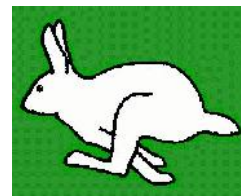


# THE HARRIERS HERALD

No. 236, October 2012

Editor: Sue Francis



## Contents, features, reports, results

- Thursday night schedules for October and November
- Correspondence received
- Christmas meal – reminder and update
- Race results: *Broadtown 5* – a win for Sus; *Jungfrau Marathon* – Lucy and Martin enjoy ‘the prettiest marathon in the world’; *Isle of Wight Fell Race Champs* – Three Harriers enjoy a weekend of racing; *Berlin Marathon* – PBs for Mags and Sus
- Running Life series – Mags Topham remembers her first run with the Harriers, and the euphoria of finishing the Copenhagen marathon
- Webmaster’s article – Mo reports on his exploits at the *Boneshaker Duathlon*
- Thanks to Mags, Martin, Lucy, Sus and Mo for this month’s contributions
- Copy date for next Harriers Herald – 31<sup>st</sup> October

## Thursday night schedule for October

Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Handicap Race  
Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> Sue to lead  
Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Martin to lead  
Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> Pete O to lead

## Thursday night schedule for November

Thurs 1<sup>st</sup> Richard D to lead  
Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> Handicap Race  
Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Tapani to lead  
Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Neil to lead  
Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Mo to lead

Correspondence received		
Sender	Subject matter	Action
England Athletics	Cross-country association handbook	File
London Marathon	Change in procedure for applying for Club Entry (now done online)	Sue to apply for Club Entry on / after 15 <sup>th</sup> October

## Harriers Christmas Meal 2012

**Sue**

A reminder that the Christmas meal will take place on the evening of Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at ‘The Bull’ at Streatley. So far, I have 18 confirmed attendees who have paid their deposits and given me their menu choices. I will pay these deposits to ‘The Bull’ this weekend, so secure our booking. For anyone who would like to come, but has not yet let me know, there is still time and room, but don’t leave it too late!

## *Race Reports & Results*

### *Broad Town 5, 8<sup>th</sup> September*

**Sus**

I had a problem with my back leading up to the race, so hadn't done much running lately and at the Thursday club run before the race it did not feel too good. So this race was a bit of a test to see how it was progressing. The warm-up seemed to be ok and, as soon as the gun went off, it seemed to have healed itself and I felt so good and stormed ahead on this flat/hilly route. None of the other ladies wanted to take the lead so I thought "ok I will take it" and I kept my position from the start to the finish, it shows what a bit of rest can do!

The race is well organized by Wooton Bassett Hounds RC, £8 to enter and you get a nice goody bag so value for money and, if you can't resist it, the finish also greets you with homemade cakes so definitely one to do again next year!

1<sup>st</sup> Man, Simon Nott, Calne RC 28:28

1<sup>st</sup> Lady, Sus 32:02

294 finished

### *In the shadow of the white spider and chalk cliffs - Jungfrau Marathon, 8<sup>th</sup> September*

**Martin**

In 2011 Lucy was the happy recipient of an email from Alan Joslin announcing that we were the first male and female TRA members to cross the line in the 20 mile Marlborough Challenge. Not only did we get a fine plate and TRA medal, we were also encouraged to take part in an overseas trail race and have our accounts published in the TRA magazine. How could we refuse?

Our events of choice were the Jungfrau Marathon (<http://www.jungfrau-marathon.ch/en/marathon-119.html>) and the Isle of Wight fell running weekend (<http://www.rydeharriers.co.uk/>) but more about that later.

For those who don't know, the Jungfrau marathon is a well established event centred on the Swiss town of Interlaken and likes to boast that it is the prettiest marathon in the world. This year happened to be the 20<sup>th</sup> running and was being commemorated with a race on both the Saturday (50+ men and ladies) and the Sunday (<50 men). To top it all, the race was hosting the world long distance mountain running championships which attracted racing snakes from all over the globe. In a normal year the race has a strong international following with folks from 50+ nations competing last year. The appeal is justified: if you want to have a running weekend abroad with friends and family, the Jungfrau should receive some careful thought.

The race format is very simple. Do a lap of Interlaken and then traipse off into the hinterland eventually making your way to the Lauterbrunnen valley. In all a pretty flat, be it very attractive 26Km section. You then take the scenic route to Kleine Scheidegg, via Wengen. This last 16Km climbs approx. 1450m but the views are truly stunning if you take the time to look. One of the great things about having a race on a Saturday and Sunday was that Lucy and I could grockle around on the Sunday, cheering on the young lads and soaking up the atmosphere knowing we had done our bit the previous day. The Swiss love their mountain races and the support they offer is tremendous from start to finish.

So how did the weekend go? To be honest it went like clockwork from start to finish. We flew from Heathrow to Basle on the Thursday morning and caught a train to Interlaken – what could be simpler. Once on the train we were treated to chocolate box countryside views as soon as we left Basle. The Stella Hotel, where we were staying, was a short walk from Interlaken Ost train station and in a very nice part of town, well away from the main thoroughfares. What is more, it was only 400m from the start line.

Having explored the town on the previous day, and picked up our number and T-shirt at first light, we decided to spend the rest of Friday reccing the route, and the best way to do this was on board the Jungfrau bahn which

follows the race from start to finish. We won't be complaining about the cost of train travel in the UK for a while. Our Swiss cousins know the value of a comfy seat with a fine view.



On the plus side the train actually stops at Kleine Scheidegg and part of the race fee includes the train fare back down the mountain to Interlaken, but it's standing room only on race day. Throughout our stay we were blessed with gin clear skies and, as you can imagine, the views from the 2000+ meters were spectacular, in all directions. The downside being the sun was quite fierce, touching 33°C on race day, and finding some shady spot to compose ourselves after the finish was a priority.

Having got off the train we wandered back up the race route to the infamous Jungfrau moraine which forms the final climb on race day. The moraine ascends to the glacier line which is rather surreal when you are being desiccated under a baking sun.



This area is overlooked by three mountains. The Jungfrau herself, which at 4158m claims to be the top of Europe, plus the Mönch and Eiger. The moraine actually offers a mixed blessing to the runners. On the one hand it is one mother to climb with tired legs but, on the other hand, you know you only have 1.5km to run to the finish and blow me down if it isn't down hill. Curiously, about 0.5km from the finish line there is a fresh water pool, complete with seats, panoramic views and a Jacuzzi option to sooth tired feet. Ideal for a post race soak, but boy is it cold.



On our return to Interlaken the pre-race atmosphere was starting to build as rows of spectators cheered on athletes competing in the junior and mini-marathon races, all good clean fun. As a general rule, I am not a great fan of pasta parties but Lucy and I did venture down to this one which took place in a massive marquee decorated with more flags than you could shake a stick at. Again our Swiss cousins put on a good show and we went back to the hotel suitably fed and watered.

As you can imagine, on race day the town centre was full of folks doing their pre-race thing. Queuing for the loo was as popular as ever although the competitors were well provided for. Before the start we were treated to a display of alphorn blowing and flag waving, which was great. And after short rendition of the Swiss national anthem, we were off. The route from start to finish was lined with well-wishers, the curious, the musical and the not so musical but there was no escaping the fact that the locals were pleased to see us. An early road section soon gave way to tracks and trails which followed a river draining the Lauterbrunnen valley. Once at Lauterbrunnen village (half way in distance) the course loops around the valley which boasts over 70 water falls (we saw 3), vertical limestone canyoned walls used by paragliders for leaping into the unknown, and white caps in the distance; really quite stunning. Then course then turns sharp right and up you go, hands on knees up, not just tilting forwards up.

Once the climbing starts the route markers change from 1/km to one marker every 250 meters to aid locating the fallen should the need arise. Despite the inescapable effort required to get body and soul up the mountain, the going is made as pleasant as possible. When you are not in woodland the route offers vista opportunities, or takes you through some pretty villages, the largest of which was the skiing mecca of Wengen. The village folk dress up the route and line the pavements several deep, making a proper din whilst they are at it. To cap it all there were feed stations every 2 or 3km from start to finish. We really were very well catered for. One oddity we encountered were bands of musicians dressed in garish quilted costumes thrashing out rousing tunes on brass and percussion instruments. They were having as much fun as anyone on route.

As the route pushed on through Wengeralp and Wixi the topography changed from wooded hillside to alpine meadow, complete with cows and cow bells. The only thing missing was Julie Andrews and the von Trapp family. From Wixi the route follows a narrow twisty path all way to the moraine and it is pretty much single file if you are running en-masse. At 39 km you come level with the finish line which you can see to the left but there is no let up. However, we were treated to another fine display of alphorn blowing. At this point, even though your ears are tired, the mellow notes from these fine instruments tingle the little grey cells all the same.

Now here's a funny thing. Although the Europeans do like their uphill races they can't run downhill for toffee, but Lucy and I can. From the top of the moraine there is wonderful 1.5km of down hill and did we enjoy flying down there all the way to the finish? A jovial vintner offered a glass of beer as we were ushered through the finish area to collect our commemorative holdall, pick up our bags and have a shower and brush up. All under the watchful gaze of the white spider on the north face of the Eiger.



Spot the white spider

So what did we make of it all? In short, full marks all round and to be recommended to anyone with an adventurous spirit. And yes, you can do it in road shoes.

Results:

### **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September**

Winner (lady) - Stevie Kremer (3:22:42)

First man - Adrian Gröbli (3:37:02)

Martin - 4:21:13

Lucy - 5:11:44

### **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

Winner Markus Hohenwarter - 2:59:42

The 2013 event will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2013 if you want to keep your diary free.

## ***'Overseas' race: The Isle of Wight South Eastern Fell Running Champs, 15/16 September***

### **Lucy**

The Isle of Wight fell running weekend consists of two races on the Saturday and one on Sunday. In fell running terms they are graded as 'A short' (3.8km/235m ascent.); 'B medium' (12km/443m ascent) and 'C long' (21km/487m ascent).

The first race starts at 11:00 am on Saturday, giving plenty of time for mainlanders to cross the Solent and pick up their number. We left Oxfordshire at 6 am and easily caught the 7:30 ferry at Portsmouth, then drove the scenic route round the island to arrive in Ventnor at 9:00. We then took the opportunity to reccy the business end of the route – up Boniface down, reached from a stepped footpath from the old railway site. The climb was pretty hard just walking, and Martin immediately decided his chesty cold would preclude him from any further activity!

A drive down to the start on the seafront demonstrated the steepness of the course. Tulse Hill is a 100-metre road down to the town centre with a 25% gradient. Another winding descent past the boarded-up Winter Gardens took us to a pay-and-display where we could contemplate the Atlantic Ocean and the nearby fishery while we drank tea. Returning to St Catherine's school car park, we met up with some of the many veteran runners who return year after year, winning or not, depending on what end of their age category they are. Many clubs send large teams of runners each year, notably Serpentine who could boast a turnout of forty, Victoria Park, London Frontrunners and Loughton AC. Yeovil Town sent the Brooks family and Compton Harriers sent three runners - but both Dick and Martin had chosen to sit the first race out. We descended into the 'nut free zone' of the school to examine the course maps for the three races and pick up a number.

It was uncomfortably warm when we assembled in the bright sun for the first race. There are plentiful toilets at the start, and cold-water showers which I used for soaking my hair. The understated start sent us trotting briskly up the steep hill on the first, 2.8 mile race. For my part of the field, the running was interrupted by a welcome wait at the footpath to Boniface down but, on emerging on the turf, I put in some running for the benefit of the cameras. A fast, hands-on-knees brought me to the first plateau from where we simply ran half-a-mile round an aerial and back the same way – a precipitous descent! From the old station there were some mainly downhill roads, but the final sprint was uphill and, despite wanting to take the first race easy, I found myself racing a lady from Loughton AC, who I beat by 2 seconds but at great cost! However I was able to lie down on the school field undisturbed while my heart rate dipped below the danger level.

In the days when the race finished at the Winter Gardens we had followed each race with a dip in the sea. Today it seemed too far away and a bit choppy, so after a sandwich from the Co-op we roasted in the sun, fretting about the afternoon's race.

The Ventnor Horseshoe starts at 3 pm – still quite warm but with a cool breeze. Dick was giving this one a go, despite a chronic knee condition. This race follows the road up to the old station, then takes a slightly less steep path to the top of the downs, but still with some narrow steps to slow down the latecomers. After the summit comes a wonderful descent down a grassy path to some woods, towards which we shot like a cork from a bottle. More downs and ups followed, notably with a field of young bovines who ran at us excitedly as we edged our way along the field! A bit of hand flapping and cursing sent them off to try again further down the line of runners, and with the added adrenaline I sprinted off. Before the steep ascent at the back of Boniface down comes a welcome interval of a couple of flat miles along a disused railway. At the end of this I begged some water from Flora Brooks who was spectating and providing refreshments for Nick and Sophie – hopefully there was still some left for Sophie! Then came a slowly ascending and narrow pathway, across some stiles and a steep pasture until some steps, this time with sturdy railings which I used to pull my ailing body up the vertical incline. Another stile, and then a friendly marshal in the middle of nowhere, urging us on and directing us across more stiles and another hill, which this time would take us to the top of the downs.

Some of the finest views can be seen from the semi-circle we now traversed, with a refreshing cross-wind helping us along. A few gates with awkward closures added interest, and eventually it was 'end of hostilities', as the aerial of the first race was reached and the familiar scuttle down Boniface fell. This time when I finished the race I noticed Pat, a rival in my age-50 class was only a minute behind; although she is far 'better for age' than myself I felt motivated to attempt the last race so I could be FV50 'champion'! Both the Brookses finished well, and Dick had a smile on his face despite the knee, so all was good for the following day.

The Compton Harriers supped at the 'Volunteer' on Reverend James and Guinness, then at the 'Buddle' in Niton on Undercliff, Doambar and Holy Joe – this last being a local beer and worth visiting the Island for alone! This was followed by meat pie, mixed grill, liver and Hong Kong stir-fry, which were all declared to be excellent!

The Wroxall round is a nominal 13 miles and proceeds along the sea-front rather than up the dreaded Tulse Hill. Even so, numbers were noticeably down at the 10:30 start, with many more supporters on the sidelines. Martin was feeling well enough to run round with me, but not race, so I was helped to a reasonable start, despite feeling groggy and being happy to underachieve on this occasion. There are many undulations even before the race proceeds inland through a housing estate. Then the gradient is constant and can be quite hard, as the path is between high hedges without any breeze. A single-track along the top gives some rest after which the urge to overtake surfaces once more, and a break-out down a grassy field and down to a farm gives plenty of opportunity to make up places. A picturesque but strenuous leg of the course took us past a shooting range, over many bumps, and eventually we caught up Dick and ran for some time as if in a club outing. At about 8 miles, at the Donkey Sanctuary came a water station, and then it was back to the familiar disused railway for a more gentle stretch. At this point I spotted Pat and despite having felt 'done for' all day I took off with Martin, and made it to the base of the horrendous steps before her! For the second time that weekend we skirted the downs, then slithered down Boniface and raced up to the school. Success – we had beaten the fells of Ventnor yet again!

This time we drove to the sea for a dip. A few hardy folk from Serpentine, Victoria park and Nailsea were swimming in the choppy grey water, so we dived in and I stood in the cool water for a few minutes so my legs would mend quicker. Then as tradition would have it, Jan bought us an ice-cream from Minghella's and Dick bought us a pint of Undercliff at the Mill House.

Owing to the large team presence the Fell series prize-giving is well attended, with many of the 'usual suspects' picking up the same awards year after year. All were given boisterous cheers as Paul Chadwick gave out the SEAA medals, and Chris Lewis of Ryde Harriers presented the individual race winners with generous Boots vouchers, and medals to the winning teams. Age categories are well rewarded, with good representation in all except FV70. Perhaps in the years to come we will 'grow our own' FV70 South East fell running champion!

A dash round the island to Chale and the 'Wight Mouse' provided more beer and some reasonable ribs, fish pie, curry and sausages. Using the inland route we were at the Fishbourne ferry within 35 minutes and on our way back to Portsmouth and real life by 6pm on Sunday.

The IOW fell racing series has a loyal following and makes a great weekend away. As well as the generous hospitality, and fees of only £5 or £6 per race, the organisers arrange cheap ferry fares and free camping at the rugby pitch. The designation of 'fell' racing is reached but the terrain is most definitely 'trail' hence our inclusion of this report in the TRA magazine (overseas section)!

Race 1: Running for the cameras!



Race 1: Up Boniface Fell



Race 2: Down Boniface Fell



### **Berlin Marathon, 30<sup>th</sup> September**

Two Harriers put in excellent performances, both recording personal best times. Mags broke 5 hours to finish in 4:55:08. Sus, very consistent over the marathon distance, ran 3:03:17, the fourth occasion that her marathon finish time has been between 3:03 and 3:04.

## *Running Life Series no. 16*

**Mags Topham**

I'm probably one of the most unlikely members to be in a running club!

At school I hated sports and did my utmost to avoid having to participate in anything even remotely sporty. I was much more at home in a library, I was a happy bookworm!

It started at about age 5 with being clumsy and tripping over my own feet in every school sports day race I had to do. This progressed to missing every ball ever passed to me in hockey (or netball, or rounders...). I was always the one picked last with a ... "Well, I suppose we have to have HER."

Needless to say even after leaving school the thought of doing sport never even crossed my mind. I did like walking and would often disappear off into the countryside, with my books, a map and a tent!

I was quite content being un-sporty until I hit my late 30's and I started getting wider even though I cut down on eating.....something drastic had to be done!

I joined a gym! I managed to keep it up, going 3 times most weeks and actually liked feeling fitter.

It was after a few years, and while half-heartedly running on the treadmill doing my 15 minute warm-up, I realized I needed something to aim for, I was bored. That's when I had a brainwave.

That evening, in late July 2010, I signed up for the Copenhagen Marathon. I have fond memories of the place, so thought it would be a good one to try. It is also very flat there!

This left me with one problem...I had never done any running beyond running for the bus and my 15 minutes on a treadmill, and I now had until May 2011 to be able to run a marathon! Next day saw me outside and puffed after 5 minutes running, when it then hit me - I had an awfully long way to go!

I kept going, doing a run/walk technique, each week slowly being able to increase the running bit, but progress was so slow. One thing that surprised me (and still does) is that for the first time I enjoyed doing something sporty! It wasn't about failing any more but was about getting better and feeling better. Also, I started to notice how pretty some parts were around here.

Searching on the internet late autumn, and looking through local running clubs sites (they all sounded so serious and competition based) I came across Compton Harriers. They sounded a much friendlier bunch. I sent off an e-mail and got a reply about meeting for a run. As is the norm, I set off, got lost and didn't make it! Mo was patient and e-mailed me with more directions so the following week I actually got there...all by myself!

That first evening was a disaster. I only had road shoes and no torch and we had a very muddy off-road dark run. I almost gave up. Poor Mo stayed with me slipping and sliding away at the back and didn't complain about all my moaning (at least not to my face). I did go again though and got better. I like that you made me feel welcome and I was never left behind!

I shall forever hear Sus' voice in my head on every hill "just do the running motion." It gets me up them hills...doing the running motion, though not very quickly! Oh, and I bought a head torch and some off-road shoes!

I've had my moments, like finding my limits and have learnt that to try and push myself too much doesn't seem to work with me. While I would love to be able to be a front runner of a race (and I am in awe of you Harriers who do well racing) I found when I started to push myself too much I started to dislike running, and so have made a conscious decision to forget pushing, just enjoy it!

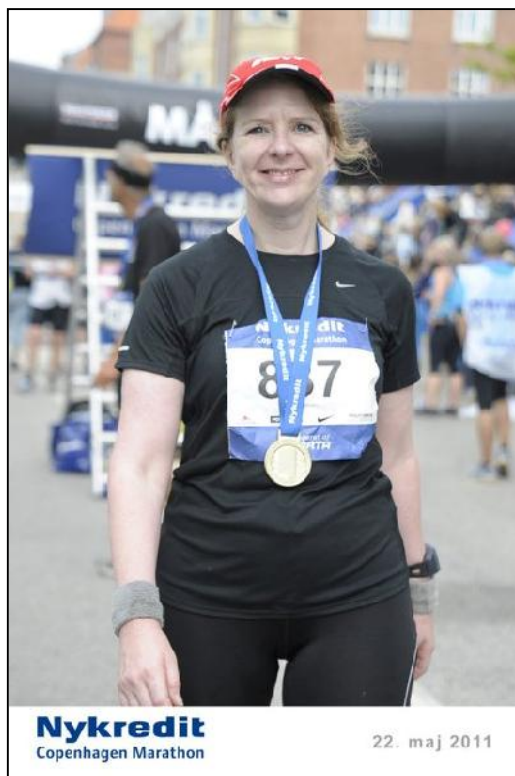
I almost didn't even go to the marathon after a very hot 20 mile Downland Challenge left me questioning why I was doing this! So apologies for my moans, and thanks Gillian for dragging me to the finish and convincing me I would be ok.



The following May I felt so proud of myself when I crossed the finish line of the Copenhagen Marathon. I don't think I'll ever get that feeling of achievement again. I had done what I thought only a few months previously was impossible.

Now I can safely say that running is part of my life, and when I don't run for a few days I feel something is missing.

Finally, thank you fellow Harriers for showing me something I hope I never forget.... Running is fun and it isn't just about the winning.



*Next month: To be confirmed*

## *Webmaster's report on The Boneshaker, 30<sup>th</sup> September*

### **Mo**

This is the event I enter every year as part of 'Team SuMo' with my lovely wife, and it is usually very enjoyable. But I'm afraid this year my luck ran out on the cycle leg of this popular duathlon, whilst speeding down the final descent from the Ridgeway to Ginge.

Sue as always had run an excellent 5k leg to hand over to me in 5<sup>th</sup> place (team) and 23<sup>rd</sup> place overall ... a position that was very flattering for me. Unfortunately, as there is a considerable uphill trek to the Ridgeway, quite a few riders went past and I was rapidly dropping down the field. Not to worry, I thought ... I can go downhill pretty fast and will pull a few places back.

As the race progressed, although I was losing ground on the uphill sections, I was starting to make gains in the downhill sections and the more I passed, the more I sent caution to the wind ... until my luck finally ran out on the last downhill section to Ginge. I was absolutely flying past everyone on a bike ... they must have all thought I was a lunatic ... unfortunately they were right! The event ambulance was called by Graham Tull, who witnessed my demise and said he was amazed I actually got up afterwards ... almost passing out in the process. With blood pouring out all over the place, I was intent on getting back on the bike to handover to Sue for the final 5k leg but, through the sensible actions of Graham and the marshals, I was forced to wait for the paramedics to arrive and check me over. In the meantime, Martin F turned up during a training run and very kindly offered to take my bike back to the event HQ and hand the electronic timing chip to Sue so she could at least have a run around the last 5k leg. However, I spotted Sue from the ambulance as it was taking me back to Race HQ so her run was interrupted and she was able to give me a hug and see the state I was in ... not a pretty picture!

After being cleaned-up by the paramedics, they suggested I should go to the nearest A&E for a thorough assessment, especially as I had taken quite a blow to the head (my helmet was split) and I would need stitches in my arm. So after the prize-giving, hot dog and cup of tea, Team SuMo set off for Abingdon Minor Injuries Unit where we met a fellow competitor who had also come off his bike during the race. After a wait of about an hour, I was attended by a medic (Justin) who happened to be a runner, so we had a bit of a chat about running injuries as he proceeded to check me over. Justin explained that as I had taken quite a knock on the head, he needed to make sure there was no damage to the brain, so he checked for any signs of blood up my nose and in my ears. He also asked me if I had noticed any strange smells as this can also indicate brain damage ... it was at this point I tried not to look at Sue as I told Justin I had indeed encountered a very strange smell just before leaving the car in the car park! As all eyes focussed on Sue, laughter immediately filled the cubicle. It was one of those moments I will never forget!

The outcome is that I have most likely fractured at least one rib, had stitches in my right elbow and enhanced my "rugged good looks" by grazing my nose, upper lip and blackening my eye ... not to mention the grazes on my right hip and across my back and of course the bump on the head that makes me smell strange things! Well, if you are going to come a cropper, it might as well be a good one and I suppose you could say I made a good job of it! As for Sue; I'm afraid I've given her a couple of sleepless nights and quite a bit of worry, for which I apologise ... and she hasn't even told me I'm a 'nincompoop' ... yet!

Still, there's always next year in which to redeem myself.

Compton Harriers finishing positions:

Race Position	Name	Race No	Overall Time	Position in Category	5k Run	20k Cycle	5k Run
9 <sup>th</sup> solo	Jeremy Waite	246	01:30:51	5 <sup>th</sup> Vet	00:17:17	00:55:13	00:18:20
22 <sup>nd</sup> solo	David Anderson	244	01:37:58	9 <sup>th</sup> Vet	00:19:22	00:57:18	00:21:17
59 <sup>th</sup> solo	Andy Buckland	195	01:46:10	36 <sup>th</sup> Open	00:20:57	01:02:55	00:22:17

There were 227 solo finishers.

Unfortunately Team SuMo was officially withdrawn during the race but Sue recorded an excellent 18:42 for the first 5k and, even with a stop to see me in the ambulance, still recorded 20:11 for the second 5k.

*Forthcoming Local Events – see Website Events Calendar for full Listing*