



A RUNNING CLUB FOR WOMEN

# WOMEN ON THE RUN Newsletter

## Spring 2018

### IN THIS ISSUE

## Latest News

Welcome to our first newsletter of the year at a time when the lighter nights are well and truly here and getting out on the trails is an enjoyable part of being a runner. All our groups are fortunate enough to have lots of fabulous routes to go at in the spring and summer months and for that we are always thankful.

This issue we look at parkrun volunteering, never being too old to pull on our trainers and we reflect on the #finishforMatt campaign.

### Women on the Swim

Members of Kendal WOTR are fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful areas of the country – right on the edge of the Lake District with bountiful access to open water swimming. Some members outdoor swim as part of triathlon training, others, like me, because it's an exhilarating activity and what's more, there's no chlorine and you get views you'll never see in a swimming pool. A number of us have taken part in many outdoor swimming events over the last year or so.

Outdoor swimming is a great sport to team with running – non-load bearing exercise that

offers a full body workout and can often be undertaken even if you've picked up a running injury. If you are interested in outdoor swimming, check out this Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/outdoorswimmingsociety/> to see if you can link up with like-minded people near you – there is a very active Outdoor Swimming scene in Devon

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/devonwildswimming/> - these are great places to find a swimming buddy.

Some top outdoor swimming tips:

- ✓ Only swim in water that you are confident and competent to be able to look after yourself
- ✓ If you're not acclimatised to cold water, always wear a wetsuit (it also offers extra buoyancy)
- ✓ If swimming alone (preferably go with a buddy), always give someone your swimming plans
- ✓ In colder weather always take a hot drink and some food for after your swim
- ✓ Enjoy it!



## Women on the Run

### Spotlight on...

Preston Thursday group leader Helen Borking is under the spotlight this issue

Page 2

### R.E.D January

An event to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of Kathrine Switzer running the Boston Marathon...

Page 3

### Taming the Beast!

Dee Pichler on mud, mud and ... more mud!

Page 5

### Wainwright Achievement Award

Ruth Buxton shares details of how Kendal Leader Lesley Wallace was nominated

Page 6

# Spotlight on...

Name: Helen Borking, Group Leader of Preston Thursday Group  
Occupation: Company Director

## 1) When did you start running and why?

*I started running in August 2011 at the age of 46. One of my husband's friends said he would do the Manchester 10k the following year for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. So (having had an alcoholic drink or 3....), I said I would too. \*\*Gulp\*\* Up until then the only running I had done previously was more than 30 years ago as part of the school Lacrosse team. So at that, I downloaded a Couch to 5k app and set about training for the 10k. Soon after I discovered parkrun and became hooked! The rest is history.*

## 2) What's your top tip for lady runners?

*Believe in yourself that you CAN do this....*

## 3) How has Women on the Run changed your running?

*I have made some real 'friends for life' running with WOTR, until then I'd been a solo runner but now I just love to run in a group. Since joining in September 2012, I trained to become a leader and started the Preston Thursday group in January 2014.*

## 4) What has been your best running experience to date?

*I can't say I have a best... I have lots of bests! Heading to The Lakes for the Lakeland Trails is fabulous, but so is the first light run of the year when we like to run in David Moyes' wood, but then again the 2017 Brighton marathon was awesome too; I ran non-stop on one of the hottest days of the year whilst others were fainting around me...I'd trained really well for it and it was just my day!*

## 5) And worst?

*My worst run was a Sunday training run out with Lindsey a few years back. We ran about 10 miles and I just couldn't get into it. I remember it being cold and wet; afterwards I went home, had a shower and got in bed – I didn't get back up that day!*

## 6) What's your favourite run/race/route?

*This is a tough one to call, but I do love the Grasmere Gallop which is held on the first Saturday of June each year. The route follows the path along the terrace of Loughrigg and then down onto the shores of Rydal and Grasmere. The views are spectacular and the terrain is good. The race is organised by the National Trust and raises funds for projects in the Grasmere area. One year we ran to help the Red Squirrel population! There is a great 'field finish' with a compere and a nice medal and piece of cakey too.*

So, where will the spotlight fall next issue?



## Kendal WOTR Annual Dinner & Awards

Kendal WOTR celebrated the New Year with its first annual dinner, held on 31<sup>st</sup> January at Kendal RUFC. Although the club has been going since 2015, this was our first annual dinner and over 30 members were in attendance. Good food, a lot of chatter and laughter precluded a short presentation to offer thanks from the ladies to Lesley Wallace, our inspirational Leader and founder of the Kendal Club, and to the other group leaders: Jude Swann, Diane Letheren, Sue Winn and Steph Lee.

We had a montage of blue army photographs showing a whole host of running activities over the past year, as well as quotes from members about what the club means to them. Lesley then presented the first club awards:

Wyn Clayton – Inspirational runner

Jane Dewhurst – Most determined runner

Zena Cassels – Most WOTR club runs

After this, presentations of flowers were made to all the run leaders, and the final award – the Kendal WOTR Club Points Champion was awarded to Diane Letheren. A great night was had by all, and it looks like it might just become a regular on our calendar! Well done everyone.

## R.E.D January (Run Every Day January)

RED January is a charity challenge helping to shine a light on mental health issues all in association with the charity MIND. It has been a brilliant way to kick start the New Year and by taking part has helped to raise awareness and open up conversation about mental health. Here is what our members have had to say about it.



by Elizabeth Lloyd (Exeter member)

I have often started the year making New Years resolutions, which have fallen by the wayside before spring is done. This year I decided I would not set any but I did still want to have some meaningful goals. A friend told me about RED (Run Every Day) January, a challenge to support the mental health charity MIND and raise awareness in the process. It seemed an appropriate and worthy cause, particularly as a follow up to the great work our WOTR mental health ambassadors started last year with Run and Talk.

I was delighted to find out through our Women on the Run Strava Group that a number of other WOTRs had also taken on this challenge. Seeing their progress was the extra motivation I needed to put my kit on and run each day. The first 14 were easy as I was on honeymoon and had the whole day to complete the challenge. A mile in the Caribbean sun each day was not so bad! The second set were much harder as I reacclimatised to winter and had to fit running around work, family commitments and other daily

obligations....but I am proud to say I DID IT! Reaching 47.5 miles by the month end. Once I had added up my mileage I was frustrated that I had not realised how close I was to the 50 – so I found myself running twice on the last day to push it over the line!

I honestly did not think I would have the tenacity to get out every day (I am past master of the good excuse) but whilst I am chuffed with my own results I am blown away by others.... A quick poll of both our Exeter Monday night groups shows that I was quite the slacker! Results range from 75 miles (Well done to Carrie-Ann Weir) through to 110 from Heidi Simms (hard core) 6 other runners achieved the 100+Tracey, Heidi, Elle, Leah, Esta &Dee and Di and Heather added a noteworthy 75 and 80 miles to our total of over 1000 miles in the month! (1008 to be exact!) from just 22 feet! I know ladies from our other groups also took part and I would love to know the mileage from our combined efforts – it must be astronomical if these are anything to go by.

A shout out to Sarah too who had to pull out through injury but had already done a solid 25 miles. Of course the challenge wasn't about mileage. It was about commitment. Pushing yourself when you don't feel like it. Camaraderie and encouragement and raising awareness. Appreciating the benefits of "being able to run off the crazy" as one of our team puts it. Understanding that not everyone has the ability to do that yet or the support to do so. Appreciating what we have and reaching out to others to say "join us, we hear you, we are here for you", which is particularly poignant as I am writing this on February 1<sup>st</sup> – time to talk day. Big thanks to our running Sisterhood for all you do in making the difference. Long may we run and talk.

by Lesley Wright (Kendal member)

I'm one of at least 4 ladies from Kendal WOTR who are doing RED January. I decided to participate as I did my 1st 10k, the Alder Hey 10k, in October and then due to holidays, injury and family commitments I didn't run much leading up to Xmas. With the Mad Dog 10k fast approaching I thought doing RED January would be a good way to get some miles into my legs and get me back running. I usually run with the WOTR ladies on Wednesday and then with my husband at the weekend, running about 10 miles in total. So far I've managed to run all but 2 days. I walked one day due to feeling yuk after a migraine and one day I walked on the advice of a Sports Therapist due to a heaviness in my calf which seems to be connected to a lower back problem. I finished off by doing a mile or so each day until the end of the month. In total I have done over 58 miles. I'm now hoping that 3 days rest will allow me to recover before Mad Dog. RED January has made me more confident about my running.

RED January is backed by Mind the mental health charity and hopes to make more people aware of mental health issues. I fortunately don't have any mental health issues but I have joined the RED Facebook page and it has made me more aware of what some people have to contend with every day and how much running can help them.



## Break a Wrist!

by Julie Morris (Honiton, Exeter Leader)

After the great start with the new Honiton group you can imagine how distraught I was to badly break my wrist, requiring surgery at the beginning of January. My first thoughts were "oh no what about my group". Well I am proud to say I needn't have worried. In true WOTR style my ladies pulled together and have kept the group going each week, each supporting the other whilst using the tagline #runforjulie. They are everything WOTR stands for and I wanted to share this with you all by way of thanks to them. I'm not back running yet but I'm back leading them with some creative sessions and... I'm loving it!



## Will Run for Food...

by Christine Acklam (Preston member)

Some people run for the bling, but for me it has to be food! I was asked if I fancied running the Inskip Half Marathon. This event in early January is a popular 'fast and flat' route which often takes place during harsh winter weather. As my running normally takes a slump over the Christmas and New Year period, the thought of running 13 miles in winter weather did not appeal at first. Then someone mentioned you get Hotpot at the end and a bar of chocolate and it suddenly became more appealing.



I don't think I will ever get 1<sup>st</sup> position in a race but with a surname beginning with A I quite often get a low race number and this time I managed to bag Number 1. With the goody bag and medal given out at the start I was all set to go home. No need to run the race!

The wind, rain and sleet was set to stay, the woolly hat in the goody bag was put immediately to use and with two hats, a buff and the hood of my coat, I set off running. Somewhere after about 8 miles I started to enjoy it, the route was

through quiet lanes with views of the countryside, I could see in better weather it would be lovely. I was happy with my run and surprised at my reasonably good time, despite the lapse in training. At the end you feel the satisfaction of completing the run and it's not put me off doing it again



## parkrun Volunteering

by Christine Acklam (Preston member)

For the last 6 weeks my family and I have been volunteering at our local parkrun. My son is a Scout and is keen to achieve his 'Personal challenge' badge. To be awarded this badge you need to complete one challenge set by your Scout Leader and one set by yourself. The challenge he was given by his Scout Leaders was to do some volunteering. The challenge my son set himself was to beat his PB at parkrun. To achieve his challenge – he needed to be able to demonstrate that the volunteering was a 'Challenge' to him and show how he overcame these challenges.

We selected parkrun to do his volunteering and thought the challenge would be to do it during the winter when it's cold and wet and he would rather be back home in the warmth on a screen of some sort. He was able to try out several volunteering roles; he did tail walking, bar code scanning and was even backup timekeeper. I volunteered each week, along with my Husband, and was also able to try out different roles. My favourite was the 'Timekeeper' role.

It has been an interested experience finding out how parkrun works and how things can go wrong. The results don't just happen by magic – there is a system which works if everyone plays their part.

I strongly recommend giving parkrun volunteering a go. You will be warmly welcomed, the roles explained and you get a lot of thanks. I saw it as a family activity something we could all do and get something from. We all enjoyed it. So next time your family is stuck for something to do on a Saturday – that you can all do – why volunteer at your local parkrun.

Now that we have completed our 6 weeks of volunteering, my sons next challenge is to beat his PB at parkrun. So he has said when the weather improves – he will start his training. In the mean time, I will go whatever the weather!



## Taming the Beast!

by Dee Pichler (Exeter Leader and Club Secretary)

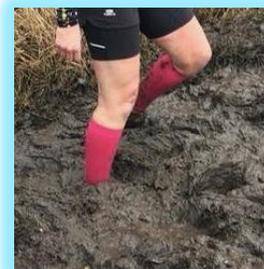


The Blackdown Beast – the clue is in the name! Despite the low cloud and Devon mizzle, our intrepid team of seven set off for this 16 mile self-navigated run around the hills and valleys of East Devon in high spirits. It is an off road run so we expected mud .... and boy did we get mud!! Mile after mile of ankle deep (and higher) foot sucking, energy sapping sticky slurry. I would love to say that the views made up for it, but the weather never cleared.

The first seven miles passed in a frenzy of stomping, glooping and squealing. Through gates and over stiles following our trusty map and some tiny white drawing pins until we reached the first stop. Hot pasty and mulled cider served up by the lovely folk from Macmillan Cancer Support. Anyone who says that you cannot possibly run after a pasty is wrong! We shot off energised and tackled the remaining muddy miles with gusto. It is a miracle that no one fell over and not one shoe was lost!

Does it sound beastly?? Well, it was in fact a laugh a minute. After all, us runners are a hardy bunch who can see the fun in everything.

We're hoping to get a team together for the Blackdown Beauty in the summer. The pasty is replaced with a cream tea and we hope the rain will be replaced with sunshine!



## Nativity December 2017

by Gill Thorne (Topsham Leader)

Topsham group decorated a tree for the annual Christmas tree festival in Topsham. This was the second year we had taken part. Last year we were a bit over enthusiastic and decorated the tree with medals, gold silver and bronze, but also running shoes! We did not realise we would have to come up with other ideas if we were to continue doing it! This year we decorated our tree with cardboard cut-outs of WOTR teeshirts - all made by the girls at our Christmas party. What it will be next year? It is great publicity for the group and enjoyable too!



## Never too old!

by Susan Frankling (Exeter Member)

When I was working, I used to play squash, in my lunchtime, against a lady; Margaret, 20 years older than me. I never managed to beat her but she was very encouraging and patient with me and I learnt so much from her. She was my role model.

My aim in life was to run until I was 60 and when I retired I did just that and gave up running. At the age of 62, I realised how much I missed running and joined Women on the Run and was back to running. The other week whilst out running, I bumped into Margaret. She still had her squash racquet in her rucksack on her back. She told me that she had to give up running at the age of 82 but was still playing an easy game of squash!!! Who is she kidding easy. I probably still could not beat her. What this has shown me is that age should never be a barrier to any of us putting on our trainers and going for a plod. I am now thinking that I will keep running until the age of 70. Meanwhile, Margaret is still my role model!

## Wainwright Achievement Award

by Ruth Buxton (Kendal Member)

Kendal's Wainwright Achievement Award dates back to 1989 and is presented to the person who, in the opinion of the trustees of the Wainwright Trust, has done most during the year to promote the prestige of Kendal or contributed most to its inhabitants. This year, the members of Kendal Women on the Run group have nominated leader and founder Lesley Wallace for setting up an amazing running group. Decisions on who will be presented with this year's award will be made after 5th February - but whatever the outcome, we all feel that Lesley is deserving of the award and she is a winner in our eyes! We want to thank Lesley and all the other WOTR leaders for continuing to support such a great running group in Kendal!

Here is what the ladies told the Wainwright Trust on why Lesley Wallace would be a worth winner.

This nomination is for Lesley Wallace of Kendal who organises and leads a running group for women - 'Women on the Run' (WOTR) Kendal. Nominated by over 100 'Women on the Run' Kendal members.

**2017 has been quite a year for WOTR Kendal!** A keen Kendal runner, Lesley organised the first WOTR 'Couch to 5k' running group starting in September 2015 - a running program for absolute beginners to help Kendal ladies to get off the couch and start running! The program provides a mix of running and walking and gradually helps to build up fitness and stamina, making the challenge feel achievable right from the start.



Over the past two years WOTR Kendal has continued to go from strength to strength. Last year, the group expanded from 2 Leaders to 5 leaders and now has over 100 members. WOTR Kendal also now has 3 different paced groups running twice a week,

and we have also established a points system to recognise members' running achievements.

During 2017, there were so many 'firsts' for the group - many women started running for the very first time. Others ran their first 5K or first 10K race; and some completed their first Half Marathon, first Marathon or first Triathlon! We all want to say a heartfelt 'thank you' to Lesley for starting this amazing group and to the other leaders for supporting us each week, and we feel that Lesley is very deserving of the Wainwright Achievement Award for her contribution to promoting the prestige of Kendal and bettering the lives of Kendal inhabitants. We run together in all weathers!

We have all benefited from being part of this Kendal group in many ways - from improved physical health and mental well-being, to building social friendships or raising self-confidence and self-belief having taken on a new challenge or achieved a goal.



I joined the group in January 2016 and am so proud to be part of it. We are local women of all shapes, sizes, ages and levels of fitness, and we never cease to appreciate the amount of support and genuine encouragement that everyone gives to each other. Thanks to Lesley and the other WOTR leaders and members, we have been inspired to take on new challenges; and what an amazing job we have done in 2017! Lesley has created a group that has bettered the lives of the WOTR members but, importantly, has also impacted on our families and friends and for that we are immensely proud and grateful.

Here are some comments from other WOTR members on the wider impact of being part of WOTR Kendal which also highlight why we feel Lesley is so deserving of the Wainwright Achievement Award:

*'Lesley has succeeded in making a group which is welcoming and supportive of all ages and abilities, improving both the physical, mental and social well-being of a whole host of women. The positive knock-on effect on the families of us women is hard to know, but I know in my case that my MS stricken husband worries less about me since I joined WOTR.'*

*'I joined Lesley's 2nd Couch to 5k group in January 2016. As a Kendal business owner with a husband who works away a lot, I was becoming too absorbed in my work and forgetting about the outside world. The activities I have become involved in as a direct result of Lesley's group, and the friends I made have helped to get me fit, make me healthier and keep me sane. She's amazing!'*

*'Lesley has really helped me. If she hadn't started this group, I wouldn't have met a lovely group of ladies and discovered that running is really good for the mind as well as the body. Anxiety is crushing at times, but this group has helped me immensely.'*

*'For me I think the most remarkable thing about what she has created is the sense of collective achievement. The sheer breadth of our age range and levels of fitness is really remarkable but she has created one group where everyone belongs and can find encouragement every single week of the year. I've been running for years but I've never felt able to join a group before because they were for 'real' runners. But she's taken that nonsense away and given us all a club t-shirt!'*

*'Lesley has given the women of Kendal a truly remarkable gift contributing so much to the physical and mental well-being of so many. WOTR is such a great running club - all shapes, sizes, ages and levels of fitness are welcomed. An amazingly supportive culture is fostered, each individual is encouraged to be the best they can and be proud of themselves.'*

*'WOTR has made me feel more a part of my adopted home town. By meeting a lovely bunch of like-minded local ladies, I feel much more settled in Kendal. She deserves the recognition.'*

*'WOTR enables all women to enjoy running and to be part of a supportive community - especially noticeable as a new resident myself. I've felt so welcomed, supported and encouraged.'*

*'Lesley is an inspiration to everybody, always cheerful & encouraging.'*

*'I am eternally grateful to Lesley and her running group WOTR - she never ceases to amaze me with her motivation and love of running; she encourages us all, the group are lovely, welcoming and embrace everyone who joins.'*

*'I never thought I would ever have the confidence to be part of a running club, yet the club has not only given me the confidence to keep running, but to also keep raising the bar to new challenges. It is also really good therapy. Thanks for listening to me moan every week and yet still make me feel welcome and included. Every week I feel inspired and motivated by this group. Thanks Lesley!'*

# WOMEN ON THE RUN Newsletter

[www.womenontherun.co.uk](http://www.womenontherun.co.uk)

## #finishforMatt and #milesforMatt

Having heard of the death of runner Matt Campbell during the London Marathon in 2018 the running community rallied round and created a campaign to encourage people to finish the 3.7 miles he was unable to and, if able, to contribute to the charity he was running for – The Brathay Trust. The hashtags went viral and in days over a quarter of a million pounds was raised with the total still rising as I write. I am proud to say the WOTR ladies in Pinhoe were also willing and able to play our own part in this, dedicating 3.7 miles of a 6 mile cross country run to his memory and making personal donations.

We didn't know him but I am confident that as a fellow runner who must have had his fair share of tracking troubles with tracking gadgets over time as most of us have, he would have given a wry smile at the sight of 9 ladies with 9 different trackers (mostly set to track kilometres) trying to decide at pace when we had hit 3.7 miles exactly. We democratically took our distance from our lovely Leader Julie-Anne.

An event like this makes you appreciate the daily gifts we often overlook and the fact that we are free and able to run for pleasure with a close group of like-minded individuals who over time become some of our closest friends. I am sure that will resonate for all of our WOTR groups. Keep up the good work ladies, for us and for Matt.



## And finally ...

Another issue over and as we move into running in warmer weather, it would be lovely to receive your photographs and articles of where you have been out and about sporting your trusty WOTR blues.....

