

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Dear Footer,

Hello and welcome to the August newsletter.

It's been a busy month for racing, reports to follow.

Myself and Janette would highly recommend the Tour of Fife for Footers next year.

Tour of Fife

The Tour of Fife series consists of five rather hilly races on five consecutive days. 150 runners take part and the race is usually closed months in advance.

I was able to do four, had to miss one as it was my daughter's birthday.

Janette was only able to do the last two due to a nasty cut on her leg.

Here's my reports from the first two races. Janette's for the last two races follows.

Luthrie Lumpy 5k

The first race in the series started at the lovely hamlet of Luthrie.

I got an idea that this was going to be a hardcore event, looking at the other runners. Of the entrants less than a third were women.

I recognised some really fast runners from other races. Mainly Fife club runners taking part.

However there was a really friendly atmosphere and camaraderie developed throughout.

It was a lovely warm sunny evening, not really ideal for running.

The race started on an incline heading out of Luthrie, on a quiet rural road.

The first half was rather hilly, then undulating, then a little downhill and finishing on a wee incline.

I got speaking to a Fife AC runner on my way back to the car. He said one down, four to go and that was the easiest one. Oh dear.

Arso Vertitus 4 Mile Trail Race

Race number two turned out to be the most challenging.

It was foggy, cold and raining. My teeth were chattering on the start line.

The start was a short walk up from the Craigmead car park, near Falkland.

You couldn't see the top of the hills for the fog.

You ran up and around on a loop of grass. Then a very sharp downhill section through Maisie Den.

I was flying down at brake neck speed and terrified that my feet were going to slip underneath me on the mud.

Once at the bottom, the muddy trail took you across some bridges and then through a rather long dark tunnel.

The end was back at the start but on a different path. So it was back up, and up and up.

It was very narrow and looking ahead you could see a steady stream of people walking.

They actually called this undulating but I noticed in the Scottish Athletics fixtures it's listed as a hill race.

So I have officially completed a hill race and I enjoyed it.

Janette's Race Reports

Unfortunately, I was unable to take part in the first 3 Tour of Fife Races as planned due to falling off my bike a few days before. However, my stitches came out on Friday, so I decided to give the final 2 races a go. The Saturday race was the aptly named Up Hell Time Trial which took place near Falkland and was a steady climb of 754ft over 2.25kms up to the East Lomond radio mast. Each competitor sets off on an individual timed run, so it doesn't feel competitive in the way normal races do. It was the worse I have ever felt at the end of a race even though it took less than 15 mins! Although the spectators and the friendliness of all the club runners taking part helped ease some of the pain.

The following day the final race was the Forest Frenzy Multi Terrain race at Strathmiglo (4.8miles). This was described as "slightly undulating" on Fife AC's website - hardly, the first 1.5 miles was entirely uphill (worse than the time trial in parts), then 2 laps of a forest path and finally the best part downhill all the way to the finish. We did ask about the "slightly undulating" description at the end and were told that if they said it was really hilly that would put people off.

There was a great atmosphere and I would definitely recommend the tour as it is a bit different, especially if you do all the races as the final results are based on overall time from all the races so there was a lot of friendly competitiveness taking place. I certainly hope to take part again next year.

Donkey Brae 7

Steve Gray's report follows.

OK I have to admit it I entered the race at short notice. I had not long returned from Russia where despite my financial weakness I had attempted to relieve this former superpower of its national drink. I swear there were points in this holiday where I could almost speak fluent Russian. I was certainly spelling like them anyway!

The reason I entered the race was because one of my pals, who was preparing for the police fitness test, asked if I would come along for moral support. The fact that I was still recovering from all my cultural exuberance in Russia did not seem to wash with 15 stone of weegieness!

When I got to the start I was pleased to see the race was very low key. It was kind of a village atmosphere, with burger vans and face painting stalls.

The weather was nice and cool before the race, as we were close enough to the coast to benefit from the sea haar. Yet just before the gun went, my nemesis the sun arrived and burnt my protective layer away. I tried to focus on the positive though, as I thought to myself, well at least the race is too short for me to get sun burnt!

I was dripping in sweat before the gun had gone off but when the race finally began my mind was distracted from this by the crazy nature of the course.

The start was in a large grassy field on the outskirts of Aberdour, we exited this via a random hole in a hedge that surrounded the field. Then we joined a gravel path that took us to the infamous Donkey Brae. From here we joined a more stable concrete road and just as I was getting used to this familiar territory, we left it so we could run down the middle of a football pitch.

The remainder of the course is much like this in the sense it has a variety of different surfaces and also gradients. What makes it most interesting is that when you join a new path you know you are probably not going to be on it for long, and it's so difficult to guess where you are going to turn next as they will have you running over anything and everything in this race.

The scenery is also quite nice and because it turned out to be a clear day I could see well out to sea and all around this part of Fife from higher points on the course.

The later part of this course brings its greatest challenge. When on your return to the start you have to run back up the Donkey Brae.

In truth its bark is worse than its bite as it's not much bigger than Mount Zion. But late in the day in a short fast-paced race is when you least want to see a hill.

I didn't feel too bad when I got to the top of it but the guy at the side of the path vomiting would beg to differ. Once I was up this I was soon back through the random hedge hole and out into the sunny field again, where I was greeted with lots of enthusiastic spectators cheering every runner as they crossed the line.

Once I crossed the line and milked my adulation from the crowd I found a nice spot on the grass and patiently waited for the potential future of British policing to end his race.

Incidentally he walked up the Donkey Brae but at least he never threw up at the top. He was even able to polish off some beers now that we had possession of the car keys. Welcome to summer racing Footers style!

Relay for Life

I am sure everyone is getting their sponsorship ready for September 20th. Alan would like to let everyone know there will be a nine-man tent for Footers.

So if you would like to bring along some food and make a party of it.....

Also, he would like club members to bring along family and friends to show their support on the day.

Also, if you don't already know, the donation web page is <http://www.donatetomyrelay.org/arbroughfooters>

Footers Web site

After the old web site was lost in cyber space we now have a new one. It's much fresher but Alan is open to any ideas to improve it further. I thought a bulletin page like some other clubs have would be good. You can post a message for example to see if anyone wants to run on a certain day.

The new website address is <http://arbroughfooters.synthasite.com/>

Hill Run

Alec is going to organise a hill run and I will keep you posted.

Thanks to Brian, our most distant member, taking part in the beach run at Lunan Bay. Ok, I know you didn't come up from Maidenhead especially for it. I hope Steve's training tips have come in handy.

Well that's it folks.

Thanks to Alan, Steve and Janette for their contributions.

Yours in running

Pamela