



Les Hislop

## LES HISLOP

**Born** 03/04/1942 Most people don't think I am that old, they think I am a lot older!.

**Joined Ilford A.C.** October 1982.

**Personal bests** all done when I was 40 or older.

Didn't do many track races other than in the vets league. I ran 5 mins 12 secs for the mile in the 100 mile relays that were held at Woodford in about 1984.

Road. 5 miles 29.50 1991

10km. 37 23 1989

10 miles 59.08 1983

Half Mar. 1.17.49 1983

20 miles 2.02.53 1983

I don't remember the first race I did for the club, but the first one I ran in was the day after I had my 40th Birthday when I got to bed at 1.30am in the morning after having a few lemonade shandies. It was the Roding Valley ½ Marathon. I was hoping to run sub 90 minutes and was pleased with my time of 86 mins. It was there that I met Martin Etchells and I joined the club later on his recommendation and we became friends and ran together a lot from Wapping Sports centre where he was the Manager.

I started running in July 1981 when I was 14 stone, a few months later I was 10 stone 7 pounds. I ran the second London in 1982, 3 weeks after the Roding and did 3 hours 16 mins.

I was not obsessed with PBs and enjoyed the hard races doing the Offas Dyke 15 mile Category C fell race 11 times. Seven Sisters Marathon twice and the Snowden 10. In the first Seven Sisters race Sarah Rowell won the race overall the only time a woman has won a Marathon beating the men.

**Notable Performances.** First man home for Ilford in the Harlow Marathon on a scorching hot October day and the first time I broke 3 hours for the distance. 2.02 53 for Essex 20 when I hadn't broken 60 mins for 10 miles. Winning Southern Counties 10 km title when I was 60. Perhaps my greatest athletic achievement was learning to walk and run again after having a stroke when I was 60. It was probably the previous years excesses catching up with me.

No real disappointments other than possibly the year I did my PB for 20 miles. I believe I was fit enough to do sub 2.50 for the marathon but took a blind friend of mine round the London called Mike Brace. We were however interviewed by Bob Wilson on the Cobbles of the Tower of London for the TV.



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### **Typical weeks training.**

Mon. 8 miles road

Tues. Track session 400 and 800 metres. Total distance 6 miles.

Wed. 8 miles road.

Thursday 9-10 miles from track. Like John Mackenzie said in his profile I think I ran harder and faster than I did when I was racing.

Fri. Resting in the pub.

Sat. 15 miles usually from Portacabin at Hainault Forest.

Sun. 10 to 15 miles.

**Advice to youngsters:** don't listen to me.

**Most famous athlete you ran with** Alastair Hutton who won L.M. in 1990 . Doing the L.M. recce runs from Wapping Sports centre.

In my first L.M. I ran next to Peter Duncan who was one of the presenters of Blue Peter on the television. He pulled away from me but I passed him at the 18 mile mark lying at the side of the road after he had an accident in his running shorts. I suggested to the BBC that they renamed the programme Brown Peter but they didn't take me up on it!

### **How would you improve the sport-**

Make all sport compulsory in Schools.

**Favourite athlete.** Steve Ovett.

### **What other sports you follow.**

Track cycling, Cross country skiing and Biathlon.

**Best Country visited** Kenya, not for the food but the scenery and wild life was spectacular. You couldn't do it now, but what an adventure.

**Favourite food and drink.** Coquille St. Jacques and Muscadet Sur Lie followed by Stilton and warm crusty roll and vintage port.Lovely!

**Favourite TV shows.**Morecambe and Wise, Open all hours , Chernobyl. Madam Secretary and Homeland.



Les Hislop

**Last film seen :** Jason Bourne.

**Last book read:** Cannot remember.

**Favourite band and singers.** Fleetwood Mac, Pink Floyd, Neil Diamond, Roxy Music and Genesis.

**Last Album bought.** Cannot remember.

**Last concert attended.** The rolling Stones at Wembley Stadium, I could definitely hear them and just about see them.

**Any pets.** Not now, but over the years we have had dogs and cats. At one stage we had 2 dogs and 2 cats at the same time, it was chaos and I spent a lot of time redecorating the house.

**Aims** No running aims for next season but to try and stay fit and healthy.

**Tell us a joke.** I used to be indecisive but now I am not so sure.

I made many friends and have great memories of travelling all around the Country and abroad doing races and socializing. In the first year that I joined the club I ran 34 races. If you did that now you would have to remortgage your house.

**Favourite people to have a meal with,** Frank Heaney, Ernie Forsyth and John Mackenzie, I don't know how much I would eat, I would be laughing too much.



## **LES HISLOP ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS**

**Before you converted to running, I believe you were a good road cyclist. Did you have competition success in cycle racing ?**

I started cycling seriously when I was 13. Bought my first hand built bike at 16, it cost me 15 weeks wages. I joined a local cycling club and did mainly time trials. This meant getting up at 3 to 4 o'clock in the morning to ride up to 30 miles, do your race and then go out for the rest of the day with fellow club members. I never won a race because you were usually competing against older riders with better equipment. I did 58 mins for 25 miles and 2 hours 2 mins for 50 miles. I did however win a few mass start races around Crystal Palace race track which were 50 miles plus

**No mention of your greatest ever race victory. You know the one !!**

I was too modest to mention winning the Umbungo fun run at Windermere, pushing the youngster out of the way whilst carrying a balloon and wearing a silly hat! afterwards in the pub I don't know how I frightened Johnny Mac's mother and she is still scared of me nearly 40 years later.



Les Hislop

### **What was the last race you did and how did you get on ?**

The last race I did was the Southend 10km which was also the Southern Counties Championship , I won the over 60 category. A few months later I had my stroke and although I got back into running I never raced again.

### **Favourite Park Run and PB ?**

I never did any Park runs, they never appealed to me, but I understand why people do them especially with the cost of entering races these days.

### **Favourite Cross-Country Course and Why ?**

Favourite Cross Country Course has to be around Hainault Forest. I have run there 100's of times and raced with varying degrees of success and not so good results.

### **Greatest Running Rivals both in and out the club.**

As a vet you would find it very difficult to beat our younger good athletes but on the few occasions when I did beat some of them great. Greatest rivals in Vets age group Mick Herring and Les Roworth. Greatest rival elsewhere Chris Finney whose brother Mike lives in the next road to me and is married to John Batchelors sister. Also Pat Dobbs of Thurrock Harriers who did the first 35 London Marathons. I did beat him once in the Chigwell 10.

### **First Single and Album you ever bought ?**

First single bought Dians by Paul Anka we were both 15 years old at the time. Cannot remember the first Album I bought. I have got a lot, let's say The Beatles Sergeant Pepper's lonely Hearts Club Band.

### **What Football Team do you support and Why ?**

I am an Arsenal supporter as my Father was. I went to Highbury a lot to see them play but never to the Emirates. I took my Father to Wembley to see them beat Manchester United in 1979. Sorry John!

### **Worst Injury ?**

I broke my left elbow running down Forest Road when a car was towing another in the dark and fell over the tow rope, as I didn't see it. A few months later I broke the other elbow by the McDonalds drive. o through on Horns road. One of our runners in front of me moved at the last moment and I hit the newly installed bollard. Ouch



Les Hislop

### **Worst Performance and why ?**

Worst performance probably running a race around Chelmsford on a very hot day I collapsed because I was dehydrated and probably because I had run too much the previous week in the heat. Its' a shame because up to that point I was well up in the field.

### **I see you trained with London Marathon winner, Alistair Hutton, What was he like ?**

Alastair Hutton was when I met him, a very quiet Scotsman, which is unusual! He let his running speak for him

### **What sort of training do you do nowadays ?**

After my stroke I ran less hard for a number of years. About 4 years ago I got Cancer and my running came to a halt. When I got over I was then looking after my wife Gill who has become seriously ill. I now go to the Gym 2/3 times a week for a good workout but it is not the same as running.

### **I see you came into running late. Any reason for this and did you do regular sport before you took up running?**

As I said in my previous missive because I had gained a lot of weight I started to run as I found it very hard to try to diet, I played a bit of Sunday football for a while and also played golf.

### **You describe your training as 10-15 miles on a Saturday at Hainault, then another 10-15 miles on a Sunday. That's a lot of running. How long did it take you to build up to that kind of mileage and was Sundays run on the road or was it another Cross Country run?**

After getting fit to run my first marathon I progressed from not being able to do a couple of hundred yards in July 1981 to running 20/21 miles by the following January. My Sunday runs were either at Hainault where I usually ran with Hugh Reese and Stuart Webster or from home around Wanstead Flats with Gerry Pellls.

### **Great story about Peter Duncan. Can you explain why he was lying at the side of the road. Was it to try and hide the evidence or simply wipe it away on the kerb?**

I can only assume he collapsed and lost control of his body functions and was trying to recover when I passed him.

### **Have you ever raced abroad?**

I have raced in New York doing the Marathon and in France, Holland and Belgium. In Belgium



Les Hislop

I competed in the Worlds Vets Championship. What a rip off you had to be affiliated to the World Vets Association which cost £30.00+, I ran reasonably well,, Andy Catton won a prize and was given a plate commemorating the WorldTrade Fair somewhere else. My abiding memory of one of the races was Bob McStocker running around Brugge Stadium having almost a wrestling match with Ron Hill.

**Back in the day did you have any specific eating plan or did you stick to certain foods when training for a specific event. Where Energy bars or gels used a lot?**

I ate as per normal. Did Carbo loading for 20mile plus races. I never used Gels or energy bars. I thought they were not necessary and overpriced. However if you like them and use them it's up to you.

**Of all the Ilford runners you have socialised with, who could hold their drink the best - Or was it you?**

I think I probably was numero uno in the drinking stakes but John Mac, Mick Herring and Lewis Dunbar could give me a run for my money.

**What was your day job, and how did you fit running around that?**

Most of my working life I was a salesman. When I started running I tried going out early in the morning but i didn't suit my lifestyle, I then went out early evening from Wapping with Martin Etchells or went home ran from home then returned to the West End to stay out until 3.00am.

**Where were you born and where did you go to school?**

I was born in Cork in Ireland and went to school in South London.

**Was athletics / sport in general encouraged at your school?**

I went to a school in Inner London with no access to sports facilities. We played Football and cricket in a very small playground, I was a good footballer and a reasonable cricketer.

I hope you have enjoyed my answers and it has brought back good and sad memories to me..