

# Centurion Runners Monthly News Bite....



Month – May 17



## Editorial

Apologies for the lack of photographs this edition. Hopefully you will enjoy the articles. If you want to see more variety please get writing and help me keep the News Bite alive and well. I can help with editing and formatting and am happy to publish your exploits.

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## Thanks to .....

James Eckloff and Lee Caves

*Neil Wilkes* 

# Runner Profile

*(Note - This profile is primarily about the fun and light sided aspects of running)*

**Name:** James Eckloff

**Years running:** 3 and a smidge

**Favourite race experience (and why):** Coventry Half Marathon 2015, training had gone well and i had a dream target of sub 1:30, realistically, i didn't feel in that shape. I stood with Wayne Muddiman on the start line expecting maybe get 1:31ish (close to his PB). My current PB at this point was 1:33 at Birmingham which was amended by them to 1:35 (timing issues). Everything went right on the day, felt awesome and crossed the line in 1:26.40. Still chasing a new PB 2 years later!

**Most amusing race experience (and why):** Due to only being running for a few years, i don't have too many amusing experiences unfortunately. Tom Healey losing his shoe at Leamington XC a few years ago was an amusing highlight of my day, there is a great video somewhere of him fishing it out whilst tens of people in spikes come running through him, he eventually gave up and ran the last 2 and a half laps with 1 shoe! im sure he was still 3rd counter or something.

**My personal amusing one was doing the St Albans half marathon 2015, first race back from a long injury, i started with a friend, but as 5k was nearing, and my stomach had decided it needs to empty. So the first portaloos were at the 5k marker, i quickly dive in, drop shorts and realise its bloody dark in here! Managed to muddle through in a rush, luckily the string on my shorts didn't knot and it was a relatively smooth transaction. Fishing for toilet roll wasn't ideal and guessing when you've used enough! As i exited and ran on, i realised that the portaloos had been positioned under a bridge. Very clever by the organisers as they need daylight to shine through the white roofs!**

**Most embarrassing race experience (and why):** Again, not too many embarrassing experiences. The only one that springs to mind was Birmingham half marathon 2016. 2 weeks prior i had completely Bournemouth half marathon and for the first time ever, for a few weeks after, i couldn't run, my legs would tingle and be really numb. even when trying to run through it, it didn't go away. So as Birmingham day came, i got ready, not running since Bournemouth, and began ambitiously with Lee Caves (us both wanting a sub 1:30). I ran 1:29 at Bournemouth the fortnight before. Anyway, legs tingle as we started and again, didn't go away, at 5k Lee was pulling away and i was about 20 seconds down on Bournemouth, so to avoid doing any damage, i stopped, and Walked back to Broad Street. It was pretty embarrassing walking back, people look and wonder if i went off too hard, or am not fit enough, and i didn't have a limp, so why have i stopped. A nice man from BRATs give me a drink and an uncomfortable silver foil blanket. And looking back, although i was embarrassed, it was the right thing to do.

**Least favourite race experience (and why):**

Any sort of cross country! i truly hate it. But i will persist and will be giving it a go again soon, it just doesn't suit me at all. I am so much slower and feel like i underachieve every time.

**What one piece of advice would you give to someone new to the sport?**

Take it easy, make sure you learn the difference between race pace and training pace, i think

learning pace control and how the body feels at those paces (whatever they are to the individual) learn to embrace them. IT will help in the long run. Plus, be ambitious! I see lots of runners who never ever reach their potential. Some have no interest in trying, and some are worried to put it all out there to get faster. Nothing to be worried about, just get out and give it your all :)

## Thanks to Lee Caves for this extended article – Part 1 Marathon Training

The only big race that I have planned for 2017 so far is Manchester Marathon, so instead of doing a race report after the event with hindsight and the predictable adjustments to my goals, I thought I would write a three part report. I will start with my initial thoughts and goal on entering the race, then a short report on how I feel after training and going into the race and finishing with my reflections post-race (hopefully all will align, but we will see.)

My debut marathon was run in Manchester 2016. As this was my first Marathon, I didn't know what to expect and so trained with the rough goal of around 3:15 but managed a very respectable 3:09 (just a few minutes shy of my Good For Age time.)

Now, I will be 40 in July and so my GFA time will rise from 3:05 to 3:15, as I can already achieve this I feel that it would be cheating myself a little so set the target of achieving GFA before my birthday.

Enter Manchester 2017.

In late 2016, and not content with just achieving GTA, I decided to return to Manchester and go sub 3 hours (after all, what's another 5 minutes?) Yes that's right; not try for sub 3, attempt sub 3, train for sub 3; I simply decided that at the start of April I was going sub 3. This may turn out to be overly optimistic, maybe not, but I do believe that if you can truly convince yourself that something will happen then you're over half way there.

So the training so far. Well, more of the same really. I have looked back at what I did last year and was shocked that I did absolutely no speed work. With no real marathon training plan and under the advice from Geoff Wheeler I just focused on consistent, slow miles (and lots of them.)

I'm not one for ridged training plans with arbitrarily targets so up until the New Year I decided to just slowly increase the mileage back up to 10 on Tuesdays & Thursdays with 17-23 on the weekend, all very slow (capping my heart rate at 142bpm.)

So 2017 came and my Marathon ever closer I wanted to get my legs turning over faster. I followed Mark Sisson's more primal training ideas of 1 speed session, 1 marathon pace tempo and one long run per week.

The speed sessions have been going well but the tempo's are a struggle. This is made worse by stalking another club members Strava profile who has very similar PB's and goals to mine and finding that he is doing perfect intervals with longer faster tempo runs (you know who you are.)

Anyway, there's still plenty of time yet. I'm sure I'll pull something out of the bag on race day. Only time will tell.

**Lee Caves**

## Part 2 – The Night Before

As promised, a brief night before race report.

Well training in my opinion has gone well, I'm feeling good and just want to get this done now. For the last few weeks I have done two hard sessions in the week followed by some sort of race on the weekends and feel that I've been teetering on the edge of an injury, roll on my recovery after tomorrow.

I have deliberately not thought about my race day plan until Monday as I did not want anyone giving their opinions and making me doubt myself.

So, onto the plan.

Sub 3 means 6:52 minutes per mile, simple. It's highly unlikely that I will negatively split so I need to plan for a slight positive one. Also the sensible half of my brain would like the first 5k to be the slowest.

After some number crunching I decided on the following:

7:10 per mile for 4 mile. That leaves 6:44 per mile for 9.1 miles to get to half way in 90 minutes.

Then continue at that pace for as long as possible to allow for slow down at the end.

I appreciate that these times are not that far apart so it will have to be a very consistent effort.

Predictably though after deciding on this plan a Marathon Talk interview on Thursday put the doubts into me. A statistician said that to PB, I should start at 6:30ish to allow for a steady drop off in speed throughout the race. What's he know anyway?

I did originally want a to allow for a positive split though so to add a little more wiggle room I've decided on: 7:10 for 3 mile followed by the rest at 6:40 minimum for as long as I can hold it. This will see me through half way in under 90 minutes and hopefully allow for a little more error in the final miles.

Less than 12 hours and we will see.

## Part 3 Race Day

Well, what can I say? I'm glad that's over.

What a day, great weather (a little on the warm side for racing but lovely before and after,) much improved organisation all round compared to the fiasco that the organisers had last year, and more toilets than I've ever seen at a race. All was looking really good for a great race.

I was feeling quite fresh and confident as Pete and I had a lazy stroll over to the start pen. This is it, make or break myself.

So how did it go?

I don't mind admitting now that although I was outwardly remaining confident throughout, on the inside I had started doubting myself. Every week there seemed to be some sort of statement or comment on the Marathon Talk podcast that contradicted what I was doing or out right said that I was not fast enough to go sub 3. That combined with my Coventry Half time two weeks ago being a minute slower than last year was weighing heavy on my mind.

Oh well, you get nowhere unless you push yourself so all I can do is have faith in my training, have faith in my plan and most of all have faith in myself.

I truly believe that I paced it perfectly, nice easy start, gradual increase to cruising speed from mile 3, passed the 3 hour pacer at around mile 10 to reach half way at 1:29. I have to say that I'd hoped for a slightly bigger cushion than that but still feeling strong, so just got to keep it going.

I soon noticed a big difference though, it was almost like someone had flicked a switch. In stead of consciously having to keep my speed down to race pace, I found I was having to focus on keeping it up to race pace. Not good as I'm still only just past half way. This coupled with a couple of rounds of stich to push through saw the toughness of this distance settle in.

Although my pace had started to waver, my mile splits still seemed to remain on target so I was somewhat surprised at around 20 miles (head was a little fussy by then,) to see the 3 hour pace man retake the lead. I tucked into the pack and stayed with them for as long as I could but they eventually pulled away and there was nothing I could do about it. Maybe his gone to fast? I'd like to think so.

As long as I can see his little flag then I should be on for my secondary target of good for age (3:05,) but both slowly sailed away from me and out of sight.

At this point I decided that no good could come from knowing the time or my elapsed time so resisted the urge to flick to the second screen on my Garmin.

I gave everything I had in those final few miles, got heavier and heavier, slower and slower, until I spotted them. The best sight of the race. Yes it is, it's the flood lights of Old Trafford over the buildings, can't be far now.

I was truly amazed to see the clock on the finish line still reading 3:00 something, couldn't make out the something for some reason, just focused all my attention on getting through before it clicked over to 3:01. It felt like time itself was slowing down and then it was over. For the first time I went weak and light headed as I slowed and grabbed the barrier. Not sure how I never passed out. I swayed about euphorically on wobbly legs as they shepherded us through.

3:00:39 is better than I could have realistically hoped for and a good for age before it gets raised on my birthday in July.

It doesn't get any better than that.

**Lee Caves**



# The Cathedral to Castle Run

## 9 April 2017 – Race Report

This was the inaugural 10 mile Cathedral to Castle (C2C) race organised by the Rotary Clubs of Tamworth and Lichfield. Their inspiration was the Two castles run (Warwick to Kenilworth) that is part of the Warwickshire Road Race League.

The race was sold out very quickly with only 400 places available. I just got lucky and saw an article in the Tamworth Herald on the day it was released so got a place. It was also a good date as a sharpener for London two weeks later.

Given it was a point to point race the organisers arranged transport for £1 from Tamworth to the start at Lichfield which you had to book in advance. I didn't use the service as I had lift into Lichfield. Bag drop facilities were available and worked well.

The start was 9:00am from Beacon Park. We took a loop of the park in before passing reasonably close to the Cathedral (but not down the side as I'd been expecting) and then following some alleyways to Darnford Lane, across Darnford Park and the A38 and heading towards Whittington. We picked up the bridleway at the edge of Whittington Golf course before heading into Hopwas Woods, past the Packington pigs and over the long hill in the centre. Recent work by the MOD has improved the paths immensely so it was a great stretch of trail running. From there it was down the steep hill (forever nicknamed concrete hill where I work) and onto the canal towards Hopwas.

At Hopwas you turn onto the road towards Tamworth passing the Fox pub to your right. I took a wrong turn at Hopwas as there was no-one to follow and the marshal didn't direct me, I ended up the wrong side of the road and had to stop running until a break in the traffic occurred. Not a big deal for me but if it happened at the sharp end then I guess some might have found that frustrating...I just had a rest!

After passing the Fox we had another mild uphill and about a mile further on turned right into Wiggington Park, following the railway line, From there we crossed the Lichfield Road near Tamworth and ran across the Ladybridge, did part of the centre of Tamworth before looping around the flower beds near the castle and a loop of the park to the finish line.

Support at the finish was great; the lovely sunny day I'm sure helped and the circus was in town too. Support on the route was low but to be expected but where people were out they were very friendly and encouraging.

I really enjoyed the whole run offering road, trail, canal, not forgetting a Cathedral and a Castle. We were rewarded for our efforts with a technical t shirt. The goody bag was really just leaflets, but we did get a banana and water as well.

For a first ever event I think they did really well, I would just ask them to provide mile markers as not everyone has a Garmin. I think they may extend the numbers next year and register with UKA. They didn't do this first time round as they wanted to try things out before getting too ambitious. I will certainly return if I can get an entry next year.

**Neil Wilkes**



## 5 at 50

I hope you will agree I've never been one to self-publicise through the News Letter or now with the Club News Bite. On this occasion I'm making a small exception and I hope that some of you will enjoy reading my exploits and my motivation this coming year.

So why call this 5 at 50? Well I turned 50 in April (yes, I know hard to believe with my youthful looks) and decided I wanted to try a marathon for every decade. Some bright spark at work has already stated I'm in my 6<sup>th</sup> decade so I'll count the Thunder Run in July for that.

I've also decided to dedicate these marathons to my Dad who passed away last year. For those that don't know I was at the Hotel the evening before the London Marathon last year and had a call to say Dad was slipping away so I rushed back to Heartlands Hospital, the marathon understandably was the last thing on my mind but amongst the chaos I put a deferment in. Dad rallied and declined a couple more time before passing away at the end of May. So in his memory and honour I'm running for the Royal British Legion. Dad was ex services, Royal Army Service Corps 1945-48 and a lifelong member of the Legion, so it seemed fitting and felt right to raise a few pounds for them whilst challenging myself.

I've kept pretty quiet about it all until now as naturally I'm wary that things can happen in life, not to mention illness or injury that would stop me achieving this. Marathons are a real challenge to me; I guess more the recovery sometimes as well, so this will be interesting in how/if I cope with it all. My plans are (all things being well!)

- London 23 April
- Flying Fox 28 May
- North Devon marathon 25 June
- (Thunder Run - works team 22/23 July)
- Purbeck marathon (actually 27 miles) but I'll count it, 17 Sep
- Birmingham 15 Oct

I'll provide some updates via the News Bite on my progress.

If you would like to sponsor me that would be lovely but this is in no way an expectation from me. I can be found at the link below.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Neil-Wilkes1>

Happy running, and good luck to you all in your forthcoming races this season.

**Neil Wilkes**

# VMLM Results

Well done to all Centurions who took part. Special mention to Paul Davies for largest amount of media exposure!

**RESULTS: CLUB, CHARITY AND BALLOT**  
5 Results | unofficial results | Club: centurion rc

Place overall	Place gender	Place category	Name	Club	Runner no	Category	Half	Finish
961	940	37	» Carwardine, Mark (GBR)	Centurio...	33344	50-54	01:23:16	02:51:41
30664	10499	1847	» Colquhoun, Clare (GBR)	Centurio...	21761	40-44	02:26:02	05:14:46
919	900	35	» Davies, Paul (GBR)	Centurio...	31756	50-54	01:23:16	02:51:09
35404	12999	7350	» Horsfall, Samantha (GBR)	Centurio...	21681	18-39	02:31:15	05:50:44
11367	8850	896	» Wilkes, Neil Harry (GBR)	Centurio...	21079	50-54	01:51:53	03:53:30

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## My First Update

So I promised an update after each marathon (I penned my 5 at 5 piece before running London). So in brief it was a great day, I paced it well, only tiring in last 2 miles. I had to keep controlled as I was thinking longer term and surviving for the next marathon. As recovery I've had a couple of massages and stretched well, I also kept moving after the marathon. Have had a dreadful cold come out but now is best time to get I guess. Next one is hilly so will definitely be slower and again need to save some for the North Devon Marathon which is a fell one. Will keep you updated.

**Neil Wilkes**

And.....



**That's all folks!**

