

RUNAROUND

THE MAGAZINE OF HORWICH RMI HARRIERS & AC



Welcome to the **December 2017** edition of Runaround which although 'electronic', as a format for the exchange of information, is being rapidly overtaken by the 'new social media' which includes the new club facebook page which is open to the public. Try it out and 'like' it as this raises the profile of the club's activities. 'To move with the Times' means many things, especially in the athletics and running world where time is of the essence, second only to enjoyment perhaps. So without more ado, let's get on with a pot pourri of Harriers' related activities.

The New Kit has arrived –

Gemma Stokes has worked with Macron (of BWFC stadium fame) on this

Gemma tells us that *"since the coaches are looking super smart in the new kit, we would now like to see the rest of club as smart especially at competitions since we are rapidly becoming a force to be reckoned with"*. Gemma is currently coordinating orders. We have gone with a 1/4 zip up jerseys, hoodies and a rain jacket. Gemma has put information on facebook and in the club house. If you are interested please contact Gemma via email gemleah@aol.com. Meanwhile two splendidly modelled examples of the kit.



Horwich RMInternational

There are reports of Harriers in all sorts of places, which really only follows the traditional roots of the club in a transport industry (says the editor stretching a point!). First, Steve Thomasson writes of his recent Finnish (or is it Swedish?) trip; only the latest of many intrepid running expeditions.

Running in Åland – the islands of peace – 28 October, 2017

The Åland (pronounced "Awe-land") islands are one of Europe's geopolitical oddities, forming a group of around 6,500 islands (of which around 80 are inhabited by a total of just under 30,000 people) off the south-western Finnish coast at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia. Whilst they are now part of Finland and have been since the resolution of the Åland crisis by the then newly-formed League of Nations in 1921, they are an autonomous part of Finland where the inhabitants speak Swedish as their mother tongue and also have their own flag, police force, national anthem, and government.



Flag of the Åland Islands

Åland, a brief history

The Åland islands were owned by Sweden for centuries until the Finnish War ended in 1809, resulting in defeat to Russia and the Treaty of Fredrikshamn. As a result, Finland was no longer a Swedish possession and Åland became part of the semi-autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland under Russian rule. Their location between Sweden and Finland in the Gulf of Bothnia was quoted by Napoleon as being "the gate to Stockholm", which made them a valuable shipping destination and a highly-coveted area. The Russians built fortifications at Bomarsund, which were later flattened by a combined French and British attack in 1854 during the Baltic theatre of the Crimean War. The islands have been demilitarised since the Treaty of Paris in 1856, reinforced by a couple of subsequent conventions.

In 1917 the former Russian Empire was overthrown by the Soviet revolution, resulting in the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. Seizing the initiative the Finns claimed independence, which was ratified by the Bolshevik government under Lenin. This meant that Åland was part of Finland, despite a vote amongst the populace revealing that 95% wanted [\(cont.p3\)](#)

(cont. from p.2) to be part of Sweden once again, a crisis that was only solved four years later by the League of Nations as said before. Since then, Åland has been an autonomous part of Finland that remains Swedish-speaking. Finnish is rarely understood by the inhabitants, so English is very much a lingua franca there. This is very useful for British tourists who have wandered over there to run and explore.

Mariehamn (Maarianhamina in Finnish, population approx. 11,400), the capital, was founded in 1861 and named after Russian empress Maria Alexandrovna. Even now, the layout of the original town can be readily seen, especially around Södragatan and Strandgatan and the town is sometimes known as the "city of a thousand lime trees" for its tree-lined streets. It's also a major shipping port with two harbours that are ice-free practically all year. As Åland remained neutral in World War Two, very little shipping was hit as neither side knew what was being shipped, and to whom. Its nautical history is still very well preserved in the form of the museum ship Pommern, which was built in Glasgow in the 1900s and famously won the grain races twice in the 1930s, before being restored and presented to the town of Mariehamn by its owner, Ålandic shipping magnate Gustaf Erikson.

Getting there from the UK

The easiest method is by plane, generally via Helsinki but also possible from Stockholm. A more atmospheric route when in Scandinavia is to take the ferry, preferably from the Finnish port of Turku, as the islands are something of a continuation from the Finnish coast even if the main island is nearer Sweden. If you choose to fly via Helsinki, the plane may stop briefly at Turku to pick up more passengers and allow others to disembark there.

The event

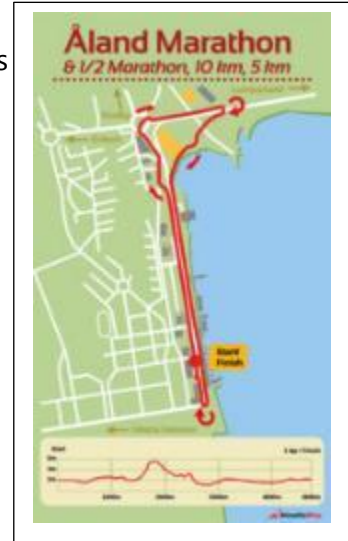


Strandgatan, a main street in Mariehamn

There are actually four events going on simultaneously, namely a marathon, a half-marathon, a 10K, and a 5K. All of them take place on the same lapped course with variants thereof. The half-marathon consisted of a short opening lap of 2.3km, turning at the local swimming baths and down the other side of Österleden, the main eastern coast road, then four full laps of 4.7km within Mariehamn itself. (Cont.p.4)

(cont. from p.3) This was essentially a mixed but rather flat course along footpaths next to main roads. The western side was mainly tarmac whilst the eastern side was mainly excellent hard-packed trail with plenty of the local red granite. Marathon runners did this lap nine times, whilst the start and finish was outside the main hotel in Mariehamn, the Hotell Arkipelag.

After having to pull out of the Oslo half-marathon with 9km to go due to an old hip injury flaring up I wasn't too sure what I would do, so the aim was to get as close to 1hr 45 as possible and take it from there. The race started in cool conditions of about 5 degrees and fine drizzle, with a slight south-westerly breeze, so it was perfect for me. As it happened, the aim was to take it very slowly on the opening lap and try to get around in about 12 minutes then start accelerating. That didn't really happen as I got through in a shade over 11 and was already slightly ahead of time.



Course and profile

One advantage of a lapped course from a running perspective is that you get a chance to see the lie of the land, so it's easier to see where you have to concentrate and where you can take it a little easier. From an organisational viewpoint it was easy as the drinks station was in the same place next to the start/finish. I generally took the view of coasting the western side, and focusing on my technique on the more gravelly eastern side, shortening my stride a little and making an effort to "fall" into my next stride with the aim of preserving energy despite underfoot conditions.



Österleden, Mariehamn's eastern coastal road. The footpaths around it were the main part of the course.

The course had marshals out where traffic had to be guided, otherwise arrows showed the way so there was no difficulty in terms of knowing where you were going.

(cont. from p.4) I'd settled into a good rhythm after the first four kilometres and was consistently going between 4:57 to 5:02 per kilometre. At the end of the first full lap, so around 7km in, I took my first gel, and got into the routine of taking gels about level with the finish line down the other side of the road, so around 600m away, then taking isotonic drink at the station just after it. Had a slight wobble at 12 with a 5:03 but got back to sub 5s again. I had another at 17 and 18 where I went 5:03 and 5:02 consecutively, but recovered to finish fairly well.

In fact, at the northern end of the lap during the fourth full and final lap, I had half-a-mind to push with about 2.5km to go. My personal best is 1:43:47 from Freckleton in 2012 and if I'd been able to go at around 4:35min/km pace from there on then it would have been broken. I started pushing, turned below the bridge, hit that gravel/trail terrain in a small wood, then decided I didn't fancy it. In the end I finished with a chip time of 1:44:24. All four main laps were within 20 seconds, with the last one being just about my fastest. In fact, the last full kilometre, a 4:45, was my fastest of the whole race. Didn't win any prizes, but 23rd out of over 100 finishers was nice. Hot coffee was available to all finishers, as was the sauna at the Hotell Arkipelag. I had other plans though, namely to watch the home team (and surprise 2016 champions of Finland, IFK Mariehamn) in their quest to qualify for the EURO Cup against Ilves. They lost 1-0 and didn't qualify. Incidentally, it cost 18 euro for a seat, and coffee and chocolate for 3EUR is really rather cheap for top-flight football. England, take note.



**Medal for all finishers
of the Åland event**

As expected for a relatively cheap event (25 euro when booked a couple of months in advance) there was no T-shirt, but there was a nice little medal.

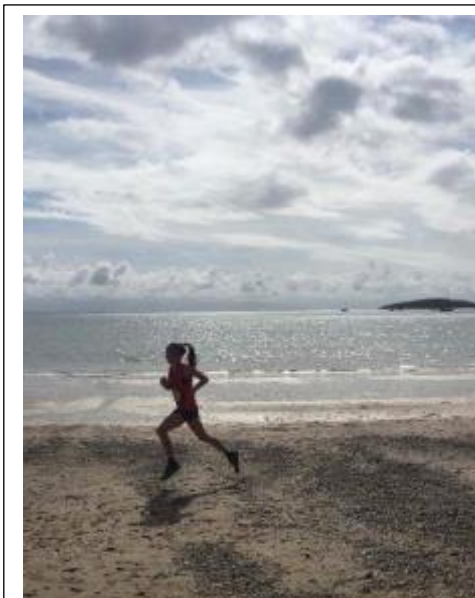
Summa summarum [ed:- possibly Finnish, Swedish or Latin for 'In summary'], this was a great little event in a remote location that's still got all the comforts of home, is exceptionally safe, and it's not difficult to come across people who speak very good English. I didn't think I'd like the lapped course, but if anything it was great here as no matter your standard, there were always people around even if they were doing a different distance.

The only downside is, as you'd expect from the wealthiest part of Finland and amongst the most prosperous in Europe, food can be rather expensive. Drinkers might need to look at a second mortgage. That said, the Italian place near the harbour, Nonna Rina, did a splendid pasta puttanesca for 15 euro. If you want more fancy cuisine, there's always Kvarter5 in the Hotell Pommern. Another thing to bear in mind is that high season in Åland is mid-June to mid-September, so this event is in low season. Very good for getting some peace and quiet, and with a bit more energy, hiring a bike is usually possible to explore the countryside. But I'd do this again in a heartbeat. I'd allow myself more time though.

MILLY'S DIARY – We've invited our young athletes to write about their running experiences and here Milly Lever tells us more

The Abersoch Beach Chief is a series of three races along Abersoch beach. The three races vary in length. The first race, which took place on the 3rd of June was a distance of 3k. The second race took place on the 17th of June and was a 1k race. The final race took place on the 16th of September and was a 2k race. To count towards the Beach Chief title, you had to take part in all of the races.

During the first race the marshal sent us the wrong way meaning we did 800m extra. This made the race a lot harder for everyone. After the 3k race there was a 10k race for adults which started and ended on the beach. Many people took part in this race. The presentation for both races took place on the beach and many prizes were given out.



The 2nd race went well and we were not sent the wrong way. In this race Emma Bradley and Katie Lever also took part, Emma came first within her age category and I came first girl putting me at the top in the beach chief. Due to Emma missing the first race it meant she could not count towards the series. During the kids race an adult triathlon was on going this consisted of a sprint triathlon and an Olympic triathlon. Within the Olympic triathlon you could choose to work as a team where one different person did one part of the triathlon or you could do all three parts by yourself. My dad did the Olympic triathlon as part of a team, he did the running part which was 10k. His team came back as the first team. After the race Emma and I went in the sea for a bit before the presentation took place, it felt like we were in an ice bath because it was so cold. The presentation took place on the beach.



Emma, Milly and Katie celebrate

The first two races were the busiest due to them being during the holidays. So many of the people who took part were there for fun whilst on holiday.

The final race also went well and Emma Bradley and Katie Lever took part as well. In this race Emma came 1st in her age category and I came first girl. After the kids race there was an adult's half marathon. This time the presentation took place in the centre of Abersoch, it being colder and the presentation was much longer with many

more prizes. First the 2k race prizes were given out and then the prizes for the kid's beach chief were given out. Next to be presented were the adults half marathon prizes and then the adults triple crown prizes. The adults triple crown is like the Beach Chief and you have to compete in all three of the adult's races. I had won the beach chief, for the 2nd year running and I was really pleased.

This series of races was a good experience and was very fun to take part in. It was different to races I normally compete in because you ran on the sand making it a lot harder. Running on the sand made your feet slip about as you were running. We also had to jump over the groins or run around them, but running around them made the race longer. If you wanted to run around them you had to just hope the tide wasn't too far in so that it wasn't impossible. Luckily on nearly all of the races we were able to run around the groins. It



was good seeing what way people decided to go, whether to go the easier but longer way or the harder but shorter. On the day of the races I was hoping that the tide had been in as wet sand is easier to run on and can feel a bit like running on a path.

In my opinion this series of races were probably one of the best I have ever done due to running along the beach and just seeing the different scenery and the difference it makes by running on sand than road. It was also fun because I got to run with my friends and afterwards we got to mess around on the beach.

Another reason I really enjoyed the races was because I got to stay over in Wales for the weekend. Also, I saw many different runners who I had never ran against before so got to see how different people run on different terrain.

SOCIAL MEDIA FACEBOOK SOCIAL MEDIA INSTAGRAM SOCIAL MEDIA

Katie Lever is leading the club's social media innovations. Many will be familiar with the facebook pages (including the public page at <https://www.facebook.com/horwichharriers/>) but less familiar with Instagram perhaps. Katie says

"It is a social media platform that I have made an account on that people can follow and see pictures of seniors and juniors from Horwich on it! I share lots of pictures from different races on there of everything to do with Horwich! The name of the account is just @horwichharriers and it is public so anyone can follow it!"

Rowen and Simon – podium couple in a coup at the Lakes Grand Prix 2017

Rowen and Simon Pymm took on the new fell championship in the Lake District this year and very rewarding it was for both too as Simon tells us here.

The Lakes Grand Prix was a new championship for 2017. It comprised of some of the most iconic races in the Lake District and would prove to be a good challenge. Coach Steve Pearson and myself decided that it should be my focus for the year as the races would really suit my strengths and be competing against some top quality fell runners. The races were: Anniversary Waltz, Coniston, Fairfield, Kentmere, Three Shires & Langdale.



The championships started promisingly with a 9th place at Anniversary Waltz (which Simon and Rowen recce'd in snow seen here) in amongst a high quality field. I was in or around the top 10 at the following two races at Coniston and Fairfield, before illness saw me finish a disappointing 21st at Kentmere and in doing so losing my lead in the Grand Prix.

It was clear that Josh Jardine (Helm Hill) was the clear favourite to win the title after his win at Kentmere, but the other podium places were certainly up for grabs. Three Shires was a race I'd never done before but I knew half of the route from other races that share the same ground, however a navigational error in between Pike O' Blisco and Blea Tarn saw me lose a lot of places that I couldn't pull back and ended up 18th at the finish.

There were no updated points table between Three Shires and Langdale so I had no idea of where I was in the table and what I needed to do. I knew that providing Josh had no mishaps he would win the overall Grand Prix. I knew that myself, Dave Lund (Dark Peak) and several others were all in the mix for the podium. The weather for Langdale was poor – the strong wind and heavy rain made for tough going but I felt great, though that didn't last long as I had a heavy fall before Esk Hause and got wet and very cold. I struggled to get my gloves on and had to stop for 5 minutes after Bowfell to put my jacket on, just opening my bumbag became difficult with freezing hands. I must admit that it really was a struggle to get to the finish but I ground it out to come home 41st, way down on what I expected but happy to have stuck it out after an epic couple of hours.



After a disappointing end to the Grand Prix I didn't expect to still be in contention for the podium spots, but I received a call from Jon Broxap informing me that I'd managed to hang on to second, to which I expressed great surprise! Even better than that was my wife Rowen (running for Saddleworth) had won the women's championships after a really consistent season, one particular highlight coming 5th woman at Coniston! (She's now signed for Horwich and I'm sure will go from strength to strength!)

Finally, I would like to thank Steve Pearson for all his help and advice this year, without his guidance I'm sure I wouldn't have had the success I've had. Also to my club-mates for their support throughout the season.

As of yet there's been no mention of next years Grand Prix – keep your eyes peeled on the Pete Bland website for details, I'd definitely recommend it!



AGM (Yeah or Yawn)

Stewart Westhead, Club President, Horwich RMI Harriers, tells us why, if you weren't at the AGM, you should have been!

Having sat in the chair for 14 years I know as well as most how difficult it is to attract members to attend the AGM. If you don't believe me, ask Pete Bland or Peter Ramsdale and they I'm sure will testify to this. In some ways it's a shame because two things of great importance are enacted through this medium, one it gives the membership the chance to **"get involved"** to stamp their mark on the running of the club by serving on the committee. Secondly changes to the clubs constitution can only be altered at the AGM, so to make a real impact attendance no matter how unappealing is a must. However to tempt you along is not the aim of this submission, I just would like to convey to those who did not attend the 93rd AGM a special moment at this years' gathering.



Peter, Tony and Brenda achieve Life Membership

As usual the Agenda had all the old faithfuls such as Apologies and Chairman's report but down at number 8 we had a new kid on the block: **8) 40 years with the Harriers - Tony Nolan.**

I was instantly drawn to this because I remember Tony joining the Harriers back in 1977 and only a small handful of current members predate Tony's arrival; I joined in 1970. The meeting went to schedule and Tony was given the floor, these days Tony's mobility is compromised but with the aid of his walking frame he took up position alongside the principals and what followed was to those present both moving and inspirational.

Tony started by explaining that due to his disability his early years were blighted by a lack of confidence so much so that he rarely felt comfortable without his mother by his side, and that led to much bullying during his school years, he needed an outlet and something to break that cycle and he chose to join the Harriers.

Now at this point I am interested to know the effect this decision had on his life. Why? Because throughout my time with the club we were known for upholding certain values, for instance despite having class athletes we were known for **welcoming athletes of all standards**, we were actually known as the "*Happy Harriers*" during the seventies we had sweatshirts made the banner printed was not a call for elitism, no it was simply "*Run for Fun*". So would Tony's Life experience blow this as a myth or confirm it as the ethos of the RMI.

Tony went on to explain that once he became one of the Harriers his life did indeed change for the better. The bullying stopped, he grew healthier and fitter and most importantly made so many friends and lived through so many great experiences. Two that readily spring to mind are his races at the English National cross country championships, one at the flat course at Newark and one at Milton Keynes. The latter always brings a smile to his face because the race was contested over 9 miles of the deepest mud I have ever seen. We used to take a coachload to the national in those days, but the resounding memory was of half of the team trying to wash the mud from our legs in a puddle at the side of the road, not really a surprise that Tony remembers that race.

He then told us that having already completed 19 Pike races he was determined to join the 20 race club; unfortunately by this time his mobility was in real decline. The only way that he could succeed was to start the race several hours prior to the 3 pm start time so that he could complete the race without troubling the marshals and time keepers, and that's exactly what he did. It took a super human effort but Tony Nolan completed his 20th race, and received the plaque momentum given to those in the 20 race club. Tony proudly hung this in a prominent position at home so that it's the first thing he sees when he arrives home.

So all my fears are gone Horwich RMI are a special club. I know this because I just heard someone with 40 years life experience tell me how it improved his life. And Tony Nolan is a special person. I know this because I had the pleasure to share most of his memories and saw for myself how someone overcomes true adversity. And just when you think that's the full story he tells you how for 30 years he has helped children with disabilities by helping at Chorley Wildcats. What a guy.

To round off this inspired moment the chairman then presented Tony with a second plaque to hang on his wall "**Tony Nolan Life Member of Horwich RMI Harriers**".

So the next time you see the AGM advertised stifle that yawn, and say Yeah I will attend, I might just learn something.

Congratulations also to Brenda Hesketh and Peter Ramsdale on becoming Life Members.



The Cross Country Experience and Championship Races

Peter Ramsdale, club chairman extols the virtues of cross country. We all love, to different degrees, the move from the road and track competition to the grassy and sometimes muddy conditions of the cross country courses. It introduces/develops another running attribute – that of endurance. There is nothing like the mental challenge of the warm up, slipping and sliding around as we attempt some strides, those clean fingers are now black and sometimes cold after tying and retying our laces, we contemplate taking layers two and three off as we won't need them once we start. It's all conditioning and preparation for what lies ahead.

Runners have either walked the course or even had a run around it, so we know where it goes and it's always important to know where the last 400m are, for our last

effort if we can manage one. Our lapped course is always a challenge as we come past the start-finish area and start the next lap. We have it all to do again, that muddy climb, those two feet in the stream, the boggy bit on the far corner. We mentally picture them whilst not losing concentration on the bit of the course where we are at the moment. We try and maintain a good stride whilst not losing the speed of our steps. It gets harder, we try harder, we think of the training we've done and how this should be easier than it is – but it never is.

This preparation and mental strength we are developing, plus the physical growth in terms of endurance, is put to test on the local courses, week in week out. What about having a go at one or two of the much bigger, higher level of competition races by entering the Championship races – they are really enjoyable and you get a real buzz being in an enormous race with, usually, a substantial crowd – that's an amazing feeling.

Regional Championship cross country races are held for the residents of Greater Manchester (that's Horwich and Bolton) and Lancashire on the first weekend in the new year, that's Saturday 6th January 2018. The criteria to enter, is your place of residence (or your birth place). This must be selected on registration. The Greater Manchester race will be at Heaton Park with the Lancashire race at Witton Park Blackburn. Both competitions are 'enter on-line' on the [SportSoft](#) web site. Do it! (Don't rely on your cross country captain).

At the end of January we have the Northern Cross Country Championship which is to be held this year in Leeds. It's an amazing day. Come and experience it, the whole day. Come and watch others run, run yourself and be a part of the Horwich team. The Nationals this year are in London where everything steps up another gear. More runners, higher quality competitors and athletes and somewhere where the spectators actually feel the ground shake as races start. (The London trip is a bit of an epic to start with but the Nationals rotate around venues in the North, South and Midlands, so maybe next year – 2019).

Young Athlete Development and Opportunities

Gemma Stokes coaches some of the youngest of our members and is often found at the Arena track enthusing them. Here are two of the events that Gemma supports so that our juniors can have an early taste of competition.



Gemma reports that the 2nd Sportshall athletics meeting of the league took place on the 8th October. We had most of the under 11s present compared to the first match which was held very early. The team worked incredibly hard against fierce competition from clubs across Greater Manchester. So we are really proud of the Girls who took the 3rd place spot and the boys' team were 4th missing out on 3rd by just 1 small point!! The final league match on the 3rd December with a full team so we will be batting for the top spots. Watch out for an update on facebook.



Bolton School Cross Country Champs has been held at Moss Bank Park on 3 consecutive Thursdays in October; lots of Harriers were in action. Gemma supported Horwich Parish Primary School who had plenty of amazing performances and their boys' team managed 1st place in the last 2 events. We hope that a few of the Harriers will be selected to run in the Greater Manchester Cross Country in January / February.



OMM 2017 – Horwich Head Coach, Steve Pearson and his OMM team partner, Alec Cottrill of Burnden Road Runners report on running these classic fell marathons

In what seems now like a lifetime ago I was asked if I wanted to do the 2017 50th OMM. After considering this for about 5 seconds Team Short Score 865 was formed. Mountain Marathons have always been one of my favourite and successful events. Having had success in various age categories over the years.

With a start time of 9.30am we had time for a hearty breakfast and a leisurely wander around the event centre, in particular the shop. I also spent some time watching old re-runs on the monitors of previous events. With runners in shorts and club vests and HH tops. I even recognised a couple of the runners. It was at this point that I realised how technical MM clothing and equipment had become and how much I needed an investment in lighter more efficient clothing.

9.30 came and off we went. Checkpoint 1 was nailed so onwards and upwards (what would you expect in the Lakes). Our attack point for cp2 was reached without issue. However it must be said that on the Col at Ore Gap the visibility was 25m with winds and driving rain at 65mph. We set our bearing and paced off into the mist. No luck so back to Ore Gap to start again. This had a similar result, but we had now walked approx an extra 2k without success. So attempt 3 except we had the company of 3 A class teams in the same predicament.

At this point we had walked an extra 3k (approximately) and lost half an hour for no gain. So we cut our losses and headed down to Cockley Beck and hopefully gain some body heat. MM's and Orienteering is sometimes referred to as cunning running. This inability to hit the cp had dented our confidence and lost us half an hour. This meant we had to readjust our route and establish the best course of action so as not to lose all our hard won points. Which were at the time 20. This competition was now a serious mind game of maximising points, route choice and not losing points. So we aimed for the obvious cp's and tried not to get embroiled in searching needlessly. Our run back to the overnight camp was going well until we over shot our path. This lost us about 5 minutes. From which we had a very frantic 3k charge to the camp. At the final dibber of the day we were 93 secs outside our 5hr time so I suppose a loss of 4 points was ok in the circumstances.

The less said about the overnight camp the better. It must be mentioned though that the farmer must have been laughing his socks off when the organisers rented the field and told him it was to be a campsite in October. Teams arriving in the dark after 6.30 must have thought that with global warming Morecambe Bay had now extended to Cockley Beck.

Oh what joy, when on Sunday we saw the blue sky, fell tops and the sun. The terrain still hadn't changed much. The difference was we could now see which patches of land were dry!!! and there wasn't much.

Along with the upturn in weather came an upturn in our performance. We soon dibbed at the crag bottom and the knoll. This left a choice, so we aimed for the prow. This allowed us a choice for another cp if time allowed. The descent down to the prow was not the best. With the extremely wet conditions, all the fellside was a slippery, sliding mass of grass and mud. With intermittent rocks protruding. The one redeeming feature was now that we were in sunshine and it was warm. The day was now turning out to be a lovely autumnal day in the Lakes, blending into a competition. At our prow we made a quick assessment into the possibility of further dibbing. After our slower than anticipated descent both cp's were outside our 4hr limit. So after a quick consultation we decided to head back to the Event Centre and soak up the late morning sunshine.

On reflection we could have pushed our luck and gone for the 10 pointer on the flanks of Blisco. However, after too many frantic charges for the finishing funnel, I must admit it was nice to finish without losing points and stress free. At the finish we were greeted with the ringing of a mini Swiss cow bell, the finish dibber and bangers & mash. The 2017 OMM was finished. In the event centre tent we heard many stories that were circulating about "epics" and withdrawals; we heard that about 50% of teams had retired or did not make the over-night camp. This just confirmed that at times our cautious decision making was the key to our successful strategy. We were never going to win the event but our tick list was to finish, no negative points and enjoy the weekend. After much debate and discussion on the drive home we decided we had achieved our goals. Not bad for team 865 with a combined age of 120+. Bring on next year.

Since the event I have read many reports both supporting and criticising the course planning. Over the years I have entered at least 20 mountain marathons within the UK. In the majority of them I have entered the equivalent of Elite or "A". It is only with the passing of time now, that I enter shorter courses. Not lesser but shorter. On at least 3 occasions I have experienced worse conditions. These were in the Howgills, Lakes and Galloway. We can't change the weather or terrain, but we can be more realistic with our course choice. Like all types of events we must learn to recognise or strengths and weaknesses and choose accordingly.

More information about the OMM can be found here:



More Horwich RMInternational

Reporting from the resort of Yaiza in Lanzarote, Andrew Storey (Club membership secretary) and Keith Lewthwaite, both stalwart members of the club's Runners' group, make a good case for mixing exercise with relaxation. Keith's running philosophy is nicely summed up in the poem he has penned, *Laugh at the Wind*, below.



LAUGH AT THE WIND

Slowly arise from my chilly slumbers
Once more to be greeted by winter's cold light
Warm-up routine like stretching by numbers
Then out in the freezing air, muscles tight

Quickly down the lane with heart beating fast
Up the steep hill that never seems to end
Heart muscles burning, how long will this last?
Finally reaching the top round the bend

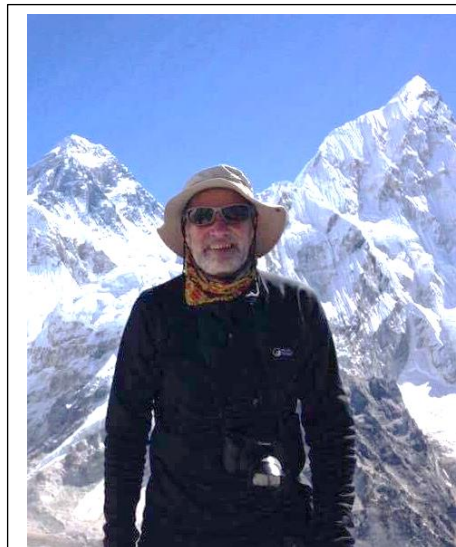
Now out on the moors feeling the raw winds
Hungry lungs gulp at the cold winter air
Taken by surprise when a dead sheep grins
Eyes pecked out by crows with white bones laid bare

Across the dark moor o'er tussock and clod
Snow falls softly down in winter's cold grip
Nearly go arse over tit on a sod
Beware the ice and take care not to slip

When winter holds you in its cold embrace
Laugh at the wind and kick snow in its face



David Crawford, also an enthusiastic member of the Runners' group has taken altitude training to the top – Everest Basecamp (below)



Area Fell Grand Prix 2017 – *Run the Moors*

This is a most excellent competition that still doesn't seem to get the support it deserves from runners. But in 2016 Horwich came 2nd in the overall competition but this year we slipped to 5th. More information can be found at <http://www.felljunior.org.uk/GP/> (it is mainly seniors so it isn't clear why the weblink implies its juniors). Here's the 2017 presentation evening where several Horwich members received prizes, including Dan Gilbert (2nd overall), Gary Chadderton (1st V55) and Ed Swift (3rd V70).



Gary Chadderton, Lawrence Pinnell, Ed Swift, Dan Gilbert, Andy Ford and Doug Fleming



Gemma Stokes, club coach and committee member here explains the club's ambition to be the best

The Harriers' club committee continues to make good progress on achieving Sport England Clubmark; this is a cross sport accreditation scheme for community sports clubs. For more information contact Gemma: Gemleah@aol.com

The clubmark stands for:

- Higher standards of welfare, equity, coaching and management in community sports
- Ensuring the nation's sports club infrastructure is safer, stronger and more successful

Thus, Clubmark shows that a Club has the right environment to ensure the welfare of members and encourages everyone to enjoy sport throughout their lives. An accredited Club is recognised as a safe, rewarding and fulfilling place for participants of all ages as well as helping parents and carers know they're choosing the right Club for their young people.

Membership is due for renewal on 1st January and it is very important this is done promptly in order to satisfy England Athletics rules. If you have any queries about membership please contact Andrew Storey, Membership Secretary at membership@horwichrmiharriers.co.uk

PHOTOS: For Runaround and the Bolton News reports I will include photos posted on the club's facebook pages as well as others submitted to me directly. Please always let me know if you prefer photos not to be used in this way.

I am very grateful to everyone who takes photos that can be used for this purpose. The reports gain a lot of impact with the great photos. For photos in this edition of Runaround many thanks to Andrew Storey, Glynne Lever, Gemma Stokes, Michael Wilkinson, Gary Chadderton, David Crawford, Steve Thomasson.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge Dave and Eileen Woodhead for allowing use of their excellent photos of many of the races that the Harriers compete in.

www.woodentops.org.uk

This edition of Runaround has been edited by David Barnes. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the club. The **deadline** for the next edition of Runaround is 23rd March 2018. Please send articles/items for inclusion to davidbarnes.david@gmail.com. Phone 07961 535163
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