



TORRIER

NOV/DEC 2004



Congratulations



To our 2004 winners



Club Champion Paul Brannigan

Grand Prix Champion Moyra Parfitt

Fell Champion Andrew Horsfall

Road Champion Paul Brannigan

DON'T FORGET

CHRISTMAS DO & PRESENTATION

Saturday 4th December

Todmorden Cricket Club

7.30 pm 'til Late

Brian's Buffet at 8.00pm prompt

Excellent Live Soul
Band
SHOTGUN JOHNNY
&
THE STINGRAYS

A bargain at £15 per person
Book your places with Jane Smith or
Derek Donohue at Wed Pack Runs or
post to Derek at Mulcture House, Eastwood, Todmorden OL14 8ST

Mandy's Page

PACK RUNS

December- Queen Hotel, Todmorden
7pm start
January - Shoulder of Mutton
Mytholmroyd
Wear something bright and be seen!!

Mid-Lancs Cross-Country League

Reebok Cross Challenge, Liverpool 4/12/04
Kendal 22/1/05
Wilson Playing Fields, Hyndburn 12/2/05
Fitz Park, Keswick (new venue) 12/3/05
Further info ring
Derek 01422 842510



Hill reps/Speed work

It hurts but it does you good
Tuesdays 7pm

Tues 30th Nov Walsden CC
Tues 7th Dec Lob Mill
Tues 14th Dec Hebden Bridge Station
Tues 21st Dec Walsden CC
For further info ring me on 01422 844936

Committee meetings

Back to the Staff of Life (the beers better)
1st Monday of every month
7pm
All welcome

What's On

Sat 4th Dec X-country
Sat 4th Dec pm **THE DO**
Mon 6th Dec Committee Meeting - Staff of Life
Sun 19th Dec The Stoop 5m/800' from
Penistone Hill 11.30am
Sun 26th Dec Whinberry Naze 4m/750' from
Marl Pitts, Rossendale 11.30a.m
Mon 27th **Hot Toddy**
Fri 31st Dec Auld Lang Syne Race 11.30 am
6m/900' from Penistone Hill
Mon 10th Jan Committee meeting (note 1st
Monday is a Bank Holiday)
Sun 9th Jan Mini-mountain marathon
Sat 21st Jan X-country
Sun 6th Feb Mary Towneley Relay

HOT TODDY 5.8

Monday 27th December 2004
White Hart, Todmorden
11am start

£4 entry £5 u/a £1 extra on the day

ALSO

1 MILE OFF ROAD FUN RUN
10.30 am

£1 entry on day only

If available to help ring Peter Ehrhardt on
01706 813417

LONDON MARATHON

Derek has three entries for the 2005 London Marathon. Club policy is that these are given to club members who have applied for places in the 2005 race but have been unsuccessful. If your application is rejected apply to me, in writing only please (by e-mail or letter). If there are more than three requests Ray and I will make a decision using the ancient Tod Harriers secret formula, passed down to us from our ancestors.
(Chairman's decision final. Conditions apply.)

Derek

Mandy's Page

Calderdale Way Relay Teams

GRAND PRIX HANDICAP

Will be held early in the New Year
Details in next newsletter

Mini-mountain marathon

Sunday 9th January

Kebs (Sportsman Inn – Long
Causeway)

This is a three hour score event to test your navigational skills and early season fitness (on your own or as part of a team) Results & Prize Giving in the pub after the event - Food will be available for purchase in the pub.

Please let me know in advance if you are entering. Only those who have entered will be guaranteed a pre-marked map.

Entry is possible on the day but you will need to bring your own map (**OS 25,000:1 South Pennines, Outdoor Leisure 21**)

Start times at one minute intervals from from 09.00 hrs. Latest start time will be 10.00hrs – please arrive as early as possible

Remember that this is wild country in mid-winter with no flagged routes or marshals– you must be equipped and have the appropriate navigational skills to take care of yourself on remote moorland. . If in doubt run as part of a team.

FULL BODY COVER, COMPASS, WHISTLE, HAT, GLOVES and EMERGENCY RATIONS must be carried by all competitors

If you want to register then call me Dave Collins on 01706 816749

Kit

Anyone short of a vest and Eric hasn't got one to fit you then the new stock is arriving this week.

We also have some polo shirts

If interested ring John Lee on 01706 356211



Grand Prix Committee

The committee that was selected to choose the races was as follows:

Jane Smith

Paul Brannigan

Mandy Goth

Dave O'Neill

Barry Chapman

It was decided to leave the format unchanged for this year (full details in the New Year)

Will be choosing the races late December 2004

The **A team** is currently as follows:

Leg 1 Andrew Wrench and Jon Wright

Leg 2 Andrew Horsfall and Shaun Godsman

Leg 3 Paul Brannigan and Jeff Walker

Leg 4 Sean Willis and Alex Whittam

Leg 5 Simon Anderton and Mark Goldie

Leg 6 Chris Smales and Nick Wigmore

Reserves Martin Roberts, Dave Collins, Derek Donohue and Simon Galloway.

Team Captain Dave Collins 01706-816749

The **vets** team line-up is currently as follows:

Leg 1: Derek Donohue, Simon Galloway

Leg 2: Mark Anderton, Phil Hodgson

Leg 3: Eric Emerson, Richard Blakeley

Leg 4: Lee McCluskey, Deon Bamford

Leg 5: John Crummett, Ray Poulter

Leg 6: Richard Leonard,(Andrew Bibby *)

(*: or runners 13 or 14 from A Team)

Team Captain Andrew Bibby 01422 844026.

Allstars are:

Leg 1 John Lee/Colin Duffield

Leg 2 Mark Harris/Neil Hodgkinson

Leg 3 Dave O Neill/Jon Sutcliffe

Leg 4 Roger Haworth/Jim Duffy

Leg 5 Richard O Sullivan/Peter Ehrhardt

Leg 6 Duncan Ritchie/Rhys Watkins

Reserves Derek Clutterbuck, Paul Duffield (if membership sorted)

Team Captain Colin Duffield 01422 846593

Ladies

Leg 1 Rachel Skinner/Mel Blackhurst

Leg 2 Mandy Goth/ Moyra Parfitt

Leg 3 Helen Wilson/Sharon Godsman

Leg 4 Kath Brierley/Kay Leigh

Leg 5 Mel Siddall/Sarah Glyde

Leg 6 Jane Smith/Ali Richards

Team Captain Jane Smith 01706 818663 or Sarah Glyde 01706 847628

New Members

Nick Wigmore

Melanie Siddall

Peter Bowles

Mark Goldie

E-group

Anyone not on the E-group who wants to be then please E-mail Ray at

ray@gardeningsolutions.co.uk

You will receive up to date info on what's going on, plus allsorts of banter.



Results from the
last two races

Withins Skyline

24/10/2004	44.24	44.54	45.1	
	Time	Adj Time	GP Pts	Fell Pts
Andrew Horsfall	50.17	48.51	91.8	89.2
Shaun Godsman	50.48	50.48	88.3	88.3
Paul Brannigan	53.33	52.01	86.2	83.7
Jeff Walker	54.18	54.18	82.6	82.6
Martin Roberts	54.26	49.57	89.8	82.4
Dave Collins	55.10	49.38	90.4	81.3
Deon Bamford	55.45	53.40	83.6	80.4
Simon Galloway	56.10	54.34	82.2	79.8
Ben Crowther	56.28	56.28	79.4	79.4
Phil Hodgson	58.13	52.22	85.5	77.0
Andrew Bibby	60.28	52.44	85.0	74.2
Kath Brierley	61.42	51.18	87.4	72.7
Rhys Watkins	63.17	63.17	70.9	70.9
Jim Duffy	63.23	63.23	70.8	70.8
Jane Smith	63.56	51.15	87.5	70.1
Richard O'Sullivan	64.04	60.31	74.1	70.0
Neil Hodgkinson	65.01	65.01	69.0	69.0
Rachael Skinner	66.38	60.13	74.5	67.3
Moyra Parfitt	68.59	46.07	97.3	65.0
Dave O'Neill	69.05	62.46	71.4	64.9
Sue Roberts	69.08	58.11	77.1	64.9
Sarah Glyde	69.13	62.33	71.7	64.8
Mandy Goth	69.28	57.05	78.6	64.6
Lynne Griffiths	70.08	56.57	78.7	63.9
Helen Wilson	70.55	61.38	72.8	63.2
Sharon Godsman	73.19	66.15	67.7	61.2

Holmfirth 15

31/10/2004	1.19.19	1.23.31	1.25.13	
	Time	Adj Time	GP Pts	Rd pts
Paul Brannigan	1.42.01	1.39.07	83.4	81.0
Mel Blackhurst	1.54.35	1.39.36	83.0	72.2
Richard Leonard	2.00.47	1.52.18	73.6	68.5
Moyra Parfitt	2.15.48	1.34.49	87.2	60.9

Shepherd's Skyline Fell Race

Sat Nov 6th (Race report for FRA magazine)

The 6TH November. It's a date I'll always remember. If I didn't I'd be in big trouble with Mandy as it's our wedding anniversary. And what a day it was. Big blue sky and bright sunshine, Todmorden registry office crammed full to overflowing followed by an irreverent blessing on Stoodley Pike. And then the Shepherds Skyline Fell Race in white veil and top hat. A surreal experience. It was probably fated that we would eventually take on the organisation of the race.

The 6th November 2004. The Shepherds Skyline. This was the first race I'd ever organised. Following weeks of meticulous and somewhat over-zealous planning all my lists were ticked and everything was ready. Or was it? I still had one or two worries. The weather was dank and drizzly, conditions that were all too conducive to losing a few runners on the moors. Surely no-one would have been mischievous enough to have moved any of the hundred or so flags? Would they? And will all the marshals get here on time? Have we got enough prizes? Do we specify full body cover? Where's the laptop? How many numbers did I bring? That bloody clag gets lower every ten minutes. Will any runners turn up.....? The morning was a blur.

I needn't have worried. All my volunteers arrived, got on with it, and by lunchtime we were sat drinking coffee and twiddling our thumbs waiting for the competitors. Two hundred and nine runners did turn up and at last, as I blew the whistle; they were off. An enthusiastic Shaun Godsman of Tod Harriers led them out until he realised that he wasn't usually right at the front. Ian Holmes soon took over. I remember standing expectantly at the finish forty minutes later. (the men's record - Ian Holmes - is 39:59). At forty two minutes I was a little fidgety. At forty three I was starting to panic. Where were they? A vision of two hundred and nine puzzled runners wandering around the centre of Littleborough filled my mind. Then we spotted him. Romping down the hill Ian Holmes of Bingley crossed the line in first position in 44:01 just over a minute ahead of Karl Gray - Calder Valley (45:16). Lloyd Kellet - Keighley and Craven was in third place (45:25) just ahead of Chris Smales - Todmorden Harriers (45:49) who was first Vet 40. Sally Newman - Calder Valley was first lady home in 52:03 less than a minute off Vanessa Peacock's record despite the conditions. Team prizes went to the Rossendale men, and the Ilkley ladies.

It was another great turn out for the race despite the wet and muddy conditions. These added a few minutes to most runners times with one or two looking like they'd become intimately acquainted with the skyline bog. The 'carwash for runners' proved very popular. One marshal exhibited great matadorial skills to prevent a goring incident when local bullocks strayed onto the course. Another has promised to learn to count for next year's race after giving me a minor panic when he somehow misplaced half a dozen runners. Fortunately the finish funnel team's mathematics was flawless.

I hope everyone enjoyed the race. My thanks to the army of marshals and helpers who ensured that it ran so smoothly, and to Phil, the landlord of the Shepherds Rest for use of the venue. Hope to see you all back next year when we'll also be organising junior races starting from 12.30.

PHIL HODGSON

FINAL 2004 FELL TABLE

		Pendle	Mearley Clough	Buckden Pike	Hades Hill	Coniston	Settle Hills	Kentmere	Withins Skyline	Mickleden	Emmerdale	Borrowdale	Three Shires			
1	Andrew Horsfall	89.6	90.6				95.6	90.3	89.2	92.1	80.2			7	547.4	Q
2	Dave Collins V45		83.3	81.9		73.8	85.6		81.3	83.9				6	489.8	Q
3	Simon Galloway V40	80.4	78.8		84.3		79.9		79.8	82.5				6	485.7	Q
4	Neil Hodgkinson	74.9	75.7		78.9		77.6		69.0	68.3	72.4			7	448.5	Q
5	Richard Leonard V45	71.0	74.8		78.8	66.1		73.0		69.6	68.0	62.5	74.1	9	441.3	Q
6	John Crummett V55	72.8	74.1	71.2		68.3	76.3	71.4			57.6		72.2	8	438.0	Q
7	Jim Duffy	75.2	75.5		75.4	66.8			70.8	69.1				6	432.8	Q
8	Jane Smith LV45	73.3			76.9	62.1		68.1	70.1	68.2	64.4	68.2	73.5	9	430.2	Q
9	Kath Brierley LV40		69.9		74.6	58.2		68.4	72.7	64.7	60.9		70.4	8	420.7	Q
10	Alison Richards L	64.0		69.0		60.8	75.1				61.9	63.4		6	394.2	Q
11	Peter Ehrhardt V55	63.8	67.8	62.7	65.5	58.7		62.2		64.9				7	386.9	Q
12	Sue Roberts LV40	61.3			66.0	57.6		59.4	64.9				64.1	6	373.3	Q
13	Derek Clutterbuck V70	60.7	63.8				65.4	60.6		57.7			56.5	6	364.7	Q
14	Helen Wilson LV35			56.8	65.3	52.4	63.9		63.2				62.3	6	363.9	Q
15	Louise Abdy LV40		58.0	58.1	65.8	48.2			60.8				47.7	6	338.6	Q
16	Paul Brannigan		87.4		91.1		88.6		83.7				80.5	5	431.3	X
17	Andrew Bibby V50	73.7	75.2		81.2	62.3			74.2					5	366.6	X
18	Jon Wright	97.3				89.7				95.5	82.5			4	365.0	X
19	Martin Roberts V45			80.2		75.0	84.9		82.4					4	322.5	X
20	Jeff Walker				88.0	64.9	82.8		82.6					4	318.3	X
21	Derek Donohue V40		82.2		88.1					74.3	62.0			4	306.6	X
22	Phil Hodgson V45				80.7				77.0			69.1	78.9	4	305.7	X
23	Eric Emerson V50		74.4		82.0	65.2	80.6							4	302.2	X
24	Jim Smith V60	42.1			50.6	45.1	51.9	42.8	44.5					6	234.9	X
25	Chris Smale V40	94.6		92.8								86.2		3	273.6	X
26	Andrew Wrench		95.4				92.4						85.5	3	273.3	X
27	Moyra Parfitt LV55	65.2	67.0		69.3				65.0					4	266.5	X
28	Dave O'Neill V45	64.1	65.4		70.3				64.9					4	264.7	X
29	Richard O'Sullivan V40	68.0	66.6						70.0				58.5	4	263.1	X
30	Shaun Godsman				92.9	75.3			88.3					3	256.5	X
31	Deon Bamford V40	78.8			84.0				80.4					3	243.2	X
32	Duncan Ritchie	69.6	78.3			65.6								3	213.5	X
33	Rhys Watkins				76.3				70.9				65.6	3	212.8	X
34	Mandy Goth				65.4				64.8				63.2	3	193.4	X
35	John Lee V40				76.8	58.4						53.1		3	188.3	X
36	Anne Fox-Kelly LV45		65.4			56.4				62.5				3	184.3	X
37	John Newby V70	41.8	45.2		50.1				45.6					4	182.7	X
38	Barry Chapman V55	60.6	62.9			56.7								3	180.2	X
39	Keith Parkinson V50	77.6								77.3				2	154.9	X
40	Rachael Skinner				70.6				67.3					2	137.9	X
41	Dave Wilson V45	69.7		65.6										2	135.3	X
42	Sarah Glyde				69.5				64.8					2	134.3	X
43	Ray Poulter V55	65.9				67.5								2	133.4	X
44	Lynne Griffiths LV45				69.1				63.9					2	133.0	X
45	Richard Blakeley V60				77.6							53.4		2	131.0	X
46	Claire Duffield L	67.9				61.4								2	129.3	X
47	Peter Marshall V55		65.1			57.7								2	122.8	X
48	Helen Hodgkinson L		62.5							59.8				2	122.3	X
49	Pat Poulter LV55	56.2			58.2									2	114.4	X
50	Paula Haworth L	56.0				46.0								2	102.0	X
51	George Ehrhardt			98.3										1	98.3	X
52	Robert Glover V40									90.7				1	90.7	X
53	Ben Crowther								79.4					1	79.4	X
54	Mel Blackhurst				73.2									1	73.2	X
55	Greg Parkin					65.5								1	65.5	X
56	Jennifer Porter LV40				65.3									1	65.3	X
57	Laura Wright				64.4									1	64.4	X
58	John Page V50									63.9				1	63.9	X
59	Jeanette Dowling				63.2									1	63.2	X
60	Kevin Booth					62.5								1	62.5	X
61	Sharon Godsmam								61.2					1	61.2	X
62	Jon Sutcliffe V40					58.7								1	58.7	X
63	Trevor Smith V55					54.4								1	54.4	X
64	David Kite V50					40.3								1	40.3	X

FINAL 2004 ROAD TABLE		Roddesworth 6	Bolton 10K	Blackpool Beach 10K	Blackburn 10K	Stainland 7	Bluebell 10	Herriott 9	Burnley FS7	Radcliffe 12	Eyam Half	Langdale Half	Holmfirth 15			
1	Paul Brannigan	88.8	82.6	85.8		90.1			88.6				81.0	6	516.9	Q
2	Deon Bamford V40	86.2		81.8		84.1	81.5	87.6		80.2				6	501.4	Q
3	Jeff Walker	78.6		81.3			81.3	87.5	84.6	72.7				6	486.0	Q
4	Colin Duffield		71.8	76.1	75.7			77.0	75.9		71.1			6	447.6	Q
5	Melanie Blackhurst LV35		70.4	75.0	73.6	75.2			75.3		73.4		72.2	7	444.7	Q
6	Nigel Hanson V45	70.8			68.7		64.4		73.6	65.2		66.5		6	409.2	Q
7	Moyra Parfitt LV55		65.1		63.8	68.2	68.4		69.1				60.9	6	395.5	Q
8	John Newby V70	54.7	52.8		53.0	55.2	49.0		55.4	50.6		49.7		8	321.7	Q
9	Richard O'Sullivan V40	74.6				70.9	68.6		73.8	63.3				5	351.2	X
10	Simon Galloway V40	86.8		81.8			74.4			82.7				4	325.7	X
11	Andrew Bibby V50		73.8		77.0					74.3	72.6			4	297.7	X
12	Peter Ehrhardt V55		64.8			70.1		68.3		64.3				4	267.5	X
13	Dave O'Neill V45	69.3	62.2	68.9					65.5					4	265.9	X
14	Simon Anderton V40					89.6	85.8			86.6				3	262.0	X
15	Dave Collins V45						88.1		82.9	85.8				3	256.8	X
16	Keith Parkinson V50	87.3					71.3			84.6				3	243.2	X
17	Eric Emerson V50				78.5					80.2	79.3			3	238.0	X
18	Pat Collier LV55	60.4	56.4			59.8				54.3				4	230.9	X
19	Greg Parkin			78.3		79.1				70.8				3	228.2	X
20	Richard Leonard V45					80.5			78.0				68.5	3	227.0	X
21	Derek Clutterbuck V70						65.5		69.4	67.6				3	202.5	X
22	Jim Smith V60	53.1				51.4				48.2				3	152.7	X
23	Brian Hargreaves V70	49.8				50.7				44.4				3	144.9	X
24	Barry Chapman V55					65.4				61.7				2	127.1	X
25	Sean Willis								97.7					1	97.7	X
26	Alex Whittem								92.1					1	92.1	X
27	Kevin Booth					81.9								1	81.9	X
28	Richard Blakeley V60							81.5						1	81.5	X
29	Duncan Ritchie										79.4			1	79.4	X
30	Mark Anderton V40									79.2				1	79.2	X
31	Ray Poulter V55	75.8												1	75.8	X
32	Alison Richards											72.6		1	72.6	X
33	Rachael Skinner							71.2						1	71.2	X
34	John Devlin V60									69.3				1	69.3	X
35	Francis Richardson V55	68.7												1	68.7	X
36	Julie Holt								64.0					1	64.0	X
37	Laurence Wright V55	63.7												1	63.7	X
38	Laura Wright L	60.2												1	60.2	X
39	Pat Poulter LV55	55.6												1	55.6	X
40	Helen Heap LV40					49.7								1	49.7	X

Navigation for beginners Sunday 15th November 2004

A small but select group gathered together for the beginners navigation course. We spent an hour on theory symbols, grid references and bearings before sending everyone out onto the moors to put theory into practice.

Everyone managed to find their way around the courses (one 5 miles and one 7 miles). All enjoyed it and felt that they had benefited from it. They all now know which way to hold their compass!! and maps make a bit more sense.

The feedback was so good that we will hopefully be repeating this again in the Spring for those who missed out.

Kath & Mandy



Amsterdam Marathon

17th October 2004

I was keen to write this article, but only if I could only find something funny to write about, i.e. making it worth a read.

We arrived in Amsterdam a couple of days prior to the marathon. Some scope then for something funny to happen, I thought. Sadly I looked everywhere, but nothing was leaping out.

Tracey, my long suffering partner, would say I was boring, I would say I was focused. I was focused on getting a good race time.

We did, of course, visit the usual places of culture. But was the Van Gogh museum funny? - I didn't think it was, but then I was ~~boring~~ focused.

I think I'm funny. Tracey would disagree. Even so, during our stay in Amsterdam I couldn't find this so important 'humorous angle'. Maybe the race would surprise me - but it didn't. I was getting close to not writing this article - thank goodness you weep.

Then it hit me, not quite out of the blue but the effect was devastating. After the marathon we promised ourselves a trip to one of Amsterdam's 'coffee shops'. I'm not into 'smoking' but a few rounds with this particular 'local herb' was just too much. The effect was quick. In a short space of time almost everything was funny.

I laughed that Easyjet cancelled our flight without telling us. I chuckled that a pile driver was working just outside the hotel door. I split my sides knowing that they were rebuilding the sewers. I found it painfully hilarious that I broke the expensive foot scan machine at the expo. The list does go on.....

However, this article is about the Amsterdam Marathon, and the point I am trying to make is that it can be serious stuff. So serious that 'funny' doesn't always play a part (well not until afterwards). This year I wished to achieve 3hour 30mins. My quickest was 12 minutes slower (and that was with loads of training). I needed to be focused for this.

Amsterdam Marathon claims to be the fourth fastest in the world (London being third). It proved to be a very flat course. Quite spectacular - running alongside waterways and beautiful buildings. It certainly didn't feel like running round a city - we even ran past a windmill (saw no tulips or clogs though).

The training, and not being funny, paid off. Not only did I obtain a chip time of 3hours 32mins, but also I smashed by best 10k and ½ marathon times. Put that in your pipe and smoke it!!!

So what made me get these great (for me anyway) times. The flat course helped, but I am confident that Wednesday night pack runs have helped. I also think that Mandy's Tuesday night hill/session work has been a major factor. These together with the weekend fell races has been just the ticket. This I know is true as all the running I have done in the last few months (except one 20 miler a couple of weeks prior to Amsterdam) has been solely with the Tod. Harriers.

Cheers then to the good ship canal boat Tod. Harriers and all that sail in her, and of course Tracey for putting up with me.

Rhys Watkins

Three Shires Fell Race

18th September 2004

It rained all night. I was up to my knees in water within the first mile. If I was a walker I would be thoroughly pissed off, but today I wasn't, and I was determined to enjoy my first proper fell race.

I realised, probably too late, that there is just one narrow route up Weatherlam. Not a lot of room for overtaking. I felt the moral obligation to keep on the heels of the chap in front, and I was relieved that nobody overtook me when they could (well not straight away!).

Strange when I was expecting a false summit there wasn't one. I was at the top, and I was pleased there were still people behind me. Over the summit and the wind hits you. That breathing in slowly, otherwise your lungs would explode with the inrush of air, feeling. Fighting to live - great. The euphoria doesn't stop - running downhill with the wind holding you up - fantastic.

A short scramble up and nip round the far side of Swirl How (thanks John) and I'm flying down - literally in one section. Anything mossy was a godsend as traction was a problem. I think Walshes may be a good idea, and I needed to take it easy. Loads of people overtook me on this downhill bit. A sad moment but I got to the bottom generally unscathed.

The boggy bit right near the Three Shires Stone managed to keep the checkpoint guys entertained. 'Should have brought a camera' one said, as me and this other guy were over knee deep in kak.

Up to Pike of Blisco and start down. People seemed to be skirting round to right far too high up, but like a lamb to slaughter I follow. A little bit later, and a climb down some rock face, I see the trees. I knew then that I was going to make it, although looking up at Lingmoor Fell was depressing.

I think this was the turning point for me. My legs felt like lead, my body was on shut down, and this mountain towered above. I wasn't the only one struggling up. Although it didn't help when two lads raced passed whilst saying that 'there was a lot of huffing and puffing going on' - maybe they were referring to guys just behind me. I shuffled past the Lingmoor checkpoint pleading with my legs to start running.

Running down Lingmoor was the best. A good gradient for my slicks. Just take it easy and the T-shirts in the bag (well it would be if there was one!). The next corner I slip in true style, all down one side. Nonetheless, following the stream down the footpath brought out the little kid. Why does it make you smile? Splash...splash....splash. It's mad, it's great - and the pub was now in sight.

What a success. Pack never came off my back, and I would have got more scathed on a Wednesday night run. I even got the '69' number that I'm obviously saving for the bedroom.

Thanks must go to John for advice, and the lads and lasses who supplied drinks on the way round. I was delighted to be wearing the Toddy vest, and even more delighted to be tucking into a huge Cornish pasty at the end.

Sad that I wasn't able to stop for the ale but the Ulverston lantern procession (and a few beers) rounded off the day just nicely.

2004 GRAND PRIX TABLE			Pendle	Mearley Clough	Buckden Pike	Hades Hill	Coniston	Settle Hills	Kentmere	Withins Skyline	Mickleden	Ennerdale	Borrowdale	Three Shires	Roddlesworth 6	Bolton 10K	Blackpool Beach 10K	Blackburn 10K	Stainland 7	Bluebell 10	Herriott 9	Burnley FS7	Radcliffe 12	Eyam Half	Langdale Half	Holmfirth 15	OPTIMUM POINTS	
1	Moyra Parfitt	10	97.6	100.3	0.0	103.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	97.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.2	0.0	90.4	96.6	96.8	0.0	97.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.2	782.3	Equal
2	Derek Clutterbuck	9	91.8	96.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	98.8	91.6	0.0	86.0	0.0	0.0	85.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	91.6	0.0	97.1	93.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	747.2	Fell
3	Dave Collins	9	0.0	92.6	91.0	0.0	82.0	95.2	0.0	90.4	93.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.2	0.0	90.5	93.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	742.9	Fell
4	Paul Brannigan	11	0.0	87.4	0.0	93.8	0.0	91.2	0.0	86.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	82.9	88.8	82.6	88.3	0.0	90.1	0.0	0.0	91.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.4	717.0	Equal
5	Deon Bamford	9	81.1	0.0	0.0	86.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	83.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	88.7	0.0	84.2	0.0	86.6	83.9	90.2	0.0	82.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	684.7	Road
6	Simon Galloway	10	82.7	81.2	0.0	86.8	0.0	82.3	0.0	82.2	84.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.3	0.0	84.2	0.0	0.0	76.6	0.0	0.0	85.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	677.5	Fell
7	Andrew Bibby	9	83.6	85.3	0.0	93.1	70.6	0.0	0.0	85.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	81.8	0.0	85.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	82.4	80.5	0.0	0.0	677.2	Equal
8	Jeff Walker	10	0.0	0.0	0.0	88.0	64.9	82.8	0.0	82.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	78.6	0.0	81.3	0.0	0.0	81.3	87.5	84.6	72.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	666.7	Road
9	Richard Leonard	12	76.6	80.8	0.0	85.9	71.3	0.0	78.7	0.0	75.1	73.4	67.4	80.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.9	0.0	0.0	83.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	73.6	646.1	Fell
10	Peter Ehrhardt	11	79.2	84.1	77.7	81.2	72.8	0.0	77.2	0.0	79.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	77.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	0.0	81.1	0.0	75.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	643.2	Fell
11	Richard O'Sullivan	9	71.3	69.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	62.0	77.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.1	71.6	0.0	77.7	66.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	582.7	Road
12	John Newby	12	61.4	67.3	0.0	74.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	67.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.6	72.0	0.0	73.1	75.2	67.7	0.0	76.4	68.9	0.0	68.6	0.0	581.1	Road
13	Dave O'Neill	8	69.9	71.3	0.0	76.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	71.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.6	67.0	74.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	71.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	575.9	Equal
14	Jim Smith	9	56.3	0.0	0.0	68.5	60.3	70.2	57.9	60.2	0.0		0.0	0.0	66.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	64.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	509.2	Fell
15	Eric Emerson	7	0.0	84.4	0.0	94.1	74.0	92.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.0	88.0	0.0	0.0	609.8	X
16	Melanie Blackhurst	8	0.0	0.0	0.0	84.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.2	86.3	84.7	85.7	0.0	0.0	86.9	0.0	84.4	0.0	83.0	512.3	X
17	Andrew Horsfall	7	89.6	90.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.6	93.0	91.8	92.1	80.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	463.1	X
18	John Crummett	8	90.3	91.9	88.4	0.0	84.7	94.6	89.6	0.0	0.0	71.4	0.0	90.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	457.0	X
19	Jane Smith	9	91.4	0.0	0.0	95.9	77.5	0.0	84.9	87.5	85.1	80.3	85.1	91.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	451.5	X
20	Alison Richards	7	70.8	0.0	76.3	0.0	67.3	83.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	68.5	70.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.3	0.0	449.3	X
21	Keith Parkinson	5	88.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	87.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	96.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.1	0.0	0.0	93.8	0.0	0.0	445.5	X
22	Kath Brierley	8	0.0	83.1	0.0	89.8	69.2	0.0	82.3	87.4	76.8	73.2	0.0	84.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	427.2	X
23	Pat Collier	5	84.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.6	79.9	0.0	0.0	84.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	76.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	411.2	X
24	Neil Hodgkinson	7	74.9	75.7	0.0	78.9	0.0	77.6	0.0	69.0	68.3	72.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	379.5	X
25	Colin Duffield	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	71.8	76.1	75.7	0.0	0.0	77.0	75.9	0.0	0.0	71.1	0.0	376.5	X
26	Nigel Hanson	6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	76.8	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	70.3	0.0	80.3	70.7	0.0	72.6	0.0	375.4	X
27	Barry Chapman	5	75.2	78.0	0.0	0.0	70.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	77.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	73.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	374.4	X
28	Sue Roberts	6	72.0	0.0	0.0	78.4	67.7	0.0	69.8	77.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	76.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	373.5	X
29	Jim Duffy	6	75.2	75.5	0.0	75.4	66.8	0.0	0.0	70.8	69.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	366.0	X
30	Jon Wright	4	97.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.5	82.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	365.0	X
31	Helen Wilson	6	0.0	0.0	65.4	75.2	60.3	73.6	0.0	72.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	71.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	358.6	X
32	Louise Abdy	6	0.0	69.8	69.9	80.0	58.0	0.0	0.0	74.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	58.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	351.8	X
33	Martin Roberts	4	0.0	0.0	87.4	0.0	81.7	92.5	0.0	89.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	351.4	X
34	Phil Hodgson	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	89.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.6	0.0	0.0	76.8	87.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	339.9	X
35	Derek Donohue	4	0.0	87.9	0.0	95.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.4	66.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	328.5	X
36	Greg Parkin	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	65.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	78.3	0.0	79.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	70.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	293.7	X
37	Duncan Ritchie	4	69.6	78.3	0.0	0.0	65.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.4	0.0	0.0	292.9	X
38	Chris Smale	3	97.3	0.0	95.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	88.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	281.6	X
39	Simon Anderton	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.0	90.9	0.0	0.0	91.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	277.7	X

Carcassonne Longue Distance Triathlon.

2.5k swim, 80k bike, 20k run.

Why I was there?

Back in the beginning, approx 4 years ago now, I watched a Triathlon on TV and decided it looked like an event I had to do. At that time my sporting background had been limited to a very small amount of cycling, weight training and breast stroke swimming for fitness.

The first event I entered was the Stratford Sprint distance event in May 2001. I approached a guy in the gym who had reputedly done a couple of Triathlons and asked for some training advice. "Do some running, do some swimming and do a bit more cycling". This advice was free of course!

I then got on t'internet for any other information I could find. I started to run in the mornings, started to swim in the evenings and cycle at weekends. The swimming was the most difficult as I could not swim front-crawl to save my life, and actually taught myself with info printed off the web. I vividly remember swimming 20 lengths non-stop and thinking I was the new Tarzan! (More like cheetah!). One cold Feb evening I ran 3 miles non-stop, and was often cycling 20miles on a Sunday.

The first Triathlon was an amazing experience. My heart rate monitor (I read about them on some training site!) was registering 145bpm, which was below my target zone. The only problem was that I had not actually got in the pool yet, and was just queuing at the side. Eventually I left the pool and got on my bike, where my heart rate settled at 175bpm (target was 168!) and never dropped below that for the whole event. Nobody told me how my legs would feel when I got off the bike (14miles) and started to run. You honestly cannot describe the pain and jelly-like feeling. I finished the event, which was my only target, and decided I would never, ever do another event. 2 days later I entered my next event.

Over that year I trained by "Doing some miles/laps" with no real focus. It was evident that my running was fair to crap! Towards the end of summer, I was talked into running with the Harriers by Dave O'Neill. This was a turning point in my Tri career. I was now in "on the secret" of running success; finish every run with a plate of butties and 2 pints of landlord!! I also met the Leg-end that is Mark Anderton who suggested we go for a ride together. Well, he was not bad for an old un, I can tell you. My cycling now needed to improve!

The motivation

I have a list of things I want to do unwritten in my head. One of which was an Ironman Triathlon. The distances involved just blew my mind, and for a recent non-sporting background, I decided it would be the ultimate goal for me. The die was cast, and I entered the 2003 London Marathon as part of my 3 year plan to do an Ironman. Mark had tried to talk me into Ironman France with him, but I decided I had not got his long-term endurance. Endurance takes years to build up to the level required for an Ironman and Marks fell-running background had made me decide I needed another couple of years. I therefore entered the UK Half Ironman to be held at the end of 2003.

The London Marathon was a shock to me. I trained well, and did a couple of 20milers prior to the day. But the actual 26.2 miles on Asphalt was horrible. It was boring, hard on the legs and very hot. I was crying when I crossed the line (yes, I am in touch with my feminine side) in relief. Over the next few days I had decided that an Ironman (3.8k swim, 180k bike, 42k run) was **not** within my capabilities.

The decision.

A lot of my training for London was done with Mark as he trained for Ironman France, thus I actually did more cycling than running, and I had decided I was going to watch Mark in Gerardmer. To say I was impressed is an understatement. The location was brilliant, the weather fantastic and Mark was magnifique! I sum his event up to non athletes in this way; imagine setting off on an event at 7am in the morning and competing non-stop without even a meal stop all day, and eventually finishing at 2015pm in the evening!!!! That's what Mark did. Again I was not sure this was within my capabilities ever. But the location, atmosphere, sheer determination and pride of those finishers made me think; "I want that feeling!" I probably cried again as well!!!

I completed Half Ironman UK (Yes, I know, I am only half the man Mark is!), in a respectable 314 out of 1400 finishers, and I was under the 5 hours mark, which officially made me into "A good triathlete".

In November 2003 I had another turning point. I went to France alone to cycle for a week in the Pyrenees. I had booked into **LE SANCTURE DES SPORTIFS** which is owned by Richard and Michelle. Richard is an ex Elite Triathlete, ex Great Britain Swimmer, and holds the world record for swimming the channel (to Belgium!!!) in a relay team. (I don't know why he did it either!). If you fancy a cycling holiday, a fell-running holiday or just a holiday where the company and catering is targeted at the Athlete, you cannot beat this place. (The fell-running here is legendary, with some great races held nearby including the Canigou fell-race) I had a weeks cycling, swimming and running with all training plans and days scheduled included at the same price as if I had just sat on my jacksy all week. Richard cycled with me, he ran with me and he taught me to swim properly, all within the price!!! Amazing. Another milestone was met as well. We decided to cycle 112 miles (Ironman distance) in the day as I had never cycled over 100 miles before.

After this holiday I asked Richard to become my coach (for an excellent price). Now my training became structured, it had purpose, and it showed big improvements. My remit to Richard was that I wanted to do an Ironman in 2005. "No problem" said Rich. His training is brilliant and varied, and his family are now good friends of mine. I decided I wanted to do something like an Half Ironman distance event in France and therefore entered the Carcassonne event, which was much harder than the UK Half Ironman, as there was a reputed Mountain to cycle up (approx 815mt climb).

Leading up to this event (5th September), I had the Salford Event to compete in. This was in July and is an excellent event as all roads are closed on the bike section. I trained hard, but very sporadically and not enough focus on the event in hand. The day came and it was raining very, very hard. I had a rubbish swim, the cycle was slow due to the slippery roads but my 10k run had improved by 3 minutes over the same event a year previous. I was very disappointed, and even contemplated becoming fat and sitting in the Bramsche Bar for the rest of my life. A week later I had cleared my head and decided that I was never, ever going to let myself down like that again! "Richard, tell me what to do, and how hard to train and I swear I will never miss another session again leading up to Carcassonne".

The focus.

I trained like mad for the next 7 or 8 weeks. I never missed a session; I out-trained Mark who had to miss a few of my sessions due to fatigue. My swimming became easy and relaxed, my cycling was strong, and I could run for ever after a bike ride. Confidence needed to be raised though, and this was done with the help of Mark who threw down the Gauntlet after telling me I was welcome to cycle to his holiday home.....106 miles away in Whitby. Reverse psychology never works with me.... so 4 days later I set off to Whitby!! I cycled 91miles without any stopping (toilet stops only) and really concentrated on eating and drinking on the move. I drank every 15mins and after one hour I started to eat every 30mins. I ate dried apricots, banana sandwiches and gels. I felt brilliant. This was the day I knew Ironman was going to happen one day.

I went to Carcassonne with the greatest confidence I have ever had in anything I had done in my life. I had trained right, I had tapered correctly and I felt so strong. The mental side is probably 70% of the event in long distance tri, and I knew that part was well in order. We had a few days in France just mentally preparing and putting the finishing touches to my preparation. It was brilliant weather and I felt relaxed. In fact I was quite concerned on the day at how relaxed I was!!

Racing in France.

If you have ever done an event in France you will understand the feel-good factor you get. Triathlon events are so much better than uk organised events. 1 hour before the swim start there is hardly anyone around, but they all stroll up eventually. Triathlon in France is general much stronger than in the UK as the set-up is similar to their cycling. All competitors **MUST** be in a team to get insurance on race day, and all teams are in divisions. The prize money is excellent, and all clubs are funded by the local government. The World Long Distance Triathlete was stood at the side of me, but I could tell he did not recognise me, and was oblivious to the threat. Richard trains the Tri Catalan team for swimming and now running, for which he receives payment. He also has free entries into most of his events.

Because of the team ethic within France, the competitors tend to be very strong in all disciplines, with hardly any "seems like a laugh" athletes taking part. Some would argue that this is what makes the UK the strongest open age Tri nation in the world. We have a much wider range of athletes whereas the Elites in France are probably stronger in depth.

Race.

Swim 2.5k.

I stood at the side of the Lake with just under 200 other athletes ready for the mass start. This is an exciting part of the race. "Will I drown," "will I have to punch anybody" and similar thoughts. I decided that the distance of the whole event allowed me to take the swim relatively easy. I started from the far right of the pack and got into my rhythm nice and easily. Competitors in front of me now became my focus as I eyed them up for a few seconds and then swam passed them. I was feeling great, and swimming very relaxed but quite quick. This carried on for about 1800mts, as I slowly made my way through the field, picking two or three triathletes off at a time. At this stage the organisers plan a little excitement for the quite large crowd. We had to run up the beach, around a cone and get back in for the remaining 700mts. Well, I overtook 3 athletes approaching the beach, ran up the beach, entered the lake and then drank 3 gallons of water. My heart rate had raised so far from the beach run (weird feeling) I nearly died. Luckily, I did not panic, but took my time to regain my composure whilst been overtaken by at least 5 athletes. I was completely unconcerned (another weird feeling) and got back into my stroke, overtaking the 5 athletes and another 4 before the end. We now had to run up to transition which was at least 400yds away, but up a 12% hill!!!! I felt great and had completed the swim in 47:43mins including transition 1 and was placed 54.

Bike: 80k.

France is a country of cyclists. Official. My strongest discipline was about to become my weakest in terms of position.

I started the cycle feeling ok, and had already decided I would ride exactly as I felt. I ate lots, I drank 3.75lits of fluids and I tried not to over exert myself. The 2 laps began with a steep climb at about 14% for a short burst, then became technical prior to the 7km climb. Then there was a fast descent into the valley, and a few nice roads back to begin the next lap. Unfortunately it was very windy on the nice flat sections which meant that the benefit was lost. The ascents were amazing, with great scenery (I only looked once coach!!) but with some fantastic cyclists passing me. They had decided to go flat out, whereas I was conscious that my run was weak, and I needed to keep some in reserve (best decision of my life).

I had probably 2 low points where I felt low and drained, but this is usual on a ride of this distance and terrain. The most important factor was keeping going at MY pace. It was very telling that towards the end of the cycle discipline I started to catch and overtake riders that had passed me earlier. One guy was stood on his pedals pushing like mad (on the flat) and had quite obviously "bonked" big style.

I finished the bike as 77th fastest in 2hrs.58.09, when normally I would be near to my swim position. I was not concerned though, as the run would dictate success or otherwise.

Run: 20k.

My training planned by Richard had involved loads of bike-run sessions. I would ride a 50mile bike quite hard, then jump off and run 8 miles. This was the most valuable training I had ever done. The run started well, with my legs hurting, but only as expected. The lactic build up is incredible, and athletes better than me were pulling up with cramp and fatigue.

The 2 lap run set off around the beautiful lake using my new fast cadence, and hardly any heel lift towards my bum, but nice knee lift at the front. After approx 2k a young girl pointed me up towards the trees and forest! My understanding of French made me believe there was food and drink ahead, but why up this track? Well, for the first time in my tri career I suddenly had to use my best fell running technique. The course went off-road and straight up. There was a slight climb over rocks, and then a 20/25% gradient for about 1.5km. I lived in France for 2 years and I quite easily picked up the amount of "Merde" shouted out by Frenchmen that had gone too quick on the bike! I just dug in and turned my mind off to the pain. Christ, I live in the Pennines; this was a soft run where I come from!

I noticed I was overtaking more athletes than were passing me. This has not happened since Jeff walker faked an injury at Coniston. I did not feel good, but I did not feel bad. I was ticking over non-stop. On the descent of the big hill I started to feel slight cramp, but managed to keep running.

The second lap became really hard, but still I just focused on my goal. It is probably the first event I have done where I never felt like jacking it in. The amount of dnf's at this stage amazed me (approx 20%), as this would never happen in the UK. Because most of our Athletes are usually only doing a couple, or even one event a year, they finish. The French just pack up and do another event next week.

I finished strong in 57th (1hr 38.47) place on the run, and 59th overall (5:24:19hrs). My run amazed me, until I worked out how many dropped out. But you gotta finish to register a time. I felt sick at the end for about 15mins, but knew I had managed to get everything right.

Conclusion.

Mark Anderton asked me how I felt the event went as a mark out of 10. I may be wrong but I give myself 10/10. My preparation was excellent, my race strategy was excellent and my mind-set was spot-on. I ate and drank well on the event and I never had any doubts that I would finish. The only way I could have improved was to be a much better/stronger athlete, which I am not yet. I have learnt that preparation is key, and I will never go into an event that is important to me, without real effort prior to the event.

4 years ago, I struggled to run 3 miles, I could not swim 5 lengths front-crawl without stopping and when I cycled 12 miles I rang my cyclist friend to boast (he did 40miles that weekend). Triathlon, and the three disciplines that it is based upon, have made me fitter than I ever imagined, given me loads of really good friends and training partners and my confidence has grown with the effect been a very successful career.

Some friends say that I am obsessed:-

OBSESSION IS A WORD USED BY THE LAZY TO DESCRIBE THE DEDICATED.

Future.

My next race report will be as a full Ironman. I have no doubts. I have no fears.

Nice, France, 19th June, 2005 is the venue and date.

My sincere thanks to my coach Richard and training partner Mark in preparing me for Carcassonne.

PARENTHOOD

A tongue in cheek recollection of the joys ahead that all existing parents will identify with, and all prospective parents will think twice about before their next undercover wrestling match.

Preparation for parenthood is not just a matter of reading books and decorating the nursery. Here are 12 simple tests for prospective parents to take, to prepare themselves for the real-life experience of being a mother or father.

Women: to prepare for maternity, put on a dressing gown and stick a beanbag down the front. Leave it there for 9 months. After 9 months, take out 10% of the beans.

Men: to prepare for paternity, go to the local chemist, tip the contents of your wallet on the counter, and tell the pharmacist to help himself. Then go to the supermarket. Arrange to have your salary paid directly to their head office. Go home. Pick up the paper. Read it for the last time.

Before you finally go ahead and have children, Find a couple who are already parents and berate them about their methods of discipline, lack of patience, appallingly low tolerance levels, and how they have allowed their children to run riot. Suggest ways in which they might improve their child's sleeping habits, toilet training, table manners and overall behavior. Enjoy it - it'll be the last time in your life that you will have all the answers.

To discover how the nights will feel, walk around the living room from 5pm to 10pm carrying a wet bag weighing approximately 8-12 lbs. At 10pm put the bag down, set the alarm for midnight, and go to sleep. Get up at 12 and walk around the living room again, with the bag, till 1am. Put the alarm on for 3am. Because you can't get back to sleep, get up at 2am and make a drink. Go to bed at 2.45am. Get up again at 3am when the alarm goes off. Sing songs in the dark until 4am. Put the alarm on for 5am. Get up. Make breakfast. Keep this up for 5 years. Look cheerful.

Can you stand the mess children make? To find out, smear peanut butter onto the sofa and jam onto the curtains. Hide a fish finger behind the stereo and leave it there all summer. Stick your fingers in the flowerbeds then rub them on the clean walls. Cover the stains with crayons. How does that look?

Dressing small children is not as easy as it seems: first buy an octopus and a string bag. Attempt to put the octopus into the string bag so that none of the arms hang out. Time allowed for this - all morning.

Take an egg carton. Using a pair of scissors and a pot of paint turn it into an alligator. Now take a toilet tube. Using only scotch tape and a piece of foil, turn it into a Christmas cracker. Last, take a milk container, a ping-pong ball, and an empty packet of Coco Pops and make an exact replica of the Eiffel Tower. Congratulations. You have just qualified for a place on the playgroup committee.

Forget the hatchback and buy a big Volvo estate. And don't think you can leave it out in the driveway spotless and shining. Family cars don't look like that. Buy a chocolate ice cream bar and put it in the glove compartment. Leave it there. Get a pound. Stick it in the cassette player. Take a family-size packet of chocolate biscuits. Mash them down the back seats. Run a garden rake along both sides of the car. There. Perfect.

Get ready to go out. Wait outside the toilet for half an hour. Go out the front door. Come in again. Go out. Come back in. Go out again. Walk down the front path. Walk back up it. Walk down it again. Walk very slowly down the road for 5 minutes. Stop to inspect minutely every cigarette end, piece of used

chewing gum, dirty tissue and dead insect along the way. Retrace your steps. Scream that you've had as much as you can stand, until the neighbors come out and stare at you. Give up and go back into the house. You are now just about ready to try taking a small child for a walk. Always repeat everything you say at least five times.

Go to your local supermarket. Take with you the nearest thing you can find to a pre-school child - a fully-grown goat is excellent. If you intend to have more than one child, take more than one goat. Buy your week's groceries without letting the goats out of your sight. Pay for everything the goats eat or destroy. Until you can easily accomplish this do not even contemplate having children.

Hollow out a melon. Make a small hole in the side. Suspend it from the ceiling and swing it from side to side. Now get a bowl of soggy Weetabix and attempt to spoon it into the swaying melon by pretending to be an aeroplane. Continue until half the Weetabix is gone. Tip the rest into your lap, making sure that a lot of it falls on the floor. You are now ready to feed a 12-month old baby. Learn the names of every character from Postman Pat, Fireman Sam and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. When you find yourself singing "Postman Pat" at work, you finally qualify as a parent. And remember: Insanity is hereditary. You get it from your children so be nice to your kids; they'll be the ones picking your retirement home!!

Taken from the Internet – Author unknown.

Things you can learn from your children

A king size waterbed holds enough water to fill a three bedroom house about 4 inches deep.

A 3-year-olds voice is louder than 200 adults in a crowded room.

When you hear the toilet flush and the words 'uh oh' its already too late.

Brake fluid mixed with bleach makes smoke, and lots of it.

Play dough and microwave should not be used in the same sentence.

Superglue is forever.

No matter how much jelly you put in the fish tank you still can't walk on water.

Water filters do not like jelly.

Videocassette recorders do not play marmite on toast.

Marbles in petrol tanks make lots of noise when driving.

Marbles in petrol tanks are very expensive to remove.

You do not want to know what that smell is.

Always look in the oven before switching it on. Plastic food does not cook very well in ovens.

The average response time for the fire brigade is about 10 minutes.

The spin cycle of a washing machine does not make earthworms dizzy.

It will, however, make cats dizzy.

Cats throw up twice their body weight when dizzy

Finally...

60% of men who read this will try mixing bleach and brake fluid.

Taken from The Scally Mag – a free magazine for the upper Calder Valley.