

DIARY OF A RACE DIRECTOR (AND PART-TIME PRESIDENT)

- 27 Dec 1997 A red-letter day for the new Keighley & Craven AC. I have been appointed President! It is a great honour and I hope the club is worthy of it. From now on I shall be referred to as Mr President and my good wife Marilyn shall be the First Lady. My duties will include the onerous role of Race Director for the famous Yorkshireman event.
- 13 Jan 1998 Asked at the club do I thought the title "Yorkshireman" is sexist. Unfortunately I was drunk and construed the comment to suggest that I am a "sexy Yorkshireman" to which I of course readily agreed. Of course the title is not sexist - it is named after its great founder, Colin Crane. Incidentally, there are a number of changes I want to push through now that I have wrested power from Colin. He makes such a song and dance about it when organising the race will be like having a p**s-up in a brewery. I want to make some fundamental improvements. NOTE TO FILE: can we improve the beer at Haworth Community Centre?
- 20 Jan 1998 Attended a committee meeting at which all of the elements of the Yorkshireman were discussed. Obviously there is quite a lot to do, but Colin clearly makes a big fuss about it all. In my role as President I shall just have to delegate. Anyway, I can't worry about it now; the Trog is approaching and I need to thrash Mr Waddingham again.
- 25 Feb 1998 A triumph toneet. Organised a K&C social from the Dog & Gun at Glusburn. A resounding personal success for me, but at a cost. I had to take a very firm line with the landlord, and he won't have the benefit of my custom in the future. You'd think these chaps didn't want to sell beer! I think the race went OK too.
- 11Mar 1998 Yorkshireman forms eventually arrived from Colin. I will give these to delegated club members to distribute. Mick Bateson confirmed the availability of free Yorkshire Puddings. I'm really getting to grips with the issues!
- 01Aug 1998 Colin asked me how the organisation is coming on. I told him firmly that everything is under control. Rang Pete Carr and asked him how things are going. He said he would ring John Dennis and let me know. Pete rang me back - apparently John had asked Charlie Marshall, who had asked Keith W. and Keith had asked Colin. Colin had immediately panicked - I cannot understand why he is so jumpy.

- 10 Aug 1998 Entries coming in now, along with telephone inquiries. I wonder what these people are on! They want to know so many details, such as where the course goes, how far it is, what time it starts and so on. I have asked the First Lady to deal with these from now on - I'm far too busy with major policy decisions. I have decided to cut down on nettle strimming round Doe Park Reservoir.
- 11 Aug 1998 Received a call from an entrant asking about an incorrect Grid Reference. I must admit that I wasn't entirely sure what he was talking about, but I quickly regained my natural poise and assured him that Haworth is on the National Grid and, anyway, the ovens work on Calor Gas so he needn't worry about a thing. I think he was strangely comforted.
- 15 Aug 1998 Giving advice on shoes, food, training and strategy to all and sundry. It's a wonder I continue to compete at the highest level with all this stress.
- 20 Aug 1998 Entries flooding in, from all over the country - even internationally. Received a call from a man with an American accent asking me about a woman called Monica. I told him that we hadn't received an entry from anyone of that name. He asked if she had received an entry from me. I started to explain the fundamentals of race organisation, but he rang off. He then rang back and asked if the First Lady knew about this Monica. I said of course she did because it was she who went through the entry slips after his first call while I was re-potting my courgettes in the greenhouse. He asked me if I meant the whitehouse, but I have to admit I got quite tetchy because it was a Thursday meet and I was due out running with the lads. He then asked if I smoke cigars - this was the last straw. I told him that finely tuned athletes don't smoke, and , furthermore, as President I must set an example. "Exactly", he said, and rang off.
- 21 Aug 1998 HEADLINE IN USA TODAY: "PRESIDENT IN COURGETTE SCANDAL" "It's Disgusting Say Top Republicans".
- 10 Sep 1998 Just a few days to go and everything is under control. All we need to confirm is the Community Centre, route-marking, marshalls, time-keeping, Raynet, Yorkshire Puddings, nettle strimming, recording and trophies. I will leave this to my delegated workers.
- 11 Sep 1998 Asked the former Yorkshireman Race Director, Colin Crane, what I should say in my pre-start speech to contestants. He advised me to say "sorry".

- 12 Sep 1998 Yorkshireman Eve. Arrived at the Community Centre at 10am - no sign of my workers. I have a finely tuned plan to get the course marked out (to humour Colin, who is still fussing) and the ovens installed by midday, after which we can get out for a Saturday run and a couple of pints.
- 12.20pm Ovens have just arrived. Went for a bacon butty. None of the course marked out yet.
- 12.40pm Back at the Community Centre, after waiting for an inept café owner to serve a bacon sandwich. Don't these people wish to sell their wares?
- 1.00pm Driving over Fly Flats to start marking the course.
- 1.20pm Running from Ogden, laden down with wooden stakes. Concerned that the club Chairman is taking over the organisation - he is not experienced enough.
- 2.30pm Arrived at Hewenden, knackered and still laden with stakes. Club Chairman states that it has never taken him this long to get rid of a steak, ever.
- 3.30pm Caught in rain over Denholme Edge, still carrying a stake! The oldest runners are doing the most carrying! Navigation (in a zig-zag) is by Pete Fisher - oh dear! Not sure how well the course is marked - I think some of the lads have been a bit slapdash.
- 4.30pm Three pints of Timmy Taylors in the Dog & Gun. It's all so easy! Colin leaves after one pint to mark some gates - he is still fussing. My only worry is how to fit a 5-inch frankfurter into a four-inch Yorkshire Pudding - I will leave this to the First Lady - she is used to such problems.
- 13 Sep 1998 The Big Day!!
- 6.00am Up early. Everyone will be so excited to meet me at last!
- 7.30am Walkers off. Made a great speech before blowing my trumpet. I have chosen to wear a fetching green ensemble so I am instantly recognisable to my public.
- 9.00am Runners off - another great speech.
- 9.30am Reports from Raynet that runners are going through unmanned checkpoints! Realised that Colin has forgotten to tell Raynet that the checkpoints have changed! Sorted things out for him.

- 9.35am Had a cup of tea in the kitchen and got charged 20p by the First Lady.
- 9.40am Found an elite tag on the floor. It belongs to Rob Grillo. I tore it in half as he will only need information on the first few checkpoints.
- 9.55am Up to start the elite race but Colin forgot my loudhaler. Had to go back for it. It's lucky that I'm so fit!
- 10.00am Start of elite race. Concerned at rumours of a set-up whereby a "hare" will set out at a suicidal pace, lead everyone on, get them knackered and allow a "certain runner" to cruise to victory.
- 10.05am Discovered that the "certain runner" is Rob Grillo and immediately relaxed. He will not complete the course.
- 11.00am News that the "hare" has fallen over and withdrawn.
- 11.30am News that Rob Grillo has retired at Denholme Gate.
- 12.00pm First Lady found me with my head in the gas oven. She assured me that the Yorkshires will cook OK and there is no need for drastic measures yet. I explained that I was merely trying to light it. Phone call from America asking for my comments on a stained dress. I explained that the course is very muddy and that I cannot be held responsible for any laundry bills.
- 12.30pm Phone call from the FRA complaining that Mick Sumpter is pacing Cath Fawcett again. I explained that it is the other way round, and emphasised that most K&C men struggle to keep up with the women on the fells. Just ask our Chairman.
- 12.45pm Yet another call on a bad line from America. The chap appeared to be asking whether I thought I would be impeached. I can only assume that he is the coach of the competitor from Colorado. I assured him that there are peaches in the fruit salad for all finishers, that we are mixing it with nutritious rice pudding, so all will be well.
- 1.20pm Competitors starting to come in, full of praise for my event. I feel that they appreciate that I have added a new dimension to their athletic careers. One chap asked me about the self-clip at checkpoint 3, and I immediately referred him to Colin.

- 2.00pm Inundated with compliments. Some people are almost in tears when speaking to me. This includes Mick Sumpter who I am relieved to see safely back. I worry too much - I give too much of myself. Presented trophies. What an honour for these athletes!
- 4.00pm A chap came to see me and Colin and said it had been wonderful. I asked him to confirm that this year was the best ever. In deference to Colin he was diplomatic (a man after my own heart) but I could see the truth shining in his eyes.
- 7.00pm Mopping up. Many Presidents would be too proud to do this, but not me. It has been a great success. Next year will be even better..... I must get Colin to get to grips with the beer supplies.