

2016/2017 Season Run Reports

1. Frodsham (10/09/2016) By Steve Murray

It's Saturday 10th September 2016 and there's a derby on in Manchester. It has the attention of a good chunk of the population of Manchester and the North-West. Some though have other things on their mind. Others are members of the Cheshire Tally-Ho, Hare and Hounds Club and it's the first day of the season. They go running. Dave Riley arrives at Murray's in a big shiny BMW 4x4, ferrying the band of athletes: - Eastwood, Burston & Markham, in no particular order. Eastwood calls for Murray and the first problem of the day, Dave R is beaten by the technology and can't open the boot for Murray to put his kit in. There must be a button on the dashboard somewhere but who needs that. Let's use the button on the key fob. The boot though, when open, has a button you press and it closes automatically. It's just as well that the boot can't be opened easily or Murray would be stood at the back of car, repeatedly waiting for it to open, just so he can close it again. Warm welcomes and off we go, down to Frodsham.

It's very overcast and the clouds are threatening rain as we whip down the M56. The forecast says rain. There's barely a breeze. 18.5 °C it says on the dashboard of the big shiny BMW 4x4. As the band arrive at the excellent Best Western, Forest Hills Hotel, Des Winterbone (fine pair of legs, just check 'em out) and Vinny Jones set off. Vinny's first chance to go a wandrin' who knows where. As the band approach the hotel, Les Ruddock sets off alone. Ooh it's all changed. The bar is now a spinning room.

Into the changing rooms. Who has brought a padlock for the lockers? Eastwood is the answer. What is the question? I just bloody said, aren't you listening cloth-ears? Who's brought a padlock? Those pound coin lockers disappeared before last year's run. All valuable goods are piled into the one locker with a padlock. It's not a big pile.

Jenkinson is returning from Corsica, Stanton's at a son marrying, the freshly minted Hon. Sec. (as in recently elected, he's been financially minted for a good spell now) is in Zante and Tim's at the aforementioned football game. For Wilson it's a 90th (birthday celebration that is). Jocys scoots off quick on his own; he's not used to moving on foot without a 40lb pack. He partially makes up for it with his goretex Utility Belt. Markham and Burston depart a little later as a duo, offering the chance to extend the Batman metaphor further. No, let's leave it at that.

Nobody has done any training over the summer by all accounts, except for Riley, the only member honest enough to admit to still recognizing what a pair of running shoes looks like. Mark Taylor infers he's been locked in a cellar and force fed doughnuts and sugary drinks and Geoff Whitehead blatantly lies about the number of limbs he has.

Gosh it's warm and humid. It soon becomes clear that Murray and Eastwood are the ones who've been suffering the carbohydrate filled incarceration as Taylor and Riley, do a Lewis Hamilton & Nico Rosberg, with Long John Whitehead keeping up admirably for a man with his "supposed" condition. Late setter offer, Steve Ruddock and Colin Goulder, soon overtake the unfit boys.

It's not a tough run. It's a fantastic introductory run, reminding us what it's all about. Fantastic countryside, gentle exercise (except for McHarry and Poupard, who storm past, almost like proper runners), really stingy nettles (really, really stingy; West-Samuel (ennui) and Butler (summer cold)

added an extra three miles to the route to avoid them by their account) and a top class trio of yapping, snapping dogs, trying to guide us away from the one true path, at the half way mark. The sun decides after a tentative start, to make a full-blown appearance.

Not long after the yappy snappers, one of the finest examples of cabbage/kale scrub you're ever likely to meet. The vegetation was perfect for obscuring trail. Murray prefers his cabbage well cooked with butter and white pepper. We made it though, eventually, of course, if we'd read the instructions our supreme leader had sent out, we have known to take a half right.

With less than a mile to go, we meet some familiar faces. In lesser clubs, he might have been known as "Dobbo" or "Dobbington Major" but not here. He's addressed respectfully as "George Dobson", even as he's sliding down a red sandstone rock-face sideways. Another rare treat, Geoff Walley (smiling at the result of the derby), who Whitworth had promised would be absent. Park as well. Well you can't just run on, can you? You've got to stop and chat. They cottoned on though and chivvied us back into action.

Back on the steps of the fine and very reasonably priced Best Western, Forest Hills Hotel, (ideal for conferences and weddings; why not combine the two and save money?), the finishers sit and bask in the sun for a much longer than usual time. Glad to be back in each other's company? Making the best of the late summer sun? Herd instinct? Goosed?

The beer is what we expect from a top quality Best Western and the prices too. The meal in the refurbished restaurant: - lasagne, chips, carrots, mangetout, french-beans coleslaw and other stuff, hot and perfectly prepared. Great sun washed view over the estuary towards Liverpool; pick your favourite cathedral and there are new wind turbines sitting lazily in the foreground.

Zante man texts to let us know that he's eating alone tonight. The love of his life is a MUFC season ticket holder and takes these things out on the other love of her life, seeing as he's an MCFC season ticket holder. Walking a fine line is second nature to him.

Great start to the season. My legs are still stinging. I'm still goosed too.

3. Sparrowpit (08/10/2016) By Joe Park

Graham and Tom laid trail turning right out of the Wanted Inn and straight up the hill then taking the path to Bagshaw and Malcoff.

The trail carried on up to South Head before turning East towards Brown Knoll and then South to Whitemoor Clough.

Much of this path has been slabbed to prevent erosion but 3 miles of this does not make for pleasant running and requires constant vigilance. We carried on down the clough to the A625 and then left to Rushup Hall and right over the fields to the pub.

We think that Whitworth, Walley and Bell used the Cowburn Tunnel to avoid the hills.

The course was mud and nettle free until the last few metres.

15 sat down to dine on a large spoonful of hot pot, red cabbage and roll followed by apple crumble.

A distance of 9.1 miles was covered in very pleasant conditions. Graham was using this as a warm up for the Goyt Half Marathon.

4. Royal Arms, Tockholes, (22ND October 2016) By Joe Park

Trail by Jocys and Ridings. 12/15 Deg C, overcast, no wind.

After turning right out of the pub the trail led through the farm and over the fields to the road. After crossing the road and into a large field the trail was lost. Jocys and Ridings had a lot of catching up to do and laying trail took second place.

Some runners took to the wood and went round Roddlesworth and Rake Brook reservoirs to Abbey Village. Others avoided the wood and went over Higher Hill and down to the village.

On completing the first loop we carried on through Plantations 2 and 3 before crossing the road and heading for Lyons Den where the hermit lived, marked now by only a few trees. Speeding round the shoulder of Cartridge Hill we climbed up Darwen Hill to the Jubilee Tower before the long and sometimes steep descent to the pub.

The young sheepdog trials were long finished but Graham the whittler was still making toad stools and guarding the tin bath.

15 sat down to the traditional hot pot, red cabbage and some sort of fruit crumble.

I recorded 8.9 miles on a very enjoyable run.

5. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, Longnor 5th November 2016 By Joe Park

Cold 3° to 5°C, no wind or rain.

When we arrived the trail layers Walley and Whitworth had long gone. It was disappointing to find the car park closed because a bonfire was due to be lit at 7.00 pm.

Not knowing what the service was like we said we would be gone before then but they said they wouldn't open it.

A room and shower were made available to us.

The trail led west out of Longnor along Gauledge and down to the road. We were soon ankle deep in mud an experience which was to be repeated a few times. We then started the climb up Fawside Edge and on towards High Ash before turning south along Blackstone Edge to the road. The trail carried on across the road and past Oakenclough Hall to the road followed by a circuit of Newtown. We went past Hall Hill and carried on to the road at Bridge End. The rest of the trail was on the road back to Longnor.

The pub was pleasant and warm with Robinson's Unicorn and cups of tea going down well. We were asked to go to the dining area which was quite a bit cooler than the lounge. We were then offered a choice of steak and kidney pudding or lasagne. After 30 minutes the meals came two at a time. The meals were quite substantial with chips and vegetables but the last few were cold inside and deemed inedible. Eventually the lasagne arrived.

We were then offered a large selection of deserts but to speed things up we all opted for apple pie and custard. A few who were enjoying the prolonged waiting wondered if they could have ice cream so a complicated head count began. After another delay we were told there was not enough apple pie so further changes were made. When nothing appeared after ten minutes most people lost the will to live and departed. This is one of our most expensive meals and we hope we were given a substantial discount.

Looking on the bright side they now have plenty of apple pie. 16 enjoyed a gruelling nine miles with no "no meals" which takes on a new meaning.

6. Royal Oak, Rushton Spencer (19th November 2016) By Joe Park

Gun Running.

In line with convention Colin and Steve started from the same pub and coincidentally the one where we had booked the meal.

The trail turned right out of the pub and along the nettle path, alas no nettles but a danger of slipping into the culvert. Past the Golden Lion we climbed up Wormhill before dropping down to Dane Valley Way. We then followed the Conduit past Hammond's Hole (not the 1.6 trillion deficit but a hermit's cave) and on to Gig Hall. The conduit was built to divert water from the Dane to Rudyard reservoir but is no longer used and is overgrown. Past Hollin Hall we climbed the edge to the road to Gun End. Climbing a slightly muddy path we carried on to Cliff Hollins and up to Gun (385 metres). We all assembled at the Trig Point to enjoy the view of the Roaches, Hen Cloud Tittesworth reservoir, the Cloud and much more. We carried on from Gun down to the road and the path to Shaw and then left on the road towards Overhouses Farm. There followed a pleasant section over the meadows to a handy spring to wash off the mud at Axstones Spring and then on to Alley Lane and the pub.

15 dined on steak and kidney pie followed by apple crumble. Unfortunately the trail layers had to leave early and so missed the plaudits. Paul the manager made us welcome and Chris the chef made sure we had plenty to eat.

We all thoroughly enjoyed a romp of eight miles.

The Tally-ho are well known for losing trail but now they have lost the trail bags which mysteriously disappeared from Vinny's Tinny.

7. The Crag, Wildboarclough (3rd December 2016) By Joe Park

The pub which has recently been taken over by local farmers had suffered a flood a few weeks ago but apart from carpets little damage was caused.

Brown and Riley laid trail up Bank Top and over Shutlingsloe (506 m) to Macclesfield Forest. The trail carried on to the viewpoint above Trentabank and Ridgegate reservoirs. At Greenbarn we joined the Gritstone over to Meg Lane and up past the Hanging Gate to the stoney lane leading to Oakenclough. Some will remember this from a steeple chase held here when we lost Rivington and had a tough run from the Crag. The trail carried on down to Greenway Bridge and along the track to join the undulating ROW over the fields to the pub.

18 enjoyed the Wincle and Macclesfield ales around the two roaring fires. Riley ate early as he was going out later leaving the rest to partake of the expensive hot pot and apple crumble.

All enjoyed the 7,5 miles under ideal running weather.

Jess took on the administrative duties and Melissa was the ideal hostess. Brian could not attend as

Marilyn was rushed to hospital with suspected pneumonia but is now thankfully on the mend.