

DAVE BROWN

Vintage 1948

When and how did you start running?

I started running as a hobby and to get fit in 1986.



My 9-year-old daughter Caroline went to Metros Saturday Morning training with her friend Penny. Penny's Mum was an active member of Metros and lived 2 doors away from founder Members Pat & Brian Jackson. I went to a Roxbourne Park Saturday Morning session after marshalling at Metros London League Host fixture at Headstone Lane. The London League is now known as the Summer League but the format of Main Race, Tenderfoot & Relays is still the same.

I remember chatting with Kath Donaldson at my first session in Roxbourne Park and her daughter Hazel was also friends and ran with Caroline & Penny.

Once a month Metros held a handicap run in Ruislip Woods and I went with my dog to take part. I only ran 1 lap approximately 3k I think but even that was too much for the poor dog and I ended up carrying her to the finish.

Do you remember your first race?

My first competitive race was at Serpentine's London League host fixture in Hyde Park. As a beginner I was allowed to take part in the Tenderfoot 3k not the 10k which was normal practice then for adults who were beginners or returning from injury.

What are your personal bests and when did you do this?

400m	01:04.09	Bannister	28.03.89
800m	02:17.40	Woodside	12.09.90
1500m	04:47.70	Perivale	19.09.90
3000m	10:29.70	Woodside	09.05.90
5k	18:12	Harrow Rec	03.02.91
10k	37:11	Hatch End (Harrow10k)	20.04.91
10 mile	65:52	Cabbage Patch	09.10.89
Half Marathon	1:23:50	Harrow	04.11.90
20 mile	2:14:50	Bury St. Edmunds	23.02.92
Marathon	3:10:44	London	23.04.89

Dave finishing his pb marathon on Westminster Bridge closely followed by a pink panther



Injuries and set-backs?

I was feeling very fit and after running in the National cross-country champs at Newark on the Saturday afternoon I followed it up by running at Finchampstead the following morning in the Today Runner League. Unfortunately, I paid the price and succumbed to plantar fasciitis in my right foot which stopped me running for 6 months.

I suffered with a serious bout of Bronchial Pneumonia when I was aged 50 which damaged my lungs and have never recovered completely. Maybe it was just the onslaught of old age.

Worn out knees and 2 operations stop me doing very much now.

Embarrassing moments?

Nearly directing the lead runner at the senior boys Middlesex Schools County Cross Country Championship the wrong way. Luckily someone else shouted and got him back on course and he went on to win the race. The lad in question is in Metros now but I don't know if he remembers it as it was about 30 years ago.

When I was commentator for the Harrow Marathon on the gantry at the finish the race officials below indicated to me that the leading Woman was approaching. I therefore announced this over the tannoy for all to hear only to see to my horror the runner was a man not a woman.



You have been in Metros for years, what are your fondest and funniest memories?

Every Easter Burnham Joggers held a festival of running using a format that was adopted by London Road Runners for the London League i.e. 10k, 1 mile and relays. Michelle my eldest daughter was first Junior in the 10k and won a lovely Easter Egg. 11 year-old Caroline ran in the 1 mile run and was first female. She stepped forward to receive her award but was devastated to get a plant not an Easter Egg like her sister. No one expected a young girl to win the race and a plant was thought to be suitable as the woman's prize. I had to resolve the situation by buying Caroline an Easter Egg & giving the plant to Sharon.

An event from the past which was considered by many Metros at the time to be the highlight of the year was the Sunday Times Fun run. The origins of Metros were when a group of scouts & cubs with their parents entered teams in this event. The whole day was spent at Hyde Park competing and supporting each other. We ran as a 3-generation team with my Mother, Wife & daughters taking part with me. Our dog was there as well.

Achievements? And biggest achievement?

Winning the very competitive male 40-44 London (now summer) League age group 1991 season.

The awards ceremony for the London League was a splendid affair then held in a posh London Hotel with a dinner and dance as well. My daughter Caroline won the tenderfoot girls award as well so it was great to go together for a double celebration. Eamonn Martin was the special guest there. He went onto win the London Marathon. The last British man ever to do so.

Have you run in other countries?

Metros used to go to France to take part in the annual Anglo French 20k race at Boulogne. Metros travelled as a group for the weekend and had a great time even being club champions twice.

Besides this I have been out running when on holiday but not in competitions.

Have you raced / beaten a famous runner before?

Dave Bedford former 10,000m world record holder. I beat him at the Nabisco 4k runs in Reading. We ran in age groups and he is only a year younger than me, so we were in the same race. Metros were shouting 'come on Dave' and when Bedford acknowledged the support, he mistakenly thought he was getting, it was quickly changed to 'Dave Brown' much to his chagrin as I finished in front of him.

What is your most memorable race?

The first time I ran the Seven Sisters Marathon. This is a very tough run starting in Eastbourne and then proceeding off road up some steep hills and steps, ascending to the top of Beachy Head before descending back into Eastbourne. I had not prepared myself at all and intended only to go and watch. A few days before Anne Leigh offered me a spare place and I foolishly accepted. I hadn't booked any accommodation and so left very early in order to make the 9 o'clock start.

I took the race fairly easily at first as it is so demanding. After about 20 miles I began to realise I may actually finish in less than 4 hours which is a great achievement considering how much more challenging it is compared with a normal road marathon.

There were no mile markers but along the top of Beachy Head someone told me there was around a mile to go. I had been running for 3 hours 54 minutes and realised I had less than 6 minutes to beat the sub 4-hour time. An improbable target but as it was all downhill; I took off giving it all I had left. Amazingly I crossed the line in 3 hours 58 minutes and was ecstatic.

On reflection I think it was more like half than a whole mile as it took only 4 minutes, but I had beaten the 4-hour mark.



You must have got a fair few medals and T-shirts – do you still have them?

What's your favourite?

I have 4 London Marathon medals & 5 seven sisters marathon medals which I am proud of but my favourite is the Norfolk Relay 10 times medal.

I recently got my 100 parkruns T-Shirt which is my favourite at the moment.

the Thursday Track man – how did you come to take on this role?

I was training with my 2 daughters at the Metros session at Bannister Track and we had quite a few Old Gaytonians juniors with us as a number of them were also in Metros.

Brian Jackson was the coach at the time but after a while he decided to stand down. He invited me to take over his role initially under his stewardship. As the session continued to be successful Old Gaytonians appointed me as their boys middle distance coach and thing went on from there.

I have led many sessions over the years and more recently been our coordinator for the Thursday track session. This can be a challenging session but everyone who goes appreciates the benefits of this type of training.

What do you love about being a member of Metros now?

I love the fact that there is something for everyone in Metros whether you come as a family or individually. Fast & slow, young & old everyone is welcome. Personally, I think it is great that I can bring the boys and we can all take part at different levels. Metros is a great place to form new friendships as well as maintain old ones.

Favourite race and why?

Norfolk Relay. I have always loved this event even though I do not compete now myself.

I used to go with my daughter when she was a teenager and remember the fun we had supporting each other over the weekend even if we were shattered when we got home having had very little sleep Saturday night. This year I took Tian & Kyie and although I didn't run I did cycle in support.

If you were stuck on an island and could invite someone famous from the running world past or present who would it be and why?

Difficult question this for although I have admired many athletes over the years I am not sure I would want to lumber any of them with being stranded with me on an Island for very long.

I would have this year's World Championship Gold medallists Dina Asher-Smith & Katerina Johnson-Thompson. Then I could enjoy watching them train but obviously not participating myself.



What advice would you give to the aspiring runners who are young enough to know their best years are ahead of them?

Keep at it even when your running may have reached a flat spot.

Vary the type of training you do. Hills & Track training are invaluable alternatives to steady road running.

Compete in races but not every week.

Have fun and keep it enjoyable.