

Masters profile

BEN REYNOLDS

Runnings Origins

My spiritual running home is Knole Park where I started running in 1975. I have loved the Park and running ever since.



1976 in my beloved Knole Park



Rather less hair but the same floppy wrist!

I was useful at school but not outstanding - I was generally on the fringes of the Kent county team but only made it to two English Schools cross country champs coming an undistinguished 133rd and 79th. The Knole Run was the highlight of my running year and I was 15th, 10th and 6th in my last 3 years at Sevenoaks School but with hindsight I should have done better. I was brought up with a severely limiting attitude that considered hard training to be but a short step removed from cheating so I was determinedly amateur in my approach which sadly persisted until my 40s. I barely ever did a track, hill or interval session in my schooldays and all my running was steady but, and here's a thing, it is at least arguable that the lack of mileage and intensity contributed to my relative lack of injury and sustained enthusiasm.

After school I went to Nottingham University and was gradually introduced to better training habits but I still rarely did more than 40 mpw and my results were correspondingly modest. 115th, 32nd and 27th in my 3 British X-C Student Champ races. While at Nottingham in 1985 I did however run my first London in 2:32 without really knowing what I was doing training-wise. That was the year that Cain Bradley ran his excellent club record 2:24.

Joining TAC

Having avoided joining a running club on the basis that it demonstrated an overly serious attitude towards running, I finally joined TAC in 1985 and started to enjoy being part of a team. Our team for the Southern Counties relays that year was Pete Mason, Andrew Hollens, Mark Scrutton, me, Spencer Newport and Darrell Smith. That had the potential to be a very strong team but it was ever thus with Tonbridge at that time - so near but so far. In this case Mark although still exceptional was a diminishing force due to other commitments, Andrew was frequently injured and joined the exodus with Darrell and Spencer to Blackheath where they achieved great things.

Breakthrough

Klix Drinks '6'
At Basingstoke, November 30th

BEN Reynolds, a 22-year-old civil engineer who recently moved home to Basingstoke, took advantage of ideal conditions and local course knowledge to win the Klix '6' 10km and improve his best time by a staggering 1½ minutes. Ben runs just 40 to 50 miles a week under his own guidance, and entered this race less than 24 hours after placing third in a Kent Cross Country League event.

The early pace was relatively modest, but the mile was reached in 4:45 and two in 9:40 by an extremely large bunch. The third mile was run mainly on the old A30 road, and Martin Philpott used the good surface and fast running to break up the group with a 4:40 split taking his Hillingdon Junior clubmate, Tony Jackson. Reynolds, last year's winner Mark Gregory, the German Heinz-Bernard Bueger, Dean Keepen and Gerry Hamon clear of the second group. Philpott kept up the pressure on the second lap and gradually reduced the bunch to just three – himself, Reynolds and Jackson.

At five miles the youngster had to let go as Reynolds, running the best race of his life, continued to track the leader. Turning up the final hill, with about 600m to go, Reynolds moved powerfully past Philpott to win by six seconds in 29:39. Following the pace car all the way, Reynolds must have been aware of the speed he was running, but admitted that he felt easy the whole time. Philpott held second and, as this represented the fruits of just four weeks back in training after a break of two weeks to get married, he was well satisfied, as must have been Jackson, breaking 30 minutes for the first time with 29:55.

Alison Wyeth had a comfortable victory in the women's race from Carol Hughes, the winning time being 35:01. Margaret Auerback picked up third and the Vets award with her 36:56.

Martin Duff
Surprise winner at Basingstoke, Ben Reynolds.
Photo: Mike Nicholson

44 27th December Athletics Weekly

1. B. Reynolds (Tonbridge)	29:39
2. M. Philpott (Hillingdon)	29:45
3. A. Jackson (Hillingdon)	29:55
4. H-B. Bueger (FRG) 30:11; 5. M. Gregory (S&E) 30:20	
6. G. Hamon (Swi) 30:23; 7. E. Cunningham (AF&D) 30:37; 8. A. Gibson (Gos) 30:29; 9. C. Tall (AF&D) 30:41	
10. T. Clark (Poole) 30:44; 11. D. Keepen (Eads) 30:46	
12. G. Dwelly (Wok) 30:47; 13. T. Dicker (F&C) 30:55	
14. D. Hayes (HHH) 30:55; 15. M. Humble (Gos) 30:56	
16. M. Ellis (Ov) 31:04; 17. A. Hoare (Ov) 31:12; 18. M. Duff (AF&D.V) 31:17; 19. P. Keenan (Ov) 31:22; 20. D. Kennedy (AF&D) 31:26; 21. J. Jackson (AF&D) 31:30; 22. R. Dooney (Sy. U) 31:31; 23. P. Arnold (AF&D) 31:31	
24. M. Campbell (Wm) 31:33; 25. G. Havers (Hil) 31:33	
26. M. Lawther (AF&D) 31:37; 27. R. Hudson (AF&D) 31:38; 28. N. Moore (Read) 31:43; 29. T. Smith (B'nto) 32:02; 30. H. Richards (Ov) 32:04; 31. A. Eade (S&E) 32:05; 32. P. Mitchell (Read) 32:06; 33. R. Swann (B'nto) 32:10; 34. J. Laker (AF&D) 32:19; 35. D. Ramsay (Read) 32:23; 36. R. Redfern (FRG) 32:24; 37. S. Tack (B'nto) 32:26; 38. M. Dennison (Ov) 32:26; 39. P. Wheeler (Ov) 32:29; 40. P. Grifley (S&E) 32:38. Teams: 1. Hillingdon 30; 2. Aldershot F&D 48; 3. Overton 66; 4. Aldershot F&D 'B' 76; 5. Southampton & E 76. Vets - 1. Duff; 2. L. Henderson (B'nto) 32:57; 3. B. Smith (B'nto) 32:57; 4. R. Churcher (S&E) 33:13. O/50 - 1. J. Mattinson (SLR) 36:12; 2. M. Keough (B'nto) 36:35. Women - 1. A. Wyeth (S&E) 35:01; 2. C. Hughes (Read) 35:48; 3. M. Auerback (Rams-V) 36:56; 4. A. Bott (Wok) 37:13; 5. E. Corden (BA) 38:43.	



Leaving Nottingham in 1986, I started work in Basingstoke and had a breakthrough 10k running 29:39 in the Klix 10k and getting my picture in AW!! Given that this had come relatively easily I thought this was the start of things to come, little realising that I would never run a 10k as fast again!

That same year I remember running very hard for a distant 2nd in the Kent Cross Country champs to an invincible Mark Scrutton who won by almost a minute.

For the next few years I was doing my accountancy exams and would not run a step for 3 months and then storm back for 3 months before the next exam cycle started. I particularly enjoyed a comeback sequence of that went 26th Kent League, 15th Kent Champs, 13th Southern X-C champs over a period of 6 weeks.

Although I always did a few Southern Men's League track races each summer (usually the 5,000m with Pete Mason), I rarely trained on the track with the

exception of 1990. That year I was living at home in Westerham again but trained on the Sevenoaks School track. The effect was marked. I was a close 2nd to Barry Royden in the Kent champs, set my 5,000m PB of 14:28, won an exciting sprint finish at Tonbridge in a Southern Men's League against Andy Bristow (happily caught by Mark Hookway on video) and surprised many by running 8:17 for 3,000m at Norman Park despite jibes from those asking whether I knew which way to run round a track given my thin track pedigree.



I remember this T Wells 1/2. I felt good but Bob Treadwell doesn't look so cheerful.

That winter I would join Mark Hookway, Steve Keywood, Pete Mason, Cain Bradley and others for their Tuesday (?) evening road runs followed by a pub meal. I benefitted and enjoyed running with them given that I always otherwise ran on my own. I also shamelessly cadged lifts from them to races which I found helpful given that I always seemed to need to fall asleep. I fear I was poor company.

In 1993 I got married and moved to Wimbledon and at the same time the TAC senior team was getting thin. In the National X-C of 1993 I was the only TAC senior man (what a contrast to now!) with little prospect of company for a few years so I switched my first claim for road and x-c to Thames Hare and Hounds. Running wise, little changed between 1993 and 2005. I continued to run well given the relative lack of focus and training. "Good, considering" is a rather disappointing epitaph.

Masters running

That changed in 2005 when I went to work in the US. I got a lift every day to work with a colleague who insisted on a 6am pick up meaning we got to work at 6.30! Fortunately there was a gym in the building that provided daily T-shirts, shorts and socks (!!) and there was a nearby park so I was able to train every morning and postpone starting work until a more civilised hour. The regular training didn't make me quicker (I was already 41 by then) but it did mean that I slowed down slower than almost everyone else. I tackled the 3 major US marathons and was pleased to finish 3rd, 3rd and 4th in the V40 category at New York, Chicago and Boston. Boston was particularly pleasing because I set a 2:25:23 PB at the age of 44 coming 27th overall and Thames won the Masters team prize as well. It's a great event if you ever get the chance to run it. While in the US I was also thrilled to earn my first ever England vest for the Masters International x-c, and run the fastest leg at the BMAF road relays (14:46).

Returning to the UK in 2008 it was suggested I run in the World Masters 5,000 champs in Finland in 2009. Such a possibility had never occurred to me but the idea seeded and germinated with a V45 victory in 15:14 which I was very pleased with. Now a devotee of the Masters scene I tried to defend my title in California



In the cooling spray at the brutally hot 2015 WMA champs

in 2011 finishing up 3rd. I skipped Brazil in 2013 but returned to winning ways last summer in France with a V50 win in brutally hot conditions in 15:48. I also tried indoor racing last year for the first time ever and was astonished to run 9:01 for 2nd in the European Indoor 3,000m in Poland and followed that up with a win this year in Italy in 9:14. I would highly recommend the international masters races. There is tremendous goodwill and camaraderie to be found amongst competitors and supporters, and friendships are easily made with former foes.

Following a V50 age group win in 2:34 in London 2014 I reached the conclusion that marathons are not really my thing. It demands too many eggs in one basket and I find the whole thing too exhausting so I think I will limit myself to one foray every 5 years when I hit a new age category (shameless pot hunting!).

The underlying engine



Not sure which but one of these fine fellows is my great grandfather

I have been relatively fortunate not to have had many injuries. My only significant injury was a pelvic stress fracture brought on by a sudden increase in training when I got excited by the prospects of turning 40. Salutory lesson! Introduce increase volume or intensity gradually! That aside I have had nothing worse than niggles helped no doubt by my happy knack of not putting on weight. I was 10 stone when I left school and I'm the same now. I don't think I've ever been more than 10st4lb. I've also been fortunate with my underlying machine. My resting HR is in the low 40s or sometimes high 30s. My VO2 max has been measured twice: in 1990 it was 70.3; in 2014 it was 73.9 which

was a surprise since it is meant to reduce with age. In general I think I have been lucky with my genes. Given that there is no sporting pedigree in my parents or grandparents generation I think there must be a

recessive endurance gene in the Reynolds DNA that skips generations! It seems my great grandfather was a cyclist of some note winning the London to Bath cycle race on a penny farthing.

Training now

I now try to maintain consistency. That seems to be key to avoiding injury and maintaining quality. So I generally run 6 days per week. One track session a week, one long Sunday run, and ideally a tempo run. The other runs are steady or easy. I find doing any more (e.g. double days, increased mileage) requires huge effort and is exhausting. It doesn't help that my daily commute is 1hr 40 mins each way so time is at a premium. Weekly total 40-50.

Biggest achievements

Few individual races stand out. Mostly it's my consistency over many years that is pleasing.

I'm pleased with my major championship record as a veteran:

- World Masters 2009 5,000m 1st 15:14
- World Masters 2011 5,000m 3rd 15:27
- World Masters 2015 5,000m 1st 15:48
- European Indoor 2014 3,000m 2nd 9:01
- European Indoor 2015 3,000m 1st 9:14
- World Masters Mountain Running 2015: 2nd

I'm pleased to have run 23 Southern X-C champs with an average finishing position of 42nd.

Boston 2008 is a very happy memory. I trained as hard as I thought I was capable, I set a PB at the age of 44 and the race went well.

Given how I achieved them, I think all my senior PBs are probably soft. Certainly on an age-graded basis, my performances now are much 'better' than the ones when I was in my prime.

PBs

800m	2:02 (1982)
1,500m	4:04 (1985)
3,000m	8:17 (1990)
5,000m	14:25 (1990)
10k road	29:39 (1986)
½ M	1:06:57 (1996)
Marathon	2:25:23 (2008)
Kent x-c	2 nd (1986)
Southern x-c	13 th twice (1991, 1992)
Nationals x-c	39 th (2004)
Best age graded	93.75% (9:01 3,000m 2014)