



Running Commentary

2024 Edition

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www.hooknortonharriers.org.uk

2024 — A Year of Great Running

Inside this issue:

2024 - A year of great running	1
Club Races for 2025	1
The Yeomans take on the Berlin Marathon	2
Racing Highlights—Dave Warlow	3
30 Years a Harrier—John Weaver	3
Celebrating Ten Years a Harrier at the runDisney Dopey Challenge—Lisa Moulder	4/5
Photo Gallery	6
Club Awards	6

I became Chair of Hook Norton Harriers in December 2023 so have now been in the role for just over a year. I have enjoyed it so I am still Chair! Thanks to the committee for the continued support through my first year. A special thanks to Anwen for staying on as Secretary for the year, you were a great help. Also, thanks to Bethan for offering to be Secretary, this is very appreciated as your role is essential for the club to continue.

2024 has been another great year of running by the Harriers. Our team events were great fun. The Motavation series this year was really well supported. The Oxfordshire Cross Country series was enjoyed and endured by all those that took part. It is great to be part of these events and the Harriers support for each other is fantastic.

The Hooky 6 and Christmas Canter were both very successful events. Thanks to the race team for the smooth organisation and also the marshalls who make the event possible. The runners in the Christmas Canter seem to have such an enjoyable time, it makes me wish we could all run in it.

Harriers have again run in many events, locally, nationally and internationally. There seems to be no limit to where or how far we want to run. Well done to all.

Royston Williams took an England Athletics Leadership in Running Fitness Course. On most Tuesdays Royston often takes the lead and has many different sessions for us all to enjoy!

Richard Hart, Chair

Club Races for 2025—please email results@hooknortonharriers.org.uk

Ilmington Tempo 10k - 5 race Series	Motavation Series
Shipston IX	Bramley 20/10
Banbury 15	Twin Lakes 10/20
Tempo Summer Series	Oxford Town and Gown
Compton Downland Challenge 16M	Tysoe Windmill 10k
Greystones 10k	Compton Verney 10k
Winchcombe Hill Climb 10k	Cotswold Classic 10
Stratford 10k	Chedworth 10
	Alcester 10k
	Bourton 10k
	Silverstone 10k
	Banbury 5
	Headington 5
	Longworth 10k
	Eynsham 10k

Club Handicap System—run six races from this list in 2025 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!



The Yeoman's take on the 2024 Berlin Marathon:

Sarah's Marathon:

On Sunday 29th September 2024 I successfully completed the Berlin Marathon to be awarded my third star on my six star journey to complete the Abbott World Marathon Majors.

This time I decided to run for a local charity and raised over £1000 for Freddie's Future, a branch of the Bone Cancer Research Trust. Freddie unfortunately was diagnosed with a rare childhood cancer in November 2019 at 6 years old. It's called Ewing Sarcoma which was metastatic (in more than one place). It's an aggressive cancer that creates tumours in the bone and soft tissue that can spread to anywhere in the body, very quickly. Freddie has completed treatment and is thankfully doing well at the moment. I decided to support this charity because



Freddie received his diagnosis when he was a little boy in my class all those years ago (and as you can see from the picture, Freddie shares a passion of mine ... DOGS!).

Getting to the start of the Berlin Marathon was fairly straightforward, just a short walk and train ride from our hotel to the beautiful Reichstag building (which features three times on the route). The course starts at none other than the Brandenburg Gate, then passes through 10 of the city's neighbourhoods. Approximately 1k into the race (perhaps not even that) you pass the Berlin Victory Column – which is just that, a lovely column with a gold statue on top – and believe it or not, I

admired the tourist sights and not just the tarmac surrounding it! And having consulted Google, the column memorialises the victory of Prussia in three historical wars.

Some 10K into the race, you pass another side of the Reichstag building – the seat of the German parliament in all its grandeur. The start was very busy and full of spectators so passed surprisingly quickly. Determined to not run any further than I had to, I was generally admiring the tarmac from here on in (Addidas had helpfully branded a lot of it with three blue racing lines)!

Truth be told, a lot of 10K-30K I don't remember other than, 'Oh look, another wide European street with some nice autumnal looking trees!' But I kept shuffling and hadn't walked at all (yet!). Though one thing I did note, and I found quite surprising for Germany given that they are known for being the Haribo capital of the world, is the lack of people handing out sweets! At no point on this run was I offered a delicious, sugary snack from a small child – often a highlight for me!

While the first half of the route is entirely flat, the second half sees a few gentle climbs with one steeper peak, although it's nothing too serious compared to the hills of Hook Norton. The marathon concludes just past the Brandenburg Gate with Berlin being one of the two circular world majors. Having passed through the gate with an 'I'm having a great time' expression pinned on your face for the photographers there's a short distance to the finish line and a nice shiny, silver poncho and medal to receive. I completed this marathon in 5:30:30 – a marathon PB for me.



Now that's London, New York and Berlin ticked off ... I have my eyes set on Tokyo next...



2024 –Some racing highlights:

The Oxbelt relay was held on Sunday the 21st of July. This is a trail relay run around the 54 mile circular Oxford Green Belt way which was created in 2007 to celebrate 50 years of Oxford's Green belt.

The first OxBelt relay took place in 2022 with three teams. In 2023, eight teams from six clubs took part. This year 15 teams took part and Hook Norton Harriers put two teams out for our first time in this event. Thanks to Anwen and Bethan for arranging everything for us. The race starts around 8am in the morning and we were all glued to our phones for updates. Every team carried a tracker that we could follow and we also had a WhatsApp group. It was interesting for us all as some people were commenting that it was weird to be in a race whilst sitting at home having breakfast! Anwen planned the teams brilliantly so that we finished each leg quite close to each other. Our teams finished in 11th and 13th place. Team A finished in 8 and half hours and Team B finished in just over 9 hours. The weather was great so there was quite a few of us at the finishing line to cheer our runners in. It is a really well organized event, although not marshalled so, ideally, you recce your route in advance of the race. There was great camaraderie between all the teams, as you might expect. Although it is called a race, it is really an event that you are meant to enjoy with your fellow runners. After the race, all those who ran, messaged to say that they would definitely like to be in the team for 2025. Maybe in 2025 Hook Norton Harriers have 3 or 4 teams! Team A was Mark Norris, Philippa Martindale, Emma Needell, Anwen Greenaway (ran 2 legs!), Suzie Morgan, Richard Hart and Erica Helmetag. Team B was James Barlow, Chris Bray, Richard Tew, Huw Williams, Zoe Thornburgh (Friend of the Harriers), Toby Shipway, Bethan Greenaway (also ran last leg with Riz!) and Riz Shires.

Oxon XC League 2023/24 Season—from Dave Warlow

This was a really enjoyable season with a great club turnout throughout. 21 Harriers participated, including 8 taking part in the cross country league for the first time. 4 Harriers showed the greatest dedication in running in all five races - Simon Woolley, John Critchfield, David Warlow and Bethan Greenaway. The Ladies led the way, finishing a credible 6th in Division 2. The Men finished 3rd in Division 3 and would have been promoted had injuries not weakened the team at the last fixture. Most importantly the cakes and treats supplied by participating Harriers were up to their usual high standard!



Motavation 2024 Season — from Dave Warlow

Yet another well attended summer series of races, with an average of 18 Harriers turning up at each race. Donna Allen was the star performer for the ladies, finishing in 7th position in the overall series as well as being 3rd VL35. Top runner for the men was Mark Norris who finished 34th in the overall series and was 4th VM40. Team positions are not known as only the first 3 teams have been listed.

John Weaver—30 Years a Harrier



What's the best thing about being a member of the Harriers? Running with a group of like minded people.

What's your favourite running memory (could be a race, a location, a proud PB etc.)? Doing the Snowdon fell race. Easily the hardest run I have ever done, but just about worth it!

Roads or trails? Trails

What's your favourite parkrun? Best parkrun ever was Queenstown in New Zealand, a great run through some woods by the lake, it's a bit far away though.....Locally I like Horspath.

What do you do when you aren't running (hobbies/job etc)? I am a retired lawyer: travel and looking after my allotment.

Celebrating Ten Years a Harrier at runDisney Dopey Challenge—Lisa Moulder:

2025 is my tenth anniversary as a Hook Norton Harrier, and what a decade it has been! Having completed the wolf run obstacle course the previous year and I found that attending the local Banbury parkrun to help in preparation for this, was the key to unlocking the door to where I am today. It all started when I was awarded the sweatshop monthly prize at parkrun due to my consistency and weekly PBs knocking ten minutes off in the space of 2 months, to which I was able to choose my own pair of free running trainers! (They don't do this anymore!)

Due to the enjoyment I had found in parkrun I set myself the challenge of running my first official 10k race at Heyford Airbase and then decided to set myself a massive goal of running my very first half marathon in Oxford later that year to see if I was capable of achieving the distance.

After hearing about the Hook Norton Harriers at parkrun and wanting to meet some people in the village I'd recently moved to, I decided it was time to go and see what they were all about! I remember my first night walking up to the social club and being very nervous and unsure what to expect as a fairly novice runner with only parkruns and a couple of race for life's under my belt, I was instantly met by a very friendly group of people, one of which is my now very good friend Graeme Hackland! I was telling them about my HM goal and remember as clear as day Graeme telling me once you have done the half you'll be signing up for marathons after! I simply remember saying no, one half and I will be done, whilst running around the roads of Hooky in the dark!

Well after a few weeks it was clear Tuesdays at the club would be a regular occurrence in my life and not long after, I was running around Hooky following their weird and wonderful traditions -touching the brewery wall, running around the only roundabout in Hooky acting as an aeroplane and touching the Hook Norton village signs were all things I looked forward to with my new found running club!

Anyway, after months of attending on Tuesdays the Oxford half marathon came round and aside from having whiplash only five weeks before due to a car accident, I managed to complete it with lots of walks, in 2 hours and 57 mins. Skip forward to the next year, ignoring the one half and I was done mantra I expressed on my first night, I went back for more and was able to give it an either better go and get my time down to 2.47!

Two years in, and regularly running PB 10ks and half marathon races, I was enjoying my new found Hobby whilst collecting medals/t-shirts at races with my running buddies. I then decided after running on the treadmill at the gym whilst watching the London marathon in 2017, I would apply for a London place, now sadly as it is so sought for, I was unsuccessful. However, little did I know it was possible at the club AGM in December to put your name into a *hat* for the clubs London marathon place... and guess what?! After only three people put their names in, I was pulled out! 2018 was going to be the year to run my very first marathon and not just any marathon... London!!

Well, after months of training the marathon came, I conquered and was absolutely incredible, despite walking for a penguin for a week afterwards and then oops* signed up for my second marathon just five months later!

Now fast forward a decade I have officially completed 101 parkruns @ 30 locations, 5x 5-mile races, 32 -10k's, a 10-mile race, 15x half marathons, a 20-mile race, 6x Mota-vation Series' and 8x full marathons! (London, Loch Ness, Liverpool Rock N Roll, London Virtual (Covid-19 year), Winnie the Pooh SVN, London again, London Virtual and Walt Disney World!).

For someone who has never been a *fast* runner, however was voted most improved runner and awarded the Alan Roche Trophy in 2020 and originally was adamant that one half and I was done, just shows that the power of people, determination, training and self-belief can go a very long way!

The Hook Norton Harriers has brought me some of my very closest friends and some of the best experiences of my life with memories I will treasure forever! I even spent three years as a committee member as a social media coordinator and was kindly awarded the Hailey award for my service to the club for this. You can do as little or as much as you want in this small club but at the end of the day it will always be my running family and I will always be thankful for everything this little village club has helped me achieve in the last decade!



runDisney Dopey Challenge—Lisa Moulder:

So, let's start with, friends don't let friends run dopey alone! Me and Graeme (One of the first Harriers I met) first thought about this challenge a few years back when I said I'd always dreamt of going to Walt Disney World in Orlando to take part in the Run Disney marathon! Sadly, at this time I was working in a school and it was always in term time so was unable to enter. However, having recently taken a new direction in my career and qualifying as a children's nurse it was becoming more of a possibility and I told him 2025 would be the year to do it! Now in true friendship style, Graeme's response was "if we're going, we're going to do it properly!" The Dopey Challenge consists of 48.6 miles over four consecutive days of running a 5k, 10k, Half and Full marathon. Not only was this my biggest challenge yet, the fear of being swept by the balloon ladies was a potential worry—16min per mile pace! However, after 28 weeks of training and a bit of faith, trust and pixie dust I started to believe it was possible! I went with Rob and my family and Graeme went with his two daughters and after picking up our running numbers at the expo, it was beginning to feel very real and I loved the opportunity to have my picture with Mickey and Minnie with my race numbers for the weekend ahead.

The morning of the 5k, was very cold! 2c and lots of Mylar blankets in sight it was all about staying warm and waiting to get to the start line, once the race started with fireworks to cross the line, we were off, the 5km was all around Epcot and we fast walked to keep our legs fresh for the next 3 running races, and decided if we didn't have time to stop for character photos during the races the next three days our aim was to pose for the photographers, and boy did we enjoy doing this!

The 10km morning came (another 2am wake up) and after being so cold, it ramped up to a muggy 18c! This race we ran-walked and was mostly around Epcot and some highways, it was so much fun having all the cast members come out and support and seeing Disney all lit up in the dark.

The morning of the half marathon came by (another 2am wake up) but this was the day we were most looking forward to, running to magic kingdom and running up Main St, in front of Cinderella's castle and then getting to run through it, was the race highlight, however a cold start and an absolute soaking for an hour of sideways rain before we started was a little de-motivating. However, the rain stopped before we started and I couldn't stop smiling and ran the whole way through the mile loop of magic kingdom (Almost missed my family supporting) as Graeme declared this was the experience we were waiting for! Again a run-walk got us through and kept our legs semi fresh for the final push on marathon day!

The Marathon would decide if we would be able to complete the Dopey challenge! On very tired achy feet again we waited and crossed that line, with a tummy full of nerves for the first time this weekend! I managed to focus and we both told each other no matter what, if we end up running apart from each other, the main thing was to keep going and hopefully we would re-find each other. Now the marathon is the one race that runs through all four parks, Epcot, Magic Kingdom, Animal kingdom and Hollywood studios before one last loop of Epcot. It was so much fun but it was becoming harder by mile 8, I had unbearable chafing from my running vest so thankfully every 3 miles there were aid tents with Vaseline on sticks to keep it cool, then we entered magic kingdom for the final time in the races – it was sunrise and beautiful! Then the long slog to animal kingdom came – I lost Graeme between mile 12-17 which meant I had to run a whole mile past a sewage farm (yuk) and then as I looked up before entering animal kingdom there he was! We were back and just in time when we saw Rob waiting for us with a bottle of coke (Red ambulance) to keep us going! Then it was the last 6 miles to go, which were indeed the hardest! Despite music, characters to see on the way it really was about putting one foot in front of the other, face-timing running friends to keep motivated and singing a fair few Disney songs. As we entered Hollywood studios it was 11am and the parks were open and the atmosphere was electric and I could feel emotions bubbling inside of me. I kept my cool until we came back into Epcot and Graeme asked me if I was okay, I shook my head and wept as tears of joy and relief flowed down my face. There were so many supporters to the sides of the paths with banners and cheering, I can't describe it, it was just an incredible feeling and the whole last mile and half I was laughing and crying, we even got a couple of character photos because we knew we had time and there were finally no queues. As the final corner approached where we reached the 26-mile marker before the finish line straight, we took our last mile marker photo and I sang/cried to the large gospel choir singing 'we are the champions' before we ran down to the finish line, sun shining, whilst waving to Graeme's daughters, Rob and my mum and auntie who came to support as we crossed that line and collected our medals and marathon hat ears! We were Dopey challenge finishers – I cried a lot that day – incredibly proud of our achievement. On Medal Monday I spent 13 hours in Magic Kingdom taking photos with my medals and riding rides before we all watched the fireworks together that evening as a celebration to end to the weekends event which was all so very humbling! Run Disney was the most incredible experience of my life. What was even more amazing than running in the happiest place on earth, and seeing all the characters and singing along to Disney songs, was I got to do this with my favourite running pal! We are definitely Dopey and I cannot believe we actually did it! In true words of Disney...If you can dream it, you can do it! I'd recommend this event to any of my running pals, no other race will ever compare. I appreciate y'all for taking the time to read this report

Photo Gallery

Email: social.media@hooknortonharriers.org.uk



Hook Norton Harriers Running Club—Group Page:



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

2024 Sporting Achievements

Female Runner of the Year	Donna Allen
Male Runner of the Year	Mark Norris
Club Handicap	Anwen Greenaway
Female Cross Country Champion	Donna Allen
Male Cross Country Champion	James Barlow
Harriers Challenge Cup	Tom Bradford
Alan Roche Trophy for most improved runner	Bethan Greenaway
The Hailey Award for Service to the Harriers	Royston Williams
Bryan Walford Award for Triumph over Adversity	Graeme Hackland

2024 Standards - Winners					
Name	5km	10km	Half Marathon	20Mile	Marathon
Anwen Greenaway	Gold	Gold	Silver	Silver	Silver
Susie Morgan			Gold		Gold
Helen Robey	Bronze	Bronze	Bronze		
Bethan Greenaway					Bronze