

CREWKERNE **RUNNING** CLUB

History 1982 - 1987

INTRODUCTION

The history has been produced with the help of photographs and details supplied by various club members . The first few years write up has been produced from notes made by the first club captain (Chris Wills) found by Martin Cook in the handicap book .



mid-1920s presentation of the cup to Mr Samways of Merriott, the winner of the marathon race that was once held annually at Crewkerne on Easter Monday. Miss Sparks presenting the cup, Police Sergeant Broom is one of three of the local force on parade.

Left.
The earliest record of running as a sport in Crewkerne.

1984

The club was first formed by Bob Parsonson in the summer of 1984 . The first meeting to form the club was held in the Speedwell club in July . At this meeting it was decided to meet at Henhayes car park on Sundays & Wednesdays . For the next 3 months the club met informally with members who could only run 1 mile gradually improving with the help & encouragement of Big Bob and Chris Wills .

August First event entered by club was the Milborne Port 10 . The club picked up its first awards , Anne Wills came 2nd lady , Roy Smart 1st veteran & Bob Parsonson 2nd vet .



Left.
Bob Parsonson and Peter Chatfield at Milborne Port 1984

New running club soon into stride

CREWKERNE Running Club was striding out with confidence last week after its official inauguration.

Two weekly training sessions led after a meeting of about two dozen enthusiasts in June, though only on an informal basis until this month's official meeting. Even then it proved to be a runaway success as runners of all standards joined up to train.

Last week even more people — about 28 — turned up, and altogether there should be more than 40 people running regularly with the club, which has plumped for red colours.

The idea for the club stemmed from Crewkerne man Bob Parsonson (51) who has been running for two years and has already taken part in the London Marathon.

Mr Parsonson, credit controller with Normalair-Garrett at Yeovil, said: "The meeting was marvellous. By and we've got a fantastic committee." He had suggested calling it a South Somerset running club but three people who live outside Crewkerne suggested the town name as an "identifying tag".

Through the winter the club will be running from different areas and starting points as members come from a wide area, from Yeovil, Winsham, Merriott, South Petherton, North Perrott, Hazelbury Plucknett and Crewkerne itself.

The club will be affiliated to Somerset Amateur Athletic Association. The club went into action immediately when at the weekend about a dozen ran in the half-marathon at Burnham-on-Sea.

Club captain is Merriott man Chris Wills. He has been running for the past two or three years.

He said: "We're hoping it will get off the ground with new people joining us. We'll carry on as before for all types and all standards."

Club chairman is Derek Boles of Hazelbury Plucknett; secretary is Roy Smart, chairman of Winsham Parish Council; and treasurer is Peter Chatfield of Yeovil.

Crewkerne man George Rawlings takes the post of events diarist, while training run organiser is Martin Denman of North Perrott.

NEW CLUB IS MAKING GREAT STRIDES

A NEW running club in South Somerset has proved to be a runaway success — even before the official launch.

The idea for the club stemmed from Crewkerne man Bob Parsonson (51), who has been running for only two years and has already taken part in the London Marathon.

Two weekly training sessions on Wednesdays and Saturdays started after a meeting of about two dozen keen runners back in June. Since then more have shown interest but the club ran for a trial period during the summer because of holidays. On Thursday though there will be a meeting to officially launch and name the club.

Mr Parsonson, credit controller with Normalair-Garrett in Yeovil, said: "It's not just for Crewkerne but the whole of south Somerset and anyone who wants to join us is most welcome."

"We hope the whole idea of the club was to get people running purely for enjoyment and to help each other, with the more experienced people helping new ones. We're after a whole range of people.

Already the club is producing results. One man who started in June, after doing no running for a couple of years, is now running 10 miles non-stop. Mr Parsonson himself only took up running after doing a sponsored walk and then Crewkerne carnival mini-marathon.

"Anyone can do it if the want to. It's all about enjoyment," he said. "We hope it will cater for everyone, and hope we can get even more."

A steering committee has been formed but the club will be formally set up at Thursday's meeting and officially named. Anyone interested — whether they are novice or marathon runners — can go along to the meeting on 20th September at the Goodwood Club, Abbey Street Crewkerne, at 8 pm.

September Spurred on by Augusts' successes club members were seen constantly pounding the roads around Hewish and Wayford . This was to be a busy month of events . Only one of these events is still going .

Hambridge Marathon & 8 mile race Good turn out of runners from club on a hot day , Big Bob tackles the Marathon but stops after the first 8 to save himself for the forthcoming Gloucester and Michelle Rawlings picks up a prize .

Chard 10Km It seems that this event was held in September from Chris' notes it was held on New Years day for several years after this date . Paul Wills (aged 8) picked up an award for completing the 6.2 miles (not allowed now) and Sue Saunders wins a ladies trophy .

South Petherton Carnival Run On the same weekend as the Chard run Liz Harris is 1st Lady vet , Pat Tanswell is 2nd and Bill Adams is 4th .

Burnham on Sea Half Marathon The first major event and the longest event to date for several of club . This was my 2nd Half after completing the Portland event the previous week . My only recollection of this event is really struggling and feeling sick with the taste of the salty sea air as we approach the finish . The field in this event was very good with our best runner (probably Pat Tanswell) only coming in 50th .So it was a great surprise when at the presentation that Anne Wills was declared 1st Lady vet she actually got her hands on the trophy only to be told that there had been an error and in fact she had been placed 1st instead of 601st !

September 20 The first A.G.M. to officially form the club . Running club colours will be red & to be affiliated to A.A.A.s (£3.00 only) , membership was set at £1.00 October Runs at Ilchester , Sherborne & Yeovil were completed this month with Paul Doble narrowly missing a trophy at Ichester and Helen Gale winning a ladies veterans prise at Yeovil .

November Not many events in this month so Sundays were spend around the lanes of Crewkerne .

December The first club handicap took part in the First week of this month . Won by Derek Boles , Roy Smart 2nd and Glynnis Watt 3rd . 25 people took part with a finishing spread of 9 minutes . Handicaps were set by Chris wills .

The final event of the year was the West Bay to Beaminster run (held just after Christmas) this was a good run to blow away the excesses of Christmas . Glynnis Watt retained her 1st lady vets prize.

1985

With several runners training for spring Marathons training runs were well attended with Chris and Bob giving encouragement , advice and lots of verbal abuse (mainly from Bob) .

Richard Stenner was the star of this year winning a race at Taunton , placing 2nd in age group at Alweston , attaining a P.B. at the Bath half Marathon and another 2nd at Bridport.



Left.
Bob Parsonson (long red trousers)
in the first Crewkerne Mini-
Marathon.
June 1982

Each of these events were attended by at least 15 Crewkerne 'Athletes'. Julie Webb was first lady home in the 4.5 mile event at Alweston with Paul Wills 30th overall (5th minor (under 12)). Bath was the first large event of the year with lots of P.B.s . One thing that typified the clubs support for each other and Ann Wills determination was what happened at Bath . Ann came in last taking 2 hour 30 + with the whole club cheering her in the finishing straight . It was discovered later that she was suffering from very low blood pressure & the specialists could not see how she ran the 1st mile let alone 13.1 .

The club organised its first long pre London training run on the Good Friday . This like other years to this date started at South Petherton but went into Yeovil along the cartgate link road and then back into Martock finishing (I think) up Pitway hill . One thing that I can remember about this run was that Chris Wills almost got Flattened by a car and caravan near Martock , several curt words were mentioned by him .

London marathon was a good event with Martin Denman 3h 20 , Martin Cook 3h 24 , Bill Adams 3h 33 , Paul Murley 3h 38 , Pete Chatfield 4h 50 and Big Bob 5h 5 mins . (I have also noted that in my diary I mentioned that Sue Ridout Finished in about 3h 24 the same time as me).

George Rawlings and Pat Tanswell completed the Taunton Marathon , Glyniss Watt the Birmingham Marathon and some (I think it may have been Martin Denman & Roy Smart) the Paris Marathon .

Pete Chatfield wins a first prize in (£60 worth of Brooks Trilogy shoes) in a Todays Runner Magazine competition .



'Big Bob'
Parsonson on
Westminster
Bridge at the
finish of the
1983 London
Marathon.
Distinct lack
of people!

Some memorable mishaps and events occurred this year as follows :

1. Chris Wills got attacked by a Lamp Post in Chard Road .
 2. Bill Adams while demonstrating his ability to run backwards in South street came a cropper when he ran into and almost over a parked car .
 3. The best Walking disaster must go to Pat Tanswell . Since running the Taunton Marathon he had been suffering with a groin strain and hadn't been seen for most of the year . He had started to secretly come back to form when he fell down stairs at work . He had just about got over this when he fell off his bike going to work hurting one of his wrists . He made an appearance at the Handicap . After more secret training he showed up at our Wednesday night circuit training section to show us all just how quick he had become . He was certainly quick for during one of Dereks shuttle runs he fails to stop in time and slammed into the wall at the end of the sports hall and broke both of his wrists .
- This did have one good thing about it he was not a threat at the pre-London skittles evening .

The 2nd Club handicap was well attended (29) and won by Simon Elliott , Bob Parsonson 2nd and Ann Wills 3rd . Finishing spread this year was 10 mins 50 secs .



Left.
Runners going up Abbey Street during the 1983 Crewkerne Mini-Marathon.

Below left.
At an early Yeovil 10K race. Number 109 Derek Boles and number 13 Clive Harwood are still regular runners with the club. Martin Denman(323) and George Rawlings (307) can be seen from time to time.



1986

Good times were posted at Bath by all Richard Stenner 1 h 17 , Martin Denman and George Rawlings 1 h 23 and Anne Wills 1 h 53 .

This next part is Chris Wills' Club Captains report 1986 to 1987 .

' Ladies and Gentlemen (that's an over statement to start with) , so I'll start again -Club members . This believe it or not will be our 4th year as Crewkerne Running Club and we have come along way since our inaugural meeting in July 1984 . I remember travelling to the meeting with John Hoare debating how many would turn up . We agreed half a dozen at most . But about 25 people turned up . It showed as now that a running club in Crewkerne is most welcome recreation . It is to you the membership that I on behalf of the committee thank you for your magnificent support over the years . The club has gone from strength to strength particularly with regard to our sense of fun and fair play .'

'New Years Honours' You can forget the one where M.B.E.s , O.B.E.s etc. are dished out , my list is a short one - KING and QUEEN of the MOUNTAINS .

QUEEN - Kay Young

Only a few of us were privileged to witness a feat which desires this most prestigious award . The event occurred last year (1986) after Kay had unfortunately broken her ankle only days before the Crewkerne Mini-marathon . After a couple of months to recover Kay was determined to fulfil her obligation to raise sponsor money by running the carnival run . So it was that one summers day she tackled the course with other club members in tow. After 5 miles and approaching the bottom of shoot hill the ultimate challenge was stupidly issued - THE LAST ONE TO THE TOP IS A 'POOF' or words to that affect . With that Kay took off and beat 7 barrels out of the rest of us , leaving us floundering and weezing in her wake. Still life has its consequences as the view from behind was quite spectacular . For this she is awarded the Queen of the mountains .

KING - Bob Parsonson

Not much spectacular about this fellow just bloody minded pigheadedness and not a little determination .We all thought he was crazy and not a lot happened to change our minds .

This was without doubt the achievement of the year and second only to Kays attack on shoot hill . I refer of course to Bobs onslaught on Snowdon in November . For those who don't know Snowdon is a mountain and the marathon is reputed to be the toughest in Great Britain .

No doubt Bob is totally speechless which doesn't often happen , to receive this award which is thoroughly deserved .

As if doing this Marathon was not achievement enough he has 'conned' about half of the club into coming back this year (1987) with him to do it all over again .

One thing we can all be sure of is that we'll not let him down and Anne will almost certainly dispute the distance saying that it was at least 40 miles (and the hills will make it 45).

Marathon Sponsorship Last year the club raised the following amounts in sponsorship:-

£6000 + Wheelchairs , £650 + Bristol M.R.I Scanner , £500 + Martin Ridley , £200 + Scouts , £200 + Crewkerne Hospital

The C.R.C is not all about running up hills (although you can't avoid them in Crewkerne) or running Marathons . This year we have had some interesting tales to tell this year .

1/ Ken Priest - 1st member to complete a triathlon . (2 mile swim , 6 mile run & 18 miles on bicycle .

2/ Crewkerne cycle weeks .

a/ Cycle touring - 30 odd miles represented by about 12 people . Clive Harwood lost his chain in the 1st two miles rendering his bike useless .

The 2nd ride was so windy that we almost had to walk down hill . Clives' legs gave out and he had a job to struggle home via a short cut . Roy Smart bought a bike purely so we wouldn't leave him behind .

b/ Cycle racing - The club entered 3 teams in this event which lapped the one way system , we ended up coming 1st , 3rd and 4th .

This was an extremely dangerous event as Clive Harwood proved after almost breaking into Lloyds Bank after failing to negotiate the turn into Market street from Church street .

You might now be wondering , especially the new members , how on earth we get so much enjoyment out of this punishing exercise . The answer is simple we've got idiots in our club and they can be guaranteed to produce topics of conversation from one year to the next .



Left.
The local press gave the bike race some good coverage.

THREE teams from Crewkerne Running Club pictured before the start of the Rotaract Road Relay Race, in Crewkerne on Friday night. The Running Club "C" team won the race in a contest that raised more than £30 for charity.

On the good Friday 22.5 miles final long run for the Marathons we experienced the worst weather conditioned imaginable . High winds and freezing rain for the last 5 miles resulted in Anne coming to a complete standstill in Martock because her legs had frozen up . Annes legs are not a pretty site at the best of times let alone when they've turned blue . Nevertheless Club spirit prevailed me , Anne and Bob P ducked into someone's open garage and massaged her legs back to life . After an hour Anne convinced Bob that he could stop . Back into the elements we went and Anne and Bob were last seen climbing pitway hill together holding hands with Bob shouting 'come on Willsy you can do it you little bugger '.

Each year we have our fair share of encounters with animals and 1986 was no exception . Bob got savaged by a Greyhound . After all he looks nothing like a Hare let alone runs like one .

One evening our juniors while doing the mini-marathon were followed back from haunted house by our old friend the Black Labrador . On arrival at Crewkerne it promptly climbed into Steve Wilbys' car demanding a ride home .

No season would be complete without tales of the gruesome twosome Anne and Kay . They may not be good runners but they are vital to the humour of the club . These two are never safe to be left on their own as they seem to always get lost . Anne has got lost twice at the Winsham wander , the second time (with Kay) they were seen climbing one of the hills in the opposite direction to everybody else . Roy Smart breathed a sigh of relief when they both decided to give the February wander a miss .

They have been attacked by all manner of road users , cars ,walkers , racing cyclists (of which Kay nearly put one through a hedge) and finally dogs . They've had those that just look , those that just bark , those that seem to have trotted down the road only to appear around your ankles when you least expect it . Believe it or not all this happened on one Sunday morning run around Stocklinch where to culminate

an eventful morning they were bitten on the ankles by a Jack Russell and Anne got her bum rubbed by a long haired Alsatian !



Bob Parsonson, Snowdon 1986.

Handicap This was won by Karen O'brien with Ross Hall 2nd and Sandra Cannell 3rd . 30 'athletes' took part with 9:30 spread between first and last .

Picture on the left above shows the participating runners outside the Merriott Memorial Hall.

1987

London Marathon Pat Tanswell was the 1st home in 3 h 3 mins with no injuries at all . But he was so stiff afterwards that he fell down stairs at work and injured himself and stayed that way most of the year .

Tony Gordon and Martin Denman put some very good training up to 60 miles a week but during the Marathon came unstuck and struggled to finish . I can remember walking past Martin at about 22 miles and he did look rough (he probably drank too much liquid) .

Triathlon Steve Wilby followed in Ken Priests' footsteps and competed in 'TR' at Farnham in Surrey . He took his support crew of Mal higgins , Bob and Chris Wills to give him stick .

I quote from Chris' notes of the events;

'Needless to say he did it but not without incident . We set off from Crewkerne at 4.30 AM and arrived at Farnham at 7.00 and started to trough through Bobs mountain of sandwiches . All the professionals were there and Wilby arrived in his hired transit van ' .

'We got him registered and helped park his bike so that he could rush from the pool straight into the saddle . Well that was the theory !! Steve rushed from the pool but couldn't remember where he left his bike' .

We followed him by car and nearly collided with someone in a side street and then were shouted at by competitors for not going fast enough .

At the end if it all a super day was had by all with a brilliant personal achievement by Steve ' .

Summer Events

Rhondda A chance meeting at London between Malcolm and Rhondda runners resulted in them sending a coach load to Crewkerne which was reciprocated by us going to Wales .

This was one of the hottest days of the year to run a 10 miler but to date one of our better trips . The route was tough , people terrific and they even had lunch laid on for us . Bev hole saw a sight travelling back and was unable to explain until we were a mile down the motorway .

Barbecues

First of the season was held at Charmouth after the 'Challenge' run . This was a successful family event . The families went around the fete having drinks and ice creams while the athletes tackled Stone barrow hill and the coach paths .

A good time was had by all , then the second race started to fire up the Barbees' to see who could cook the first sausage . Steve Wilby was still trying to keep his coals alight while everybody else were tucking in .



BACK ROW : TONY GORDON , BOB WEBB , BOB PARSONSON ,
MARK CANNING , GEORGE RAWLINGS , CHRIS WILLS ,
MARTYN BUCK , IVAN MARGETTS .
MIDDLE ROW : LES YOUNG , SCOTT WHEELER , MARK TUCK ,
MARTIN DENMAN , RICHARD STENNER , STEVE WILBY , STEVE HOLE
, BOB WHEELER , MAL HIGGINS .
FRONT ROW : JULIE WEBB , ANN WILLS , KAYE YOUNG , KAY BUCK .

Runners setting off to the Rhonda on July 5th 1987.
The bus was expensive as we had it painted red for the day.
(That's not true)

Incidentally , although Wilby didn't do the race (it was too tough for him) he managed as usual to make a fool of himself thanks to Jasper .

Jasper was Kay Young's' Whippet and Steve volunteered to look after it while he watched the race though his binoculars . Jasper Pee'd into his binocular case !!!

The day was finished by playing cricket in a monsoon .

The second Barbecue was held at the end of the summer at Hinton St George in a field organised by Dave Read . Chard running club also joined us , Bob and Frankie Parsonson organised a Treasure hunt around the village . Despite having lived in Hinton for 20 years Kay Young managed to come last .

Later in the year Chard organised a family quiz evening .

Brain Scanner relay During this year Malcolm encourage several of us to run London to raise money for Bristol Frenchay M.R.I. Brain scanner a total of £3,000 was raised .

Rather than us sending a cheque Mal decided to deliver it by hand and foot . So we ran in relay from Crewkerne to Bristol a total of 50 miles in November . Pairs of runners ran 1 to 2 miles carrying a batten containing a large cheque donated by Bristol and West Building society . This was a long day of 7 hours running . I can remember that when we got to Temple Meads Anne and myself ran a long section and then got into the minibus to follow the other runners who took over but somewhere around St Pauls we got split up from them and had a long wait for them to arrive at the hospital .

(Note. There were two of us who lost contact with the support team. We were running through St Pauls with a bucket full of money and were a little apprehensive. No problems however and we actually

collected quite a lot on the run. But we got lost and it got dark, we were very pleased to finally get to Frenchay. I can't remember who was running with me. Derek Boles)



Left.
A montage of press cuttings from the Bristol relay delivery.

A great time was had by all with a tour of the facility and the day was finished off with fish and chips . Cosy pet supplied the mini bus and George Rawlings was good enough to drive us . £80 was collected on route by Jane Wilby and Mals daughter .

Snowdon After Bobs assault the previous year 20 club members and families descended on Llanberis for the weekend in early November . The scenery was spectacular and the run was something to remember . This was the start of the annual pilgrimage to Snowdon .

December

An informal cross country league was started by Chard and Axe Valley clubs the first run was held at Cricket St Thomas wild life park on the 5th of the month . 4 Crewkerne runners entered Clive , Ken , Tony Gordon and myself . This was a punishing 2 laps of the grounds (approx. 6.5 miles) in very cold conditions . Out of 20 finishers Clive came 8th , Tony 10th , Ken 12th and me - joint Last !!

This years handicap was won by Steve Harwood with Clare Bennett 2nd and Dave read 3rd .
Finish spread was 10:21 and 31 people taking part .



Runners approaching the finish line at the Crewkerne Mini-Marathon June 1987



Typical London training runs during the hot spring of 1987.





Runners and supporters at the 1987 winter handicap race, Merriott Memorial Hall.



Left.
Some of the runners who raised
incredible amounts of money for
special childrens wheelchairs.



More pictures of the Bristol Relay to Frenchay Hospital.

And even more pictures...

