



# Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter

*Autumn is upon us – I think I missed summer??! But what have the Footers been up to? Here are a few race reports and other news...*

## **Clyde Stride 40 mile Ultra Marathon – Race Report by Gerry Austin**

### **The Start – Partick Train Station**

After weeks of awful weather we awoke to clear blue skies and the prospect of the route being a little more kind underfoot than had been anticipated earlier in the week. Scores of worried and excited runners all hoping their plans would go smoothly filled the carpark of Partick train station (and the toilets of the local Morrison store), Steve got talking to a guy from Carnoustie who he recognised but couldn't remember his name who was there to watch some friends who were running. Unbeknown to us at that stage but 'Carnoustie' would become our very own one man support team and would have our drop bags sorted out and would be waiting for us at each checkpoint with the bags to hand and a breakdown of our timings and positions. What a guy! After a quick race briefing, bang on 9am we were sent on our merry way, 150 or so individual runners and 20 relay teams.

### **Section 1- Partick to Cambuslang**

The first 10 miles are fairly flat running along the Clyde pass the impressive SECC and BBC Scotland buildings on smooth tarmac paths. Within a couple of miles and nearly in the countryside we slowed down and relaxed running along the river watching the local rowing clubs training thinking 'what a great morning for a run'. Time passed pretty quickly while chatting away to each other and some other runners. We reached the checkpoint at Cambuslang and stopped to have tuna and peanut butter sandwiches and a drink.

### **Section 2 - Cambuslang to Strathclyde Park**

We set off again. After about 500 yards we had to turn off the path onto a grass trail. We knew we had to run through a field but nobody told us it was 8 miles long. The overgrown path was very narrow and very rutted so it was not wide enough to get good traction on. We had to stumble along for a few miles into the rolling hills and a couple of steep climbs, nothing to big but with undergrowth tugging at you constantly it was draining. (A couple of the shorter footers may have got lost in the undergrowth). As we left Blantyre woods coming onto the main road which leads to Strathclyde Park, a group of "gentlemen" were gathering under the bridge with a substantial carry out. "Excuse me" asks one of them (I never cease to be impressed by the politeness of the typical west of Scotland drunk) "Are you really going to Lanark?" Yes, I replied. "For F@ck's sake" comes the retort. "Where did you start?" comes the supplementary. Partick, we offered. "Oh that's just no F@cking right in the heid" he offered in admiration, before offering his support in the customary style by offering us a swig of his cider. We duly declined as it was only the back of 11am and we still had four hours running ahead of us. We hit the check point at 19 mile and picked up our drop bags from 'Carnoustie' who informed us we were now in 12th position. After more sandwiches and a wispa bar it was time to push on.

## **Clyde Stride – continues...**

### **Section 3 - Strathclyde Park to Maudslie Bridge**

This was a fairly uneventful section running along the lake in the Strathclyde Country Park. I had to slow down a few times to encourage Steve along who had decided to stop and feed the ducks with the remainder of his sandwiches. We left the park and at about the 25 mile mark we had to again enter into a field, thankfully this time the grass was short and dry but the ground underfoot was uneven due to the large herd of cows and bulls. If you thought Steve was bad with dogs I can testify he doesn't have much love for cows either. We reached the end of the field, climbed over the stile and made our way up to the last checkpoint at 28 miles. I was really starting to flag now and just wanted water as I couldn't face another Lucozade sport. There was a drop off box for front runners to leave 'goodies' behind for the back runners so in went the remainder of our energy gels, sweets, sport drinks and the trusty tuna and peanut butter sandwiches.

### **Section 4 Mauldslie Bridge to New Lanark**

Right away we found ourselves off road again. Back into the now familiar fields, nature trails and forest walks. We knew this 12 mile section was going to be hardest partly due to fatigue but also that this section has loads and loads of uphill sections and steep steps to climb. Somehow I had got a new lease of life and felt great at around 32 miles while Steve started to get cramps, although within a couple of miles the roles were reversed as my energy levels went downhill drastically and it was now Steve who was bounding away in front. With our water bottles now depleted we came out onto the road at Kirkfieldbank and found a nice old man sitting in his garden sunbathing. He filled up our bottles and again we were on our way. Of course running on a tarmac surface was never going to last long and we soon found ourselves back on a forest trail. The climb up to Stomebyres Weir which is the highest view point above the Clyde river is very impressive but running an ultra crushes your appreciation of aesthetics. After Clydeholm Bridge the course drops then climbs again. I'm knackered. I'm panting after every climb and force some short runs. This is followed a series of hair pin drops through the forest back onto the river level which I jog down as my toes scream at me to stop. This is the point that I nearly lost Steve as he lost his balance and started to slowly topple over the edge toward the river. Luckily he regained his balance and survived (well he was carrying the return train tickets). Leaving the forest and with just a mile to go there are a lot of stairs you have to climb towards New Lanark village and the finish. I try with the left foot, then the right foot but with no strength left in my legs I cannot manage to get up even one step. Eventually I haul myself up pulling the banister with my arms. We can now see New Lanark and the finish line. I get some energy and run down the hill toward the finish line, only to remember that we have to loop the falls of Clyde and back into the village. This seems cruel but we know that this is our final climb. This is hard as I'm beat and so want to finish. We push on and up the short hill and drop back down to the Clyde level. What a relief to know that we had no more climbing to do and all the hurting was about to end.

Steve and I started this adventure together at the last Christmas night out and fittingly we crossed the line together in joint 24th position in a time of 6hours, 18mins and 44 seconds. We collected our goody bags, got the bus back to Glasgow and proceeded to down some well earned pints of beer.

THE END..... FINISHED..... JOB DONE.

## Suggestion Box

Does anyone have any suggestions for the club? If so we would love to hear from you.

Do you fancy a coached track session, a run out of town for example Lunan, Crombie or perhaps a scenic hillrun?

**Please send your suggestions to: [secretary@arbroathfooters.com](mailto:secretary@arbroathfooters.com)**

## **Dates for your diaries**

**AGM** – Tuesday 25th September 2012 at 7.30pm *in the Saltire. Membership for 2012/13 (£10) can be paid on the night. See you all there.*

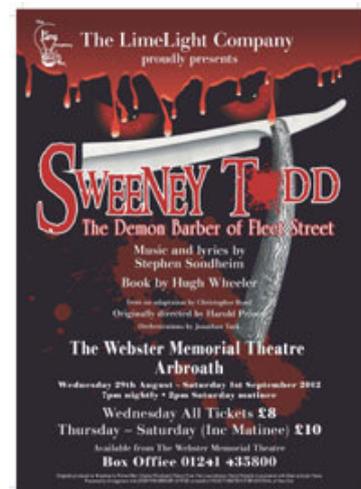
**Glen Clova Half** – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November

**Hartley Relays** – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November, Burntisland (anyone wanting to take part please let Christine know at [secretary@arbroathfooters.com](mailto:secretary@arbroathfooters.com))

**XMAS Night** – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December, Meadowbank. Please contact Steve Dear for tickets at [treasurer@arbroathfooters.com](mailto:treasurer@arbroathfooters.com)

### Sweeney Todd – Martin Gregory

A group of Footers went along to watch Sweeney Todd at the Webster Theatre on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August to see our very own Martin Gregory meet a rather grisly end set to music. Hopefully he will recover and be back along at the club soon. Well done Martin we all enjoyed it.



### Couch Potato to 5km now known as IMPROVERS

Following the introduction of the beginners night on Wednesday we now have 5 ladies who reached the end of the programme and are now keen to continue up to 10k distance and build up speed along with 3 new recruits including 2 men.

We will continue to meet at the Saltire Leisure Centre each Wednesday, at 6.30pm. If you know anyone who may be interested please let them know about this and if any club members would like to come along please do.

**What's your next race? We would all love to hear about it.**

**Please email any news or race reports you would like included in the newsletters to me [secretary@arbroathfooters.com](mailto:secretary@arbroathfooters.com)**



## ***Not the school sports!***

Tour of Fife is always popular and this year the series sold out in less than 2 hours! Footers who took part this year were: Ian Beattie, Chris Elliot, Gillian Sangster, Pamela Brandie & Christine Bird along with Jagoda Penkala who we are still trying to get to join the club...

### **Wednesday 25th July – Teddy Bear Race, Giffordtown**

#### **Report by Pamela Brandie**

Christine and I headed through to Giffordtown for the first race in the Tour of Fife series. We were all excited in the car and chatted about the poor Footers that had had to drop out. We spoke about how we'd do our best and try to enjoy it. Then once we got over the Tay Bridge the nerves started to kick in. For those of you who haven't run the series, registration can be a bit nerve wracking. You see all the super speedy serious club runners and start to wonder if you should really be there.

Once we eventually found the wee place it started in, we met up with our fellow Footers and started to calm down. It was a lovely sunny evening and we leaned against a wall watching all the serious runners warming up.

The start and finish were the same. It was a downhill start so we knew we would have an uphill finish. It was a speedy start and the route took us on quiet country roads and paths. At mile one I looked at my watch and thought that's a bit quick. Mile two was quicker. I still felt ok and decided not to look at my watch again. The course was undulating and rather pleasant. I kept thinking I shouldn't be overtaking runners who looked fit and didn't have any knee supports etc on. Near the end a marshall was dressed as a teddy bear and I'm guessing that's how the race got it's name. Whatever reason it was all rather jolly for a Tour of Fife race. Even the uphill finish didn't hurt too much. Once reunited with fellow Footers everyone had enjoyed the race and were pleased with their times. Ian, not known for throwing around compliments, said to me "tak it yer throat's a right now". Translated this meant I had my running mojo back, high praise indeed.

Race one down, roll on number two.

### **Thursday 26th July - Tarvit Trail Race**

#### **report by Christine Bird**

Taking it in turns to drive to the races, tonight was Chris' turn and it felt like we were in an episode of Ashes to Ashes with 80s music the soundtrack to our careering round Cupar as we missed the turn offs. I had been looking forward to this race as I liked the course which takes you round the grounds of Tarvit Mansion House although I would've been happier with 2 loops not 3! The race was started by the man in tweed plus fours and we were all a bit worried when he mentioned a starting gun!

The start is a run down the road until you hit the muddy tracks, the start of which is a nice downhill section and then it starts to climb! Slipping a bit on the mud you make it to the top of the first hill and get a bit of a flat for a breather before the next muddy hill. You think you are just about at the top but there is just that little bit more of a push round the corner which just about does you in. The thought of the next stretch keeps you going as the rest of the loop is a downhill back to the road then flat along the road to a nice single track off road section along the back of the golf course and back to the start. I was aiming to get through lap 2 without being lapped but this didn't happen.

The last lap was a struggle up the hill section but I made it and up the final small hill to finish on the lawn ahead of the people I had identified as my ones to beat from the first race. Pamela didn't feel too great after this race and was lying flat out on the grass but managed to smile and pose for the traditional team photo on the mansion steps by Peter Bracegirdle the unofficial ToF photographer.

## **Friday 27th July - Up Hell Time Trial**

### **Report by Christine Bird**

The shortest race of the series at just 1.4 miles, this race is still arguably the toughest as it is all uphill from the entrance to the car park all the way up to the car park itself on East Lomond. Pamela gave this race a miss as she still wasn't feeling great after the previous night.

Ian drove to this race and the way he went made the hill loom large on the horizon. Chris was trying hard to convince himself it didn't look that bad but I think even he knew he was kidding himself. We registered for the race at Falkland Village Hall and then travelled by car to the car park. As the car park is small runners are encouraged to car share up the hill then walk back down to the start line for the off.

Runners are set off in pairs at 15 second intervals and make their way up the twisty hill, counting off chalk markers half way, 200m to go... We had set a maths question to try and solve on the way up to keep our mind off the pain. The Fife AC devil was competing against the Corstorphine Panda and it was a close call. Once the devil had finished though he resumed his usual role of soaking people with a water gun as they struggled to the finish line. The last runner was the current race leader who was attempting to beat the race record but didn't quite do it. He still managed a very impressive 10 mins 16 seconds though.

As a treat for finishing runners are handed a much needed drink and some sweets. After collapsing on the grass wheezing and gasping for breath I was eventually recovered enough to scoff these before we headed home, all happy that we were now half way through the series.

## **Saturday 28th July - 'Chariots of Fire' Beach Race, St Andrews**

### **Report by Ian Beattie**

For the fourth race in this series we had Pamela back after her crapping (quit literally) out of the previous night's time trial. So we were back up to six footers. This being the shortest distance for us to travel to a race was handy as this one started an hour earlier than the previous races, maybe this was to catch the tide out so we didn't get our feet wet. So after getting parked up and meeting Gillian who had just played rugby that afternoon and was complaining of sore legs before we even started we got the race clobber on and headed for the start line on the beach .

After a few gentle jogs and a bit of stretching and a blether to some runners that were around my overall position in the race to gauge how they were feeling after the previous three races I was ready for the start which was just as well as the starters horn went off with most people not ready for it so we were off unexpectedly and a bit further down the field than I would have liked. The first part of this race is run on hard sand so I was able to work my way through the field to where I thought I should be, as you turn the corner at the end of the beach you are then into the soft ankle deep sand which makes the going a lot more difficult. But as they must have messed up there start time???? We were able to wash this sand off our shoes, socks and also thighs as the tide was not fully out at the turning point and we got wet. The rest of the race is just retracing your steps back to the start which on jelly legs did not seem to get any closer but in the last 50 meters I heard someone shout encouragement to one of the competitors who was close to me in the overall standings so I had to put what I thought was a sprint on for the line to keep my time advantage.

While I was catching my breath and waiting for the others to finish we were treated to a fly past by the red arrows. On all of us completing the course the footers made their way down to the water's edge for what seems to be now our annual paddle in the North Sea to wash the sand of f and soothe aching muscles. Then it was back to the car to get dried off change out of the running gear and find a chipper in St Andrews .

## **Sunday 29th July - Black Hill Race, Falkland report by Gillian Sangster**

Well, we all made it to the end of the week. After four races we were all feeling pretty tired – I think we were all glad that it was the last race but also a bit disappointed that it was the last race! It had been a great week – the organisation of the tour is fantastic, not only are the results ready the next day, but the photos are also ready for you to look and laugh at aswell. There is a great atmosphere and there are little touches that make it special – the devil on the up hell time trial squirting you in the ear, the water section at the beach race and the santa !? at the top of the hill race (more about that later on). And of course having the craic with the lovely footers for a whole week makes it very worthwhile ☺

So the last race on the Sunday afternoon is a hill race, run just outside Falkland. You walk through the village on the way to the start and you get a chance to have a wee nosey at the gorgeous houses and flowers – if you like that kind of thing - otherwise it's a good chance for a blether and a moan about how tired your legs are ! The map in the village hall showed a 4 mile course - a nice surprise – I thought it would be 5 or 6 as it was last year, but due to some hill erosion, the course had to be changed (thank you crappy summer with lots of rain).

Everyone was very cheery at the start - keen to get it over and done with and get back to the village hall for cake afterwards. The first part of the race was downhill and I did keep thinking that I would have to come back up the hill at the end, but the downhill didn't last for long and after a dark and scary bit through a tunnel behind Chris !the uphill bit started – and went on and on and on for a very long time !! well it was a hill race.

At the top you had to splash through a big muddy puddle and then run around Santa before starting back down. I actually was so busy trying not to slip in the mud that I didn't really realise it was Santa until I saw him in the photos afterwards – he was definitely there !!

The downhill was steep and fast and my wobbly legs were not coping too well – the bottom of the hill came up really quickly though and instead of having to run back up the big hill at the start, we took a different route and just had a small hill back up to the finish. And yee ha – it was all over (for another year).

Half way through the week I was asking to be reminded how much hard work it was and how tired I was so that I wouldn't enter again next year, but after the last race on Sunday I was definitely up for doing it again next year – hey ho !

See you at Tour of Fife next year ☺

# Graham Clark Memorial Race, Tuesday 7th August, Knockhill

## – Race Report by Gillian Sangster

I've been to Knockhill a few times to watch the superbikes and the touring cars – I was even on a driving experience course a while ago and managed not to crash. So I knew what the course would be like and after doing some other 'school sports' races the week before I thought that a 4 mile race might suit me!! and I quite liked the idea of running round Knockhill.

I managed to drag Chris and the boys with me – they thought it might be more exciting to be at Knockhill than a normal race and would be good for spectating. There was quite a big turnout, with lots of Tour of Fifers and other familiar faces aswell. The weather was great, which, for anyone who has been to Knockhill, will know is surprising.

We all lined up on the start grid – which I thought was quite cool, and took off down the start straight towards the first corner. I ran over the rumble strip and took the racing line!!! Well, I thought that was funny aswell.

There were some extremely fast runners and they disappeared away pretty quickly – I was slightly worried that I might be lapped. The lap is quite 'undulating' with a big hill at the hairpin – where my (spectating!) kids were rolling around in the black tyre debris – much more exciting than a normal race!

Three x 1.3 mile laps round the track takes you to 3.9 miles and the finish flag (well - ok there was no flag).

After we finished, there was loads of sandwiches and cakes in the club house where we all sat and watched the Olympics (remember them?) till the prize giving. It's definitely a great race to do, really well organised and a bit of fun – or very serious if you can run that fast. I'd thoroughly recommend it.