

# WEST HULL LADIES NEWSLETTER February 2020



Advent Run 23/12/2019

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Cultural Tour 19/01/2020

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# Coaching Corner

Amanda Dean

## Coaching Corner Blog 1:

First advice to ALL runners. Enjoy running. Enjoy it for the running, for the company, just how good you feel after. Whenever a new runner asks, "What should I be doing" my answer is "Just enjoy it. If you enjoy it, you'll come back for more. If you come back for more it will get easier. If it gets easier you'll enjoy it even more .... and then you will come back for more". Even experienced runners at times need to remind themselves to enjoy running.

Second. Run at least 3 times a week. If you run once a week, it is always hard. If you run twice a week, you will improve a little but quickly plateau. If you run 3 times a week, you will improve for a long time.

Third, get motivated you – enter an event (race). Find a suitable training schedule and, if possible, an even more suitable friend to train with you and you will be motivated.

See what is happening with the 0-5K ladies on their training schedule J. My 'coaching in a nutshell', passed on each Monday at the 0-5K sessions, 4 more to go.



## Coaching Week One - the Key advice to new runners: Run tall & relaxed

Because this is the easiest way to carry your upper body and makes breathing much easier. Try breathing relaxed & upright then with a lean, then with slight tension in the shoulders. You will find harder. To relax shoulders pick them up up and drop them into your back pockets □. You are more efficient when relaxed.

Running tall: When in alignment ears are above shoulders, above hips, above ankle and back is a nice S shape. Desk jobs can change this resulting in hips pushing back. Good form avoids the hips/buttocks pushing back which cause head to slump, making it harder difficult to breath. It is the main cause of over striding/heel striking which can cause injuries.

## Coaching Week Two: Over-striding (also called heel striking).

It is nothing to do with having a long stride. Over-striding is when your foot lands in front of you, probably hitting the heel. You have quite a straight leg which causes excessive impact on all parts of the leg, hips, lower back making you more prone to injury.

Ideally foot lands directly below, around mid-foot which makes the leg springy (bent ankle, knee, neutral hip).

Don't try to think about where your feet land whilst running, it's pretty much impossible to get your feet landing correctly by thinking about feet. It's all about the hips.

Try this whilst walking. Stick your bum out behind and try to land mid-foot. It's hard - it's very easy to land on your heel! Now bring your hips forward into 'neutral' (think of your pelvis as a bowl, and don't spill the water). It may feel like tipping up towards the front if you have got used to your bum poking out. Now if you try to heel strike, this will be difficult and landing mid-foot easy. Yay J

So .. It is all about the hips. Hips should always face forwards (not wiggling side to side) and maintaining a neutral position.

# Gallery



Anna Looking Epic and getting her feet wet in the Auld Lang Syne run 31/12/2019



Ferriby 10 Ladies  
25/01/2020



Kerry-Ann, Jo and Jackie 15/01/2020



Anna Cartwright, Wendy Saverton, Rebecca Johnson and Jen Walker 15/01/2020



Friday Fresheners 10/01/2020

**West Hull Ladies Committee meeting –  
Monday 6th January 2020 7:15pm  
Cottingham Rd Baptist Church  
Anna S**

**Present:** Anna C, Anna S, Angela, Maria, Janet, Jan, Linda, Liz H, Liz N, Andrea, Amanda  
**Apologies:** Rachel, Jill, Sara, Annette  
Welcome to Janet as Treasurer.

**Minutes of previous meeting:** were accepted as a true record

**Matters arising:**

The club rules document to be updated regarding running with dogs. *Action before AGM.*  
Linda's transfer has been done.

The athletics club in Grimsby have been emailed to decline links.

Welfare policies/documents.

*Action: Jan to contact Caroline again regarding the Welfare Office work.*

**4. Membership Maria, Email Amanda, Facebook Anna C Update**

We have **95** first claim club members plus **4** second claim = 99

We have **101** ladies on our distribution lists. Plus 4 'New' ladies i.e. not yet members.

We have **133** members on FB of which 16 are 'Specials' (not club members), 2 not yet club members, and 3 members have not yet emailed the club. Plus around 12 of the 0-5K ladies.

**5. Training Update Amanda**

Most club runs a little quieter in December, indeed Sara had a lone run! However, the Christmas Lights and Advent Calendar run enjoyed. The start to 2020 great turn out to Friday Fresheners. The parkrun on 4<sup>th</sup> Jan had over a quarter of club out and the 10' intervals around 20 ladies. S2S: Six weeks to 5K starts on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January.

**6. Website Update Amanda**

Liz N, Jan D, Annette added to mug shots. Linda removed L, one new prize winner and Anna C continues to update gallery.

**7. Six Weeks to 5K – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January**

Charge of just £10 for the course (not club members). To be knocked off membership if they join on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Currently have 20 ladies signed up. Andrea will arrange cakes for Peter Pan parkrun on 29<sup>th</sup> February.

Meet car park close to entrance, as not enough room inside.

Route Chants Ave, Barrington Ave, Kenilworth, Bricknell, Chants: 1.6mile but faster ones will do more because of loop backs.

**Action:** Amanda to email club and ladies on course with information and help requests.

### **Purchase of badges**

Liz H updated us on costs. There was a discussion regarding designs for different distances and years.

*Action- Anna S to investigate adding numbers by hand.*

(50K: Anyone who has a T Shirt can purchase replacement at £5).

### **Presentation Dinner**

This has been booked and paid for.

*Action: Jan to contact Rachael to start discussions regarding menu and costs.*

Maria to organise the raffle.

### **AOB**

Amanda: Year-End report. Balance healthy. Club made a profit of £77.88 last year. Income is from membership. Out goings mainly presentation evening, 3 leaders trained and Midsummer/Midwinter Madness.

**Amanda needs help!** Training Schedule Administrator wanted to do:

Before new month email leaders, complete calendar with training, save training to pdf, prep email for the months training, email to club.

Each week prep a w/c training email to go out Sunday evening or Monday morning.

*Action: Amanda to email out to the club for volunteers.*

Maria highlighted a problem with the verification of her England Athletics membership, as she is the named approver for the club.

*Action: Maria will follow up with EA.*

Liz N- A discussion was held regarding the 10K series results. The final results for the year will be sent out on the usual email, before the presentation evening.

**Next meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020**



Verity spotted the first Snowdrops of the year 25/01/2020

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# Medals, (mugs, beer, t shirts and hats) of the Month



Rachel's Brass Monkey Bottle  
12/01/2020



Amanda first in the Auld Lang Syne run 31/12/2019



Sharron's "Parky up North"  
Marathon Stash 11/01/2020



Sandra's Nordic Walking Filey Flyer certificate 11/01/2020

# Dates for your Diary

**Presentation Evening**  
**13/03/2020**  
**Canham Turner Hull University**

**Midsummer Madness**  
**13/06/2020**  
**Thixendale (Endure 3 weeks later)**

**The club has the following camping equipment available to borrow for events:**

## Club's Camping Equipment

**2 Event Tents with four sides**

**1 Cook stand**

**1 Double stove with Gas bottle**

**First Aid Kit**

**Please email the club if you would like to borrow any of the equipment**





**Parkrun News**  
**21/12/2019-01/02/2020**



**It's been a bumper parkrun period with extra Parkruns over the Christmas and new Year period. Our Parkroamer Sarah Wilson managed 2 Parkruns on New Year's Day at Keswick and Whinlatter.**

**In all West Hull Ladies have taken part in 192 local Parkruns over this Period.**

**47 at East Park, 103 at Peterpan, 5 at Humber Bridge and 14 at Beverley**

Our Double Parkroamer Sarah Wilson

**We've had Shiny PBs for Samantha Giblin, Angela Salisbury, Amy Brewster and Anna Cartwright, (1st sub 20 mins). Karen Park managed 2 PBs and Eve Fullard have managed a fantastic 3 PBs, wow! And we have had 200 Parkrun milestones for Stacey Foxworthy and Jan Walker. Jane Allen has also now reached 100 Parkruns**

**Well done everybody!**



Eve Fullard 3 PBs Wowzers!



Karen with 2 PBs wow!



Well done to Jen and Stacey (Plus Shelley)

# Jan's A-Z of running

## Jan Draper

**A** **Ankles** – ok, so not a particularly exciting way to start off an A-Z of running but ankles are VERY important! Having had a nasty ankle injury a few years ago, I have learned to respect and take care of my ankles. Heel raises (see **F** below), gentle ankle circling in the morning and self-massage are now regular staples in my body 'maintenance' regimen. As well as making sure I'm running in the right trainers, I've also changed my approach to non-running shoes too. I'm careful what I wear when I'm not running to keep my ankles and feet in anatomical alignment whilst also reducing the risk of cockling over!



- B** **Bufs!** Where would we be without them? They are so versatile. You can wear them around your head, neck, then if you get warm easily wrap them around your wrist and immediately it becomes a hanky! Bufs are closely followed by bras (see **K** below)!
- C** **Core** – a strong one is a great asset for a runner. Working on developing a stronger core has become part of my training, all year round. And the core is not just about developing defined abdominals – the infamous 6-pack! The abdominals are relatively superficial muscles – the deep core muscles are the ones I've been recently trying to concentrate on, such as the Psoas. This is such an important muscle connecting the spine to the femur – literally connecting your lower body to your upper body. Still a work in progress! But yoga has helped enormously (see **Y** below).
- D** **Decathlon knickers** – they are the best! Thin, no seams, wicking fabric, and a lovely fit. And cheap! I think they are far better than another well-known runner's brand of knicker and are a fraction of the cost.
- E** **Even gait** – and by this I mean trying to achieve a running style that is balanced, and that is not too heavy footed. Someone once told me to try and stroke the ground with my foot, rather than smash it into the ground! Our natural biomechanics can mean that we carry imbalances in our bodies. I know that I have benefitted from my gait and running style being analysed. At least then I know where the imbalances are and can try and correct these, either by trying gradually to retrain my style or by doing strengthening and balancing exercises.
- F** **Feet** – looking after them is crucial. From making sure you are in the right trainers, to doing toe and ankle raises and calf strengthening, to keeping nails short and regular dead skin removal and of course painting toes in WHL's teal!
- G** **Gloves** – I have lots of pairs of gloves for different conditions. I have some expensive, thick ones for really cold days, thinner ones for when it's not as cold and have some that I thought were waterproof but aren't! My favourite ones are finger gloves that also have a mitten pullover that adds an extra layer if my hands get really cold.
- H** **Head torch.** Always good to have one of these for those dark nights and dark early mornings. And you don't always get what you pay for. Some of the cheaper ones can be just as good, even better, than the expensive ones.

**I** Injuries. The bane and frustration of every runner! Adhering to the 10% rule will help – not increasing your mileage by more than 10% from the previous week. Take good care of yourself – see **X** and **Y** below – and sleep well and eat well. Get yourself a good physio/sports therapist and if you can afford it, have a monthly massage (see **M** below). And if you do get injured, don't rush back too quickly – give the body time to heal. I've learned that the hard way!

**J** Joggers – the quickest way to offend runners! We are not 'joggers' we are athletes!

**K** Kit – a runner cannot have enough kit! Thank goodness for the Sports Shoes discount we get as a club! A key bit of kit I would not be without – a good running bra. I've run in Shock Absorbers for years –

they keep everything compact and stationary!

**L** Lip balm – I find my lips get dry and sore if I don't use lip balm regularly. Particularly in the winter if I'm training for a spring marathon, I always have a bit of lip balm with me on a run.

**M** Massage – I really swear by the benefits of a regular massage. I know it's another expense, but I have found it to be a good investment. Massage helps to ease out knots in muscle fibres and stops these becoming entrenched, tight spots. It needs to be a firm massage, nothing too superficial and airy fairy! You can of course learn how to self-massage those bits that are reachable. And foam rolling complements massage well.

**N** Nutrition – it's so important to try and get this as right as possible not only during races but also leading up to races and afterwards. I have experimented with so many different approaches, depending on whether I'm running road or trail. Trail is somewhat easier as you can stop and take on 'proper' food (as opposed to gels, for example) and can walk a little as you eat. Road running is rather more difficult, and despite running quite a few road marathons, I still don't think I've cracked taking on enough nutrition and hydration whilst doing road marathons. Read as much as you can and practise whilst out running.

**O** Others – it's so good to run with others, to encourage each other, share tips, learn and inspire. Joining West Hull Ladies is one of the best things I have done!

**P** Preparation – it goes without saying that preparation leading up to races is really important, increasing your chances of a good performance whilst also decreasing your chances of injury. Training plans are important (see **T** below) but other sorts of preparation are key: making sure you have the right kit and that you get it out all prepared the night before; eating carefully in the week running up to the race; keeping hydrated in the run up too; perhaps if you can, getting to know the route beforehand and doing your homework so that you know where water stations and aid stations are along the route. Practise as much as you can with your kit, and a golden rule is never to wear anything on race day that you've not run in before.



- Q** **Quadratus lumborum** (or QL for short). This muscle connects the lower spine to the top of the pelvis (the iliac crest). Mine are always tight, tender and hard. Side bends are good to try and stretch it out. Anatomically, it is close to the Psoas (see **C** above). I think I hold a lot of tension in these muscles and I have to work hard to try and stretch them out and R-E-L-A-X them! And yes, I am a bit of an anatomy geek!
- R** **Races** – it's so good to race! But it's also important to **relax** too! R is also for **Run** Britain where you can follow your rankings for all the races you've done and compare yourself with others across Britain.
- S** **Socks** – I have run in Injinji toe socks for many years now. I used to get little blisters between my 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> toes and since switching to Injinji I have not had a blister. I've lost a few toe nails mind!
- T** **Training plans** – I love having a plan! For everyone big challenge, like a road marathon or an off-road race, I will plan out a training schedule, informed by lots of reading – both online and books. I've accumulated lots of books over the years. I find that having a plan printed out, each day of which I can tick off when done, encourages me to be more intelligent about my running (not just going out and running at the same speed all the time, for example), mixing up tempo, speed, at-pace, and then the long slow run. I find that piece of paper motivates me to get out and my bum off the sofa!
- U** **Uphill** – yes, I know, we all tend to hate hills! But ... they are very good for training, increasing heart rate rapidly, building leg and core muscle strength. And on the whole, unless you avoid hills at all costs, you will always encounter a hill! So, it's good to know you have the strength – physical and mental – to get up that darn thing!
- V** **Vaseline!** – there's not a lot more to be said, really! On a long run, apply liberally to all the places you think will chaff. Be creative in your thinking – there are some very interesting, and painful, chaffing sites for us ladies!
- W** **Whistle** – this is mandatory kit on the off-road races I have done. It's also in my hand when I lead 10' speed sessions on Monday evenings!
- X** **eXercises** – or **X**-training. Doing different sorts of exercise such as gym work, swimming, and cycling can complement running very well. These activities use different muscle groups and therefore build strength, flexibility and movement in different ways to running, which can all enhance running performance.
- Y** **Yoga** – I so wished I had discovered yoga as a younger woman. It has been one of the biggest surprise discoveries of my 50s! Regular practise certainly builds strength and flexibility, but yoga is so much more than that. Learning how movement connects to the breath, the peace that comes from turning up on your mat, meeting the challenge of holding poses, are all tools for life off the mat too. There are lots of classes available and a big online community. I can highly recommend *Yoga With Adriene* (<https://yogawithadriene.com/>). Yoga has had such a profound impact on me that I am about to start to train to become a yoga teacher.
- Z** **Zzzs** – sleep, the big healer. Get as much as you can. Simple!



# TRY CORNER

What other things have our Ladies been up to this month  
apart from running?



Eve featuring on the Big Bobble hat Blog  
01/01/2020

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Liz and Sandra Nordic Walking  
31/01/2020

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Jermaine passing her Coach Licence

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Christmas Night out 15/12/2019

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# West Hull Ladies

## 0-5k Jan 2020

### Program



On 20th January 2020 we welcomed some new friends embarking on our 0-5k program.

Welcome to all our new ladies I hope you are enjoying the program so far.

Here are some of your highlights and facebook posts up to now.



Stretches and warmups



22/01/2020

**22/01/2020**

**Jenny Rattenbury** went out early managing all 8 runs for that session, excellent work Jenny.

**23/01/2020**

**Jane Smales** managed a run on her own that was great Jane it's tough on your own but you did it!

**24/01/2020**

**Jan Antons** managed to fit her training session round a 7 hour drive to Brighton and a dinner the evening before. Great work Jan. **Katie Mouatt** went out at 6am before work. Fantastic Katie well done but sorry about your sore shins I had exactly the same problem too when I started I found that compression socks helped me but take Amanda's advice about the stretching and resting.



**Shirley , Gina and Aileen** completing day 3 of the course with buddies Andrea and Beryl

**29/01/2020**

Hi I'm Amy I'm very new to running and not very fit lol so far I'm really enjoying it. My hope's for this is that I take to running and keep doing it so I can be healthier for myself, my husband and my daughter. It's lovely to hear about your motivation Amy I am sure you'll enjoy running with the club and look forward to meeting you and all our other new ladies



**Amy Medlam** who posted on 29/01/2020

# Filey Flier Sandra Holdsworth 11/01/2020

This is a long-distance walk organised by the LDWA (Long Distance Walking Association) and there is a choice of 16 miles or 22 miles.



I entered the shorter route and Jo, Louise and Jenny friends from the Nordic Walking Group the longer one.

As it was an 8.30am start we decided to spend the evening before in Bridlington. I really enjoyed that as it gave us time to socialise without a pair of poles in our hands!

So, I set off on Friday afternoon and hadn't gone far before I realised that I hadn't packed my walking belt L - not a great start but I decided that as refreshments were provided on the route and I had packed my tin mug I

would be able to manage.

When I arrived at the hotel – Louise, Jo and Jenny were easy to find – in the bar!

After a meal of what else but fish and chips and a drink in the hotel bar we had a relatively early night.

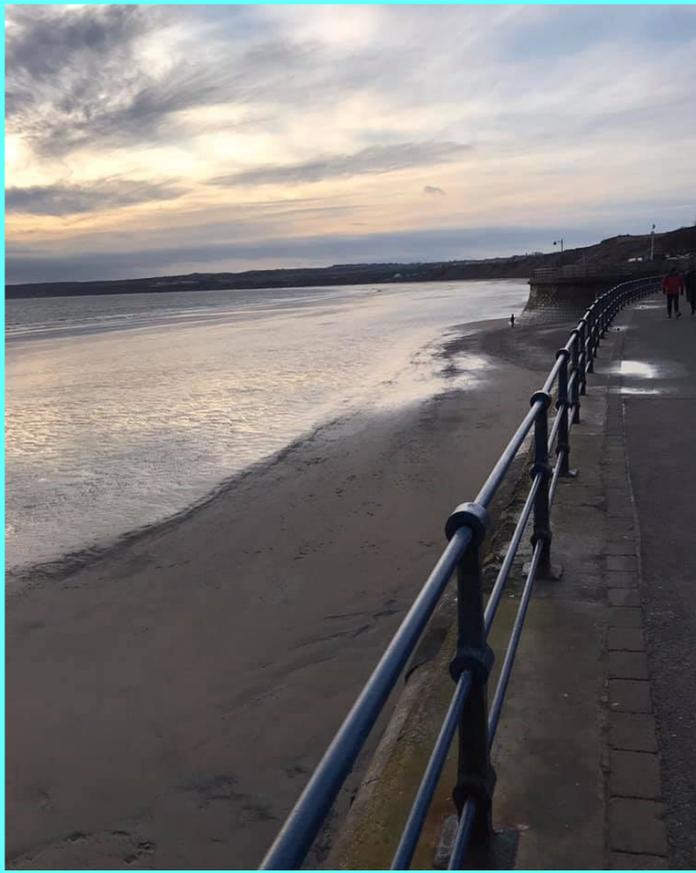
Things didn't start too well for me in the morning as I had left my car lights on the night before and so had a flat battery. Louise kindly gave me a lift to Filey.

It was a beautiful morning except for the strong winds caused by Storm Brendon. But it was dry which is always a bonus.

The HQ was at St Johns Church and we easily got parked. Tea and toast were served and then at 8.30 we set off.

The course was fabulous – I just loved it. We walked along the front for a short way before climbing steps up to the cliff top. The views looking backwards and then over to Scarborough were just amazing. In some ways it was a shame that the walk didn't start earlier as it would have been a sight to behold seeing the sunrise over the cliffs.

The wind was unrelenting and the paths muddy – that horrible sloppy skiddy mud. I was a tad concerned as I am not fond of heights so to be walking on the edge of cliffs on a narrow muddy path was scary. The wind was so strong and I was pleased that I was clipped into the poles as I am sure they would have been wrenched out my hands.



After about 5/6 miles along the cliff tops we turned inland at Lebberston and we walked along a quiet tarmac Lane before crossing the main road. The remainder of the walk was undulating – through mud and more mud. But it was enjoyable and although I was walking on my own I wasn't as until the point where the route split there was always someone to talk to.

The worst part of the route for me was probably the last two or three miles. For the first time we had the wind to our backs and oh my was it pushing me along. I didn't want to walk as fast as I was being pushed and I did feel a little sorry for the runners who had 20 miles in their legs. Also, in those last few miles we had a few styles to climb over – pretty cruel on tired legs!

And then it was over – I was back at the Church. Bit disappointed with the food on offer at the end – meat pie. No vegetarian option.

What finished the day off nicely was that my husband and daughter were there to meet me having kindly sorted out my car!

I really enjoyed the Filey Flyer and whether you walk or run it is a great one to do. Put it in your diary for next year – I will be doing!



## Deanies Escape to the Sun ... Again:

*Amanda Dean*

We were beginning to develop web feet in December so a last minute check found that Tui had a pre-Christmas bargain. Calpe, Costa Blanca £249 (17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December) for flight, East Midlands to Alicante, transfer and 4\*, half board Diamante hotel. This is a repeat of the holiday back in March. It was a little cooler this time around 16C for the first couple days but up to 21C by our final day. No rain, though there was a windy day.

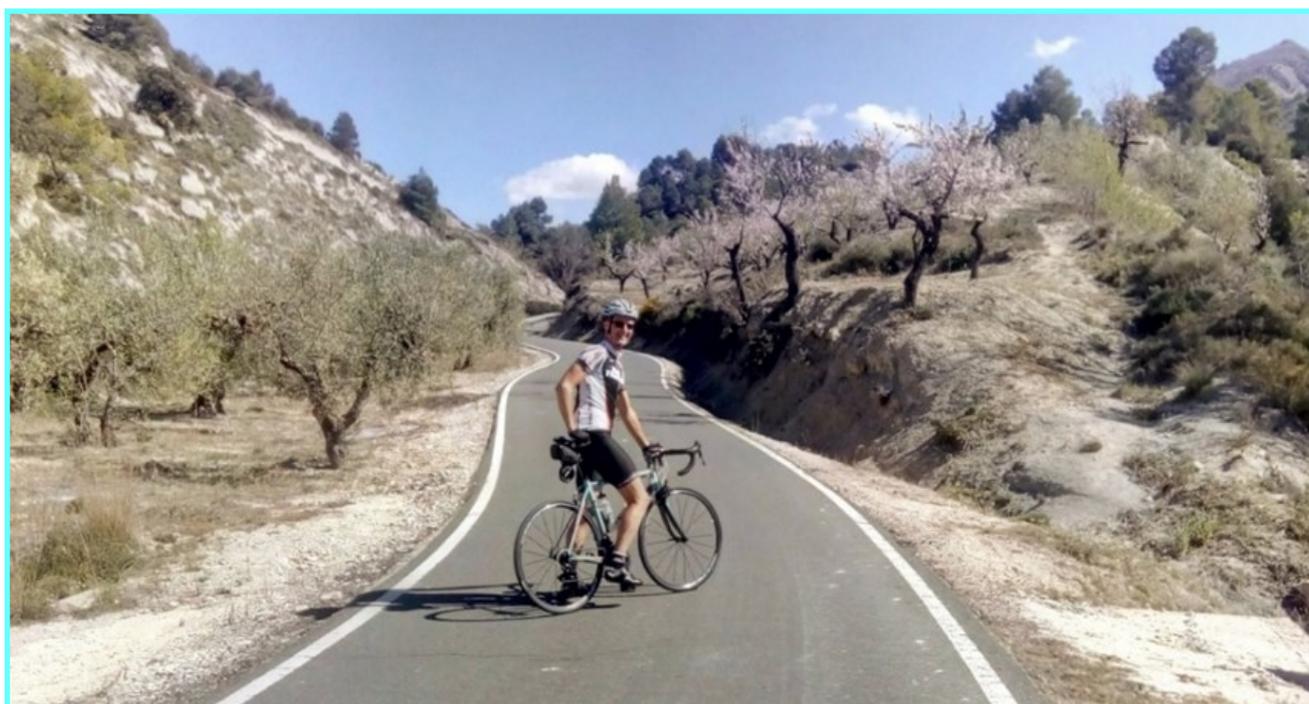
The cycling in the area is not easy. Calpe is flat but if you head either way along the coast it is rolling to hilly and heading inland you are soon climbing. So not a place for cycling if you like flat. I did three days of cycling and three days running.

**Day 1:** We started the holiday tired so did a short first day, 37 miles, Port de Bernia, 3,500ft climbing. Wonderful to be in the sun.

17% climbing at one point but, this is steep for round here. Normally you won't hit higher than 10%.

**Day 2:** Port de Confrides, 74 miles, 7,200ft climbing. We passed through Gorga with its 'yarn bombed' trees then east into a super valley. Beautiful and very little traffic. It has a section that was like a little dipper, plummet down, cross the river, turn and up and if you have a bit of humph, the momentum can just about carry you over ready for the next one.

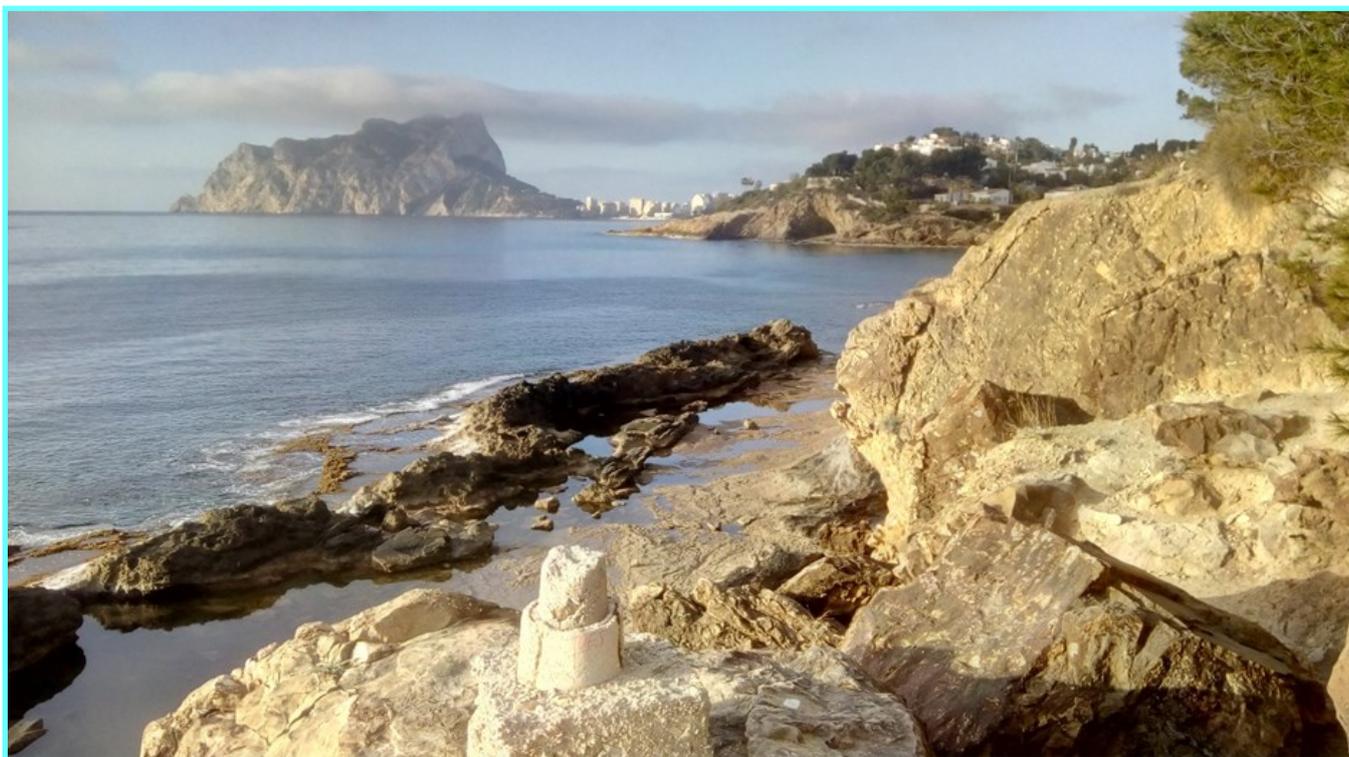
50 miles to Castells de Castells, very ready for lunch – a massive cheese and serrano ham baguette with a plate of chips and cup of tea Just 5 euros! Tired by now, so very glad that most of the 25 miles home were downhill



**Day 3:** Windy! The palm trees going crazy. The cycle hire were brilliant and let me return the bike for the day and collect for my day 3 the next day. Really impressed.

I went for a run along the coast along the Basset Path and back, only a couple miles each way but plenty of steps

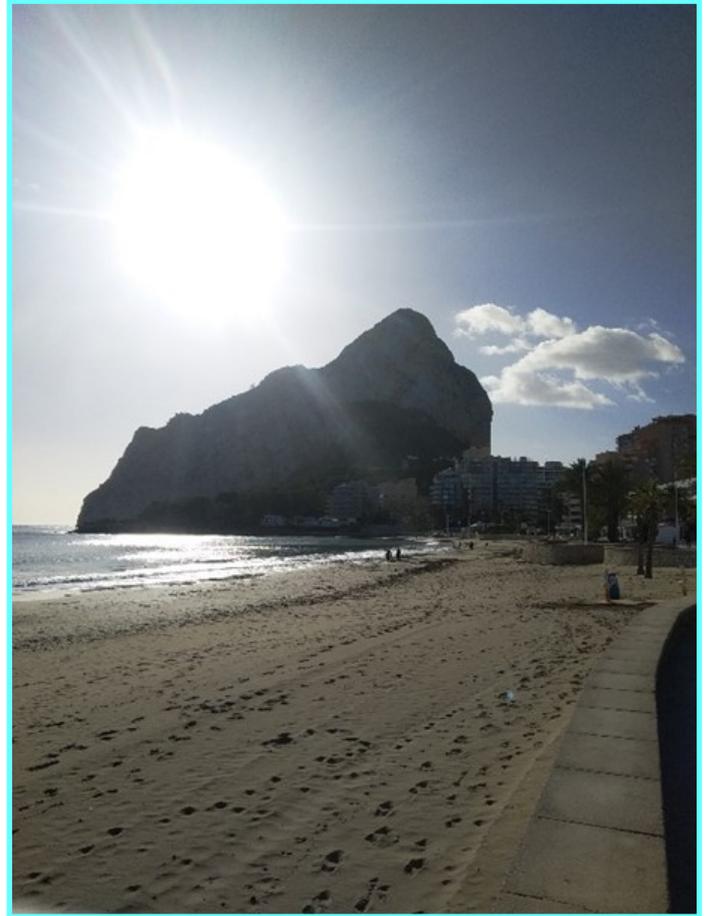
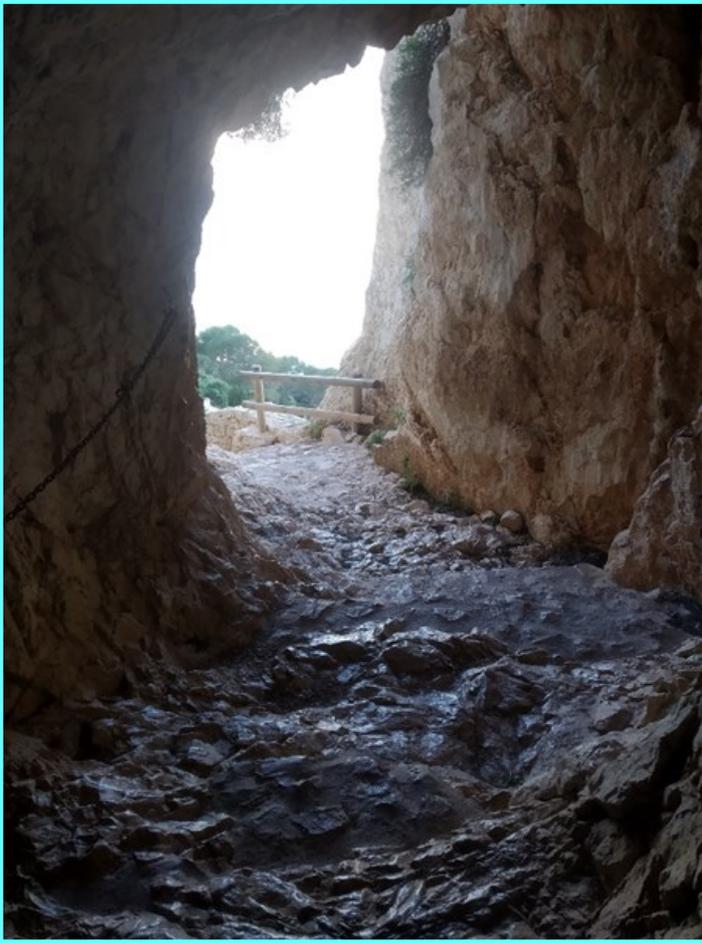
Then read my book and chilled for the rest of the day.



**Day 4:** 51 miles, 4,200ft climbing. A common route out via Benissa then headed through the valley of the Gorgos river which is fabulous.

After this we wound our way up and up steeply through a town lined with orange trees. Very pretty. We planned to lunch at Parcent but cafe was closed L but cheered up as we left Benissa when Julian Alaphilipe passed us chatting and looking really happy.





**Day 5:** I ran up the Ifach – the amazing lump in the photo to the right:  
Just 6 miles but I worked hard on the ups.

When it gets too steep for a path you go through a tunnel which I love! It brings you out to the less steep side of the rock.

This is also steep and at times you have to use your hands to steady yourself clambering over rocks. Chains have been laid along the rock to hold on to. Brilliant.

You are rewarded with fabulous views from the top.

The seagulls are so tame coming very close in the hope of some of your lunch.

Fab day, and a whole afternoon to relax.



**Day 6.** I had my big run today up the Cim d'Olta.

The start is a bit dull running across town to the foot of the mountain. It is about 3 miles before you are on the track winding up through woods.

Towards the top the trees vanish and it is slow going over limestone. You have to watch your feet but well worth it for the amazing views.

Looking south over the town you can see the Ifach



And in the other direction a panorama of mountains. Fantastic.

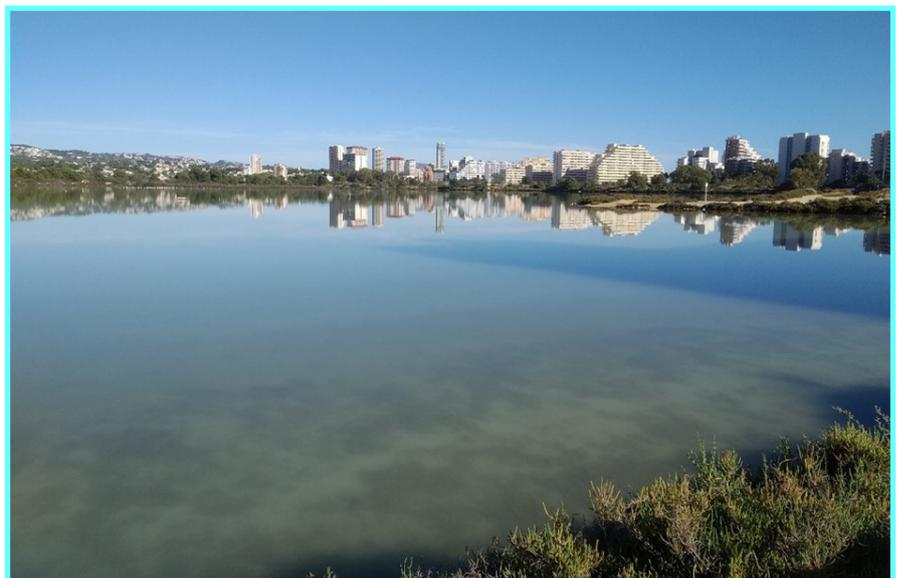
Lovely being alone on top of the world.

I took a slightly different return which took me towards the coast, (again there are some dull miles across town) and returned to our hotel (seen in the distance) along 'Les Salines', a piece of water which is being developed as a nature reserve.



We didn't find much to do in Calpe but we were happy to wander along the pretty sea front in the afternoon and partake of coffee, cake and brandy which didn't break the bank at 2.50 Euro.

Very much recommend it to escape our winter .... If you are allowed to escape Christmas preparations. We returned home Christmas Eve, late afternoon J



# VIEW FROM THE BACK

## Keilder Forest Dark Skies 10k 04/01/2020

Liz Hobson



First, let me wish everyone a Happy New Year, indeed a Happy New Decade although my dad would argue that it's not actually a new decade until next year, as year zero doesn't count!

In October I decided I fancied a dark skies race but that I didn't fancy a 10 miler or half marathon which a lot of them seem to be. After a bit of research I found that there was a new year 10k at Keilder Forest, which started at 5pm, so I booked me and Chris on it. This seemed like a good idea at the time, but as often seems to happen, as it got closer and partly because of over indulging on Quality Street, I was struggling with the training. I had been running but hadn't managed any mileage over about 5 miles. However it was only a 10k I mean I've done marathons haven't I?

So Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> came probably too quickly and too near to the festivities. It took about 4 hours to get to Keilder, stopping off at Bellingham to check in at our digs on the way. We had a quick change into our running gear and set off for Keilder Forest.

We were lucky that the weather was calm, although cloudy, which sadly meant that we would miss out on starry skies but that it was relatively mild for January. The registration was at the Keilder Castle, (hunting lodge), and we had to pay for the car park, (something which I do find annoying at events, I mean why not charge a couple of quid extra and have the parking free for competitors?) We got our numbers which were luminous, (cool or what), and got kitted up. I was going for warmth and had my ultra vest containing my water proofs and a few snacks and drinks with me. As always there were some hardy competitors in shorts, but most people had sensible kit on and of course we had our head torches on. There was a short briefing which basically involved telling us all to follow the arrows and stay on the paths!

Just after 5pm we started along with about 200 other competitors. I had positioned myself in my usual spot near the back and as per normal the main field soon left me and a few assorted ladies and one Labrador dog towards the rear. When this happens I tend to have a bit of a panic because I am always worried about losing my way, if I can't see people ahead of me. It's really no wonder I aren't keen on races with handicapping in, where I start towards the front. Some people are natural leaders and some are natural followers! Almost immediately there was an uphill and I started to have one of my anxious moments, so I gave myself a good talking to, "Liz you now qualify as an experienced runner, Liz you have done marathons even 50k, yes, Liz you have consumed far too much chocolate over the last two weeks but this will be useful carb loading for the trials ahead and for F\*\*k sake this is just a 10k!" I also started to distract myself by looking at how pretty everyone looked in their reflective gear and watch out for the reflective arrows marking our way.

After about half a mile I realised that I was catching the field up and then realised the reason, we had to climb a sheer hill which was quite slippery. It had been well worn by the field and there had also been a 10 mile race and duathlon earlier. The marshal gave me a cheery wave and shouted

“Careful it’s slippery love!”

I was really happy with the way the way I climbed that hill and in general when it’s slippery I find, up is better than down. It did mean that I went up a few places in the field and when I got to the top there was a nice gentle hill downwards which I enjoyed all the way back to the castle, (hunting lodge), and the first 2k was complete. The main loop was back past the start and then back into the country. At this point I really felt as though I was on my own, just me the darkness, my headtorch and some very comforting reflective arrows! I kept a steady pace with a brisk walk up the hills strategy. (I generally find I am no quicker if I run up than if I walk up and I tire myself out if I do try to run). I would then run down the hills. Every so often a marshal would appear out of the darkness and give some encouragement and also the odd photographer would flash you almost out of nowhere, they were taking pictures nothing more sinister than that (honestly)!

I could hear some of my fellow runners behind me but otherwise felt quite alone. I actually enjoyed it, as it was just me, the course and the comforting arrows, I felt a bit like an explorer and I can only describe it as epic. We went under a viaduct and then climbed to actually run across it, here I met another marshal who was on a cycle, this was about half way. We then had a long climb I guess possibly about a mile in length up to the summit of the course, I had actually looked at a map of the course and knew about this and also knew that there was a steep downhill at some point. Initially it was a gentle slope but then we had to turn left down a sheer drop which was basically a

mud slide, with added treeroots and trees for a bit of variety. The marshal there, was having a laugh with another lady who stated that she didn’t do hills up or down or running in the dark! He suggested that this wasn’t a good run for her to do. I looked at the drop and thought,

“Shiiiiiiiiit! Here goes!” as the marshal shouted,

“It’s best to just let yourself go love!”

I took his advice, sort of, but slithered and slid my way down looking a bit like bambi on ice, if he was wearing an ultra vest, skins, West Hull Ladies buff and headtorch. I nearly did fall at one point but managed with a bit of skill, luck and determination to stay upright and I breathed a sigh of relief when we hit flatish ground and the last mile through the woods. I lost the comforting arrows at one point but luckily I caught one with my head torch about 100 yards away Also slightly worrying was all you could hear was running water which made me very determined to stay on the track! There was also a lady with two dogs running free, I think she was one of the marshals and this reminded me of all those vampire or werewolf movies when my head torch caught their eyes.

My watch then told me that the 6 miles was up which was slightly worrying as I expected to be able to see the finish, but I think this was because of the dark as eventually I caught sight of the coloured lights of the finish. I was relieved but really enjoyed the adventure of it. I came through the finish and was given my medal. My time was my worst ever for a 10k which was 1 hour 43 mins 05 secs but it was a real experience, slightly scary and great fun. I can’t help wondering what the course is like in daylight now! The medal was cool too.

I would recommend this race as it was well sign posted and had enough toilets! My only complaints would be paying for the parking and also possibly I might have expected more marshals, I couldn’t help feeling that if I had fallen and picked up an injury the marshals seemed to be a long way apart, again that may have been due to the darkness.

So that’s my first adventure for this year over!

