



Valley News

The Newsletter of Avon Valley Runners

#157 March 2014



email: news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

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One of the advantages of being editor of a newsletter is that you have the final editorial say. I know there are some of our members who refuse to participate at our region's biggest event because they find it over priced and over hyped. There have certainly been a few blips in the time I have been running it but I still find it a very special event and one to which I always look forward. This year at the Bath Half Marathon, AVR enjoyed particular success and I think it warrants a mention in the AVR chronicles.

A few years ago we had a huge exercise to catalogue previous race results and my predecessor regularly included an *all those years ago* section. This month I decided to include a newsletter from *all those years ago* just to create a little nostalgia.

We delayed last month's newsletter in order to do justice to Tony Bartlett with a poem and funeral details and this month Denise Ellis has provided a very moving obituary.

We have a few pictures from the presentation evening. I'm no photographer but it at least provides a mini record of just a few of the outstanding achievements from 2013.

Our member's profile this month goes to one of our elder statesmen. When I joined the club at a fairly advanced age, it was guys like Bernie Hobbs, Frank Lamerton and Ted Rockliffe that I looked up to and longed to emulate. It helped me to have an incentive and to see what could still be achieved in advancing years.

Did you know?

In 1952 Czech runner Emil Zatopek won gold at the Helsinki Olympics at 5000m and 10000m - the events for which he had trained and at which he had created new Olympic records. At the last minute he decided to *have a go* at the Marathon, never having run one before. Knowing of his inexperience, the then British record holder Jim Peters tried to trick Zatopek into burning himself out by telling him the pace was a little slow. Zatopek simply increased his pace, leaving Peters behind. Peter's in his attempt to keep up eventually collapsed and was unable to finish the race. Zatopek went on to win Gold and create yet another Olympic record - not bad for a first attempt. Not surprisingly, in 2013 Runner's World awarded him the title "greatest runner of all time."

Tony Bartlett - Obituary

As many of you will be aware one of our Life Members Tony Bartlett died recently at the age of 78. But not many of the newer members of AVR will have known Tony before he had to stand back from *active duty* due to illness. Others may only remember him as *Alistairs Dad* due to the fact that Tony had not been prominent within the club for many years. I found it difficult to elicit memories from others who ran with him so this walk down *Memory Lane* is largely my own!

Tony was born in Devizes in 1935. He ran well in Schools Cross Country and continued to run well off road when he joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1952, representing the Home Air command on several occasions. When he left life in the Services he moved to Trowbridge and continued running to keep fit. Working at the then Hattersley Heaton he became a founder member of their running club - *St Georges' Runners*.

Considering he only ran for fitness Tony had P.B's of 37:29 for 10k in Devizes 1989, 62:15 for 10miles in Trowbridge 1986, 1:21 for Bath Half in 1985 and 2:59:34 at Basingstoke Marathon in the same year. All of these times set as a Vet 50!

Hattersley Heaton closed down in 1992 and Tony-with Alistair his son-joined the burgeoning Avon Valley Runners.

A significant memory for Tony - as his times would start to decline - was the last time that he beat Alistair. In the tough Bath Hilly 10 the margin of victory was 1.09 to 1.11. (Alistair went on to exact revenge 2 months later at the Dursley 10 with a similar time edge!) Had Alistair been running marathons that year he would have been hard pushed to have recorded 3.08.22 at the South Coast which gave Tony the 2nd M55 award.

Sadly in his early 60's Tony was diagnosed with Parkinsons disease - a condition he refused to define him. He chose to ignore what would be his inevitable decline and carry on regardless. Training and racing became more difficult and he had to reduce and eventually give up training. But many of us will remember him showing us how it was done at the AVR mile complete with stick and later a rolator tripod.

For many though, Tony will be remembered for his sense of fun, enthusiasm and encouragement. Despite being beaten by his son he relished Alistair's success and that of his daughter Verity. Mike Brain and Bob Sales both former members of the club remember moments within races where Tony would sneak up behind them and chide them into pushing on for the final miles else they would be beaten by an "Old Codger"!

Chris Atkinson remembers, as Club Captain, organising a particularly successful *BernCol Relay*. Tony immediately offererd Chris his congratulations which - coming from such an inspirational figure within the club - meant a great deal to him. He also remembers pushing hard towards the finish line at the Bath Half in 2008; with Tony on the sidelines shouting encouragement at the top of his voice Chris found reserves he didn't know he had and went on to record a PB.

Joyce Field remembers his quiet friendship and camaraderie.

Tony was competitive but not aggressively so. He was also quietly modest. He recorded times many of us can only dream of. He was always encouraging, but never patronising. He was a great champion of all runners regardless of their pace or talent. He was proud of his times but equally as proud of his fellow club members especially when they were competing in AVR vests.

His own words of advice

"To respect your fellow runners, give something back to the club like it has given to you, train diligently, never give up on your own athletic goals and always give your best - but above all ENJOY IT!"

Having to step back from running did not mean giving up life with AVR. Tony continued to support us in other ways. He remained The AVR Bard producing over 40 poems which were published in the newsletters. Fun and witty, we waited in anticipation for the next installment. He attended almost every AGM since joining and only missed 2014 due to his failing health. He was awarded Life Membership in 2007 which he accepted with his usual grace and dignity.

His military organisational qualities were also evident during his help at the Over the Hills race. A "Herding Funnel" the likes of which we will never see again was constructed from the bridge at Freshford up the steps and onto the track. There would never be any doubt the direction the runners were to take. (*Alistair! The steps are eroding again. We need some of your Father's engineering skills to make them safe for this year - the challenge is on!*)

Always organized, selfless and thinking of others Tony planned and wrote his own Eulogy saving others from the task. It was again clever, modest and fun.

Chris Atkinson described Tony as one of life's Selfless Nice Guys. I found him the type of person that many of us aspire to be like but seldom become.

I do not apologise if you find this overly sentimental. I am only sorry that many of you never got to meet the Gentleman that was Tony Bartlett.

Run in peace Tony.

Denise Ellis.

Member's Profile



I realise Bernie provided a profile not too many years ago, but being one of our more senior members I felt he deserved another mention, although it reads more like an autobiography than a profile. He's been a club member ever since AVR first formed back in 1986 and for better or worse has dragged most of his family along with him. Every time I talk to him he seems to be looking forward to another race in his calendar. At our recent presentation evening he figured in the *Road Championship Best Cumulative Times*, the *Off-road championship best 8 results* and *How Farr for AVR* – displaying an enthusiasm that would put many youngsters to shame. His advancing years gives him the right to make wise sayings and I will always remember his quote – “You might get faster, but it never gets easier!”

In my school years I participated in very little sport apart from a small amount of running at seniors. This amounted to a weekly run around the school field during the PE lesson, the annual school cross country race and one attempt at the mile. This introduction to running was however enough to start to tell me that long distance running would become a passion. There were very few that actually ran all the way around the school field, most the class would hide behind the nearest tree and were bewildered by those who went the full distance.

The annual cross country was much the same, the majority finding as many short cuts as possible and stopping off for a smoke. Very few could understand my enjoyment of completing the full course.

In my final year Geoff Saxty and I were the only entrants for the mile race. We were allowed time off class to race each other. I came second, about a lap behind Geoff.

At the age of sixteen I joined Bradford on Avon rowing club. Once again my passion for running came through. As part of winter training we met once a week at Bradford grammar school. We would all be sent out by the coach to run into Trowbridge and back before doing Gym training in the school hall. Again I found myself running out ahead of the rest who would join me on the run back into the school after waiting at the top of Widbrook Hill for my return. I left the rowing club and all sport activity at the age of 18 when I started shift work

I had always held a fascination for the marathon event and after the first London Marathon was staged in 1981 I was inspired (in the cover of darkness) to take up road running. I trained for my first marathon at Winchester in 1982 and on completion of the course and coming home with my medal I decided to 'come out' as a runner and run in the light of day.

I ran my first London Marathon the following year 1983 having queued for 3 days outside Bristol main post office to gain an entry. Entry at that time was as first received in the post from given Post offices across the country.

I joined AVR when it was founded in 1986, my son Joby joined aged six in 1987 and my other sons Luke and Jake followed as age permitted, so starting the dynasty of Hobbs at the valley.

I have since run the London event in 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2012.

I finished the 1993 London Marathon in 3Hours and 1 second. At this time the Iron Man Event was starting to take my interest and I vowed that once I had completed the marathon distance in less than 3 hrs I would take up the challenge of the Iron Man.

In 2002 my job took me for 3 years to live in Hanover Germany, my passion turned to German beer and sausage and my weight rose to 15 stone. I did manage to reduce it to 14 stone to complete the Hanover marathon in my final year there. In 2005 shortly after my return from Germany my son Joby read out an article in the local news paper stating that the UK Half Iron Man event was to be held at Longleat in a couple of months time. I jokingly said to him that if he could manage to get me entered I would do the event. Half an hour later he returned from the computer and announced that my entry had been accepted. I had not run since the Hanover Marathon and my weight had returned to a 'round' 15 stone Again. It was at this point I decided to give up on the under 3 hour marathon challenge, get on with my life and convinced myself that line to line on the London 'old' course I had achieved around 2:58. There was a new challenge ahead and only a short time to prepare.

The worst part of the Half Iron Man on the day was squeezing into the wet suit, that was, before I became terrified having started the open water swim. I completed most of the course with breaststroke only managing crawl for the swim into the finish to try to look good.

The following year I entered the Half Iron Man again this time to be staged at Wimbleball on Exmoor, and the UK full Iron Man held at Sherborn, Dorset. About a week before Wimbleball I did my back in at the gym and when it came to the event I managed the swim (but I was still terrified of open water swimming). The bike was not too bad but I had to walk the up all hills and the run was never going to be a run as my back forced me to walk the entire distance.

When the Full Iron man came round a couple of months later my back had eased a little. The swim was brilliant, at last I had got my head around open water swimming and for that part there would be no going back. The bike went quite well, managed to stay in the saddle the full distance but when it came to the 'run' I managed a 10 mile jog followed by 16 and a bit mile walk finishing in under 15 hrs. The following year I entered the full Iron Man-UK championship again August 2007. Training was going well until the spring when the cycle route out of the bottom of Trowbridge park-under County-Way took me to a bridge, up and over!!!!!! And down a steep set of steps---head first, smashed my face and knee and was laid off running for the next 8 weeks.

At the Iron Man event I had a good swim an awful bike and the 'run' was a half marathon run jog and a half marathon walk, finished just under 17 hrs.

Financial restraints due to redundancy put an end to the ironman but Joby came up with the next challenge to run Bristol to Reading along the Kennett and Avon tow path over Easter weekend 2009.

He set his next challenge over spring bank holiday weekend 2011 to run the length of the Ridgeway. Joby was living at the time close to the village of Ivanhoe Buckinghamshire. As the Ridgeway runs from close to Silbury hill in Wiltshire, his birth county, to Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire where he then lived he decided it would be a good idea. With the Ridgeway complete Joby and Jilly took time out to do a bit of cycling around the coast line but on their return and moving back to live in Wilshire brought a return for Hobbs to face the challenges set by AVR, running the series events, club championship and the odd cross country and marathon thrown in.

I still hold an ambition to start an Iron Man fit and injury free and to perhaps qualify for the old gits' Hawaii place.

PBs

10K	38:28	Devizes	1991
10 Miles	63:55	Bournemouth	1991
Half Marathon	1:22:17	Bath	1993
Marathon	3:00:01	London	1993

Success at the Bath Half



Our winning ladies team

Left to right....

- Jackie Rockliffe 1:29:19
- Diane Hier 1:30:57
- Fiona Price 1:26:58

While ten of our members were taking part in the Reading Half Marathon or the Drovers Half Marathon, our local event in Bath attracted over eleven thousand runners; more than thirty of whom were representing Avon Valley.

This year our ladies enjoyed huge success; recording no less than THREE winning categories which complemented a number of other very creditable performances.

Fiona Price won the ladies V45 category.

Diane Hier won the ladies V50 category.

Along with Jackie Rockliffe they won the Female Vet ladies' prize. by a margin of ten minutes over their nearest rivals from Bristol and West AC. Their performance was such that despite their average age being something akin to a young grandmother (sorry ladies, statistically it *is* true!) they finished third team overall.

Other notable performances:

Joby Hobbs finished well within the top 100 men, achieving 93rd place in a time of 01:18:54

Jill Westwood, Sarah Sims and Helen Maria took sixth place in the Ladies' Vet category.

Joby Hobbs, Peter Velecki, Robin-Mark Schols and Rich Ayling finished in sixth place in the Open Men's Category.

Robin-Mark Schols, James Lowther, Chris Brown and Ken Marshall finished in ninth place in the Men's Vet Category.

Caption Competition



Vice President Darren Wrintmore took on the 922 step challenge of running up the stairway of London's NatWest Tower to raise money for homeless and housing charity Shelter. Darren completed the challenge in a time of 7-minutes 16 seconds but what could he be saying when the photographer snapped him after completing the ascent.....

Email your suggestions to
news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

The Wiltshire 10

The Wiltshire 10-mile Road Race in Melksham organised by Stampede Sports and sponsored by the Wiltshire Times proved as popular as ever with a sell-out field for the fourth year running. Thirty seven Avon Valley Runners were amongst the three hundred who took advantage of a nice break in the current unpleasant weather to take part. Simon Nott of Calne Running Club set off at a blistering pace with club champion Michael Towler in hot pursuit, even following Simon Nott through the flooded River Avon at the halfway mark in Reybridge. However by time the course had passed Lacock Abbey, Mike had been overhauled by two chasing runners but managed to hold on to fourth place in a Personal Best time of fifty five minutes and thirty four seconds, the third fastest time ever recorded by an Avon Valley Runner. With 23rd placed Pete Veleski, 26th Tim Lowrie and 34th Robin Mark Schols the Men's team came in second to Team Bath AC.

The Ladies race was a close fought affair with Denise Grech of Calne Running Club and Honorary Secretary Fiona Price giving it everything as they matched each other's pace until the final couple of miles when the Calne Runner managed to open up a winning margin of just ten seconds to take victory in 64:58, both athletes achieving Personal Best times. However with 61st placed Jaqueline Rockliffe who also landed the 1st FV40 prize and 67th Fleur Ross-Harris the Ladies claimed the team prize ahead of Somer AC and Frome Running Club.



Presentation Evening



Steve Williams, winner of the Bomb, the Grape and coach to the most improved Tim Lowrie.



Diane Hier with some of her many awards including the Stan Farr, outstanding VF50 and best WAVA.



Mike Towler, hiding from the limelight of being our fastest runner. Seen here talking to Jilly Moore taking time off from her VLM training.



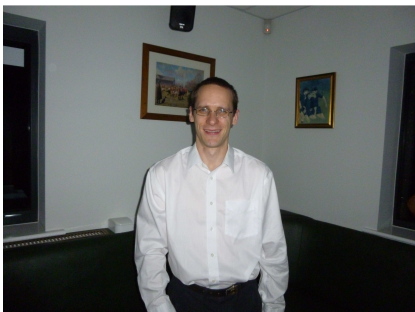
Our two *elder statesmen* Bernie Hobbs and Ted Rockliffe – either discussing the state of the economy, or who’s buying the next drink.



Ruth Barnes, winner of the Denise Ellis award for outstanding Senior Woman. With the very same Denise.



Former head coach and our MC on the evening, Andy Hoddinot with Judy Farr, wife of founder member Stan.



Tom Coney, off road winner and furthest distance in the *How Farr* contest.



The ever youthful Rosemary Barber, winner of the Nan Simpson award for outstanding FV60, with husband Ken.



JAVR News # 9



WILTSHIRE JUNIOR RACE LEAGUE

The first race of the Wiltshire Junior Race League was hosted at the JAVR 2K run at Southwick Country Park near Trowbridge. An excellent turnout from the JAVR boys saw them finish in first place with a score of 289 ahead of Chippenham Harriers (274) and Team Bath (199). Leading the way for the boys was Niall Thorne (98) who finished 3rd overall with Josh Whitfield Lott (96), Alex Tucker (95), Robert Warner (94), Kieran Beardmore (93), Corey Lewis (92), Luke Slade (91) following closely behind.

In the girls race JAVR were represented by Ellie Isaacs who finished 5th overall picking up a score of 96. In the overall standings after this first race of the new Junior Race League JAVR are in second place with their combined boys and girls score of 385 placing them with 19 points behind leaders Team Bath.

The next race in the league will take place at the Swindon parkrun 5km (Lydiard Park, Swindon) on the 15th March. More information about the league including league tables and individual scores can be found at www.wiltshire-athletics.org.uk

Note: numbers in brackets relate to runners league score / team league scores

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE 2014

The JAVR Junior Championship League has now entered its second year with the league now taking place over the full 12 months of the year. With winter now (officially!) over we are already two races into the 2014 league with a fantastic number of juniors participating – 77 runners after two league races!

In the first race of the new league season which took place on the 25th January Niall Thorne (B13) was first home for JAVR with a new PB time of 8.16. Following behind Niall were Robert Warner (B13) 8.23, Alex Tucker (B15) with a new PB and new B15 record of 8.35, and Josh Whitfield Lott (B13) 8.42. In the girls race Polly Allan (G11) finished as first JAVR runner with a time of 10.08 followed by Ellie Isaacs (G14) 10.39.

In the second race (22nd Feb) of the 2014 league Niall Thorne (B13) was first finisher for JAVR in 5th place overall with a time of 7.56 recording a new PB. Josh Whitfield Lott (B13) was next JAVR finisher with a time of 9.00. Third JAVR was Alex Tucker (B15) just 5 seconds behind Josh. Next to finish for JAVR were Robert Warner (B13) 9.08, Kieran Beardmore (B12) 9.19, Corey Lewis (B12) 9.23 – new PB, Luke Slade (B11) 9.46 – new PB. In the girls race Ellie Isaacs (G14) was first JAVR finisher in a time of 11.11.

In the overall league standings for the boys Niall Thorne (JAVR) is in first place with 32 points, just ahead of Joseph Alexander (unattached), Johnny Cruttenden (Winsley School), Luke Slade (JAVR), Leo Harris (Paxcroft School) all with 30 points. In the overall stadings for the girls Freya Buglass (Springmead School) has a ten point lead in first place with 35 points ahead of April Cruttenden (Winsley School), Alice Tipple (Southwick School), Talia Fearnley (Fitzmaurice School), Eloise Buglass (Springmead School), Abbie Brown (Bratton School) all with 25 points.



RESULTS

Bringing us up to date with all the latest JAVR results:

Southwick Country Parkrun – 21st December

- 41. Cameron Price – 23.54
- 82. Holly Newman – 26.58
- 85. Robert Warner – 27.08

Southwick Country Parkrun – 28th December

- 97. Alex Tucker – 26.19
- 132. Holly Newman – 29.15

Southwick Country Parkrun – 11th January

- 72. Alex Tucker – 25.35

Southwick Country Parkrun – 18th January

- 86. Alex Tucker – 27.46
- 88. Robert Warner – 28.01

Southwick Country Parkrun – 1st February

- 67. Alex Tucker – 27.18
- 77. Robert Warner – 28.12

Southwick Country Parkrun – 15th February

- 29. Alex Tucker – 25.34

JAVR 2KM Race – 25th January

- 3. Niall Thorne (B13) – 8.16
- 4. Robert Warner (B13) - 8.23
- 7. Alex Tucker (B15) - 8.35
- 8. Josh Whitfield Lott (B13) - 8.42
- 21. Polly Allan (G11) – 10.08
- 27. Ellie Isaacs (G14) – 10.39

JAVR 2KM Race – 22nd February

- 5. Niall Thorne (B13) – 7.56
- 15. Josh Whitfield Lott (B13) – 9.00
- 17. Alex Tucker (B15) – 9.05
- 18. Robert Warner (B13) – 9.08
- 20. Kieran Beardmore (B12) – 9.19
- 21. Corey Lewis (B12) – 9.23
- 27. Luke Slade (B11) – 9.46
- 40. Ellie Isaacs (G14) – 11.11

NEWSLETTER No. 1

SUMMER 1986

Dear Member,

Welcome to "AVON VALLEY RUNNERS". The Club was formed on 2nd January 1986 by a mixture of experienced athletes and local Jim Runners looking for a low key running club without the hassle of track and field athletics.

The following members were elected to fill the key positions:-

President - M. Holland Sr.

Vice-Presidents - O. Swansbury, C. Eddy.

Secretary - I. S. PARR, 26 Victoria Gdns., Trowbridge, Tel. 3603

Treasurer - M. Holland Jr. 20 The Bank, North Bradley, Trowbridge, Tel. Trowbridge 62743

Chairman - P. Morgan. Tel. Levington 3289

Captain - T. Northwood, 45 Hilperton Road, Trowbridge. Tel. 69529

If you have any queries ring any of the above or area contacts:

T. Roberts Bradford on Avon 6764, M. Connor Melksham 703558,

M. Ellis Westbury 827135 and N. Merritt Bath 839173.

It was agreed to affiliate to the bodies governing Road Running and it is hoped to enter local cross-country leagues for the 86/87 season for any member who is interested in this sport.

Training for members bored with their own company is as follows:-

Tuesdays 7.30pm at the Judo Club, Innox Road, Trowbridge.

Thursdays 7.30pm at the Culver Close Pavillion, Pound Lane, Bradford on Avon. (near the Tythe Barn). Afterwards members can be found in the club Headquarters "The Three Horseshoes" near the station replacing their carbohydrates.

Sundays 10.30am meet in Pound Lane changed.

Club vests and T shirts are available from the Secretary at £3 and bobble hats at £2.

If you wish to take advantage of the Club postal system please pass your race entries to the secretary or captain. Entry forms for many races can be obtained from the secretary.

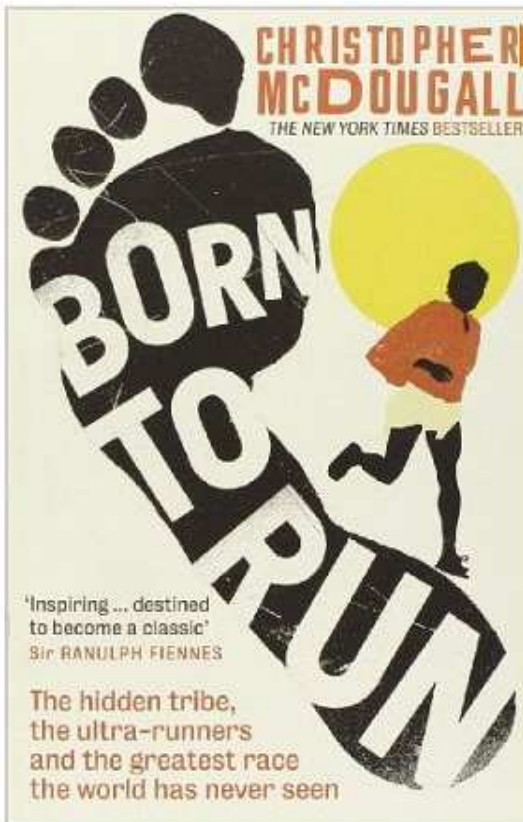
Any member who competes in a race where the captain is not present and would like their performance included in the athletic notes of the local newspapers please notify the captain before the following Tuesday. The secretary would also like to enter your performance in the club activities book.

The club will be presenting a perpetual trophy to the fastest club Marathon runner of the year. Leader at the moment is Bill Thomas with 2hr-58-04 in the Bristol Marathon.

A donation of £10 was sent to the "Kennet & Avon Canal Trust" as so many members are using the cinder towpath which leads all the way to Bath and stunning scenery through the Avon Valley.

Members are reminded that Bath Marathon forms which will be available in the Autumn must be sent in immediately to gain a place.

Book Review



"McDougall's book reminded me of why I love to run."

—Bill Rodgers, American marathon legend

"A really phenomenal book."

—Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show*

"A tale so mind-blowing as to be the stuff of legend."

—*The Denver Post*

"Fascinating.... Thrilling.... An operatic ode to the joys of running."

—*The Washington Post*

Another one I've read which I found fascinating and couldn't put down. It changed my running style, ended the injuries and got me one or two more PBs

Chris McDougall

We're lucky. 2010 is going to be a great year, because we're watching one of the most harmful myths in human performance explode before our eyes. I discovered this quite by accident while researching *Born to Run*. When I set off to explore the secrets of the Tarahumara, I assumed this ancient tribe was custodian of a tidy little technical trick, and once I learned it, I'd abracadabra myself from a broken-down ex-runner into an unbreakable, unstoppable, ultrarunning dirt demon. I was at least partially correct: the secret to injury-free running isn't the proper shoe. It isn't stretching. It isn't even training mileage.

It's skill.

Like every other sport, healthy running is all about technique.

But why hadn't I ever heard that before?

All I ever heard, over and over, was about shoes. Every podiatrist, sports physician, and running magazine preached endlessly about the absolute necessity of corrective footwear. I was never told what to do; I was only told what to buy.

So how did that square with the Tarahumara? They run multiple marathons — I'm talking about 150-plus miles at a time — on stony trails as hard as any city street. All they wear is the thinnest of home-made sandals, with zero cushioning, no motion-control, and certainly no orthotics. I saw Tarahumara men in their seventies springing around like teenagers. Caballo Blanco, the White Horse wanderer at the center of my book, watched a 95-year-old man cruise more than 30 miles up and down the canyon face. So how were their legs holding up to a lifetime of running without running shoes?