



# SALFORD HERALD

ISSUE #5 DECEMBER 2007



## AWESOME ABYU MAKES HUGE BREAKTHROUGH



## REFLECTIONS OF 2007



## THE "GHOST RUNNER"



Duncon Mason & James Kovacs with our own 'Marathon Champ' Tomas Abyu.

Merry Christmas everybody!  
There have been some amazing performances by club members since the last newsletter and some heroic efforts in building a successful team for certain events. Of particular note is Tomas Abyu's PB at the Dublin Marathon of 2:10:37, following on from his storming race at the Great North Run. While collating this edition of the newsletter the same theme often runs through the email and forum posts, which is of countless Harriers who, despite a lack of fitness or injury or prior commitments, will always step into the breach for the club when asked to. You do the club proud and without your commitment we would often be unrepresented at large events. Andi Jones did a sterling job in assembling a team for the Caldedale Way Relays and our third placing shows what can be achieved when we are all pulling in the same direction. Like all the major events throughout this last year, on paper we have a team to be reckoned with, yet it often transpires that we are lacking on race day. As Geoff Doggett would have once said "You can only piss with the c\*\*ks you've got!" That ability to tell it like it is and to rally the troops as Geoff did is greatly missed, but there are others who are trying their damndest to make the club successful again. Let's reward their efforts and try to make ourselves available to them as much as we possibly can. I hope you all have a fantastic 2008. **James Williams**

### A Word From El Presidente

Hello everyone, first the good news: Leykun Amde has just sent an application form to join Salford Harriers, he is from Ethiopia, so welcome to Leykun who is now living in Bolton. Unfortunately I have received a letter of resignation from Sean McMyler claiming he is resigning because of the behaviour of the local jobs at the track and lack of anyone to look after the "B" team, so hopefully we can persuade him to stay with us. Please give him a telephone call, I certainly will.

Your subscriptions to Salford Harriers for the new financial year are **DUE NOW**.

SENIORS £25,  
SENIORS (who do not race) (£16),  
UNWAGED £16,  
JUNIORS/YOUTHS/BOYS £10,  
ASSOCIATES £5.  
Please pay: ROY STANDRING,  
or WRITE to me at:  
259 CHAPELTOWN ROAD, TURTON,  
BOLTON, LANCS, BL7 0HQ.  
Cheques payable to Salford Harriers.

From next year all athletes need to be registered with the English Athletics Authority and it will cost £5 for each individual athlete, also race entries are going up for which we as a club pay for: ie the Welsh Castles £12 each member, Calderdale Relays £12 each

member, English Cross Country relays £5 each athlete, Northern Cross Country £3.50 each athlete. This is just an example of just a few of the races we do and for paying your subs on time as these are quite considerable on-costs to the Club.

I have just received details of the National Cross Country at Alton Towers, Staffordshire on Saturday, 23rd February, 2008.

Ladies race (8k) at 2.15pm.

Ladies see Julie Laverock to enter.

Men's race (12k) at 3pm.

I enclose a provisional list of entries:

L. Amde, P. Bangani, P. Birkett, J. Brown, S. Bruton, W. Burns, M. Cryer, T. Elly, C. Hardman, R. Hughes, J. Jackson, A. Jones, J. Kovacs, W. Martin, M. Moorhouse, G. O'Neil, D. Shaw, M. Shaw, D. Townsend, M. Wakefield, P. West, P. Simons.

If you want me to enter you please get in touch with me or if you do NOT want entering in my list please let me know as it costs Salford Harriers £4 each entry. Please note I will be sending my list of entries on January 2nd as the entries close on Jan 7th, 2008.

**Roy Standring**

### Easy to Master

What a brilliant performance by the over 50's at the 'Masters' relays recently. Everyone ran great and excitement was at fever pitch from start to finish. Well done boys. Incidentally, now that

the Masters relays have been well and truly established to replace what were formerly called the Vets, does this mean that all men of a certain age are to be referred to as Masters? Bring it on I say. I hereby dedicate myself to train like a demon in the long and forlorn hope of being awarded a 'Masters Degree' at any given race! Wouldn't it make one feel just like a university 'dick'....well something like that anyway!! But what about the ladies equivalent? If the men are Masters, does this mean that our lovely lasses would be classed as well, er, mistresses?! Surely they can't bring that old chestnut into the equation. I mean imagine the scenario: "Will the first over 35 mistress please come forward". Blimey, what ever next? Anyway, I for one give that a huge thumbs down although I'm sure good old Andy O'Sullivan would have been on cloud nine presenting his awards!  
**Pete Budd**

## All For One

It's time finally to draw a line through the great tent controversy. Following a growing amount of adverse remarks from certain areas it was decided to organise a hush-hush training weekend for the majority of club members. However, on this occasion, running matters were strictly off the agenda, as a top class international tent pitching coach was rumoured to have been engaged to put the squad through their paces. After a TENTative opening when a few of the group were naturally on PINS for a bit, the importance of the occasion was quickly HAMMERED home to them and soon everyone was ROPED into affairs and they all began to PITCH in. Finally an impromptu doubles competition was held. Initially one pair STAKED their claim for success but were eventually PEGGED back and the eventual Champions prevailed. It was agreed after a fairly ROPEY start, the squad became quite HOOKED on the subject and everyone stood ERECT as one and gave the coach a ripple of applause. So if anyone is interested in emphasising their new found authority and helping out at a club organised race or one of the other "majors" whether it be setting up the tent, assisting at registration or marshalling, just turn up early, you'll be made really welcome by a very friendly group indeed, with lots of jolly banter. Criteria is as follows: - You don't have to be over 60, or hold a current position

within the club - or both. It would be really good to see you. **Pete Budd**

## Race Reports

### RED ROSE XC

Well done to James Kovacs on winning the overall Red Rose league. Not that they seem to know it as they have awarded the overall win to Darren Kay. (Maybe something to do with us not being in this league James, I am not sure, but well done.)

First XC event of the year over with. Bring on the next one!!

**Andy Jones**

### GEOFF DOGGETT 5K

A total of 25 harriers plus a number of supporters made the pilgrimage to Littleborough to support this race in reverence to our iconic former club president. It would, I feel, be quite superfluous to describe any aspects of the race. Instead I will take this opportunity to recall just a couple of personal memories about Geoff. Around about 10 years ago Geoff got wind of a rumour that Dave Lewis was on the lookout for another club. Lewis had been a superb athlete with a magnificent career including three National Cross Country titles and an olympic games appearance at 10,000 metres. Now in the twilight of his career, the Rossendale Harrier had never been part of a successful team in the many road relay/cross country team events. Something Salford could offer him in abundance. Armed with this as his bargaining tool, Geoff made a beeline for Lewis before the start of a race, somewhere in the Rochdale area as I recall. The conversation lasted only a couple of minutes and I could tell by the grimace on his face as he trudged back towards me that he had been less than successful. His response to my inquiry clearly confirming this observation; "He wants f\*\*\*\*\*g money doesn't he, well he can p\*\*s off". To my knowledge, Lewis was, and is, a thoroughly affable guy, but Geoff was nobodys fool and he would have hated the fact that someone, no matter how good they were, would only join Salford for monetary gain rather than the pure love of the sport. Lewis, to his credit, remains to this day a member of Rossendale.

On another occasion and poignantly just a few short weeks before his untimely death, we attended the big cross country race at Liverpool's Sefton

Park. Geoff offered to buy me a burger and a cup of tea from the mobile snack bar. Whilst in the queue Geoff noticed the outrageous prices that were being charged, and of course being the person that he was, let rip with a verbal broadside towards the proprietor of the snack bar, letting him know in no uncertain terms what he thought about his prices. This was so typical of Geoff. He was obviously very unwell at this stage, yet still sticking up for the man in the street when he knew of an injustice. We shall never, ever, forget this guy.

**Pete Budd**

### MISCELLANEOUS

May I first of all add my congratulations to all the superb results from the **Great North Run**, especially Tomas Abyu to get within the qualifying time for the world half marathon, pity there wasn't a team race because Salford would have won easily.

There have been many other fine performances recently by our members. **Wesham 10K** - 1st Billy Burns (32:33). **Leeds Abbey Dash 10K**: Ladies - 4th (and 1st F35) Rachel (34:32), 6th Tess (35:16). I believe that these are PB's for both of them. Men - 6th Carl (30:27), 30th Pumlani (32:17), 39th Rob (32:41). Carl and Rob also appear to have recorded PB's.

**Benidorm Half Marathon**. Not easy to pick out our performances from the results as there were so many Brits there. Maria's run stands out though; 5th in the Ladies race in 82:38, a tremendous improvement over the distance. Stan appears to be 2nd in the M60 with 87:04, just over a minute down on a 62-year-old Spaniard. Other times: Billy Martin (78:12), Sean McMyler (79:51), Pat Curran (129:39). Apologies for any omissions from this race. **Roy Profit**

### GREAT NORTH RUN

It's not often that we can justifiably say that men have had a raw deal in the sports pages. Fair enough, Paula Radcliffe has returned to the fray and even if she is a couple of minutes off her best and well beaten into second in the Great North Run this is clearly newsworthy. But the Guardian's report of the men's race comprises one paragraph of barely 30 words. There is more there on Steve Maclaren jogging it! The report failed to list the leading British competitor.

That was Tomas Abyu who ran a staggering 1:02:50 for the 13.2 miles.

This is I believe a minute and 15 seconds off his adult best, one of the fastest GB times of the past ten years, and a truly world class run from an athlete who sometimes races way too much - because of the absolutely barmy economics of UK sports funding. We say "adult best" because Tomas, who came here as a refugee from Ethiopia and is now a citizen, ran 63 minutes as a prodigious 17 year old back in his homeland. Still a life time best. But we did know he had it in him. Preselecting Tomas for the Beijing marathon now, subject to fitness, and giving him enough financial support to discourage the old four half marathons in 29 days (three in 15 days) routine of Spring this year would be a cracking idea. Congratulations to Tomas (62.48) finishing 4th, Andi (65.04), Pumlani (69.38) and Stan (1.24.05).

**Chris Paul**

Thanks to the BBC coverage as brilliant as ever, we were treated the sight of two women and two men racing each other for nearly two hours, a quarter screen view occasionally of the third man and nothing whatsoever of any happenings further back until thanks to Steve Cram's club knowledge we were just able to see Tomas sprinting out for 4th place and Andi's head a short time later. Given the paucity of female stars in the race, it's about time the two events were merged so that at least some of the men up to 70mins could be shown along with the leading ladies instead of uninteresting lengths of empty tarmac behind the leading men and women. **John Dawson**

### TRAFFORD 10KM

3rd Andy Parker (32.30), 6th Rob Hughes (33.19), 33rd Sean Mcmyler (36.52), 46th Maria Lowe (37.50 and 2nd lady, PB), 49th Stan Curran (38.01 and 1st v60). Team result 1st Salford.

Congratulations also to Tess and Rachel who counted for the winning Northern team in the **Cardiff 10km** with good times. **Stan Curran**

### CROSS KEYS RELAYS

Once again, a lovely day out on the Saddleworth Moors. Not too many teams out, but thanks to Paul Simons, Salford started the relay season with winning ways. Andi Jones had an epic battle with his old adversary Gareth Raven who was running for East Cheshire. Andi just got pipped at the

post with Gareth doing the fastest road lap of the day (15.23). Rob Hughes volunteering to do the fell for the first time put us in a winning position from which we were never headed. Billy Martin put in a solid lap to hand the glory leg to Phil West who bought Salford home first for the first time and was very disappointed that there were not thousands of spectators to cheer him over the line!

1. Salford Harriers A (73.17): Andi Jones (15.26), Rob Hughes (fell, 19.54), Billy Martin (18.00), Phil West (fell, 19.57).  
6. Salford Harriers B (78.29). Paul Simons (19.12), Paul Birkett (fell, 20.57), Andi Jones (16.22), James Jackson (fell, 21.58). **John Dawson**

### CALDERDALE WAY RELAYS

Leg 1- Phil West and Billy Martin  
Leg 2- John Brown and Billy Burns  
Leg 3- Dave Townsend and Mike Shackcloth  
Leg 4- Andi Jones and Jonny Gilby  
Leg 5- Phil Leybourne and Rob Hughes  
Leg 6- Duncan Mason and James Kovacs

Looking at the result. Horwich and Pudsey had cracking runs and deserved to fight it out. The second Pudsey runner on Leg 6 ran a very gutsy leg. He was off the back and struggling when Horwich repassed them with three miles to go. At 400 yards to go the two teams were neck and neck and he was still slightly detached but was still giving it his all!! Tough as old boots!! Horwich did their homework with their recruiting too. Looking at the records for legs and the overall event there have been some amazing runs down the years. John and Billy have the record for leg 1, some times are unbelievable. Lets aim to get more record times for the legs, with class runs from everyone I am sure it is possible to get a win....that would make my day!  
However, not to decry those who ran, you all gave everything for the team, well done!! **Andi Jones/ John Dawson**

### GRAVY PUD

The third running of the Gravy Pud 5 fell race on Sunday 2nd December was won by John Brown. Typically, he decided to do the JB version of the race and not the marked version. (And he was moaning about navigation for the CWR!!!)

Well done John. Phil West was a great 9th place. Well done all who ran (111 finishers). For further details and next years events please visit the NBLG website at [www.northernboyslovegravy.co.uk](http://www.northernboyslovegravy.co.uk) .  
**Andi Jones**

### NORTHERN ROAD RELAYS

MEN:

The Harriers team of of 6 had to settle for fourth place after a battling display at Birchwood. Hopes were high of a place on the podium taking into account the clubs outstanding record in this event. However the lads fell agonisingly short on this occasion. Hopeful of a strong start, Carl Hardman set off in a determined fashion on leg one, only to feel the effects of a work related injury, badly imparing his running and only coming back in 12th place in 26.40. Matt Moorhouse took on the mantel on leg 2 and made up 2 places in a good time of 26.26. Even though most of his efforts are concentrated on duathlon these days, its always good to see Matt, and you know he will always give his best. Tarus Elly still feeling his way back a bit after injury ran a solid 27.07 on leg 3 taking us to 8th. On leg 4, newcomer Andy Parker stepped into the fray and advanced us another place forward with 26.59. Andy was pretty disappointed with his run, nevertheless I feel certain with his attitude and commitment he will prove to be an exceptional addition to the club. The stage was now fair set for big John Brown to again compound the odds and blast us back into medal contention. This he did in style with a splendid 26.23 clocking. Over the past decade John has been a colossus for Salford, always delivering a big performance when it has been needed. Once again he's done us proud.



Rob Hughes was given the task of completing the proceedings on leg 6, and he didn't disappoint. Running solidly in 27.34. Although this wasnt

enough to hold off Altrinhams Andy Norman who burst through to snatch third place. Robs time will come, of that I am certain.

## LADIES

Bev Jenkins, getting stronger and fitter and faster with every race got the girls off to a handy start in 5th place with 20:12, handing over to the returning Estelle Malm who despite missing several months due to injury, again showed signs of her potential with 21:08 losing just three places. This was the incentive that Tess Walker needed, and fresh from her spectacular success in the clubs summer handicap, kept her particular pot boiling here with a swift 19.57 elevating the team up to fourth place. Late withdrawals to the original team meant recent newcomer Sarah Russ was given a chance to show her paces and despite feeling pretty nervous on her debut at this level acquitted herself quite well with her time of 23.03 and ninth team place overall. It was generally agreed that both ladies and Mens teams had by and large ran pretty well with the ladies squad in particular now developing into a very competitive unit indeed. **Pete Budd**



Estelle Malm being chased by Ex - Salford Harrier Ann Buckley

## Members News

### NEW MEMBERS

The Club extends a warm welcome to our new members Andy Parker, Simon Bruton and Leykun Amde.

### BIRTHDAYS

Birthday wishes are extended this month to:  
Billy Burns: (38) Michael Canny (49) John Dawson (73) Pete Haigh (53) Joe Lonarter (81) Maria Lowe (29) Estelle Malm (28) Duncan Mason (39) Kevin McCluskey (44) Anna Weaver (23) Michael Whithow (61)

## DENIS HOLDEN



On September 13 2007 at North Manchester General Hospital, Denis Holden passed away after a bravely fought illness. Loving Husband of Yvonne, special Father to Francine, Sharlene, Sandra, Paula and Lisa, dear Grandad of Lee and Joel and a loved Brother and Uncle. Denis will be sadly missed by all his Family and Friends.

## Physio Corner

### AN ACCOUNT ON STRETCHING

Stretching Exercise - to stretch or not to stretch? that is the question.

I would like to commence this article by presenting my own definition of stretching

“exercises aimed at moving a targeted anatomical structure a precise amount in order to gain a treatment effect”

Controversy surrounds the use and application of stretching within sport, this in part is due to individual athletes having diverse requirements. Stretching can be utilised for injury prevention, performance enhancement and rehabilitation from injury. In the discussion that follows I shall attempt to present a consensus from the literature, combined with my own experiences as an athlete and as a physiotherapist working with athletes.

Stretching has been demonstrated by research to make little or no significant change to injury rates for certain populations. However anecdotally most therapists and athletes alike believe it has a role to play. As a result of movement dysfunction, mobiliser muscles- in particular the two joint muscles, become increasingly active, shorten and tighten. In this shortened state they can cause injury by two mechanisms. The first could be within the muscles themselves, due to over activity they can fatigue quicker becoming increasingly susceptible to injury. Secondly, as a consequence of reduced functional length, they exert more influence on the body and consequently can change the movement patterns. The resultant change in joint movement can lead to secondary overuse injuries

Another factor to support the use of

stretching in sport is for enhancing performance. Should soft tissues, particularly nerves and two joint muscles, remain extensible, increased ranges of motion may be possible. In turn this may add a few millimetres onto a stride to improve style and efficiency. To this end stretching should form a part of an athlete's training regime.

There is more evidence to suggest that stretching should form a part of soft tissue rehabilitation plans. Correctly applied stretching at the correct juncture in the healing process will enhance recovery. It would be necessary to consult your Chartered Physiotherapist or Sports Rehabilitation Professional as to when and exactly how this should be applied, as severity of injury and other factors require consideration. Controlled stretching will increase extensibility of scar tissue in the healing region. More importantly the alignment of collagen in the healing tissue can be influenced to produce increased tensile strength. This will enable the area to withstand higher forces sooner and facilitate a more rapid return to training and competition.

There are several types of stretching used by athletes these include PNF, static and dynamic stretching. PNF techniques utilise muscle contraction to induce relaxation in a muscle. The muscle is then stretched in this relaxed state theoretically resulting in a more effective change in extensibility. Static stretching is the most commonly applied technique, during which the target tissue is maintained in a lengthened position for a predetermined duration. Its benefits include the fact it is relatively safe and is specific to a structure. Dynamic stretching is an alternative technique aimed at mobilising tissue during repeated active, functional movements, a degree of neuromuscular control is required to perform these safely. All three types can be used by athletes to good effect, personal preference often being the determining factor, as to which technique is selected.

The next contentious point is the timing of stretching, whether to do before or after activity. Some evidence suggests that stretching before activity can detract from performance as it is suggested that muscles in a lengthened state cannot develop torque as efficiently. This consideration should be given in the performance of

stretching exercise immediately prior to power activities such as 100m sprint or weight lifting. Yet stretching can also be an important part of an athlete's mental readiness, in addition to physical preparation. Others state that the increased extensibility resulting from a stretching regime would enhance performance for the reasons already discussed. Relating this to running, an endurance event, there is no reason why prior stretching should detract from performance. Stretching following intense activity has obvious benefits in lengthening tissues that have tightened during activity and should certainly be performed. There is no evidence, contrary to popular belief, that stretching can relieve the effects of delayed onset muscle soreness following intense exercise.

How long a stretch should be held for has been recommended to be for 30 seconds for some time now. It is hypothesised that this time is required for receptors within the muscle to adapt to the revised length. It has been shown that thirty seconds appears to be more effective than shorter durations and no less effective than longer ones.

What is of importance is stretching technique. Careful isolation of the stretch to the target tissue is of obvious benefit for success. For this reason a basic anatomical knowledge is required to prescribe, give feedback and correct performance on these exercises. For example, the hamstring muscles are possibly the most commonly stretched muscle in the body. These muscles take origin from the buttock and insert just below the back of the knee. It can be seen that to stretch these muscles effectively it is necessary to involve both of these joints in the exercise, whilst not involving any other regions. However, frequently hamstring stretches are mistakenly performed with spinal or foot and ankle movement components, resulting in stretching of the sciatic nerve and its neural connections. This practice could in fact prove detrimental particularly for those with spinal complaints.

Many muscle groups need to be considered for stretching maintenance in distance running. Below is a list of muscle groups with the activity indicated which will predominantly cause that muscle to tighten. Muscles that become shortened and require regular stretching to maintain functional length are:

- Hamstrings
- Piriformis
- Iliotibial band
- Rectus femoris
- Back extensors
- Calf muscles

I hope the above discussion has demystified some of the points surrounding the use and application of stretching in sport and that you can make a more informed decision on whether to stretch or not to stretch. My personal approach would advocate use of stretching on a regular basis at least twice a week, either with a controlled static technique with a 30 second hold before and after sessions and competition or dynamically as part of a functional warm up prior to running faster.

If you would like to know more or have any concerns then make an appointment with either of the clubs Chartered Physiotherapists; myself or James.

Happy stretching!  
**Duncan Mason**

## **Blast From The Past**

### **SALFORD'S STEEPLECHASERS.**

Athletics Weekly is currently running a series listing the UK all-time top 10 in each event. Eminent athletics historian and statistician, Mel Watman, has compiled the rankings, based on points for each of the athletes' major championships and records. The issue dated 8th November listed the rankings for the 3000 metres steeplechase and Salford's two great runners from the 1930's, George Bailey and Tom Evenson, were included, Bailey in 5th and Evenson in 8th places. They were outstanding runners in all branches of distance running whether it be track, road or cross country. They both reached national and international recognition for the first time in 1930 and dominated the British steeplechase scene during the first half of the decade.

In 1930, George won the AAA championship in the steeplechase and, representing England, went on to win that event in the first British Empire Games (now the Commonwealth Games) at Hamilton, Canada. Tom concentrated on the flat events that season and was also selected for the Empire Games where he ran the 3

miles, finishing 5th, and the 6 miles where he was 3rd. After the Games, there was a match between the British Empire and the USA in Chicago which was mainly a relays meeting. It included a 4 x 880 yards steeplechase but George, although the Empire champion, was not selected for the team in this event. This was because the team mainly consisted of 400 metres hurdlers including the legendary Lord Burghley, 1928 Olympic champion in that event, and it can be said that the selection policy was justified when the Empire team won the race. There was a 3 miles team race at the meeting and Tom surprised everyone by winning that event.

The following year Tom also turned his attention to the steeplechase and narrowly beat George to win the AAA title. Later in the season, he set a new British best time for the 3000 metres steeplechase when he ran 9m 27.4 in a match against France.

In 1932, Tom triumphed again in the AAA championship after another close race with George. Both were selected for that year's Olympic Games in Los Angeles. In the Games, there were 2 heats for the steeplechase, with the first 5 in each heat progressing to the final. Tom won heat 1 in a new British best time of 9m 18.8s. This British best time lasted about 15 minutes. George was in heat 2 which had a stronger field, but the first 4 got clear of the rest well before the end with George finishing a comfortable 4th in a new British best of 9m 16.0s. In contrast to Tom's 15 minutes of fame with his British best, George's time lasted for 19 years until John Disley ran 9m 11.6s in 1951. Disley went on to win bronze in this event in the 1952 Olympics.

Another British best could have been expected in the final, but this proved impossible when the race was marred by one of the greatest acts of incompetence in Olympic history. As we all know, 3000 metres is 7 laps of the track, but the lap counter was not able to count correctly up to this number. There was an outstanding Finnish runner in the race, Volmari Iso-Hollo, one of the greatest of the "Flying Finns" who dominated world distance running between the two world wars. He had already finished 2nd in the 10000 metres and quickly took a clear lead in this race. Behind him, there was quite a battle for the remaining medals with Tom and George right in the thick

of it. As the field came to what they thought was the finish after 7 laps, the runners were shocked to hear the bell ringing and were made to run an extra lap.

Approaching the 3000 metres mark, George was in a medal position but could not hold it over this additional lap and finished 5th. In contrast, Tom finished well and narrowly beat an American, Joseph McCluskey, to take second place and the silver medal. The eventual distance covered was 3460 metres.

In 1933, Tom did some serious running over 1 mile. He won the Northern title for this event and entered the AAA Championships at London's White City. He qualified comfortably from his heat but was unable to match the speed of the true milers in the final and finished 4th. The next race on the track was the steeplechase and who is that lining up at the start? Yes, Tom Evenson again. However, Tom, the defending champion, was unable to make an impact and also finished 4th in this race. Unfortunately for the Britons, Iso-Hollo had come over from Finland and won easily from George Bailey.

The following year, the 2nd British Empire Games were held at the White City. In the steeplechase, Tom finished 2nd, George 3rd and another Salford Harrier, Pat Campbell was 4th. Although perhaps overshadowed by the performances of Tom and George, Pat was a fine all-round runner in his own right and enjoyed a long and successful career. He is best remembered for his exploits in the Rivington Pike fell race which he won 9 times in 10 years. He did not win all 10 because on one occasion the race clashed with the Manchester to Blackpool Relay and he was required to run a leg for Salford in that race. 1935 was George's last year as a steeplechaser but he signed off successfully with victory in the AAA championship and the international match against France. Tom continued in 1936 and after winning the AAA title was selected for his second Olympic Games, this time in Berlin. However, he was not in the form of 4 years previously and failed to reach the final. Iso-Hollo was again the winner, in world record time, after earlier finishing 3rd in the 10000 metres.

George's 1932 time of 9m 16.0s remained a Salford best performance for 47 years. It was finally beaten by

Peter Morris in 1979 with a time of 9m 02.6s. Peter had previously belonged to Blackpool and 6 years earlier, when a member of that club, had placed 4th on the British year list with 8:33.8 achieved in a race in France. He is the fastest steeplechaser to have belonged to Salford Harriers.

Peter's time of 9:02.6 remained a club best until 1998 when John Brown had the first of 2 excellent seasons at the event and ran 8:55.6. He was marginally slower with 8:56.3 the following season when he reached the final of the AAA Championship. John's time did not last long as a club best because Andy Morgan-Lee joined us. Andy had several seasons when he was below 9 minutes and achieved his best in 2000. He qualified for the final of the AAA Championship that year with a time of 8:43.95 which remains the club best performance in the event. In 2001, he won the national Inter-Counties steeplechase title.

Lee Dunn was an outstanding steeplechase prospect when a junior. In 1989, aged 18 and a member of Sale H., he ran 9:00.04. The following year he was slightly slower with 9:01.49. He was never to approach these times again. A glance at this year's national steeplechase ranking demonstrates how the marks of George Bailey and Tom Evenson in 1932 have stood the test of time. 75 years later, George's 9:16.0 would place 26th and Tom's 9:18.8 28th on the 2007 lists. **Roy Profitt.**

#### JOHN TARRANT "The Ghost Runner"

The following piece has been taken from the internet, and I have taken extracts from John Tarrant's book of the same name. A fascinating read and a true champion. **James Williams.**

John Tarrant was born in 1932. Soon after the outbreak of war, since his father was on active service and his mother was seriously ill, John and his brother were taken into care. They had a tough time in the home they were sent to, but eventually were re-united with their father, who had re-married when their mother died.

John had some success as a runner at school, but where he was living in Buxton, there was little interest in athletics at that time, and he drifted into boxing. Later, in a small boxing

tournament John fought for a prize of a £1 and subsequently in another for a prize of 30 shillings. In his boxing career he won five bouts and lost four, and his biggest purse was £4. His boxing career was over before his 20th birthday with total earnings of £17!

*'The most enjoyable part of my boxing training was the road work, and although my boxing friends could out-punch me in the gym they could not out-pace me on the road'*

John then decided to try athletics.

*'Living in Buxton was a famous athlete by the name of George Bailey, a member of Salford Harriers. George was Empire Games steeplechase champion in 1930. In 1932 he finished fifth in the Olympic Games in the same event. I got to know George quite well, and we often did some training together. Early in his athletics career George had unwittingly competed at unregistered sports meetings. This falls foul of Amateur Athletic Association laws! When George had become an international star, someone reported him for his 'error', and he was suspended from competing in athletics for three months. 'When I realised that by boxing for money I had broken the AAA laws I thought of George Bailey, and his misfortune. I decided to put this record straight before I embarked on my return to athletics'.*

He applied to Derbyshire AAA for reinstatement as an amateur, giving full details of his boxing career. However, his appeal was refused and he was told to contact the Amateur Boxing Association. They in turn referred him to the Athletics Association and this went on for a long time.

John decided to gate crash the Liverpool marathon in 1956. At this time he was working in a stone quarry, working 12 hour shifts, 7am to 8pm, with an hour break for lunch. He also worked overtime on a Saturday. His long 12 mile run was done on his only free day, a Sunday. He ran in the race without a number, which went without comment until he took the lead at 11 miles. He was eventually reduced to a walk at 19 miles, since he had not drunk any liquid in the race at all in hot conditions. He staggered on to 24 miles, walking and running, before taking a lift. However, his run was taken up by the press, and his fight for

amateur status was publicised. This was also the first time he was referred to as the "ghost runner" by the Daily Express.

To give him more time for training, he changed jobs. He was not successful initially in races, but experienced runners encouraged him to continue.

Unfortunately he was now well known and there were attempts to keep him out of races. He would change in the car, line up in cap and long coat, which he would take off as the gun went, running too fast to be caught by the protesting officials!

Runners were sympathetic, and the leading marathon runner of the day, Arthur Keily, offered to write to Athletics Weekly, the major publication in the sport, pushing for his reinstatement. Races began to invite him to "ghost run" their events.

Following a television interview on national television a huge petition was circulated among athletics clubs asking for John Tarrant's reinstatement. As a result he was reinstated as an amateur. However his amateur status would not be recognised by the IAAF, so he would be unable to represent his country.

*'Immediately I joined Salford Harriers by sending a fee and membership form to the club secretary. Tom Helliwell wrote back to me confirming my membership, and thanking me for honouring my promise to join the club'.*

In 1960 John was second in the AAA Marathon championships behind Brian Kilby, in 2:25:17. It was around this time that he first encountered another tough competitor in the City of Liverpool Marathon.

*'My good friend Joe Lancaster was looking after me on the run, and he was concerned that I was doing all the work. After about 17 miles I remember Joe shouting out from a passing car "John, ease up and let Ron take the lead". This remark seemed to offend, or inspire, Ron for he immediately sprinted away into a big lead. It was around 21 miles when I eventually caught up with Ron again, and we remained together until around 24 miles, when Ron put in a burst which I could not match - on he went to victory clocking 2:24:22 in this his first marathon! Ever since that day one of the most famous names in marathon*

*history - Ron Hill - has never looked back'.*

In 1962 John tried his first ultra, winning the South London Harriers 30 miles in 2:59:55. In 1964 he won the Woodford to Southend 36 miles race, and then attempted his first London to Brighton, finishing fourth in 5:56:20. 1965 saw him run a whole succession of ultra road races, winning the Exeter-Plymouth 44 miler, the Isle of Man 40, the Liverpool to Blackpool 48.5 miler and a 40 mile track race in Dublin in 4:11:11, the third best time in the world. However he was not to finish his last two ultra races that year.

The following year saw an excellent start with wins in the Exeter-Plymouth and Isle of Man races, he had various problems in later races, including stomach trouble. Finally in the 40 mile track race at the Maindy Stadium in Wales his fortune turned. He set a new world 40 mile track best of 4:03:28. 1967 saw John Tarrant totally dominate Ultrarunning in Britain. He won the Epsom 40 miler in close to record time, the Exeter-Plymouth, the Isle of Man 40, Liverpool-Blackpool, the SLH 30 and the London to Brighton. However at Cardiff an inspired Lynn Hughes became the first man to run 40 miles in under four hours taking John's record, and relegating him to second place.

In November of that year, John travelled to America to compete in the National 50 mile championships; however his appearance could not be recognised officially, so he was forced to be a "ghost runner" with the blessing of the organisers.

The race was won by Tom Osler in 5:52, with John tiring in the latter stages and finishing in 6:02.

1968 saw John fulfil a long held ambition, to run in the Comrades. He was to finish fourth. He was to have more success in the Brighton which he won in 5:37:27. The following year he won the Exeter-Plymouth, then decided to take a one way trip to South Africa, to run the Comrades, aiming to work there to earn his return fare. He was only 28th in that year's Comrades, but decided to stay on, thinking that it would be very difficult to raise the money to return to South Africa again.

He took advantage of a cheap return package from South Africa to the Brighton to defend his title, but was not to finish. He then entered the Walton 100 miler where he was up against

Dave Box, a good friend of his from South Africa. Box had set an unratifiable world best in South Africa and was determined to get the official record.

Dave Box and John lived and trained together in the weeks leading up to the Walton race. Dave and John became locked in a battle after 50 miles, but John then was violently sick and lost a mile to his South Africa rival. As he came out of his bad patch he slowly closed on the South African. When he came up along side, Dave sprinted away, this continued for some time but then John took the lead for good. He finished with a new world 100 mile track best of 12:31:10.

He then returned to South Africa, again leaving his family behind him. He again ran the Comrades, but once again was unable to produce his best form. He entered the 100 miler in King Park stadium, Durban, but the organisers said that since it was to be held on a closed track he could not run. Dave Box ran, and took the world best, recording 12:15:09.

John eventually returned home in December 1970 to unemployment. His first race was a 50 mile track event which he won in 5:43:31. John again returned to South Africa for the 1971 Comrades. This run was to be hit by stomach trouble. He recovered from this to run - and win - the multi-racial Goldtop 50 miles in 5:40. The only other white runner, a 15 year old boy, was suspended for a month for competing in the race!

Late one evening soon after John awoke feeling sick, he vomited blood, and also subsequently passed blood in a bowel motion. An ulcer was diagnosed. Trying to keep in training despite having lost four pints of blood, he was reduced in jogging on the spot in the hospital bathroom! His blood count slowly returned to normal and he built his training up to a 100 miles a week in preparation for a 100 mile race in England, in an attempt to regain his world track best.

John never really got moving well in the track race, and although he rallied later in the race, closing to within a lap and a half at 90 miles, Ron Bentley, the race leader hung on to win in 12:37:55, with John finishing in 12:51:28.

After this race, John's form fluctuated but gradually grew worse. Then in April 1972 he had another massive gastric

haemorrhage. Once again he seemed to have recovered, finishing fourth in the Welsh marathon in 2:34. Later he ran a 40 mile track race in 4:33:43, but a gradual loss of form led John to announce his retirement. Soon after he found he was losing weight. He re-entered hospital but the doctors thought his "ulcers" were healing and were reluctant to undertake an exploratory operation. His form over shorter distances was still good. He was in training for the 1973 24 Hour race, but had now lost 14 pounds from his normal body weight. His weight continued to drop and an exploratory operation was carried out. He was found to have stomach cancer. After having had half his stomach removed, John organised a charity run and ran for 10 miles to raise money for the hospital that was looking after him. Sadly, he eventually lost his battle with cancer and died on the 19th of January 1975.

#### JOHN TARRANT RECORD

Athletic Record of John Tarrant  
(1932-1975)

#### Walton-on-Thames

World Record for 100 miles (1969).

**Isle of Man** (39 miles) Winner 1965-67. Set course record in 1965 time 4hrs 11mins 26secs.

**Exeter to Plymouth** (44 miles) Winner 1965-67. Set course record in 1967 time 4hrs 44mins 35secs.

**Liverpool to Blackpool** (48 miles) Winner 1965, 67. Set course record in 1967 time 4hrs 55mins 56secs.

**London to Brighton** (52 miles) Winner 1967. Time 5hrs 41mins 50secs. A strong head wind prevented record timings in this race.

**Isle of Wight Marathon** (26 miles 385 yards) Winner in 1960-62. Set course record of 2hrs 26mins 44secs in 1962.

**City of Liverpool Marathon** (26 miles 385 yards) Winner in 1960. Set course record time 2hrs 22mins 35secs.

**Maindy Stadium** (40 miles) 1966. Set World Record time 4hrs 3mins 28secs.

**Salford Harriers 10 miles track championship** Winner 1958-66. Set course record 1963 time 51mins 35secs.

**Roath, Cardiff** (16 miles) Winner 1960, 62, 65, 66 and twice in 1967.

**Herefordshire County Championship** (20 miles) Winner 1962-64, 66, 67.

**Newport** (10 miles) Winner 1960, 61, 67.

**Hereford to Ross-on-Wye** (14 miles) Winner 1960, 62. Broke course record

each time.

**South London Harriers** (30 miles) Winner 1962,67.

**Woodford to Southend** (36 miles) Winner 1964.

**Herefordshire County six mile track championship** Winner 1962, 66, 67.

**Schoolboy Champion at ? and ? miles** 1946, 47.

**National 20 miles Championships** Champion in 1960.

**National Road Runners Club Marathon** (26 miles 385 yards) Champion in 1962.

**National Territorial Army Championships** (Cross Country) Champion in 1960, 61.

- Winner of three 40 mile track races in England, Ireland and Wales.
- First man ever to do the grand slam in Britain's four epic long distance road races in one season (1967), i.e. London to Brighton, Isle of Man, Exeter to Plymouth, and Liverpool to Blackpool.
- In the AAA Marathon Championship of 1960, Tarrant's time was 2hrs 25mins 17secs.

## Last Word

Following on from my earlier comments, I found this poem in John Tarrants book and thought it quite inspiring and relevant to us all. Read it, digest it and carry these sentiments with you into 2008. Have a great one.

**James Williams**

If you think you're beaten you are,  
If you think you are not - you don't;  
If you like to win, but think you can't,  
It's almost certain you won't;  
If you think you'll lose, you've lost,  
For oft in the world we find,  
Success begins with a fellow's will;  
It's all in the state of your mind.  
If you think you're outclassed, you are;  
You've got to think high to rise;  
You've got to be sure of yourself  
Before you can take home the prize.  
Life's battles don't always go  
To the strongest or fastest man;  
But sooner or later the man who wins,  
Is the man who thinks he can!



118 118???!



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