

# Portsmouth Joggers Newsletter Edition 27. Summer '25



Hi there fellow Joggers.

I can't believe that this is the 27<sup>th</sup> Edition of this Newsletter. I started doing it during the Covid Lockdowns to try and keep the club together. Then after Covid I just kept going. However I couldn't do it without all the contributions from club members. It would be very short and boring! Thank you all for your invaluable support!!

Anyway I hope you enjoy this edition, which is full of reports from various events and activities that Joggers have been involved in over the last few months. There is also a list of all this year's annual awards which were presented at the recent AGM.

So read on and enjoy.

## Chairperson's update - May 2025

Hello fellow Joggers! I hope you have all been enjoying running in the sunshine these past few weeks. I'll be honest, I much prefer running in the cold (it's my northern blood), but I am enjoying the light evenings.

It has been a busy couple of months at PJC towers. The spring race calendar has been chocka, and we also had our AGM. I will take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended the AGM. We had a great turnout and, considering it was my first time as Chair and our first time in the new venue, I think it all went very smoothly. Further on in the newsletter you will find a list of all the prize winners. Make sure to congratulate them when you next see them. At the AGM we also collected donations for Portsmouth foodbank, which I was honoured to deliver to them the following week, along with a donation of £250.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our recent Couch to 5k graduates, and welcome our new C25k recruits. We are honoured that you decided to start your running journeys with us, and hope that you will continue to run with us in the future. If you have any feedback about the course or the transition into our other groups upon completion, please reach out and let me, Tony, Sue C or Sue H know . It will help us continue to improve the course for future cohorts.

In case you hadn't noticed, it was the London Marathon in April. As a race that is notoriously hard to get into, I was extremely excited to get to take part this year, alongside a handful of others from the club. This included the winner of our club place, Richard Clark-Lyons, who impressively managed to run a PB, despite the excruciating heat on the day. Well done Rich!

The club is allocated places in the London Marathon each year, based on the number of EA affiliated runners we have registered with this. We were allocated one place for the 2025 race, and we balloted this amongst our affiliated runners who didn't manage to get a place through the normal ballot. So, if you are interested in running London Marathon in the future (and believe me it is an epic run!), make sure that you sign up for EA affiliation so that you are eligible for the club place later this year.

I promised myself I would keep it short and sweet this time, so that's it from me. I hope you enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

Happy running,

**Kate (PJC Chairperson)**

## **This year's award winners**

**Ian Morrison award - for attending HRRL and SCCL races : Anthony Quinn -**



**- Chairperson's award: Vinh-Dieu Lam and Rich Boakes**  
(Unfortunately Vinh couldn't join us)



**Joggers' Jogger: Sue Clarke -**



**- Outstanding achievement award: Russ Tullett**



**Most improved female, overall winner: Jenny Larkham -**



**- Most improved male, overall winner: Tony Conway**



### **Most improved female nominees:**

Racers: **Kate Lewis**

Pacers: **Alice Rebecca Hunter**

Endurance: **Lisa Kernot**

Pace Cadets: **Briony Rodgers**

Inbetweeners: **Emma Boakes**

Next Step: **Jenny Larkham**

League runner: **Pauline Jeffrey**

### **Most improved male nominees:**

Racers: **Tony Conway**

Pacers: **Craig Lodder**

Endurance: **Lewis Clarke**

Pace Cadets: **James Elkins**

Inbetweeners: **no nominee**

Next Step: **Martin Whiles**

## **EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) Survey Responses**

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to complete the EDI survey. Overall, we had 49 responses, and this has given us some great feedback and ideas to consider moving forwards.

In response to the first question 'Do you feel valued and respected by other club members and the club leadership?' - 82% said yes, 10% said often and 8% said sometimes. This is a very positive response overall, and hopefully by taking up some of the suggestions made we can further improve on this.

We received many positive comments about the club being welcoming, from 'just an inclusive and welcoming club' to 'I just love how everyone is made to feel welcome and included'.

Others commented on the fact that they like being able to move groups, depending how they feel and are always made to feel welcome, and about the affordability of the club, making it open to those on lower incomes. Whole club runs, where all groups run together, were also seen as very positive.

We also received some great suggestions on how we can improve things. The committee will consider all of the suggestions carefully, but to summarise a few of the ones raised and the initial ideas on how we can respond to them see below.

<b><u>Suggestion</u></b>	<b><u>Committee Ideas</u></b>
Keep the number of females in leadership positions (group leaders, RDs, committee members) high	We have a good balance at the moment and will continue to aim for this to be the case
Better use of social media to attract new members, especially from younger age groups	This is something the committee strive to do but would love to appoint a dedicated social media officer if anyone is willing to take this on?
7pm start time is a bit late and suggestion of morning/ daytime groups	As well as the 7pm groups, the club also offers the 6pm Early Birds group and the 6pm walking group. Details about these groups' activities will be included in the Portsmouth Joggers Members and the Portsmouth Running Facebook Groups.
Look at new ways to get the message across that we are an inclusive club	The new website should help here but again welcome any other ideas?
Holding a newbie night on a regular basis to attract new members	A great suggestion that we will have a think about how best to implement and how to attract a diverse audience for this
Promotion of events other than by social media as not everyone has access to this	Putting events on the website will hopefully help with this
Does anyone in the club know British sign language to support anyone joining who is deaf?	For anyone joining the club with a disability we will aim to support them by applying a personalised approach on a case-by-case basis. If anyone in the club does know British sign language it would be great to hear from you, so that we could offer this support if needed
Planning car shares so that new and long standing members can get to know each other	One to think about when offering car shares in the future?
Showing a diverse range of members and abilities in social media	Another job for a social media officer!
Put something on the website to show the club is LGBT accepting	We plan to put the inclusion policy on the website which should help to address this. We can also look at having some additional information to support special events such as Portsmouth Pride

Create a new member rep to introduce and bring people into club nights	This is a great suggestion and one of our new committee members, Tim Le Comte, has already volunteered to take this on.
Attract younger runners to the club by advertising more widely and at events like Park Run takeovers	
EDI training for all leaders to set the line for acceptable comments to ensure no implied discrimination against trans or other minority group athletes	All group leaders have now completed the England Athletics Equality & Diversity in Sport training as part of their LIRF accreditation, this will be renewed on a regular basis
Consider a ladies only group or run each month to encourage any members who are reluctant to run with mixed groups.	The ladies 5 (our only women-only run is very popular and so we can look at having some more events such as this)

Next steps planned for EDI include

- Getting more information about inclusion on the website.
- Carrying out a survey on new and existing members to gather equality data.
- Setting up a sub-committee to meet a few times a year to focus on EDI – if anyone is interested in this it would be fantastic to hear from you

**Sarah Stone (EDI officer)**

## **Portsmouth Joggers Club Gears Up for 50th Anniversary Celebrations!**

Portsmouth Joggers Club is proud to announce a major milestone coming up in 2026 — our **50th Anniversary!** Founded in 1976, the club has grown from a small group of enthusiastic runners into a thriving community that has supported thousands of athletes across the decades.

To mark this golden occasion, we're planning a **year-long celebration** filled with special events, throwbacks, and plenty of opportunities to bring together past and present members. From commemorative races to social gatherings, there's lots in the works — and we want **you** to be part of it.

A dedicated **Anniversary Committee** has already been set up to coordinate the celebrations. They're currently seeking ideas and contributions from members — both new and long-standing — to help make this anniversary truly special.

Here's how you can get involved:

- **Share your memories:** We're collecting old race reports, photos, club kit, and any memorabilia from the past 50 years.
- **Suggest celebration ideas:** Got a great idea for an event or a way to honour the club's legacy? Let us know!
- **Volunteer:** There will be plenty of opportunities to lend a hand as plans develop.

Please send your ideas, photos, and stories to [pjic50@pjic.org.uk](mailto:pjc50@pjic.org.uk). Whether it's a tale from your first club run or a snapshot from a long-forgotten relay, every contribution will help celebrate the amazing journey of Portsmouth Joggers Club.

Let's make 2026 a year to remember — together!

**Steve Hyson**



## Now on to 4 Very Different Race Reports

### Winter's End

So, on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March Kirsten, Bob and I took on the challenge of the Winter's End marathon, which turned out to be Kirsten's 150<sup>th</sup> marathon!



The day started off by driving to Winchester and boarding a double decker bus which took us to the start at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

The start was a bit hideous as we had to start at the bottom of Butser Hill, boy what a start that was.



Almost as bad as Beachy Head!

The course was very well marked out, with well stocked aid stations along the way.

It was a stunning course which consisted of various other steep inclines, I wanted to quit at 11 miles and I'm not one to not finish something. I overcame the difficulties with the help and support of Kirsten and Bob and then started to enjoy the marathon again.

The views were scenic and the medal we received was amazing.

Overall a very enjoyable experience and well done to Kirsten on completing her 150<sup>th</sup> marathon.



Ali Smith

## Thames Ring 250 – April 2025

Thames Ring 250 is a 250 mile running endurance event that starts at Goring-on-Thames, along the Thames Path, moving onto the Grand Union Canal and Oxford Canals and finally returning to the Thames Path and back to Goring.

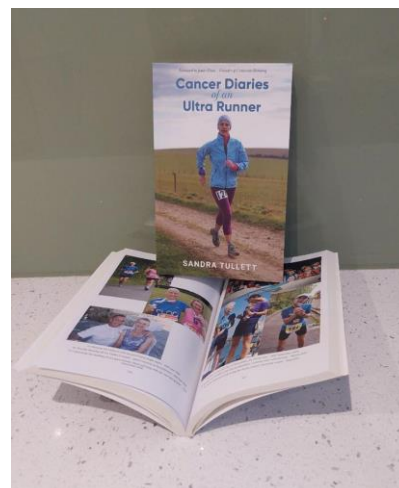


There are check points approximately every 25 miles where you can get food and aid and access to your own drop bag. Support is only allowed at these check points. Other than this, you are entirely self-sufficient but are free to go into shops/pubs to buy things. Below is a table showing the check point locations and mileages at each. Due to a few long standing diversions the distance is now stated as 256 miles but it's probably a few miles more!

Location	Distance to Checkpoint	Total distance	Max total time
CP1 - Hurley	29	29	7.5
CP2 - Chertsey	28	57	15.5
CP3 - Yiewsley	28	85	24.5
CP4 - Berkhamsted	23	105	32.5
CP5 - Milton Keynes	25	133	42
CP6 - Nether Heyford	26	159	53
CP7 - Fenny Compton	29	188	65
CP8 - Lower Heyford	23	211	77
CP9 - Abingdon	25	236	89.5
Goring - FINISH	21	256	100

I first ran this race in 2017 when I was 52 having no idea what I was letting myself in for, but I somehow managed to survive the event and grabbed my first Thames Ring medal. I said I would never do the event again because it had provided some very special memories and I felt that if I did it again it wouldn't be the same and might spoil those precious memories.

7 years on in 2024 I changed my mind and decided to have another go. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2017 and wrote a book called 'Cancer Diaries of an Ultra runner' describing how I used running to help me cope with going through treatment. My book was published in 2024 and I had written in it '*Do the things that scare you a bit, or a lot. Look back with no regrets and live your life. Don't let it pass you by thinking I wish I had done that, do it now.*' so I decided to practice what I preached and promptly entered Thames Ring again, this time with the added pressure of doing it for charity.



In 2024 I was timed out at 188 miles at Check point 7, but I still managed to raise over £1500 for our local Queen Alexandra Hospitals' mammography department. A way to say thank you for everything they had done for me. Special thanks also to PJC for donating £250 towards this total.

I then quickly decided that it would be a good idea to enter again in 2025 to celebrate reaching 60 years old! Many times, over the following months, I questioned the sanity of my decision but as the race drew closer I began to look forward to the prospect of having another go. I knew where I had gone wrong last time so I would make sure that I wouldn't make those mistakes this time. However, with such a long event, there were plenty of other different mistakes that I could make along the way!

So, at 10am on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April I began my third attempt at the Thames Ring 250. The picture below is at registration with some good friends, just before we were about to start.



The first 29 miles to check point 1 passed quickly. There were plenty of other runners still around to chat with. I stopped at a shop in Shiplake at 17 miles for a Magnum ice cream which went down well and lifted my spirits. I arrived at Check Point 1 at Hurley in just after 51/2 hours. I topped up my food and drink ready for the next section, changed my socks (which I did at every check point) and picked up an extra top as I knew it would be dark and getting cooler by the time I reached the next check point. In the early evening, I stopped off in Windsor at a kebab shop to buy a portion of chips and a can of coke. I did this the previous year. The chips went down far better this year.

Everything was so far going to plan but this was essentially the easy bit. I knew it would get much harder to stick to a plan further into the race as I grew more tired. I reached Check point 2 at Chertsey at 10pm, put on a thicker jacket and put a heat pack in my bag ready to put on my back if I began to feel too cold at any point. I also picked up an extra water bottle and put hot water in it and stuffed it down my jacket. This would provide me with extra warmth and then later some additional fluid as I knew there would be limited water options on the next leg as it was now late at night and I wouldn't reach the next checkpoint until the next morning. I ate some warm cheesy beans from the check point and set off for my first overnight section along the Thames, through Walton, Hampton Court, Teddington and Richmond. Previously, I had coped with the limited water on this leg but this year I felt more thirsty. There were not too many late night revellers around but I did stop and ask a group of youths if they had any suggestions for where I could find any drinks. I did not feel scared talking to them. I've been through this before, and they are more likely to find the sight of me a little odd. Their only option was a kebab shop off route that I wasn't prepared to go and find.

A few miles further along the route I met another runner, Rob, who was beginning to struggle. We agreed to run together to help us get through the night and I suggested a 2 minute run , 2 minute walk strategy which seemed to work really well. Running together helped us both. I needed to go to the toilet, and we stopped at Buccleigh gardens in Richmond in the hope of finding the public toilets still open. Unfortunately, they were closed but we were absolutely chuffed to find a water fountain available at the front of the building that I wasn't previously aware of. This really cheered us both up. We then stopped at a hotel at 2:30am to see if we could use their toilet. I would not have done this myself but Rob suggested it and it ended up being a great idea. The concierge was happy to open the doors for us and let us use their toilets. It was such a pleasure to be able to wash my hands and face with soap and water. We felt like we'd won the lottery having found both extra water and a toilet in a posh hotel.

We then continued through Syon Park, leaving the Thames Path and promptly joined the beginning of the Grand Union Canal. At this point I was struggling to eat and drink much. This often happens to me if I run too fast for my stomach to cope with and as we had been run/walking throughout the night I was beginning to tire considerably with the lack of food. I began to feel quite negative. I felt that my pace was too slow for Rob, and I knew that he could go much faster if he wasn't with me. Running with him felt like more pressure to me and I felt that I needed to walk a bit more to give my stomach some time to recover so that I could eat more. I was not going to manage the next 3 days and nights if I didn't eat enough. I suggested that Rob go ahead, and I said I would probably see him at Yiewsley (check point 3). In reality, I expected that I would never see him again in the race as I expected that he



would progressively get further and further ahead of me.

I had originally planned to have only a quick stop at Yiewsley and use the following check point at Berkhamstead to sleep, but you can never really plan when exactly to sleep. It may even be better to sleep outside of a check point at the point that you feel tired. I decided to have 45 minutes sleep in one of the tents at Yiewsley. I did not sleep very much but it was better than nothing. I probably needed to use ear plugs to make it easier for me to sleep. I had some food and went on my way. It had been a cold night of about 5 degrees and in the early hours it was still very cold, so I had to keep all my thicker clothes on me even though I knew that in a few hours I would no longer need them as the sun came up. I would just have to carry them with me.

I was still finding it difficult to eat and walked much of the route from Check point 3 to Berkhamstead, in the hope that I would get my appetite back by slowing down. I had also developed a slight groin strain which prevented me from striding out when I walked and slowed me down further.

I reached Berkhamstead mid-afternoon and did not stay long as I felt that the sleep at the previous check point was sufficient for now. The next leg was where I made a mistake in my choice of socks. I had thought that the next part of the route would be dry. However, I had forgotten there was a large area of standing mud in the first few miles. I left the check point in normal socks which promptly got wet in the first few miles, and I had to continue to wear them for the next 20 mile developing a few blister along the way.

On this part of the route my appetite came back and I could manage food again. I stopped at Tesco at Leighton Buzzard which was approximately 10 miles before CP5 at Milton Keynes. Here I bought some socks and a 4 pack of hot cross buns. From experience, I knew that the next 10 miles to Milton Keynes would feel like it went on for ever. The benefit of new socks and a couple of hot cross buns lifted my spirits here and I ran the majority of the 10 miles into Milton Keynes. I was pleased to make it quickly through an area where I had got lost the previous year which was a bonus. The cut off at Milton Keynes is 1:30 on Friday morning. Last year I was being rushed out of here as I was closer to cut off. This time I was not quite so late and I had time for a lovely bacon sandwich and

to sort out the few blisters that I now had on my feet. On reflection, I should have probably shut my eyes here and had a quick nap but it just didn't occur to me. The issue with this was that as soon as I left the distraction of the check point and I was alone again I began to daydream and I found myself falling asleep on my feet and not focussing on the job at hand. I also had to change my torch battery because I had forgotten to do this at the checkpoint. The early hours of the morning tended to be the worst time for me in terms of feeling sleepy. I looked at my tracker and noted that Anke, the eventual ladies winner, was close behind. I turned around to look behind me and I could see her torch not far behind. I decided to stop and wait until she caught me up and then walked along with her for a while chatting. Having company, I knew, would help to keep me awake. I walked and talked with her until daylight came. She was a lovely lady and when I finally felt that I could not keep up with her metronomic walking pace I wished her well and let her go ahead.

I made my way towards the next check point at Nether Heyford. As I got closer tiredness again got the better of me. The route comes off the canal at a particular bridge in order to reach the indoor check point. My frazzled brain could not comprehend what I was meant to be doing. At one point I just sat on a bridge in the sun wondering why I needed to go to the particular bridge number. Why couldn't I just stay here where I was? I rang Russ, as I was confused, and he managed to convince me to keep going to the specific bridge number. Once I got to the check point my head would clear and I would forget that I needed to sleep. I had some pizza here and sorted my feet and I was set on leaving as soon as I could because the next leg was where I had timed out the previous year and I became really focussed on getting to the next check point without taking any time to sleep. Anke had arrived here before me and was currently sleeping and managed a really good sleep here. I also found Rob sitting in Nether Heyford having dropped out here earlier. Looking back, I should have spoken to him and encouraged him to join me as he was not injured and we could have helped each other on the next leg.

I set off from Nether Heyford in good spirits. I had my higher power head torch and a really bright hand torch ready to take on the HS2 diversion near the end of this leg, determined not to get lost like I did last year. First, I had to get myself to Braunston. Again, the sleepiness washed over me and I would find myself waking up on the path wondering what I was doing. I had it in my head that I was walking with someone but instead I was on my own. Again, Anke caught me up and checked on me and was concerned about my lack of sleep. We ran together for a while which helped wake me up and kept me going but eventually, I had to let her go ahead. I made a silly mistake of turning up the Grand Union Canal at Napton Junction. Something that I would never have done if I wasn't so tired. I did realise quite quickly, however, and retraced my steps to continue along the Oxford canal. This next part has some of the worst canal paths, but the lack of recent rain meant that the paths were much better than the previous year. I ran as much as I could in the remaining daylight to try and reduce the amount of this trail that I would have to cover in darkness, but ultimately darkness fell and it became more difficult. However, the worry about being timed out here meant I ran the majority of this path up to the HS2 tunnel and when I finally reached it I was over the moon. I got my large torch out and navigated the route so much better than the previous year. It was such a relief to get through this. This was my downfall last year. The next 4 miles to get to Fenny Compton then seemed to take forever - but it always does. When I finally reached the check point I was so happy

to have made it this time. I had two bowls of soup here and sorted my feet and extra food for the next section. This was an outdoor check point and I was the last person here but I still had a little time and again I really



was really confused about where I was meant to go. I didn't even think to look at my OS maps app which had the GPS set up on it. This would have helped guide me along the canal. Instead, I looked at my google maps and remembered that I needed to get to a place called 'Copredy' which was along the Oxford canal and I put this as a walking route on my phone. This did not help me, however, to get past the first part of the route from Fenny Compton and I walked back and forth trying to work out which direction I was meant to be going and on what side of the canal. Eventually, I did find the canal but at this point I was completely exhausted and confused. I was talking to people that were not there. I climbed up a bank looking for signs of life, although unlikely since it was about 3 or 4 in the morning. I climbed back down the bank and then somehow, halfway down it, I just fell into a deep sleep for at least an hour. When I woke up it was daylight. I walked down from the bank and could see the canal in front of me and suddenly everything made sense again. I felt so refreshed from the impromptu sleep that I then continued the rest of this leg feeling really positive and confident that I could make it to the next check point at Lower Heyford before the cut off despite having wasted a lot of time. This leg was now all in daylight which was great. I went off route briefly to Banbury station, where I had stopped previously. I wanted to go to the toilet and buy a sandwich. The queue was long and I didn't want to wait so I went to the front of the queue explained my situation and offered to pay the persons bill in the front of the queue if he let me add my sandwich to it. I then quickly continued on my way.

I arrived at the next checkpoint at Lower Heyford with not much time to spare and the check point team were counting the minutes down for me, until I had to be out of the checkpoint. This was not surprising since I had wasted so much time at the beginning of the leg. However, I was confident I could get to the next check point at Abingdon in time since the amount of time available to me was longer as the race takes into account the fact that people will slow down and need more sleep later on in the race. Unfortunately, this did not take into account the fact that I was now given details of two other diversions on the next part of the route that I had not been made aware of before the race. A member of the checkpoint team talked me through them and drew details on my map whilst they counted the minutes down and sorted myself out. I now did not have an accurate gpx available for these diversions and would have to rely on my memory from what I was being told which would be challenging considering how tired I was. I was told that if I missed the first diversion I would reach a dead end and have to go back on myself.

I left in fairly good spirits, however, the tiredness I was feeling meant that I had to have a few minutes sleep on the trail. The trip to Oxford went fairly smoothly. I had yet quick nap at Thrupp (at least I think that's where it was!) by a building where I found some dog blankets left in a bag with a sign on it that were free for anyone who wanted them, so I borrowed them to have a sleep in. They smelled a bit 'doggy' but kept me warm. I then walked on until I reached the point where trail turned to decent path and I could run the four miles steadily into Oxford. At this point it began to get dark and I checked my time. I was about 1 hour behind when I finished the race in 2017 so felt it was definitely a possibility for me to finish in time. At Oxford I stopped at a shop to buy a sandwich, a Magnum and a can of coke, which really helped. I then started the last 9 miles in the dark from Oxford to the checkpoint at Abingdon. The first part was straight forward but I kept finding myself stopping in the middle of the path and waking up on my feet. I had to keep telling myself that I had noone with me that I needed to look after as I kept trying to talk to people around me and keep telling myself I just had to keep walking forward to Abingdon. This was fine until I reached the first diversion. This was where I hit a sign saying I could go no further – that was when I remembered that I had the diversion and now had to go back on myself. I really struggled to work out where I needed to go and, in the end, spoke to someone by phone at the Abingdon check point who talked me through some of the route. I don't know what I would have done without them, however I wasted a good hour getting through this part and then realised I was now very close to cut off.

It was a really close call and when I reached the last field where I had been told to run diagonally across it as part of the second diversion. I was totally disorientated and frustrated as I could see my final few available minutes ebbing away. I was on the phone to the check point team again and I was clearly panicking as I was so concerned that I would miss the cut off. In the end after many failed attempts, I reached the metal fence that indicated that I had reached the play park in the middle of the field and I had to walk around this to get to the town. Russ came out from the checkpoint to meet me. I looked at my watch and had only a few minutes left. I ran as hard as I could to get to the checkpoint, but it was further than I thought. Russ said I was sprinting as if at a 5k park run by this point.

When I hit the checkpoint, I had exactly 3:30am showing on my phone which was the cut off time and I was only a few seconds over, but the checkpoint lead would not let me go any further and timed me out.

**Sandra Tullett**

What an amazing achievement Sandra, well done!!!! – Ed.

## Salisbury HRRL Race Report



It's 6.00 on an April Sunday morning. 23 alarms are beginning to go off as the PJC team awake to another League race, and the 26 runners begin their pre-race routine.

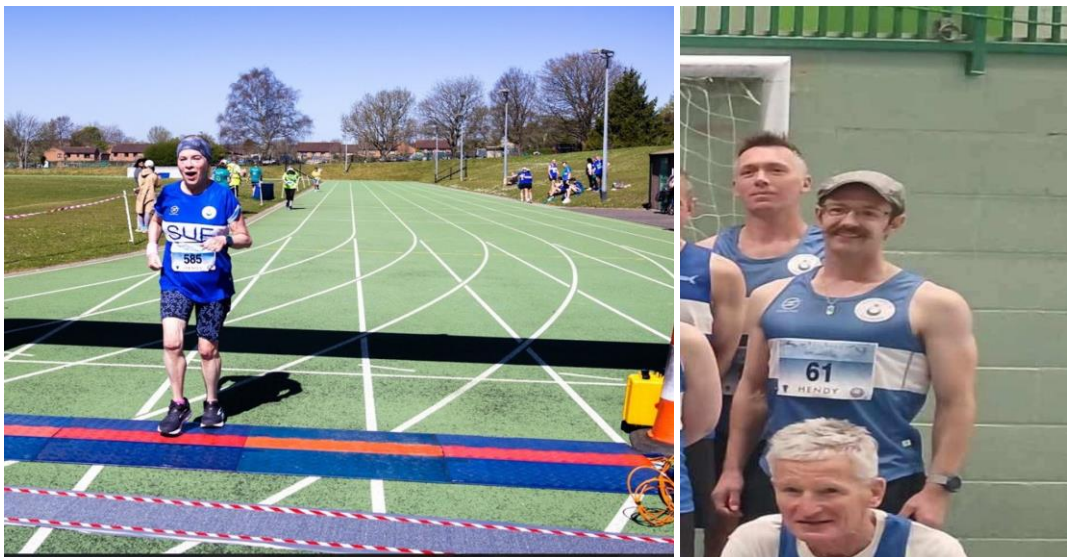
Me – always a look outside to check the weather – its dry, the sun has already made an appearance, and the predicted sunny day looks spot on. Check the PJC message group just in case – but all looks good. There is a car share at 7.45, so I have around 90 minutes. In which to have a leisurely coffee, small breakfast, shower etc. and get my kit on/packed – always dressed in PJC tops/tracksuit bottoms (I have a lot of PJC kit accumulated over the years). And then the short journey to Lakeside – 3 cars worth doing the car share, so nice chat before we divide ourselves up into suitable car loads, and we are off to Salisbury.

Unsurprisingly at that time on a Sunday, it's a good journey!

This was my first Salisbury for 7 years – I was really surprised at this gap as I try and do this every year as its my Mum's birthplace, and a lovely city, dominated by the cathedral spire.

Short and picturesque walk to race HQ from the nominated car park, and then pre-race routine kicks in again. Number collection, find the rest of the PJC team, pin number on PJC vest, team picture.

In between, find time for a loo visit or 2, then warm up and stretch. Notable is the silent shock, even awe, at Lewis' new moustache and flat cap combo (more on that later), Bob just making it in time for the team photo as usual, and always nice to talk to fellow PJC runners from groups I don't run with. Conversation is about race plans (always!), route advice for those doing it first time, and a catch up on a various fitness levels (or lack of), even a bit of non race chatter.



Walk to the start, which is on the running track, decent warm up, more nervous chatter, and then we distribute ourselves in the start area. This is roughly in pace order, with a couple of PJC blocks!

And exactly on time, we are off, just 25m on the track, a bit of gravel, and then onto the course proper, which hasn't changed in all the years I have done this race.



The first mile is always a bit of an overtake fest as runners who started too far back or forward sort themselves out, and then it settles down. I was going slightly faster than my plan A, but felt good so decided to revise my plan A! Dangerous possibly....

Salisbury AC's organisation is, as always, excellent, from the cheery marshals to the 3 water stops, materialising exactly where the race instructions said they would be. Most welcome as we were bathed in glorious sun by now.

The first half has a few lumps, nothing too bad, although a short sharp one at 5 miles. Just after 6 miles is the first testing hill. Steep, and the road bends to the left, which combined with the hedgerow, means you can't see too far ahead. Not being able to see the top of the hill makes it so much worse for some reason – although that top doesn't take too long to arrive. And there is another short and not-quite-so-steep hill just before 8 miles. By this stage, I had caught a couple of PJC runners, friendly words of encouragement offered before our race strategies, planned or forced!, take us apart for now. I was feeling good still, playing my usual mental games of "if I keep X or Y pace going for the last 2 miles, I will get Plan A or Plan B time". Much to my surprise, I still had a bit left, so actually got faster in those nice and flat last 2 miles, including a lovely finish around the running track. This was enhanced by the lady on the PA, who was "spotting" the runners coming around the top bend, and giving everyone a shout out and encouragement over that last 100m. The finish is always a relief regardless of how well (or badly) you have done, nice to get the congratulations of other PJCs. Grab water (needed), Race t-shirt (needed, as I am down to my last 50 race t's), banana and a yummy flapjack (to die for).

More Joggers are finishing now, a good number with big smiles! Post-race chatter is about how well we did, excuses made where needed!!, plus how we are doing in the quest for the hallowed HRRL mug (7 races needed), and the PJC mystery bonus (8 races needed). As this was race 8 out of 12, one or two already qualified, many still on course for their 7 or 8.....

Then, led by Pete and Kate, most of us decamp to the "back straight", about 50m from the finish, from where we can spot the rest of the Joggers approaching the track, and getting ready to cheer them in. Fuelled by the Clark's lovely fruit cake (made by Sue I believe, served for sure by Richard). You can see some of us in the picture of Sue finishing.(previous page)



Absolutely brilliant that most of our 26 strong team stayed together right until the last Jogger finished. Allie and Debbie finishing holding hands (aww), and the other Debbie (Pentland), just out of hospital, getting the biggest cheer of the day (well, there were more Joggers there by that time to cheer her home).

Special mentions to Debbie, her enthusiasm for these races and the club in general is unbounded, and I know the fact that so many stayed was appreciated. Also, Lewis, fairly new to PJC, sporting that superb moustache, and snappy headwear, that was the talk of all of us. Lewis has the opposite experience to Debbie, as he is the first Jogger home, so gets no support (yes, it's a hard life!!), but again has embraced being a PJC runner in a big way.

For once both Ben and Georgie Stait ran together (instead of alternating running/baby-sitting), and Ollie and Tony doing more restrained efforts ahead of Newport marathon a week later. Nice to see Richard L finish his first Salisbury, and yes you did go out too quick

Richard!! We have all done that at some time or other. And as I said, many more personal achievements, if not PBs, mixed in with a few struggles.

**Steven Wooldridge**

## **Purbrook Ladies Five – A Marshall's View**

At this year's Purbrook Ladies Five, Marilyn & I decided to have our first go at marshalling having previously marshalled on the Summer Cross Country. We arrived at the recreation ground around 8am, set up was in full swing, the finishing line was being prepared, and the club tent was up and busy starting to issue race numbers.

We wandered over to the Cricket Club pavilion where we had a catch up with some of those taking part and then had a welcome cuppa and a bun in the clubhouse, Gary was doing a sterling job on refreshment duty.

Having done a recce (yes, that is the correct spelling) previously on the course in the car, we knew roughly where our marshal post was, we again checked the position with Pete our lead marshal, he also issued us with lanyards that also had a useful map plus emergency contact information and high visibility tabards, at 8:30, Pete gave us a briefing which was very useful. After a few more catch ups, we decided to drive off to our marshalling point (9) and set up (I had my flask of coffee).

At point 9, Marilyn & I split up, as it was on a bend in the road, we decided to take both ends so we could control any traffic and other pedestrians to warn them of runners in the road (sadly some didn't take any notice).

Around just before 10am, the first runners came through, it was good to see Kate as the first of the PJC runners, I believe she finished 8th.

As an added, I decided to add some music to my post and played Born to Run on loop to try and encourage those who were starting to flag. I lost count at the amount of times I was asked if there were any more hills or are we nearly there yet!

Finally, just before 11am, the last runner came through as did Emma and the event car, we followed soon after that.

Arriving back at the Recreation ground, celebrations were in full swing, plenty of group photos being taken, not just those from PJC but by all the other clubs and individuals who had taken part, a thoroughly enjoyable few hours and it stayed dry.

If anyone reading this has not marshalled at an event, we would highly recommend, it's good fun, it's giving something back as these events would not happen without the marshalling and set up teams.

Thank you Pete Birch for being a fantastic lead Marshall and everyone who organised the event, hopefully we will be back to support next year, if we are not out and about on our travels.

**Garry & Marilyn Batten**



**A Wonderful Turn-out From Portsmouth Joggers!**



## **Couch to 5k Group (C25K)**

### **Spring - Summer 2025**

The class of 2025 is up and running and there are about 10 – 12 of us, plus leaders.

It's now week 4 at the time of writing so we are running for a total of 16 minutes with short periods of walking to break this up. Everyone is getting round and our spirits are high. We have been told by Tony (group leader) and both Sues (other leaders) that we will achieve the 5k challenge and we now expect to.

When asked why people joined the C25K group the answers were varied and included going for something previously seen as impossible, combating age and tiredness, joining a family member to do a charity run, getting fit, losing weight, an inexpensive way to exercise, getting support to exercise, redoing the programme after health issues and recovering from injury. It just shows what PJC can offer !

Feedback after four weeks of the C25K included reference to it being supportive, welcoming, a community, non-judgemental, friendly, awesome and good for mental health, That's pretty good !

It's been hard word work but rewarding and big thanks go to Tony, both Sues and the other regular joggers who have guided and supported us.

We look forward to getting us all to the finish line.

**Graeme Swain**



**Most of the current C25K Crew + 2 Sue's!**

Well that's it for this edition. Hope you enjoy it.

### **Two Requests**

If you are up for helping Sarah on an EDI Sub-Committee please let her know.

If you are running in a particularly wonderful event please write about it for the next Newsletter, to encourage other joggers to join you next time! Send all contributions to [picnews@gmail.com](mailto:picnews@gmail.com).

Thank you so much!!