

Big Leggy's blog – 2013 edition

21/8/13 - The Anchor, Plungar

At last, some material to work with, which means that I can get flowing! The actual route was devised by local celebrity, Steve McGarry, and was flatter than flat! A few began to yearn for a hill and were rewarded when we scaled the North Face of the canal bridge. Lovely run, with pressure off, I plodded at the back – great!

A bit of a close shave with a combine harvester, which separated the wheat from the chaff, I was definitely chaff, and we all had a dust bath. Still, its nice to see the farms being used to produce food, rather than diversifying into golf courses, fishing lakes or off-road driving. Well done lads, let's all buy British and be proud of it – we need your flour for our celebrated annual cake competition. Timed to coincide with the Great British Bake Off, there were contenders in all categories, with a record 12 entries and £27 raised for Air Ambulance. Thanks to everyone who made cake and also to those who stayed at the pub to help us eat them. Thanks also to The Anchor at Plungar, who very kindly didn't mind us eating cake on their premises, so long as we drank their beer. The best of which was Welbeck Red Feather. Only kidding, it was Blue Monkey BG Sips, which hurtled into the Top 3 Beers of the Year.

So, after Mary Berry and that beardy bloke rang to say that they were busy, I was nominated, as Chairman, to taste the cakes and form impartial judgement. I would not be influenced by anyone plying me with beer this year – which was good because no-one did! (It was noted). So, the results are in and here they are:

Root Veg Category – Winner, for her Carrot Cake, was Helen – a moist, velvety texture cake with carrot in it.

Chocolate Cake Category – 2 entrants here. Richard Angrave's Chocolate Fudge Cake, with attached label, and Sam's Iced Chocolate Sponge in a nice tin. A hard fought draw. I didn't taste these, as chocolate makes me hyper-talkative and I didn't want to risk it!

6 Individual Scones Category – (with matching cream & jam) – Winner was Steve McGarry, who unashamedly promoted his scones with a hard sell, force-feeding Mike with the last one.

Selection Box of Cakes & Pastries Category – Won by Greg, whose mixed bag may contain nuts.

Vegetarian Animal Fat Free Egg Free Category – Won by Andy Nicholls, with his Lemon Fairies – light and fluffy with a zesty lemon kick.

Healthy Eating Fat Free Fruit Cake Category – Won by an anonymous Be-Ro Book baker, for his very fruity, slightly chewy. Best cut with a very sharp knife on a hard surface.

2 entries in the Illegal Section – Iain's Lemon Drizzle Poppy Seed Cake and Richard Gray's Rum Brownies. I think I overdosed on these. I was high as a kite, dropping things and tripping over non-existent steps on Wednesday evening and spent Thursday in Cold Turkey!

We had one entry which was, unfortunately, entered in the wrong category. Being from Stamford, Celina entered her cake as a roulade, when it was, in fact, a common or garden Swiss Roll. It was, however, very tasty but, sadly, not eligible for a prize.

2 decorated entries in the Victoria Sponge Category – Alison's excellent running track, with gold medal motif. It is the only purpose-made running track and sports centre in Melton and was submitted to a Local Authority for a formal planning application. However, as soon as the esteemed planners saw it, it was immediately ear-marked for a medium-sized housing development which will include 20% of social housing, a play area with overflowing bins and a traveller's rest site. So, great news all round there!!

Best Newcomer Category – Won by Mike, with his Strider's Vest Cake. This won the Best Decorated Item of Clothing with Badly-spaced and Slightly Wonky Lettering Cake Category. It was also unrealistic, as some of the icing on the vest had been patched and who ever heard of a running vest with a patch on it? The very notion!!

So, as the sun begins to set on another Outrun season and just two runs left, I leave you with the last words of Mr Kipling, as he lay dying on his Sponge Finger, waiting to be called to that great mixing bowl in the sky "Let them eat cake". Very poignant and, in his honour, we do eat cake, lots of it!

23 runners this week. The Outruns have been well supported throughout the summer, which makes them worthwhile – thank you.

Scalford next week, for the Pot Luck Raffle.

Sam's Barbeque at the White Lion on 4th September.

Regards
Big Leggy©

Tilton, Skillington & Knossington - the "several-in-one" blog

Apologies for getting behind with the blogs but my ghostwriter (see Ashby blog) has been away. However, he is now back and able to gather all the facts from the Knossington run. Before that, here is a resumé of the Tilton and Skillington run highlights:

Tilton

- 1. A station in the middle of nowhere, might be why Dr Beeching closed it.
- 2. Got injured and walked back, chased by cows.
- 3. The big hill – a rite of passage for all new runners.
- 4. £23 for Air Ambulance on the night.
- 5. 23 runners on the night.

Skillington

Only 12 runners on the night, due to holidays and the Wreake Challenge the previous night.

- 1. New course – very pleasant.
- 2. Picked the wrong pub, I think, and it won't make this year's Top Ten (or 50!).
- 3. Rob Szabo and his Buckingham Palace anecdotes – fascinating.
- 4. The fire outside the pub which the landlord put out with a soda syphon.
- 5. Only one 100%er left and one 50% 100%er.
- 6. No six.

Knossington

Lots of stuff happening at Knossington and if I have missed anything, I am sorry!

Small car park at the pub, so we parked around the village and met at the pub, which was (unfortunately) closed. Typical, the one night when we were going! Perhaps they had heard about us? Wayne took advantage of the empty car park, by leaving his car there. Didn't know he was in it, as the windows were steamed up. When he did get out, he seemed slightly flushed, as 4 girls got out as well!!

Heading out of Knossington towards Withcote, on a beautiful undulating track, we turned left and headed past a polo field. Some doubts had been cast about my memory and whether there was actually a thingy (what was it again?) in the area, as it is normally played on a flat field. This is not always the case, as anyone watching 43rd run of Michael Palin's Himalyas (pronounced Himalayas, as we discovered it) on Yesterday will testify. Wouldn't fancy playing uphill against the wind in the second half though.

Heading towards Braunston, downhill on a rutted field, the old injury curse struck again. So far, working upwards – stung on toe, twisted ankle (twice) – it was real beauty this time – torn calf muscle (nearly better), knee operation (all on right side). Only hip and thigh left – can't bear to think further than that!!

A long, steady climb, muddy in places, causing Celina to lose a shoe and half a leg! The girls then spent 5 minutes in the mud before deciding to look for the shoe. I am sure that mud wrestling came up in a previous blog (was it Gaddesby?). Up to the Radio Mast and fantastic views over Rutland Water. Two people thought it was the Wash and another, Lake Tanganyika, but I can assure you it was Rutland Water. The Mast was 193 metres above sea level (Newlyn, in Cornwall) but not the highest point on the course. A short run spread right across both sides of the road – not sure if you all had a death wish? Heading up to Cold Overton, and 203 metres (for all you map readers, there is a higher point at 211 metres which we didn't get to). This formed part of the Air Ambulance quiz – won by Greg, with £20 raised this week. Thanks to you all.

A split in the group, as some ran the last half mile on the road, while 5 of us took the field option, where I was sadly lacking in something and got left behind to be chased by horses, spooked by the fast boys. I reached the far side of the field with my life barely in tact, only to be chased by cows, deliberately (I suspect) encouraged to stampede, probably by Mike, and I detoured down the road, missing Mike, who was being frightened by a foul-mouthed pussy..

As the pub was closed, we headed to The Stilton Cheese at Somerby, with the usual selection of Real Ales, the pick of which was Top Totty (which, for some reason, I downed in one – the first time since May 1978).

Next week it is the Cake Competition at Plungar. If you would like to make a cake, there are a number of categories – so don't be put off.

The following week is from Scalford and is the Pot Luck Raffle. Bring a wrapped prize for the draw and it is pot luck what you win.

It is good to be blogging again – hope you enjoyed it!!

Regards
Big Leggy©

10/7/13 - No Watch Run, The Plough Inn, Hickling

A beautiful summer's evening and the prospect of a pleasant run along the canal attracted 19 runners this week (20 if you add Jim, who got lost).

This week's twist was to run without a watch and roughly predict the time taken to complete the course. The beauty of this is that you can run at any speed that you are comfortable with, as there is absolutely no pressure – it is so not a race at all! (I don't know how many times I have to say it!)

I know that, to some of you, running without your watch or GPS is something that scares you, as it may affect the meticulous record-keeping of miles, times, speed per mile, wind speed, atmospheric pressure etc etc. But don't worry if the watch is off the wrist and packed in ice, it can be put back without long term damage. Much the same as if you cut your hand off in the lawnmower and you pack it in frozen peas (sweetcorn or mixed veg works just as well).

To put you all out of your misery (now, there's a thought!), I have used the tried and tested string method to measure the course, and it was 5.16 miles. I wonder if any of you have run it again with your GPS's?

It was pretty much an incident-free run, apart from (I am told) an unruly swan. For most people it was an inconvenience, for Julie and Celia it was a stop/go, you/me, one side/t'other, forward/back, sort of thing. Whilst, for one of our runners, it was more serious, as he is swanophobic (I cannot tell you Shanes name, in order to protect his anonymity). Swanophobia is the fear of big birds, in fact, as a child, he was unable to watch Sesame Street and now, much as he would like to, he can't bear to look at Tess on Strictly Come Dancing.

This leads us on to the results of last week's quiz, as everybody's answer was the same all the names have gone into a hat, which I can't find. However, as is usual, nobody bothered to get in the spirit and take the time to answer, so none of you will be disappointed not to win 2 tickets for the final day at the next Test Match. The answer, of course, was Ostrich, Rhea and Cassowary.

The best running guessers, by the way, were Sally at 37 seconds out and Celina, (Celina, who's seen Celina?) at 36 seconds and Richard at 30 seconds. Well done to everyone who joined in and I hope the damage to Sally's leggings wasn't too serious.

Beer of the Week: Erdinger Wheat Beer and St Austell Tribute.

Pies recommended by Steve.

2 100%'ers left but about 10 50% 100%'ers.

Work this one out! £1 to enter for Air Ambulance, 19 runners and only £16 collected. Are the 3 of you forgetful or stingy? We will find out at Tilton on the Flat next week.

Regards

Big Leggy©

3/7/13 - Stilton Cheese Inn, Somerby

After some weeks of, what most people would consider to be, dull blogs – it is not my fault, as I am working within the constraints of fitting the blog to one page and also a tough editorial panel, who really have no idea of the agonies I suffer, trying to produce

an interesting piece of prose, worthy of a Grade C GCSE, this being the target and aspirations of most young people my age!

So, after splashing out a massive zero pounds this week on a Leo Tolstoy creative writing course, my creative juices are flowing again, I am ready for an epic blog akin to the Tolstoy classic. That's good news for everyone (especially my typist).

Down on numbers this week, with just 14. It is to be expected at this time of year, with holidays, races and the prospect of the toughest run in our calendar.

The run took us on a short section of the Leicestershire Round (are we doing it this year?), with little to report until Celia's shoelace came undone. This is very basic stuff, Celia, and there is help out there for people like you who have a lace issue. Try www.Icanttiemylacesboohoo.com - I did.

We arrived on the Dalby Hills path and saw a memorial to a runner who was eaten by the rare breed carnivorous sheep, which frequent the area. All that was left was his woolly hat on a post - as we all know that sheep are not cannibals. Talking of rare breeds, did anyone notice the menagerie at a farm on the Pickwell Road? There were spotty pigs, Longhorn cattle, llamas and, most interestingly of all, an emu. So, if you need your aerial adjusting, I can get you an assistant. The emu is one of the 4 biggest flightless birds - name the other 3.

Down into the ancient village of Pickwell, where I once had an audience with writer and historian, Max Hastings - what a name dropper! Actually, I was in the audience and it cost me a tenner. I also had 2 seasons with the long-lamented Pickwell FC, who played in Somerby. As a raw, skinny (no change there then) goalie, I needed the protection of a tough centre half and got it, in the form of Horace Ward, whose farm we ran through at the end of the run as we entered Somerby. Have I digressed slightly from the run?

Along a grassy track and some field edges, to reach a mighty ploughed field. Fortunately, we were able to run around the edge, thus avoiding the possibility of ankle or knee twists. There was a big flip-off tractor in the field, which Mike Brighty examined very thoroughly, writing down the number plate, mileage, chassis number and the driver's choice of reading material in readiness for the quiz. Unfortunately for him, he never noticed the big flip-off plough in the corner, which had 24 blades and was the subject of the quiz - won by Wayne Hackett and we collected £18. Thanks to nearly everyone, we have £150 now. The plough, of course, contributed greatly to man's pastoral existence and has been a feature of the landscape for thousands of years. The first evidence was in the Stone Age, when man thought the antlers of a deer, tied to a small boy would be ideal for tilling the earth. It was after many unsuccessful efforts that they thought they had better kill the deer first before farming took off.

Those of you at the pub will be wondering if I got any sleep on Wednesday, after I was stung on holiday - £12 for a coffee - scandalous! Seriously though, the foot is better and I am now in another Doctor's Red Book and he has prescribed some chilli cream if the problem recurs. It is so potent and expensive that Boots don't keep it in stock and it arrives in liquid oxygen by Securicor, when no public can be harmed. Anyone got some asbestos gloves?!?

The highlight of this run is the Cold Overton hill, a Category 4 climb, which everyone (apart from Julie, who threw the toys out of the pram very early at the bottom) negotiated well. Having joked to Alison and Amy about a loose Alsatian on the road run, how surprised we were to find one loose on the footpath of a house in Cold Overton. He seemed more scared of us and backed away. I am never convinced when people say "His bark's worse than his bite", as I don't recall anybody having their hand barked off!

Through a small wood, we encountered our first view of the Georgian-neo Classical-Gothic-Romanesque-Mock Tudor pile of bricks, situated in the middle of nowhere. I am not sure about the its artistic value at the moment but, who knows, it may become the new Chatsworth. I was very impressed by the tree planting scheme and mown rides on the adjacent land, clearly designed by an expert from FWAG (didn't Julie work for them?) in the style of Incapability Brown.

Our animal encounters continued as we entered horse country. The first field of 5 were quite placid and the second field was empty when, all of a sudden, the sound of galloping hooves took everyones ear – you really need to be lighter on your feet girls! With 3 potential Derby winners appearing at speed from nowhere, Abi (the horse whisperer and gateman) saw them off.

Back to the pub for a couple of pints, with Orsino probably the pick – although Old Rolly cider was good and the Devil's Own at 6% was very potent, with Ian Mason falling asleep on the way home.

Only 3 100%'ers, soon to be down to 2, as Mike is off to Crawley for a few weeks. Oh how we will miss him! I will work out the 50% 100% when I have a day or two, or indeed, a pint or two.

No time to mention left-handers, they are real people too, just like vegetarians (but not vegans).

Next Outrun is 17 July, from The Plough at Hickling. Nice pub, plenty of parking and also Pie Night – surely everyone will be there (apart from Mike, of course).

I am hoping you will agree, it is a welcome return to blogging form and the cost of my writing course was money well spent. Although it is still only a page and a bit!!

Regards
Big Leggy©

26/6/13 - Britannia Inn, Queniborough

A new venue and some decent weather, attracted 22 runners to the Britannia Inn at Queniborough. A pub close to my heart as it, and the Horse and Groom across the road, were my locals as I was "dragged up" in the village from the early 60's.

Thanks to Richard A, who wasn't there but bizarrely provided the road running group with a map for a 5 mile route, half of which was off road! The girls are now in two minds where their future lies – we await developments!

A completely new route took us towards Barkby, on the old Wreake Stomp course (a hard 7 miler with plenty of mud, brook running and a free wash in the cattle trough at the end). An encounter with the entire competitors of Crufts gave us a start, as we ran uphill over Barkby Holt Lane and into the village. On towards Barkby Holt Wood (2954mtrs in circumference), with some lovely views of Ollie running backwards and forwards again.

When I wrote in last week's Blog about a prize for falling, I was joking but, just as we said "Mind the tree roots", Will tripped over. He was in line for a non-existent prize before Iain spectacularly fell in Barkby Holt Wood, sustaining a small cut to his finger. A fine effort. Tim had discarded his girly, sting-prevention, lycra tracksuit in favour of a

new bandage on his right knee, obviously his way of paying homage to the Pathfinder. How touched and emotional I would feel if more people wore a bandage and we could have a photo of our knees, followed by a competition. (Casper: What? I am still here in the ether!) Talking of competitions, if you're out of the running for the 100%er award (there are just 3 of us left), I am introducing a 50% 100% award, which was the halfway mark of this year's tour. So we have 22 (about 49.85% of this year's outrunners), contesting the 50% 100% award.

Back to the run. We entered the dark, mysterious world of Barkby Holt Wood, where nothing ever happens. It was a nice track, with many woodland plants and trees, out onto the Ridgemere, an ancient drovers' road, which afforded views to Leicester and beyond.

This week's Air Ambulance quiz raised £16 (are some of you saving your £1's to pay a lump sum of folding stuff?). The prize was a bottle of '7 tenths', relating to the fact that 7/10 of the earth is covered in water, not 7/10 of the wine is water. There is a '7' theme developing with the wine prizes – last time it was Hungarian 7 Bridges. Next week's prize will be a can of '7 Up' instead. The winner was Tim (or Will – they are easy to mix up, anyway he was bandage-less, I think!).

Beer of the Week: Wainwrights or Landlords, both equally good. As for the pub, a bit down to earth, with the same decor and furniture from the time I was last barred in the 70's.

One last bit of Queniborough history was the Old School, situated near the pub. Built in 1847, it was where I began on my academic path towards obscurity and the memories came flooding back. It is now a swimming pool.

Outrun dates for the diary:

July 3rd - Somerby – everyone's favourite – don't miss it!

July 17th - No Watch Run – 5-6 miles along the canal from Hickling. Just a bit of fun – not a Competition. Leave your watch behind and predict your time. Prizes to be won.

August 6th - Wreake Challenge (3 Team Event). Hosted by Barrow Runners. Run from East Leake Golf Club – a 5 mile multi-terrain race. This too is a bit of fun and a chance for everyone to run for the Club. Entry fee to be finalised but will include a free raffle and food. We will need to give Barrow an idea of how many Striders are running, to gauge the food order. The race format is everyone to count in the team with the fewest runners, so the more we have the better our chances are to win. Don't be put off, we encourage everyone to enter – the more the merrier. See me to get your name included.

Finally, please remember that Barrow Runners and Wreake Runners supported us last year.

Regards
Big Leggy©

19/6/13 - Cheney Arms, Gaddesby

Another big turnout, with 27 at the Cheney Arms, Gaddesby for the latest outrun, with a few new faces, making 42 different runners on this year's tour.

A hardcore of road runners headed towards Ashby Folville for a 5-6 mile run – we're not sure whether there were any notable incidents to report, as they had almost all gone by the time the off-roaders returned. This also meant that they missed the Air Ambulance quiz, where £28 was raised (double bubble next week), with the prize being a year's supply of chocolate, won by Andy Nicholls. The multi-terrain crew (see OED), headed up Park Hill before taking a grassy track towards Rearsby.

One of our former star runners, John Cresswell, considered multi-terrain to be roads and pavements – is that correct? Answers please to the usual place. On second thoughts – don't bother!

The track to Rearsby was a first for us, it was reconnoitred (what an odd word!) some years ago but not taken up, as it went through a farm. Calculating that the 2 dogs which chased me 6 years ago would be too old to chase me now, I took the risk and was rewarded, as it was an excellent track to run on with some lovely views towards the Charnwood Hills in the sunset. The dogs were, indeed, knocking on a bit and bore a distinct similarity to the shaven Specsavers collie.

Crossing the main A606, we ran through Rearsby towards the Mill Stream. The correct route went through the stream but even the promise of a mention on the blog was not enough to persuade everyone to get their feet wet, with only 6 taking on the not-inconsiderable challenge (Mike, me, Jim, Will and 2 others). Mind you, after barely managing to struggle through the raging torment (see Violet Elizabeth), I understand their reluctance to take on the Mighty Amazon in full flood, the bottom of my shoes got completely damp and it is touch and go whether they will dry out for this week. However, now I know the level of bravery this tough bunch of multi-terrainers are willing to take on, I am having to scale the runs down in the future (there is also a road alternative – think of the Beetle, VW that is, not Devil's Coach Horse, on Top Gear).

Could anybody smell fish on this week's run? I thought we were in Cleethorpes.

Through a small housing estate and past Rearsby's own car park – do they need all those cars? – and on to open country towards Brooksby, with more cracking views over the Wreake Valley. No time this week though to admire the view, as we seem to be running faster – although clearly not fast enough for some who ran ahead, then turned to sweep up at the back, before hitting the front again. Oh the memories came flooding back, when I used to dream of doing the same!

Through the grounds of Brooksby College, over the main road and back towards Gaddesby, with the only incident worthy of note was Kirsty falling over, we've not had a faller for some time and it is always certain of getting a mention. In fact, next week there will be a prize for the best fall, real or acting, so you have time to practice. A brief detour and down the hill on the gallop finish and along the main road back to the pub – all lasting 79:46mins.

20 sweaty, thirsty runners walked into the bar, gagging for a drink but only 1 person serving (with 3 others collecting glasses), it wasn't exactly a fast-food operation. However, it was worth waiting for – Beer of the Week being Holts Humdinger.

Despite having 42 runners this year, we are down to only 3 100%'ers – will there be any left come September?

See you all at The Britannia, Queniborough next Wednesday. Not much of a car park, so please share cars as much as possible.

Regards
Big Leggy©

5/6/13 - Handicap Race, Rutland Water

22 competitors lined up, in conga style, for this year's Club Handicap Race around the Hambleton Peninsula on a lovely evening. The handicap setter had a difficult time this year, with so many new members and umpteen Hatherleys of, hitherto, unknown talent. Getting the handicap right was not easy and most runners ran ahead of their predicted time. Obviously, I was over-generous this time but I won't be next year!

The top 5 were within about 75 seconds of each other, with Tim Hatherley snatching first place in the finishing straight from Beth Hatherley, 14 seconds behind him. Unfortunately for them, they were illegible for any prizes, as they were not members at the time of the race. First Strider, and trophy winner, home was Jim Hatherley in a terrific time of 30:49, over 3 minutes inside his handicap. Jim caught Neil in the last 150 metres, who ran a creditable 40:08, with debutante Joe in third, who ran really well and probably surprised himself with a time of 43:02. The improving Iain Howe came 4th in a time of 38:02, with Andy Nicholls 5th in 38:22.

Thanks to everybody who ran, it really is a good event which benefits from having a big field and a broad spectrum of runners. Thanks also to the timekeepers for helping out and also to everyone who chipped in for the Air Ambulance quiz, where another £26 was raised.

FULL RESULTS		
NAME	HANDICAP TIME	ACTUAL TIME
Tim Hatherley	47:14	35:51
Beth Hatherley	47:28	47:28*
Jim Hatherley	47:59	30:49
Neil Jaggard	48:08	40:08
Joe	48:32	43:02
Iain Howe	48:42	38:02
Andy Nicholls	49:07	38:22
Sam Spencer	49:23	33:43
Celia Bown	49:25	47:10
Laura Hatherley	49:35	47:20
Wayne Hackett	49:56	39:31
Greg Pettingill	50:08	34:58

Mike Brighty	50:32	40:02
Will Hatherley	51:13	37:33
Mike Bryan	51:36	37:54
Vicki Lowe	51:41	41:21
Gary Christmas	51:51	45:21
Darren Glover	52:16	32:46
Louise	52:24	52:24*
Amy Kitson	53:22	50:52
Natalie	56:38	56:38*
* Set off first at zero		

The presentation of prizes took place at the Grainstore in Oakham, where John Nowell of the Air Ambulance presented us with a certificate for our Christmas fundraising run around Melton – we collected £169.

Beer of the Week: Spoilt for choice really and it is too long ago to remember!!

Regards
Big Leggy©

29/5/13 - Three Horseshoes, Whissendine

Where have all the runners gone in the previous 2 weeks, we were up in the 20's? Total running numbers down to just 9 this week – possibly frightened of dissolving in the acid rain? But we had the last laugh, as it didn't rain and, apart from being boggy and slippery underfoot, we had a good, testing 6½ mile run.

There was a higher proportion of over 50's this week, at 33%. I am not sure how old Celia is but she is now an Associate Over 50, as she had to be assisted over a stile. When she got her leg over, she didn't know what to do next! Anybody else had a similar problem? I would love to hear from you.

After many years of providing a valuable service, not only of useful information, public service announcements, social comment, quizzes and, not least, my humble opinion. I have, at last, had some contact with one of the many readers of the Blog and it wasn't from a Strider but from someone further afield. Darkest (if it is indeed dark) Hungary sounds unbelievable, doesn't it? But, via the interweb, G-G Granville's father has contacted me. He has lived in shame these past 50 years, yearning for his son. Now in his 80's, Ichee Kocsic, lives on the shores of Hungary's fashionable resort of Laked Balaton and is desperate to know where his son is. Not wanting to see an ageing man miss out on somequality time with his son, I quickly emailed news of Granville's last sighting, which was 2 weeks ago on UK Gold. Good luck with that, Ichee, let me know if you find him.

The very next day, I had the correct answer to the quiz emailed to me by none other than the author himself. I am afraid that I am unable to accept any further answers (an unlikely scenario anyway!), as it is a strictly first come, first served basis. The answer, as I'm sure you are aware, was an Austin Clifton Heavy Twelve Four.

We did the same route as last year, out towards Langham and back over the fields. Imagine our surprise as, about 2 miles from home, on a wet and muddy field with the light fading, 2 dogowners appeared out of the gloom. Their dogs appearing out of the crops, racing towards us (or was it the hares?). It was like the Waterloo Cup all over again. As the light faded, we forded the brook on the rickety bridge back into Whissendine, where the magnificent ram (immortalised in last year's Blog) was still proudly standing guard in his field. Or was it? Is it like the Golden Fleece, where only the leader of the expedition can see it?

Disappointingly, only 7 of us stayed, so only £8 raised for the Air Ambulance this week (although Celia has considered taking out a Wonga-type loan to pay off her increasing quizzing debt).

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Mike Brighty won the sweets in the "Guess the weight of the sweets" quiz. Compensation there after last week's stairlift joke. (Actually, it's no joke!)

A funny pub, with a cat (you had to poke it to see if it was alive) and no customers – well, 1 and us actually! A nice pint of London Pride, Speckled Hen or Spitfire but, sadly, no contenders for "Beer of the Year".

5 June – Handicap Race from Hambleton. Please share cars to avoid congestion. Remember – the handicapper's decision is final (and fallible!). Prizes for the first three and also a spot prize or two. After the race, we will go to The Grainstore in Oakham, near the station, for the prizegiving.

19 June – next outrun at Cheney Arms, Gaddesby.

Regards
Big Leggy©

22/5/13 - Wheel Inn, Branston

Another excellent turnout for the Branston outrun, with 24 finely-tuned athletes (9 100%'ers) hitting the roads, fields and tracks. The Air Ambulance fund was boosted by another £26, (£96 to date) with "Guess the country of origin on the bottle of wine" quiz. This was won by Steve McGarry, who correctly guessed Hungary. The name of the wine was "7" and this set me thinking of 7 famous Hungarians. Like any list such as this, the final contenders will differ from person to person. This happened to me in the Italy '90 World Cup Team Quiz, when Brian Clough (the so-called expert!) had a different team to me and I won a consolation prize of a football, instead of two tickets to the Final. But I am not bitter!

Anyway, here is my final 7:

1. G-G-Granville's father in Open all Hours. I believe he was a sailor and met Granville's mother when she was out late one night on the doskside in Hull and the elusive Hungarian was never seen again.
2. Zsa Zsa Gabor, a wannabe actress who had many husbands (probably 7!). She may

best be remembered as the voice of Duchess in The Aristocats, when her cat family were led back to Paris by the redoubtable Thomas O'Malley. His voice was that of the famous Baloo the Bear in Jungle Book. Baloo's final appearance was in Disney's Robin Hood. Since then, he has worked tirelessly for charity, highlighting the plight of fellow bears and other animals in Asia, where animal parts are used in medicine. Why not leave them alone and let us use aspirin, Mrs Wong? Still, as long as Chinese goods turn up in Felixstowe and Southampton, we can turn a blind eye in the West, content in the knowledge that we can plant a few trees where our factories used to be and our pollution is produced on a grand scale in another country.

3. Am I really on No.3? Ferenc Puskas, the best player in the world, known as the "Gallop Major" – due to his army rank. He was captain of the Hungarian football team in the 50's, who were the first team to beat England at Wembley. Favourites for the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland, they lost in the final to Germany, who stashed the trophy with all of their other gold!

4. (Struggling now!) But what about Bella Bartok, the composer and arranger who, as regular listeners to Radio 3 know, is really good at music and things.

5. Laslo Biro, inventor of the ball point pen in 1938 (patented in 1943). There followed "pen wars", as Frenchman Marcel Bich marketed the Bic Biro, however, the fountain pen still reigned again until the 50's, when Mr Parker made a very popular, quality and affordable ballpoint. Mr Parker later found fame after dropping the "Mr" and became Lady Penelope's chauffeur in Thunderbirds.

6. Val Biro (no relation to the above), author most well-known for the childrens' stories of "Gumdrop", an old car. This week's quiz is: What type of car was Gumdrop? (I am expecting no replies, as usual).

7. Finally, a bird – the Great Bustard. Does anyone know any Great Bustards? I do. Hungary is one of the last strongholds in Europe and is their national bird. The last Bustard in Britain was shot in Norfolk in 1832. A re-introduction programme, with birds from eastern Europe, has seen the bird returned to the wild on the Army Firing Range on Salisbury Plain, so they will be dodging the bullets again. Good luck with that then! On a serious note though, they are doing well and produced chicks last year.

I know that many of you would have Attila the Hun on your list but, whilst he was leader of the Hunnic Empire, Hungary (as a country) did not exist during his time.

No winners from last week's quiz. Bernard Cribbins favourite Womble was Tomsk. Tomsk also gives his name to the suburbs of the Belarus capital city, Minsk. After some illegal tapes of The Wombles found their way to the country in the Communist 70's, Tomsk was revered as a strong figure of freedom and has a statue in the Town Square, holding the world in his hand, à la Charles Atlas.

On the subject of the run (you may have forgotten that's what we do!), 25% of Wednesday's runners were over 50 – well done to us oldies! As usual at Branston, we run up the famous Iron Staircase (see history in previous Blogs) however, with us over 50's, we may have to think of installing an iron stairlift, for us and Mike Brighty!

A tough run, mostly climbing, with beautiful views over the Vale of Belvoir. Enough of the route, just a token gesture! More on Greg getting lost next time.

A top pub, with a good atmosphere and selection of real ales.

Beer of the week: Brewsters Hop Head (all of their beers are delicious!)

Next week: 29th May – Three Horseshoes at Whissendine.

Advance News:

5th June – Handicap. Run around Hambleton Peninsula at Rutland Water. 7:00pm start. Let me know your proposed time please and/or register your name if you haven't

already done so. Thank you.
7th August – Wreake Challenge. More info to follow.

Regards
Big Leggy©

8/5/13 - Berkeley Arms, Wymondham

With the pressures of filming gone, it was back to relaxing, running on the intended route from Wymondham this week. Just when everything seemed to be going to plan, I received a distress signal from my favourite son, Jed, who made the elementary mistake of thinking his car runs on fresh air and not petrol, hence he came to a grinding halt about 2 miles from the A1. Leaving the map and route with the team, in the hope that they would follow it correctly, I embarked on a mercy dash, getting Jed back on the road before heading back towards Edmonthorpe, meeting everyone at the top of the Drift.

Joining them, we headed on a track to Millennium Avenue, a tree-lined vista, opened by the Queen in 2000, the day after she ran the Hose Pose. This led to the field where I got injured last year and, although it felt really spooky (it didn't really!!), being there, I have got the monkey off my back! Our Treasurer, Theresa, has okayed some money for the erection of a blue plaque to commemorate the event.

Talking of monkeys, I was surprised to receive no entries to last week's blog quiz about marmosets. The correct answer was: 22 species, including the Pygmy, Golden, Black Headed, Black Tailed and the Buffy Tufted (what does that look like?). The marmoset is not new to science, or indeed literature. I am sure you all know from your schooldays that Shakespeare mentions it in 'The Tempest', when Caliban says he "will instruct his new master" (Stephano) "on how to snare the nimble marmoset", which I am told makes a tasty meal. The Tempest, of course, is set in South America, following a shipwreck, possibly up the Orinoco (the river, not the Womble!). Did you know that Bernard Cribbins celebrated 70 years in "the business" recently. This week's question is: Who was Bernard's favourite Womble?

It is time to update you all on facts and figures this week.

Total runners: 27 (joint second overall). Record of 29 being set in 2000 at Ashby, including the Queen, as part of her Millennium Tour. (I'm not sure why I appear to be stuck on the Queen theme, there must be a reason).

New runners: 4. We are up to 31 this year – Richard G and Ian J disputed this for a while, as they thought we had an additional new member but it was Matt with a haircut. If you were a criminal in a police line-up, you would want them identifying, wouldn't you?

100%'ers: 11. A major prize up for grabs – who will win?

Beer of the week: Blond Witch. If anyone knows (and I am sure you can think of someone) who the Blond Witch in question is, email me and I will collate a graph, or indeed, a pie chart to record the results.

With an actual prize this week (well done, Greg), we raised a further £27 for Air Ambulance. This brings the total, after 3 runs, to £70 – a great effort. Thanks to everyone who chips in and no thanks to those who don't.

Nice to see Vicki with us, she is obviously still on trial but I think she may make the grade. Will the floodgates open and the Wreake flood Melton? Who knows?

15th May – up at the Club, with either a speed session or and off-road run.

Regards
Big Leggy©

1/5/13 - Rose & Crown, Hose

A staggering 4 runners of the 19 running on Wednesday, got in the spirit of the fancy dress theme – more on that story later. It's a cracker (not really just trying to build up the suspense).

Once again, there were murmurings of discontent about the pathfinder but what I have been dying to tell you, although due to contractual obligations I have been unable to do so until now, is that this week's run was the 2nd episode of a 15 programme reality TV show sequel. It is called "Get Lost", directed by the great N J Abramms. The knight's garment I was wearing, cunningly concealed a hidden camera in the centre gemstone of the cross and I was encouraged to put the group in a difficult, unusual or dangerous situation to monitor reaction. It was a character-building exercise in an attempt to get us bonding together, finding out who is a natural leader and, in the pressure cooker situation of being one field off the footpath, who would crack or break down? It was noted that the "faster" runners were seemingly unable to handle themselves in a group situation, clearly preferring to with their peers. Would anyone panic by being close to a scruffy farm where a farmer had been waiting for such an opportunity to use potential deterrents and give his slobbering, angry (and starving) mastiff the chance to feed?

As night enveloped us and we huddled together like penguins in an antarctic winter, our thoughts turned to food – the \$64,000 question is "Who do we eat first?" I know we are not adrift in an open boat in the Pacific, with just a barrel of seawater and some hard tack, but if you have a suggestion for "Who to eat first?" send me an email. (As part of the production team for "Get Lost" I am, of course, exempt from any cannibalism on your part!!)

Casper: What is he talking about? There was no waffle when I wrote the Blog last week...

The results will be sent for psychoanalysis by Sigmund Fraud and published in a feature length blog. Don't miss it.

3 new runners this week – Amy, another Mike and another Matt. Matt turned out to be a bit of a sheep whisperer, as he cleverly shepherded an errant lamb away from us and left it bleating in the middle of the field, hundreds of yards from it's mother. Clearly an expert.

Sheep Matt is not to be confused with Lycra Matt who, had he gone the extra mile and wore a hat or a wig, must surely have won the fancy dress for his budgie smuggling gear. However, the contest was down to 4, with my knight's outfit, Luke who sprayed himself purple and wore one of his extensive collection of tutu's and Ian M who came as Frank Spencer in some authentic clothes from the 1975 Frank Spencer collection by Vivienne Westwood, some of which sold recently on Flog It for £13 less 15% commission. The clear winner though this year was Rooster Jim Hatherley, with chaps on his legs and his six-shooter in his hand (I nearly said weapon!), who shot up some Morris dancers before mounting his 2-wheeled stallion and riding off into the sunset.

The quiz this week was a "no result" but £24 was raised. Thank you. There are some people who are like the Queen and do not carry money (also they squeak when they run). In fact, the last time the Queen ran with us (she is an honorary member) at the Millenium Hose Pose, she won the fancy dress competition dressed as Helen Mirren.

Beer of the week: Marmoset from the Monkey Brewery. A marmoset is, of course, a type of South American monkey which lives in small family groups. The question this week is How many species of Marmoset are there? Email me (along with the answer as to who to eat first). The beer itself had fruity overtones, we got hints of grapefruit, peaches and kumquat – lovely!

Stop Press: The producers of “Get Lost” have just told me they now have enough footage for the show and we won’t need to get lost again.

For artistic purposes, let’s hope for a good run next week, with no detours or diversions. It starts from the Berkeley Arms at Wymondham.

24/4/13 - Carington Arms, Ashby Folville

It’s back!! But whether it is going to be any better, you decide. I am not sure if you have missed the Blog more than me?!?

22 runners assembled in the car park of the Carington Arms to begin this year’s summer runs. Richard A’s posse took to the roads, while the rest headed up across the fields towards Barsby. We lost Julie halfway through the first field, who headed back to the pub. Abi, very kindly, ran back after her, as she only wanted a short run following her success at the London Marathon. Unfortunately, they failed to meet up immediately and ended up running on their own to start with.

The rest of the group had an uneventful start to the run, as we headed to South Croxton through endless stiles and gates, before eventually reaching a big field, where Greg, Jim, Luke and Ian J could stretch their legs and the rest of us slightly slower ones, caught them as they waited at the road.

It was lucky for me that Mike was there, so that I wasn’t left on my own at the back – this being the longest run for some 9 months (knackered!). Although I am pleased to say that my knee, along with Mike’s “girlie foot”, held up well. Mike attributes his recent accosting by a faith healer outside Boots for the speedy improvement to his foot.

Heading away from South Croxton, many people thought (for the first time) that I had got lost. Far from it. I took this opportunity for a short detour, in order to view the ancient (and recently restored) mansion of the medieval knight, Sir Edmund de la Vere. He was a close friend of a recently-dug-up former King of England, who may have stopped at the de la Vere mansion for a light lunch, on the way to a decisive battle. We all took note of the local stonework, the mansard roof and the famous Leicestershire sash windows, before nipping over the hedge and regaining the path.

The long drag up the hill took us past another famous Leicestershire residence, that being Thimble Hall which, after a fire some years ago, was thoughtfully and sympathetically restored, to look nothing like the original building. (It used to be tiny!). Regaining the Midshires Way, we enjoyed the long downhill stretch back to the pub.

£19 was raised this week for the Air Ambulance through our regular quiz. Some members left before I could get their donation but I’m sure that won’t happen next week, after all, it is a very worthy cause and we do run in some relatively inaccessible places as well as on very rural roads!

This week’s road-based question was won by Ian Mason, who was a mere 4,000 miles out in his answer but was easily the closest. Unfortunately, his prize of a bucket of tarmac was stolen, probably by someone who is fed up with the Council taking so long in

getting the roads mended and taking his or her opportunity to sort it out! It is said that because of the amount of pot holes to be filled, there is a countrywide tarmac shortage and it worth more, pound-for-pound, than jam – pricey indeed! At the current rate of repair, it is estimated that all of the pot holes will be filled in the year 2525 – if man is still alive (for those of you who are old enough to remember the song).

Beer of the week: Grainstore Cooking

There will be a prize next week for the Hose Pose Fancy Dress. This is run from the Rose & Crown. Try and get in the spirit and don't forget your donation – it promises to be great fun.

Please note: This week's blog has been written by my ghost writer, Caspar. Just in case I have written anything I shouldn't have! (I don't think I did).