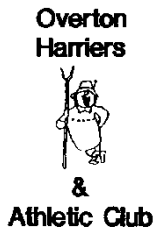


HARRIERS NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of Overton Harriers and Athletic Club



Roundup

Great report from Lucy Sykes on her exploits on the Marathon des Sables, a tremendous, if slightly mad, achievement.

We also have reports on the Salisbury 10 and the first Monday Night Veterans' Southern Track and Meet at Portsmouth.

The club AGM is on Thursday 26th May, at around 8:45 after training and we have the first Summer Handicap on 12th May.

After a hiatus of two years the mob matches against Basingstoke are on again; the away match at Cliddesden is on Thursday 30th June Mob Match with the home fixture being on Thursday 28th July

Enjoy your running
Piers

Salisbury 10

3rd April

from Neil McCann

It was a cold, dry morning in Salisbury when we arrived. First of all, we went to the race headquarters to pick up our numbers and free t-shirt. I was quite taken aback when picking up my t-shirt the man looked at my belly and said "Men's large". A bit personal I thought. I then realised that I had put my race number on which covered that area and the number had next to it "ML"!

After that we went to warm up on the track and it wasn't long before the temperature started to rise. A Harriers vest was all you needed once we started. This 10 mile race is quite pretty and takes you out of the city.

The race website says that it "follows a scenic route north of Salisbury following the banks of the River Avon through the gentle undulating Woodford Valley with fine views of the cathedral spire on the return leg".

I haven't run 10 miles for a while so I was happy to just get round and enjoy the race and the views. The first half of the race is pretty flat and not too undulating. However, the second half is slightly more "undulating" and there is a tricky hill at about 8 miles thrown in just as you are feeling quite tired!

However, we are used to hills in Overton so nothing that we couldn't do!

After I had dragged myself up the hill at 8 miles I knew that the last couple of miles were pretty flat and once you see the Salisbury spire you know you aren't too far from the finish.

The finish is on the track and you can hear others finishing when you are on the footpath outside, so once you hear this you know you haven't got far to go. It wasn't a PB for me but I was just happy to finish and enjoy it. This race is a race I would recommend....it's scenic, only a little challenging in parts and well supported.

Sarah, who had tested negative for covid on the day of the race, went on to test positive the next day. She thought she felt tired but thought it was the after effects of the Combe Gibbet from the week before. We managed to get full teams out for both men and women so very well done to all of the Harriers who ran in these still strange times.

Harrier	Chip Times	Pos	Cat. Pos.
Sean Holmes	59.15	23 rd	1 st V50
Hannah Bliss	1:07:27	98 th	3 rd Snr Lady
Gareth Juliff	1:09:01	118 th	21 st V40
Jack Steed	1:12:52	181 st	66 th SM
Lucy Pearson	1:16:45	238 th	45 th FV45
Charlie Duncombe	1:19:20	292 nd	74 th SM
Sarah McCann	1:25:37	379 th	10 th V50
Jasmine Kalton	1:31:34	437 th	29 th SF
Neil McCann	1:33:02	492 nd	40 th V50

746 finished

13th Men's Team, 9th Ladies Team



36th Marathon des Sables 2

March / April 2022, Morocco
from Lucy Sykes

Our first day in the desert was spent completing medical and technical checks. The MdS is self-sufficient with runners carrying everything excluding water and tent; there are strict rules regarding race fitness and equipment. Bags must start between 6.5kg and 15kg including all compulsory kit, food and 'luxuries' such as toothbrush or sleep mat. Mine weighed 8.7kg, slightly heavier than I hoped but not unexpected as I was carrying almost 50% more food than the minimum 2000kcal/day. This was a calculated risk balancing extra weight against the benefits of being better fuelled. That evening was spent admiring the vast African night sky, I saw a shooting star.

Sunday 27th: stage 1, 30km

Anticipation was high as many runners had been postponed several times through the pandemic, some were returning hoping to finally complete the race following the difficult 35th edition in October 2021. After the daily start line briefing from race director Patrick Bauer, including birthday announcements and the traditional 'Highway to Hell' soundtrack, we were off. I paced myself carefully knowing that there was a hard week ahead and the Sahara is considerably hotter than my training ground of the Alps in winter! Several hours spent in saunas appeared to pay off as the heat was manageable and I completed day 1 feeling strong. A highlight was talking to 'Spider-Man' who completed the entire race in full costume for charity.

Monday 28th: stage 2, 38km

Day 2 was both longer and more challenging as it included sand dunes plus a lengthy straight section across stony ground where a prolonged sandstorm made the going extremely tough. After a brief stint following a compass bearing as I couldn't see more than a few metres ahead, the storm eventually cleared and I approached the final jebel climb. This was where my mountain legs kicked in and I pushed up the rocky gorge with good pace. A super-fun sandy descent and short run into bivouac was followed by a visit to the Doc Trotters medical tent for some blister care advice.

Tuesday 29th: stage 3, 30km

This was one of my strongest days as we were routed over three more jebels, the middle of which had a steep rope-assisted sandy ascent which sapped energy from tired legs in the midday heat. My alpine training came to the fore and I whizzed past lots of other runners, enjoying the summit views and breeze.

Once back at bivouac I and my 7 tent mates focussed on preparing for the long stage: hydrating, 'washing' (sort of!), and getting calories in with a protein shake, salty snacks, and rehydrated food.

Wednesday 30th: stage 4, 85km

My other strength is my ability to speed-walk for very long distances. This was exactly what was required on the long stage which included a dried-out lake crossing, various river beds, wide stony plains, sand dunes, and three smaller jebels each boasting spectacular views. The weather was overcast and slightly cooler, we even had a few spots of rain! This made the going much easier, as did linking up with a fellow runner from 55km so we could encourage each other to keep pushing the pace into the night. We finished just before midnight, managing a 'sprint' across the line. This was a real achievement as it meant we had 24+ hours completely free to rest. Apart from the necessary admin the following day I only left my tent to cheer the final runner (barefoot!) over the line at 5pm, and to attend the random string quartet / opera singer evening performance put on in the middle of the bivouac.

Friday 1st April: stage 5, 42km

By now my feet were in a bad way with multiple blisters and several loose nails. They were extremely painful and although my legs were ok it was only with painkillers on board that I could even contemplate another marathon.



The day was hot which also restricted my pace, but I gave it my best shot, maintaining my speed-walk throughout. Unfortunately other runners seemed to find another gear and I dropped several places down the rankings. My final position was 295 overall, 33rd female and 17th in my age category which I'm pleased with. We crossed the line to receive a medal and hug from Patrick before heading back to our tents.

Saturday 2nd: stage 6, 8km

This is known as the charity stage and although it's not timed it is compulsory. Friends and family of competitors had travelled to join in and everyone walked together through spectacular sand dunes to the finish. There was scalding hot sweet mint tea as at the end of every stage and buses to take us to our hotels. The UK contingent stay in the lovely Berbère Palace which provided magnificent buffets, plenty of beer, and a somewhat chilly pool for some much needed R&R before flying home.

The UK team for MdS is coordinated by MoreThanRunning which makes the whole experience hassle-free. Safety is a priority for the MdS organisation with plenty of water available and race staff on hand to help with whatever is needed. Supporters can send daily emails from home to runners which are printed and delivered to tents each evening, a welcome source of morale especially any jokes which were shared around.

By far the highlight for me was the lovely people I met, ran with, cheered on and was cheered on by. The camaraderie was fantastic and truly life-affirming. I am proud to say that I've raised over £3000 for the Stroke Association: thank you so much to everyone who has generously donated. It's not too late if you have a few pennies to spare, please visit www.justgiving.com/DrLucySykes

Southern Vets Track & Field

25th April, Portsmouth

from Piers Puntan

A small select group of Harriers dashed down to Portsmouth for the Monday evening meet. Such was the numbers that Harriers did quite a few events that were outside their "best" disciplines to get some points for the team. Highlight of the night was Keith Vallis' win in the 2k walk.

Men's		Ladies	
1. Basingstoke	151	Southampton	154
2. Southampton	138	Winchester	138
3. Havant	102	Basingstoke	103
4. Winchester	95	Aldershot	77
5. Overton	73	Havant	55
6. Portsmouth	66	Portsmouth	47
7. AFD	57	Overton	18
8. Fleet	25	Fleet	0



April's Parkrun Results

	02/04/22	09/04/22	16/04/22	23/04/22	30/04/22
Basingstoke					
Terry Clarke	25:31	25:23	25:42	28:18	
Amy Jewell	32:04	31:56			
Emily Battershall			25:08		
Grace Cox			25:55		
Andover					
Sarah McCann	24:43				
Peter Mitchell	24:23		20:53	19:33	
Jasmine Kalton	36:04		26:53	30:27	32:15
Monique Van Nueten		28:58			
Imogen Collins			21:41		
Michael Ball			23:59	23:10	
Hannah Bliss				20:28	
Gareth Juliff				22:11	
Piers Puntan				26:17	
Charlie Duncombe					32:16
Tetbury Goods Shed					
Matthew Wateridge		21:04			
Frimley Lodge					
Dave Bush		20:00			19:47
Harcourt Hill					
Gavin Roberts		23:15			
Great Salterns					
Matthew Wateridge		22:18			
Abingdon					
Gavin Roberts			22:17		
Delamere					
Katie Brothers			26:07		26:49
Southall					
Matthew Wateridge			22:59		
Salisbury					
Cath Wheeler			20:59		
Lee-on-Solent					
Claire Boyle			26:01		
Walmer & Deal					
Neil Martin			20:41		
Woolacombe					
Mike Peters			25:00		
Banstead					
Dave Bush				20:40	
Reading					
Amy Jewell				31:23	
Irchester					
Matt Wateridge				23:16	
Didcot					
Gavin Roberts					22:28
Waterford					
Piers Puntan					25:06
Judy Hewitt					34:18
Marlborough Common					
Neil Martin					19:48