



Running Commentary

2021 Edition

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www.hooknortonharriers.org.uk

2020-2021 — Two very unique years for the Harriers

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2020 started much like any other for the Harriers with cross country season seeing a fantastic result for the women's team, cementing a solid 7th in Division 2 after their promotion from Division 3 the previous season. The men's team had a tough season finishing 9th in Division 2 and dropping to Division 3 with plans to come back bigger and stronger for the 2020-2021 season.

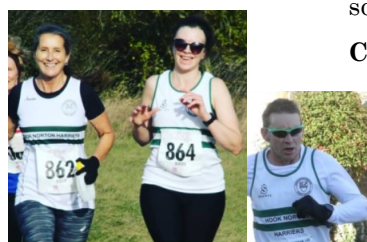
Then the elephant COVID, not Nelly, arrived and how things changed. For the rest of 2020 we adapted to a new way of life unlike what any of us had previously experienced. We had to find new ways to do the things we loved, with the people we loved. Lock-down bingo, Zoom monthly meetings and home schooling became part and parcel of our lives and running was the relief and freedom that many of us found comfort in. All the Harriers supported each other through this time which I know helped myself and many other members.

We've had a wedding, welcomed new babies, and new members still despite all of this and as 2020 blurred into 2021 we began to see more and more elements of our day to day lives and running lives return to normal, club nights returned and races started to reappear. Seeing so many Harriers coming together to support the 2021 Hooky 6 and Christmas Canter felt like a much overdue reunion of sorts.

With life being cyclical so is this report. At the time of writing our women's cross country team are sitting 3rd in Division 2 pushing hard for promotion again a huge well done to those who have participated. Our men's team sit 6th in Division 3 amongst some fierce competition, with one round to go it's all to play for!

Conata perficio – I carry through what I attempt

Steve Frame, Chair



Club Races for 2022—please email results@hooknortonharriers.org.uk

Not the Roman IX	Ilmington Tempo 10k - 5 race Series	
Bramley 20/10	Bourton 10k	Banbury 15
Chedworth 10	Motavation Series	Silverstone 10k
Oxford Town and Gown	Tysoe Windmill 10k	Chiltern Chase 10k
Banbury 5	Kingham 10k	Hornton 6
Headington 5	Witney 10	Winchcombe Hill Climb 10k
Woodstock 12	Eynsham 10k	Andy Reading 10k
Any UKA certified Half Marathon or Marathon		

Club Handicap System—run six races from this list in 2022 to qualify—two under 10 miles and two at 10 miles or over, plus any two others (incl. Motavation). 10 bonus points for every extra club race you do—this can make all the difference to who wins!

Centurion “One Community” 100 Mile Events by Graeme Hackland

Virtual Races became important when they were all we had!

The Covid pandemic affected almost every person on the planet's life in one way or another. There is still so much that is not known about this disease (why are some people asymptomatic whilst others have life changing long Covid symptoms and of course far too many people have died from this awful disease).

Like most people, I found lockdown hard. I was lucky that I had my work to keep me busy and distracted—but there was always the worry about what Covid would do to an overweight asthmatic if it got me.

Running, as always, was my saviour! I relished the time out running—during the once a day government mandated time for exercise and later when we were allowed out more. What I really missed though, was racing!! I love racing, even although I tend to be near the back of every race I do - nothing feels quite the same as crossing a finish line!

I've never really done virtual races - it felt like buying a medal—but in the lockdown(s) - virtual races were all we had. Some I signed up for just to support the race organiser (hoping they wouldn't go out of business—e.g. I supported Enigma Running with loads of 5k/10k virtual races); some I signed up for because I liked the medal (Rasselbock Seven Seas Challenge was a particularly good medal—as was the Conqueror Challenges LEJOG medal).

However it was the Centurion “One Community” virtual races that really caught my attention—I could earn a 100 mile buckle over the course of a week—that should be doable, right! Over a whole week! Then I realised I was doing 35 or less miles a week when I signed up to the first one in May 2020—on Day 1 I did a marathon, Day 2 a half marathon, then double run days and finally finished it with a half marathon to earn my first 100 mile buckle in 5 days, 4 hours and 32 minutes

Centurion decided to hold the “One Community” event again in November and I seemed to forget how tough it was in May, so signed up again with the aim of running it quicker and doing more marathons—so the first two days were marathons and the last day was a 20 miler—this time I earned the buckle in 3 days, 7 hours and 45 mins

2021 rolled around and although racing started up again, I didn't sign up for too much at the start of the year, waiting to see if the various Covid Protocols race organisers were putting in place would allow me to feel comfortable enough to “return to normal”. Yet again Centurion decided to put on their “One Community” event in April 2021 and inexplicably I decided I wanted a 3rd 100 mile buckle but I wanted to really push myself and go for 100km (62.2 miles) on Day 1 and the remaining 37.88 miles on Day 2. It didn't quite go to plan!! The evening of the 6th April was SO cold that I eventually ground to a halt at 57.1 miles (I just couldn't face another 5 miles—which would have taken 2 hours or more). I managed 30 miles the following day and had to finish the final half marathon on the 8th April to give me a lapsed time result of 2days 1hr 43 mins—just over the 48 hours I had targeted.

Without question I would not have finished these three 100 mile virtual races without all the support I received from friends and family. So many Harriers cheered me on, supported me in so many ways and especially on the third one—ran with me to keep me going (I think I was only on my own for 3 hours in total over those 2days, 1hour and 43 mins)!

IF I do 100 miles again, it would need to be an in-person race and sub 28 hours—never say never!



The effects of Long Covid and a trip to Eindhoven by Nell Darby

As some Harriers may know, in March 2020, I contracted the first of what is now three bouts of COVID. Although this first dose was the least serious in terms of symptoms, it left me with Long COVID, which I am still struggling with nearly two years later. My running is considerably slower and shorter thanks to lung damage, as some observant people may have noticed, but one of the things that has made it more bearable is trying to enjoy my runs by taking photographs of the scenery along the way! We are lucky to be able to run in a beautiful area, and I'm not the only one who takes the odd photo (the one on the right is by Royston on one of our Sunday runs). However, I might be the only one who has stopped midway through a parkrun to take a photo of runners in front of Windsor Castle (much to Royston's bemusement!), and who uses the time to work on a photographic project that aims to record what people leave behind on the roads and verges: not just fly-tipping (I found a double mattress and suite of furniture dumped at Sibford on one run), but random possessions, from Santa Claus earrings to a single brogue shoe. Taking photos enables me to stop and catch my breath when I'm struggling, but also helps me appreciate where I run a bit more. Since starting to take these pictures, I've got really into my photography, and even gained a certificate in it through the Royal Photographic Society. I've also had my work exhibited in Oxford, and have two more exhibitions lined up already for this spring. It's still frustrating not being able to run at the speed I used to, but it's also started a new hobby for me!



I went to Eindhoven in the Netherlands intending to do the parkrun there – only for it to be cancelled due to Covid. I did it as a (not)parkrun instead, but to get there, you have to run through the Silly Walk Tunnel, dedicated to John Cleese's character at the Ministry of Silly Walks in Monty Python. So obviously, I had to pose as I went through it....



The Harriers Couch to 5k Programme

Couch to 5k has become a really popular programme and as a way to introduce the Harriers to local runners who may have moved to the area during lockdown—we decided to set up our own group.

On the 6th July we had 15 people join us for our first week, as we built them from a largely run/walk strategy to being able to run 5kms (of course we encouraged them to use run/walk for their 5k if that's what they needed to do).



Week 1 included 20 minutes of running and 40 minutes of walking over 3 sessions. For some this was quite daunting and we continued to stress that they could do as much walking as they needed to in the early weeks and then we would tailor the sessions to individuals—especially as we had some people who only wanted to walk (Rob kindly stepped in to lead the walking group), there were some who were returning to running after a long lay off and they were capable of more running than walking and at least one person who was still suffering long Covid symptoms—we worked with them to adapt the sessions to meet their recovery needs. One person completed a number of 5k runs before graduation—a real mixed bag!

As the weeks went on—we lost some people who decided they didn't want to run anymore, or for whom life got in the way (injury in another sport and a house fire come to mind). We had a core group who we volunteers felt would stick it out until their graduation (which we planned to be at a parkrun).



Some weeks, we 4 volunteers outnumbered those who joined us on a Tuesday night—but we still had that core group who were encouraging each other and training hard!

Only Naomi (see top picture) was able to graduate at parkrun—she and Graeme ran Banbury parkrun on 31st August in a little over 34 minutes. The following Tuesday—Claire, Cat and Rachel (see middle photo) all graduated running a loop of Hook Norton. The following Tuesday we did it all again in Hooky with Claire (see bottom picture) graduating.



Graeme, Lisa, Katrina, Rob and Richard all enjoyed supporting the C25k programme and seeing the progress all our attendees made, whether they graduated or not!

In February 2022—our second cohort has assembled with Naomi (who is now a Harrier) joining the volunteers to see if we can get another 10 people from couch to five kilometres in 8 weeks.

Hook Norton Harriers—the Early Years

Steve Kaplan one of the founding members answered questions for Graeme Hackland on the origins of the club:

What do you remember about the growth of the club in its first decade (1985-1995?)

I remember thinking, will we ever get more than 30 members in the club. We seemed to take ages to get beyond that number! Then the numbers gradually grew and grew, I don't think we could believe it when it happened.

The first Hooky 6 was in 1986 - why 6 miles and not add 0.2 for a 10k?

The first Hooky 6 in 1986 came out of the 3 mile Village Fun Run the previous year, 1985. The village fun run was organised by one of our founding members, Don Cornelius, and the Harriers took it on and doubled the route to make it more challenging. We worked out a good start position based on finishing at the Sports and Social Club Field. We measured it by car and bike, it was not officially measured in the beginning. I remember we did measure it with a surveyors wheel at some point before official certification came in.

We did consider turning it into a 10k but decided to leave it as a 6 mile event. Weighing up having a safe start position and wanting to finish in the Sports and Social Club Field in a straight line without doing a lap or two around the field. We thought it would be safer and more exciting to have a straight line finish.

The Grove 6 was on the first Saturday in August and the Hooky 6 was the day after on the first Sunday in August. It became a tradition to do both events for some runners and there was a uniqueness to keeping the Hooky 6 a 6 mile event.

What else do you remember about the first few years of the Hooky 6?

Our main sponsor was the Hook Norton Brewery as it is to this day. We created mile markers and had a water station similar to how it is now. We did all the organising, marshalling and time keeping ourselves but still tried to let a few run so we had some representation. We called upon friends and family to help. I have only done the race once myself and feel lucky to have had that chance early on.

Was it popular with Oxfordshire runners in the early years?

Yes, it gradually grew and grew in numbers and became a club race for many clubs in the county.

Photo Gallery



Running in 2020/2021 was interrupted by a global pandemic, but Harriers found ways to run—together when allowed! #TeamHooky

Photo Gallery

Email Bethan:
social.media@hooknortonharriers.org.uk



Hook Norton Harriers Page:
<https://www.instagram.com/hooknortonharrier>

2021 Sporting Achievements

2021 Standards - Winners							
Name	Age Category	5km	5Mile	10km	10Mile	Half Marathon	15Mile
Paul Taylor	55-59	Gold	Gold	Gold	Silver	Gold	
Nell Darby	45-49	Gold			Bronze		
Taryna Goode	50-54			Bronze		Silver	
Richard Hart	55-59			Bronze	Bronze		Bronze

	2021
Female Runner of the Year	Taryna Goode
Male Runner of the Year	Paul Taylor
Club Handicap	Paul Taylor
Female Cross Country Champion	Nell Darby
Male Cross Country Champion	Martyn Foster
Alan Roche Trophy for most improved runner	Paul Taylor
The Hailey Award for Service to the Harriers	Lisa Moulder
Bryan Walford Award for Triumph over Adversity	Suzie Field