



Welcome to the last quarterly Rebel Newsletter of 2023

Club Champs Latest

AGM & London Marathon Ballot

Running North of the Border

A glass of wine with your half marathon Madam?

100 up for Jane

Member Profile – Stuart Britten

John Allen gets fit for London 2024



First a word from our Chair

Dear Rebels,

Thank you for reading our latest Rebel newsletter and thanks as always, to Nigel for putting it together. If you'd like to share a story in the next edition, please contact him clubsec-rebelrunners@outlook.com. We always want to hear from members so please get in touch!

It's been lovely to celebrate all the successes from special runs and events and read members' personal stories. Thank you to our contributors for their interesting, funny, honest and sometimes emotional accounts.

Since our last newsletter, Rebels have taken part in a successful, very hot and very competitive Rebel Rounders match. Thanks to Polly for arranging and to Wendy for supplying the equipment and never-ending enthusiasm. We are hoping to make the event an annual one. We also had our Rebel Quiz, organised and hosted by Polly who was ably assisted by Rosie. Thanks to both of them and to you for coming along and donating raffle prizes and items to Medway foodbank. You helped raise funds for the club and supported the local community which is fantastic. (My particular thanks to Lisa for bringing chips -yum!)

More and more people are now attending team runs and our LIRFS turn up whether there are eight of you in the pouring rain, or thirty runners in the pitch dark! Thank you to them and to Wendy for organising the rotas. Coach Darren's Wednesday track sessions are rightly very popular and I know you value these. Thanks to Darren for leading these each week. Thanks also to Karen for Sunday Socials and lately, Miles of Smiles, and to Cathy for Friday Frolics.

By the time you read this, Club Champs will be drawing to a close and the AGM on 23rd November is imminent. I hope many of you will come along to celebrate success and meet up with old friends.

Our membership is growing again after lockdown and this is down to you for being so welcoming and supportive of each other and the club. What comes through in all the stories below, is that running is far from a solitary activity and that all of you contribute in some way to each other's success. You have big hearts and you make Rebels special.

Thank you everyone,

Zoe (Isabel)



Rebel News

New Permanent Club Chair!

Our thanks go to Ross who led the club until earlier this year. After his resignation, the club were very grateful that Zoe stepped into the role so successfully on a temporary basis after an internal leadership contest. Everyone will agree that Zoe has brought a tremendous level of professionalism and enthusiasm to the role. Under club rules a permanent chair can only be chosen from committee members who have served for a year with the club. Therefore, committee members have again been invited to apply for the position and your permanent Chair for the next two years will be confirmed at the AGM.

Your Chance to join the committee!

The club has room for more committee members and would love you to consider applying! Your club's committee is an enthusiastic and convivial group who meet 10 times a year to manage the club. Meetings are held at 7pm, usually on a Monday or Tuesday evening. It would be great if we could have a few new faces for 2024. Let us know if you are interested as soon as you can – clubsec-rebelrunners@outlook.com.

The Rebel AGM 2023

This year's AGM is being held at Gillingham Golf Club on Thursday November 23rd. As well as the formal side of the meeting we will also be announcing the results of the Club Championships, the Rebels of the Year and have the excitement of the London Marathon draw! Please arrive at 6.30 for a prompt 7pm start. There is a pay bar and plenty of car parking. It promises to be an enjoyable evening. There is no club run that night.

25th Nov Christmas Party

Don't forget to get you payments to Polly by TOMORROW Friday 2nd November!
There is one space left at time of writing so contact Polly if you would like this.

The Rebel Quiz

Saturday 23rd September was Rebel Runners' Quiz night at Fairview Primary School with 10 teams of 6 and bring your own snacks/drinks and an item to donate to the Medway food bank. The collection was fantastic as Rebels continue to support this fabulous local cause. The 'bring your own snacks' was taken to extremes by some members who prepared a spread that Egon Ronay would have been proud of!



The winning team were the (now) famous **Trolley Dollies**.

Here's team member, **Sarah Simmonds'** version of events!

A great night was had by all thanks to our fabulous quizmaster and organiser of the evening, Polly Clayton, along with her lovely assistant Rosie Regan. After much pondering, laughter & deliberations amongst the teams there could of course be only one winner! And the brilliant Trolley Dollies (a team made up of myself and Paul, the Marron family and Helen Leaver) took 1st place and the all-important bragging rights! We are already looking forward to defending our crown next time around 😊



Club Champs Latest

With just one race to go Darren is currently adding up all the figures and it's going to be a very tight finish this year.

The last event is the Great Lines parkrun on November 18th, maybe a chance to cheer your favourites over the line (or volunteer as it's also Rebel Takeover Day!).

Below are a few pics from the penultimate race, the Maidstone Half Marathon.



Mount Ephraim 10K – Sunday 13/08/23



“Bejesus! That was a toughie! So friggin' hard!”

cried one of our Rebel competitors in the 9th race of this year's club championships!

There's undulating and there's Mount Ephraim! Lots of very pretty hills making it a very hard course to complete and certainly one where times were significantly behind personal bests as well as just average bests!

Lovely scenery though, lovely soft grass to run on and the wonderful, fantastic Rebel camaraderie still made the event something to savour for all our runners.



Mount Ephraim – Club Champs Race 9



The Mount Ephraim 10K

	Chip Time		Chip time
Amanda Link	00:50:08	Stuart Britten	00:41:49
Lousie Pudwell	00:54:53	Timothy Link	00:44:39
Michelle Waterman Gay	00:56:03	Ian Moore	00:44:45
Jess Lyons	00:58:46	James Barney	00:46:01
Katelyn Jarvis	00:59:58	Ken Rains	00:49:03
Celia Mantle	01:00:22	John Western	00:49:21
Karen Illman	01:09:22	Nick Baxter	00:49:50
Charlie Johnson	01:19:20	Chris Ponton	00:52:08
Isabel King	01:19:34	Paul Clark	00:52:50
		Michael Harvey	00:55:28
		Eddie Charlton	00:59:52
		Paul Heywood	01:00:54
		Stuart Inglis	01:01:13
		Gary Stacey	01:03:24
		Alan Lyons	01:06:26
		Ian Hewitt	01:11:14
		Brian Lees	01:22:51

The Wingham 10K Club Champs Event 9



WINGHAM 10K			
Bridie Fry	00:48:29	Stuart Britten	00:42:10
Louise Podwell	00:53:53	Ian Moore	00:46:39
Michelle Waterman Gay	00:57:19	Ken Kains	00:53:07
Jess Lyons	01:00:06	John Western	00:53:46
Charlie Johnson	01:29:43	Timothy Link	00:52:35
		Paul Clark	00:53:05
		Mark Langridge	00:56:06
		Michael Harvey	01:00:20
		Stuart Inglis	01:07:53
		Gary Stacey	01:18:23

An excellent turnout of Rebels, including 15 competing in the Club Championships, lined up for this popular event on a very warm day! It's the only race in the world with clay pig medals made by Canterbury Pottery!

It's a particularly scenic route around the beautiful east Kent countryside, starting at the Recreation Ground in Wingham and taking in some of the prettiest villages in Kent. However, most Rebels will remember this year's race by the effort needed to struggle up the hills on what was a very hot day for 2023!

One Rebel that didn't struggle though was Stuart Britten who had a fantastic 3rd place and 2nd male overall just a short time after recovering from injury.

Well done to everyone who took part.



100 UP FOR JANE!

Jane Jeffery's journey to the 100 half marathon club

I'm not sure how I ended up with this as a target. I joined the Rebels in 2015, throwing myself into club life and as a new member entered the club champs. I thought it was a good way to meet more Rebels and get involved in the social side.

In those first three years I ran across every distance from 5K up to marathon distance and approached the running events to socialize, pick up goodie bags and medals.

In 2019 I became aware of a brand-new club called the 100 Half Marathon Club,

I liked the distance and felt that it was a challenge so started the spreadsheet and started to get those races ticked off to become a full member of the 100 Half Marathon Club. The club entry is at bronze level with 25 half marathons completed, so in December 2019 I became a bronze member of the 100 Half Marathon Club completing 12 half marathons in 12 months and picking up a T-shirt.

Being a very sensible runner (winky face), I do like a T-shirt and a medal - that's why we do it right? so, when the opportunity to run 20 half marathons in 2020 was advertised, I signed up. This was going to be a huge step towards the 100 half marathons and of course another T-shirt. Then COVID hit, but by the time the first lockdown came I had already completed seven half marathons. In between periods of lockdown I managed, by December, to have run 19 half marathons and one full marathon. The December lockdown started on the night I completed my 19th half marathon so it was not until we emerged from that lockdown that I was able to pick up my T-shirt for completing 20 half marathons in 2020. Seems a lifetime ago now.



In 2022 I completed 26 half marathons in 52 weeks again for another T-shirt. Picking up 25 half marathons, 50 half marathons and another 12 in 12 T-shirt just for good measure.

There was no planning or end date I was working to - I was just ticking off the races month by month and going to half marathons wherever it took my fancy. I finally completed my 100 half marathons in August of this year although I have not eased up on booking half marathons just yet.

I have run in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, London, Bedford and in a few more UK based half marathons. I entered the Marrakesh half marathon and the Run Disneyland Paris 36K challenge which included a half marathon. I've run in every type of weather over every type of terrain (please don't ask about the Polo Club) and enjoyed every moment, except when I'm moaning.

There are some I would return to and some highlights, having many adventures along the way getting to and from the half marathons and enjoying sinking a pint afterwards.

I will always be a Rebel and thank every Rebel that has joined me in the exciting journey to the 100 half marathon club whether it's been at parkrun, during coaching or on a 1/2 marathon. Looking forward to running with some of you at a half marathon soon.



Red or White with that run Madam?

Karen Illman remembers the Bacchus Half Marathon (just!)

There's a good run, then there's a really good run (which usually involves a bit of food, maybe a drink), then there a really good flippin' brilliant run (which involves good food and is a smidge more generous on the alcohol front!), and which usually has to wait until the next day for its run report!



This was a really good flippin' brilliant run!

We all had a dressing up theme this year - The Mister Men and Little Miss. I was Little Miss Sunshine, and boy, did the sun shine all day! Until at one point, I was a bit tired towards the end and was walking a bit, and a marshal said to the others, 'Little Miss Sunshine has just gone under a cloud for a bit!' So funny, and we all laughed!



Running a half marathon isn't easy, but try running one in the blisteringly hot heat of over 30° C, and all the while getting more tiddy as you make your way around! How we survived, Lordy knows! But surprising as it may seem, it all went by so quickly! And I think that was all down to the fab company I was running with! Thank you Paul Heywood, Celia Mantle and Paul Mantle. You all made it soooooo much fun and you all really made my day! 😊

There were 6 wine stops with all different kinds of wine and goodies! 🍷🍷🍷 My faves were the cheese & crackers 🍞🧀, and the melon and pineapple 🍉🍌 stops! The onion bhaji and spring roll stop was quite good too! Paul M really enjoyed that one! He had to have a little lie down on a bed of Prosecco bottles! 🍷🍷🍷 I think the smile on his face says it all! 😊

We met a running ladybird and 3 Mexicans (one who was very lazy and was being dragged along by his compadres!), as well as lots of other fab peeps along the way! Everyone was so friendly offering to take photos of us and other people, and we of course obliged and did the same! Such a lovely, friendly atmosphere!

After stop 2, Celia was feeling decidedly more perky and it showed! 🍷 Just look a bit closer at the photos & you'll see why! 😊

Just before mile 9 Mr Hose Man was waiting! 'Would you like a spray?!' were his words to me!



I just stood there, looked up to the heavens, flung out my arms and said, 'Oh, yes please!' and stood there for maybe a small eternity! 'Wow, that is the face of happiness!' he said as he continued spraying me with cool water! And then I was cheeky and said, 'Will you do my back as well please?!' which he readily obliged! Everyone after me also took him up on his offer! I don't remember him last year, but I'm soooooo glad he was there this year! He really did help to cool me down. Apparently, his aim was a bit off though, and poor Celia and Paul H both got sprayed a bit too much in their lower regions than they would have liked! I think I did too, but I didn't really care at that point, as I was wet all over by then!

Celia said it was the most beautiful and scenic run she had ever done, 🌄 and had been the most fun too! And I have to agree. The views were just absolutely stunning! And if you run with peeps that are of a similar mindset, then everyone has fun and really enjoys themselves, and there were plenty of giggles and laughs along the way!

I had warned the guys about a really big hill about halfway, which you had to climb, and definitely was not runnable.

'Is this the hill Karen?!' asked Celia.

'Ummm, no, not yet.' was my reply.

'Is this the hill Karen?!' asked Paul H.

'Ummm, no, you'll definitely know it when you get to it!'

And so, every hill or incline we came to (there were quite a lot of hills!) I was asked the same question!

Then a little further along, Celia and Paul H, both said, 'THIS IS THE HILL, ISN'T IT?!'

'YES!! ... See, I told you would know it when you came to it and they both laughed!'

It was a very steep hill / climb in the middle of the woods, and was almost vertical, and which seemed to go on forever! That might be a tad exaggerating, but it's not far off! Last year I did it all in one go, but in the heat, we all had to stop twice for a rest to get our breath.

One time I looked at my Garmin and it was 9.5 miles, then next time I looked at it, it was about 12 miles and we were arriving at the last stop (this one was chocolate eclairs and macarons), where a fab band was playing 'Kids in America' by Kim Wilde. It took me back to my youth and I couldn't resist a little boogie, and Celia said, 'Here, let me take a photo of you by the band'. The cheeky monkey took a video instead! But it just sums up the whole feel good factor of the



day and the fun we were having! 🍷

Before we knew it, we were all at the finish line, and we all joined hands and ran over it all together!

Such a fab run and it was all over too soon!

Well, not quite, we then spent the next 3.5 hours waiting for our fellow friends to come in, eating a fabulous Hog Roast, and enjoying some of Denbies very nice wine!

🍷 🍷 🍷 A few bottles may have been consumed between all of us! But what better way to relax, than lying down on the grass with the peeps you've just run with, chatting to everyone else that has come in, and enjoying the spoils of all of your hard work and sipping VERY nice wine in the afternoon sun! ☀️



It really was a fab day out, and then some of us carried on into the evening too in Rochester with more drinks and another posh burger & chips! It was really nice to catch up with other peeps I hadn't run with. There were so many of us this year. We had 2 minibuses, and it really did make for a fun day out with everyone. From the banter on the bus, to the running, and to all the fab food and wine afterwards. I really can't think of a better way to spend a Sunday with some fabulous peeps! ❤️

But I have to say a really special thank you to Paul, Celia and Paul for making the run so enjoyable, and whizz by so fast! I really couldn't have asked for better company! 😊

Just an absolutely brilliant day with you all!

.... Soooooooo, same time again next year peeps?!



(Note from Chair – this report was definitely influenced by wine. It was boiling hot with hills, more hills, a mountain, a nice flat bit through some woods and then more hills!)

Member Profile – Stuart Britten

How did you get into running – was that something that you were good at at school or has it developed since?

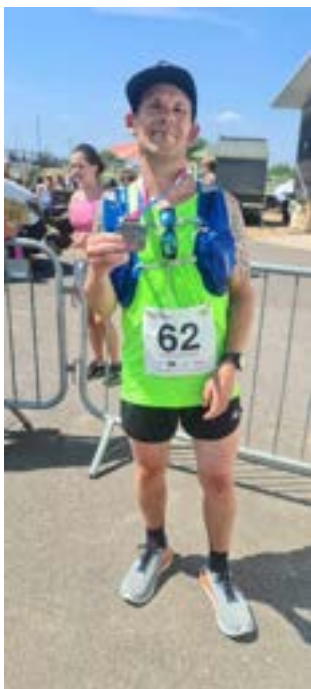
I got back into running last year after a cycling injury and have just started to really enjoy it again and haven't looked back.

A lot of Rebels have noticed that your times have improved recently and you must be particularly pleased with 3rd place in the 4 Bay 10K. Do you regard that as your best run to date or there any which you think were better?

The 4 Bay challenge was an unexpected surprise but my 3rd place and 2nd male was definitely my best result! However, my Great South Run was definitely my best race and my favourite too! 10miles in 1.06.07 was amazing and the atmosphere was electric.

On the same theme can you attribute your improvement to any lifestyle changes?

I can definitely say giving up alcohol this year has been the biggest effect in my life! I soon will have been 300 days sober after many years of heavy drinking. I've also lost 2 stone in weight and this has been a major contribution to my serious improvement in running.



Is there anything else that you plan to do in addition to the above? What's your current training regime and do you intend to make changes to it in the future?

The only running challenge now is to run a marathon but I want to be able to run one 'good for age' so I can get into the London Marathon this way which will involve some serious training next year.

I believe that you have a partner who is equally keen and competitive. How much does this help you achieve your goals?

My partner Sarah has been a huge inspiration since we got together and has kept me focused on my running this year. She's done everything from taking photos to running the same event with me.

How has being a member of Rebel Runners helped you with your running hobby and how important is support from other members of the club?

Running with the Rebels had been a huge help for me on the social side of things and improving my running. The best has been the track training which I would like to thank Darren Jarvis for. His sessions have been amazing!

Have you had to contend with any injuries that have kept you from running for a while? If you have managed to stay injury free is there anything specifically that you have done to achieve this?

I'm had one main injury this year throughout March and April which was a shin splint and it took me some time to shake it off but I still managed that 3rd place at the 4 Bay Challenge which was why it was so surprising.



What's your favourite running distance and what other events have you got lined up?

My favourite running distance is definitely 10k but I'm really starting to enjoy the longer distances as I've got fitter and look forward doing more 10+ mile races next year all the way up to a marathon. Fingers crossed!

I understand that you are also into cycling (Stuart runs Peninsula Cycle Repairs in St Mary Hoo). How do you manage to have time for both?

Being self-employed has really helped me able to run and cycle a lot more and having a job I really enjoy is always a bonus too.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

I would just like to thank all the Rebel Runners who have helped me with my running and given me all the support and encouragement. I wouldn't be where I am or running so well without you. Thank you you're all amazing and look forward to many more runs with you all.

Thank you Stuart and best wishes for all your future events.



John Allen is in training for The London Marathon!

In February 2015, I started running.

I weighed 12st. I had recently lost a bit of weight and I wanted it to stay off. I'm a compulsive eater, a sugar addict and a prodigious binge drinker. I did Couch to 5k all alone, managed to complete the programme, then looked around and realised I needed something to keep me going with the running. I did my first parkrun as an unattached runner and saw a number of clubs at Great Lines. I did some research and based upon websites and Facebook posts, fired off a few emails to clubs who seemed least scary. A couple of weeks later, I found myself running down Dock Road with a very friendly and chatty Jenny on a Monday night team run and I decided to sign up.

Things escalated rapidly. In August 2015, I ran my first 10k race at Capstone. In November 2015, I ran my first half marathon along the Thames in horribly wet conditions. In April 2016,

about a year after my first parkrun, I ran my first marathon at Ranscombe. I hadn't intended to; it just sort of happened. I had been doing long runs with people who were training for spring marathons and I was running up to about 18 miles. I signed up to do a lapped event where I could do as many or as few laps as I wanted and encouraged by some fellow Rebels I did 26.2 miles. I then started a period of running a marathon a month to avoid having to train for a marathon again. I continued to push myself. I'm not a fast runner so I concentrated on doing harder or unusual races rather than trying to constantly get a faster personal best.



In October of 2016, I ran my first Beachy Head Marathon- which is still my favourite marathon. I have done it six times now. On my 48th birthday in 2019, I ran the 100km Race to the Stones ultramarathon along the ancient Ridgeway path, finishing in Avebury Stone Circle in Wiltshire. For 2020, I signed up for the 100km Race to the King ultramarathon which was due to finish on the steps of the Winchester Cathedral. For some reason, the race was cancelled that year.

However, on my 49th birthday that summer, I got the train to Tonbridge and ran the 49km back to Rochester. My place in Race to the King, along with a 50km ultramarathon, Brighton Marathon and many other races were deferred to 2021.

Sadly, my body is not as strong as it could be. I'm a middle-aged man with a missing arm. My arm was amputated following a motorcycle accident during which I also ruptured the brachial plexus nerve which controlled my right arm and shoulder. As a result of the damaged nerves I have no muscle in my right shoulder which means the rest of my back is working harder and differently to account for the missing bit. It is also worth mentioning, at some point, in fact more than once, someone told me that if I was running, I could eat as much as I liked as I'd burn it all off. That's not true. You can't outrun a bad diet! By 2019, my weight was back up to the 13st 7lb mark. I had a good lockdown though, I was running well; I was doing at least 50k in total each week. I often ran half marathon distances a few times a month and my weight was down to 13st.

In January 2021, I started training for all my deferred races, with the ultimate aim being to complete the Race to the King in June. In February, I started having calf issues, which I went to my physio about. His efforts alleviated the symptoms but they always came back. I also started having back problems whenever I ran with a hydration pack - which was pretty often when I was doing long trail runs. In the end, my



training wasn't consistent enough to complete my targets. I deferred Brighton Marathon. I got a refund on Race to the King when they were forced to change the route and my only marathon that year was Beachy Head. Also, by now, my physio had referred me to a back specialist, courtesy of my employer's private health scheme, and he was keen to perform a procedure on my back to fix the underlying problem. I declined, because I didn't want to not run for the many months of rehabilitation.

2022 should have been a good year of running. In the spring, I had my deferred place in Brighton Marathon to look forward to, for my birthday weekend I had Snowdonia Mountain Marathon and in September I was partaking in a 24 hour endurance race called Equinox 24, doing as many 10k laps of Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire as I could complete in 24 hours. I had previously taken part in the event in a relay team but this year I was going to do it as a solo entrant.

The year was rubbish. I was almost always nursing an injury of some sort. I had no consistent training. I had to withdraw from Brighton Marathon and because the original organisers had gone bankrupt, I couldn't defer my already deferred place again. I dropped down from the full marathon in Snowdonia to the half, which was a horrifically challenging course which gave me a pathological hatred of slate which still lingers on. Then there was Equinox 24. Equinox 24 is more like a festival.

Due to the 24 hour nature of the event and because there are both team and solo efforts taking place, it's an event you camp at. I camped with lots of friends from the Midlands who enter various teams and individuals to raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital. It was cold that year. I don't think sleeping in a tent in the cold helped my back. I woke up on the morning of the event in agony. I could barely move. I spent the morning (the race starts at midday) sat in a car with the heated seats on, trying to get my back to work. I did start the race. I completed a solitary 10k lap before retiring. Because I had completed a lap, I got my medal and t shirt (which, because I was a solo entrant featured my name!) but I felt like a fraud and a failure. I hid in my tent for the rest of the 24 hours, avoiding all human contact. I was not in a good place.

On my return to Kent, I contacted my surgeon, who seemed overly cheerful on hearing about my back failing and immediately scheduled me in for a little procedure. This would mean at least three months with no running. I had my procedure in November 22. Since stopping running in September after Equinox, my mental health had plummeted, my exercise levels had dived and my already prodigious food and alcohol intake had increased dramatically. I was a mess. My return to running took longer than I'd hoped. My surgeon wanted me to complete physio before starting to run but my weight was rapidly increasing. I was permitted to run/walk from the beginning of March, but I really couldn't get going or motivated.

On 3rd April 23, my father died. This caused my mental health to drop even further into

the abyss. However, I recognised the state I was in and while I was at my mother's helping to deal with everything, I did my first parkrun in ages. I ran the whole thing, but I was terribly overweight and I really struggled. I was 15st 9lb. The next few months were difficult. I did a bit of running, but I wasn't consistent. I did the Harvel 5 race, but only because of beer. That was my longest run since Equinox in September. On 2nd July, running with friends in the lanes near Rainham, I fell over, sprained my ankle and grazed my knee. My knee became infected and I could barely walk. I was still 15st 9lb. I was coasting along with no direction, no plan and no chance of running any kind of distance.

In 2008, I had entered the London Marathon ballot. I wasn't a runner, but someone else at work thought it would be a laugh, so I entered. Luckily, I didn't get a place. In October 2008 I had the accident where I lost my arm. Strangely, I continued entering every year even though I didn't run until 2015. Every year when I got the rejection, I think I thought it was the universe's way of telling me running wasn't for me. In 2016, I wanted to get in. By 2017, I had mixed feelings about it. I prefer smaller, off road, races and London is definitely not in those categories. However, whenever I talk to a non-runner, London is THE marathon to them. So, I thought I would keep trying. Most years between 2016 & 2021, had I got in, I would have just done a couple of long runs and turned up on the day and ran it. On 6th July, I was working from home, barely able to move because of my infected knee and twisted ankle.





I was annoyed, going stir crazy and at a very low ebb. Everyone was updating social media with their rejections from London Marathon. There were far fewer successful applicants than in previous years. I checked my emails, ready for the annual rejection. I was in!!! I was actually annoyed. Why couldn't I have got in when I was fit? Look at me! I'm a mess!!! When I calmed down, I realised that I needed to do this. I needed to use this to focus my recovery on.

I could get fit again. I could lose weight again. I could do it. To further add fuel to my burning ambition, a colleague who has previously run it and had smugly said things like 'trail marathons aren't real running, they're just picnics with a ramble in between the aid stations' and 'running over 10 min/per mile isn't really running' reckoned I'd struggle with it. He ran London in 2023. He ran it before Covid too, and had done Brighton twice as well. I looked up his finish time on the London Marathon website. He finished in 4h 26m 5s. Which is actually just over 10 min miles... Anyway, I didn't think his time that impressive for someone who is 15 years younger than me, complete, and supposedly fitter than me. So I challenged him, that if I could beat his time, he would have to run Beachy Head with me in 2024. You know, one of those easy trail marathons with picnics and walk breaks...and 1200 metres of climbing... that one. He agreed. I'm a determined chap.

Since July, I have employed a running coach to produce a plan for me and to hold me accountable. I have also employed a health, nutrition and wellness coach to help me control my eating and drinking. I have largely given up alcohol and refined sugar. Today, I weigh 13st 11lb... just below my pre-injury weight. I'm hoping to get below 12st before April and below 13st before Christmas. I have some very supportive Rebels helping me such as Nick Baxter, Steve Button, Coach Darren Jarvis and my long time running partner Clara Carter. My regular attendance at track has certainly helped with speed and form. I would recommend it to all runners, it doesn't matter how fast you are now, you will improve with track work and everyone is so supportive there. Come and try it! I also hold myself accountable by publishing a quick(ish) account of the previous day's food and exercise on Facebook. I'm sure most of my Facebook friends are sick to death of it by now, but it's now a habit I need to keep going to ensure I stay on track.

I am an athlete and my body is a temple.

(Yes you are.)

Adrian Darr takes a Scotland Road (and Running) Trip

Most people when they go on holiday, hang up their running gear and take a break from it... Not me! It is now part of my weekly routine, I love running in different places, and needed to keep the legs ticking over with a Marathon planned for November. So, when myself, my wife Kirsty, and our trustworthy mini-campervan Fred, embarked recently on a 17 Day Road Trip



to Scotland, it gave me an ideal opportunity to run in new places.

First stop was 3 days in Glasgow, so I managed to get some Parkrun Tourism in, and ticked off Ruchill Parkrun in Glasgow's West End. There were 90 runners on the day, on a lovely undulating course through Ruchill Park. As the Race Director said, "there are no hills in Ruchill Park, it's just a wee bit up and doon".

The Great Scottish Run also just happened to be on the weekend we were in Glasgow too, but owing to time constraints I chose to do the 10k version. It started in George Square in the City Centre next to Queen Street station, the heart of Glasgow surrounded by statues and the City Hall. The course is all on closed off roads, and the worst hill (by far) was within the first half a mile up St Vincent's Street. At the top you pass the iconic music venue King Tuts Wah Wah Hut and then cross the River Clyde over the Kingston Bridge

alongside the M8 Motorway. The route took us through the suburbs of Plantation, Cessnock and the outskirts of Govan, back across the River Clyde over the Finnieston Street Bridge and under the Clyde Arch with lovely views of the Exhibition Centre. Then it's along the banks of the River Clyde through Anderston Quay and Broomielaw Waterfront before going back over the Clyde across King George V Bridge, then 1 more time across the Clyde over Glasgow Bridge and then finally past the famous McLennan Arch and Nelson's Monument to the finish Line in Glasgow Green. I really enjoyed the GSR 10k, it was superbly arranged, great local support, decent weather on the day, easy public transport links, and I managed a respectful 44m 40s time – well happy!

After a weekend in Glasgow, we continued our Road trip North and went to the stunning Isle of Skye for 5 days, followed by 6 days on The Isle of Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides. I was getting out most mornings for a 5k to watch the wonderful sunrises over Loch Portree or along the most amazing beaches we have ever seen. I couldn't resist going out most mornings in the fresh breeze and having these huge mile long beaches to myself.



Lewis and Harris is an amazing Island, the 3rd largest UK island after Great Britain and Ireland and closer to Iceland than Kent with a population less than Rainham!

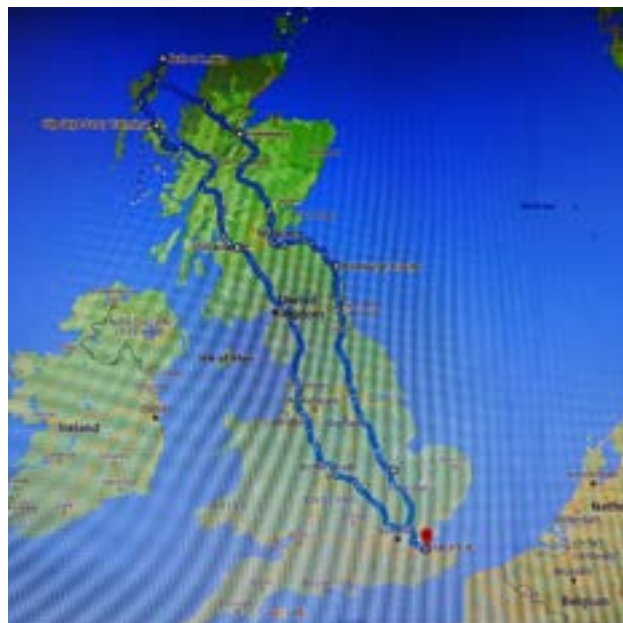


I also did more Parkrun Tourism here, possibly my favourite Parkrun so far (and furthest from home) – Lewis Castle. A beautiful run through Lewis Castle Grounds and along the banks of Stornoway Harbour and the Creed River. There were only 14 runners on the day because of another event elsewhere on the Island, and because of the low numbers I managed to come first with a time of 24m 30s. But first is first so I'll take it, and I was the furthest tourist on the day by far!

Once back on the Mainland I managed to do a couple of morning runs along the banks of the River Ness and The Ness Islands in Inverness, parts of which were flooded following recent bad weather.

Heading south back into England we travelled to Bamburgh, Northumberland where I was able to run along the beautiful sands of Bamburgh Beach overlooked by the magnificent Bamburgh Castle. Then, on our final leg home, we stopped overnight in Peterborough which meant I could do one more Parkrun at Ferry Meadows. This had a mammoth 505 Runners on the day – a bit of a difference from 14 runners on the Isle of Lewis! I really enjoyed this course too, a flat run through the picturesque Ferry Meadows in Nene Park.

This was a great trip, the far North islands are so refreshing and a runner's paradise, and Glasgow is such a vibrant and friendly City – I highly recommend it!



Thank you for reading our newsletter and happy running everyone!