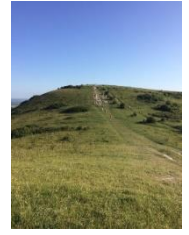




## The Ridgeway Relay – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Ridgeway Relay, Ridgeway Relay – it’s a bit of a tongue-twister, actually. I don’t know how many times I posted about this event between Easter and when it took place. If you weren’t involved, you probably got fed up with hearing about it. It’s quite a big deal, though, so what’s it all about?



The event website says, *‘The Ridgeway is one of England’s national trails, covering 86.5 miles from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Overton Hill near Marlborough’*. The actual relay race leaves the trail and veers to the finish at Marlborough leisure centre. The trail is split into 10 legs, from 5.4 to 11 miles.

There are marshals stationed at the end of each leg, where you slap hands with the next person in your team; there is no baton. There are also some checkpoint marshals, for areas where shortcuts are possible. Otherwise, it is up to you to find your own way. Most people recce their leg in advance, to save time on the day. They can then give an indication of how long they will take to run it, and each team member gets an estimated start time.

You also have to consider how you will get back to your car at the end of your leg. On the shorter legs, a run or jog back is not too demanding, as Lesley Whiley and Carrie Hoskins discovered. On the longer legs, you would probably need to organise some kind of chicken, corn and fox pick up/drop off scenario, or stash your bike in a hedge, like Dave McCoy and Bill Watson did (but don’t forget to run with your bike lock key....). You are allowed to run with a friend or fellow team mate, as long as only one of you wears the race number. You are also allowed to run more than one leg, for one or more teams. In fact, should the next member of your team not be waiting at the end of your leg, you are advised to just keep on running. Fortunately, this was not an issue this year.

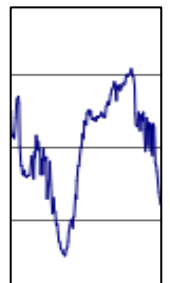
This year’s event took place on a scorching hot day. This led to some team members suffering heat exhaustion, and many others taking longer than expected to complete their legs. There are usually two or three mass starts throughout the race, but there were more of these this year, because of the delays caused by the heat. This meant that some of us didn’t get to ‘hand over the baton’ officially, and times were adjusted after the event. Most people ran with a drink, as there are no official water stations along the course.

Here is a summary of the results. The start times will give an idea of the heat experienced on that leg. Photos courtesy of Barry Cornelius, Marlborough Running Club, Linda Wright and June Bilsby.

### Leg 1 – Ivinghoe Beacon to Wendover – 11 miles – climb 452m, descent 543m – start time 7.30

*“The first half is physically quite tough, lots of hill-work, although the last 5 or 6 miles are predominantly flat or downhill.”*

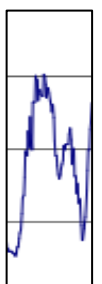
A:	Jamie Cole – 2:00:00 (not actual time – taken ill and DNF)
B:	Neil Carpenter – 1:45:21
Ladies:	Sam Whalley – 1:47:23
Over 60s:	Jim Kiddie – 1:40:22



### Leg 2 – Wendover to Whiteleaf – 6 miles – climb 352m, descent 248m – start time 9.10-9.25

*“Navigationally this leg could be tricky. Although relatively short, this is a very tough stage with some interesting hills, especially the final ascent.”*

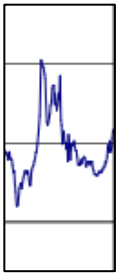
A:	Lesley Whiley – 55:07 (gained 3 places)
B:	Brett Date – 1:08:24 (gained 2 places)
Ladies:	Mary Carol de Zutter – 1:19:30
Over 60s:	Ken Beck – 1:11:41



**Leg 3 – Whiteleaf to Lewknor – 9.4 miles – climb 273m, descent 357m – start time 10.05-10.45**

*“There is a steep downhill section at the start, and a significant hill to climb and descent in the middle. Otherwise this stage is fairly flat. It can be navigationally tricky.”*

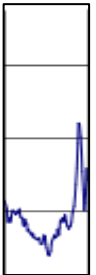
A: David McCoy (younger) – 1:06:09 (gained 9 places – 4<sup>th</sup> fastest time for leg 3)  
B: Dave Brown – 1:35:15  
Ladies: Caroline Hargreaves – 2:07:35  
Over 60s: John Bailey – 2:02:56



**Leg 4 – Lewknor to Swyncombe – 5.4 miles – climb 169m, descent 141m – start time 11.10-12.10**

*“The first 4 miles of this leg are relatively flat. The last mile is quite tough, involving a steep hill climb, a short descent, and a last climb to the finish.”*

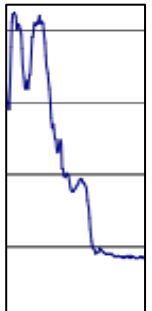
A: Carrie Hoskins – 37:51 (gained 6 places – 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest time for leg 4)  
B: Julie Rainbow – 47:46  
Ladies: Sophie Hoskins – 46:40 (gained 1 place)  
Over 60s: Lorraine Bailey (supported by Maureen Sweeney) – 1:08:53



**Leg 5 – Swyncombe to South Stoke – 10.1 miles – climb 171m, descent 307m – start time 11.50-1.20**

*“The first two miles are physically tough with some tricky navigation. Stinging nettles are also a pain, and stiles make it quite tiring. The path crosses the fast A4074. The final 4-mile length is flat.”*

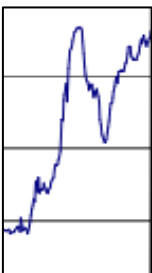
A: Chris Lucas – 1:06:24 (gained 6 places – 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest time for leg 5)  
B: Belinda Tull – 1:27:20 (gained 5 places)  
Ladies: Gemma Buley – 1:41:23  
Over 60s: Liz Atkinson (supported by Sev Konieczny) – 2:27:01



**Leg 6 – South Stoke to West Ilsley – 10.4 miles – climb 323m, descent 184m – start time 12.55-2.30**

*“For about 2 miles the route is flat, until just after crossing the Thames, but then this becomes a tough stage with a long climb onto the Downs followed by plenty of undulations.”*

A: Rupert Shute – 1:08:17 (gained 5 places – 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest time for leg 6)  
B: Jane Davies – 1:28:30 (gained 5 places)  
Ladies: Susan Knight – 1:56:58  
Over 60s: Andy Atkinson – 1:51:15 (gained 1 place)

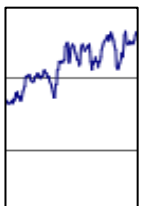


----- HALF WAY -----

**Leg 7 – West Ilsley to Wantage – 9.1 miles – climb 198m, descent 149m – start time 2.00-2.05**

*“This stage is undulating, and tougher than it looks.”*

A: Ben Whalley – 1:02:13 (gained 4 places – 4<sup>th</sup> fastest time for leg 7)  
B: Kevin Bilsby – 1:48:00  
Ladies: Claire Seymour – 1:48:00  
Over 60s: Trisha Arnold – 2:22:35



**Leg 8 – Wantage to Charlbury Hill – 7.8 miles – climb 183m, descent 177m – start time 3.05-4.05**

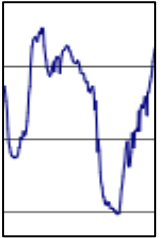
*“This stage is like the previous one, being undulating but navigationally easy. There are two main hills to climb, including one about a mile long just before the finish.”*



- A: Lance Nortcliff – 49:13 (gained 2 places – fastest time for leg 8)
- B: Bill Watson – 1:05:50 (gained 3 places)
- Ladies: June Bilsby – 1:20:20
- Over 60s: Janice Thomas – 1:44:23

**Leg 9 – Charlbury Hill to Barbury Castle – 10.7 miles – climb 338m, descent 309m – start time 3.55-5.10**

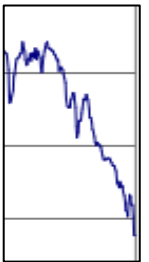
*“This is a long and very tough stage with some serious hill climbing.”*



- A: Gary Tuttle – 1:20:18 (5<sup>th</sup> fastest time for leg 9)
- B: Louise Atkinson – 2:03:05
- Ladies: Toni McQueen – 1:56:49
- Over 60s: Cecilia Csemiczky – 2:39:59

**Leg 10 – Barbury Castle to Marlborough – 9.4 miles – climb 163m, descent 291m – start time 5.15 to 5.45**

*“The route is well marked and obvious for the first 4 ½ miles.”*



- A: Richard Smith – 1:17:48
- B: Sian James – 1:16:49 (gained 4 places)
- Ladies: Angela Burley – 1:32:03 (gained 1 place)
- Over 60s: Linda Wright – 2:16:53

**Final Placings**

At the finish at Marlborough Leisure Centre, the A team placed 6<sup>th</sup>, the B team 29<sup>th</sup>, the ladies’ team 38<sup>th</sup>, and the over 60s’ team 42<sup>nd</sup>, which meant that members of the latter each received a wooden spoon. Members of the A team should be commended for their overall achievement on the day, having finished leg 1 in 40<sup>th</sup> place.

Reading Roadrunners was awarded a no-longer-required shield, for being the club to have received it the most times in the past.

Well done to all 40 runners who took part in the race, and I hope others might have been inspired to have a go next year. Fingers crossed for cooler conditions.

