

January 2008 race reports up to 26 December 2007

11 October Ramsey Bakery Firemans Run round 1

85 runners turned out for the first race of the series which had a mass start. Kevin Vondy won the 3 lapper with new club member Sally Walker the first women home. New member Kevin Deakes was the first club member home in the one lap.

3 laps

1. Kevin Vondy	28.38	31. Alan Kelly	37.08
6. Alan Postlethwaite	30.30	32. Dave Anderson	37.15
11. Chris Cale	31.22	33. Alan Pilling	38.54
13. Mike Gellion	32.17	35. Martin Bell	39.18
15. James Bishop	32.57	38. Geoff Hall	39.59
16. Steven Brown	32.58	41. Moira Hall	43.09
21. Sally Walker	34.24	42. Steve Willmott	44.35
23. Gill Churcher	34.32	43. Wendy Sandford	44.46
26. Dave Corrin	35.18	46. Lesley Christian	47.13
29. Les Brown	36.15		

1 lap

2. Kevin Deakes	10.00	28. Maureen Kelly	15.35
11. Dave Nixon	12.32	29. Ingrid Sugden	15.35
25. Sue Ackroyd	15.26	31. M. Kelly	16.45

See further on
for Dave
Anderson's
Career so far,
(by Robbie
Lambie) and
Bethany's Year

14 October Manx Gas Cross Challenge round 1

This was held at Nobles Park and organised by IOMVAC.

Men

7. Andy Fox	38.09
9. Peter Kaneen	39.46
13. Dave Newton	42.45
14. Michael George	43.11
19. Lewis Veale	45.34
21. Les Brown	47.44
23. Ian Callister	48.57
24. Alan Pilling	50.09
25. Doug Corkill	51.37
26. Geoff Hall	53.38

Women

1. Gail Griffiths	32.44
4. Liz Corran	38.43
7. Bethany Clague	41.29

Short Course

10. Moira Hall	18.43
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14 October Welbeck Hotel one hour walking challenge

There were 43 entrants for this taster for the winter walking league, where the object is to walk as far as you can in one hour.

2. Vinny Lynch	9,914 metres
9. Dave Corrin	8,846
17. Brian Cowley	8,168
18. Alan Gault	8,168
20. Miriam Kelly	7,797

25 October Blackrock Investment Vets' Autumn handicap 6 mile run and 5 km walk

Run

Actual times

1. Alan Postlethwaite	36.54	15. James Bishop	39.24
2. Gill Churcher	42.01	16. Martin Bell	47.55
3. Kevin Vondy	35.07	17. Geoff Hall	47.28
4. Mike Gellion	39.00	19. Rob Gillanders	45.05
5. Peter Cooper	41.34	20. Lesley Christian	53.28
6. Kevin Deakes	37.41	21. Sue Ackroyd	56.28
7. Roger Moughtin	41.49	22. Steve Willmott	49.53
8. Robbie Lambie	39.32	23. Wendy Sandford	52.59
9. Neil Wilson	38.17	24. Ingrid Sugden	58.35
10. Stephen Brown	38.20	25. Maureen Kelly	58.35
11. Les Brown	42.24	26. Bethany Clague	54.45
12. Paul Cubbon	37.14	27. David Quine	53.01
13. Moira Hall	49.54	28. Peter Pierce	51.15
14. Alan Kelly	43.35		

Walk Actual times

1. Jock Waddington	24.54	2. Jane Mooney	31.50
4. Simon Cox	30.04	5. Vinny Lynch	28.28
6. Peter Kaneen	22.51	7. Sarah Goldsmith	36.32
8. John Stubbs	30.06	9. Margie Killey	34.08
10. Michael George	24.54	11. Ian Callister	30.24
12. Brenda Charlton	41.24	13. Brian Brough	41.24

27 October Winter hill runs round 1

The first race in the series was at Glen Roy.

9. Dave Young	17.57	25. Bridget Kaneen	21.44
10. Andy Gosnell	18.15	26. Geoff Hall	22.32
13. Lewis Veale	18.58	27. Christine Barwell	22.36
14. Roger Moughtin	19.28	29. Les Brown	23.15
18. Mike Gellion	20.24	30. Lorraine Stigant	23.58
19. Allan Corran	20.30	32. Dave Quine	24.46
21. Peter Cooper	20.55	33. Bethany Clague	26.26

28 October HSBC Securities walks round 1

The large entry had a mass start at the NSC in perfect weather. Seven out of the first eight finishers are Club members, and Lisa Motley was the first lady.

10 km

1. Peter Kaneen	47.55	21. Gordon Corran	66.18
2. Michael George	51.37	28. Alan Gault	70.26
3. Jock Waddington	53.51	32. Brian Cowley	71.37
4. Sean Hands	53.57	35. Miriam Kelly	73.52
6. Doug Allan	58.11	42. Sarah Goldsmith	76.41
7. Vinny Lynch	58.44	47. Brian Brough	80.19
8. John Stubbs	59.33	48. Alan Pilling	81.53
11. Ian Callister	62.59		
12. Lisa Motley	63.43		
19. Dave Corrin	65.15		
20. Alison Brand	65.18		

5 km

2. Henry de Silva	35.23
4. Brenda Charlton	39.57

4 November Haldane Fisher Syd Quirk half marathon run and walk

This included the Isle of Man Half Marathon Championships and the winners were (Men) Kevin Loundes and (Women) Gail Griffiths. The Merit Award went to Bethany Clague, on her birthday, and in the walk, Peter Kaneen set a new course record.

Run

7. Alan Postlethwaite	1:22.59	26. Alan Kelly	1:39.53
8. Kevin Deakes	1:25.05	32. Lewis Veale	1:44.51
9. Paul Cubbon	1:25.31	36. Liz Corran	1:46.37
10. David Young	1:27.12	37. Alan Pilling	1:49.49
11. Mike Gellion	1:27.53	39. Bethany Clague	1:50.40
12. Rob Sellors	1:28.14	44. Rob Gillanders	1:54.00
13. Neil Wilson	1:28.36	45. Geoff Hall	1:54.00
15. Stephen Brown	1:30.25	46. Steve Willmott	1:56.40
17. Alan Cowin	1:32.30	48. Moira Hall	1:59.58
19. Gail Griffiths	1:35.14	49. Dave Quine	2:10.01
20. Robbie Lambie	1:35.14	50. Maureen Kelly	2:17.41
22. Roger Moughtin	1:36.31	51. Ingrid Sugden	2:17.57
24. Les Brown	1:37.53	54. Sue Ackroyd	2:24.20

Walk

1. Peter Kaneen	1:44.28	13. Alan Kinvig	2:24.20
2. Michael George	1:53.58	14. Roey Crellin	2:24.20
3. Jock Waddington	1:56.59	17. Ian Callister	2:34.47
4. Vinny Lynch	2:10.38	19. Colin Moore	2:35.57
6. Eammon Harkin	2:11.42	20. Alan Gault	2:37.58
9. Lisa Motley – first woman	2:18.43	23. Sarah Goldsmith	2:44.22
12. Gordon Gorran	2:21.20	25. James Bishop	2:46.24

8 November Ramsey Bakery Firemans runs round 2 NAC

This was the first of the handicapped runs.

3 lap		Actual times	
2. Steve Willmott	41.28	29. Dave Corrin	36.19
5. Wendy Sandford	43.06	34. Sally Walker	35.59
6. Lesley Christian	45.49	37. Alan Pilling	41.12
9. James Bishop	31.55		
11. Martin Bell	38.40	<i>One lap</i>	
14. Moira Hall	42.43	4. Miriam Kelly	15.06
16. Stephen Brown	32.24	15. Stan Hall	12.27
17. Dave Quine	44.25	19. Dave Nixon	12.35
22. Geoff Hall	39.58	24. Kevin Vondy	9.53
27. Mike Gellion	32.46	25. Kevin Deakes	10.36
28. Alan Postlethwaite	30.56		

11 November Manx Gas cross challenge round 2

The second round took place at the Crossags Farm, Ramsey with conditions surprising good underfoot.

Men		Women	
8. Andy Fox	30.55	1. Gail Griffiths	23.52
13. Dave Newton	34.44	2. Bridget Kaneen	26.47
15. Mike Gellion	35.51	4. Bethany Clague	28.50
16. Lewis Veale	36.56		
17. Peter Cooper	37.11		
18. Ian Callister	38.10		
21. Les Brown	39.50		
22. Garry Ross	40.39		
23. Alan Pilling	43.02		

17 November Winter hill runs round 2

The second round of the hill league took place on Peel Hill.

10. Dave Young	23.22	25. Bridget Kaneen	27.44
16. Lewis Veale	25.29	28. Geoff Hall	29.37
17. Roger Moughtin	25.38	29. Alan Pilling	31.45
18. Mike Gellion	25.42	30. Lorraine Stigant	31.52
20. Ian Callister	26.22	32. Dave Quine	32.52
21. Peter Cooper	27.04		

18 November HSBC Securities winter league walks round 2

This took place at Andreas, with another excellent turnout for the first of the handicapped races. It was good to see Wendy Ross and Margy Killey walking again.

10km		Actual times	
1. Wendy Ross	66.14	20. John Stubbs	58.36
5. Gordon Corran	64.06	24. Alan Pilling	81.16
6. Alan Gault	68.19	25. Michael George	51.09
8. Ian Callister	61.08	28. Sean Hands	53.48
10. Sarah Goldsmith	75.04	29. Brian Brough	80.17
13. Chris Cale	56.46	34. Brian Goldsmith	65.47
17. Margy Killey	68.57	40. Dave Corrin	69.05
19. Miriam Kelly	72.40		
<i>5km</i>			
3. Hendy de Silva	35.00	5. Brenda Charlton	40.16

2 December Empire Garage Peel to Douglas walk

Held in pouring rain, Peter Kaneen scored his 6th victory and Marie Jackson her 4th win. Seven out of the first nine finishers were IOMVAC members.

1. Peter Kaneen	1:20.09	17. Lisa Motley	1:45.06
2. Michael George	1:25.18	18. Gordon Corran	1:46.18
3. Sean Hands	1:25.25	21. Dave Corrin	1:48.27
4. Jock Waddington	1:28.39	23. Brian Goldsmith	1:48.50
6. Chris Cale	1:31.47	27. Alan Kinvig	1:52.15
8. Marie Jackson	1:36.07	29. Alan Gault	1:53.44
9. John Stubbs	1:36.35	36. Colin Moore	1:58.24

11. Ian Callister	1:39.19	39. Miriam Kelly	2:02.18
12. Vinny Lynch	1:39.26	45. Sarah Goldsmith	2:04.11
15. Sue Biggart	1:40.54	50. Alan Pilling	2:05.45

6 December Ramsey Bakery Firemans runs round 3 (handicapped)

Nasty weather – good race

3 laps

Actual times

3. Lesley Christian	43.27	21. Alan Pilling	38.44
7. Ray Pitts	35.14	25. Dave Corrin	35.25
9. James Bishop	30.46	29. Steve Wilmott	41.29
10. Dave Quine	43.09	33. Ian Callister	39.55
12. Alan Kelly	35.53	35. Wendy Sandford	44.11
16. Richard Radcliffe	33.58		

One lap

2. Kevin Vondy	9.17	13. Kevin Deakes	10.01
7. Maureen Kelly	15.12	14. Dave Nixon	12.43
9. Stan Hall	12.01		

9 December Manx Gas cross challenge round 3

This was held on the super muddy course at Glen Lough with multiply river crossings to clean your shoes.

Men

8. Andy Fox	32.37	19. Ian Callister	39.27
10. Peter Kaneen	33.35	20. Peter Cooper	39.40
12. James Bishop	35.40	25. Doug Corkill	43.09
15. Dave Newton	37.12	26. Gary Ross	43.25
16. Michael George	37.12	27. Alan Pilling	44.44
17. Lewis Veale	38.09	28. Geoff Hall	46.53

Women

1. Gail Griffiths	25.01	3. Moira Hall	24.03
4. Liz Corran	31.20		

Short Course

Rentokill Manx Fell League – final places 2007

6. Dave Young	23. Bridget Kaneen
13. Andy Gosnell	25. Christine Barwell
15. Roger Moughtin	26. Les Brown
17. Ian Callister	27. Stan Sille
22. Lewis Veale	28. Dave Quine
	30. Gareth Evans

15 December Winter hill runs round 3

The final round was held on Slieau Whallian.

10. Dave Young	22.24	28. Ian Callister	28.32
11. Peter Kaneen	22.33	29. Alan Pilling	28.54
15. Lewis Veale	23.50	30. Geoff Hall	29.02
18. Mike Gellion	24.36	31. Christine Barwell	29.47
19. Peter Cooper	24.59	32. Dave Quine	30.58
20. Roger Moughtin	25.13	32. Lorraine Stigant	35.14
23. Bridget Kaneen	25.48		

16 December HSBC Securities Services winter walks round 3

The Christmas walk was held, as usual, on the St Johns circuit with a buffet and raffle afterwards at St Johns Football Club.

10 km

Actual times

3. Chris Cale	54.27	21. Gordon Corran	63.08
5. Sean Hands	51.45	22. Wendy Ross	65.27
7. Lisa Motley	61.50	23. Alan Kinvig	66.40
8. Jock Waddington	52.02	27. Miriam Kelly	72.45
15. Margie Killey	67.27	29. Alan Gault	68.35
17. Michael George	49.45	30. Vinny Lynch	59.11
19. Ian Callister	59.51	34. Dave Corrin	66.18
20. Sarah Goldsmith	73.53	39. Brian Brough	82.40
		41. Doug Corkill	67.27

5 km

5. Brenda Chalrton	39.40
6. Enid Watson	33.37
7. Dot Watterson	36.10

26 December Mann and Partners Millennium way relay

Team position	Team name	Runner's name	Leg	Time
2	Whats that coming over the hill?	Andy Gosnell	3	30.42
3	Gail Force	Gail Griffiths	2	44.27
	" "	Les Brown	4	45.20
4	Still Shining Brightly	Graham Stigant	2	44.01
6	Onward Christian Soldiers	Ray Pitts	2	48.00
	" " "	Sue Biggart	3	36.26
	" " "	Lesley Christian	4	59.44
9	Team NSC	Jams Bishop	4	39.48
10	The Tuesday Knights	Stan Sille	2	52.04
	" " "	Mike Gellion	3	30.12
12	The Mince Pie Eaters	Ian Callister	1	1:20.38
	" " " "	Alan Gault	3	39.14
14	Sister Sledge	Bridget Kaneen	1	1:23.28
	" "	Peter Kaneen	2	40.35
15	Beauty and the Beasts	Debby Ashe	2	54.19
	" " " "	Rob Gillanders	3	34.50
	" " " "	Geoff Hall	4	50.09
17	St Nick, an Elf and two Angels	Liz Corran	4	55.32
20	Dyer's Straights	Kevin Deakes	4	41.06
22	Three Crabs and a Goat	Chris Cale	1	1:17.27
	" " " " "	Phil Motley	2	48.03
	" " " " "	Lisa Motley	4	53.51
25	Tinsel Trotters	Ingrid Sugden	2	1:16.38
	" "	Vera Jones	3	47.06
	" "	Mo Kelly	4	1:01.09

DAVID ANDERSON'S ATHLETIC CAREER (so far)

My first encounter with Dave was way back in the summer of 1959, when we both lined up against each other in year 1's - 50 yard dash at Peel Clothworkers School. I was running for St Johns Primary and he was representing Patrick Junior School. I remember finishing ahead of him (I was 2nd and he was 3rd). Funnily enough throughout our days in the junior ranks, I usually got the better of Dave in most distances and events up until the age of 13. The rivalry has always been fierce but friendly and good humoured as well. Little did we think that nearly 50 years on from that first race in Peel we would still both be involved in athletics.

After leaving school, Dave entered the senior ranks in the early 70's. In 1972 he left the Island to go to London to attend an agricultural college. He was encouraged to keep his running going by several athletes in the London area and he joined London Athletic Club in his brief spell down there. During this period and for several years later, when back on home soil he had some mighty battles with Steve Higgins, Colin Watterson and Stuart Lambie over the 100m/200m and 400metres. Until Dave McCutcheon came along in the 1980's, I think Dave was unbeaten over the 400, though he never had it all his own way, as I well remember he was pushed on many occasions by Stuart right up until the last 30 or 40 metres of a flat 400m.

It was about 1977 when David moved off the Island for a year to work in Guildford. He was employed with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAFF). It was about this time that he had a serious go at the 400m hurdles and the 800 metres.

A year later in 1978 David was chosen to represent the Isle of Man in the Commonwealth Games (CG) in Edmonton, Canada in the 400 metres flat and the 400 metre hurdles. And to his credit he performed with great distinction. This was by far the biggest event he had ever lined up in and he came through the test with flying colours. In his typical calm and professional manner he remained unfazed by the occasion and rose to the challenge by setting a personal best in the first round of the 400 metres and broke the Manx record as a result. His time of 48.8 was just two hundredths of a second outside qualifying for the semi final. He also set a personal best for the hurdles recording 53.2 (also a new Manx record). Such was his run in the hurdles, meant that he progressed to the next round. This was the first time a Manx athlete had got through a heat in the CG. Dave had ripped the local records apart as well as setting pbs. It must be added that he also broke his and the Manx record for the 200 metres a few days before the official opening of the Games in Canada with a time of 22.6 breaking Brian Cowley's previous record of 22.8 which he set in Edinburgh at the Games in 1970, when he was only 17. As if this wasn't enough, just for good measure in another 'warm-up' race just prior to the Games he set a pb in a 300 metres race. His time was about 35.5 seconds. So within about a week Dave had set 4 personal bests which turned out to be 4 Manx records. Now that's what you call peaking. Amazingly in the 400 metres he broke the Manx record (which he held) by 0.7 seconds! Incidentally, I think Dave has the distinction of being the first Manxman to have broken 50 seconds for the 400.

Shortly after the CG in 1978, due to work commitments, Dave took a little rest from athletics. He kept fit by playing football and rugby. But by about mid 1980 and recharged from his relatively inactive couple of years, he decided to commit himself to the next Games which were due to be held in Brisbane in 1982. On this occasion he decided to have a crack at the 800 metres. In the early part of 1982 he got down to 1min 54.6 in the Lancashire Champs. However, he was unable to improve on this which resulted in him not being selected as the Games standard for that distance was set at 1mins 52.9.

After years of just 'ticking over' and keeping his hand in he decided to give it another crack, this time for the Island Games in 1989. By now he was 35 and arguably his best years were now behind him. But it didn't take him long to re-establish himself and he was duly selected for the 400 flat and the 400m hurdles in Aaland. He also competed in the 4 x 400m quartet which won the gold medal. Dave won bronze in his individual events.

And from then on that was more or less the pattern throughout the 90's where he picked up medals in these events. He never actually won an individual gold but you have to take into account he was entering the veteran age group and he was then competing with athletes half his age in some cases. David's last Island Games was in 1997 when he was 43. His best times when competing in the Island Games were roughly 50.8 (late 30's) for the flat 400 and about 55.6 for the 400 hurdles and he apparently broke 50 seconds for the last leg of a 4 x 400 relay. Although Dave was clearly much older than all his opponents he more than held his own throughout his time competing in the Island Games and proved to be a calm and stabilising influence for the younger members of the Manx team. It was obvious the youngsters learnt a lot from the invaluable experience he could offer and in many respects he was seen as an ideal role model.

Several years before Dave reached 40, I can well remember him saying to me once when we were training on Peel Beach, that one of his targets in veteran track and field was to be the first Manxman to break 2 minutes for the 800 at the age of 40. I remember thinking at the time that seemed a tad ambitious since he had missed several years of serious running due to work commitments on his farm. Would he be able to achieve this, that was the question?

When he became a veteran in 1994 he decided to enter the British Vets Track and Field Champs in Bedford. The events he competed in were the 400 flat and the 800. In the 400 he finished a fantastic 2nd to Stephen Peters in 51.8 and 6th in a physical and rather tactical 800

(2.02). In essence this was his first encounter competing in veteran athletics and he learnt a great deal from this initiation – as time would prove.

Of course I should have known better than to doubt his ability to break the magic 2 minute barrier, as the next year he bounced back by obliterating his 1994 time when running 1.57.1 in only his second year in the veteran ranks and ended up winning the race outright as a result. He recorded that time down in Exeter at the British Vets National Champs. A great run that as he beat Dave Wilcocks, who at the same age, ran about 1.56.6 earlier on in that season. It would be fair to say Wilcocks was considered the favourite to win that race.

Some weeks after his success, he took on Wilcocks again in Buffalo, South Africa, at the Worlds Vets. However, Wilcocks exacted revenge over Dave and took the title. Dave finished third (1.57.7) but admitted he ran a tactically poor race as he allowed a 10/15 metre lead to develop between 500 and 600 metres. Although Dave was closing the leaders down rapidly in the last 50 metres, he had mistimed his late effort.

Dave continued to gain success for the rest of his time in the M40 category picking up medals in the National, European and Worlds Championships. He also picked up medals in the Indoor Championships. Such is the list of his successes in all of these championships, I've had to leave many of them out of the article and just kept in the better ones. That wasn't easy either.

When he reached the M45 category he still kept his great running going. Although initially on entering the new age group he eased off a little, his best times for the 400 were 53.24 and was still good enough for him to be in the top 3 in Great Britain.

However, fired up for the World Vets in Brisbane in 2001 he got down to some serious training and entered the 400 flat and the 400 hurdles. Unquestionably his best ever life time performance came in the hurdles when won the final in 58.41 at the age of 47 – a World Champion - marvellous! Incidentally Dave's best 800m time in the M45 age group was 2.05.64, he recorded that in Bedford at the age of 46.

At 50 Dave arguably ran faster (pound for pound) in the hurdles when he posted a time of 58.86 in 2004. He was second in the GB Champs to Robert Stevenson in that race. He went on to record times for the 800m in 2.09.8 later that year.

A list of Daves pbs in the different age categories are as follows:-

Senior		M40	M45	M50
100m	11.0	11.9	12.3	-
110h	15.8	17.5	-	-
200	22.6	23.6	25.4	26.3
400	48.8	50.5	53.24	54.73
400h	53.2	55.6	58.41	58.86
800	1.54.6	1.57.1	2.05.64	2.09.8
Pole Vault	3m 10	4.20.2 (1500)	-	-
		4.52 (mile)	-	-

Actually David's latest success came in the North of England Masters Track and Field Champs in Accrington last August. He won the M50 – 400 metres in 55.8. This time would probably place him in the top 6 in the UK for his age group. This was most impressive as he has been out of action for long periods over the last 2 to 3 years due to injury. Furthermore, his new post as DoT Minister is very time consuming, so fitting in training is more difficult for him these days. Needless to say, Dave holds veteran records almost in every distance from 100 to 800 metres. More recently he has been breaking Alan Connor's M50 records which have stood for 12 years.

So as you can gather he is still very much alive and kicking and next year he will no doubt be setting new M55 local vets records in track and field. His cv in athletics is pretty well unrivalled, certainly for consistency. Medals and records galore! And I'm sure some of his age group records could be here to stay, for a very long time at least.

Robbie Lambie

2007 RUNNING HIGHS AND LOWS

By Bethany Clague

This year has been a rollercoaster year for me in terms of running. January saw a good start with the 50-mile RNLI SOS walk round the 5 RNLI lifeboat stations in just over 13 hours with Kevin Ford (3FM Radio). We raised £500 altogether and endured gale-force conditions over the Sloc and rocky branch-strewn pavements in darkness after Peel. However it was well worth the trip on the Douglas lifeboat the next Sunday, joining the crew for a training session.

The Liverpool Half-Marathon in March was hard and slow. A fairly hilly course, I was not impressed by my time. Stomach and bowel problems were ruining my running and training and this was to culminate in a near-disaster during the Blackpool Marathon in June. I was too ill with the winter vomiting bug to take part in the Fire Station's 50-mile walk. I was gutted not to be a part of it. I also missed the Vet's Spring Handicap through stomach problems. It was not looking good.

I went back onto a wheat-free diet after Blackpool and the situation improved. The Parish Walk was "easy" this year, if you can describe getting your best friend, who is not a walker and "exercise" is a swear-word, to Rushen in his first attempt. However he did it, although painfully slowly towards the end, and I compensated for the lack of miles by wearing the 17lb backpack that I was going to carry on MOB Coast in July.

So by July I was back to getting in shape again. I was weight training at the gym where I was working and running regularly at the crack of dawn with full ultrarunning kit. MOB Coast has to be the highlight of 2007. I didn't finish it, as I have written about previously, but I learnt a lot about ultrarunning, mental and physical strength and preparation, and met some wonderful runners and crew. It has since changed the way I think about running and train. It has given me ambitions!

I ran a 7-minute PB in the IOM Marathon in August. I beat my previous course time by 18 minutes! I was delighted. It was my fastest and strongest marathon, and made even more special by knowing lots of other runners and marshals etc. They spurred me on when it got tough. I was also delight to receive 2 prizes in the presentation afterwards.

Two days after the marathon, however, my health deteriorated. I caught flu and spent the next 5 weeks taking antibiotics, eye drops and steroid nasal sprays to combat a series of bacterial infections. I have never had this happen before, and I think the explanation is that after MOB Coast and the marathon I weakened my immune system so much, it could not fight infection. However I managed to crew for MOB, although I lost 8lbs in weight.

I did little running in September. I did manage the End-to-End walk, which was tough, but was pleased with my time, especially as I had no support. (That was why I had the 12lb backpack!)

By the end of September I was back training hard. From then onwards 50 miles a week was my target, although I managed 82 miles one week. Most training I do involves a 10lb backpack in order to carry the water, food and clothes I need when running 2-4hours in the middle of nowhere! I train off-road now, along the old railway trails, hills etc. I much prefer the sound of birds and country and sea smells to the noise and fumes of traffic.

By now the weight loss was a stone. I felt great and looked lean and slim. At the Western 10 I reinforced this by knocking 8 minutes off my time I did for the Northern 10 earlier in the year. I was delighted as I consider the Western 10 course hillier and harder than Northern 10.

I find cross-country tough, especially as the races are so short – 4 miles! I just cannot keep up with the speed of the ladies in my race! However I use them as training runs and may even, one day, run with my 10lb backpack, if I am brave enough!

My first fell race, the Glen Roy Winter Hill League, was another learning curve and a near disaster. Going up was okay and I was strong. But flying down was scary and within moments I had gone over on the outside of my right foot, despite wearing Walsh PB Extreme fell shoes, although they don't have much support. I'll try my Mudroc shoes next time. I gingerly managed to finish the race but spent the evening applying ice and wearing a support.

I raised £200 for the Hyperbaric Chamber and was privileged to see the chambers when I handed the money to Claire Duchars and David Downey. Claire explained how oxygen breathed in under pressure saturates every cell, speeding up the healing process for soft tissue injuries and fractures. It also treats lots of other conditions like MS, circulatory and lung problems etc. So I wrote to my GP who wrote to Dr Chalmers and an "open referral" was made for me. So after my foot injury I spoke to Claire and I have had 6 one-hour sessions in the chamber. It is a bizarre experience that takes a bit of getting used to, especially the art of "popping / clearing" your ears under changing pressures. But the bruising and swelling of my foot receded and after a week I was running on it. I then proved how effective the treatment was by running my fastest-ever half-marathon time in the Syd Quirk. I had a fantastic race, knocking 17 minutes off my PB and winning 1st in my age category. However the highlight was being awarded the "Merit Shield" – the best birthday present I could wish for!

I'd like to say a big thank you to all the marshalls, timekeepers, water station officials, results collators and photographers, who have all contributed so much to the races this year. Your selfless volunteering means the races can go ahead. This is much appreciated by every runner.

So three consecutive PB's in 3 different distances in 3 months! Not a bad end to the year after a wobbly start! I am focussed, committed to training and have goals to take me into next year – the main focus in January being the Thames Path 50 Ultra. I'd like to run the Manx Mountain Marathon in March, the Night/Day marathons immediately followed by the London marathon, over the 11th/12th and 13th April, if I can get into London, (this was the reason why I started running and this is my 4th attempt at trying to get through the ballot entry), the Parish walk in June, RAW Britain in August and attempt MOB Coast again and finish in September!

I need to raise £2000 to enter RAW Britain. I will be raising money for the 'Hyperbaric Chamber' on top of that as well. If anyone has any fundraising ideas or wishes to donate money, please contact me at bethanyclague@hotmail.com. If anyone would like to volunteer for backpacking sessions at 'Shoprite' please contact me. I'm also thinking about inviting Rory Coleman over to talk about ultrarunning and raise money for my RAW Britain attempt. Rory has run over 540 marathons, 150 ultras, holds 9 world records for running on a treadmill and organises extreme ultra races all round the World. He is a wonderful guy who always encourages everyone, has a great sense of humour and has 6 kids (not all his though!) and an equally amazing wife, who does not think he is mad!

I've discovered a wonderful website for runners – www.fetcheveryone.com. It is free and you can log your runs and races, chat with other runners etc. My name is 'Freespirit' and I'd love to have a fellow Manxrunner using the site!

See you all at future races. However, if you see a lone, strange-looking runner with water bottles coming out of her ears and a heavy backpack complete with blue flip flops, give me a wave!

Bethany Clague

Nov 2007