

## Why I Started Running – Ron Dyson

I'm in the Spread Eagle beer garden early one summer's evening, enjoying my pint and the company when a small group of runners pass by heading towards Ackworth. They are chatting and laughing. I'm walking round Winterset on one Sunday morning, when the same group of runners are encountered. They are chatting and look happy.

Its 10pm one school night, I have just shut down my computer and watching a bit of telly before bed. Looking back on the day, I have survived on strong coffee, 40 John Player Specials and 4 cans of Stella. This is my daily diet. My sister in law dies of lung cancer.

I am in my office one lunchtime with a pile of admin, when a colleague suggests a short run one day. After the inevitable 'You are having a laugh' response, a week later I find myself gasping for half a mile and aching for days after. The half a mile becomes, a whole mile, then 2, then 3. I discover Nicotinell gum and buy a pair of running shoes. I am in my late 50s.

'Hey Ron, you fancy doing a race?' I discover it's the Sandal Castle 10k and never having been good at saying 'no', I reluctantly agree. Fast forward a few months and I am on the starting line at Pugneys Lake. To say I am bricking it was an understatement. There are loads of proper runners in club vests doing warm ups and looking menacingly good at this.

I climb up and up to Sandal Castle without stopping or oxygen breaks and even overtake a few on the way back down.

I am not last! My time was 1 hour and 15 minutes. My kids call me a 'machine' which is far better than some of the names I have been called. I am beginning to feel sort of healthyish. Fast forward a few more weeks and I am in Askern social club after the Askern 10k running as unattached. I am at the bar and get talking to Ken and Christine who I recognise from the running group outside the Spread and at Winterset. We get to mention joining Ackworth and a few weeks later, I turned up at the Angel as possibly the oldest newbie at ARR.

I have never been fast but could always last the course and as I now go back down on the bell shaped curve of running times to 1 hour 15 for a 10k, I can reflect on many great years as a proper runner myself. Stella and cigs did not detract from doing 5 marathons and countless other races. ARR gave me great memories and even greater friends.

If only I had started this running lark as a youngster, but then life is all about if only.....

Ron Dyson – April 2020