

Ivanhoe Runners Chairman's Report to AGM – January 2014

It gives me great pleasure to present the Chairman's report for 2013. This year has been another strong year for the Club and I will highlight some of our achievements in this report. Tomorrow night we will of course recognise the athletic achievements at our awards night so I wanted in this report to focus on the efforts of the many people whose efforts make this Club so successful.

Firstly, my job has been very easy this year due to a very strong committee. With Alan Edwards as Secretary and Phil Stevenson as Treasurer the "back-office" of making sure meetings get held and minutes taken, members get registered, subs get collected, bills get paid, London marathon numbers get applied for, and all those other things that are invisible to most of us just happen.

Secondly, our Captains Martin Yeomans and Julia Blewitt-Jenkins make sure that runners know when teams are needed for races, encourage their teams and runners, ensure we know what standards are being achieved and so on. We have competed again this year in three leagues, the Leicestershire Road Race League, the Burton and District Summer League and the Derby Runner Cross Country League, and making sure we have representation at each of these sometimes conflicting events is no mean feat. In the LRRL the men and both womens teams finished 7th in their divisions, while the vets teams fared better with the men 6th in their league and the women an excellent 4th. And, we had four runners with amazing 100% attendance records, with Martin Yeomans, Julia Blewitt-Jenkins, Ruth Green and Andy Lindley doing all eleven LRRL races. Well done to them. Some runners focused on the BDSL, with Nick Teague and Laura Johnson enjoying individual successes there with overall winner and overall second places, while the ladies team were 2nd and mens team 4th overall.

Thirdly, our Social Secretaries ensure that we have a busy calendar of social events – from our Awards Evening tomorrow night, through mince pie runs, bacon butty runs, train races, curry nights, marathon cakes and so on. I think this club runs on curry and cake. And this year we have benefited with having a Special Events Organiser – a post we have been missing for a few years – and Nick Teague excelled himself with organising a great night with Rosie Swale-Pope and inspiring the Benidorm trip in November. This latter trip was reminiscent of some of our Club trips from earlier years where as well as some great athletic performances – with numerous personal bests - we were also treated to an AC/DC tribute night

complete with Swan, Graves, Bradbury and Yeomans groupies, and an evening of paddyoke – a first and last for me! Nick is already looking at a repeat Club trip for this year, and has thoughts about another guest speaker evening. Nick also acted as our representative on the Burton and District Summer League.

Our Fixtures Secretary Andy Lindley has done a similar role attending LRRL league meetings and also doing a sterling job by organising our GP series – with assistance from Phil on the results. As you would expect Andy also comes up with some great ideas on new events for us to have a go at.

Ruth Green joined the Committee as Publicity Officer this year – taking over from me - and has taken it on to a new level with very comprehensive and interesting newsletters but also regular bulletins after each committee meeting. Ruth also did a lot of the background work on the new design for the Club vests and as a Committee we are very pleased with the result. Not everyone likes every change – that is human nature – but overall the brighter, more distinctive modern design has been a hit with positive feedback from a lot of you.

Two of the above Committee members – Alan and Julia – have expressed their wishes to stand down this year and so I have to say a massive thank you to both of them for the excellent work they have done on behalf of the Club and wish them every success in their running in 2014. I know they will be around to help any incoming Committee members and they are both still heavily involved in organising - Julia with the Ivanhoe Robins and Alan as treasurer to the Ashby 20.

Which is a great segway into my next topic. The Ashby 20 is an integral part of Ivanhoe Runners but because of its size and importance has its own race committee under race director Barry Alldread. The 2013 race has just been voted the 5th best “other distance” event by Runner’s World, an improvement on 8th place last year. And for this years race on March 9th the entries have already topped 1,000 – a record. The work that Barry, Alan, Tim Sturla, Ian Kirk, Keith Baron, Dave and Zoe Allery, Alastair Chambers, Richard Bebbington, Ruth and others do again goes largely unseen by the rest of us... what we see on race day are well over a hundred helpers turning out to support over 1,000 happy runners.

The other critical aspect of the Ashby 20 is that it financially supports the Club to a huge extent. Anyone who has raced in any of the closed league races we have competed in for the last few years will have had free entry – paid for by the Ashby 20. Anyone going to the awards night tomorrow will

be only paying £15, as it is subsidised by the Ashby 20. Anyone buying a new club vest for £20 will be benefitting from the Ashby 20 subsidising the cost and so on. So it is important that as members of the Club we do everything we can to support Barry and team and ensure March 9th is another outstanding success, and continues to build.

But beyond the Ivanhoe Committee and Ashby 20 Committee there are other Club members fulfilling vital roles. Rosie Dear does a great job as our Derby Runner League representative and organiser, and Dave Mann has race directed the Worthington 5, another very successful Ivanhoe event, for several years. This year the event raised £544 which has gone to Leicestershire Search and Rescue – who we will be presenting a cheque to later this year. Alastair Chambers is our kit man, and Ian Bolton has been working on a new website which should be launched early this year. Andy Hough with Nick Teague has re-introduced some structured sessions on Wednesday nights and are always there for advice. Teresa's tea is a godsend at the cross-countries, and everyone helping with gazebo handling makes life much easier. Beyond them still are you, the ordinary members who turn up on Wednesday and Friday club nights and at races to run yourselves but also support fellow runners, encourage new members, lead groups and so on. You know who you are !

I will now apologise to any specific individuals I should have mentioned, and say thanks to all of you. I have been a member of Ivanhoe Runners since 1986 and been on the Committee for very many of those years. My feeling is that the Club is at least as strong as it has ever been and that is down to you. The ethos of the Club has always been its friendly and social nature – whilst keeping a competitive edge – and that remains important today. It is encouraging that new members continue to join but it is important that we are not complacent and understand why members leave, and if there is anything else we should be doing that we are not. We did do a survey in 2013 – thanks for everyone's responses – and whilst that was very positive overall, there are one or two things that we will pick up this year.

The current membership stands at a record 140, with 68 men and 72 ladies – so an even split. Also personally satisfying is that we are seeing new generations coming through. In the late 1980's the names Enion, Butler and Sturla appeared in Ivanhoe's results, and they still do today with the next generation. Of course those same 1980's results also showed Yeomans, Gough, White, Sanders, Jeyes, Mann and others as well.... but that's another story.

One thing I do want us to build on in 2014 is the Adrian Smith handicap race. This is important to some of us because of course we ran with Adrian, a very early member of the Club, and some of us were in the race he collapsed and died in in 1986. But there are other reasons to promote the race: firstly it puts all runners on a level playing field with an equal chance of winning (just ask Tim Caulkwell, 2013 winner), secondly it has over the years collected a lot of money for the British Heart Foundation, a very worthy cause and directly related to Adrian, and thirdly it gives us a great opportunity to do something alongside the Ivanhoe Robins.

I think this latter point is very important. Whilst now a separate entity, Ivanhoe Robins grew out of Ivanhoe Runners and many members are today or have in the past contributed to that Club's growth and success. I think keeping strong links, with combined events of both a running and social nature is important. The Ivanhoe Robins of today could be the Ivanhoe Runners of tomorrow, indeed some of their more mature runners are already competing in the Derby Runner League as Ivanhoe Runners. The mince pie run was a great example which both clubs enjoyed and can only lead to stronger collaboration.

We had some great individual performances during 2013, and for many the highlight would have been the London Marathon in April, where we had a record twenty runners and saw PB's from Ramzi Sidani, Clare Fowell, Julia Blewitt-Jenkins, Ruth Green and Heather Swan, and debuts from Rebecca Hallam, Rhona Kirkham, Emily Starkie, Emma Kirtland, Karen Marfleet and Shirley Marlow. It's not all about London though; we also had Spring marathoners across the country with Nick Teige at Blackpool, Karen Edmonds and Andy Pole in Brighton, Barry Alldread, Kev Wright, Martin Yeomans and Fran Sinclair in Stratford, Alastair Chambers and Andy Gillies in Manchester and Ian Kirk in Milton Keynes. Later in the season we saw Nick Teige, Kelvin Banbury, Andy Lindley, Martin Yeomans, Rebecca Hallam, Ruth Green, Fran Sinclair and Sarah Taylor at Chester and a week later saw Ian Kirk, Barry Alldread and both Sturla's at the Leicester marathon.

For many of us the marathon is a goal too far and we enjoyed many other opportunities to race across this country and abroad, at distances from 5k to the half marathon and 20 milers – and on and off-road. There were so many of these performances that I cannot mention them all here, but I will recall Ramzi Sidani and Rosie Dear who won our own Ivanhoe 20 back in March, and note the race will be held again this year on Saturday 8th March. For many the Saturday morning Parkruns provided an informal friendly opportunity to run 5k as well as being a recruiting ground for new

members. And the leagues we compete in provide a focus for our talent – in 2013 we broke a record with 42 runners turning out for the Markfield cross-country, a great team event. If you haven't yet competed in any of the league events I strongly encourage you to do so, they are all great fun and everyone counts whether point scoring at the front or pushing our rivals further back.

Tomorrow night we will be recognizing some of our top performers from 2013 with Standards Awards, Most Improved Runner Awards, Best Newcomer Awards, Team Player Awards and so on.

Whilst at our core we are a running Club, our membership takes part in many other eclectic events. 2013 saw our members take part in their first triathlons, Julian Rawlings do his first Ironman triathlon, many members improve their triathlon times and one member – Trish McPherson – join the most exclusive of clubs with gaining entry to this year's Hawaii Ironman triathlon, an amazing achievement. We also saw our members take on cycling challenges – in addition to a number of sportive completions, we had the Bebbington's cycling from Ashby to Rome, Bob White doing LeJoG and seven more senior members cycling Coast to Coast.

So, 2013 was again a very busy year. I will close my Report with my usual plea for you to get involved in the running of your Club. The committee – all voluntary - are if you like the management arm of the Club but we are a busy minority. There are lots of ways for members to become involved either on the committee itself, or the Ashby 20 committee, or in one of several "seconded" roles. And of course at the Ashby 20 itself. The more we share the load of the administrative side of the Club, the easier it for everyone. And we all have a role encouraging new and existing members, looking out for runners who seem to be on their own, and in recruiting new members. For my part, whilst my running is more restricted these days, I will endeavor to keep up with the pulse of the club and attend as many events as possible – even if sometimes just in a supporting role.

Thank you for a busy 2013 and I look forward to a successful 2014.

Kevin Sanders
Chairman
Ivanhoe Runners