



PENNY LANE STRIDERS

We get Liverpool running!

Lockdown Edition

From the Editor

Apologies that this has taken me so long to send out – some of the blame must be directed towards my laptop (circa 2011), which is very slow and needs quite a lot of careful attention, and the rest is because of the lack of races and sessions providing me with little motivation.

However ... some races are back on and Tuesday night sessions have been a roaring success. So before we get back to business, I provide you with the “Lockdown Edition” of the PLS newsletter.

Nigel F and Supanki K set some amazing challenges over the past few months and I’m sure you’ll all join me in thanking them for their efforts.

I personally have enjoyed cracking on with training over lockdown (without my usual Manchester commute) but the most important thing I’ve gained is an excellent tan which rivals one from any bottle!

Kathryn B



Mile Challenge

By Lisa Mitchell

Being a bit of a fair-weather runner of late, the lockdown challenges from PLS have been a real boost to my weekly running.

From the beginning of lockdown, I've been running quite a few times but with no real purpose except for the daily exercise allowance.

My husband Dave had started the 1 mile timed challenge and was really seeing a quick improvement in his time. However I was a very consistent 11 min mile runner. I NEVER sprint so this would be very new to me.



I began by just using the 1st mile of my 6 mile run as this was usually my faster time. I managed to drop down from approx. 11 min to 10 min 20 secs within a few days which was great. Near the end of the challenge I was closer to 10 min which I was made up with. Obviously, the real point to these challenges is to keep us going during these uncertain times and with the added competitiveness between me and Dave the race was on!

The final weekend Dave got me to run his mile route (around Estuary square) but run 1 mile only. I didn't hold out much hope as my phone died, which meant no music (and I usually only ever run with music!) and dodgy GPS from my fitbit. Anyway, the race was on and I managed to run 9 min 21 secs which I was thrilled with until I realised that although I knew I'd ran a mile, my fitbit registered it at 0.91 miles. Gutted.



After picking myself up off the grass I decided to give it another go, this time with music! It worked and I pulled off 9 min 4 secs. I even ran just over 1 mile to make sure I bagged the distance.

It was amazing to realise I could still get around the 9 min mile, which is a time I haven't been able to run for at least 3 years. I was awarded with the most improved (by 1 second!) and won a medal.

It's great to be able to represent Group 5 in the first challenge of lockdown, and to get one over on Dave (only joking!).

Thanks to Supanki for organising it - it was a great way to start lockdown!

The Quiz with Legs

By Ian Claridge

In what now seems like another life ago, whilst complaining to Dave Lynan, Kath Bradley and Judy Dyer about how painful I found business meeting video calls, I remarked that those platforms would be much better suited to something like a “virtual pub quiz”. Little did I realise that the rest of the world had already had a similar idea.

Within weeks we were into lockdown and we decided to see if fellow Penny-Laner’s fancied giving it a try as a means of keeping in contact and our minds engaged whilst our group activities were curtailed.

Luckily, we were blessed in that together we had all the resources to hand that could make it happen. Dave had a “posh” Zoom account we could misappropriate, I had already gathered a database of collated questions, pictures, puzzles and silly videos, and Kath had the savvy to know how put all these together for a “seamless” online delivery.

Just like that we were committed to giving it a try.

Since then we’ve had a quiz every Sunday evening, with the only exception being for an event at the corner of a park somewhere involving men dressed in red and blue protracting an argument as to which of those colours is the best.

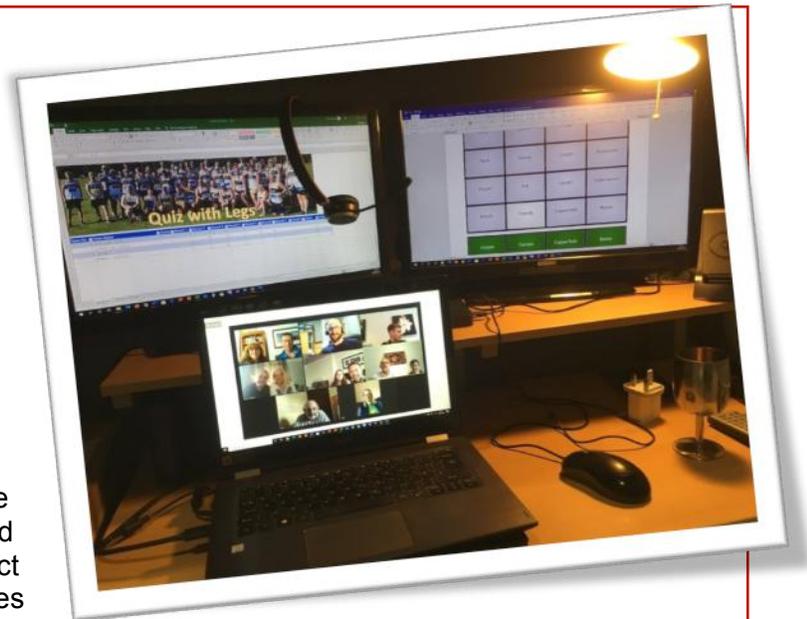
For the record, there is still no definitive answer to this question.

We’ve had plenty of you through our virtual doors, and covered a breadth and depth of topics, styles and media over the weeks. A few (author’s opinion) highlights have been the guest rounds such as “Sink or Float”, “Guess the Park Run Route-map”, “Race Night” and “Bully’s Special Prize”, although since the phased return we’ve pared some of these down to try to reduce the game time to an hour.

Regular quizzers appear to particularly enjoy “Dingbats” and “Only Connect” rounds, and whenever we have “Song Intro’s” rounds they appear to result in enthusiastic debate as to the definition of “popular”.

The way we play is basically akin to the grass-roots version of the aforementioned sporting event. We simply turn up and pick teams (usually at random using the power of zoom, so no embarrassing standing against the wall whilst the biggest kids take turns to choose from most to least gifted), and then work together virtually in those teams to come up with some answers. In this way players don’t need to commit to every week or book in advance, and similarly we can accommodate anyone who wants to play together.

We’d like to thank everyone who has been involved so far. I personally feel like through sharing a few laughs (and slip-ups) I’ve gotten to know you all a little better, and hope you’ve enjoyed it too. We’ll continue to put them on for as long as you want them, and are always happy to receive suggestions for new things to try, so email me (ianclaridge@gmail.com) anytime with any suggestions.



PLS Mileage Challenge

Set by Nigel Foo

The second lockdown challenge saw us split into two teams based on birth month. The winning team were Group A, both on total mileage and taken as an average for each participant.

Group A:

Men

1st Ian Sadler $52 + 114 = 166$ total

2nd Luke Curtis $61 + 88 = 149$ total

3rd Dave Lynan $55 + 58 = 113$ total

Women

1st Lenka Vidamour $64 + 90 = 154$ total

2nd Kathryn Bradley $70 + 70 = 140$ total

3rd Felicity Wolohan $63 + 66 = 129$ total

Group B:

Men

1st Eamonn Brady $77 + 112 = 189$ total

2nd Phil Riding $72 + 92 = 164$ total

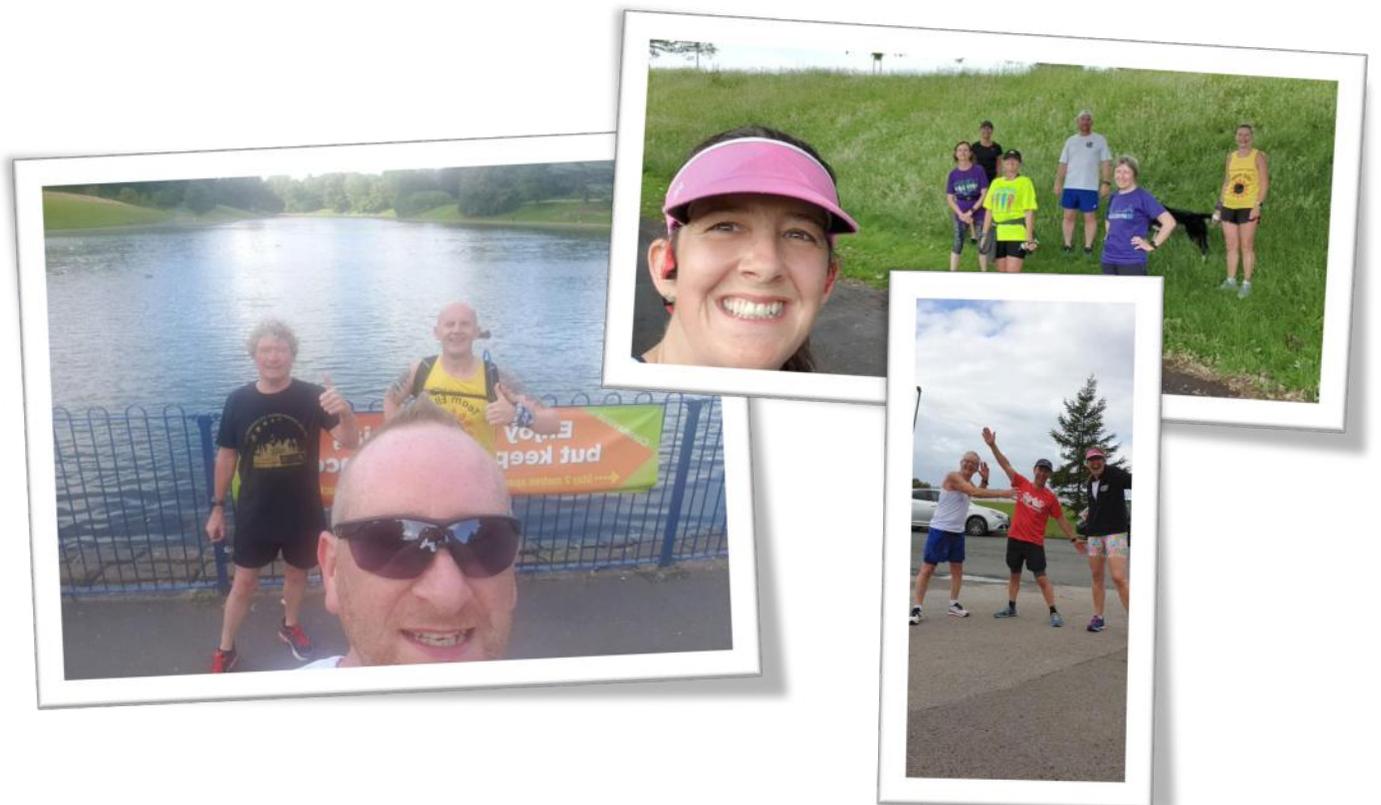
3rd Nigel Grant $74 + 81 = 155$ total

Women

1st Jane Nicholson $58 + 69 = 127$ total

2nd Sarah Jackson $27 + 39 = 66$ total

3rd Sara Kelly $32 + 32 = 64$ total



Nigel Grant

What motivates you to keep running when you are running so many miles on your own?

The first week it was all about not being obsessed with a target for the week but instead setting little targets and achieving them, before going on to applying what I knew was realistic over the weekend. I never set out with a particular target in mind but towards the end of the first week 70 miles seemed realistic. My marathon training has always seen me top 70+ miles per week so I knew it was possible although I was wary that there hadn't been a gradual build-up to the 70-mile mark this time, and that injury was therefore a risk.



How did you go about building up your mileage?

Once or twice a week, I run to and from work (7 miles all in). I figured that if I could do this every day for the fortnight and could extend each day's running to at least 9-10 miles it would not mean having to go out and doing silly, dangerous mileage at the weekend. As a result no single weekday run was greater than 7 miles (but there were always two of them) and my long Sunday runs were 15 and then 16 miles. In the second week, I took the view that adding the odd mile here and there wouldn't hurt too much and by the end of Friday I had run 3 more miles than the previous week, setting me up nicely for a tilt at 80+ miles over the course of the two remaining runs, at the weekend.

Had you ever run this many miles in a week before?

Only when marathon training and even then it was slightly less.

What do you think about when running?

Absolutely everything! In the present climate though it was hard to avoid thinking about the pandemic and all its consequences e.g. implications for jobs, how long would we be doing this type of thing for, when would we go the footie again, or to Scotland, or Wales? Quite literally, you think of everything though the fresher air and closeness to nature were recurring themes.

Sara Kelly

Most of my miles in the challenge were walking miles and not running miles.

Motivation came from a combination of having a baby that sleeps better when he is being walked and it being lockdown so there was nothing else to do!

I've been doing a similar sort of mileage since Cillian has been born. I'm usually thinking about what I am going to have for tea!



Sarah Jackson



What motivates you to keep running when you are running so many miles on your own?

I use my running as stress relief. If I doing a long run on my own I will try and run off road through the parks, with my music playing and I take a few snacks and drinks with me.

How did you go about building up your mileage?

The key is to go slowly and listen to your body.

Had you ever run this many miles in a week before?

I ran further in one run - I have completed a 100 mile ultra.

So the mileage I did in a week was low.

What do you think about when running?

It depends sometimes how nice it is to be out in the fresh air, sometimes whatever my next mad challenge is. When I was doing my dissertation I would plan it in my head while out running.

Lenka Vidamour

What motivates you to keep running when you are running so many miles on your own?

I like running early in the morning when there are less cars around to enjoy the city in peace. Also, the weather was beautiful so it didn't feel too hard to look for motivation to get out before the madness of home schooling and home working started at home. A good playlist or a podcast can do the trick too.

How did you go about building up your mileage?

I didn't have a specific plan, just decided that 10 miles every day for a week should be doable. It was little bit risky with picking up an injury but doing yoga along with the many miles seemed to work really well and kept me going. Couple of walks added to the total number also.

Had you ever run this many miles in a week before?

No, never. Thanks for the challenge PLS!

What do you think about when running?

All kinds... But the aim is to stop thinking by about mile 2, and just enjoy the exercise and possibly catch up with friends. I generally feel so much better about everything by the time I get back.

BIG thanks to Nigel and Supanki for organising all the lockdown challenges!



Ian Sadler

What motivates you to keep running when you are running so many miles on your own?

I like to have a challenge / target, for example PLS challenges or competitive races throughout the running season. I also enjoy completing a training plan – one of my favourites is the BUPA Marathon Training Plan (ask Rod Jones!). I think it's also important to set realistic targets. Finally, I live in fear that if I stop I'll seize up !!!

How did you go about building up your mileage?

Running or mountain walking every day.

Had you ever run this many miles in a week before?

Yes, regularly! During Barmouth Walking Festive in September every year, I lead the walks each day, then have a run afterwards, finishing at the Sarnfaen Leisure Centre (Dyffryn Ardudwy) for Steam Room and Jacuzzi. I've also hit this many miles in marathon training.

What do you think about when running?

Not in any particular order... mentally scan body from top to bottom for aches and pains; Liverpool FC's next game; planning the next day's training; music; jobs that need doing at home; Barmouth 10k Race 19.6.21; Barmouth to Fort William Three Peaks Yacht Race and my next meal!



Kathryn Bradley

What motivates you to keep running when you are running so many miles on your own?

I actually just love being outside, especially when it's sunny. I'm fortunate to live near the prom (for those who hadn't already worked this out from my Strava) so it's easy for me to go out and experience our city's amazing waterfront!

How did you go about building up your mileage?

I ran my "easy" runs a lot slower than I usually would. I also stopped looking at my watch and turned off the mile notifications. This was a relaxing way to run and I've kept up with this for some runs (though I'm not quite ready to run pace-less for all!!).

Had you ever run this many miles in a week before?

I've hit close to this sort of mileage at peak marathon training but this was much more enjoyable because it wasn't cold and I wasn't permanently exhausted...

What do you think about when running?

My list isn't quite as comprehensive as Ian's! If I'm running alone I'll run with music usually. Otherwise I try not to think about too much – if I start thinking about a race I find start running too fast!



STRIDER OF THE MONTH

David Rand's cul-de-sac training has paid dividends over lockdown as he's recently set a number of PBs!

Why did you choose Penny Lane Striders?

I was doing quite a bit of solo running leading into a ski trip in 2018. Our ski group welcomed a new boarder for our trip in March 2018 who happened to be a member of PLS. She told me how friendly the club was and how much my running would improve. I joined on returning from the trip.

When did you join?

I joined in April 2018.

What is your favourite distance?

I enjoy the challenge of the half marathon and my goal is to go under 2 hours. The Great North Run is my favourite - I've done it 5 times now. I love the atmosphere and the support along the entire route, and the fly past by the Red Arrows. One year got quite emotional when one of the Red Arrows' pilots had been killed in a training accident; his spot in the formation was left empty and his wife also started the half marathon.

What is your least favourite distance?

I enjoy all running and I'm not put off by any distance, although I have never attempted a full marathon. I was thinking of doing Chester, but I think if I were to do one, I'd love to do London. I would raise as much money as I could for a kidney charity.

You're in the middle of a race and you feel like giving up - what keeps you going?

This is an easy one. I always think of the amazing gift of life that I was given by my kidney donor. Without it, I would not be running the race in the first place.

What is your favourite session?

I really like the efforts sessions. I enjoy the different locations and the feeling of really pushing myself.

If you could do one more run in the year what would it be?

My last run of 2019 was the Betws-y-Coed 10k trail run. At the time this was only my second trail run and I absolutely loved it. I was looking forward to more trail runs in 2020 and particularly this one; maybe I would have stepped up to the ½ marathon distance!



Event	PB	2020	2019	2018
5K	25:06		25:06	
5M	42:56		42:56	
HM	2:05:04		2:05:04	2:27:06

Lockdown best performances:

Cul de sac half marathon – 2 hours 29 mins

1 mile TT – 8 mins 19 seconds

2 week millage challenge – approximately 90 miles running and walking

PLS 5k challenge team 13 – 24:44 new PB – Wavertree park

10k PB 53:29 – Wavertree park

What is your best running memory?

Running the Great North run 1 year after my kidney transplant. It felt like an amazing achievement and I raised a load of money for Kidney Research UK.

How have you coped during lockdown?

Very well, considering I shielded for most of it, although I very quickly realised how much I was missing my running. I resorted to laps of my cul-de-sac which my Strava followers will remember as the crazy little loops similar to a spirograph! The PLS challenges helped me to go faster and longer distances through this period. Big thanks to Supanki and Nigel for organising these. I was also very lucky to be able to continue to work full time from home during the lockdown, so I was kept fully occupied.

What do you see in your running future?

I'm currently feeling fitter and faster than ever before, so hopefully will be able to maintain this until races begin again so that I can officially smash my PBs. I must admit though, I'm more than happy just to be out running with others and not doing solo laps of my road.



Tell us something we don't know about you.

I play cricket for the England and Wales Transplant cricket team. It's a great opportunity to play cricket all around the UK and train at some of the best facilities, while the same time promoting organ donation and demonstrating what can be achieved after transplantation.

Sandstone Trail

By Supanki Kamalanathan

Back in 2016, a few of my friends and I attempted to walk the Sandstone Trail. At 30 miles, with 4 miles to go, we had to abandon due to poor conditions (dark and freezing) and a threatening bull blocking our way. Since then, I have had some unfinished business.

With lockdown fully underway, I had lost running motivation. I had no races booked around the time and the loss of a routine (even just getting up on a Saturday morning to do Parkrun) gave me nothing to aim for. Having chatted to Alice, I thought now would be the perfect opportunity to complete this bucket list challenge.

Alice is a running legend, running ultras in her stride like a walk. She has a positive outlook when it comes to such challenges. As an experienced ultrarunner and close friend, I asked her to join me. Lucky for me, she had no plans! I had only told a few people about this challenge as I did not want the pressure of people watching; who knew what might have happened.

I slowly built up my miles again and did 20 miles 2 weeks before the planned date. After that run, I was goosed! Nutrition was something I had to sort out before the big day.

On 11th July, with Ian as our pit stop crew member, we started our challenge at Frodsham. Our plan was simple. Run the flat/downhills, walk the uphill. Alice had the route already mapped out on her fancy GPS Garmin watch (and on the OS map app as backup), but thankfully the signs were fairly obvious throughout the way.

Based mainly on undulating trails, we made our way up Frodsham Hill and towards Manley Common for our first pitstop (5 miles). We then headed into Delamere Forest, passing keen cyclists, runners and dogs. We saw various wildlife including some sort of bird of prey (possibly buzzards) circling in the sky. By 10 miles, we were still feeling good, knowing that there was still a fair way to go but still early in the day.

The famous sights (which seemed so distant) quickly became close- Beeston Castle, Whartons Lock, Peckforton Castle. The time seemed to pass really quickly - must have been the company!

We soon arrived at Rawhead, the highest point of the Sandstone Trail, meaning we had to have a quick photo stop of course. We continued to run through fields of tall grass, ferns, maize and wheat.



My legs were starting to get tired by 26 miles (Alice, of course, was fresh as a daisy!). But there was no doubt in my mind that I would continue to the end.

As I was making my way through the course, there were areas I remembered from the last attempt and I recognised the exact spot where I had to turn back many years ago.

Ian waited for us at various planned pitstops, which was great as it gave me something to aim for. It broke up the path a little, knowing that there was a stop where we could briefly rest, have some tea and lots of snacks.

With 3 miles to go, we reached the infamous canal towards Whitchurch, which I knew was the last landmark to the end! We were so close at this point and it re-energised my legs. But that canal seemed to go on forever! We arrived at the car park marking the end of the Sandstone Trail after the final last slog.

We made it in just over 8 hours 30mins. The Sandstone Trail completed! I have always been a lover of the countryside and this trail has given me a different kind love for running: to be in the great outdoors, discovering trails and having adventures (without the pressure of hitting times or PBs).

Also, I hope our adventure shows that if you put your mind to something, you can achieve anything! To quote the great Eliud Kipchoge, "No Human Is Limited".

I want to thank Alice and Ian immensely for their support during this! I could not have done it without them!



5k relay challenge

By Stuart Brandwood

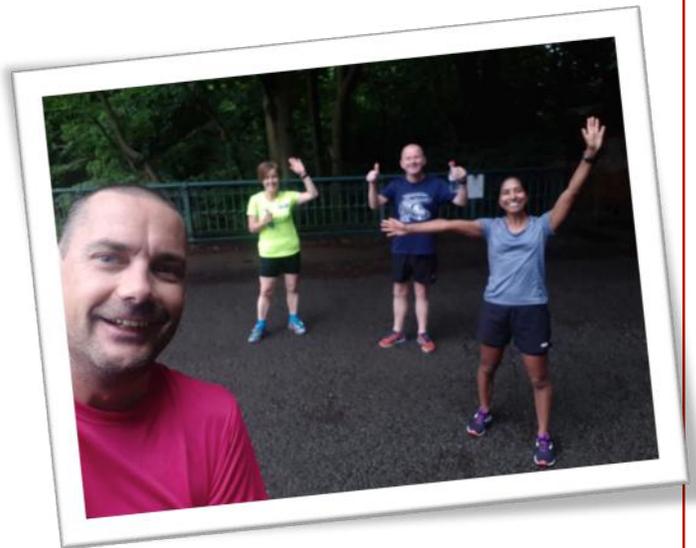
Hot on the heels of the distance challenge came the 5k relays. Another perfect example of how the club has come to the fore during the lockdown. This one was slightly different because instead of just being out on our own, it placed us into teams of four.

With the iconic tortoise and hare prizes on offer for the slowest and fastest teams respectively, 76 of us signed up and Supanki divided the participants into groups based on our most recent PBs. It meant that in theory anyone could win so it was all to play for.

Personally I found this my favourite challenge so far, being matched with Dave, Sarah & Tony on Team 13 was superb and as the two weeks unfolded it was brilliant to encourage each other and see the times come in. Here in south Liverpool we are blessed **[Editor: I'm not sure Estuary Square is a blessing!]** with some great spaces for a 5km run. The Prom, the Mystery, Halewood and Princes to name but a few, so finding a good, safe place to run was never going to be a problem.

One thing notable about this challenge is the number of PBs achieved. As Nigel Grant said on the Facebook group, PBs almost always occur in competitive race environments, and so to go out there and achieve them on your own is outstanding. With a total lack of races recently it is absolutely clear that a challenge like this unleashed our competitive edge.

Over the two weeks we had at least 7 Striders setting new 5k PBs, which underlines how lockdown does not necessarily mean just maintaining fitness. Whilst some of us have used the race cancellations as an opportunity to rest and allow injuries to heal, in many cases people are out there training just as hard as ever.



What was brilliant was that across the 19 teams the combined times were covered by less than 15 minutes. The hare winning team, made up of Andrea Bond, Charlotte Rawcliffe, Pamela Thurtle and Mark Finch clocked a time of 1 hour 32 minutes, which averages out at just over 23 minutes each. Comparing this to the team claiming the tortoise prize, who averaged 26:35, shows how well balanced the teams were.

The challenge was a great way of bringing us all together despite us being apart.