

Saltby

It really was a "bogging" night in the end, as the rain and wind came in over the last 3 miles and the light was gone at around 7.45pm, which left us in near darkness for the last 15 minutes. The welcome return of Jason after injury meant that we were able to use his garage to change in!

If we were hoping for a roaring log fire in the pub, we were sadly disappointed and, with no cider, no peroni and "iffy" bitter, the pub failed to make the top ten this year. It did have one restoring element, however – see below.

All in all, a pretty good year, with around 10 runners turning out on a regular basis and, I think on the whole, all who turned up had a very good evening, with good company, at some lovely pubs.

Slightly disappointing numbers for the Club Handicap but a tight race for the M M Manns Trophy.

Plenty of entries at the Cake Competition but only 6 at the No Watch race from Denton, which turned out to be a great venue.

Great to see Darryl (otherwise known as the "restoring element" mentioned above) again, who says that he will be fit for next year's outrun programme.

100%er this year was Ian Mason – congratulations and well done, Ian – with Neil & Julie missing one outrun and Ian J, Richard, Mike in double figures.

Beer of the Year – Wold Gold, The Wheel at Branston

Top Chips – Rose & Crown, Tilton

And finally, probably the most important thing, is that we have raised £138.70 for Air Ambulance. Thank you to everyone who has been so generous this summer.

Somerby Outrun

Unbelievably, it is more than 50 years since Yul Bryner and his band of heroes righted the wrongs in a Mexican village, as the Magnificent 7 rode out for the first time! (Film Club reunion idea?) On Wednesday, the Striders Magnificent 7 assembled in Somerby, in the week of the English Riots, to keep law and order amid rumours of possible looting and sheep rustling. Just like the star-studded cast of 1960, the Striders team reads like a "Who on earth is who?!?" of running heroes.

Cast includes:

Mike Brighty (same hair style) as Chris - Yul Bryner

Ian Mason as Britt - James Cockburn

Rob Szabo as Vin Tanner - Steve McQueen

Ian Johnson as Harry Luck - Brad Dexter

Neil Jaggard as Bernardo O'Reilly - Charles Bronson

Richard Gray as Chico - Hurst Bucholz

Julie Jaggard as Petra

Rosenda Monteros The Robert Vaughan character, Lee, didn't turn up, just like the coward he was in the film. You may recall that in the film, it was Bernardo who found the lovely Petra,

hiding in bushes as her village was being attacked by the evil bandit Calvero (played by Eli Wallach). Many people are under the misapprehension that the film is based on the Japanese story, The 7 Samurai. This is not the case, it is actually a parody of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Seven men find a girl in the woods, kill off evil person (in that case, the evil Queen), live happily everafter. That's it in a nutshell. To continue the parody theme, Julie would be Snow White but you can fill the remaining cast of Doc, Bashful, Sleepy, Dopey, Happy, Grumpy and Sneezy!!

After we had cleaned up the village, we thought it might be nice to have a run – and what a run! Possibly the toughest outrun of the year and probably why only the Magnificent 7 turned up!

First part of the run took us along the Leicester Round where we were joined by Lassie, on location for the latest remake of Lassie Come Home. A nice collie dog, which preferred to run with us for about ½ mile instead of accompanying it's owner on the mad horse. Out along the Dalby Hills path to the car park and a short road section before joining the Dalby Hills path in the opposite direction towards Burrough Hill. The decision was made to run up the steep grassy section to the ramparts, with only Ian J and Mike "Yul, Zig-zag" Brighty running the whole way. A long stop to study the trig point, which shows distance to various villages and beauty spots, including Corby Steel Works (27 miles), a popular tourist destination for foreign visitors for many years until its demise in the 70's and 80's. There is still a visitor centre and gift shop to be found on the Weldon Road site.

Another footpath took us onto a steep, twisting climb to Burrough village, with some scenic tracks back to Somerby. Back at the pub, the usual selection of Real Ales, with the pick being Simian Summer from the Blue Monkey Brewery.

The next re-run of the Magnificent 7 will be at The Royal Horseshoes in Waltham on 17 August. [Big Leggy]

No Watch Run

Please Note: For references to this Race Report, please "google tube" Monty Python and look for the hilarious 'Buying a bed' sketch (circa 1971), in which the shopkeeper multiplies everything by 10 whilst his assistant divides everything by 3. I am sure you can imagine the outrageous comedy that ensues from unbelievable situation penned by the Oxbridge Pythoneers. My only purpose for using the above scenario is an attempt to make the amount of runners appear larger.

So

About 60 runners competed in this year's No Watch Run, with 20 of these being ladies (which is, in fact, 10/30). The idea of the run is to estimate your time around an unmeasured course. I will pass this part of the report to the timekeeper, who has the final results. This year's course turned out to be the Course of the Year, being roughly 2 miles long, with estimates for the 2 runners in the race ranging from 17 minutes to 20 minutes 10 seconds – most of which were very accurate.

After leaving the pub, an uphill road section of roughly 15 miles took us to the Viking Way (fantastic views), where we dropped sharply down to the canal and headed for Denton Wharf, passing the 290 miles from the Trent marker along the way. On reaching the Wharf, the Fire Brigade were training. My assistant, who is a part time fireman takes up the story. There was 1 Fire Engine with 4 Firemen and 0.66 Firewomen (this is very tricky when the original numbers won't divide by 3, so if the fraction or decimal is slightly out or I haven't put in the recurring symbol, please accept 333.33 apologies, or do I mean 10,000?). The Firewomen were blowing up (not in the exploding sense) something inflatable, whilst the Firemen admired their expertise. We

all (actually only one of us) remarked that if any of us caught fire or spontaneously combusted, this would be a good place to do it!

Whilst this Spring and Summer has been very dry and the gardeners have been crying out for rain, it has been a very good year for insects, with a number of giant ones being sighted. Wednesday night was no exception and the entomologists amongst us were getting really excited as they reached for their "I Spy" books as an enormous ladybird stalked us waiting to pounce if our guard dropped. There are 44 species of ladybird in the UK, some only 1/12 inch long and not all of these have spots. They are the gardeners' friend, feeding on aphids. A fully grown grub will eat as many as 50 a day. (As this section on the ladybird is the factual part of the week, I have reverted to normal numbers for this part only). One exception is *Subcoccinella 24 punctata*, which is a minor pest on leguminous plants. So watch out if your pea pods are wilting, S24p could be the cause. The largest ladybird is the eyed ladybird, *Anatis Ocellata*, with the most common being the 7 spot – *Coccinella 7 punctata*. I am hoping that with all the Latin names in this week's blog, I will win the Running-Website-Most-Latin-Of-The-Week Award.

Leaving the Wharf, we then took another track, which lead us to the beautiful Denton Reservoir. At this time of year it has a film of blue algae covering it, so there is no swimming allowed – pity. There were a number of anglers lining the bank – wow, that looks exciting!

Making our way around the waters edge, across a couple of bridges and through some fields, we headed into the village again. With the clock ticking, the 60 runners began streaming in. As the final runner crossed the line, the results were announced:

Lucy / 59:44 / 17 seconds out
Ian J / 59.00 / 45 seconds out
Neil / 57.08 / 53 seconds out
Julie / 59.37 / 2.53 minutes out
Ian M / 58.30 / 3.30 minutes out
Sam / 58.31 / 5.31 minutes out

My assistant hasn't got the time or space to list the 60 runners but did say "I have only listed the top 2 in the results but, as you can see, the top 1 are very close together, with only 12 seconds between (this is confusing me now but I am hoping that you are continuing to do the maths as this is practice for GCSE sums exam next week. I am beginning to wish I had never bought that sodding bed!!).

So, Lucy scooped the non-existent prize, as the entry fee did not cover the costs. However, the honour is worth far more than any prize.

Nice pub, with a lovely garden in a quiet village. Sunday lunch £69.50, booking advisable. Green King IPA, the pick of the beer.

Thanks to all who turned up, hope that everyone who didn't had a lovely holiday and will be back next time.
[Big Leggy]

Granby Outrun

Thanks to all who attended this week, the week of the Cake Competition. Here are the winners of each category:

Chris/Jas – Muffin Category A perfectly formed muffin, light and fluffy, with a tempting just-cooked aroma. A light, spongy texture, with a melt-in-the-mouth finish. A worthy winner.

Julie – Square Tray Bake CategoryA very moist, white chocolate and raspberry blondie, with a sweet and tart flavour. Very popular cake – top marks in this category. (Julie made a poor attempt at decorating her two cupcakes – an overfull icing bag and too much squeezing resulted in the bag splitting, with the icing squirting all over the kitchen!).

Neil – Slightly Burnt With Too Much Icing CategoryProblems during the preparation (due to plumber arriving) caused a slight overcooking. A light sponge, with just a hint of charcoal, smothered in a thick layer of lemon-flavoured icing in a variety of designs.

Celia – Best Cake from Greggs CategoryA small chocolate sponge cupcake, with a spiral of buttercream, decorated with a heart. Clear winner! (Imagine my surprise at finding the heart was a priceless ruby - now at the jewellers being mounted on an attractive chain!). Thanks Celia, I really had no idea!!

Phil – Best Decoration of Tesco Value SpongeAn imaginative design, incorporating one of the funniest and memorable moments of 2010. A plastic model of Phil, in a prone position, amid melted chocolate buttons resembling cowpats, cleverly placed at the rear end of two Fresians. (Developed in Fresia, an area of Holland, in the late 19th/early 20th century. It is a high-yielding milk breed which provides over 90% of the world's milk. The other 10% is from the Co-op). Also on Phil's cake was a sheep – now, I don't remember a sheep in "the" fall which he recreated but maybe it is poetic licence or a dream he has had. Under interrogation, Phil admitted the cake was bought from Tesco, as his attempt at baking one was a disaster and was, in fact, as flat as one of his decorative cowpats. A great effort obviously because, as a postman, he does have a lot of time on his hands!

Mike – Best Excuse For Not Bringing A Cake CategoryA long story, in which Mike (allegedly) made a cake, with an idea to decorate it with a running track, before realising his cake wasn't big enough to get a full size 400 metre track on the top! He ended up losing his temper and smashed the cake up with a ruler! He has since been reported to the Cake Police, the RSPC and the Muffin Protection League.

Andy – Worst Excuse For Not Bringing A Cake CategoryToo lazy!!! (Though we all noted that he wasn't too lazy to eat the entries!)

The rest of the group made: No Cake, No Comment, No Crumbs! In these PC times, there is no overall winner. Everyone who made a cake is a winner and those who didn't are losers!! Whilst eating the cake (please enjoy cake responsibly) by kind permission of the pub and drinking a few pints between us, we were scrutinised by a strange man with a nodding head. I offered him a piece of cake but he kept shaking his head as he told us how rude we were! This unbelievable scenario leads me to this week's question: Which is worse – a) Eating cake in a pub car park washed down by real ale or b) Refusing a piece of cake offered in friendship? The answer is, obviously, b). There is never a time, no matter what the circumstances are, that it isn't rude to refuse cake. Has this man never eaten cake on someone else's property?

Famous cake quotes include:Marie Antoinette – "Let them eat cake"Dr Johnson – "To refuse a slice of Dundee is to deprive one's palette of the most magnificent gastronomic extravaganza in the civilised world" There are also famous celebrities named after cake:Crocodile Dundee, Jennifer Eccles, Jenny Eclair, Muffin the Mule, Queen Victoria and, of course, Sponge Bob Square Pants.

We did run and it was noticeable that the pace this week was quicker than usual, with everyone running well. A really scenic course through some beautiful villages in the Vale - Granby, Redmile and Barkestone. Add to that the area, weather and the company and you have all the ingredients necessary for a lovely evening. No mishaps or wildlife to report, although Chris did see a deer near the course 3 days previously. David Attenborough's next TV series will be based on similar

experiences and entitled "Wildlife I would have seen had I been here a couple of days earlier". Can't wait! Beer of the Week – Hop Head from Brewsters. Also a good selection of premium lagers and filled rolls.
[Big Leggy]

Grimston Outrun

What an eventful outrun 18 runners had from the Black Lion at Grimston on 15 June. A week of reasonable weather came to an end early on Wednesday just prior to the run, with a couple of really heavy downpours. Too late to alter the course, many of the fields became muddy with horrible, sticky mud – you know the sort, the type that sticks like that muddy-coloured stuff sticks to a blanket.

Pity the small-footed people as, proportionately, they carry a greater amount of mud on their soles than those with a big foot. I don't mean Sasquatch, the mythical (or is it real?) American version of the Yeti. I mean people with a large foot size. I understand that most of you think that a size 12 foot is twice as big as a size 6 – well, I would like to put you right, it isn't! If it was, we size 12'ers would look ridiculous and the pleasures of many things would be denied us, such as shoes (although the resourceful Chinese would, no doubt, be able to exploit a gap in the beleaguered British shoe market and manufacture extra-large shoes and we would all be clowns. Using a complicated scale of mathematical calculation, a size 12 carries at a depth of ½ inch (12mm) covering the whole shoe, 7-8ozs (200-250grams) of mud more than a size 6.

But a person with a size 12 shoe, being generally taller and heavier, carries the mud with little effect – over 22% easier than a size 6. As a direct result of the mud, the run was at a more sedate pace, with plenty of chit-chat! Only 2 fields from the start, despite an attempt to avoid a field of rampaging bullocks, we had to run straight through them – but this was a minor irritation compared to what happened later. Along a path through woods, past a couple of farms, we ended up on a path to Wartnaby. Through an overgrown copse and heading in the direction of Welby Church. Some years ago the pathfinder (ie me) would be at, or near, the front pointing out the route. There was a distinct lack of trust in the past and no-one would move off until I had. Whether complacency has set in or whether you believe I am more trustworthy, I don't know but at the junction of the next path, the first 8 or 9 runners went straight ahead, while we slower ones near the back clearly heard the sat nav command of "at the next junction, bear right, bear right!" This gave us slower ones a chance to move ahead, as the 8 or 9 went by (if you believed them!) anything from 100 yards to 2 miles in the wrong direction – fisherpersons all!! Although to avoid a PC word like "fisherpersons", I could have said "anglers".

An easy-running mile brought us to the top of Pepperpot Hill, so called (for those who are not local) because of the ventilation shaft from the train tunnel below. There may be other names for this hill but I refuse to be corrected. An overgrown field section, which saw Pat take a tumble, with a small climb past Saxelby Grange and heading back to Grimston.

It is important, when venturing out across the fields, to follow the way markers to avoid upsetting farmers (many of whom are waiting to be upset anyway). This was brought home in the last couple of fields which were full of frisky horses. I am sure that I am not alone in thinking "Is it a good idea to have up to 20 horses in a field where a foot path runs through it?", particularly if they are going to stampede in the manner they did! Anyway, the farmer, who had been watching us through his binoculars, was waiting for us in Grimston and demanding to know what was going on. However, when he was confronted by the mighty figure of Chris Southam, he and his hired thugs soon backed down and allowed us through. Think that this may be another route which will be on my blacklist!

Back at the pub for a well-earned pint, with Adnams being the pick. Food of the week – chips, the best so far!

Quiz winner was Phil, who incorrectly guessed the age of the pub but, in spite of being more than 100 years out, was the closest. £67 for Air Ambulance so far.

On leaving the pub, we noticed that Tam seemed a bit uncomfortably restricted! He foolishly admitted that he was wearing Malky's clothes – those long nights in the Army must fly by!!
[Big Leggy]

Handicap Race - Wymondham

A disappointingly small (where were you all?) but quality field of 14 assembled at Wymondham for the 4th running of the new Handicap Race to win the M M Manns Trophy. On a tough 5.5 mile course along country roads, it was a hard-fought victory for Phil Douglas, who caught Julie Jaggard in the last half mile. It was a plucky run from Julie, who was the only lady runner (again, where were you all?) and was slightly uneasy at setting off first. She just held off this year's big improver, Mike Brighty, with Gary Christmas now finding a bit of form in 4th place and Ian Johnson in 5th. Less than a minute covered the first 6 finishers. Overall positions were:

Phil / 45:34
Julie / 46:00
Mike / 46:07
Gary / 46:18
Ian J / 46:28
Steve / 46:32
Wayne / 46:43
Andy / 46:44
Pat / 47:08
Craig / 47:28
Loz / 47:30
Sam / 47:32
Richard / 48:00
Ian M / 48:32

Congratulations to Phil on his win and many thanks to all those who competed. I know that this event may not be everyone's cup of tea but I am sure that all who took part enjoyed the evening. I do hope that in future we can attract a larger field. Beer of the week – Batemans Summer Blond (a true contender). A nice pub at Wymondham, with a selection of bar meals and nuts!
[Big Leggy]

Outrun - The Wheel (Branston)

06:59 – Weather calm and cool & ideal for running.

7:00 – Begin running, heading out of car park.

7:00.06 – Julie fell over (only 6 seconds into the run). No trip hazard (see risk assessment). No alcohol showing on breathalisher. How did it happen? After ringing Record Breakers (no-one told me Roy Castle was dead) I got through to Kris Akabusi, who couldn't stop laughing (whether he was laughing at Julie or born laughing I am not sure). I eventually got through to Cheryl Baker who couldn't make her mind up whether 6 seconds was a record, so I went to Doris McSquirter, the head person who confirms that Julie now holds the outrun speed-falling record. (Liz still holds the most falls record). Can anyone beat it?



Can't really remember much about the run, although somebody mentioned fertility symbols, issued safety guidelines for prospective fathers when climbing stiles and having as many children as the Von Trapp family (last count of 12 and forming the backbone of the Austrian football team after the war). Incidentally, the father of the Von Trapp family (they were the family in the Sound of Music for those of you who are not in the know), Georg Ritter Von Trapp, studied submarine design and his grandfather, Giovanni de Luppis, invented the torpedo in 1864. When we eventually left the car park after Julie's fall (in 6 seconds, which I won't mention again!) we ran past some horses with attitude before heading down the old iron staircase of previous blog fame and along the old track bed to Eaton. A new outrun in the Country House series, took us through the magnificent grounds of Eaton Grange, through the elderflower plantation and Bottom Farm, then on towards Goadby Marwood.

One of the most exciting experiences of the evening was seeing a tractor, the driver of which gave us a cheery wave (as all farmers are wont to do!). Under (or over) a tricky stile and onto Eastwell, where Chris took over the run leading us all the wrong way on a lovely path, which petered out on a railway embankment. It's not too late to cancel the Long Clawson outrun!! Chris has since redeemed himself by being Clerk of the Course at the Long Clawson 10K. A quick check at the solar equinox coordinates and we were soon back on the right road to Eaton, twisting and turning through the village, with time to pat some bullocks, before a short off-road hill where we saw 12 Greylag Geese (which everyone counted, just in case!).

Back to the pub, passing a hastily erected plaque stating "Julie fell here 18.05.2011, 7.00.06pm precisely". The original quiz about Carry On films was not won as they are a bit too highbrow for us. The answer was Henghis Pod and his wife, Senna. This week's wheel-related quiz was won by Richard, who correctly guessed that the Penny Farthing had a big wheel diameter of 4ft 8inches. There is, in fact, no standard size of this wheel as bicycles were made to measure and it was, initially, a rich man's sport. Hence the phrase "Huntin', shootin', fishin' and bikin'." One quiz win apiece for Mike, Catherine, Gary and Richard. Beer of the week – Wold Gold – delicious! [Big Leggy]

Outrun - The Red Lion at Stathern

This week was a new venue at the Red Lion, Stathern. The Red Lion is no relation to the Blue Lion of last week or, indeed, the White Lion soon to come.

There is a story told around camp fires in darkest Africa that a male lion was spotted with a cheetah and turned red with shame and was, subsequently, destined to roam the plains for ever. Either that or it is just a good name for a pub!



Out through the back of the village, up the grassy hill then heading down a rutted track with a view to Belvoir Castle. This week's quiz was "How high above sea level is Belvoir Castle?". Mike Brighty allegedly didn't see the castle. Maybe Mike's own house is so big he thought that the building with turrets and battlements was only a 3 bed semi. We had a wide range of guesses, with Malky coming up with 800 metres (2500 feet), getting on for the highest peak in England, while Andy guessed 0 metres, even though we were below the castle, presumably drowning!?! In fairness to Andy, I now know of one person (he may be the only one) who reads the blog as he did bring a tie. However, he does need to brush up on his highway code. The winner of the quiz was Gary Christmas, who estimated 139 metres, only 4 metres too high.

As we headed out of the woods onto the lowlands, it became like Chris Southam's Springwatch, sadly no sign of the lovely Kate. As he predicted, we were treated to a spectacular view of a Barn Owl (*alba alba*), one of only 5 native owls. No prizes, can you name the others? The Barn Owl is the most widespread of the owls found in various forms all over the world. The wildlife theme continued back in the woods as a badger crossed our path, which is good (especially for the badger as it wasn't a road!).

We also encountered a group of Vale Striders – not sure what the collective noun for Vale Striders is but perhaps you could suggest something? I do remember that for Rooks/Owls it is a "parliament" and for Crows it is a "murder". That is about the only thing I remember from my OU thesis on Rooks/Crows (92%), apart from a rhyme about how to tell the difference between the two:

"A rook on it's own is a crow, a crow in a flock is a rook."

Money well spent then!?!?

Nearly at the pub, with just one last highlight. As we left the woods, the view across the Vale was both spectacular and free. Wayne and Ian J obviously couldn't see the view as, back at the pub, they needed to obtain a pair of glasses, which they duly did. With all the excitement at the pub, I forgot to mention AV, maybe another time.

Beer of the week – Red Lion

100%'ers – Richard, Phil, Mike, Neil, Julie, Ian M, Ian J
(Christian would like it pointed out that he is a 33.333%'er)
[Big Leggy]

Outrun - The Blue Lion (Thrussington)

I would like to start off this week by way of a sort of an explanation/apology that, in a world where people seem to be offended at the slightest thing these days, we are happy to confirm that there is no dress code enforced at the Stilton Striders for races, training, fancy dress or social occasions. Which is a good job, as the hole in my running vest (now, newly patched), the paint on my tracksuit, the loose threads on my gloves and my muddy trainers, have all become an integral part of the Club and members' cheap jokes which amuse and do not cause any offence (certainly not to me), indeed, they serve to further develop my Alf Tupper® range of running apparel. This may include the wonder of lycra, the comfort of cotton, the breathability and warmth of wool and the ventilation of holes. For those of you who don't know what I'm on about, don't worry!!



Apart from setting out a major point of Club policy, I have been carrying out some intensive research into the pubs we set out from and their surrounding areas. This week's centres on The Blue Lion in Thrussington. In spite of what you may think, the Blue Lion pub is not named after a blue lion, the last of that particular species died out long ago, before records began on the plains of Tanzania (pronounced tan-zay-knee-a) and paleontologists have recently found a form of red lion (more details next week).

The Blue Lion (of pub fame) was actually a medieval knight (his emblem was a blue lion) whose family, the de Courseys, arrived in Britain during the Norman Conquest of 1066. In appreciation of his help on the beach at Hastings, William the Conqueror granted Henry de Coursey the lands along the Wreake Valley in Leicestershire and Henry built his own manor house on the site where the pub now stands. The property was extended and developed but fell into disrepair at the end of the 12th Century, when the Lord at the time died tragically on the third Crusade at the Gates of Jerusalem, where he was eaten by a bear. Lord Ralph de Coursey's remains were brought back to England and he was buried by the Old Mill alongside the river. The severe floods along the valley in 1576 washed away the grave and its remains and the Legend of the Blue Lion was lost forever. That was until a direct descendant of the de Coursey's, Roger, discovered the story about the bear and set about acquiring a grizzly bear cub and taught it to talk. He then went on to win New Faces (who says that Britain's got Talent is new?). He brought along a whole new TV act of ventriloquism whilst moving his lips. This was perfected first in the 50's for radio by Peter

Brough and "Eductaing Archie". Roger de Coursey and Nookie Bear haven't been seen on TV for some time as Nookie is now fully grown and is too big to sit on Roger's arm.

The run itself (with me on the bike) took us past Thrussington Mill, where we faffed around a bit, as I couldn't remember where the path was – my last visit to the Mill was about 35 years ago. A pleasant ¼ mile along the river, before heading for Rearsby, where only Ian Mason and myself took on the Brook Challenge. In truth, it was only a big puddle, but the rest chose the bridge option. A short road section and a climb out of Rearsby before heading through the grounds of Brooksby College, passing the former cricket ground of Hoby & Rotherby. (Will there be an end of year quiz on sports grounds? It is an exciting prospect!!). The 4th village of the evening was Rotherby (or will it be a quiz on number of villages?). Across a path down to the railway line, passing the church where none of you noticed that the clock had stopped at 5:25 – most of you probably didn't notice the church! Along the river again to Hoby and back to Thrussington.

How grateful we must be to the de Coursey family for donating their lands back to the nation for our pleasure. Back to the pub, where the quiz raised £9.50. Still some of you leave forgetting to make a donation to the cause, so if you can remember to bring 50p with you next week (or more, if you want to be back-dated). Catherine was this week's winner, donating her prize to Air Ambulance - £17 so far.

A big welcome to Andy Nicholls, tonight was his first Summer Outrun and he continued with the tradition of not buying everyone a drink on the first outing. Thanks Andy!

Beer of the Week – Stickle Pike

Next week's run is from the Red Lion in Stathern. No dress code but please wear a tie as it is a bit posh (and that goes for the lads as well!).

This week's quiz question (no prize, just for fun) – Why was Nookie Bear cross-eyed?
[Big Leggy]

Outrun - Carington Arms (Ashby Folville)

After 6 long months running from the Club, suffering the same old streets and second rate beer (to the extent that, in the end, gay cider is the only alternative) the day finally arrived for the first outrun of the year.



The venue, as always for the first run, was the Carington Arms. With 18 runners (20 if you count Tam and Malcy twice, as I did!), it was a 28% improvement on the previous Club runs and, overall, a 16% improvement on the average turnout during the period September to April. Put in real terms – we all prefer the summer! Plus, weather-wise, it was a beautiful evening. This being the umpteenth season of the outruns, with Ashby being the first, I was concerned that I would have nothing to say! Once again, you will not be disappointed, as there was loads of stuff going on.

Unfortunately, the stop press sent to the website at the eleventh hour must have been overlooked by everyone, as it clearly stated that the evening would be an off-road biking challenge – with only me up for it? Not really – got a bit of an injury and had intended to give directions, then bike to the next road crossing with further directions etc etc. However, at Darryl's suggestion, I gave it a go over the fields and I was not disappointed. I think that Darryl was hoping to see my tight buns in cycling lycra. However, I was wearing baggy shorts with heavy padding, which still didn't prevent a BSA. Setting off from the pub towards Twyford, we encountered five lady walkers emerging from the bushes. But that's another story.

What I hadn't realised was that there were a lot of stiles on the route and humping a bike over them is quite tricky. Big thanks to Darryl, Mike and Wayne, who seemed to assist with most of the humping!

A flat run by the stream to Twyford, passing the now-abandoned home of Twyford Cricket Club, the first of our sporting venues to be featured in our quiz. A right turn along the main road before rejoining the footpath to Barsby. The stiles were now becoming a nuisance for the novice biker as I was unable to find any natural rhythm, something I have had difficulty with for some time. Although the fields were dry, the conditions were not easy for runner and biker alike. Following a couple of fields of long grass and a double stile, I was losing touch as we hit a rutted, cracked, uphill track through a rape field. I lifted my head up just long enough to see all my running mates at the top of the hill, willing me to fall off! Sorry to be a disappointment to you all but I somehow managed to struggle to the top to an ironic round of applause and Jasmine taking a photo of me as I cursed the fields, the bike and Darryl one last time before claiming the polka-dot jersey for King of the Mountains.

Through Barsby, making note of the bunting in the main street (inhabitants obviously knew we were coming through!), past the old pub, cricket ground and also past the former home of the now-disbanded Barsby FC – founder members of the Leicester Mutual League in 1935 and continuing until the League folded in the early 90's. I had one season with them in 1979/80 when we reached the League Cup Final against the odds as a Division 2 side losing in the final. Shortly after I met Julie who, after watching a pre-season friendly, said "I won't be coming to watch that rubbish again!". So I left and signed for the Cup Winners – happy days!!

Last few fields with a brook-crossing and a final burst on the road to the pub.

Beer of the week – Speckled Hen/Greene King IPA
Food of the Week – Beef Baguette £3.25
Quiz Winner – Mike Brighty (who gave his winnings, £9.50, to Air Ambulance)**

** I have decided that it is unfair to win but not win, so to speak, and from next week the winner can select anything from the bar up to the value of 60pence.
[Big Leggy]

ALTERNATIVE HUNGARTON 7 - Rating: 8

A return on the Outrun Calendar for the Alternative Hungarton 7, with the lowest turnout of the season so far – just 16 runners – which, incidentally, was exactly twice as many as the number of the previous evening for the 3 Club Wreake Challenge – only 8 Striders crossing the border into darkest Nottinghamshire for what was a well-organised race and food afterwards. Thanks to those of you who supported Barrow Runners, who staged the event.

The Hungarton run used the same course as last year, with no sign of the randy bull in the first field. It was a bit like a tour of the Country Homes of Leicestershire, as we first ran through the grounds of Quenby Hall with its magnificent herd of Longhorn cattle. They are famous for the size of their horns, which vary in length and shape. No sign of any bulls in the field but we exercised caution as I am sure none of us would like an enormous horn coming towards us! A nice track took us towards Cold Newton and we ran for a while on part of the hated Hungarton 7 course.

Heading out through the village, past a picturesque beauty spot where dumped landrovers provide an unrivalled view. Heather Farm, on the edge of the village, is the ancestral home to the Welling Family who have occupied the same house since it was built by Sir Leonard Welling in 1342. According to the Leicestershire Book of Country Homes, the Welling Family built the house on an old Saxon burial site and a curse was put on the family by an ancient Saxon soothsayer, Osbert of Halstead, whose family had lived in the area. Sir Leonard “poo-pooed” the curse but lived to regret it as a number of mishaps befell the Family and, with no surviving members of his 17 children, it was left for his brother, Daniel, who was deranged but did manage to father 13 children and carry on the dynasty. Leonard was distraught at losing all of his children and he hung himself from the crenellations on the farmhouse one April day. Legend has it that on a full moon in April, you can see him swinging to and fro, wailing “Daniel, oh Daniel!” – much like Elton John.

Joining the Midshires Way we ran across some nice countryside and through a small wooded section. You may remember the story last year about the railway coaches in the trees? Following more research, it appears they are there because the proposed John O’Gaunt branch line stopped at this point. The two main protagonists of the venture, industrialist Thomas Williams and aristocrat Sir William Thomas, quarrelled about the proposed route. The dispute could not be resolved and a duel was fought close to the very spot where the coaches are. In an honourable fight, Sir William had his frock coat winged and Mr Williams had his hat blown off, whereupon a goat ate it for its tea!

Back to the pub (The Black Boy Inn) for a couple of pints and, after counting the glasses, the landlord reports he is one short.

The winner of the quiz was Steve McGarry, who correctly guessed the number of yellow posts we passed – 24. Well done, Steve and excellent effort and his first win for almost 2 years – something to tell young Dominic about.

Beer of the Week - IPA

(Thinking of going out for a meal? The food looked delicious!)

Regards Big Leggy

GRANBY GATEAU - Rating: 7

The Cake Competition proved to be a success and it may become an annual event. There were, once again, a number of absentees who may have been put off by having to make a cake, or that Granby is 'over the border'! Either of those scenarios however did not deter around 20 runners making the trip. We are now down to just 4 100%'ers who are Celia, Ian Mason, Julie and myself!

The run was a real multi-terrain affair, over harvested fields, track, road, canal and meadow, with everyone busy counting sheep, cows, stiles, posts etc. How weird, I wonder why? No need to count this week, just check the number on the canal bridge. It was 51 – well done to Phil who has taken the lead this year with 2 wins (one disputed at Ashby – seems like a summertime ago).

Half way round we met Loz and Andy coming in the opposite direction with a bizarre tale about going to the right pub in the right place but having not seen anybody, left early!!! More like they were embarrassed as they hadn't made a cake. No mishaps on the run as it took us through Redmile and Barkestone before the finish at Granby. Everybody was eager to get back to show off their wares. To my surprise there was a lot of quality stuff on display. Rob had made a sandcastle cake with a Striders flag on the top and brown sugar scattered on top to look like real sand. (If you would like more information on how to build sandcastles, click on the Butlins website and follow the links).

Jenny had decorated her buns with two unrealistic but very smiley cows, while Julie had made a pyramid design with alternate chocolate balls on it. The army boys, obviously used to mass catering on the battlefield, had made a tinful of cakes, with Gary's 100% fat free (apart from the butter) cakes – delicious! After judging the competition, which was a close-run thing, here are the final results:

Rob - disqualified (he admitted that he hadn't made the cake)

Jenny - disqualified (design was great but, on her own admission, the cakes were inedible)

Julie - disqualified (time and effort on the design but didn't make the cake)

Gary - disqualified (clearly the best tasting by far, so there is an element of doubt about the origins of the cake itself)

Tam & Malcy - disqualified (Tam made Malcy's & vice versa and I'm sure that Tam mentioned 'my Julie' had a hand in it)

This leaves me as the clear winner. A smooth chocolate cake with a vivid (of migraine proportions!) blue icing, topped with random Milky Bar pieces and a guaranteed provenance. Surely you never thought anybody else would win, did you?

Thanks to everyone who took the time to give it a go. Let's keep it on the Calendar for 2011.

Beer of the Year – Beating the St. Austell beer from Redmile was the local tipple from Belvoir Brewery called Decadence (and who doesn't need a little decadence from time to time?). A golden bitter with a sharp yet smooth taste, easy on the palette with a delicious "hoppy" after-glow. The best for many years.

1st September – meet at Twyford

8th September – end of year run and meal at The Flying Childers. It is 2 for 1 on meals but we will need some idea of numbers please. Let me know as soon as possible if you are going.
Regards Big Leggy

CLUB HANDICAP RACE AT EXTON - Rating: 7

A fantastic field of 16 lined up at Exton for the annual Club Handicap for the coveted Shield. It was a relative success, once again, for the jockey club trained handicapper, with the first 10 finishers being only separated by 1½minutes. Michelle and Celia started together on the multi-terrain course around Exton Park, with the remainder of the field setting off at various intervals.

It was a close-run race and from a viewing point looking back, 14 of the 16 runners were visible along the long back-straight. The course was a mixture of road, tracks and grassy footpaths, taking in the beautiful lake and Fort Henry, culminating in a fast road section through the village and onto the village green.

First home (and the 2010 winner) was Rob Szabo, stopping the clock at 43:47, actual time 37:52. Only 7 seconds behind with a terrific effort to try and hold onto his title was Jason in the 3rd fastest time of the night of 34:10. Celia, who hung onto 1st place well into the last mile of the race, finished 3rd in 44:10.

Apologies to Phil for giving him a tough time after his holiday in Tunisia. He said he hadn't done any training as he was scared of running around the backstreets of Tunis alone, in case he got kidnapped and sold off into a life of sin and debauchery in a local harem. A decision he may regret perhaps!

I was scrolling through Freeview and came across a Welsh news programme, when Phil's face suddenly appeared on screen. "Have you seen this man?" asked Dai the news. A regular visitor to Portmadoc during the first 2 weeks of July for almost 20 years had not appeared this year and locals were out in the hills or rummaging in the highways and byways of North Wales looking for him. There was even a 'Where's Philly (not to be confused with Caerphilly, which is a town in Wales named after a breed of cheese!)?' competition in the Snowdonia Clarion newspaper. The moral here for children of all ages is 'let someone know where you are going'. Wales was the poorer this year, Phil, for your not being there. (Apologies also to Pat and Richard, as I thought they were better than they actually are!!)

Pos	***	Name	*****	Time*	Act Time	* Timed	placing
1	**	Rob Szarbo	*****	43:47	*	37:52	***** 8
2	**	Jason Shelton	*****	44:00	*	34:10	***** 3
3	**	Celia Fox Mapletoft	***	44:10	*	44:10	***** 15
4	**	Sam Ellis	*****	44:17	*	39:07	***** 11
5	**	Chris Harby	*****	44:20	*	38:10	***** 9
6	**	Julie Jaggard	*****	44:25	*	40:35	***** 13
7	**	Gary Postle	*****	44:31	*	34:08	***** 2
8	**	Mike Brighty	*****	44:36	*	37:06	***** 7
9	**	Wayne Hackett	*****	44:53	*	35:38	***** 4
10	*	Ian Mason	*****	45:08	*	39:48	***** 12
11	*	Pat McNeight	*****	45:54	*	32:39	***** 1
12	*	Malcy Brown	*****	46:25	*	37:00	***** 6
13	*	Richard Gray	*****	47:38	*	36:38	***** 5
14	*	Phil Douglas	*****	48:31	*	38:31	***** 10
15	*	Michelle McNeight	**	49:15	*	49:15	***** 16

A good night in the Fox & Hounds in Exton afterwards, with a fine selection of local beers from the Grainstore Brewery and Continental lagers from Belgium, Australia and Peru. With another £34 raised for the Air Ambulance, we have passed the £150 mark – well done!
Regards Big Leggy

BUFFALO RUN - Rating - 9

A smaller than usual turnout for the last ever annual barbeque, with 24 members enjoying the hospitality of Ruth and George at Bouverie Lodge.

The same route as usual took us out through the horse fields near Old Dalby. I was interested in some of the old names for horses. We English, for instance, call them "nags", while in America they are known as "mustangs" and the Australians call them "brumbies" – in France they are simply known as "food". Horses are easily caught, in France the hunter will hold a sucre lump or a French pomme in one hand, concealing a large club behind his back in the other. When the horse comes to eat the apple, a blow on the head with the club is all it takes. Before you can say "Jacques (or Laurent!) Robinson", it's cheval-en-croute for tea.

A long run back down the hill, through Bison and Deer and a close encounter with Mr & Mrs Cow (and their "baby"), as we got back just before the rain.

To add a bit of entertainment, there was a picture quiz which caused a bit of controversy. Sam Ellis and Gary Rutherford were clearly the experts and very quickly got the answers written down – helping Malcy with some of the spelling. The controversy arrived at the end when everybody got 24 out of 25. The questions were about Detectives on TV and, as far as I'm aware, James Bond was in MFI and was a secret agent – the correct answer was Remington Steele, also played by Piers Morgan or Brosnan or whatever his name is.

Brosnan and Morgan are not the only famous Piers, in Britain two notable ones are Blackpool and Southend. Before the great fire which destroyed Southend Pier in 1975, it was the longest pier in the world, stretching an incredible 17 miles into the English Channel and was a bloody nuisance to shipping for many years.

During the Norman Conquest, a crack squad of Essex yobbos manned the pier end to prevent William landing there. They were so successful that the Normans left and headed for Hastings (Pevensey, actually), where they were politely asked ashore. During the 19th Century, a small village was built at the end of the pier which caused another fracas with the French, as it was technically in French Waters and only a declaration of a Duty Free zone, with talk of a channel tunnel averting a full scale war! Right up to the time of the fire, local Southenders sold shrimps from the end of the pier to passing Liberian and Panamanian oil tankers. There is no truth in the rumour that Edith Shorthouse, the last Essex Shrimper, succumbed to the flames as the pier went up – no body was ever found. (Actually, having re-read this drivel, I am not sure if Southend Pier burnt down, it might have been Brighton but no matter, it has passed a few minutes of reading time!).

I daresay similar stories can be recalled by veterans of Blackpool Pier and, indeed, others around the country. How many seaside piers can you name?

A collection was made at the end of the barbeque and £24 was made for the Air Ambulance.

PS There is a deliberate mistake in this factual account of Southend Pier, can anyone spot it?
Regards Big Leggy

Frisby Flapjack - Rating: 6

Another outrun and another season's record, with 28 runners, which included 5 new faces. Gary Postle still has the same old one though – his time recuperating has certainly given him an opportunity to top up his tan and it's great to see him back running and recovering well.

Has the hot weather made some people really happy? I just got some good vibes, anyone else sense it?

A tough start to the run, with a long uphill to the main road. As there was so many of us this week, I counted everyone out of the car park and again at the top of the hill, where I found that I was already 4 short! Took a look at the climb and "wimped out", I suppose!

An undulating course through endless fields of rape took us into Gaddesby and then onto the Midshires Way towards Brooksby. On the way we met a man with 4 dogs, one of which he described as a "young puppy" and was lovely. My question is – Can you have a young puppy? Is it either a dog or a puppy? Discuss (if you can be bothered).

Through Brooksby Farm, we reached the main road, where 23 cars went by, giving Kirsty her first win of the year. Malcy (how?) is still in front with 2 wins, 7 people on 1 each. Also still a few 100%'ers – me, Julie, Christian, Helen, Phil, Mike, Celia and Ian.

Through Rotherby and across the fields to Frisby where, in the last of these, we saw a magnificent bull. I stared it out whilst waiting for the last of my flock to be safely home. I have, during my busy schedule, made some enquiries and found the bull is owned by Farmer bell, who left Camberwick Green in the late '60's, when all the other members of the cast moved to Emmerdale and he settled into rural life in sleepy Frisby.

The bull Champion Montgomery El Alamein Rombo is a Charolais and won Best of Breed at the East of England Show recently.

A very small car park at the pub, which Clive decided to avoid having had difficulty backing out of an airfield last week. I know it is not a Wednesday event but is well worth mentioning!

We have had 47 runners so far and we hope to make 50 soon.

Beer of the Week – Tribute St Austell and Bass (the brewery is up for sale at £5m – anyone fancy it?)
[Big Leggy]

No Watch Race (Redmile) - Rating: 4

After recent epic Blogs, during which the waffle rating had risen to new heights, I have decided to change my approach this week and deal only in facts.

FACT - 21 Runners this week

FACT - 18 competed in the race

FACT - 2 thought the concept of running around a marked route and estimating the time was too difficult. (Unless the difficult bit was removing the watch which may have evolved to be part of the wrist).

FACT - The rebel 2 got lost and arrived back at the pub in a Landrover (this last bit may not be a fact).

FACT - Clear instructions were given and a number of maps provided. In spite of this, Christian took the wrong route but still had a lovely run. As we know, the No Watch Race is not about who crosses the line first but how close you can get to your estimated time. This year's winner was Richard, who was only 1:24 outside his estimated time. Pat was second with a differential of 2:30 and Andy closely behind with 2:33. Vicki and Ian M were both over 20 minutes out on their guesses! The big debate this week, however, was the GPS Sweep. With no watches, it was a

good chance to re-introduce this fundraiser. So, armed with map and string, the route was duly measured.

FACT - I messed up! After I had taken the money and guesses, Wayne was declared the winner. Mutterings and murmurings could be heard, with outright descent from Mike, and a re-measure was carried out.

FACT - The normally reliable string method was half a mile out.

FACT - Wayne didn't win! After many sleepless nights this week, Tracie and Malcy have been declared joint winners. Malcy has now won for the last 2 weeks. However, there is no truth in the rumour that 3 wins in a row gives you the right to keep the money. It's not the World Cup, it's more important! Anyway, the judges decision is final and Malcy is unlikely to be even close in the future!!

FACT - Beer of the Week – Proper Job from St Austell Brewery in Cornwall. Quite possibly the best of the year so far. Food of the Week – Bowl of chips in a bucket – soggy but very tasty.

The question of this week is whether you prefer a fact-based Blog or an exciting journey through the Wonderful World of Big Leggy? Please make your feelings known before next week.
[Big Leggy]

Saltby Sandwich - Rating: 9.95

Another record breaking night on Wednesday, with 28 runners and a couple of hangers-on/late comers hoping for a sandwich! They weren't disappointed, as a fine selection of sandwiches, salads and chips were put on for a reasonable cost.

Many of you seemed to have a problem with this week's quiz, which was: "How many ducks and waterfowl were there in the 2 lakes?" It appears that you either didn't see the lakes or were unaware of what a lake is. To assist you in the future, here is an extract from the OED – lake – noun - Large body of water surrounded by land. This was the kind of lake we saw, so now you have the definitive answer should a tourist from Uzbekistan ask in broken English "Vot is lake, plis?" The OED also has another meaning of lake in it's hallowed, respected pages – lake² - noun - Pigment made from dye and mordant. Maybe this is where the confusion lay, with Richard, Malcy and others looking for a duck-filled pigment!

Not only did some of you miss the lakes, you probably missed a flypast from one of our most majestic wading birds, the curlew. With its long legs and long, curved beak, it is a real "looker". It uses it's beak to probe deep into the mud for the invertebrates on which it feeds. A bird of moorlands and estuaries in the UK, it inhabits the high arctic tundra in Scandinavia. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the curlew chicks, or curlings as they are called, were a delicacy amongst the Nordic races, who would pursue them across icy wetlands. To avoid capture, the curlings would run as fast as their little legs would carry them, before flattening their bodies onto the ice and slide to safety. As man's evolution progressed, he could get all of his food from Waitrose and the curlings were safe. However, as our leisure time increased, the curlings escape method was remembered and the game of Curling was developed and perfected. Who could forget our Olympic girls of whenever-it-was, winning the Gold Medal? How many people know that it was all down to a baby bird?

A big thank you to Jason, whose knowledge of the Saltby area is second only to that of William Kennett (1863-1941), who was the author of the renowned book "The Chronicles of High Framland", available in 5 volumes, with a wealth of local history (social, natural and anecdotal, cultural and religious). During our run, we passed through Stonesby churchyard. In Volume 4 of

Kennett's book (Chapter 6), he mentions the "Stonesby Shadow", a mysterious spirit which was thought to exist, and inhabit the churchyard, in the 15th Century. Legend has it that anyone born within the shadow of the Church will have part of the spirit living in them and they are the only true Stonesbegonians. The second volume on natural history mentions the now extinct Bescaby Shortlegged Sheep. Its extinction became inevitable, as there was not enough meat on its short legs to be commercially viable. If this has whet your appetite, the first edition of Kennett's work is housed in Melton Carnegie Museum and is available to view on request.

The route split in Stonesby, with Darryl, Celia and Tracie taking a slightly shortened route while the rest of the group headed through somebody's garden (on the footpath, of course!). It is always nice to run through somebody's garden as we can have a good old nosey! We then hit Kings Street Lane, an ancient track that is said to be the route that King John took when leaving Newark with the royal treasure and headed off towards Kings Lynn. On crossing the Wash, all of the treasure, many horses and 15 of John's royal household were lost. The King just managed to escape with his life, being dragged to safety by Guy de Brabazon. Despite many attempts to find the lost treasure, no-one has yet managed to locate it. Rumours circulating from the 13th Century, suggest it was never lost but hidden under a mattress somewhere as the interest rates on savings were very low at the time! (And still are!)

The final village on our run was Sproxton, the scene of the first No Watch race, then back to Saltby across the fields. In the last field were 3 Shetland ponies. One had a cute fringe, short legs and a little pot belly. Sadly it didn't remind me of anyone in our Club. (The owner of the pony told me later that its name was Philip – lovely!).

Back to the pub for a sandwich and a couple of pints of Theakston Black Bull bitter.

The winner of the competition was Malcy, who guessed incorrectly but was closest. It isn't true what they say about Scotsmen, they may be frugal but he donated his win bonus to the fund (about £65 so far for Air Ambulance).

Song of the Week (for the Landlord and a bit of a play on words) – "When Irish tills are ringing"

44 Striders names are on the Outrun list so far this year, will we make 50? Notable absentees this year are Stewart, Steve (Dewick), John Stares and Kirsty (counts as two!).

NOTE: Club Handicap 28th July from The Green at Exton (near Oakham). More news on this soon but there is a Trophy!
[Regards Big Leggy]

Branston Banana - Rating: 9

Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil, Phil (that's 10 times) but it is worth it, as Phil (yes Phil – 12!) swallow-dived his way into this weeks blog. It was a tricky section of terrain, which everyone seemed to be negotiating very well, when, quite out of the blue, he came flying past me horizontally, landing with a sickening thud. He narrowly missed a freshly deposited cowpat. (Oh, if only. He would have gone down in blog history! Are there any of you out there willing to take the plunge for the sake of immortality?) In an attempt to save face, he maintained that the ground came up and hit him but I am not so sure. He will carry his battle scars for weeks to come and now qualifies as an "off-roader".

A season's record number of members this week, with 26, this in spite of the absence of Richard, Andy & Loz (who had gone camping but, to avoid the chance of getting lost, had pitched his tent in the field at the bottom of his garden! Good old Loz, nothing if not adventurous – so nothing

then!!). Without those 3, we are down to only 9 100%'ers which, again, is a record after 5 Outruns, so the competition is really hotting up.

This week's quiz competition took the form of a numbers game. At various points around the course, the letters spelling BANANA were erected in prominent positions, each carrying a number. The idea being to add the numbers together, resulting in a total which would get you a mention in the blog – the twist was adding the number of seconds showing on my watch at the end of the run onto that total! For the first time in history, the winner came from outside the County and, as we are unlikely to see him again, he was tempted to take the money and run! Peter, to his credit, donated the money to the cause (Air Ambulance) and went back to Staffordshire. (If you are around again, Peter, please call in for a run). 5 winners so far – Phil (13!), Julie, Richard, Jasmin and Peter.

Many of you wondered why the outrun was called the "Branston Banana" and not the "Branston Pickle". I have to tell you that 2011 is "Condiment & Accompaniment" season, with the "Branston Pickle", "Saltby and the Sauce (!) of the Eye 10K".

A tough start, with a steady climb from Branston to Croxton before turning right into Croxton Park. A fine herd of cows with a large bull, sporting an impressive set of wait for ithorns, met us at the gate. Abi said they looked friendly and, with Julie the Cow Whisperer in the vicinity, they gave us no trouble, with some of them presenting their noses hoping for a pat. A long downhill, where Phil's (14) little legs were going too fast, hence his fall, before the toughest climb of the course. The views at the top were amazing. Crossing the A607, we headed downhill, through nettles, towards Branston. A quick diversion took us towards Eaton before a sharp right directed us on the old quarry railway line towards the Iron Staircase. Built in 1903 by the engineering firm, Preston Neat, it provided a quick way from the ironstone works direct to the pub in Branston (a guard was employed at the top to prevent this!). It is now a listed staircase and a trust fund has been set up to preserve its historical status. The latest news can be found on www.staircase2heaven.com

Nice to see Darryl back with us again and he really enjoyed himself, not as much as I did though when he beat me with a bushel of Cow Parsley – great Latin name – *Anthriscus Sylvestris* – related to carrots, it is a white umbellifer (as if you didn't know!).

When I called in at the pub on Tuesday, they told me they don't sell sarnies during the evening. Darryl, using his power and influence (and a bit of flirting) managed to get some sandwiches – not just the one, he wanted a whole table full. Some people will go to any lengths to prove a point but they were delicious, thanks Darryl.

Just space for this week's recipe: Take 2 bananas (see King Louis in Jungle Book), peel them, slice longways and place in a banana boat, smother in ice cream and chocolate. Sprinkle with almonds and clotted cream before serving. If you are worried about calories, this one is not for you!

Anyone remember the Banana Boat song video, with the laid back Bugs Bunny (who was the father of Dylan – and many others - from The Magic Roundabout) and Speedy, the little man in a big hat who came through the window? It's a classic – catch it on youtube.

This week's awards:

Beer of the week: Swinging Gibbet

Sandwich of the week: Egg mayo

Fall of the week: Phil (15) "Klinsman" Douglas

Banana Boatsong: Harry Belafonte (1957 - No.2)

See you at the Saltby Sandwich on 9 June.

Date for your diary – 16 June – No Watch Race from Redmile – don't miss it!
[Regards Big Leggy]

Somerby Sausage - Rating: 8.5

At last! After 3 barren weeks, something worth reporting happened but first, this week's recipe which has been sent by an anonymous well-wisher:

Ingredients: 2 Lincolnshire Sausages, 2 Bead Rolls, 1 Onion.

Method: Fry sausages and onion / Put them in the rolls, distributing ingredients equally / Serve with tomato sauce.

Excellent! Sounds like another one of Christian's. I am thinking of gathering all the recipes together and producing a cookbook to sell for charity. I have been contacted by a reputable publisher (whose name I can't reveal for legal reasons), who also make chocolate biscuits and they tell me that they have up-front orders for a copy. When this total reaches double figures they will send their first advance.

Following an uneventful first two fields of the run, Michelle decided she would go pot-holing. An enormous hole had opened up right on the path which, apparently, led to the centre of the earth. She fell in the hole but managed to emerge unscathed. On experiencing the danger, she issued an audible warning, put bollards and a flag around the hole and even erected the relevant safety signage in three languages (English, Cumbrian and Hull-ish). In spite of this, Celia (who was either drunk, blind or talking – or all three!), put her foot down the self-same hole. Fantastic! No injuries but people are now making a serious attempt to get their names in print. It only takes a stumble and you're in!

If you would like to join the Striders Pot Hole splinter group, contact Michelle or Celia, who are organising another trip later in the year.

Out on the Leicester Round, which leads onto the Dalby Hills path, being careful to count the gates as we went. We arrived at the bottom of Burrough Hill, a daunting task which sorts the men from the boys and the girls from the girls. The view from the top was well worth the struggle. Down the other side, we headed for Burrough village. Through someone's garden, along Stingers Alley and onto Marefield Lane. A good chance along here, I thought, to hang back and let the leaders head up the hill while I nipped off to the left. They rumbled me! They are all too clever for the likes of me – or are they?

Heading across the field, with Andy taking the lead, making up his own route (not for the first time), he missed the path on the left which took us to Newbold. Over a little bridge, Phil opened Gate 22 and a badger ran through, taking us all by surprise. I don't know how long it had been waiting but he had gone grey. I wonder if, in time, badgers will evolve claws which can open gates?

Only a mile to go now but the action wasn't over, as a herd of bullocks were blocking the gateway. We "shooed" them off but as some of the stragglers came along, the cattle returned. It was the turn of my brave (?) Julie, who walked up to the lead bullock, tapped it on the nose and told it how naughty it was being. What was going through her mind? I don't know. In truth, I have been concerned about her behaviour for some time. Only last week in Cornwall, whilst swimming near Falmouth, she had a close encounter with a shark and wanted to pat that on the nose as well. I did point out that you should always poke a shark in the eye. (However, if you get that close, it's probably too late!). It is, in fact, an urban myth that more people are killed by vending machines than sharks.

Before setting out on the main run I provided Sally and Catherine with an easy-to-follow map of an easy-to-follow 3 mile course, with some easy-to-follow verbal instructions and yes, you guessed it, they got lost and did 4 miles instead. Had I realised they could run 4 miles, I would have done a map for 4 miles. So, now they are improving, I consider it a challenge to get them to run 5 miles at the last run of the year from Kirby Bellars. Are you ready to accept the challenge girls?

Lots of real ales on offer, with Clipper Inn and Bloomsbury Bitter being the pick. Many of you ordered food, notably those who have not paid their subs yet, which were due on April 30th. Please pay a member of the Committee in the next 2 weeks, as we need to register everyone by the end of June. If you haven't paid, we will send the girls round!!

The winner of the "How many gates competition" was Richard – his first ever win, I believe – who totted them up on his pocket calculator and came up with 29. Worst guessers were the 2 Ians, with 11 and 45. One doesn't know what a gate is and the other obviously got caught up in a revolving gate situation.

Another great competition lined up for next wee. See you soon.
[Regards Big Leggy]

Tilton Tortilla - Rating: 8.5

Another lively evening for the latest Outrun from the Rose and Crown at Tilton on the Hill, with more than 20 making the trip.

A gentle start through the village which gave no indication of the pleasure (or torture) to come! We headed off-road after ½ mile over some pleasant pastureland before running up into the foothills of Colborough Hill, with Whatborough Hill in the distance, one of the highest points in Leicestershire. A road section and attractive farmland took us to the picturesque village of Owston, with evidence of a long-demolished Priory and undulating fields opposite where the fishponds were.

According to the local website, "AroundOwston.com", these ponds were jam-packed with fish. In fact, the monks were expert fish keepers or Piscaterians, as they were called, and held county records for the largest bream and fattest carp, before records began!

With all the easy bits out of the way, we arrived at the base of the final hill.

The word "Tortilla" in this week's title has nothing to do with food, so please do not send in your recipes. Now I know some of you will be disappointed, as I am positive that you have come up with some terrific, mouth-watering ideas. Please save them for next week and substitute "Tortilla" for "Sausage".

"Tortilla" is rhyming slang for "killer" but if I called it the "Tilton Killer" nobody would have turned up on the night! It is for the same reason that next week's run is not called the "Somerby Slaughter".

Back to the hill, which went on for ever and, although he was well in front of me, I have it on good authority that even Loz found it tough.

Back to the pub for a pint of Summer Wizard Ale and some chips.

The quiz took on a different format again this week, asking how many road signs we passed. The winner was Jasmin, who correctly counted 23. She donated her prize money to Air Ambulance, which was very kind as she told me later that her dad doesn't give her much pocket money!

Did anyone notice the low ceilings? No? Perhaps they seemed tall to you, however I did bang my head on a low beam and if I don't make a full recovery I may ring Claims Direct.

I am sorry that the Blogs are getting shorter but everyone takes the run so seriously now (!), maybe something will happen at the Somerby Sausage?

Beer of the week: Summer Wizard

Song of the Week: The hills are alive with the sound of music

STOP PRESS: Once again, the Club will pay for the Buffalo Run BBQ on 14 July for fully paid up members. We will ask each member for a donation of £2 for the Air Ambulance. We do need numbers – give your name to me!

[Regards Big Leggy]

South Croxton Salad - Rating: 8

Another week, another run and, of course, another blog. I am sure that you all know me by now (!) and that I intend no offence to anyone in my weekly report, however, last week I crossed the line and I am afraid that I have to print a retraction.

It appears that Andy took offence to last week's report and has threatened to subject me to the powers of his full legal team unless I print a full retraction of this slur both on himself and on his family. It will never happen again. In my report I mistakenly referred to Andy as "a northerner", he is, in fact, a Cumbrian. Cumbria is a wild and lonely place on the edge of the known world. (This was re-iterated by a football commentator during Barrow's win over Stevenage in the FA Trophy). I trust this clears it up.

The quiz this week was something totally different to the usual and involved counting cows. I made sure that I kept my counter well hidden to avoid another libellous situation. The actual number of cows, cattle, bullocks, calves, heifers, steers etc (but no bulls) was 137, with Julie being the closest with 132 – congratulations! Scores so far – Phil 1, Julie 1. Next week's competition could involve counting the gates we pass through or stiles we cross, so remember to count. All monies raised go towards the Air Ambulance - £22 collected so far, well done!

A lovely evening for a run, with over 20 joining us from far afield such as Stafford, Long Clawson, Hull and Cumbria with 15 100%ers. The course was truly multi-terrain, with a particularly tricky field of long grass. Halfway around the course we at last got the first sign of summer. Not the sound of the cuckoo, the first swallow or a buttercup, it was Phil removing his tracky-bums to reveal his legs for the first time. Summer is here – official!

On the way back from Beeby, there was a small herd of cows with a red complexion and, as none of you wondered what breed they were, I made it my mission to find out – they were Lincoln Red, a popular beef breed.

It appears that the food theme is not producing the expected flood of recipes and food tips. This week we again received less than one salad idea. Am I just expecting too much from you all, as over the years the response to anything hasn't been great? I will keep trying. Next week is the Tilton Tortilla. We have already had one unimaginative suggestion, which was "stuff it with chips". Fantastic idea Christian, a TV series beckons! The pub however did get in the spirit, with a whole menu board full of salads with local produce widely used.

Did anyone spot last week's truth? It was that the de Folville's are buried at Teigh. The family came over with William in 1066 and were greatly favoured by being given land and stuff.

Parking of the week - Rob in his van
Beer of the week - Abbots Ale
Identical dressers of the week - Celia and Tracy

Not an epic this week but I have been very worried over power-sharing, political reform, rainbow coalitions and horse-trading. Where is the stability? Come back Tony/Maggie (cross out only one candidate as appropriate).
[Regards Big Leggy]

THE ASHBY AUBERGINE - Rating: 8.5

A fantastic turnout for the first outrun of the year, with 22 100%'ers so far. Who will still be there at the end?

Some exciting events to look forward to this year, with all of our runs carrying a food theme, with a chance to share recipes and tips based on the food of the week. Little disappointed this week not to have any aubergine ideas. Perhaps you are wondering why the aubergine and Ashby Folville (apologies to anybody who went to Ashby de la Zouch by mistake, if you did you are obviously stupid!!) are so strongly attached? Some of you may have noticed a particularly large field with a gentle slope on the outskirts of Ashby. This field, with its own micro-climate, provided ideal conditions for the propagation of aubergines. In medieval times Casper de Folville (the Lord of the Manor), whose dead relatives can be found in the churchyard at Teigh in Rutland, married bespectacled Greek heiress - Nana of Mouskouri. She persuaded him to clear the forest on this hillside, which was reputed to cover an area the size of Belgium (or Wales, whichever you prefer) and grow aubergines. So many, in fact, he started a profitable export business to Greece, where they are used in mousaka (a popular lamb and vegetable dish) which was named after his wife. The Greeks have, unfortunately, based their economy on aubergines with disastrous consequences. Cheap imports have flooded the market, causing the economy to collapse, with the aubergine now virtually worthless. This in turn has led to an increase in borrowing and an inability to repay loans. How fortunate we are that Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling didn't align our English Pound into the Euro/Aubergine Crisis. This has kept our economy buoyant and our borrowing at a manageable £180bn - phew!! The run, I mention this early in the report this week as some people rather bizarrely like the running bit whereas others prefer the educational part (see above and below), took in four lovely villages - Ashby Folville, Gaddesby, Barsby and South Croxton (where next week's run will begin). That run will have a salad-based theme, with a competition for the largest cucumber and the roundest lettuces. If you think you may qualify, see me in the pub afterwards. Plenty of great scenery on the course this week, which Sam decided to take a closer look at by diving into a ditch via the barbed wire. This has left him with a neat scar on his head. Top Tip 1 - Put TCP on it.

Everybody was very watchful on the early part of the run, keeping an eye on the "Pathfinders" orange shirt to avoid going wrong, Loz (and a few others!) got a bit slack towards the end and, in truth, it was very easy to drop back and take the right route while they headed for Twyford! I cannot believe the depths some people will stoop to in order to win a non-existent prize. In an attempt to win, and therefore get a mention in the Blog, someone cheated quite blatantly (or is he just a brilliant estimator?) by pretending to tie his shoelace and look at my watch at the same time. His guess was bang on the correct time but because I know him, I've disqualified him and will not give him the satisfaction of mentioning his name - it was Loz's dad and it was a poor example to set his son (whom I've always found to be honest and trustworthy). Emma Brown was declared the winner, just 14 seconds off the correct time. However, the drama was not over, as Phil demanded a re-check and was finally declared the winner, being only 13 seconds off.

Look out for a different competition next week. In election week I will not be using the "first past the post" method but prefer the Liberal way of doing things. In the pub we were treated to an hilarious collection of stories and anecdotes about the London Marathon (I think you had to be there!). We heard about lampposts, puddings, over-priced rail tickets and Gary's hernia (I had no idea!), which can be viewed until May 18th by appointment, with the stitches on display after that, between 2pm and 4pm on weekends and Bank Holidays. Seriously though, congratulations on all who completed the Marathon in some excellent times – apart from Christian, who can do better!! Good luck with the op, Gary, and hope that you are back running soon. Update on other injuries – Darryl still has "girlie foot" (and we miss you!).

Did anyone notice the field of Alpaca just outside Barsby? The sign on the gate said that they are shy – so shy, in fact, that we couldn't see them. They were probably crouching down in the long grass. For anyone who doesn't know what an Alpaca is, it is a rodent, slightly bigger than a guinea pig and is a delicacy in its native Peru, where it is casseroled with tomatoes, peppers and aubergines. Contrary to popular myth, there is actually one item of truth in this week's Blog. Can you spot it? Answer next week.

Beer of the week – Bass Bitter

Song of the week – Grease (obviously!)

Cheat/Guesser of the Week – a Northerner (I still can't bring myself to say his name!).

See you at the Golden Fleece South Croxton.

[Regards Big Leggy]

The End of Term Run - Rating: 9.999

I have just been on the website and realised that I hadn't written the concluding episode of this year's blog. I bet all of you regular readers have been clicking in every day in eager anticipation, wondering how it will all end?

It's a bit like those Schubert fans who are still waiting for the finish of his unfinished symphony but, unlike his fans, you will not be disappointed. I have been doing a bit of research on Schubert who, apparently, was a bit of a joker (as most Germans are!) and he actually wrote nearly all of his unfinished work and hid it in his sock drawer, where he hoped it would be found after he had died. Everyone would think he had been working on it right up to the end and we would all feel sorry that he didn't have time to finish it (or something like that). The music score was found sometime after his death by his housekeeper, Frauline Sticklegruber, who was looking for old clothes to take to the charity shop. It was tucked away behind his socks and hose, along with a well-thumbed copy of "Composer's Wives" (a popular magazine of the time amongst those with an artistic bent!). This edition was famous for a shocking drawing of Mrs Handel kissing a pianist, which could be found on Page 15, and was recently sold at auction to a collector in Hamburg for \$10,000.

Another person famous for an unfinished work, this time a novel, was Charles Dickens who never completed "Mystery of Edwin Drood". Charles Dickens, of course, is best remembered for his work "On the oranges of species", published 150 years ago, which caused great concern in the Christian society. In the book he suggests that man originated from the Gorillas (the hairy apes, not the Gorillaz the popular beat/combo/instrumental group of the early 21st century). He was ridiculed in the sartorial press at the time but was later hailed as a genius when he found the missing link – a tribe of whom can be found in a popular Melton roadside pub 7 days a week. After 150 years he has now been honoured by the Post Office, which put him on some stamps, the BBC have devoted a whole year's TV time to him and a commemorative tea towel has been exclusively produced by Poundland at the cost of £1.29. I bet this would have been thrilling for him. Dickens also wrote many complete novels including Oliver Twist, Bleak House and David Copperfield, a story about a Victorian magician who makes an elephant disappear and ends up with a world famous glamour model. You wouldn't want to get that trick mixed up!!

We did have a run but it was such a long time ago I forget what happened. Probably nothing, apart from Tam and "my Julie" taking the wrong route and pretending to be looking at wildlife in the bushes. I trust he is not responsible for route planning in his line of work or, indeed, as a race director. Around 20 (19, in fact) stayed for the gourmet 2 for 1 ready meal offer at the Flying Childers and I think we all enjoyed it.

The final donations for the Air Ambulance were made, giving a grand total of £256.93. A big thank you to everyone who joined in throughout the summer.



The overall result in the GPS Sweep was a draw between Julie, Ian and Michelle (2 each) and numerous others scoring 1 each, including (I may have mentioned it before) Phil, with his first win ever.

A packed out outrun saw a return of the Wreake Challenge, The Club Handicap, No Watch Race, Fancy Dress Night, the End of Term meal and the Buffalo Run. Next year's events will also include a Team Run and Quiz Night, the return of the Guest outrun, along with a few new venues and its only 30 weeks before we start again!!

Thanks to all of you who answered the occasional questions on the blog, it makes all the thought and effort worthwhile.

And, finally, thanks to (it's like an Oscar speech with all of these "thank you's") Christian for keeping the blog up to date. It's a wonder he has had the time, what with being a 100%er and all that – I hope he doesn't disappear like some previous winners.

Signing off until Christmas
Big Leggy

Wymondham Wobbler - Rating: 6 (conservative estimate!)

A miserable, dark, wet evening did not deter 19 Striders from the penultimate Outrun of the season from the Berkeley Arms. Starting off through the village before a left turn across the field to the old railway line - the now overgrown track was another Dr "Hatchet Man" Beeching's cost-cutting measures. The closure was a severe blow for many of the locals who worked and travelled on the line. Former Station Master, Fred Nuttall of Wymondham, went down in local folklore by beheading an effigy of the Doctor under the wheels of the 18.42 slow goods train to Peterborough on 9th July 1965, the last ever train on the line. Indeed, to commemorate this event, a glass is raised in memory at the exact time of this heroic but sadly ineffectual act. Fred was a broken man and eventually emigrated to New Zealand, where the economy still relies on steam trains, strange looking birds (kiwi, kakapo, Dame Kiri and their enormous shot-putter) and, of course, dancing cows! Isn't it weird that everyone speaks of Dr Beeching as if he were Dr Crippin or Dr Harold Shipman – give him a break, he was only doing his job.

Skirting the edge of a muddy field (more on that story later), we headed along the Wymondham Brook which, in turn, lead onto another field. There may have been a flypast from the RAF Red Devils at the weekend but we have our own female branch in the form of Kirsty, Abi and Michelle who, in their matching red shirts, seemed to spend the whole run talking and holding everyone up. Only kidding girls!! I am sure that your improved times are down to one hard cross country run a week.

No fallers for the 8th consecutive run – it used to be so much more fun when Liz used to come and do it for us. I've given everyone long enough to spot the deliberate mistake from the Hose Pose report and I don't think anyone will spot it (probably not even read it!). Although there are at least 13 places called Jackson in the USA, there isn't one in Texas. Incidentally, Jackson is the state capital of , you tell me.

Did anyone notice the 1800 x 600 double-finned convector radiator in the aforementioned Brook? It's been there for years. Why anybody would take a radiator to the middle of nowhere and throw it in a brook, heaven only knows. Surely it would be much easier to dump it down a country lane with the 3-piece suite, old mattress and the asbestos off the old garage roof? This facility has been made possible by the government's "Tax what you tip" scheme at the local amenity. The question towards the end was either to follow the Brook or go across the stubble? We took the latter option for three long fields of mud. Action which proved tough-going and made us all ready for a pint.

Quickly changing in the now persistent rain, we headed for the bar where we were served by Sarah. I didn't really take much notice of her but the lads couldn't avert their eyes. Apparently she had a pretty face as well! The bar service was a bit slow but who cares? We all had a great night and even though it was raining, we had a lovely view. No toasted peas this week but sandwiches (of the door-stop variety) and chunky chips.

Beer of the week – coffee.

Forgot to mention in last week's blog that, after many years of trying, Phil finally got his name on the GPS Sweep roll of honour at South Croxton. This week's winner was Wayne, who also added to his ever-growing glass collection. His living room is open on the last Sunday of the month for any pubs to come and collect their property.

Wayne is really a bit of an Arthur Daley character and was filling us in on many of his scams. He couldn't say too much as ITV are making a new series with Wayne as Arthur, Jason as Terry (Jason is apparently "well handy") and Darryl as Dave. Filming to take place at the Winchester Club, formerly Off the Beaten Path. Ian will make a guest appearance as Inspector Chisholm. Anyone fancying a barbeque, bring your own sausages and kebabs.

Christian is the only 100%er and only has to run at the Flying Childers to become a surprise (but popular) winner. I wonder what his prize will be??!!?
[Regards Big Leggy]

Note from C' - I could do with a new car??

Croxton Canter - Rating 4

"Love is in the air, everywhere I look around".

Unfortunately, everywhere I looked around, there was Darryl skipping, singing, trying to hold my hand and showing his love for me by picking a bunch of poisonous flowers. His behaviour is becoming quite weird at the moment and we will need to be vigilant and watch our backs. On a dull, misty evening we headed across the fields from the pub, where we had a number of parking

issues (particularly from Tam, who abandoned his Volvo at a jaunty angle in the middle of the car park – but he's in the army and that's okay!).

A mainly cattle-free route towards Queniborough, over some overgrown fields before our first ploughed field, with the mud sticking to our boots (like that stuff!). A bit of respite after a short climb took us to the Ridgemere and the sun began to come out. The views were spectacular, possibly the best of the summer so far. The sun was setting over the Charnwood Hills, clearly defining Syston Church through the mist, with rainbows all around. Where is my camera? Could this route win 'Best sunset of the year' award at the Christmas Dinner? Cast your votes in all categories before November 14th.

Over a good selection of muddy ploughed fields, where everyone stuck to their task well before the reward of the last mile on the road.

We thought the excitement was over for the evening but we hadn't reckoned with Julie and Helen forgetting spare shoes. Not a problem in some of the dives they go to but this was a posh pub with a big sign saying "No muddy boots". Julie decided on bare feet and asked me to carry her into the bar. This reminded us of last year's attempt on the "World Wife Carrying Championship", held annually at Truskallati, 50 miles north of Helsinki, Finland. Our attempt, although brave, ended as many English effort do, in glorious defeat. The problem of our stance is that some of the obstacles become obscured and Julie can only see where we have been. This year's champions were Ivan and Ada Cochovatia from Lithuania, whose bizarre technique involved Ada, in front of Ivan, wrapping her legs around his neck and sticking her face between his legs!! This gave Ivan a clear view of everything, allowing them to complete the 500 metre course in just under 7 minutes. Our efforts ended after 100 metres when, unable to see where I was going, I tripped over the 3rd jump resulting in falling into the mud and we were unable to continue after collecting too many time faults. I did point out Ivan and Ada's method of transportation but Julie said she draws the line there! So it's just piggy back from now on. The practice on Wednesday of across the car park and down the steps should stand us in good stead for next year.

Excellent atmosphere in the pub, with a couple of nice beers (Adnams and Green King) which seem to be almost commonplace now. Snack of the week – Toasted Peas (I bet Captain Birdseye will be turning in his gravy).

[Regards Big Leggy]

Hose Pose - Rating 7-8

A bright evening once again for the Hose Pose at the Rose, where the Striders got into the spirit of "dressing up". There was, of course, one or two who didn't and most of them paid their £2 forfeit (I know who sneaked off alleging poverty). Richard, being a local, felt he couldn't dress up in his Girl Guide's outfit in case anyone spotted him. However, next year the Fancy Dress Night will be at a new location just for his benefit, so we look forward to that!

I noticed in the Melton Times on Thursday there was a short piece in the news pages under the headline "Wig Shortage at Discount Store". This was of obvious interest to me, as 5 Striders turned up in black, curly wigs looking like the Jackson 5. No, not the chart-topping group, who sang such hits as ABC, Rockin' Robin and Can you feel it? But the notorious group of Mexican racketeers and murdering bank robbers, who were shot by the Texan State Police after a gun battle on the outskirts of Jackson.



Anyway, back to the story. It appears that due to the rush on wigs last week the discount store, where everything is a £1 (I'm unable to mention the store as they haven't coughed up their advertisement fee) are concerned that they will not have enough stock to cope with demand for the Michael Jackson Pageant and Tribute Show taking place in Egerton Park later this month on, what would have been, his birthday. The route begins at Thorpe End and follows in the footsteps of Michael's last visit to Melton as a young boy in the late Sixties. With this in mind, the discount store is offering a wig amnesty and, if you return it before Friday, you will get your money back. You can of course save your wig until next year, buy a shell suit and a pitbull and come as a Scouser (you know what I mean, like).



A bit of an altercation took place in the car park, where Ian and Christian had to be separated when their wigs started to mate. Luckily we stopped it in time before it got too messy. Christian's wig though had to be beaten to death with a stick as it was far too frisky (and there were things living in it!). Stories of Wayne's slim-line twin brother in Melton appear to be false, however he does seem to have been working out recently, with a tremendous six-pack (although he has become a bitter and twisted man). Where is the old Wayne?

We were sorry to hear that Darryl was unable to join us because of illness. The good news however, was that he was planning to wear a thong, so we were not subjected to that! Phew!!

Can you imagine that? Once the thought (and picture!?!) is in your mind, it will remain with you forever. So I'm told. No doubt he would have been locked up and the remainder of us arrested, just for knowing him. On the subject of thongs, Jason wore one on his head, slightly perverse. He obviously threw the instructions away instead of reading them, just like a man would.

There was a tough competition to find the winners of the best dressed (see picture). The contenders were:

Neil - Julius Caesar, with real Roman nose

Wayne - Peter André, slapper hater

Vicki - Serena Williams, complete with an even louder grunt

Kirsty - Fairy, in chafing leotard

Ian - Caveman/Fred Flintstone

Pat & Michelle - 118118

Steve - 70's porn star

Jason - a 'thong-as-a-hat' man

Christian - It/Ossie Osbourne/a Goth (who knows?)

Phil - Uncle Ben (free to a good home)

Ron - Old man with false nose

Jenny - Army deserter



After much deliberation our judge, Ron, decided that Ian and Vicki were the winners, so congratulations to them.



For the first time in many years (if not ever) I had a sackful of entries from members to last week's quiz. I can't remember the question but most of the answers were in the 6 – 8 inches range, with one of the girls stating 12 inches!! The closest however, was Dan Archer (alias Stewart Owen) who said 4 inches or 102mm. Well done, Stewart!

A quick mention of the run, which was traffic/bullock free, along a nice track to Dove Cottage and back along the canal, where one or two members of the public were treated to a free fancy dress parade (and Phil flirted with a cyclist).

GPS winner was Jenny. Unfortunately we can't give her the prize as she was wearing her ipod.

Next outrun is 26th August from The Golden Fleece, South Croxton (see blue card).
[Regards Big Leggy - climbing the Google charts!]

Alternative Hungarton 7 - Rating: 9

A point raised this week by Steve McGarry about the rating needs to be explained. The rating at the top is the waffle content of what is about to follow; the more the waffle, the higher the rating. The actual routes do not get a rating as they are always of the highest quality, meticulously mapped and measured and aimed at providing an interesting run with lots of historical features (both manmade and natural) with a hint of wildlife and the odd field of oil-seed rape.

How great it was to see Darryl back with us and sporting an hilarious tee-shirt which had us rolling about with laughter. Joking apart, he was like a born again off-roader as he quickly headed to the front of the line, setting the pace. Was he still being chased by those grizzly bears? One thought did cross my mind and that was, would he run as fast if he was being chased by a Mountie? As you know, they always get their man!

There seemed to be some uneasiness about the name of the pub "The Black Boy" in these fun-filled days of political correctness. Well, let me put your mind at rest. The fixture list contains a misprint, the pub is called "The Black Buoy" and refers to the black buoys which are used to denote the equator running around the centre of the earth. The first landlord of the pub was Captain Baines (whose grandson appeared on BBC2 in The Onedin Line), who crossed the equator in the early 19th Century and came up with the idea of the buoys, as there was no

official landmark or information boards or gift shop with a Starbucks franchise to mark it, as there is today. So it's not someone off the jam jars after all.

Plenty of livestock tonight, it was like being at the last Royal Show. We first encountered a huge Limousin bull, having a good sniff at a 'very attractive cow'. We were all stopped in our tracks. Would he lose interest in his possible night of passion and chase us? Putting ourselves (metaphorically) in his position, we thought it unlikely, so headed across the field with one group making up their own course. Its one thing circling around the bull but quite another to run into the next county to avoid him!

Farming Fact No. 1 – The Limousin is a breed from central France and was introduced in Britain in 1971 for its high quality lean beef.

Over the hill heading for the yellow marker, we ran into a number of frisky Shire horses with foals. I am sure you agree that they made a wonderful sight, bringing back those halcyon days of pre-industrial Britain, when the horse was the mainstay of our transport needs and everyone had award-winning rhubarb (atomic number Rb53).

Farming Fact No. 2 – The Shire horse is Britain's largest horse, weighing around a ton. Stallions can reach 17-18 hands at the withers.

This week's question: How many inches are equal to a hand?

We were soon back together as we headed into the grounds of Quenby Hall (for more information click on www.quenbyhall). It is not open to the public, though I do recall many years ago visiting Quenby Hall for a charity open day and the carousel I was riding on began to fall apart. We all had to leap off as carousel bits were flying in all directions. Everybody had to shelter under Peggy Mount. (Peggy Mount being the mouthy actress, not the hill rising out of Tilton, part of the Whatborough Hill Range). Quenby Hall produces one of the finest local Stilton Cheeses and is available at Marks & Spencer (that is my third product placement fee in this blog so far). The Hall was also home to an extensive herd of Longhorn cattle, fascinating creatures renowned for their horns, which seem to grow in any direction.

Farming Fact No. 3 – Longhorns originated from Yorkshire and were one of the most popular cattle breeds until the early 19th Century, giving rich milk for butter and producing good beef.

A short road section into Cold Newton picking up the Midshires Way, where we were joined by a herd of stampeding bullocks which ran alongside us (much to Vicki's delight) for around two fields. Incidentally, Vicki obviously went abroad for her holiday and looked particularly tanned, even more so when she stood next to Julie – it was like the Dark Brown and White Minstrel Show!

Farming Fact No. 4 – The bullocks were a mixture of half-breed Hereford/Friesian crosses and are popular early-maturing beef animals.

Through a short wooded section, still on the Midshires Way, we passed an old derelict train coach. It was in very poor condition, covered in moss and algae and severely vandalised, it looked very sorry for itself. Those of you who took the time to look at it more closely may have noticed the badge of the Southern Railway, with the barely discernable rolling stock number '1437' on one of the doors. Being a railway buff I visited oldrailwaycarriages.org and, on punching in the details, found that this coach was originally made at the Swindon works in 1892, seeing service in the Home Counties well into the 1940's. I was also interested to find out that the carriage built immediately afterwards (No. 1438), briefly appeared with Jenny Agutter and Bernard Cribbins in "The Railway Children".

Heading back towards Hungarton, passing some posh semi-detached mansions through a field of British Milksheep (Ovis Domestic).

Farming Fact No. 5 – The British Milksheep is built for easy lambing and has large, strong udders. (I once knew a girl like that).

Back to the pub to get dried off. I've gone on and on and not mentioned the weather - it was chucking it down, even so we had a good turnout of 16 hardy runners.

It was Pippa's last night, so drinks all round. We wish her well in her new career in Walthamstow (first winners of the FA Amateur Cup Final beating Old Etonians 2 – 0).

Julie won the GPS, guessing 6.19 and being only 0.04 off the mark, thus drawing level with Ian.

Beers of the week were Timothy Taylor's Landlord, Peroni and Amstel. Both lagers served in attractive vases (how Wayne must have wished he'd bunked off work again). There is a rumour that Wayne's slimmer twin brother has moved to Melton and we look forward to seeing both of them at the Hose Pose.

[Regards Big Leggy]

SOMERBY SLASH - Rating: 2.5

A short version of the blog this week as I have been very busy and, I regret to say, it is over a week late. In the old days it would have been easy to blame the webmaster for the tardiness (what a great word), however, the fault is all mine this time. Now I know many of you will recoil in horror at the prospect of a shortened blog but my memory is not what it was, although I'm pretty sure nothing happened!

We saw the welcome return after a few weeks absence of Di Underwood and Steve McGarry. Pippa brought a bike along, which is a new twist, however it was for her daughter who followed her around her accurately mapped and measured road run, during which they got lost.

As for the main group, Andy was the latest victim of "The Jaggard Switch", as he went off in the wrong direction, Loz had an episode with some sheep (like father, like son) and we all loved the challenge of the oilseed rape field which, after looking at my map, is the biggest field in Leicestershire.

A totally new course took in the villages of Burrough on the Hill and Owston, before heading back to Somerby on the Leicester Round and back to the pub.

Beers of the week were Summer Sizzler and Rutland Panther, both served in attractive glasses, although with neither Kirsty or Wayne being present, none were taken. There was an interesting discussion as to whether the picture of the panther on the glass was a bear, a deer or a badger!

Winner of the GPS was Ian, for the second time. Answer to the "Farthing" question was: The Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

Next Outrun is the Alternative Hungarton 7 from the Black Boy at Hungarton (another new course).

Chicken Run - Rating: 6

Spectacularly hot but debilitating weather and no free food on offer, saw the lowest number of Striders on an Outrun this year. And what a night all the 'no-shows' missed! We were awash, over run and, indeed, inundated (not to mention overwhelmed) with chickens. The only problem was, we couldn't see them. Britain's mainstay of egg laying and poultry production is the good old Rhode Island Red and these birds can be found on farms up and down the country. Rhode Island reds (along with all domesticated chickens) are descended from the jungle fowl, which is to be found in, the once, dense forests of Asia, which have been decimated by the world's insatiable desire for timber and palm nut oil. Our chickens have inherited many of the survival instincts of its forebears and the Rhode Island Red is known the world over as the 'chameleon' of the bird world. In many august bodies it has been likened to Ray Mears. The slightest sound of an unfamiliar human voice will start them effortlessly into silent running mode and, without a cluck they will crouch down in long grass, blending in with their surroundings until all danger is passed. They then come out of hiding and resume doing what chickens do.

The run was a mixture of good tracks and footpaths to Teigh (home of grey telephone boxes), followed by a road section as far as Ashwell (loadsamoney!), where we took to the fields again, heading for home. It was along here that an incident occurred. A couple of fields were overgrown with rape and thistles, which made running impossible. One or two of the more vertically challenged amongst us were barely visible. It was after the last field that Kirsty announced "I am bleeding!". Expecting to see a major wound, a team of medical experts were summoned and the Air Ambulance was scrambled. Following a thorough examination of Kirsty's leg, using the most powerful magnifying glass money can buy, the experts confirmed that there was a speck of blood almost as large as a pin head. Concluding there was nothing to worry about, she should make a full recovery. It is for incidents such as these that we raise money for the Air Ambulance. So next week let's have some proper money and not copper, washers, euros or pfennigs! A disappointing collection this week raised £5-6s-10³/₄d (five pounds, six shillings and 10 pennies three farthings)!

This week's question: Our smallest unit of currency was the farthing and it was phased out in the early Sixties. For 2 points, which bird appeared on the obverse of the coin? For 2 more points, what is its Latin name?



Veni, Vidi, ney pullus... (We came, we saw, ney chicken)

The 'phone lines have closed in the vote to choose a mascot for the Club. It has been declared a draw, with both candidates (Bison and cheese) polling no votes. I am appalled to think that our grandfather's fought the Nazi's to maintain our liberty and freedom and uphold our democratic rights and you, the voters, cannot be bothered to make an effort to choose either of these hardworking mascots. Official figures show that although both candidates polled no votes, the overall turnout was up on previous years.

After 'naming and shaming' last week, it is only fair to do the same again this week for those not sharing cars:

Neil - (yes, me!), this was caused by a late withdrawal by Julie, which meant I had to come on my own – sorry, it won't happen again!

Jason - as usual, say no more,

Richard - straight from work – wonder what he does?

Pippa - Phil, our Club Captain, sent her to Cold Overton. Does everyone get their letters on his round?

Just like to say sorry to Helen. Whilst I am still on to watch the Sound of Music with you, I have eaten the Maltesers and opened the Gnats P—s, it really was what it said on the bottle (had to tip it down the sink!). How many gnats to fill a bottle? (This is not a 'phone-in).

GPS this week was won by Jason "I swear I didn't look at my own GPS, honest" Shelton, who guessed 6.45 miles, only 0.03 off the actual distancemmmmm! He became the 6th winner this year, with Tam, Ian, Julie, Susie, Lucy and Michelle (sorry, 7th winner).

With the Robinson family unable to join us we only have four 100%ers left – Phil, Helen, myself and Christian. With me not really counting and Phil and Helen off on holiday (not together!), Christian remains the hot favourite to claim the appropriately monogrammed T-shirt.

Nice break for everyone on the 8th, with an easy race at Hungarton. We will meet again for the Somerby Slash over a new course on the 15th July.

Regards Big (cut and scratched) Leggy

Club Handicap Race - Rating 3

A warm, breezy night for the annual Club Handicap Race, which this year was run around the Hambleton Peninsula.

For a major event where there is a trophy on offer, there was a disappointing number of only 20 members who made the trip to Rutland Water, many of whom got lost on the way. This included Kirsty and Helen who are now wondering whether entering the Paris-Dakar Rally was a good idea after all! Last year's winner, Susie, was unable to defend her title, so a new name will appear on the shield for 2009.

After a number of complaints last year about the handicaps, I decided to relinquish all responsibility this year by getting outside help. I collated all recent race times, with details of terrain and weather conditions and the ages of the entrants. At enormous expense, I passed the information to the Government's own Finance & Statistics Consultants, Hope, Less and Pants, to provide this year's times. If you have any issue with the results, please contact the Government direct at Number 10 where, I am sure, you will get waffle, rhetoric and very little else, apart from an offer to set up another committee to discuss the necessity of setting up an inquiry (you know the rest, you'll end up getting nowhere!). You may as well come to me in the first place, the result will be the same!

Pos - - Name - - Finish - - H/cap - - Actual

1	Jason	46:50	8:40	38:10
2	Julie	47:44	4:30	43:14
3	Ian	48:47	8:00	40:47
4	Pippa	49:12	6:35	42:37
5	Stewart	49:32	10:45	38:47

6	Loz	49:49	16:45	33:04
7	Jenny	50:10	8:10	42:00
8	Michelle	50:43	0.00	50:43
9	Patrick	50:54	16:00	34:54
10	John	51:14	15:00	36:14
11	Phil	51:19	15:20	36:39
12	Malcy	51:50	14:45	37:05
13	Toby	52:10	16:40	35:30
14	Craig	53:03	16:00	37:03
15	Shaun	53:16	8:40	44:36
16	John S	53:55	4:30	49:25
17	Andy	54:09	15:30	39:39
18	Christian	55:15	16:10	39:05
19	Helen	55:30	11:45	43:45
19	Kirsty	55:00	11:45	43:45

NB – All times start from Michelle (at zero)

May I take this opportunity to apologise to Andy and Christian. Those wasters at Hope, Less & Pants clearly think you are better than you really are and it is for this reason I have informed Theresa not to pay their invoice. If they get all legal about it, I will see them in court, just as soon as I get my suit back from the porn shop (yes, you read it correctly!) . More on that story later.

So, congratulations to Jason Shelton who put in a great performance to win by almost a minute from Julie, who ran consistently all round and finished about 150mtrs in front of Ian, who is now showing signs of getting back into form. Has he stopped drinking with his mate from the Club (whose name escapes me!)?

Run of the night came from Loz, who clocked an impressive 33:04 for the 5.2 mile course. A quick mention for Tam and "My Julie" who were unable to run in the race but ran somewhere together (!?! so they said), with "My Julie" running for over half an hour for the first time. Keep it up – it is obviously helping Tam with his training.

We all went to the Grain Store for a drink afterwards, where 'Beer of the Day' was Phipps IPA. The pub entertainment was provided by four old codgers playing smooth jazz – mmmm ... nice (look sideways). Our 2 biggest turnouts of the Summer so far have been the ones where free food has been available (at the Wreake Challenge and the Buffalo Run). What does this say about us? I am thinking about telling a whopping fib about an upcoming run, changing the name to the Somerby Banquet, stating there is free food and checking the response!

Wednesday 1st July is the Chicken Run at Market Overton. Free chickens are available if you can catch one!!

[Regards Big Leggy]

Buffalo (Bison) Run

Rating: 7 (As scored by Stuart Holm BSc (Hons) CEnv)

For those of you are under the mistaken impression that the Blog has anything to do with running, I thought I would begin with an in-depth description and analysis of the run itself. We started at the start, tricked a few people at the first turn, ran across a field with horses in it (in which Pippa had an electric shock off a fence and enjoyed it so much she went back again!), we then got stung, ran up a hill, through some trees and across a field. Still running we went down a road, then a track (where all but 4 of us took a wrong turn) and through the woods (I thought that everyone else had gone to do what bears do!). Myself, Abi, Lucy (who will get another mention) and Michelle (who will also get another mention) went via the correct route and we all met, somehow, at the next turn. Along a track to Wartnaby, before heading back to Bouverie Lodge which has the best view in Leicestershire from the top of the hill. The run was measured at 5.36 miles, with Lucy Underwood winning the GPS, guessing 5.35 miles.

There!! I hope you are all (Christian!) satisfied. It might fill a few lines but it is not as interesting as CAMFABIS. The Campaign For A Bison as a mascot. The petition already has less than one signature and the excitable, outgoing Striders could hardly contain their enthusiasm for the project. The Irish Guards have their Wolfhound, the Black Watch have a Goat, Hereford United have a Bull, so why not a Bison for us? Imagine the look on the faces of our fellow running clubs at the LRRL when Club Captain Phil leads out an enormous Bison to the start line of the Barrow 6. It would be priceless! If there are those of you who think this is inappropriate and is not a fair representation of our Club, Phil could always lead out a fine piece of Stilton on a roller skate.

This week's phone vote is:

*0800 000 0001 – Vote for Bison

*0800 000 0002 – Vote for Stilton

* Calls charged at the local rate – calls from mobiles may vary (see terms & conditions)

The answer to the tie breaker is: Bob Marley spent 167 weeks on the singles chart. This may not be the correct answer at time of print as Christian may have altered it to suit his own (unbelievably poor) answer.



**That's it Big Leggy - keep pushing those buttons!

You may recall last week's question regarding the origins of the name 'Moscow Farm'? I have had hundreds of replies but one sticks out in my mind as a possibility. It comes from Mr Ivan Ivanov, who now lives in Whissendine. He writes that when he was a small child, he moved from Moscow as part of 'Uncle' Joe Stalin's 5 Year Plan, part of which was to integrate seamlessly into the

British way of life. A large collective farm was envisaged on the edge of Great Dalby and a number of Russians, including Ivan and his family, were moved into the area. The idea didn't take off, as MI5 received a tip-off and, some 15 years later, realised that the name 'Moscow Farm' might have been a clue and closed it down. Most of the Russians returned to their homeland. However, the Ivanov's stayed behind and have a nice cottage in Rutland worth many roubles. Celia has also been looking into the history of Moscow Farm and has found she had a relative who lived there. Is Celia of Russian descent? Watch this space!

The popular 'Name the TV Series' quiz was won by Michelle and Patrick, with 26 out of 30. I must reprimand them however on their team name 'Big Fur Cup'. Michelle seemed a little embarrassed by it, I suspect it was Pat who encouraged her to choose such a name. May I remind them that we are a family Club and this sort of behaviour will not be tolerated. Diane Underwood was banned from entering the quiz. She recently attended another competitive event which included this self-same picture quiz. She did, secretly, have a go and scored 9 (a big improvement), well done Di!

Almost finally, as promised it is name and shame time for those who didn't share cars (along with their excuses):

Helen - lovely eyes (!)
Stewart - no-one else in Whissendine*
Pippa - had to fetch her daughter
Abi - hubby on urgent job
Susie - northern
Jason - late - had to get himself ready
Wayne - not insured for passengers by Pizzahut

* apart from Ivan Ivanov Actually finally, a big thank you to Ruth and George for their wonderful hospitality and food - it was greatly enjoyed and appreciated.

On Wednesday, 24 June we are at Hambleton Peninsula for the Handicap Run. Park at the Fisherman's car park on the left just before the village of Hambleton. Please remember that whilst I have done my best to ensure the times are fair, I have not got access to the Duckworth-Lewis tables and that the judge's (i.e. me) decision is final!
[Regards Big Leggy]

Crepes Night - rating: 6

After a marathon blog last week, I feared that my creative writing skills may have been impaired and I would suffer from writers block (which has I am told affected amongst others Jeffrey Archer and Salmon Rushdie), not a bit of it, I am beginning to flow already! Has anybody ever wished they were Oscar Wilde? Not the time when he languished in Reading gaol for heinous crimes against humanity, but for his biting and witty quotations. I came across one the other day which I thought might be appropriate: "I love talking about nothing, it's the one subject I know everything about."

Some of you may have noticed in last week's blog that I used a number of words more than once in the same sentence. This does not show lack of vocabulary. It is more a case of I like a word, so I will use it again. It's like that Kylie Mynogue song, the one that goes "Na na na, na na na na na na, na na na I just can't get you outa my head" etc. Hum it a few times, it is really annoying. I recently read a race report in the Melton Times which began "Four intrepid Striders" I looked up the word 'intrepid' in the OED and it means 'fearless, brave'. Now I know running the Notts 10 is a challenge but I don't think you need to be fearless or brave unless, of course, the race begins at midnight and runs through the less salubrious areas of Nottingham!

What lovely crepes on Wednesday night, it's a shame our regular food critic was, once again, on holiday as I am sure he would have appreciated French cuisine at its best. Tam and "me Julie" went for the full savoury, followed by sweet crepes, whilst the rest of us sampled such delights as lemon, strawberry and cream, ham and cheese and the classic crepe suzette (which I ordered after Celia had bought her own this year!). Can't say any more but Wayne was up to his old tricks again – more on that story later!

The answer to last week's question was: 65million years ago – not June 3rd 2009, as all of you answered. Almost a record turnout this week, as 28 of us not only blocked the car park but also the main street as well. It seems we need a reminder about sharing cars – please do so at the BBQ as parking is very limited. We have now reached 43 members who have been on an Outrun (what has happened to Sly?) and still no sign of John Cresswell, can't understand it!! With 6 100%ers – me, Helen, Phil, Andy, Loz and, most surprising, Christian – have any of you got the staying power? A nice easy run this week took us across the fields to Burrough before heading to Moscow Farm, a big loop with a brisk road section, before heading back towards Thorpe Satchville along a track with a road finish.

Tam was the closest with the GPS guess even though he didn't run the official distance of 5.98miles. Thanks to all who contributed this week. £14.50 was raised and we have already passed last year's total. Darryl was way off with a guess of 14.2miles. This week's question is: Where does the name Moscow Farm originate? (You don't have to know the answer but any plausible suggestion may be good enough to win this week's prize which will be on a Russian theme). Please try and use email for your answers as, once again, the Royal Mail was brought to a standstill in the Scalford Road area by the volume of your previous replies – most on postcards but we did have one on a sealed down envelope - obviously sent by a child of the 60's Blue Peter era!

Record of the week is "Midnight in Moscow" by Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen – No.2 in 1961 – a year most of you won't remember!! See you all next Wednesday (17th June) at Bouverie Lodge for the BBQ. Please remember to:

- Share cars if you can
 - Bring your own drinks
 - Bring a pen for the fun quiz
- [Regards Big Leggy]

The No Watch Race

Waffle Rating: 9½

What an eventful evening we had on Wednesday night, with events after the race somewhat overshadowing the nail-biting race itself. Before going to the report, there are a couple of items to clear up from the Skillington Scramble. First, the answer to the quiz question: The King of England was George III, who was the third King called George from the House of Brunswick Hanover and was responsible for losing to America in a straight fight during the American War of Independence. So, well done there Georgie boy!! Secondly, did anyone spot the deliberate mistake? Limestone and sandstone are, in fact, sedimentary rocks and not igneous as stated in the report. Congratulations if you spotted it – look out for this week's mistake later.

What a complete turnaround this week for the Robinson family. Only 2 weeks ago they were on a high, with 3 counters in the Wreake Challenge and now here we are with the whole family in turmoil. All 3 of them made a *superb effort/pathetic attempt (it's back!) (*please delete as necessary) to scoop the night's Booby Prize. Andy coming home in over 14 minutes difference to his predicted time. Not to be outdone, Craig was 16 minutes adrift of his time and was, as it turned out, awarded the Booby Prize prematurely as none of us had reckoned on Loz's determination to scoop the prize. Through half way in 2nd place, Loz was not far behind Chris and he looked sure to win the Booby prize by being way under his time. However, following clear instructions at the start of the race as to which way to go at the end of the disused railway

section, Loz was the only one to hear me say "At the end of the railway line, turn left, go back up the hill, do not look back or stop and think 'I should be back by now', continue running until you reach the coast where there will be a small boat waiting to take you to France".

Loz the explorer! [Click here](#)

The search parties were sent to all points of the compass. How I wished Andy had passed on his map reading skills to Loz. An hour passed and still no sign. During the search, I flagged down a motorist who said that she hadn't seen our young runner but asked me if I had seen her daughter who was out on her horse? Me, being me, put 2 + 2 together and made 5, began to wonder if the pair of them had ridden off into the sunset and Loz had found love and true happiness in the Vale of Belvoir (pronounced beaver). He was eventually found and returned to the fold.

We may have to provide counselling, not for Loz but for me. The pain and anguish cannot be described, as it is the nearest I have ever come to "losing one". One of my favourite sayings is "You cannot get lost in Leicestershire". From now on I will add " ... unless you have a brain the size of a Stegosaurus". I don't mean the size of the Stegosaurus, that would be ridiculous as it was a plated dinosaur reaching lengths of 25 feet. No, I mean the size of its brain which, according to experts (what do they know?!), was the size of a walnut. I hope that's clear. I should have just said "walnut" in the first place and not mentioned Stegosaurus at all. This week's question: In what era did the Stegosaurus roam the Vale of Belvoir?

To the regular cross country runner, altitude (and indeed attitude) and distance are a complete irrelevance in the time and space continuum (!?!) and it doesn't matter how far you have run, as long as you enjoy it. Darryl, however, will not let it go. Is it because he is different? He certainly isn't a vegetarian, as he tucked into what looked like an extremely tasty Rutland Burger. It was a big night for our hitherto vegetarian runners, many of whom "came out". Well done to you all! Gone are the old taboos of the Victorian age and vegetarians can now integrate with normal people and become respectable members of society. (As an aside, years ago I did go out with a girl who told me she was vegetarian but I found out that she wasn't as she still liked sausage).

Many of you were asking how far the run was and I indicated it was 5.8 miles, accurately measured by shoe laces. I must apologise now to those of you who thought you had a good run, as I made an elementary measuring error. In an attempt to show Darryl the accurate course measurement, I used laces from a size 12 trainer and not the recognised industry, European and IAAF standard laces from a size 9. This means that the distance can vary by up to 0.5 of a mile either way before any conversions to rods, poles or perches! Sorry for any confusion. I still think all of you ran well (apart from Darryl and the Robinson Family). The race itself was an exciting affair, with Chris first home in 36:24, just 1:36 off his time (if only he had done a few more stretches around the corner, he may have won). As it turned out, he held the lead for about 10 minutes before Tam came in only 25 seconds outside his estimated 42:00 prediction. The rest of the runners came in outside of Tam's time, leaving only first timers Paddy and Tracie ('ie', that's posh!) in with a chance. Tracie came home in 1:12 outside her predicted time, leaving Tam a worthy winner and pushing Chris into 3rd place. Tam now joins Steve McGarry, Stuart Owen, Julie Jaggard and John Whatsisname as winners of the 'No Watch Race'.

Thanks to all 24 of you who turned up for another good night's entertainment. We will reconvene on Wednesday 10 June at Thorpe Satchville. I will take numbers for the BBQ as it is the last chance to do so. Hope that you have/had good runs at Swithland. The times from the race will form the basis for handicap times later in the month.

Regards Big Leggy (God, I love this job!)

Skillington Scramble - rating 6

Wed 13th May 09 - Congratulations this week to the 4 drivers who gave lifts to other runners, thus avoiding blocking the non-existent car parks at both Skillington pubs – we seem to be getting the idea!

A delicious irony this week in the GPS Sweep – Susie, who had previously boycotted our fund-raising efforts, happily (some may say cheerfully), paid her 50p before confidently guessing the distance to be 8.2 miles and, lo and behold, was spot on!! Unfortunately for her she wasn't able to stay for a drink and, as the rule I have just made up states, you only have 5 seconds to claim your prize after the result is announced. Failing that, the money will be donated to charity – therefore, the money was donated to charity (Air Ambulance). Thanks to Susie and all who joined in this week, especially our latest 'Outrunners', Jenny and Pippa, who both thought it was excellent value. GPS Update: Celia, Ian, Susie all level on 1 run each after 3 runs.

Twelve 100%ers are still on course for a (minor) prize and 35 members have been out this summer. Apart from Pippa and Jenny, we had another new off-roader, the gregarious (not to mention gay), elderly gentleman and owner of an eating house of high renown*, Darryl. *Oops, nearly said ill-repute! After many years of pounding the Wednesday night roads alone, the call of the fields was too much to resist and he joined us. Just one look at his smiling face and jolly countenance and we could all see just how much he enjoyed it, especially the field of long, wet grass. No animals this week, apart from the odd hare, or was it a rabbit? I say this, as a recent survey carried out by Natural England found that 22% of people could not identify a hare, with 1 in 8 people thinking it was a deer!! (They obviously haven't seen the rather interesting, and not in the least bit tedious, race report from the Cotgrave 10K).

Just sign off this week with a bit of local history as Jason seems to be sadly lacking in this department. Horny Quarry, between Saltby and Sproxtun, has (according to village records) been in existence since the late 18th Century. The metamorphic rock found in the quarry consists of sandstone, limestone and alluvial brash, all of which have many uses, including rock for rockeries. With the advent of the railways in the early 19th Century, much of the rock was transported along the Mowbray Way to be used as ballast on the track beds of the local ironstone railways at Ponton, Eaton and Hungarton in the Weald. The quarry is still in use to this day and is, in fact, owned by the same family who made the initial limestone strike all those years ago in 1785. This week's quiz question: Who was King of England at the time?

The local airfield at Saltby was established in the mid 1920's, where it was at the forefront of local airfield design, being used for both take-off and landing for many years (!). If you have an interest in local history, why not email me at the usual address and I will include your item on the following week's blog.

Beer of the week was Reverend James, a happy beer brewed by Brains in Cardiff. [Big Leggy]



Like a Bolt out of the blue, thanks for reminding me!

Knossington Knobler - rating 4

Wed 6th May 09 - The skill, know-how and resourcefulness of the Stilton Striders never ceases to amaze me and, indeed, everyone in the world! Putting aside the rest of the events of the night which, when put into context, are of little consequence compared to the sheep rescue orchestrated by Andy Robinsdon. When we saw him grab hold of the sheep, we imagined it was the 'Cumbrian' in him and he was longing to recall those long days and lonely nights out on the fells and we thought he wanted to be alone with Dolly. But as soon as he said her foot and neck were caught in some wire, the might of the Stilton Striders Rescue Team sprang into action and, without the aid of tools or wire cutters, Dolly was extracted in a matter of minutes (much to the relief of the gathered sightsee-ers. Thinking that was the end of the drama, the main group headed off into the woods, leaving myself, Chris, Susie and Abi to check that Dolly would make it back to the main flock. Her plaintive cries could be heard as she desperately searched for an opening in the fence to join the rest of the flock. Chris, who obviously watches too much 'One Man and his Dog' (originally fronted by the legendary Phil Drabble and latterly the suspect Ben Fogle) set off in a wide arc, gaining 9/10 for the lift as he began his 'drive'. Dolly made her way along the fence to the gate at the top of the hill. We all had a lovely warm feeling inside at the success of our mission but it is all in a day's work for the SSRT. This week's burning question concerns Richard. On a very warm night did he forget his shorts or is he part of the Phil Douglas tribute act? A new feature this week was 'Guest map Reader and Expedition Leader'. After his success in getting most of you lost last week, Andy took on this very important role. I am pleased to inform him that he has passed his Key Stage I Map Reading Course (anyone with children will know how tricky Key Stage I is!). As he is not yet ready to gain a higher qualification, next week's map reader could be one of you. Emma Brown has already expressed an interest - Go Emma!!

Last week we had an excerpt from the horror novel 'Cows', this week is the long-awaited sequel 'The Farm of the Damned'. Situated in the lonely village of Withcote, population unknown, we gathered at a farm entrance situated on the Leicester Round. Is that the reason we can never get a team for the Leicester Round Relay? I had run through this farm alone a couple of weeks earlier and, having spoken to some locals at the pub, it dawned on me that I had probably had a lucky escape! It was a Friday night and that is Devil Worship Evening - phew! It was essential that we counted everyone in and everyone out - I haven't lost one yet!! A row of colts was standing between the field of runners but a'whooping and a'hollering, John Wayne style, cleared the way. Just as we began to climb the stile, we noticed an Alsation, which appeared to be a bit long in the tooth and it made a pathetic attempt (3rd week!) to rise from it's evening nap before giving up and letting us through. It was feeding time for the horses but some looked as if they were destined for the pet-food trade. We were greeted to a cheery "Hello!" by two people of an indeterminate gender. Continuing on through the farm, with low-flying crows and sleek fast-running rats as big as cats, we sprinted to self-opening gates (spooky) to emerge unscathed. To be left behind would be like being suspended in purgatory for the rest of your unnatural life to infinity and beyond.

We then rescued the sheep, the girls reunited 2 lambs with their mothers and we finished with a short road section back to the pub. Hearty cheers to all who contributed to the GPS Sweep and a loud Boo to all those who didn't - the money is not for me, it is for the Air Ambulance - hope that they, and the rest of us, don't ever need it! After being miles off last week, Ian was this week's winner.

Regards Big Leggy

Ashby Amble - rating 7

Wed 29th April 09 - How long is a piece of string? I know it is an odd way to begin the long-awaited and much-anticipated Summer Run Blog but it is a question that needs a definitive answer. I am not yet in possession of a GPS and I am not sure whether I need or even want one but for the GPS Sweep it would be useful. As many of you now have them I have to rely on your trust and integrity that you won't take a sneaky look at the end in a pathetic attempt (this is a phrase I have used for the second consecutive week and I may try and include it every week. If there is a saying or favourite phrase you would like including on your behalf, let me know – things like, "the lithe, athletic, brilliant runner and skilled chef, Darryl Woolward" will not be considered!) to get their name on the Leader Board. One of our blonde runners, Emma Gane (whose name escapes me) asked me how far the run was and, on being told that I had measured it accurately using a ball of string, she genuinely believed I had been around the whole course with an enormous ball of string – some 7 miles long which I nailed to the pub door before trailing across the countryside. I know some of you think I have a lot of time on my hands but that is taking it too far. We all wish Emma well in her new job in Brighton (which is 186 miles away) this is just a guess as I was stopped by Police while pushing a ball of string down the M25.

The warm, sunny weather had brought out 28 runners to our first Outrun and we formed a funnel with bunting and a guard of honour with crossed trainers for our conquering London marathon heroes. Setting off through the village of Ashby Folville, we headed across the fields towards Twyford, along the brook and through the old cricket ground before reaching our first re-grouping in Twyford near the old pub. Down a recently formed jitty, past some local authority housing, where there was a very nice Ford Cortina Mark II Ghia for sale at a competitive price. We were now getting quite strung out but on entering a field of cows, the slower runners suddenly found some speed and overtook the main field. Referring back to one of the most popular and informative reports from 2002. A cow is a herbivore and eats grass not human flesh (except in the Stephen King horror novel 'Cows' but this wasn't real). They can attain speeds of up to 20mph over short distances and Health and Safety Risk Assessments recommend you do not stand in front of stampeding bullocks (or, indeed, stampeding rhinos, elephants and tacky tigers – "This town ain't big enough for the both of us" Sparks No.2 1974). You would think that after 10 or more years of Summer Outruns there would be some of you who can:

(a) follow instructions (b) spot a yellow marker (c) see a well-defined footpath (d) read a map (e) there isn't an (e) (f) same as (e)

or is it just maybe you were trying to lose me as I waited and waited and waited for Julie and Celia who appeared to be out for a stroll and a chat. No offence! The three of us now had a good lead while the rest made up their own route, it was like the hare and the tortoise (animals again, these reports are like Zoowatch) or the paperchase in 'The Railway Children' where the wet lad broke his leg, very sad. As we crested the hill into Thorpe Satchville, a stream of disoriented runners came into view and we all re-grouped again for the homeward stretch. The only issue was for some horses (see previous para about their eating habits which are similar to cows, however they are faster – except for the ones I pick for the Derby!).

Back to the pub for a well-earned pint where we and many others were asked to pay homage to the god 'Football'. We have come a long way since Frankie said "Sex and horror were the new gods of the 80's". The GPS Sweep, once again, proved popular and raised £12.50. Some of our northern friends did not join in the fun this week but allegations that northerners are careful with their money are totally unfounded. Darryl decided to take part in our 'Pay-up-front-for-the-whole-year' Scheme. This will enable you to have a go even when you are not there. Our aim is £200 for the year. This week's run was measured by Global Positioning String at 6.45 miles and the winner was Celia, guessing 6.43 miles. Ian obviously thinks he runs faster than he actually does and guessed 7.89 miles! Please share cars next week for the Knossington Knobbler, as there is no car park. Plenty of parking in the village on the Owston Road though. We are asking for pledges of food for the Wreake Challenge on May 20th i.e. cakes, jelly, sandwiches, jelly, sausage rolls, jelly for the after run buffet. I have a list, please see me a.s.a.p., I'll bring the list

on Wednesday.
Regards – Big Leggy