

## ***REX'S RAMBLINGS (R.W.Legge)***

### ***Introduction***

Many years ago standing near the slipway at Stokes Bay Sailing Club I was in conversation with a sailing colleague and we were discussing our respective careers.

Much to my amazement he seemed genuinely interested in what I had to say and suggested that I should record my various experiences!

When my daughter Deborah began to research the family tree it became very apparent that we know very little about our parents early history let alone the wider family! Once again the embryo of an idea was born.

The year 2000 was particularly significant when having completed the 630 miles of the South West Coast Path - Minehead to Poole I decided to write of our experiences! (Brother John completed 400 miles before being taken ill)

Initially I wrote the account in long - hand and eventually had it transferred to floppy - disc in order to be able to add or edit etc. on my computer at work. After a degree of frustration and a considerable amount of time I finished the article and although one is never satisfied with the final product, to my surprise I had enjoyed the experience!

After retirement I vowed that within reason any day that I was unable to enjoy the great outdoors I would retire to the study and reminisce about my past! Hence winter nights, rainy days etc. has led to the following ***rambles!***

For many years I recorded in long - hand being unable to hold my thoughts while desperately trying to find my way around the computer keyboard!

The anecdotes are listed below:-

*Diary & family homes*

*Schools & Colleges*

*Employment*

*Sailing*

*Running*

*SWCP (South west coast path)*

*Scouting*

*Holidays (Pre 1991-Post)*

*Walking/Cycling*

*Parents & Relatives*

Nomenclature:-

Jeanette my late wife and mother of Deborah and Martin

Maureen - for many years my partner.

*A few expressions and saying that were to guide us through life.*

Children should be seen and not heard.  
Parents/elders: - do as I say not as I do.

Speak when spoken to.  
Do not speak with your mouth full.  
Leave the table feeling a little hungry.  
Do not eat or drink in public.  
An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Vacate your seat for an elderly person.  
Respect your elders.  
Always have respect for authority.  
Respect other people's feelings.

Do not expect others to do what you are not prepared to do.  
Do not leave until tomorrow what can be done today.  
If you want a job done quickly; give it to a busy man.  
If a job is worth doing it is worth doing properly.  
A stich in time saves nine.  
Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves.

Wash your hands after visiting the lavatory.

Be kind and courteous.  
A smile costs you nothing.

Be kind and understanding of all animals.

When in Rome do as the Romans do.

Better late in this world; than early in the next.

To reach the moon you should aim for the stars.

## RUNNING 2013

A few recollections & anecdotes relating to many years of running.  
They are in chronological order and in note form.

For results, press reports and photographs etc. see separate file



My brother John who had been running for many years often encouraged me to follow his example and enjoy the freedom/simplicity of the sport. I had declined his suggestion because arrogantly I considered jogging to be an older man's pursuit! [Now (2008) I consider anything faster than 8-minute miles to be running!] After my knee injury (1984) on the surfboard I needed to regain full fitness, the message was reinforced early in 1985 after a game of squash when I felt totally exhausted and my face a beetroot colour! Hence I started to run around Titchfield village which took approximately 13 minutes. The circuit was simple, after leaving home it was up the road to St Margaret's lane, down Coach Hill, along the bye-pass and back through the village.

I played squash at the Lee on the Solent tennis and squash club which also had a small running section, the LOST runners. I joined the runners for a circuit of the airfield (HMS Daedalus) approximately 4 miles and to my astonishment instead of finding it difficult to stay with the group, I was humoured for setting a fast pace! I had found a new sport and as a consequence I reduced my squash activities in preference to running.

Running further afield I soon realised that caution was required at the proximity to road junctions, crossings etc.

I was running along the A27 just past the Plessey establishment and in the process of crossing the petrol station forecourt when a car travelling at 30/40 mph turned in off the main road into the garage. I was brushed along the side of the car before falling to the ground! The driver either did not see me or did not care, but I was shaken. Running as with both walking and cycling, the motorist must always take precedence!

Late 1986 on a very cold November day I completed the Gosport 1/2 marathon in 1hr/27min I was aged 48 and my road-racing career was about to unfold.

Although the LOST runners did not have a qualified coach they did generate enthusiasm and gave me a lot of encouragement, unlike my visit to the Gosport roadrunners club where I met a total lack of hospitality! As a consequence I joined and paid my subscription to the LOST runners.

Running very soon became my way of life and every effort was made to stay reasonably slim and fit, increasing control over food consumption, never eating immediately before a run, which is definitely not practical, if too much too soon you feel sick, fortunately after a hard run the appetite seems to diminish. Apart from fitness another major benefit is that every path, lane, etc. within a 5 mile radius of home is explored and natural places of beauty are soon discovered and they are returned to, time and time again.

1986-Total / year of training miles -243



During 1987 I ran the Fareham 10mile-64min/29secs.

Portsmouth 1/2 marathon-1hr/25min/28secs, (a substantial snowfall the day before the race!)

Gosport 1/2 marathon -1hr/25min /50secs.

I was starting to increase my training regime -e.g. often on a Wednesday night after sailing at Stokes bay my son Martin would drive the car back to Titchfield, thus allowing me the opportunity to run home! Plus I was extending my mileage on Sunday mornings doing a long run prior to sailing.

1987-Total / year of training miles -827

1988 saw an increase in the number of races in which I participated: -Stubbington Green 10k-38min/41secs, Fareham 10mile-64min/17secs, Selsey 1/2marathon -1hr/24min/57secs, New Forest 10 mile-66min/41secs, Braishfield 15k-61min/36secs, Sultan 10 mile-64min/53secs, Purbrook 6k-37min/47secs and the Gosport 1/2 marathon in 1hr/26min/7secs.



Although I had increased the number of races during the year my finishing times were not significantly improving, I needed to join a structured running club.

Stubbington Green was the nearest to Titchfield and late in November I drove to their meeting place - the car park in Stubbington village. I had chosen an unusual night, only one runner was present, Mr. John Armon. He asked if I would like to join him and we ran around the Lee on Solent Airfield adjacent to H.M.S. Daedalus, John was a very competitive man and every time I increased the pace he would respond by adding to the pace until all I could do was to respectfully follow! Back at the car park I was exhausted but pleased with my overall effort. I joined the fledgling Stubbington Green club just before Christmas. 1988-Total / year of training miles -980

1989 saw a further increase in the number of races in which I participated: -Stubbington Green 10k-38min/03secs, Fareham 10mile-62min/08secs, Winchester 10mile-64mins/55secs, Romsey 10k-38mins/08secs, Portsmouth 1/2marathon -1hr/22mins/52secs, Eastleigh 10k-38mins/25secs.

I won my first significant trophy at the St Dismas 10K, finishing in 38mins/08secs. The prize was a lovely engraved goblet, I was 2nd in the over fifties (the man who came first won a trophy in a lower age category!) and a PB - (Personnel Best) - 1hr/22mins/46secs in the Selsey 1/2 marathon.

I was now running with the club at least twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday and my race times were improving but as I pushed harder the loads on my body understandably increased! [I remember the first grueling Tesco run, Warsash to Lower Swanwick up Bursldon Hill, (reaching the top exhausted and then being told to sprint!) continuing around the roundabout, down the Hamble Lane, across to the A27 and a race back to Warsash!]

By May I was diagnosed with stress fractures! It was to be November before I raced again, however I was fortunate to be able to use the Multi gym and shower facilities at the squash club in order to assist in my recovery and subsequent training regime. November-Gosport 1/2marathon- 1hr/25mins/47secs and the Totton 10k in 38mins/..Secs.

1989-Total / year of training miles -930.



1990- Participated in 18 road races and my first cross-country for the club, the highlights of the year were, 1st (age category), Sultan 10 mile, 62mins/56secs, PB's at the Bournemouth 1/2 marathon 1hr/21mins/57secs and the Gosport 10K, 37mins/33secs.

Unfortunately I was unable to register the 1/2 marathon time as subsequent to the race I received a letter from the race officials stating that the course was slightly short!

I was re-introduced to cross-country running on a cold, wet and windy January morning when I participated in a Hampshire race. It was at Stokes Bay and the course took us across bog land that lie between the recreation grounds and the golf course and then along the shingle shore between Gilkicker point and the sailing club all very wet, muddy and tiring! Later in the year, February, I again ran in very strong, wet cold winds, this time it was the Winchester 10 mile. During the race I had hallucinations running up a long hill,

midway and ahead at the top I could see an oasis of palms! Perhaps I was beginning to take running too seriously even on my birthday Jeanette dropped me off at Hengisbury Head and I ran back along the promenade to Shore road!

I learnt yet another of many lessons, an elderly gentleman running just ahead of me in the New Forest 10 was splaying his arms and legs in all directions as part of his running action! Mentally I belittled the chap in anticipation of overtaking him and leaving him for "dead", regrettably the exact reverse occurred proving yet again that style is not everything!

I had encouraged a work colleague to enter the New Forest 10 mile, on the Monday following the race he came up to me and stated that he could not understand how the race could be uphill all the way around!

The Swanage 12mile was disappointing, it was held on a hot July day taking us to Corfe Castle where we met traffic chaos. The roads were jammed packed with stationary/slow moving vehicles on their way to Swanage; in general the motorist had little consideration for the runners on the side of the road trying to run a race! The health value of the run was very questionable, as we were continually breathing in the horrid toxic exhaust fumes, mile after mile!

I ran in the first Great South Run-10 miles and as with the Portsmouth 1/2 marathon it was still a challenge running into a strong wind between Eastney and the finish at Southsea.

During November I almost felt that I was becoming an athlete! Stubbington Green had arranged a training session at the Mountbatten sports centre Portsmouth where we had the opportunity to train on the running track; our session comprised four pyramids of 400-steady/race/jog/race. The experience was enjoyed by all, the resilience of the track adding to the spring in ones stride, plus the ability to have a shower/drink before leaving was very different to the usual club venue of the Stubbington car park!

1990-Total / year of training miles -1442

1991- 61mins/50secs was to be my best ever time for the 10mile-road race, Fareham was the venue and a flat course assisted with running a good time, I went through 5 miles in 30mins/33secs.

The Portsmouth 1/2 marathon was later in the year on the 3rd March, which I completed in 1hr/23mins/10secs, split times; 5miles 30mins/47secs, 10miles 63mins/10secs.

If one ever has the need to be “toughened up”, have a “reality check” or just wishes to improve physical stamina, then cross-country running is a must. (Maybe that's why I never really warmed to it) Earlier in the year I took part in both the 100acres (39th) and Hamble (34th) cross-country runs, both muddy, the Hamble paths were mainly frozen!

Cross-country races are held during the winter months and as a consequence it is either very wet /cold or freezing, sometimes all three, but always physically challenging! The race often started at one end of a field and a sprint was required to establish a favourable position before entry to a track or footpath. I am naturally a slow starter; hence it was difficult to be well placed at the initial phases of the race. Overtaking was difficult in many areas due to the narrowness of the path and as such I had a tendency to settle in behind the runner in front! After the race it was time for a clean-up, a small stream was ideal but if necessary a pond would suffice!

Standing ankle/knee deep in a pond/stream on a cold winter's day needed a degree of good humour!

After the Portsmouth 1/2 marathon I experienced considerable pain /tenderness in my left heel. I went to the alternative medicine surgery at Stubbington for several weeks and had my heel massaged/manipulated but with little healing effect! During this period I had continued to run short distances accepting the pain. On the 24th June I visited the sports injury clinic at the Mountbatten centre Portsmouth where they treated my heel using Laser and Ultra sound. The treatment continued for a further three weeks after which it was suggested that I went to my local GP for a steroid injection. The injection into the heel had a limited effect but it did allow me to participate in short runs, mainly on the grass along the Lee on the Solent sea front.

It was during this period that I first ran the very scenic run through Whiteley woods, along the wooded banks of the river Hamble and eventually back through the woods to Whiteley. By the 23rd July I had re-joined the Green runners for their regular training sessions. Unfortunately by late August the heel had become very tender again and I arranged for further treatment at the Mountbatten centre. It was much as before, one hour of Laser, Ultra sound and manipulation plus the medics insisted that I stopped running! A week later at the end of the second period of treatment it was the clinics considered opinion that a spur may be causing the pain and suggested that I have my foot X-rayed. I duly visited the Titchfield health centre and saw doctor Dunton to arrange a hospital visit. I had the x-ray taken at the Queen Alexandra hospital, Cosham and fortunately there were no signs of spurs or fractures etc. The next day 27th September I visited the sports clinic and met the podiatrist Andrew Fisher who proposed I used tailored orthotics and that I stopped running for a further two weeks. After a few weeks the orthotics arrived and I felt very awkward when using them, but it was necessary and I persisted. The heel remained painful for the rest of the year and well into 1992, it was the 2nd February before I had my first real run and a fortnight later I felt strong enough to run with the Greens. The pain gradually relented and by May I was in full training. Once again during my thirteen month enforced lay-off I was able to maintain a keep fit agenda by using the Multi gym several times a week at the Lee on the Solent tennis and squash club.

By the middle of August I was beginning to become accustomed to the orthotics and increased the mileage e.g. before sailing on Sunday mornings I would run to the Locks Heath shopping centre to join friends and club colleagues Mike Bell and Allison Judd, run to Warsash and then along the cliff tops to the Meon, through the valley back to Titchfield, then return home for a shower etc. and leave Mike and Allison to run back to their cars at Locks Heath.

1991-Total / year of training miles -486

I only managed to complete two races during 1992, the Gosport 10K (40mins/58secs) and the 10 mile Great South Run-(64mins/20secs).

Due to Jeanette's very sad death and various domestic difficulties I only ran with the club and did not run competitively for two years.

However my running ego took yet another plunge when on a Sunday run I endeavoured to hurdle a stile in the same fashion as the leading younger contemporaries and got it wrong! I Hit the top planking and crashed to the ground with a very sore and bleeding shin!

1992-Total / year of training miles -1285

1993-Total / year of training miles -1345

1994-Total / year of training miles -1192

August 1995 I entered the Dorset Duddle.

The Dorset Duddle is organised and run by the Bournemouth Youth & Community Council and the event takes place annually between Weymouth and Swanage.

The event literature describes the route as follows: - "This route-one of outstanding beauty -is hard and long. It has up to 10,000ft rise and fall, following the coastal path from the clock tower at Weymouth to the youth centre, Swanage. More than thirty unforgettable miles!" Unforgettable yes! It was to be one of the hottest days recorded for this event.

I arrived at Weymouth having been driven by my partner Maureen and accompanied by her sister Hilary around 8.30 for the 9 o'clock start and obtained the necessary documentation etc.

After a brief encounter with a fell runner who made the contentious remark-"you are not wearing those shoes are you! - I had a pair of those and during a run in the Peak district, the soles fell off! "

We were away, running along the causeway to Bowleaze Cove and then onto the cliff paths to the first check point at Osmington Mills. Arrived at 9.39 and then on to Ringstead Bay 9.49 and the White Nothe 10.07. Felt really fine in the bright sunshine, although the sun was beginning to climb higher into the sky I was not feeling too hot. After running through the Warren and past Durdle Door I arrived at Lulworth 10.44, still feeling fine although it was beginning to get fairly warm! The climb over Bindon Hill was hard, initially steep and then a slow incline which I was able to run before descending into the Arish Mel, where my energy seemed to ebb away and for the first time I felt tired and exhausted!

The ascent to Flowers Barrow Hill Fort was gruelling, the path seemed to be trapped by the sun and there was no breeze whatsoever! However it was reassuring to see other competitors in similar difficulties! Once at the top it was down into the lovely Worbarrow Bay (11.36) where I met Maureen and Hilary. Even along the shore there was little or no breeze and it was becoming very hot. A short stop for extensive liquid refreshments before moving onto and over Gad cliff, into Kimmeridge by 12.18 having completed eighteen miles and beginning to experience a few leg cramps.

Decided to rest for five minutes at the checkpoint and drank at least two pints of liquid (unfortunately salt tablets were unavailable) before moving on. Any thought of a race had completely evaporated and all I wished to accomplish was completion of the course. I later learnt that a considerable number of runners dropped out at Kimmeridge and one was air lifted away due to heat exhaustion. I walked away from the stop and climbed the hill to the Folly, managed to run with intermittent walking to Egmont Point where Houns Tout could be seen projecting skywards! This hill was a killer; runners seemed to be stuck to the hillside. The temperature was unbelievably hot, the stops up the hill were numerous and the pace merely a crawl. Once at the top there was just the slightest zephyr of wind, a short pause and then down into Chapman's Pool 13.27. (Yet another runner dropped out.) Around Chapmans Pool where I took the remnants of the shore path and experienced several bouts of leg cramps while endeavouring to jump across rocks etc. and up to St Aldhelms Head, but fortunately I found the steps surprisingly easy. It was now 14.15 and very hot. Mentally St Aldhelms was my catalyst, having accomplished the distance to St Aldhelm's Head I knew I could make Swanage.

I gulped a teaspoonful of salt, and a Mars bar supplied by my able and welcome support team, Maureen and Hilary, more salt via a salt-water drink at the checkpoint. (More runners dropped out at this checkpoint) The cramp eased considerably and I was able to run/walk the rest of the way. Seacombe 14.43, Anvil Point 15.27 and finally Swanage 15.55. I was the 23rd (210-Starters) runner to arrive; apparently 74 competitors had dropped out. For reasons I do not understand it was enjoyable and certainly memorable. Apart from the wonderful scenery, the extreme heat, the lack of air, the liquid consumption etc. it was the other competitors that I remember, particularly the esprit/de/corps, the ability of the fell runners; running down steep hills at speed! Running down Houns Tout! And two runners having completed 29 miles were running around Anvil Point as if they were out for a Sunday club run! As for my shoes, they gave an outstanding performance; I didn't even have a blister!

1995 Great South Run -10 miles - 67mins/56secs.

1995-Total / year of training miles -1270

1996 I did not take part in any competitive running. (Most weekends visiting Maureen?)

I was on the final leg of a training session returning to Titchfield from the Meon Shore and running along the banks of the river Meon, about to pass an elderly lady who was out exercising her dogs when unexpectedly her dogs decided to form a pack and to have me for meat! Luckily they were small but they snapped at my legs causing a little blood, fortunately they did little harm. My first reaction was that of fury, yet again dogs out of control and not on leads etc. But the dear little "blue rinsed" lady was almost in a state of shock and could not have been more apologetic. *"They have never done that before!"*

1996-Total / year of training miles -935

1997 I ran the Great South (10 mile) run in 66mins and for the first time ran the 10K around the Lakes race held on Boxing Day. (41 mins/25secs)

1997-Total / year of training miles -1240

### THE LONDON MARATHON 1998

April 1998 at the age of sixty I ran my first marathon (London) which I completed in 3hours/15 or 17mins!

New Year's Day started the Stubbington Green way with a run through the muddy paths and bridle ways of Bere woods. Maureen and I drove to Bere wood where I ran and Maureen joined other ladies for a walk. Later we all gathered together for the customary mince pies and mulled wine.

I again helped as I had done for many years with the organisation of the Stubbington 10K road race, unloading and placement of barriers, building, setting up the start and finish scaffold, marshaling for the fun and main events, after which dismantling and packing away etc. all of which was an enjoyable experience.

In preparation for the London marathon I selected three races as part of my training programme, Eastliegh 10K -39mins/01secs, Portsmouth 1/2marathon -1hour/28mins/30secs and a 16mile Combe Gibbet race -2hour/20mins. These races were inclusive with the 3hour /15min -Bruce Tullow's marathon-training schedule.

The Combe Gibbet race was an unusual experience, although I had entered the paper work etc., I had done so on the advice of my running colleagues and had no idea of the distance, tentatively thinking it may be around six miles!

I joined my friends Mike Bell and Glen and Mike drove us to Overton, where we parked the car and the runners were bussed out to a remote hill with a gibbet at its summit! I did not carry a watch and of course there were no mile markers, thinking it was a short race I started to overtake runners I normally trailed! How things change, I was soon lumbering behind, pleading with the few marshals that I saw as to the remaining distance, at one stage after eight miles I was told there were a further eight! My body uttered a strong protest!

Marathon race day, 26th April started very early, we were out of bed by 4am and after washing, breakfasting etc. Maureen and I drove to Stubbington to board the coach to London, arriving at Blackheath by 8am. After final greasing up, stretching and handing my baggage in etc. I was ready for the 9.30 start. Maureen wished me well and made her way to the finish. I was very fortunate being placed in the blue start, apart from old timers there were various sports personalities and celebrities; I was in the starting line with Steve Cram! I set off at a 7min/mile pace that had only slightly slowed to 7min/15secs pace at 20 miles. There had been a cold wind on the heath and I started the race with a T-shirt and vest, by 9 miles it was hot and I discarded my T-shirt but regretted it later when it turned cold before fronting a very heavy rain squall. Although carpeted most competitors find the cobbles at Tower Bridge unsettling, disturbing the stride pattern etc. but for me I was totally unprepared for the welling up of emotion as I passed the Cutty Sark! Past the Tower for the second time and over the cobbles, approaching the 24 miles when I seized up, it seemed as if every muscle in my body was suffering cramp! Uncontrollably I veered into the side of the road and just before collapse a policeman caught me! I could hear the encouragement of the crowd to continue but the body was unwilling. I stood trying to regain my composure and relaxing muscles etc. when I saw a fellow Stubbington Green runner pass by. He was my inspiration and I left the arms of the policeman and re-entered the race with very painful legs and aching body! I slowly managed to overhaul my fellow club runner, John Reeve to complete the race.



At the end of the race I felt very chilled, the weather was still cold and wet and I was nearly in tears while waiting for the baggage handlers to search for my belongings. (Somehow they had been put in the wrong lorry!) I endeavoured to eat the cheese and tomato sandwiches given to me on race completion but due the excessive rain, water had filtered into the bag and the sandwiches were sodden. The changing marquee was more like a military field hospital, runners trying to relieve cramp, loosen up, stretch etc. before changing, most looked very cold and exhausted. I made contact with Maureen and we walked into St James's park for a snack in the cafe.

On route back to the coach pickup point we were pleased and heartened to see a champagne party being held in a local dwelling by a group of very happy runners and associates.

The coach had been organised by Stubbington Green and the arrangements were first class, the coach was at the right place on time and we had a very pleasant journey home. Eventually to bed at 1145 after a very exhausting but rewarding day.

1998-Total / year of training miles -1625

1999 The customary start to the New Year with a run in Bere woods, followed by mince pies and mulled wine and later in the month again marshaling at the Stubbington 10K race.

Eastleigh 10K (38mins/58secs) where I came second in my age category, was the only road race I took part in that year, the main event being the Dorset Duddle.

Better off the second time around? A second attempt at the Dorset Coastal footpath run/race.

The Duddle, starting at Weymouth and finishing at Swanage. A route in excess of 30 miles and a 10,000ft rise and fall along a coastal path of outstanding natural beauty.

Maureen dropped me off at the Weymouth Clock Tower 20 minutes before the start and I collected my checkpoint record card, the weather was dull with a chill fresh easterly wind. It was my intention to have a revised plan of campaign to run the first half of the race more slowly than previously, in order to have a little more strength for the latter stages.

An hour into the race and the sunshine and wind strength had increased, I had passed Osmington and Ringstead and was climbing the White Nothe headland, ran on and into Lulworth, where I rendezvoused with Maureen and felt still full of running after 1¾ hours. By this time the wind had increased to fresh and the long climb up Bindon Hill against the wind was energy sapping. Eventually down into Worbarrow Bay and on to Kimmeridge, 17½ miles in 3 hours. By now the legs were showing signs of cramping, so an additional intake of fluid supplied by Maureen and a welcome cup of tea organised by the race officials.

The endurance part of the run really starts from Kimmeridge and although I was ahead of the previous schedule and had drunk considerable amounts of Isotonic liquid my legs were feeling very cramp sensitive. I was probably paying for a rather boisterous run down the hill into Lulworth full of myself, and past all the holidaymakers! The next hill on the course was Houns Tout, as with the previous run, runners were finding it very hard going, steep stone steps down the other side then two more steep climbs before reaching St. Aldhelm's Head.

Unfortunately at the last hill I was experiencing very considerable leg cramps causing great difficulty when trying to climb steps straight legged. At this stage 23 miles, I was feeling depressed and could have easily given up, but unknown to me my niece and her husband (Martin & Sarah Brown) were there to wish me well, with their encouragement I continued onto Seacombe Cliffs and Anvil Point both walking and jogging between bouts of cramp.

It was a joy to turn out of the wind which was now strong and run down into Swanage, through the town I was humbled with a bout of cramp, which now reduced me to walking past the holidaymakers! Eventually arrived after 5 hours and 50 minutes to be greeted by Maureen and companions, I had come 17<sup>th</sup> out of 163 starters and had finished within my target of six hours, one hour better than the last time.

1999-Total / year of training miles -1475

Apart from my regular club activities/runs/marshaling etc. the year 2000 was totally dominated by the South West Coast Path adventure. 630 miles in twenty-two & a half days! See separate article, The South West Coastal Path- My Way.

2000-Total / year of training miles -2140

Due to my continued regular weekend visits to Maureen, who lived in Poole I did not participate in any road races during 2001/2, the exception being the Boxing Day around the Poole Park Lakes 10K race. On both occasions I was first in my age category with times of 42 & 43mins. I did continue to marshal and assist with the Stubbington 10K race, plus an "x" country run organised by Stubbington Green running club at the Hamble country park.

2002 started in the usual way with a run through Bere wood on New Year's Day, assisting with the 10K race and for something a little different, running in the Hamble cross- country race. Both events were extremely muddy and necessitated vigorous washing in local streams or ponds after the event!

2001-Total / year of training miles -1400

2002-Total / year of training miles -1205

The following year was to be my 65th birthday. To mark the occasion I was hoping to run my second London marathon.

### THE LONDON MARATHON 2003

Having run the London Marathon in 1998 and coming 23<sup>rd</sup> in my age group in the over sixties it was tempting to try and better the result when I was 65. I had sent in a private entry but was turned down, however my running club Stubbington Green had a number of club entries and the committee nominated me as a representative.

Although at the time I was unsure of an entry my training started after Christmas 2002, in fact on Boxing Day when I entered the around the lakes race in Poole park. It was a cold and windy day and my legs felt very heavy [all that Christmas tuck] but I won in my age group, the over sixties in 41 minutes, and retained the previous year's winning of the event, a good start.

For reasons best known to me, I chose Bruce Tullow's sub 3hr training schedule, which I edited to suit my ageing ability, it did contain a good mix of speed and endurance work. The majority of long distance runs were scheduled for Saturday, this suited me fine as I usually stayed with my partner Maureen at Poole during the weekend and was therefore able to run along the Poole and Bournemouth sea fronts. I did nine runs over 15 miles the longest being 22-23 miles.

I ran from Wynford road [near to St Aldhelms church- Parkstone] to Luscombe, Shore road, along the promenade to Bournemouth, Boscombe pier, Southbourne, to the Hungry Hiker café at Hengistbury Head. Back along the sea front to Shore road, then along the Sandbanks peninsular to the ferry and then back via Luscombe and Compton road.

I was very fortunate with the weather during the 3-4 months of training, no extremes, for the time of year it was relatively dry and warm. During the last week of training I felt very buoyant and ran more miles than the schedule required and did not take sufficient rest - A silly mistake!

However I felt in good physical shape.

Entering the London Marathon and registering is I think a palaver, however one of the club members travelling to London kindly registered for me and I arranged a lift for the big day with the Portsmouth Joggers.

The day before the race, Maureen and I drove from Poole to Titchfield. We unpacked and I laid out my race gear ready for the next morning. Maureen made and we ate tuna pasta before we set all the alarm clocks plus the telephone ready for the early morning start. Just after dark I went to bed to relax and if possible to sleep?

At 0345 on the day of the race 13<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2003, all the clocks and the telephone exploded with their various audible alarms; we reluctantly dragged ourselves out of bed.

After my usual breakfast of muesli, shaving, greasing feet etc. and changing into my Stubbington Green running outfit we were ready to leave. We drove to Wallington to the east of Fareham to await the Portsmouth Joggers coach.

I parked the car in the village hall parking area and we joined a half a dozen others to board a 21-seater coach. The coach left at 5 o'clock and on the way we picked up various runners as we passed through Denmead etc. on route to Blackheath. As we approached London the race competitors started to eat their respective high calorie foods and I went for my intended bananas, I looked deep into my bag, they were not there! I had left them behind - was this a bad omen?

We encountered the usual traffic congestion as we entered the starting zone and the competitors were dropped of near a little chapel on the green.

I headed straight for the portable toilets and relief after which I re-joined Maureen in order to make the final preparations for the race. I applied more Vaseline to critical parts of the body and then did my usual pre-run stretches. I left my bag at the appropriate lorry and then decided to have one last visit to the toilet. The toilet queues were very long and by 0930 I had hardly moved. A decision had to be made; and it was, I peed behind the Portaloo. It was now becoming late for the start, so after goodbyes to Maureen I rushed off to join the race. Road barriers separated the runners from the spectators and I could not find a space. I became anxious but eventually found a gap and joined the queue. Mingling amongst the competitors I noticed that most of the race start numbers were in the 5 and 6's and mine was 4. [I considered that it should have been 3]. I tried to move further towards the front but in such a large crowd (10, 0000) it was virtually impossible.

I knew that my time would be measured from the moment I crossed the starting line, so I decided to relax and watched 1,000's start in front of me. However once into the race the runners were slowly jogging, walking, stopping, I very quickly became disillusioned. When I went past the first mile marker in over 20 minutes I knew that my target time of 3 1/2 hours had all but disappeared.

It was a nice warm sunny day with a light to moderate wind, so I decided to enjoy the atmosphere and take any opportunity that came my way to overtake and get a little nearer the front. I had accepted that I would be outside my anticipated time but was surprised when my legs started to feel heavy after only 5 miles. So much for my training schedule of 771 miles in 16 weeks. I continued my steady plod around the Cutty Sark and further onto Tower Bridge where I actually took the opportunity to admire its unusual structure. (We had recently seen a television documentary discussing various aspects of the bridge).

Between the 13 and 14-mile markers I could see some of the elite runners nearing their 22-mile mark as I entered into the outskirts of the new Dockland area and then around, across the pain inducing cobbles at Tower Bridge and on past the position where I had a cramp seizure 5 years earlier and into the underpass.

By this stage I felt very tired and stiff legged, it was physically and mentally difficult to complete the remainder of the course. Luckily I saw Maureen about a mile from the finish and she gave me a wave and a cheer, which lifted my spirits and enabled me to extend my gait and increase the pace into the Mall and across the finishing line.



After I stopped it was very difficult to stand upright let alone walk at any reasonable pace, two marshals kindly asked if I needed assistance and of course I said no. The most painful experience of the whole event was walking to collect the medal and goodies bag and then further to the lorry for my clothes bag.

I met Maureen again at the repatriation area and from my goody bag gulped down isotonic drink, chocolate etc. in a vain attempt to increase my energy levels and well-being before leaving her and going into the changing marquee. When I re-joined her I had excruciating stomach cramps and headed for the nearest toilet. Unfortunately they were few in number and oversubscribed. I joined the queue and eventually entered the portaloo only to find no toilet paper and therefore decided against its use. After relaxing, drinking copious amounts of fresh water and releasing various mixtures of methane gas the pain slowly subsided.

After we established the Portsmouth joggers meeting area we went into St James Park and found a seat where close by were a team from St Johns ambulance who were busy massaging tired legs and limbs.

By this time I was able to sit in the sun and relax, watching ducklings and moorhens playing in and around the daffodils that were planted at the lake edge.

At 4 o'clock we joined Portsmouth joggers and walked through the park to Admiralty Arch, our collecting point for the coach. The organisers had made a mistake, coaches were not allowed in that area. After what seemed an eternity we were marched off into the city to join the coach. We sat on the coach for a while and passenger numbers were checked. It was hot and we were tired, two people were missing and unaccounted for but eventually we were away into the madness of the city traffic. The driver decided to take the quickest route out of the city via side roads!

After delivering runners back to the Denmead area the driver took yet another short cut! This time over Portsdown Hill and around Wickham in order to arrive at Wallington! (He must have been trying to earn double time?)

We drove back to Titchfield by 2010, followed by a shower and a meal, eventually to bed by 1200 o'clock after what was a long and enjoyable day.

My official time was exactly as I recorded on my own watch 3hr 41mins, finishing position 5412 and 11<sup>th</sup> in my age group. IF ONLY!!

The running year was completed participating in the 10K around the Lakes on Boxing Day, 43mins 56secs.  
2003-Total / year of training miles -1600

2003, I had moved from Titchfield to Poole, moving into a new house on the 23rd October and as a consequence during 2004 I only ran in order to keep generally fit but I did assist with the Subbington 10K at the beginning of the year ( Approximately 1000 entrants). Unfortunately my last duty with the club was marred by a regrettable incident. Together with several other marshals I helped to operate the finishing gates, three in all, an established team had done it very successfully for many years. During a very busy period when the bulk of the runners were beginning to finish a wheelchair entrant appeared. He had decided to finish at full speed! The funnels started only a few feet behind the finish, we rapidly switched an inner tape for his exit. Once in the funnel he could not slowdown sufficiently before being entangled with the other runners! He lost control and hit the kerb, the chair with him inside careered to a stop on its side. We rushed to his assistance; he was badly shaken with several cuts and bruises. An ambulance was summoned and in the meantime we had to contend with many of the 1000 runners finishing. I later enquired as to the health of the fellow but apart from the fact he was only checked over at the hospital not a lot was known. However it did put into question the need for extra resources if wheelchair entrants were to be allowed entry to the road race in future years!

2004-Total / year of training miles -707

One of the new occupants in a house obliquely opposite us in Churchfield crescent, Mr Rex Bale had recently joined Poole Runners and having seen me out running suggested that I might benefit and enjoy the Poole Running club. On the 6th April 2005 we drove to Broadstone and I was introduced to the club.

At the age of 67 a whole new era of running/racing was about to unfold!

Poole runners as a clubhouse use a room in the Broadstone Sports centre and meetings are held on Wednesday nights. During the summer months runs from the centre will take us along disused railway tracks, footpaths, lanes, etc. across Upton / Canford heath or out into the countryside, in the winter they would obviously use the local roads. However during the summer in addition to the off road Sunday morning run there is a social run on a Friday night. These are always an off road run and gave me the opportunity to explore parts of Dorset that were new to me: -Wareham Forest, Hurn, Holt, Manington, Cranborne to name but a few and again all the official road races were a new experience.

1st June 2005. I entered my first Poole Festival of Running and came 1st in my age category running the 10k in 42mins/30secs. The Poole Festival of Running is Dorset's largest running event and is principally organised by Poole Runners. There are 8 races in all catering for boys and girls in various age bands, plus 5 and 10k races for seniors. I entered the 10k race again in 2006 and again came 1st in my age category in 42minutes -50secs. In subsequent years I have helped with the organisation principally by marshalling.

7th July 2005. I drove to the Upper Hamble Country Park in order to take part in the Stubbington Green's 20th anniversary. It was good to see numerous old friends and racing companions and it was not long before most of us were off for a run. I tagged along but soon started to waver! I encountered the main party arriving at the bank of the Hamble River and plunging into the swirling, brackish water and swimming to the other bank! They then continued on with their run. Fortunately I was not alone in my fearfulness and was able to join a smaller group off less adventurous runners.

When we had all finish (and dried off) we were invited to a Barbeque organised mainly by the ladies. I was made to feel very welcome and I had the time and opportunity to reminisce with my many friends.

Later in the year I raced the Round the Lakes 10K - 42mins/8secs, [where I regained the 1st place in the over 60 age group] and in the summer time trials held at Upton country park and the Canford Arena. In all the events I was first in my age group 65-70.

2005-Total / year of training miles -870



In 2006 I participated in nine road races, in the process won the club championship and the Dorset Road Race League - (male vet 65) titles and again first in the winter and summer series. (But I only came 2nd in the Boxing Day -10k race -42mins/40secs in the over 60's - now ancient at 68)

2006-Total / year of training miles -905

2007 I ran a plethora of twelve road races to again win the Dorset Road Race Championships and the winter/summer series!

2007-Total / year of training miles -978

2008 was a very disappointing year, on new year's eve I was hit with the Norwalk virus which laid me low for several weeks and as a consequence I was unable to compete in the early Dorset Championship Races and towards the end of the year I suffered a very heavy cold, plus I pulled a ham-string! Therefore I was unable to complete sufficient races to qualify for the Dorset Road Race League! I had taken part in six qualifying events and had won all in my age category; I only needed to finish in two additional races!

However I did manage to win the club championship in my age category and set a new course record at the Portland 10 mile race in 74minutes 47 seconds. (My best 10mile time 2008 - 74 minutes 14seconds)

2008-Total / year of training miles -788

## PORTLAND 2008 - 9

The Portland 10mile-road race is considered by most runners to be demanding! The Isle of Portland has its own microclimate and is usually very hot, windy, or wet and windy! The course itself is undulating and starts with a small lap of 3.5miles followed by a 6.5 mile loop that takes the runner down the scenic route to the light house at the Bill of Portland and then the long exhausting climb to the finish. I have participated in the race on five occasions and managed to achieve two notable results. In my seventy- first year (2008) I established a new course record and in 2009 I won the British Masters Athletics Federation Ten-mile road race championship! Both obviously in my age group.

I left Poole by car in pouring rain and strong winds for the 2008 road race and on arrival at Portland the rain had begun to ease! On completion I was told that I had won my age category and I later learnt that I had smashed the course record by over six and half minutes! The record had stood for ten years! The following year I secretly tried to break my own record, unfortunately the weather was very hot and on the return leg from the Bill (after approximately eight miles having run at a good pace, I paid the price) I so to speak “hit the wall”! My head seemed unbearably hot and although at the drink station I threw cups of water over my head I seemed unable to loose heat! I succumbed to the situation on three occasions and walked for short spells! No record that year.

Later in the year the Masters were being held in Portland using the ten-mile circuit and Poole Running Club of which I am a member was encouraging participation. I was not interested, I intended to reduce my competitive activities and after my experience earlier in the year considered that I had run my last Portland ten-mile! Rex Bale the club secretary, friend and neighbour quietly coerced me into entering the championships! On the day he drove me and two other club members (Geoff Scott and Alwyn Dominey) to Portland .The weather other than being windy and a little cool was not inclement. After a cup of tea and several trips to the toilet I changed into my running shoes and vest ready for the off. Rex saw and indicated to me the likely winner of the over seventies!



Armed with this knowledge I started the race and after about four miles could see the relevant gentleman well ahead running in a relaxed style! Whereas I felt rather ragged! However after a further mile or so I was closer and to my dismay realised he was running with another seventy plus entry, two to beat! At the lighthouse I was right behind and on the climb back decided to overtake them and increase my pace! Although I dropped one, the favourite stayed close behind apparently undaunted. I then slowed down to allow him to take the lead, which he did, reluctantly I think. I stopped at the last drink station and gulped a mouthful of water, by which time my adversary had gained ten or so metres- yet another effort was required to catch him, which I did. We then ran together with the pace slowly increasing! Both of us were obviously tired but determined. At about five to six hundred metres from the finish I kicked for the line expecting to hear his familiar footsteps

following me! But no, I knew I could not slow and tried with every ounce of energy I could summon to continue my increase of pace!

**At the finishing line I had a twenty two-second advantage and therefore won the “gold medal” for the over seventies British Masters Athletics Federation Ten-mile Road Race Championship, I was exhausted but obviously delighted. (Time 75minutes - 13 seconds)**



2009 Fortunately this year my running was not affected by injury or illness and once again I was able to win the Dorset Road Race League now in the over 70's category plus the Poole Runners Club Championship in my age group and overall I finished 17th. I was triumphant in the Upton House series of 3.5 mile races and the Dorset Road Race League, winning again in my age category, coming 1st in all of my qualifying races: -Rotary Quarter Marathon, Purbeck 10K, Portland 10 Mile, Sturminster Newton Half Marathon, Littledown 5 Mile, Weymouth 10 Mile, Wimborne 10 Mile, Maiden Castle and the Boscome 10K. I was particularly pleased to clock 6mins-13secs for the club's official mile (71years of age) but the icing on the cake must be winning the gold medal at the British Masters Athletics Federation Ten-mile Road Race Championship, held at Portland.

Later I learnt that I was ranked in the U.K. for my age group (70-I was 71) by the United Kingdom Athletics for the year 2009 as: -

5 Kilometers -8th. 5 Mile - 4th (2008, 3rd). 10 Kilometers -10th. 10 Mile - 4th. Half Marathon - 6th.

2009-Total / year of training miles -937

2010-Total / year of training miles -635

2011-Total / year of training miles -544

2012-Total / year of training miles -1020

2013-Total / year of training miles - 419

2014-Total / year of training miles - 535



#### *Marshalling*

Stubbington Green -1994/5/6 /7/8/9/2000/1/2/3/4

Broadstone ¼ Marathon - 2009/10/11/12/13/14/15

Boscome 5K - 2009/10/11/12/13/14/15

Upton House 5K -2011/12/13/14/15

Poole Festival of Running - 2009/10/11/12/13/14/15

During mid-November, 2014 I had difficulty completing my 3 mile circuits around the Poole park lakes due to a painful left knee, through December I was only running once fortnightly and at the end of the year I decided to have a complete rest! My next attempt (1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 - April fools day!) was with the Poole Runners from Broadstone when again after only a short distance the knee felt insecure and painful.

Eventually I consulted the doctor (17<sup>th</sup> April, 2015), X-ray at Poole hospital (7<sup>th</sup> May) revisiting the doctor (18<sup>th</sup> May), I was informed that my left knee joint had the early signs of arthritis and that I should not run for at least 6 to 9 months! In the interests of maintaining my joints and not worsening the situation I decided to quit running, I had been running for approximately 29 years

*Over twenty-five years of competitive*



***RUNNING***