

ERIC SMITH

Part Two of the Phil Dean Interview

In the last Interview you mentioned that you were a member of the Leeds Harehills Liberal Club AC and you recorded your best achievements in the late 1950's- what happened after that time ?

After finishing 4th in the 1958 Empire Games Marathon I decided that at the age of 37 I would retire whilst still at the top. After 7 years of talking, eating, & sleeping athletics full time, life was becoming tedious & there must be more to life especially having a 2 year son. After reaching a peak of just over 12 stones & idleness in 1978 I finally decided after 20 years absence to become a secret night phantom runner & struggled, puffed and panted myself to a modest 11stones. (previous racing weight 9st-8lbs) Over the years my nightly runs increased in length and endurance. In 1979 I was the subject of much rivalry in the local pub. Much money circulated regarding my capabilities of completing the 3 PEAKS course in 5 hours. I obliged with many witnesses in 4 hrs- 5 mins. In 1980 I again completed the 3 PEAKS setting off one hour before the race started. Only 9 runners caught me, I registered 3 hrs 42 mins. The urge to run was with me again. I continued running increasing the tempo & effort gradually to 40 miles per week. By 1983 my weight was a slim 10 stones. I entered the Yorkshire Vets Cross Country and took the over 60 title, followed by the Northern Vets title. I was not eligible for awards as I was a guest runner. Hence I joined the Northern Vets AC. The running boom exploded & I completed the Bradford Marathon in 2-58-05 being the first over 60 & finishing 75th out of a field of over 2000. The bug was certainly alive & my weekly mileage increased to 60-70 miles.

I know that Otley AC was formed in 1983, some members will not be aware of the circumstances which lead to the formation of the Club- can you give a brief comment on how the Club came to be formed ?

The response of over 1000 entrants to the 1st Otley $\frac{1}{2}$ marathon inspired & prompted the organiser Gordon Baines (ex Rugby Player) to advertise in the local press for local runners to form a Club in Otley with the Rugby Club as Headquarters. The inaugural meeting attracted an attendance of 50 plus with AAA officials in evidence to give advice and the Club was born, short of experience but full of potential.

Best times since becoming a member of Otley AC, 10K, 10 miles, $\frac{1}{2}$ & full marathon and which race do you consider your best as an Otley AC member. ?

1984 (Aged 62) 10 miles Thirsk 61-45, $\frac{1}{2}$ marathon York 1-20-05, Marathon Bradford 2-58-05
1987 (Aged 65) 10K Barnsley 38-30, Track 10,000 metres 38-43

I know you have achieved various Vets records, brief summary and which race do you consider your best as an Otley AC member ?

1984 Aged 62, Yorkshire, Northern & British Vets Cross Country Champion.
1983,84,85,86-Yorkshire & Northern Vets Cross Country Championship titles,
1987 British Vets, over 65 all comers record 10K Barnsley 38-30

In this year I won 27 out of 28 races over 60 prizes at all distances. The one I lost was an International in Brugge. I was beaten by a GERMAN.

I have many best races to mind but one of the most satisfying was aged 62 at York $\frac{1}{2}$ marathon. Otley hired a bus & we turned out approx 20+ runners with much rivalry. My 1-20-05 proved the best.

Present amount and type of training ?

I have always believed in getting steady miles in & I have tried to average 60-70 miles per week broken into 8,10, & up to 14 mile runs, When running marathons I used to do 24 miles Saturday AM 16 miles Sunday AM, 12 miles Monday evening, 10 miles Tuesday evening. No matter how I felt physically and mentally every Wednesday I ran the Farnley, Pool course either way as fast as I possibly could go. Otherwise I relied on regular racing for speed & endurance.