

# Prattle & Run

The Magazine for Thornbury Running Club

November 2008



The Alternative 5 Valleys Runners – more of a picnic ...

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## Caretakers Cupboard

Where to start.....!!!!!!!!!!!!

At the beginning I guess, but where is that.

Some good runs recently from club members in various races.

Phil LUCKER gave his all one week: Bridge Inn 5k on the Tuesday followed by a sub 10 min two miler taking 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Portsmouth Naval challenge on the Thursday. The same week on the Sunday saw 20 TRC runners at the Stroud Half marathon including Phil coming in first for Thornbury in 1.22.29. This was the event that saw Malcolm CARR complete his very first half marathon beating wife Karen by almost 6 minutes. Well done to all: fantastic efforts.

Not wishing to tell people how to suck eggs, but Phil is now suffering from Glandular Fever and has been advised not to run until the new year...Hopefully recovering now. But I did tell him he was over doing it...and too much running...

One for the future, Hogweed Muggle races. The Mini, The Mimsey & The Major We had 5 TRC runners at this new event. All fared well and recommended it for the off roaders amongst us (see Jo P's write-up) .....Harder than the Sodbury Slog.....

The Slog has just passed us, with lower numbers than usual from TRC.

Was this due to the weather conditions?

I guess not....a tough race for the mad ones.

Remember if you take part in a race and want some form of recognition then please let me know along with Graham Bishop official race editor and Jimmy G Godden the web master.

The Winter Handicap series starts on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008 the first of four. The course is a challenging 5K, so let's support the races with Wilf BURKE putting in a lot of time and effort to allow you to get extra fit prior to Christmas with the opportunity to work off the Christmas cheer in January with the last 2 races on the 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>.

As this will be the last P&R before the festive times, let me wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year of running for 2009....

Your ever committed Caretaker T-12 (at the time of writing)

*Mark Williams*

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## Editorial

As Mark says, this is the last P&R before Christmas, with the 'do' at the Cricket Club, the Mince Pie Run at Wotton-under-Edge, and a casual social evening at CTK. Remember to check the diary and the website.

On a cautionary note; recently a lady runner was attacked near the Portway in Bristol. Such incidents are very rare, but it may be a good moment to check your safety precautions. And here, I have to confess it is 'do as I say' not 'do as I do'. The major thing is to Be Prepared. If you run wired for sound you will not hear anyone approaching. If you run in a dream you will not clock the slightly dodgy character lurking round the corner. Space prevents me going on (whew, I hear you say) but check:

<http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesArticle/Knowing-Your-Running-Safety-Rules.id-449.html>

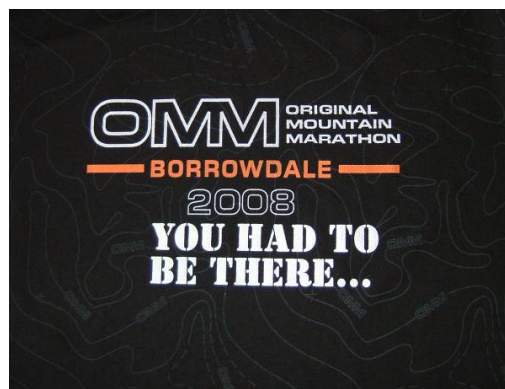
Many thanks as always for all contributions; articles for the next edition by 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009, please to [judy.mills@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:judy.mills@avonandsomerset.police.uk), Safe Running and Happy Christmas.

## OMM 2008

*Dave Palmer tells it how it really was. Like the t-shirt says – you had to be there.*

*'Gales turn a test of fitness into survival fight for thousands of runners'*

So said the Times on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October after a weekend of unprecedented national media interest in the 41<sup>st</sup> running of an annual event that had previously gone unnoticed outside the specialist press. Much of the reportage was sensationalist and misinformed, causing unnecessary anxiety to friends and relatives of those taking part. Conditions were undoubtedly tough with, according to the organisers, by far the most demanding weather conditions ever. Accordingly courses were shortened for Day 1 and, when exceptional amounts of rain fell during that day and flooded out the overnight campsite, the race was abandoned. Most of the people who took part agreed that the organisers made the right decision to start, and the right one to stop it.



They have recently released a press statement that is a good summary of events - [http://www.theomm.com/assets/files/PressRelease/OMM\\_PressRelease2008.pdf](http://www.theomm.com/assets/files/PressRelease/OMM_PressRelease2008.pdf)

For anyone still not sure what the OMM is all about the press release states:

*The Original Mountain Marathon (OMM) was founded 40 years ago with the concept of holding a 2-day mountain orienteering race with two consecutive marathons of 26 miles (42km) and a height gain of up to 8,000ft (2400m). It was the world's first venture of this kind and indeed a whole new type of sport called "adventure racing" has evolved from it.*

*The competitors must use a combination of navigation, mountain and equipment skills. They come from all walks of life and are vetted for their ability and experience in the mountains, and take part as a team of two for safety. Teams are often described as fell runners but most have a broad range of mountaineering experience ranging from military (including "Special Forces") to outdoor instructor professionals and some of the UK's most renowned adventurers including previously the likes of the late Chris Brasher, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, John Disley and Alan Hinkes. They carry a tent, sleeping bag, spare clothing, food for 36 hours and other essential equipment to be self-sufficient in the hills.*

The event attracts 1500 teams of two and there are now a number of courses – the elites still run two consecutive marathons, the course I run is just over a half marathon each day. Except of course, it feels like a marathon each day! But, away from all the hype, how was it for me this year? Well it was challenging for sure, but there was never a time when I felt we were getting out of control. 'We', this year being long time orienteering and mountaineering friend, Pete and me.

The OMM Event Centre was based at Seathwaite Farm at the head of Borrowdale in the Lake District. Seathwaite has the unenviable reputation of being the wettest place in England but it sees plenty of visitors as one of the main setting off points for hill walkers climbing Scafell Pike, the highest mountain in England. The higher fells around are rocky, with lower fells being open moorland, notable for extensive bracken and heather coverage. Much of the land is boggy, and there are numerous streams.

We had been allocated a late start on Day 1 – 11:08. The first starters had gone off at 8, facing a stiff breeze but the promised rain had not yet arrived. The cloud base was around

1200 feet. By the time our turn came to set off the wind had strengthened and it had started raining. We had turned to heavier weight kit to cope with the deteriorating conditions, replacing the lightweight running jackets with technical mountain jackets on top of several warm layers underneath. Next to the skin was the traditional Helly Hansen Lifa top – what a fantastic piece of kit this is, and what a pity they've changed the material for the new version.

And so eventually we were off, picking up a map each, and then straight into the wind and rain. The cheery start marshal pointed out that after the first control we would find the wind on our backs / side for a few controls. While this turned out to be so, he didn't mention that for the latter part of the course we would be heading directly back into the weather! On our way to the first control, a stream source high up on the west side of the valley, we saw a number of teams who had decided to retire and were making their way back to Race HQ. At this stage the biggest problem we faced was reading the map, the wind was tearing at it, the rain was making seeing it through my glasses difficult, and on top of this the scale was 1:40,000 ie 400 metres on the ground appeared as just 1cm on the map – a small scale for complex terrain. The next biggest problem was with the shoes we were both wearing – Adidas Swoops. I find Swoops are great fell shoes in all respects bar one – they lose grip on wet rock. Usually this doesn't present a problem because you can pick where you place your feet but it becomes much more difficult to do this with precision when you are being buffeted by the wind.

Control 1 came up after 50 minutes and we duly turned north and, with the weather as promised now on our backs, we headed off down into Gillercombe and towards Control 2. We were now in the mist and needed accurate navigation to find Control 2, a subtle knoll on a broad, otherwise featureless, spur. But at least we were able to run a bit and it felt like we were making progress. On down to the Youth Hostel at the summit of the Honister Pass where we sheltered in the lee of the building and downed a quick 'go-gel' before heading back up again into the mist. After climbing a path for 500 metres we left it to follow a compass bearing towards Control 3, a spur high on the east side of High Spy fell.

Turning almost completely back on ourselves on leaving Control 3 we were headed directly into the wind that had now reached gale force. The horizontally driven rain was stinging our eyes and forward progress was slow. But at least we were heading for the last two controls, and then the overnight campsite. Crossing a swollen stream we momentarily lost our footing and crawled out on to the far bank. With the wind now gusting severe gale we staggered up to the summit of Dale Head, at 760 metres our highest point of the day. On along Littledale Edge where Pete's map was snatched from his hands by a violent gust, never to be seen again. We sheltered in the lee of some rocks to check the map and make sure we dropped off the Edge at the right point – out came the jelly babies for a psychological and physiological boost!

Dropping down out of the mist towards Control 4 we caught sight of the overnight campsite at Gatesgarth in the Buttermere valley below. But, for reasons which would shortly become clear, there were only a handful of tents pitched. Control 5 was near the finish and we ran in strongly, pleased to clock a time of 4 hours 30 minutes. It was then we were told the event had been cancelled and asked to wait in a nearby barn for further instructions. It transpired the organisers had hoped that teams would be able to walk the 5 miles back over the Honister Pass and check in at the Event Centre in Seathwaite, but Police had closed the road on the advice of Mountain Rescue as conditions on the Pass had become too dangerous. Instead we would be spending the night in the barn.

The prospect was not particularly appealing, but at least we were out of the wind and rain. And we were not alone; there were at least 300 other runners in the barn. Cosy would not be a word to describe it. The barn had no doors, slatted sides that allowed good ventilation, and a concrete floor. Still, with dry clothes on, the stove going and a mug of tea later it didn't seem so bad. And after soup, pasta and more tea we became reconciled to our fate. The night was long, cruelly the end of British Summer Time added an extra hour, but, crucially, the air temperature held up at around 12 degrees. During the night the wind eased and the rain turned from a continuous blast to periodic showers.

Up at 6am, a cheer reverberated around the barn as we were told the pass was open and we could return to Seathwaite. So off we trooped and a couple of hours later we were back at Race HQ to check back in. Spirits were now pretty high, helped by the soup and hot food available. We took the soup but passed on the food, anxious to try and get the car out of the car park field. Getting stuck in a muddy car park is one of the great OMM traditions – this year many teams had tried to avoid this risk by parking their cars on the side of the approach road to the Event Centre. Unfortunately a number of these cars were flooded when a swollen stream burst its banks. Luckily I managed to slither out of the field with just a little light pushing by Pete.

So, quite an epic, although of course we had no idea until we reconnected with the outside world later on Sunday of the extent that we had been in the media spotlight.

Most people of course will not understand why we do it. The late Chris Brasher, the man behind the first London Marathon, was a regular participant in the KIMM, as the OMM was originally known – in fact I saw him at the first one I did, and I think he got close to the truth when he said:

*'Perhaps it is escape from the pressure of life, but really it is more than this: it is proof that, sophisticated man though you may be, you can still go out with all your worldly needs on your back and survive in the wild places of Britain. That knowledge is great freedom'*

There is already speculation that next year's OMM will attract far more entrants!

*David Palmer*

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## The Latest Offering from Hogweed Trotters

*Yet another opportunity to get tired, wet and muddy, thanks to one of our sister clubs. Jo Plumbley describes the run and hopefully sells it to more of our runners for 2009.*

The inaugural Hogweed Muggles took place on 18<sup>th</sup> October offering 3 cross country options across 5.5, 10.5 and 15.5 miles, the mini, mimsy and major muggles respectively. Getting to the start line from the village hall race centre did prove slightly problematic and for some of us included a scenic detour through some of the very attractive yards and gardens of Hawkesbury Upton

The rain that wasn't forecast didn't make starting the race particularly appealing – and there certainly seemed to be more than just me who had almost accidentally entered the longer of the races and were looking slightly daunted but the atmosphere at the start was friendly and optimistic and as the rain cleared everyone seemed to be looking forward to the next couple of hours.

Each of the races followed the same route for the first mile or so then the 5.5, and the 10.5 peeled off to finish their routes. The course stayed off road across some very lovely parts of the Cotswold Way and in the main the marshals and route markings kept people on the

right track. There was enough variety of tracks, trails and the odd serious incline to keep things challenging and enjoyable.

Finishing the race seemed to take a while, the marshals further back seemed a little unclear at times as to how far away the finish line was and the walk back to the village hall was not ideal but overall the race seemed well organised, well marshalled and covered some really beautiful parts of the Cotswold countryside. I would definitely recommend giving it a go and it would be great to see an even bigger Thornbury Running Club contingent on next year's start line if the race becomes an annual event

The small number of Thornbury Runners achieved the following places and times

In the Mimsy Muggle (10.5 miles)

<b>Place</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Category</b>
34	1:44:43	CLOTHIER, Jeremy	Thornbury Running Club	MALE VET 60
38	2:01:20	BISHOP, Graham	Thornbury Running Club	MALE VET 60
39	2:01:21	BISHOP, Carole	Thornbury Running Club	LADY VET 60

and the Major (15.5 miles)

22	2:28:49	PLUMBLEY, Joanne	Thornbury Running Club	SENIOR LADY
33	2:51:26	MILLS, Judy	Thornbury Running Club	LADY VET 50

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## **Climbing the Ben**

*After all his marathon efforts John Francksen goes for a gentle stroll*

My involvement with Round Table meant I had an opportunity to join a group of friends to climb all 4370 feet of Ben Nevis in June this year. "The Ben", as it is affectionately known locally, is the highest mountain in the UK and forms part of the Three Peaks Challenge. This is to climb (and descend) the highest mountains in England, Scotland and Wales within 24 hours, namely Scafell Pike, Ben Nevis and Snowdon. We saw a few doing this while we were there (from their charity shirts mainly), tackling the Ben first as it is the hardest climb.

The minibus ride up to Fort William was fairly uneventful (but a bit long) and we settled at a quite comfortable campsite overshadowed by the huge mass of the Ben. Now I had my doubts about camping, but after seeing they had mod-cons like showers I felt happier about the adventure. There was also a good shop where I bought a bottle of the local distillery's whisky as a souvenir (unopened as yet). We went out on the town in Fort William that evening and had a few drinks. Nothing riotous as we were all thinking about the next day.

After a rather interrupted night we all woke early (to rain) and had the obligatory fried egg & sausage sandwich breakfast which went down a treat. So we all trooped off, happily whistling the Happy Wanderer (made that bit up) down the road a short distance to the visitor's centre at the foot of the Ben. Here is a shop to get your last minute walking clothing (jacket reduced from £275 to £250 – generous!), an interesting exhibition about Ben Nevis and other things including weather forecast, mountain rescue and ample car-parking. After getting some last minute supplies we were off up the tourist path that goes right up to the summit. The weather was by now dry and still and spirits were high as we started the trudge uphill.

As we climbed we noticed scantily-clad runners every so often going up and down in their Walshes (fell-running shoes) apparently training for the Ben Nevis fell race in September or for the sheer hell of it! You would see some of these guys hurtling down

some gully miles off any footpath. I could see the sense in it as the footpath was quite crowded as we ascended. The men's record for the Ben race is 1 hour 25 mins 34 secs (!) held by Kenny Stuart of Keswick AC. The women's is 1 hour 43 mins 25 secs held by Pauline Haworth also of Keswick AC. I struggled to comprehend these amazing feats as I slogged on. I would be happy just to finish! But then the Ben is a category "A" fell race which means you have to be an experienced fell runner to take part. People have died in these sort of events. If you want to read more about fell running, check out "Feet in the Clouds" by Richard Askwith, it is absolutely fascinating. These fell running folk are definitely a bit mad I decided. The Bob Graham Round is a circuitous route of 42 lakeland peaks over 72 miles to be completed within 24 hours, starting and finishing at Moot Hall in the centre of Keswick. This is the coveted certificate all fell runners want to earn apparently.

The weather had the knack of changing from dry to wet & windy very quickly and of course got colder as we went higher. I was benefiting from my running fitness and was near the front of our group, and had to wait for others less fit. This starting and stopping caused me to get cold quickly so I decided to keep moving. There was snow at the summit and thick fog unfortunately masking a spectacular view but I felt a real sense of achievement as we all stood on "Trig Point" (see photo – that's me in the Dayglo hat!) where pictures are traditionally taken at the highest point on the summit. I used a walking pole for the first time which I would recommend.

Getting down proved more physically & mentally taxing as the path is nothing more than worn-down boulder in places and rougher as you get near the top. It was near 5pm as I finally got back to the bottom, so it had taken all day to get up and down. But we all felt elated at conquering the Ben (talk was already of a crack at the Three Peaks but we'll see) and after a refreshing shower (yes they did work) it was off back into town again to celebrate. We had a few more beers this time so some of us were a bit bleary-eyed packing up the gear the next morning. I managed a short run to clear my head which drew praise from the others.



The drive back south was quieter than coming up as we took the opportunity for a doze in between stops. All in all it was a satisfying trip enjoying good company with a real physical challenge.

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## **The Don Morrison Edale Skyline Fellrace – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

*Well, it's not quite Ben Nevis but here's one for those of you who like mud and stones and long distances! It's an alternative to the popular Grizzly race which this year clashes with our very own TRC Aquathlon. Now you can get your adrenaline fix and still remain loyal to your Club!*

The Skyline is a 21-mile fellrace in North Derbyshire. It has few marshals, is minimally marked, and runners have to navigate (or follow someone who knows where they are!) It usually has no more than 250 entries, and there is a cut-off point at 11.5 miles of two-and-a-half hours.

There is a kit check at the start and runners must carry:

- *Full waterproof body cover i.e. cagoule with hood and overtrousers*
- *Hat*

- *Gloves*
- *Map of the route*
- *Compass*
- *Whistle*
- *Mobile phone*
- *Emergency food*

Back in the summer I said I would be trying to arrange a day when anyone interested could reccy the course. Sorry; I failed – not enough weekends in the year! However, I still intend entering the 2009 race and have booked two nights accommodation in the neighbouring village of Castleton, though it would be possible to travel there and back on the day.

If anyone is interested in joining me, entry forms will be available at the end of December. The cottage sleeps 4 in comfort, (more in less comfort or if you're prepared to be really friendly!)

One disadvantage is that it is on the same day as the Hogweed Hilly Half - still too few weekends and there are even less when you have to work half of them!

For more information, contact me or see: <http://www.dpfr.org.uk/index.php?p=skyline>

## In the Himalayas

*You may have already followed the link to Pete's Nepalese Adventure. Below is a very potted version of his first month, the trekking part. If it doesn't make sense – why not read the whole thing? See <http://www.travelpod.com/travel-blog/psmainstone/1/tpod/html>  
In the next edition Pete will introduce you to the orphanage ...*

### **The Suicide Run – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

...arrived Kathmandu yesterday ... one last night of luxury in a hotel with water, electricity, even a swimming pool. Today was the suicide run... get into vehicle ... drive on potholed roads seeing how close driver can get to hitting everybody below in the pecking order ...dog, pedestrian, cyclist, motorbike. Only one above him is the bl\*\*dy great lorry! 5.30am you'd think ... difficulty finding people below him, not so ...even runners to be added to the pecking order.

After 7 ½ hrs arrived at Jiri ... only way one out ... up and up ...veggie diet started, so far so good.

### **Arrival at Namchee Bazaar – 6<sup>th</sup> October**

...left Jiri 7.30am ... experienced level ground for all of 15 minutes, then up steep, stony paths continuously for next 4 hours or more ... sunshine turned to rain, I bought umbrella.. Basic is correct word for lodge which was solely ours for the night. Tea houses plentiful ... which helped climbing up the hills.

Third night ... in a lodge with many others and so met French, NZ and English people that we were to see numerous times over the coming days.

... I shall never complain about the Tintern Trot or Cotswold Way again ... Entered more and more forested areas ... wonderful views of valley below. However by Sunday we joined main trekking route for those that had flown in to Lukla ... very busy ... Became resentful of tourists that had taken over our trekking route ...only doing the easy option of flying in, shorter trek, flying out. Today saw Everest, just a short look ... already something special. Came across dejected-looking Italian team that had failed the climb due to avalanche risks.

Just three of us on the trip Dave and Sheila from Inverness as well as myself. ... Sheila had done Everest Marathon and knew the route we were taking. ...No yearning desire to do such an event...

...have to stay a full day to acclimatise.

### **The first Eight days – 7<sup>th</sup> October**

Namchee. ... shame to leave tomorrow - coffee & cake shops are something else!!

Day 2 - trails not made for main trekking route ... difficult to walk unless you're a local Nepali porter carrying huge loads and wearing sandals or flip flops. 3rd day continued uphill through rhododendron forests that gave shelter from the heat. After another long day finished at bottom of valley at a good lodge with electricity ... Junbesi is a typical small village ...5 or 6 lodges all vying for very few trekkers coming through. Day 4 we were to meet the Dudh Koshi river that we were to get to know very well. Crossed on one of many typical bridges that I have come to accept but don't enjoy, to climb to Ringmo, 20 minutes straight up, no twists or turns just up and up. Lunched here dreading the afternoon as we had only just started climbing. Downhill slightly and we stayed at Traksingo a one lodge, one monastery village. Our lodge had been home to Babu Cheri a Sherpa who holds the record for the fastest ascent and the longest time spent on Everest - 21hrs without oxygen... continued onto Surkhe and then beyond Phakding where we had now joined the main tourist route. But what the hell, if it means I can have coffee and cake who cares; that reminds me ... appointment in the coffee shop in a few minutes...

### **Arrival at Tengboche - 9<sup>th</sup> October**

What surprised me on the way to the Everest View Hotel ... very small airstrip with people sky diving - or breaking legs as one had done the day before. The hill was covered with flowers with large German groups photographing them. ... Hard uphill but very short ... we stayed at Kunde and were there by midday. Today was to have been another short day but a fall-out with lodge owners at Tengboche means an extra 3 hours walk....Didn't expect the opportunity to use internet at lunchtime way up here!

### **Lazy Afternoon at Dingboche - 10<sup>th</sup> October**

After the problems at Thengboche yesterday all trekkers made for Pangboche where it was like the nativity scene, no room at the inn. ... after an extra couple of hours walking our porters found accommodation for us. We have been to a rescue centre, from which there had been 2 helicopter evacuations this morning due to altitude problems. Tomorrow another acclimatisation day where we will walk high before coming back down ... Now at 14000 feet, getting colder and surrounded by mountains. Terrain very rugged, very little vegetation. Yaks everywhere and heating comes from Yak dung. Luckily food to date is great, I'm sticking to my veggie diet. ...Views are so good it's all worth it.

### **18,192 feet - 19<sup>th</sup> October**

Rest yesterday, today climbed higher again towards Island Peak the mountain ordinary climbers come to the Everest region to summit. Late afternoons getting much colder. Trekked to Lobuche So many trekkers here ... not enough accommodation ... people sleeping on floors of the lodges which are getting more basic as you climb higher. Cost of Mars bar increased to £2. Not craving for chocolate, but oh for a bacon buttie.

... Walk to Kalar Pattar ...like walking past a McAlpine quarry. All caused by the Kumbu glacier. ...on top you could see clearly Everest Base Camp below and the Khumbu Ice Fall that all Everest expeditions have to walk up to, to reach Camp 1. View of Everest outstanding ... not a cloud in the sky. ... I have now been to 18,192 feet, it felt great once I was there ... a damn sight easier coming down.

Only another two 17,500 + heights to do.....

### **Across the Cho La Pass - 21<sup>st</sup> October**

After Kala Pattar stayed at a lodge at Gorak Shep at 17,345 feet ... bl\*\*dy freezing! Next day from Lobuchewe came to hilltop covered in Chortens in memory to Sherpas and others who had died on Everest ... moving and eerie place. One to Scott Fisher,

expedition leader who died in big 1996 disaster ... biggest to Bambu Cheri (see earlier) a personal friend of our guide and at the same camp the day he fell to his death.

Then across the side of a mountain ... like Brecon Beacons - glorious sunshine as always in Wales. ...no more tea houses ... picnics instead ... what a place for a picnic. Eventually arrive Dzongla at 15,157 ft ,, unfortunately there are dozens of trekkers who cannot get accommodation and are turned back to Lobuche. They didn't miss much ... we had a room and a bed booked but I wasn't sorry to leave.

Very early start to cross pass ... up to 17,782 ft. Climb started very early on ... up and over huge boulders getting harder as we got higher. Snow overnight ... frozen ... made climbing harder. Eventually reached top after about 3 hrs climbing to find the pass covered in snow ... pretty but treacherous.

Having crossed ... spectacular views of other side of valley. Unfortunately we came up the easy side ... descent a nightmare ... down very steeply with boulders ... Another picnic was a real welcome but then another two hour walk to Dragnak.

### **Caught in my boxers - 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

Dragnak ...only 2 lodges ... both full ... just happy get a bed and a roof over my head. ... Having my wash in the bedroom confronted by young lady ... turned out I was in her room. At 9.00pm ... banging on the bedroom door and shouting ...her again...she hadn't come to see me in my boxers again ... she just needed her bedding and to hide the days takings. I held the torch whilst she stashed it away ... told her she could trust me as I used to be a policeman....

Next morning ... moonscape ... up, down, around, across lakes and boulders ... geologists' dream ... load of stones to me. At one point we crossed a causeway some under fast running water. I did not cross willingly or with confidence, however having showed how brave I was ... reached the Gokyo area ... several crystal clear lakes ... classed as a resort. Well it did have a book shop

### **The Best View in the World - 24<sup>th</sup> October**

...looking at the hill in front of us it seemed straightforward ... starting at 15,580 ft ... going up another 2,000 ft ... straight up, no easy walk in ... at this altitude ... not going to be a jaunt. Passed people really struggling ... several rests were taken ... just got harder. Looking back onto Gokyo lying next to the lake ... beautiful. Several hours later ...finally reached top ... very emotional place to be ... felt very humble. Completely surrounded by some of the highest peaks in the world, most of which my guide had summited several times. He had lost a lot of friends on those mountains and was to lose another in the next few days, just trying to make a living to look after his family.

For half an hour we stayed there, enjoying ourselves, taking in the surrounding peaks and taking numerous photographs,

### **Do I really want to fly from here? - 25<sup>th</sup> October**

In no time at all back at Namchee Bazaar again. ...luxury of sit down toilet and hot shower to be taken when and as often as you liked. Coffee shop and bakery as I remembered, the cakes not to be taken in small quantities ... tomorrow I wouldn't have them.

Next morning we were off again down to Benkar, a very pretty village ... again luxury ... a lodge to ourselves.

Final walk was into Lukla, the airport built on the hill ... runway very small with planes landing and travelling up the hill before coming to rest at a small terminal building. The take-off downhill all passengers pedalling furiously ... end of the runway ... rather large drop off the hillside. 3 weeks previously plane had crashed on landing killing all the trekkers and one of the 2 pilots. ... a few drinks did help and by 6.00am next morning we were preparing for the experience. Within no time Yeti Airline No 3 had landed and I was sitting immediately behind what appeared to be a boy pilot.... Within 40 minutes we were back to the chaos of Kathmandu and the luxury Shangri La ... home for the next 4 nights before the next chapter of my experience.

## Iron Man – Just Do It!

*Jane Leslie describes a long day – and a great achievement. The TRC IM Club is growing!*

Needless to say, Iron Man poses, for most of us, the sort of challenge never before encountered. The training is hard and the race hangs over life like an unknown world – or as I suggested to some of the other competitors as we gathered in the dark in our ghostly moonlit wetsuits it is, in a miniscule way, a bit like going over the trenches in the First World War. The dangers of fatality, resulting from poor hydration and feeding, had been well pointed out in the pre-race magazine, so that the adrenaline fuelled excitement was tinged with a very tangible fear.

As the hushed seal like bodies streamed in the dark towards the starting gantry, which yawned like the mouth of a tunnel into the unknown depth of the black water ahead, it seemed as if we were entering another world. I wouldn't have been surprised to find a giant silver pod at the end of the tunnel ready to transport us into another dimension altogether.

But the shock of the cold water soon brought reality into focus; only to be faced with yet another amazing sight – 1500 heads bobbing almost silently in the stillness of the now approaching dawn, ready to explode into action at the sound of the horn. Gender is not usually an issue for me, either in training or in competition, but with females outnumbered by males in the ratio of 10 to 1, I was conscious of a general masculine largeness and density all around me. To say this was threatening would be extreme, but it was certainly disconcerting.



As in any race, once the starting signal goes the immediacy of the moment takes over. Arms and legs tangled and flailed around; bodies crashed into each other in a desperate bid to find a bit of vacant water in which to swim. It took about 1000 of the 3600m to actually start swimming properly – and this only because I chose to take a detour and swim on the very outside of the crowd. Nevertheless, this still involved grappling with some very fine water lilies.

Transition is pretty chaotic, and I was very happy to be taken in hand by a kind volunteer who picked up on my confusion and disorganisation. She stripped my wetsuit from me, packed my bag and handed me my bike things, as if I was a child. She was very comforting. Setting off on the 112 bike ride was all about mindset. I had decided not to get puffed at any point in the race, thus giving myself a better chance of finishing. The plan was to make an enjoyable day of the luxury of empty roads and relatively good weather. The crowds that lined the roads cheering and making much ado at the top of each hill with bells and banners lifted the spirits and helped the time to pass.

Things went fine for the first two of the three lap bike course. The feeding stations had worried me, but I coped better than expected with the bottles of water, sports drink, power bars and bananas all thrust rapidly in succession towards the rider as they pass. I found stuffing power bars up the leg of my shorts a good strategy – until I found they melted against warm skin! Lap three heralded the beginning of the 'big bloat' that was to dog me almost until the end of the race.

The crouched position adopted on road bikes is great for aerodynamics – not so good for digestion. Power bars just didn't seem to want to go down, and even banana cud became impossible to swallow. The sports drink tasted like sick, so from mile 90 onwards, it was

just water. By the time I dismounted and rolled into the second transition tent, my trunk had blown up like a balloon. I have never been given to much belching – not because I am ladylike, but because it just doesn't happen. This proved to be a great disadvantage. When sheep eat too much clover they blow up to such an extent that the farmer has to come along with a spike and pop their prone bodies – or they die! This was exactly how I felt. My diaphragm was so extended that it was almost impossible to breathe in, as there was no expansion left in it.

A First Aid lady approached me and asked me if I intended to finish. She looked doubtful, but respected my determined 'Yes'! Again, I became a child, as she proceeded to peel off my gloves, shoes and cycling paraphernalia, and help me to struggle into my running shoes. After a good 15 minutes battling with these things, I emerged from the tent – to run a marathon!

This was a moment I shall never forget. I was so bloated I could hardly breathe. I knew eating and drinking had become an impossibility, though I did nibble at a pretzel and sip flat coke – fearful of the warnings in the competitors magazine. So I started walking, just taking one mile at a time. The realization that if I just walked all the way, I might not make 'cut off' time, prompted me to gingerly attempt a jog. For the next 19 miles I jogged and walked my way round the course. So distracting was the 'bloat' and accompanying nausea that at mile 7 I surprised a marshal by stopping to take a shoe horn out of my shoe (I had been running with it lodged under the arch of my foot, and hadn't even noticed till the niggle finally stabbed my consciousness). The look of surprise on her face was one I won't forget. When, peering at my shoe horn, she asked me, 'what have you got that for?' I promptly replied, 'putting on my shoe!' Which I did and proceeded on my way.

At mile 20 I could bear it no more! It was burst or vomit. With no kind farmer to pop my bloated belly, nature took its course; I vomited a gale – shrunk to my normal size, and felt better!

At the previous day's introductory talk we had been told that we would have a 'family for a day'. It proved to be true. The mutual support amongst competitors saw, I am sure, not just me, but many round who would have otherwise succumbed to the weak moments when it was so tempting to stop. A young New Zealand woman certainly saw me through one of these moments as she determinedly encouraged me not to give up whilst apparently suffering herself. We kept each other going over the dreary 10-15 section of the course, when you have already done so much- but there is still so much to do. My mile 20 experience brought out some very chivalrous behaviour and I was looked after by three nice young men – all the more so as, after recovering, I proceeded to spring home at 9mm pace for the last 5 miles, having saved my legs with so much walking. I left them behind and several others, but there was no bitterness, just many congratulations at the end of the race.

If this race has taught me anything, it is that regardless of age, sex or any other defining or seemingly restricting features, we can do it if we want to! It's not about Iron Man – not everyone wants to put themselves through that sort of physical torture, but if you want to sit and knit 100 sweaters on the top of an iceberg - do it! I never thought I could get round Iron Man, and amazingly, I still don't think I can. But I do KNOW I can – that's a good platform for building confidence. If there is something you want to do, but don't think you can – JUST DO IT – you CAN!

*Jane Leslie*



## *My Beijing Diary*

*The Olympics already seem a long time ago, and before we know it the 2012 games will be upon us, with perhaps a chance for a few of us to watch the world's best sports men and women. Our own Craig Carscadden had the dubious privilege of being at Beijing as an International Technical Official, a job which was guaranteed to make him unpopular with someone! Here's his account of the fortnight he spent living out of a suitcase – except that – well, read it for yourself...*

### *Day 1 - Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September*

*My Amsterdam flight was delayed and I struggled to make the connection to Beijing. I have to sprint from gate B to F at Schiphol Airport and make my flight by 5 minutes and I'm rather embarrassed to be the last person on the plane.*

*Flight to Beijing is uncomfortable. I would not recommend South China Airways; the leg room is limited.*

### *Day 2 - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September*

*I arrived in Beijing and was whisked through passport control. However, baggage reclaim was a complete disaster as my luggage didn't appear.*

*The journey from the airport to the Paralympic village took 40 minutes. The first thing that struck me about Beijing is its sheer size and how modern it appeared. In some ways I could have been anywhere.*

*I attended a meeting with the technical delegate, team managers and coaches. The meeting was very tense and a number of issues were heatedly debated.*

*I then attended an IPC reception which gave me an opportunity to meet up with a few old friends and have a good old chat.*

### *Day 3 - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September*

*The day of the opening ceremony started with a gam meeting with the Technical Delegate and the other International Technical Officials (ITO's). The key message from the Technical Delegate was that the role of an ITO was not to judge the competition but to observe the competition and identify areas of improvement.*

*Uniforms were handed out at this and unlike some of my colleagues my uniform was a perfect fit.*

*I was excited about the opening ceremony. This was my 4<sup>th</sup> Paralympics but this would be the first time I had actually been a spectator at the opening ceremony. I was not disappointed; it was truly spectacular! My favourite bit was the wheelchair athlete who abseiled up*



the stadium to light the Paralympic flame.

#### **Day 4 - Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

The morning after the opening ceremony I was back at the Birds Nest for a stadium orientation tour. Most of the time was spent in the bowels of the stadium being shown the various technical areas.

The Chinese were reluctant to let us see the clear up operation. They had 36 hours to transform the stadium from a massive outdoor theatre into a modern track and field arena in the world. Don't know how they managed this but they did.

After lunch I was back at the track to meet the Video Recording team. As a member of the jury of appeal I would be working closely with this group. The video footage they provided may prove crucial in any protest we would deal with during the competition. The meeting was conducted through a translator but even so it was clear our hosts were a friendly bunch who were keen to help.

The volume of protests we received during the competition meant that I was often in the video room. At the end of the competition they presented me with a full DVD set of all the television footage.

In the evening I attended a UK Athletics function hosted by Tanni Grey-Thomson. We chatted about the gossip in the GB Camp and reminisced about previous Paralympics.

#### **Day 5 - Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September**

On the first morning of competition there were a couple of incidents that forced me out of my seat in the sand and into the video room. These protests were dealt with quickly.

The evening session was going the same way until the last race. With just over 800m left in a 5000m race a collision took place which up ended 3 wheelchairs and obstructed several others. Five protests were received on this race and after 2 hours of deliberations a re-run was ordered. Unfortunately the medals had already been presented and proverbial hit the fan.

#### **Day 6 - Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

The fallout from of the previous night's incident continued all day. Some countries were threatening to take the matter to CAS Court of Arbitration for Sport. Any hearing would have to take place before the 12<sup>th</sup> when the race was to be rescheduled.



The chairman of the jury of appeal spent the morning at a press conference. Thankfully although there were a couple of decisions to be made, I could handle them on my own.

#### **Day 7 - Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September**

*This was my only morning off during the games. I had been asked to attend a presentation by New Zealand Paralympics Committee publishing the IPC athletics World Championships which will take place in Christchurch in 2011. I conducted the site visit to Christchurch during the bid process and I was there to provide technical input.*

*My time off also allowed me to have lunch with part of the Mexican delegation. One of their cerebral palsy athletes had come over to do a competition in the UK that I had organised. They wanted some advice on putting on a similar event on in their country.*

*I also spent some time filling in an insurance claim form for my luggage, which still hadn't arrived.*

### ***Day 8 - Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September***

*By now we were into the routine of competition. The protests were coming at us thick and fast but there was nothing we couldn't handle. There had been a number of positive drug tests in other sports. This had taken the pressure off athletics as the press had started to circle around other sports.*

*At lunch I bumped into one of the GB team who had been injured in training and wouldn't be defending his 800m title. I knew the athlete well but even so the chat was brief. What can you say in such circumstances?*

*I returned to the village about 11.30pm to find my luggage sitting outside my room. I examined the labels on the case and found that it had been to Canada and back before getting to Beijing*

### ***Day 9 - Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September***

*I had breakfast with the Technical Delegate. He invited me to accompany him on his daily pre-competition inspection of the track. I was thrilled at this prospect because it may have been my only opportunity to get onto the field of play.*

*Between the morning and afternoon sessions I arranged a visit to the Silk Market where you can shop until you drop for under a fiver. I wasn't taken with the shopping but it did give me the chance to eat away from the village. The food in the village was good with lots of variety but you can soon grow weary of the plastic cutlery and the paper plates. The Paralympic Village life can make you become very institutionalised.*

### ***Day 10 - Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September***

*I was inspired by my taste of freedom the previous day and I decided to wander round Olympic Park at lunchtime rather than go back to the village. I bought a coke and a box meal of rice and chicken. I sat looking at this box for ages trying to figure out how you heated it up. Finally a kid sitting next to me showed me how it works.*

*The rest of the afternoon was spent looking at the sights and people-watching. My favourite attraction was the musical fountains*

### ***Day 11 - Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September***

*By this stage the days are starting to merge into one.*

*I was meant to be vigilant at all times, on the lookout for potential problems. The long days were beginning to take their toll and I found my concentration flagging. It is difficult to fall asleep amidst 90 thousand cheering and chanting Chinese but I came close.*

*After the evening session a few of us walk back to the village via the swimming venue and saw the Cube in its full multi-coloured glory.*

#### ***Day 12 - Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September***

*Another routine day at the track for me, but there were issues elsewhere on the field regarding classification. A Great Britain athlete had her classification protested. The outcome is that she is re-classified as not eligible. There are some unsporting scenes during the competition and the press have a field day. A not eligible classification does not mean the athlete is not disabled but that their disability is minimal and does not affect their ability to perform the event.*

#### ***Day 13 - Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September***

*I was really starting to flag and decide to get some extra sleep between sessions rather than going on the tour of the Marathon course. I arrived at the track for the evening session refreshed and find that the Marathon bus had been delayed. We were short of ITO's and I was asked to go onto the field of play again and observe the club throwing event. While out there a zoom started directly behind me. In such circumstances it was difficult to remain focused on my particular event, especially when there was another home victory and the whole place started to rock.*

#### ***Day 14 - Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September***

*My last full day in Beijing started with a 5am breakfast then it was off to Tiananmen Square for the start of the Marathon. I watched the start and then played the tourist for a while before being driven back to the stadium to take my usual place in the stand for the final time awaiting any potential protesting. Thankfully none came and my job was done.*

*The closing ceremony was as spectacular as the opening. The fireworks were incredible and everybody was in a real party mood. The hand over to London was greeted with excited applause. Roll on London 2012*



# Triathlon at Thornbury Running Club

by Jacqueline Wadsworth

IT'S FULL steam ahead for TRC's Aquathlon next March after a successful trial-run at Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre on November 16. 'After the initial crazy period things settled down and ran really well: thanks to everyone who helped out,' said organiser Sandra Webber. 'It will be a lot easier when we have total use of the pool area and a separate registration room on the day itself.'

One of the major lessons learned was that more marshals will be needed to direct competitors through the maze of changing rooms to transition. A few more will also be needed on the run.

Nineteen 'guinea pigs' took part in the event 'So far we have had very positive feedback from competitors,' said Sandra. 'Over the next few weeks we'll get folk together for a formal debrief.'

Sandra has reined in plans for 200 competitors for the event next March. 'Ideally we would have 200-plus like Taunton Deane, but I think we need to test out the run route with 100 competitors first, largely due to the number of dog-walkers on the run!'

The Aquathlon is being promoted all over the South West, through tri and running clubs, leisure centres and sports shops.

Sponsors so far include Sandra's company Kudos, TRC member John Watt's X-Press Legal Service Ltd, Linela Embroidery of Olveston, and local magazine Bradley Stoke Matters. One more sponsor is still needed to help with the £550 hire of the pool. If you know anyone who can help, contact Sandra at [Sandra@thekudosgroup.com](mailto:Sandra@thekudosgroup.com).



Results:

## Long Course - 1000m Swim / 10k Run

	Age Cat	Swim Time	Run Time	Total Time	Prize	
1	Horsfall Paul	21-39	00:12:50	00:39:39	00:52:29	1st male
2	Green Martyn	21-39	00:18:37	00:41:29	01:00:06	2nd male
3	Jim Thurton/Steve Thorn	Relay	00:18:38	00:42:56	01:01:34	relay winner
4	Curtis Mark	40-49	00:18:36	00:43:10	01:01:46	3rd male
5	Hopkins Rob	21-39	00:18:20	00:43:36	01:01:56	
6	Lima Jorge	40-49	00:14:41	00:48:44	01:03:25	
7	Ross Jo	21-39	00:17:10	00:46:55	01:04:05	1st female

## Triathlon

## at Thornbury Running Club

	Age Cat	Swim Time	Run Time	Total Time	Prize
8 White Ron	50-59	00:17:20	00:48:02	01:05:22	
9 Greenwood Jon		00:19:23	00:47:00	01:06:23	
10 Plumbley Jo	21-39	00:20:50	00:50:14	01:11:04	2nd female
11 Gaze Steve	21-39	00:23:13	00:51:54	01:15:07	
12 Stagg Nigel	50-59	00:19:20	00:57:20	01:16:40	

### Short Course - 500m Swim / 5k Run

1 Godden Jim	40-49	00:09:56	00:21:58	00:31:54	1st male
2 Williams Mark	40-49	00:09:28	00:23:47	00:33:15	2nd male
3 Rich Phillips/Jan Burke	Relay	00:07:19	00:30:28	00:37:47	relay winner
4 Renshaw Arthur	50-59	00:10:36	00:27:12	00:37:48	3rd male
5 Lansdown Caroline	40-49	00:13:02	00:33:22	00:46:24	1st female
6 Parrott Maddie	40-49	00:12:19	00:34:06	00:46:25	2nd female
7 Francksen John	40-49	00:17:28	00:30:51	00:48:19	

Triathlon News is now going into hibernation for the winter. But before the long snooze begins, here's a review of what has been a great year for triathlon at TRC.

### Two National Champions

Trevor Roberts won the 60-65 age-group title at the British Duathlon Championships at Milton Keynes in April. And Jane Leslie won the 55-59 age group at the National Triathlon Championships at Wakefield in July.



### GB Team

Jane Leslie and Jon Greenwood represented GB at the World Triathlon Championships in Vancouver, Canada in June.

### Tri Series Winner

Jo Williams won the overall female category in the DC Leisure Tri Series, in races at Westonbirt, Springfield and Malmesbury.

**Thornbury Running Club's** Tri Section has really take off in 2008 - we now have 41 paid-up members; we also have our own club tri-suit; and we are staging our own Aquathlon next March, with a full Triathlon planned for 2010.



One to Watch in 2009.....John Scanlan has his sights set on the Austrian Ironman next year and he's leaving nothing to chance: he's talked bikes with Ironman Roger Denton, his legs are swathed in compression tights, and his running is getting *serious*.

Soon the question so many have been asking for so long will be answered ... can he actually swim? Go on John, you show us!

# Thornbury Running Club Annual Dinner & Ceilidh at Tortworth Court Hotel

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009**      7.30pm till midnight

Drinks in Atrium bar 7.30pm      Dinner in Westminster Suite 8.00pm

**Music by live Ceilidh band "Spinach for Norman" who will provide musical accompaniment to dinner and for dancing afterwards.**

Dress code: Smart (DJ optional) £35 per person



RSVP by 23 December      01454 632255 or 07814 756367      [janeleslie@hotmail.com](mailto:janeleslie@hotmail.com)

## Reply and Menu Selection for Annual Dinner 7 February

Name (please print).....

Name of guest(s): .....

### Menu Selection

Please tick your choices from menu below:

	You	Guest
<b>Starter:</b>		
Slow roasted sun blushed tomato & purple basil soup with herbed croutons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Main course:</b>		
Escalope of local salmon on a bed of dill infused crushed new potatoes and citrus butter sauce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- or -		
Sautéed supreme of free range chicken with a wild tarragon cream sauce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- or -		
(V) Baked aubergine filled with an aromatic cous-cous & served with a tomato sauce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pud:</b>		
Poached pears with brandy snap and clotted cream vanilla ice cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- or -		
Tuille basket with a lemon mousse and strawberry coulis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coffee and Mints		
<b>Wine</b> can be pre-ordered (from list on TRC website or by request from Jane), to be paid for on the night	<input style="width: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	

**Please enclose £10 deposit per person** or full amount; balance to be paid by 1 January on club night or by post to *Jane Leslie, Collingwood, Easter Compton, Bristol, BS35 5RE*. Cheques payable to "Thornbury Running Club".

For **mini-bus transport** please contact Sarah Martin email: [sarah.martin1000@virgin.net](mailto:sarah.martin1000@virgin.net)

If you wish to sit with particular people please indicate names:

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