

Up and Running February 2014

Devil's Burden

Jill Horsburgh writes

Every year as the New Year dawns the question of the Devils Burden relay raises its horned head. Will we, won't we? Who wants to run which leg? Which runners are most evenly matched? Who can navigate leg 2? Who can work out the logistics of getting all our runners to the start of their leg and hopefully back from their finish? I have particular reason to run as good friends always host a Burns Supper the same evening and I don't feel that I've earned my haggis if I haven't trotted around the Lomond Hills a bit. Hence my determination to get a team entered.

Names came and names went. Numbers fluctuated. First we had too many, then not enough. Linlithgow were in the same position for their second team so with less than two days to go before the entry deadline, we combined forces. Being the only person who knew all team members I juggled names around, which was the easy bit. The inter-leg transport was way more complicated but Linlithgow came to the rescue with a logistical masterpiece and all we had to do was get ourselves to Falkland bright and early on the Saturday morning.

There wasn't really much bright about it as a fine drizzle set in just as the leg 1 runners made their way to the duck pond for the start and the forecast was set to worsen. Jennifer Newton from Linlithgow took the first leg (and much to my dismay was back and eating soup and cake before I had even left for the start of my run). At Strathmiglo she handed over to the youngsters of the team, Andrew Fish and Colin Partridge who had volunteered for the hardest leg. Conditions were pretty miserable and Colin was one of the few leg 2 runners braving West Lomond in shorts. The pair completed the leg in seconds over eighty minutes and bringing the team well up the field.

Meanwhile two pairs of leg 4 runners (self and Robin Morris plus Darren and Gerry from Linlithgow) were sitting at Holl Reservoir with rain battering on the windscreen and changing layers as you do. We were also debating when we would need to actually get out of the car and warm up. We had barely done this when out of nowhere came our leg 3 runner, Graham Burrows. Amazingly at this point the Lothianlithgow team were 5th of the 42 "early start" teams. Robin and I set off through the muddy break in the trees on a gradual climb to Ballo Reservoir and then through the limekilns to East Lomond. From there it was downhill all the way and at this point Robin's pedigree as a hillrunner shone through – still great on the descents.

Soon the factory, not the most picturesque bit of Falkland, but certainly a welcome sight, came into view. As we crossed the finish line we learned that we were 11th team to finish, not bad for a team thrown together at the last minute and with the combined age of the final 3 runners topping 180. Once the two starts were combined we finished 57th of 111

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teams in a total time of 3 hours 26.21. A great day out highlighting the camaraderie, co-operation and friendly rivalry of hill running...and yes, I'd earned my haggis. Give it a try next year.

East District League Broxburn Cross Country 18th January 2014

John Barclay writes

This was my first Cross Country outing for LRC and at times during the race I thought— it will be my last too. But despite the mud and the difficulty of keeping my balance on wet grassy slopes it was enjoyable in a strange punishing sort of way. No it was more than that - it was fun! (when I stopped).

I made three mistakes, first of all, I thought I would do a warm up recce of the course before the off. I came back to the tent thinking that's not too bad, however that recce failed to include the muddy loop round a field (a muddy quagmire) at the bottom of the course. In my ignorance I just assumed nobody will be running round that. We did – it was part of the course - and believe it or not that's where Martin decided to position himself to utter encouragement to toiling mud splattered runners.

The second mistake was that my so called "trail running shoes" didn't have the ferocious looking grips or studs or spikes that other runners were wearing. The result was that I was so busy concentrating on not falling that I didn't have the nerve to properly speed up and try to run fast. All my energy was tied up in not falling over. Oh well you live and learn - even at my age! Next year I'll get the proper shoes.

Finally, the last mistake was thinking that I could run the Edinburgh Park Run in the morning and then do the Cross Country at Broxburn in the afternoon, now I know you need every ounce of available energy for Cross Country.

The course was three laps it was undulating rather than hilly and apart from that bottom field (the muddy quagmire) on reasonable grassy paths and trails. Some of the grassy paths were slippery due to the camber on them. There was of course a large puddle (small pond) to be negotiated each time round and you have guessed correctly that was the vantage point for photographers and spectators!

There was a great turn out from Lothian Running Club members and a great performance from our ladies who ended up overall second in the league. Being a newcomer to Cross Country events I was amazed at the number of tents representing all the different athletic clubs. It seemed a well-run event with a good atmosphere.

There is something therapeutic about running a muddy cross country course on a grey winter's day especially when everybody else is in the house or at the shops.

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When I got home I was too dirty to be allowed in the house! My wife insisted on hosing me down in the garden first - only then was I allowed over the threshold.

A good day and a great run! I'll be back next year!

Canada Update

Sarah Inglis writes

It has been a while since I wrote a little piece for the up and running (since my first XC race) so here goes.....

The cross-country season in US/Canada is much shorter than Scotland. It starts early September and finishes in of November. I remember running my last race in November and thinking, surely that can't be cross country season over already? Since December I have had a good few weeks of training....had a nice Christmas and then flew to Phoenix, Arizona for 10 days over New Year for training camp with a group of 25 athletes from my university. Must add that has been my first sober Hogmanay in years (haha)! Everyone knowsthat, like my mum I love the sun! So this place was like heaven! Blue skies and sun around 25 degrees everyday was perfect! The location for training was also great. We were a 5min jog from desert like trails that went on for miles and miles. The track was 10min drive away and grass pitches around the corner. I was able to fit some non-running activities in around training...attending NBA basketball game and live bull-riding! The latter I was tempted to pay the \$40 fee to have a go but the coaches weren't too keen. Anyway, I would love to go back there for training....possible Lothian training camp next year?! Haha get organising Lana and Maximus!

After coming back I had a couple weeks before my first indoor race in Seattle. We travelled down on the morning of our race – no issues at the American border for once (they usually like to hassel Scottish immigrants especially dodgy ones like me!). My race was later in the day at 5pm, so arriving at 11.30am we had some time to hang about and cheer on team-mates. The race took place at the University of Washington and I have never seen facilities like this anywhere before. A 70,000 seater football stadium, yep 70,000! A 400m outdoor track, 309m indoor track, astroturf pitches, baseball arena and it goes on! The place is unbelievable; it has more facilities than Scotland and is a university campus. The races were being filmed, with large screens about the campus so I started feel this was a bigger race than I thought! My race had a few 'pro' athletes so I knew it would be a good chance to get a pb – I checked it had been long time since I had pb'd so i was looking forward to get out there and racing! The race had a pacemaker who was planning on going out at 73's...but we ended up going through 78's for first couple laps, I felt my chance of good time was gone but decided to just focus on beating people instead. A girl then upped the pace dramatically – and i followed this move, I held on to her until 2 laps to go where she pulled away. I

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finished in 9.26 and 3rd place this was new indoor pb and school record. So I was pleased with my opening race!

I now have a race in Seattle this weekend (Feb 1st) racing a 1 mile then next weekend we are off to Idaho for 1km and 800m relay. The Championship races start end of Feb where I am competing in Edmonton two separate weekends. I am loving the opportunity to travel and see different places when racing – although will be missing Nationals at Callendar Park for first time in 10 years.....yep that makes me feel old! Good luck to all competing there!

I've got to get back to studying (*yeah right haha) see you all in May when I'm back for couple weeks!

Run for your life

Neal Drummond writes

I took up running in my mid forties, the result of a crowing remark from a younger colleague – “I could take old Neal, over a couple of miles” – and the reply from the boss man – “I don't know, the swimming, the cycling... he looks after himself?” A 10K, a gasping twentysomething (he now teaches BodyPump), a few youngsters passed on a hill in Granton.... I could say I was hooked, but not quite. I could train smarter, I could do it better. The next year, in Bathgate, brakes off, I did.

I could go further, too. Up hill and down to the sea, then back up the Donkey Brae. And, if seven miles, why not thirteen? I sat in that big pub in South Shields. My cousin's 21st Great North. My first. The look on his face as he walked through the door, and clocked me sitting with a pint, will live with me forever. Now I was hooked.

And so it went and so it went. I realised I was never going to be world class, but appreciated that there were more modest goals I could set. I made many friends of various abilities, inside and outside of our club. Nobody (and this is rare in sport) ever condescended to me. I got adventurous about the locations – Budapest, Berlin, Munich, and my favourite, the Round Cumbrae. How clever of Slartibartfast to design an island exactly ten miles in circumference.

I lived for training on Sundays with the girls around Dechy Law, and Friday nights at the track. A generation of Lothain athletes grew up dreading the “you can't let the old guy beat you” cry from lane two.

I joked that I ran because of my family history. My mother was one of five. none of whom celebrated a 70th birthday. My people, being from the north of England, have an industrially unhealthy diet; we regard lard as a delicacy.

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Then the training started to get harder. I ran a pants leg on a Round Arran. I made up the numbers in a Helensburgh 10K, trailing the pack by a mile, encouraged from their driveways by the good citizens of the town.

It was depressing. Realistically, I was better than this. Seventeen minutes better, and a mere year before. So I did the logical thing, and kept it to myself. I gave up running, feigning injury, stopped swimming, even on holiday, unless there was a float-in bar, and went for a sauna at Bannatyne's, assuring Kathy that I had "been to the gym". The obvious signs grew: stopping for a breather walking up Fleshmarket Close, stopping for a breather on the way up to the chippie, stopping for a breather on the way down from the chippie.

The tipping point was Wallace Monument, September 2013, The Day Of The Four Stops On The Way Up. I'd shown weakness in front of the family.

Later that week, the doctor bricked it twice; once when she heard the family history, and once when she heard the heart murmur. She told me I was going to St John's.

"When?"

"Now."

From then on, it was pretty straightforward. Everybody panicked in their own way. But the nub of the matter is this is, I had running in the bank. At every stop, health professionals stressed that the outcome would be better, because I was, at 59 and 70Kg, young and fit. And because I ran throughout my middle age. The rehab girls were doing cartwheels. Their more usual clientele are, well, not so rehab friendly.

The precise problem was a totally knacked aortic valve. I now have that of a doubtlessly peeved pig. The surgical team and RIE Ward 102 staff are beyond compare. I have heard as many pig jokes as I want to hear, this lifetime, thank you. Everybody has been so very kind, sending cards and wishes.

On the first of February 2014, I took a light jog, somewhat less than nine weeks after surgery. Running for my life, indeed.

Training

"Failure to prepare is to prepare for failure" – Benjamin Franklin

As a member of Lothian Running Club you have privileged access to a number of great weekly training sessions. Some are more popular than others but all sessions are great opportunities to enhance your own personal training plan.

Sunday sessions with Martin Hyman (or another coach) at Dechmont Law are a great off-road experience of intervals and activities in woodlands. Some adults go for a group run and join in the session towards the end, leaving the juniors for the first part.

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Tuesdays with Martin Hyman at the Meadows in Edinburgh, which Martin has run for 30 years now, offer a variety of laps of between 220m & 1253m on the flat paths.

Wednesdays are in and around various parts of Livingston, taken each week but different coaches. Depending on the weather and time of year they will be intervals either on or off road. The training rota now includes detailed descriptions of each session on offer.

Thursday sessions are at Craigswood Sport Centre track, with Steve Cottom. A variety of track intervals (or sometimes grass next to the track) for some speed and endurance work.

Friday sessions are a busy evening at Craigswood Sport Centre track with a number of sessions on offer from a number of coaches. There is the main adult session of intervals. An adapted session for 12 to 16year olds. Multi Event Development for the under 12's. And a sprint session. Detailed plans for the main sessions are on the training rota.

There is something for everyone and all are welcome to any session regardless of age or ability, so why not give them a try and prepare for success.

So, how fit are you?

Alan Moffat writes

On 26th February, the Lothian Training session at Inveralmond will be the Bleep Test.

Arranged by Martin Hyman, this session is an ideal opportunity to gauge your fitness. All are welcome, and in fact encouraged, to come along.

The test involves a "track" 20m long with a line at each end. Each runner stands behind a line at one end and, on the start bleep, runs up their lane, to put a toe on, or over, the far line. Then turns to run back on the next bleep, and so on.

At first the bleeps are very slow. (9 seconds to cover 20m. Fast walking pace.) If you can just manage this, your fitness is "level 1"

After a minute the bleeps become slightly faster for level 2. After another minute they get a little faster still for level 3.

You go on and on, without a rest. The bleeps get faster at each level till you can no longer keep up. You can't transport oxygen fast enough. Your fitness level is the fastest one that you could manage. Most of you will get up to level 3, unless you are a super vet, or have a health problem. The super fit will get to level 12 or more.

So, how fit are you? Come along on 26th February to find out. And why not come along to some training sessions in advance to improve your chances of a good result.

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Training Rota for February 2014

All sessions suitable for all ages (under 8's must be accompanied by an adult) and adapted for age and ability. Help from parents of younger children for our coaches is most appreciated. Contact info@lothianrunningclub.co.uk if you would like to know more about how you can help.

Sessions at Craigswood SC track, £2 per person or £5 for family

All other sessions £1 per person

Date	Location	Session	Coaches
Sun 2nd Feb and every Sunday thereafter	Dechmont Law car park @ 10am	Intervals and varying activities off road in wood & field	Martin or alternative coach
Tues 4th Feb and every Tues thereafter	The Meadows, Edinburgh @ 7.30pm for 7.55 start	Choice of intervals	Martin
Wed 5th Feb	Inveralmond @ 7pm (Start at entrance to St. Margaret's)	Fiddlers Handicap (Winter Course) <i>Click here for more details</i> <i>(Reflective clothing advised, required for younger athletes)</i>	No coach
Thurs 6th Feb And every Thurs thereafter	Craigswood Track 6.50 for 7pm start	Intervals	Steve
Fri 7th Feb	Craigswood Track	Main: Intervals (see more) Adapted main: 12 - 16yrs 6 - 11yrs (multi event dev) Sprints	Susan Saran Alan Rita
Wed 12th Feb	Inveralmond	Civic Centre Reps / Relay (see more)	Saran
Fri 14th Feb	Craigswood Track	Main: Intervals (see more) Adapted main: 10 - 16yrs 6 - 9yrs (multi event dev) Sprints	Alan Susan Saran Rita
Wed 19th Feb	Inveralmond Committee meeting @ 8.15pm all welcome	Howden Park Hills (On grass if dry) (see more)	Edel
Fri 21st Feb	Craigswood Track	Main: Intervals (see more) Adapted main: 10 - 16yrs 6 - 9yrs (multi event dev) Sprints	Susan Saran "" Rita
Wed 26th Feb	Inveralmond	Bleep Test /Group Runs (see more)	Martin
Fri 28th Feb	Craigswood Track	Main: Intervals (see more) Adapted main: 12 - 16yrs 6 - 9yrs (multi event dev) Sprints	Alan Susan Saran Rita

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