

Folksworth 15 Miler – 18 Jan 2009

by Kym Wheeler RRC 13072

'Twas the night before Christmas.... oops! Sorry, wrong story!

'Twas a dark and stormy night, the night of Saturday 17th January. By morning the clouds had cleared and only puddles and twigs on the road were left to show that the night had been a bit blowy and rainy.

As is usual on a race day, I started my morning several hours ahead of the alarm clock with nervous trips to the bathroom. Finally, the clock went off and I was in the shower before my patient husband had even opened his eyes.

Checked the thermometer for the outdoor temperature. Quite a bit cooler than expected, re-assessment of what I had planned to wear for the race. Long fleecy lined tights and two thermal tops, then my gloves and just a head band. But I took my wind shirt and woolly hat, just in case.

The luxury of going to a race close to home. This is such a rarity! A leisurely 30 minute drive over to Folksworth, with plenty of time to take the pretty route to check out the race course. We picked up the race signs around the 3 mile marker and followed all the way to the start/finish area.

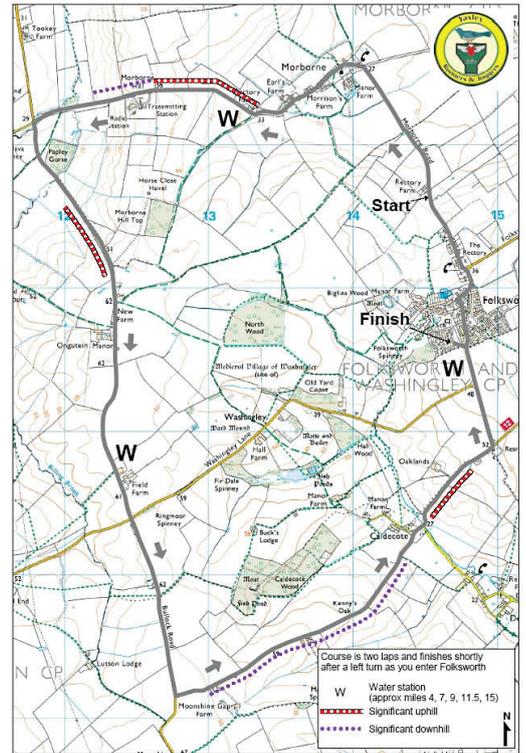
A 2-lap race with three hills going up. They didn't look too bad from the car although I had heard tales of these hills. They have a reputation in the local area.

The first minor problem was the car parking. We had driven into the village centre and were politely directed back out to the farm yard some ¾ mile away. From this car park there was a regular mini-bus service to the village hall. I took only my 'what I need to run in' bag with me.

First thing on arriving: check out the loos. A reasonable supply – very short queues. Two in the village

hall, 4 mobi-loos outside and in the school were 2 mini-ature toilets (it was a primary school) which caused much hilarity with the ladies, a disabled loo and a staff loo. No problems there, then.

The start was gloriously sunny. The start was some ¼ mile outside the village in the opposite direction to the car park. Runners studied the hedges by the roadside closely as they had last minute wees before the gun went off. A gentle downhill start, through the village of Morborne, then up the first hill towards the big radio masts. The wind was



chilly and on to our faces. As we crested the hill there was no reprieve. It was straight down hill, dropping from 52 metres to 24 metres in the space of half a mile. I have to brag here – I'm very good at going down hills! I struggle on the ups, can maintain a good pace on the flat, but give me a down hill and I fly.

I hurtled down the hill, round the corner and up the next hill. Nasty hill, this one. Starts gentle then becomes steeper. The only saving grace was the small line of trees that gave some protection for a short distance from the biting wind. Top of the hill. Flat bit for about a mile (so glad I had gone round here in the car and knew what to expect). Round the corner and the wind was finally behind us. Flying down a long, gentle mile to Caldecote village, then a steep up hill again.





Turn left towards Folksworth village and it was back into wind. Down hill to the village, past the cheering crowds and the finish funnel.

Husband and friend cheered me on. A good time. Half way and looking to beat the 2 hour mark.

Down through the village, round the course again. The wind seems stronger, colder. The hills have been cranked up a notch. I find myself running with a tall man from Werrington Joggers. We puff and pant together round the course, he runs ahead, pulling me up the hills, I charge down the hills and he tags on. Then that last hill from Caldecote to the last turn and I can't keep with him. Never mind. It's the last half mile, last quarter mile, last turn and the finish line.

'54' someone says as I cross the line. I didn't do 1 hour 54 did I? I shake my watch and look at it. I did. I managed 1:54:30. I had hoped to be inside 2 hours, had a vague hope of maybe 1:58, but 1:54!!! I was overjoyed. Kisses for husband, sister and anyone who came close enough. A go bar and go gel as finish prizes, plus the long sleeved t-shirt collected at the start made for good 'goodies'.

Signs said for finishers to keep on the grass, I did for a short while, but the grass appeared to be the local dog-walk-and-don't-pick-up-the-poo area. My husband pulled me off the grass on to the road as I squidged into a turd.

Back to the village school, finding a puddle to swish my stinking dog turdy shoe clean on the way.

Not having my full kit bag, as it was $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away in the car park, I stripped off my hot, sweaty kit and wiped down in the disabled loo with my thermal top, putting on my new Folksworth 20th anniversary long sleeve t-shirt with my track suit. Bacon butties, a wedge of gooey cake, bag of crisps and cup of tea and we settled down to wait for the prize giving. I had had a good run, could it become even better?

The prize giving was just before 2 pm. A reasonable crowd stayed for the presentation which is always good to see. Thanks to all the organisers, marshals and sponsors. Teresa Dyer, who set the women's course record 14 years ago, was presenting the prizes.

Very nice crystal glassware. My Club colleague Troy Garrity collected a decanter for 4th male finisher. Another Club colleague, Maree Jesson collected her age group (W35) crystal fruit bowl. My sister nudged me, showing that she had her fingers crossed for me, then - "50 year old female - Kym Wheeler"!

I was so pleased. It was a beautiful crystal fruit bowl. What a start to the new year. A better than expected time, a PB as I've never run this distance before, and to top it all, an age group prize.

Now the big question - would I do this race again? It's a hard course and the weather in early January can be abysmal. We were lucky on this day with glorious sunshine, despite the chilly wind, but yes, I think I would IF I was planning to do another spring marathon and had the winter training in my legs.

Kym Wheeler (L) with Teresa Dyer



Results - 2009 Folksworth 15m

1st Woman	Sharon Orridge	Long Eaton RC.....	1:38:02
1st W35	Maree Jesson	Northampton RR.....	1:44:43
1st W40	Julia McIntosh	Hunts AC	1:47:44
1st W45	Wendy Gooding	PACTRAC	1:45:29
1st W50	Kym Wheeler	Corby AC	1:54:30
1st Man	Neil Addison	Shaftesbury Harriers	1:23:18
1st M40	Stuart Mead	Spa Striders.....	1:32:52
1st M45	Lazloe Boden	Witney RR	1:34:03
1st M50	Paul Muffett	N Norfolk B Runners	1:31:58
1st M55	Colin Moody	Harlow RC	1:41:44
1st M60	Jim Hayes	N Norfolk B Runners	1:47:03