

MALDWYN HARRIERS OCTOBER 2013 UPDATE

With news of much long-haul race activity, latest cross-country action and yet another therapeutic mud bath for certain of our athletes, not to mention news of a special one off run to commemorate one of our late inspirational figures and details of our Christmas meal, welcome to the October news update

ROAD

We'll start on tarmac, then, and news from what is one of the busiest months in the road race calendar. True to form, our Harriers stepped up to the line gallantly and in numbers, no more so than at...

Cardiff Half Marathon, 6th October 2013

In fact we start and finish this week's road roundup with Andrew Davies. To run under 70 minutes in any circumstances is no mean achievement but to do so as part of a 23 mile training run in preparation for a marathon later in the month is hugely impressive. Andy's time of 69:06 might have been some way short of his best but it was still good enough for a podium finish in the Welsh Championships and, by his own admission, he felt comfortable throughout. Honestly, some people...

The other notable Harrier performance was a 1:25:38 PB for Martin Copus who has kindly provided the following personal account of race day and the run itself:

"5.45 is a stupid time of the morning and I wasn't overly impressed to see it on race day. After a quick shower, attaching the race number to my vest and trying to remember where in my bag I left my compression socks it was time for breakfast. Much to his dismay, I had to tell Dave the novice that a bacon-based breakfast was not part of a runner's pre-race preparation. After polishing off 4 Weetabix and a banana it was time to head to Cardiff and get cracking.

After finding the only free car park in Cardiff we strolled through Bute Park towards the start zone as Dave starts to panic as he can't see many runners that might finish behind him. We get to the start zone and I direct him to his coloured start line and take my stuff to the baggage

area. Wearing a fetching bin bag over my vest I head through the castle to the white zone.

30 minutes until the start and I realise that the start line is incredibly close to where I'm warming up. Stretches done and the elite athletes turn up just in front of me (closest I'm ever likely to get to them!). On the double decker bus with the dignitaries Colin Jackson is ready to get us underway.

Gun goes and I'm across the line in 2 seconds flat. First couple of miles are nice and flat, the pace is comfortable and I'm into a good rhythm. As the miles tick off I start to work out what sort of time I should finish in and it is pretty close to PB pace. 1.25.41 is the magic number as I head into the second half of the race and I'm still feeling fairly fresh.

Miles 7, 8, 9 and 10 come and go and time is still just about on my side as I head towards the lake in Roath Park. Slight uphill section negotiated and the legs are well and truly stiffening up when I spot a couple of familiar faces, Ffion and 'Edgar' Price, shouting at me on the side of the road just before mile marker 11, I've got 15 minutes left for that PB.

Prior to the race I wasn't even thinking about a quick time but missing out after getting this close would be so frustrating. Bit of downhill on the way to the last mile and time is getting tight. Head down, dig deep. In my coaching capacity I wouldn't recommend looking at your watch as frequently as I was but at this stage I was on a mission.

Into the final straight, 200 metres left and the line is in sight, now or never time. With a final sprint, and a dip the aforementioned Welsh World Champion would have been proud of, I cross the line and stop my watch.

1.25.38! PB by a massive 3 seconds! Job Done!

Medal, T-shirt, bag reclaim and get changed before I head to the runner's village. The offer of a free beer is too good to turn down and I wander past the sponsor's tent and get my photo taken with Mr Jackson, (he says he has never heard of anyone dipping over the line in a distance race).

All in all a very good day with a very unexpected PB as a bonus. Same time next year?"



Celebrity-fixated running obsessive achieves long-time ambition of being photographed with 1:25 Maldwyn marathon legend Martin Copus

I must remember to ask Martin where that free car park was. Mine was anything but!

Of the other Maldwyn-registered finishers listed in the official results here is how they did (we should point out that one or two of the runners named are strangers to the membership list and it may well be that they exaggerated their association with the Harriers in order to save themselves the price of a well-earned post-race pint or two)

Paul Pritchard 1:52:18

Janette Graham 1:52:55 (Jan's second sub-2 hour clocking inside a month)

Sarah Hamer 1:57:12

Estriana Frel 2:04:02

Liz Williams 2:05:29

Becky Hillman 2:06:54

Jill Hillman 2:06:55 (we think Becky owes Jill a big bunch of flowers and a daughterly hug for having paced her to yet another one second victory over her mum)

Cyndy Humphreys 2:07:11

Paul Hillman 2:17:09

Sylvia Price 2:49:55

Well done to all these Harriers (genuine and otherwise)

Honourable mention, too, to our old compadre Richie Jones who clocked a stunningly good 1:20:48 to place him 8th in the M50-54 category.

Chester Marathon, 6th October 2013

Glyn Fletcher's bid to break 3 hrs for the 26.2 mile event came to nought as he battled gamely with a heel injury, finishing in a still respectable 3:08:42 (9th M50-54). His post-race comments were much more succinct than Martin's at Cardiff and are best not repeated here.

Birmingham Half Marathon, 20th October 2013

Hats off to Haf Leonard who negotiated the tricky "second city" course and that tough hill between 10 and 12 miles in a time of 2:57:18

Snowdonia Marathon, 26th October 2013

In pretty unforgiving conditions, Chris Atherton recorded 3:38:01 with Glyn Fletcher just a few places behind in 3:39:02. Says Glyn: *"I really struggled this year. In fact I was half an hour slower than last time. Not only was the wind challenging but my heel had been hurting since Chester and started to affect my running from about 8 miles. It's time to rest for a few days and then run on grass for a while – keep off the roads!"*

BMW Frankfurt Marathon, 27th October 2013

Andrew Davies ran the fastest marathon by a Welsh runner in more than four years in clocking 2:20:35, which also took five minutes off his previous best mark (it's a new club record, you'll not be too surprised to learn). His fine performance was good enough for 28th place overall and 4th fastest Briton on the day.

Unfortunately this leaves Andy still adrift of the 2:18 he needs to gain automatic qualification for next year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Said Andrew "The plan was to go under 2:20 but that was always going to be a challenge in the very windy conditions and so I'm happy with the result. I decided to run with two experienced marathons runners who were aiming for 2:19. However at half way we were behind schedule and so I struck out with the lead women and tucked into a pack of runners which gave me some shelter from the wind. Luckily, I was able to at a good pace and was able to overtake some of the top British runners in the last 3 or 4 miles. However by then I'd forgotten about times and was just intent on finishing in as high a position as possible".

Andy intends having another bash at the Wales "A" standard next spring.

FELLS

One result late in, which meant it missed the September update, is **Bury Ditches, 29th September 2013** in which Chris Atherton was 7th in 42:09 and John Murphy finished in 26th place with a time of 49:31.

Twin Peaks, Aberystwyth, 6th October 2013

While several of his club colleagues were pounding the roads in one or other big city event, Bernie Jones was content to dog it out over the lumpy bumpy bits, registering a time of 1:01:20 to finish in 50th place in this Aberystwyth AC event.

Worcestershire Beacon, 12th October 2013

Billed as being “not for the faint-hearted and definitely not a fun run!” (their underline and exclamation mark) it is a tribute to Steve Orrells who, following a period of illness, gave it a go and in his own inimitable expression “rolled it”, 20 years after first competing in the event.

Breidden Hills Fell Race, 13th October 2013

Tim Davies (representing Mercia) won this well supported annual Mercia Fell Runners event at Criggion in a time of 54:20,

Roland Stafford (7th in 1:00:17) and Ed Davies (11th in 1:02:08 and 1st M55-59) also representing Mercia and Bernie Jones (1:19:09) were the other “Maldwyn” interests.

UKA British Fell and Hill Relay Championships, Llanberis 20th October 2013

Tim Davies helped Mercia A to second place in this jamboree featuring the best fell teams in the UK not to mention some of the UK's top international exponents of this tough art.

Tim's third stage “double leg” with Graham Gristwood was the second fastest third stage of the day but wasn't enough to overhaul eventual winners Dark Peak (love the name).

Roland Stafford (Mercia B) and Ed Davies (Mercia V40) were the other Harriers on show.

OMM, Brecon Beacons, 26/27 October 2013

I had to look up OMM and on the evidence of what I read was surprised that the word “masochism” didn’t make it into the title. The Original Mountain Marathon is run in pairs over two days and involves the need for orienteering skills as well as athleticism and endurance (which renders some of us ineligible on all three counts). Facing the challenge were our very own Paul Beeson and his running partner Matthew Hand.

Paul takes up the story:

“What fun we had over the 26/27th October in the Brecon Beacons. We thought it would be only right to enter this year’s OMM as it was being run on our doorstep in the Beacons National Ppark, so we entered the B class and duly registered along with 1600 other fools for two days impersonating drowned rats ploughing through peat bogs & swollen rivers in the Black Mountains. Saturday’s 39k and Sunday’s jolly of 20k was split by a civilised night of wild camping on a steep farm field in a howling gale with our tiny tent (which we had to carry) being either normal tent shaped or totally flattened on our faces shaped. Such fun for 14 hrs.

Overall we ended up 2nd vet team in the B course, beaten by an even older team through the handicap system but were pleased with our times and navigation choices - never easy in hailstorms. Amazing to see how happy all were back at H.Q on sunday afternoon after being well & truly tested by a good old Welsh winter weekend in the hills. I’m sure most of us were delirious with relief at having got through it unscathed. Can’t wait for the next one”.

(Footnote to this month’s Fell section

You may have noticed a distinct lack of fell running photos or links to the usual site over the past couple of months. This is because our good friend Alastair Tye of Fell Running Pictures is in hospital having suffered a stroke in September. We wish Al the very best for a full and speedy recovery).

Mudrunner

Maybe it's a sign that the Maldwyn love affair with the twice-yearly Eastnor Castle events is on the wane in that the names of only two club registered runners could be found in the results for the **Mudrunner Classic** on **20th October 2013**. Of course it may be that several more of us were representing one or more of the imaginatively named scratch teams (most of which are cringe-worthy and a good number of which are extremely near the knuckle). Anyway, very well done to Jess Evans (1:41:58) and Andre Hutchinson (1:42:10) on their typically gutsy performances and apologies to anyone else lost in the mix – let us know if we've missed you out, please.

STOP PRESS – Just seen Jill and Paul Hillman's names down as "unattached" (1:48:51 and 2:03:04 respectively).

Cross-Country

Shropshire Young Athletes League, 20th October 2013

Race two of the Shropshire young Athletes League, then, and it's over to our intrepid reported Chris "The Travelling Harrier" Copus for his monthly serving of information and entertainment (a Royal Charter must surely beckon).

“And so to Packwood Haugh School and what a good course. We had undulation, some 'squidgy bits', a climb through a wood, a nice little downhill section and a proper hill. I bet those who complained about my 'hill reps' the previous Wednesday were grateful to me when they saw that!

Twenty athletes this time round – a third more than the previous outing. Once again some performances to gladden the heart; a win, two second places and a further five top ten finishes.

Just the two U17 ladies in action here. Chloe Evans ran another well judged race. After the early exchanges 2nd place was never in doubt, some way ahead of the 3rd placed athlete. Margo Martin is a coach's dream. Never complains and works hard from gun to tape. No exception here as she battled to a fine 7th place.



Chloe Evans (left) battled to a clear second place in the U17 girls' race (photo: John Thomas)

On the subject of hard working athletes, what about Meg Randell!? Contesting the lead throughout in the U15s Meg clearly had a plan. With about 500m to go Meg suddenly sprinted up the hill and took about 30m out of her startled opponent. It was a lead she would not relinquish. A superb effort. Despite looking good in the early stages Olivia Sofianos unfortunately succumbed to injury and failed to complete the course.



Meg Randell romps home to win the U15 girls race (photo: John Thomas)

Good stuff too from the boys with all 3 in the top 9 for joint 1st place in the team competition. Joseph Crutchley narrowly failed to repeat his Oswestry victory, eventually settling for 2nd place in a hard fought race. Niall Thomas demonstrated that, despite earlier misgivings, he is suited to cross country. 8th and looking good. One place further back was Kaya Saul returning from injury. A good run as he steadily picked his way through the field.



Joseph Crutchley – an impressive 2nd place in the U15 boys (photo: John Thomas)

There were also some fine performances in the U13 girls. Shannon Walker (17th), Kate Jerman (21st) and debutante Caterina Nascimbeni (35th) all did well in a very competitive field. I'm sure there's more to come from these young ladies. For the boys Dillon Gill continued his impressive start to life as a Harrier with a terrific run for 9th. Elliot Howse was on the wrong end of some 'argy-bargy' at the start but eventually recovered well to finish 32nd.

In the U11 girls we had another Saul returning from injury, Mary this time, leading the team home in 25th. A little further back and a repeat of Oswestry's sibling rivalry as Phoebe Carter again edged out Aurora, 36th to 38th. I like the look of Josh Wynne in the boys section. An assured run to claim 8th spot - really promising. 2nd Harrier home was the ever reliable Amren Stephenson (42nd) just ahead of another first timer Antonio Nascimbeni (46th). Tyler Muscroft and David Kinloss both found it hard on their debuts. They stuck at it though and made it round though in 48th and 49th respectively.

What a shame there wasn't a coaches/helpers race at the end. It was a cracking course.

Next up is Much Wenlock on 24th November. There's still a few to swell our ranks so it could be good!

British Athletics UK Cross Challenge

Maldwyn “old boy” Gwynant Jones registered a solid 9th place in the men’s U20 race (23:22) while Joseph Crutchley impressed with his 15th spot (14:47) in the U15 boys’ event – remember this is Jo’s first year of competition in the older age group.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Pete Williams Run, Newtown High School, 9th November 2013

The Pete Williams run takes place on Saturday 9th November, starting at 1p.m. from Newtown High School. The run is the idea of Nick Glynn, former Newtown resident and a member of the old Newtown AC and is in memory of his coach, mentor and Newtown AC stalwart Pete who passed away 20 years ago this year.

Anyone who knew Pete or simply wishes to support the event and run all or part of the 3 mile route of the town which Pete mapped out back in the early 1980s is welcome to take part.

Nick’s Facebook page can be accessed here for more details.

https://www.facebook.com/events/532588303486273/?ref_dashboard_filter=upcoming

**Maldwyn Harriers Christmas Meal, Elephant and Castle, 6th
December 2013**

A reminder that the club's Christmas meal will be at the "Ellie" on Friday 6th December, 7pm for 7.30p.m.

Visit <http://www.maldwynharriers.org.uk/christmas13.html> for more details and please contact June should you wish to book or have further enquiries.

If you have any news, views or photos of any events involving Maldwyn Harriers members then we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Ian at fraserman1@hotmail.co.uk