

The Bath Plug

Issue 1487 07 Nov 2019



Tom Hutchison in his England Masters vest at the Yorkshire Marathon

In the Plug this week: We missed out on the XC, but there's still three race reports from over the last few weeks for you in the Plug: Tom Hutchison gives an in-depth account of his England Masters performance at the Yorkshire Marathon, Cath Dale rounds up the TBAC experiences at the OMM in Scotland, and closer to home Chris Moore's report from the classic AVR race Over the Hills.

Plus, note XC entries for Tri-Counties, SW Champs, and Gloucester League fixtures, plus indoor track season starts up soon - with entries for the SW Indoor Champs.

Tom Davies (Plug Editor)

Yorkshire Marathon

By Tom Hutchison

I came to York by train to overnight with my sister. I had trained for three months and the final weeks of preparation had gone well. I had completed Tuesday track sessions and one Sunday cross country race with a good result. I generally felt fit, my core certainly felt stronger. I was not injured!

My proper England vest had arrived as well as spare tops. I bought new shoes: Nike 4% egged on by my kids and by the thought of doing everything I could for a result in my first England Masters marathon.

On race day I woke before 6. It was dark outside but there was no sound of rain. I got into running shorts and vest under a warm hoody. I made coffee and a big bowl of porridge, adding fruit and started breakfast. Porridge has always served me well for marathons and caffeine is a great help waking up the whole body. Son Neil and daughter Jo appeared in running gear. They were planning to run 16 miles from about 6am and then come and support me. We discussed my race to come. I was confident I had a plan that was both strong and flexible: run with my heart rate under 147 and try to finish strong.

At about 7.30 I tip-toed out of the front door in the grey dawn light. There was a mile to walk to the university and halfway my wristwatch beeped. 'Battery 4%' was flashing on my wrist. "I have just charged it" I thought. "What the Hell!" My whole pacing strategy was gone. I walked on, trying to stay calm. "I can be fine without it. I might trust my instincts. Could I?" Everything I had worked 3 months for seemed imperilled. Family supporters were running somewhere in the city. Maybe I could borrow a watch. Thank goodness I had my phone. I called. Answerphone only.

I found my way to the England Athletic tent and picked up the Vet 65 badge to pin to my back. Then there was milling around for the group photographs. There were 100 or more older men and women looking very fit in their England matching vests and all the latest go faster shoes.

Jo called me. They would come across with a spare watch. We met out near the start and walked to the bag drop using a portable battery to recharge my watch. It was up to 40% by the time we were checked in and I decided to use the watch I knew.

I lined up in pen one in good time. The minutes before the race start are always special. There is heat from the bodies all round, lots of fidgeting and adjusting of clothes and kit and very little conversation as everyone thinks about the hours to come.

Off we went at 9.30. I was across the timing mat in five seconds and then gradually accelerated with the human flow down the hill out of the university. I was concentrating on my footing and the chance of tripping on tired tarmac, cobbles or people's feet. We turned into York for the obligatory tour of a stretch of city wall. The first kilometre beeped on my wrist: 4 minutes and 6 seconds and heart rate 129. This was pretty fast but it had been downhill. The next kilometre up to York Minster was flat and slower (4:20), by the third I had settled down properly (4:34), with 141 from the blood pump. This was close to the

pace I hoped for and my target effort of 147 beats per minute. At 5k I was passing my sister's house and the whole family were waving me past.

And so out into the country. I had started near the front and people overtook me as everyone settled into their pace. I could feel the temptation to follow, but any time the heart rate nudged 146 I eased off and let people go. Over my shoulder there was a crowd around a man with a flag, which read '3 Hours.' I let them sail on past. I was not racing anyone but my own physiology. Concentrating on my posture and body movements. Feeling the hardness of my new shoes under the balls of my feet.

I glimpsed one male Vet 65 way ahead of me as I approached the Minster but now saw no more 65s. The first 5k passed in 22 minutes and the second and third and fourth in about 23 minutes each. I accepted these as the best that could be done. I got to half way in 97 minutes: Not nearly as fast as my time in Manchester earlier in the year but it would still take me home inside 3:15. This had been my worst-case assumption based on Marathon pace efforts in training.

Now the work might begin I thought, wondering how the second half would unfold. The course turned out onto an A road which we went up and back. It was getting gusty, but all around me were familiar runners who had been travelling about my speed. The 3:15 pace group was noisy behind for a while then gradually came past and I let it go. Then they settled about 30m in front.

There was more noise and there was a second 3.15 pace flag carrier. I settled behind him until 25k when suddenly my watch face turned dark. My battery had emptied. I felt as if my lifeline had gone. What now? I decided I might as well cruise behind the 3.15 flagman hoping for the minimum of windshield. I was Eliud Kipchoge and this was my pacer! My shoes were really hurting the balls of my feet. It was as if I was running barefoot on very hard sand. The sock and laces were tight round my forefeet and they were beginning to tingle. My fault for running in new socks and shoes. If this was the 4% bounce I was not enjoying it.

And so we ran about 6k up the A166 towards yet another U turn back. They were really getting value out of this road closure I thought. Neil and Jo were on the other side of the road. I yelled and pointed at my watch. What a crew I had! So round the bollard and back up the road. I abandoned one Garmin and strapped on another. This was now 29k; 13 to go. The 3.15 pacer had got ahead and I sped up to re-join the group while my watch settled down. Maybe that was my mistake and the time I tore through my lactate ceiling.

Within a kilometre I was finding it hard to keep up with them and the new watch was giving heart rate readings in the 160s. Was it right? Surely not! I had to ease back whatever and let the Pacer go. The 5k to 30k was 23.42. However the 5k to 35k was 27.06 and it really felt like it. It was as if all my form and posture and spring had gone. My wonderful kilometres had become a minute slower each. My feet hurt, the runners were spread out and we were following endless straight country roads with winds gusting across fields. I searched for positives. 'Not seen any vet 65s' and then got passed by a gnarly vet 70. There at least was someone to try to hang onto and he probably felt as bad as me. My right hamstring grumbled, it was about to cramp. 'Please no, don't let this all end in a mass of leg spasms'.

The 5k to 40 k was also 27 minutes and the cramp hovered between a threat and a punishment all the way to the end. The last kilometre was back up the hill we had started down. I grimly held on to a runner in bright yellow and it was all over in 3:25.20. A full 14 minutes slower than my Manchester time of the previous May.

Every muscle had stiffened up. The bag drop was about 800 metres from the finish but it seemed like miles. I had just enough energy to message so my support crew could find me and soon I was supported on either arm. They were looking up results. I was second V65. I could barely believe it. The only V65 man in front of me had run 3.12 so there was no way I could ever have caught him. The man behind me clocked 3.28. So it wasn't a disaster after all. And this race was the qualifier for the 2020 Masters marathon. I could do it all over again in a year's time. Yippee! By the time I got onto the sofa with a mug of sugary tea I was a tired but happier boy.

The English team beat the Celtic team but massively outnumbered them. It's a nice idea and opportunity and I can recommend it to all the club vets. Maybe in future years they will be able to make an actual fairer international competition out of it. I would love to go head to head with some European Masters.

52nd Original Mountain Marathon - 26/27 Oct

By Cath Dale

The 52nd Original Mountain Marathon (OMM), Clyde Muirshield Regional Park, Largs, Scotland. 26-27 October 2019

Contrary to its name, a Mountain Marathon is a form of fell running, over two days, with an overnight camp, and with a strong orienteering element. Competitors usually participate in teams of two, and have to carry their own food and tent. It's a test of your navigation (how efficiently you find the checkpoints), your fitness (how quickly you travel between the checkpoints) and your mountain craft (being self-sufficient in the mountains and at overnight camp).

You can choose a 'time trial' linear course – fastest round a set number of checkpoints; or a points-based 'Score' course – most points accrued in a set time. This year the OMM was located west of Glasgow in the notorious Clyde Muirshield Park. TBAC sported 3 teams: Phillipa & Freya Spruit, Ilana Wigfield & me opted for the Long Score (7hrs Day 1, 6 hrs Day 2); while Tom Hutch & his daughter, Jo, on her inaugural OMM, chose the Short Score (5/4 hrs).

OMM vital statistics for Team Wigfield/Dale

Competition area: 200km² of peat bogs, tussocks, reeds, heather, invisible ditches

Days of 'running' – 2

Hours on course/day – 6.3/5

Distance travelled/day - 23km/16km

Average speed - 3-4km/hr
Actual km run - 2-3/day
Paths/tracks – virtually zero
Featureless hills – many
Compass bearings used – numerous
Face plants – plenty
Real people encountered - zero
Average backpack weight - 7kg
Weight of tent - 1500g
Number of tent pegs packed – 0
Sense of humour failures – 2
Bagpipe wake-up calls -1
Hours holed up in small tent – 11 (+1 GMT)
Hours without a wee due to rain & being late for start – 13
Ankle sprains – 5
Filter bottles lost - 1
Number of times thought ‘Why am I doing this?’ – constant
Overall position/points – irrelevant
Type of fun had – 2
% likelihood of doing it again - 100 (well, maybe not in Largs!)

Thanks to partner, Ilana, for hauling me out of ditches; massive well done to Freya, 17, stoic and resilient on her first MM, and to the ever positive, practical Phillippa, who kept the waning team spirit alive on Day 2!



Over the Hills

By [Chris Moore](#)

This is my annual home town race and since living in Bradford on Avon I often get to train on the trails used for this race. Having run the route a week before, I was not totally surprised to hear that the river crossing (my highlight of the race), was cancelled. Given the height of the water I am sure several runners would have been washed away!

The race started very fast and we were soon on the slippery, muddy trails. Trail shoes providing some grip but only just enough to stay upright at full pace. Once the race settled

down I was able to work my way past several others who had started too ambitiously. I was joined in my endeavour by another runner, 'leggings man'. We pushed on, and on the fast decent and then final climb I thought I had done enough to drop him. However seemingly from nowhere he managed to appear on my shoulder in the final mile and blast to the finish line. After several exchanges of the lead between us, I didn't have enough in the final sprint to the line. However, I did end up with a top 10 placing, a top 3 finish still out of reach with the prize being a very tempting fruit cake. There were lots of great runs from TBAC, with James Donald leading the men home and Lizzie Wraith leading the ladies.

As always a well organised race, great marshalling and a testing course for a Sunday run.



Cross-country

By James Donald / Mark Thomas

Gloucester League

[More info here.](#)

14/12/19 (Saturday): Old Down Country Park

16/02/20 (Sunday): Cheltenham

Reserve date: Sunday 1/3/20

Tri-Counties Cross-Country Championships

Sunday 1st December 2019 at Bath University.

This incorporates the Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire County Championships.

Sign up [here](#).

SW Cross Country Champs

To enter the 2020 event on 5th January 2020 please go to the following [link](#) where all details are shown.

English Nationals (22nd Feb, Wollaton Park, Nottingham)

Indoors Fixtures

By Di Viles

Entries for **Day 1 of the SW Indoor T&F Championships** (involving several of the U13/U15/U17 events) are now open [here](#).

Closing Date for entries is Nov 21st, but note that for some events, especially the long jump, entries are likely to fill up well in advance of that.

Results

Over The Hills 03 Nov 19

1	Michael Towler (AVR)	0:45:23
6	James Donald	0:48:04
10	Christopher Moore	0:49:11
16	Barry Awan	0:51:22
23	James Camp	0:52:09
24	Lizzie Wraith	0:52:33
30	Niall Urquhart	0:54:26
32	Nick Parry	0:55:15
53	Brett Raynes	1:00:02
76	Debbie Heywood	1:02:23
84	John Mitchard	1:03:03
92	Claire Forster	1:03:48
101	Ilana Wigfield	1:04:56
107	Nigel Osborne	1:05:17
129	Sevim Sangwell	1:07:38
148	Claire Riou	1:09:15
149	Alison Vuagniaux	1:09:16
160	Lauren Jauss	1:10:33
180	Lisa Bennett	1:12:12
189	Katie Robinson	1:13:04
242	Sue Brigden	1:21:32
283	Andy Reid	1:26:16

Parkrun – 02 Nov 19

Bury St Edmunds parkrun

166 Marcus FIELD-RAYNER 00:35:17

Eastville parkrun

65 Leah DEVERICK (10F) 00:24:42

Centennial parkrun

33 Jo THOMPSON (2F) 00:21:55

63 Mike THOMPSON 00:23:43

Somerdale Pavilion parkrun

3 Gary HUGHES 00:21:11

parkrun Zamek w Malborku

38 Michael STANLEY 00:35:33

The Old Showfield parkrun

82 Nicola CRACKNELL (33F) 00:42:41

The Bath Plug is the weekly magazine of Team Bath AC. Copy and comment for publication, questions and corrections to the editor at plugeditor@teambathac.org. Copy to the editor by Wednesday 18.00 for inclusion. Available online at teambathac.org.

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