

Glenn O'Hara

16/2/1968 – 25/1/2022



It is with shock and deep sadness that I have learned of the passing this week of Glenn O'Hara at the age of 53. His wife Nicky, and young son Harrison, prevail in our thoughts as this sad time.

Glenn was a member of the Westbourne Running Club from 2001 through to 2017, holding the position of vice-president from 2007 to 2010, and remained a regular participant in the group lunchtime runs as recently as September 2021.

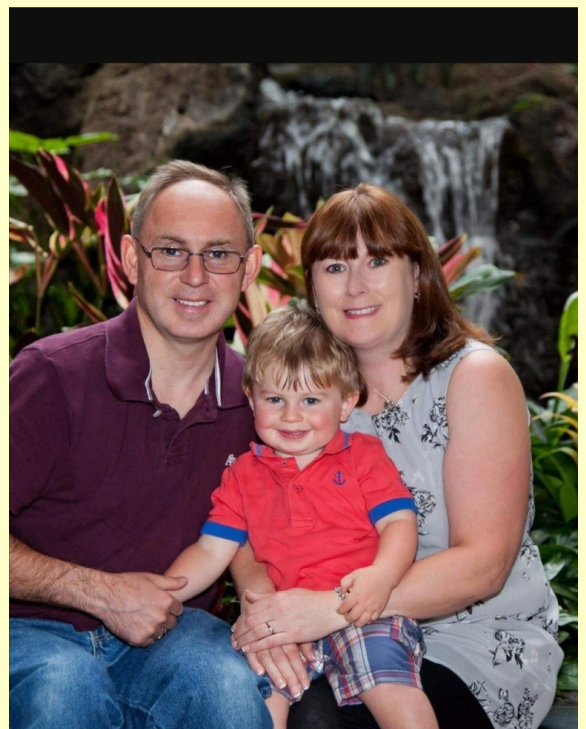
Glenn was an absolute stalwart of the lunchtime running scene throughout. Lunchtime running was a welcome break for all, especially at busy and stressful times, and Glenn was renowned for his attempts to bring humour and relief to the sessions and became associated with many catchphrases such as "Leading it out", "Punching the air", "Put it in", "Blazing", "Disgrace", "You're only fooling yourself" and many more.

Aside of running, Glenn was a Rugby referee and officiated at a very high level (including officiating at Twickenham as I recall) as well as being a magistrate, and lunchtime runs were adorned by a wide range of topics including Glenn's tales of the variety of "customers" he encountered during his time in court; incidents during Rugby matches; or advice on a wide range of topics including cars or finance or just a general chat about the latest TV drama or Doctor Who. Everyone returned to the afternoon's work fully refreshed, all thoughts of any earlier stress (or any running niggles) firmly forgotten.

... Glenn was passionately supportive of runners of all standards, encouraging of occasional runners and new members, more than willing to run a bit steadier to integrate newer runners, but also having the ability to "put it in" if the group was a small one of faster runners. Glenn's passion for running to be inclusive was legendary, and to reinforce these principles, would often humorously produce a "yellow card" to anyone infringing the group's protocols such as the ban on talking about work; anyone "blazing off" or "leading it out" would be greeted by a yellow card and a friendly but serious "get to the back", and the group re-assembled.

Glenn was notorious for experimenting and finding different routes – this would often include obscure or hidden footpaths or alleyways, such that the resulting routes ended up with names such as "Glenn's back passage".

Glenn was proudly non-competitive, his passion for running coming from the camaraderie and fitness benefits rather than prizes or times, yet on the rare occasion that he would participate in an organised race, he would take some quiet satisfaction from heading home the Westbourne contingent.





For many years he said he would never run a marathon, yet finally relented and took part in the London Marathon in both 2011 and 2014. He trained and ran 2011 with colleague Nick Thorp – inspiring each other to a sub-hour finish, and three years later ran with club colleague Guy Bates achieving a time of 3 hours 42 mins.

As the sad news emerged this week, one of the tributes I read on social media described Glenn as “a legend” - I have to concur. Within our running community, any new runners would quickly be asked “Have you met Glenn yet?”, and in later years (as the running groups evolved) newer runners would be reminded “We used to have this bloke called Glenn”

Despite Glenn’s outgoing and friendly disposition, he was in many ways a private person, and his recent illness was not widely known to many. At my personal last encounters with Glenn he was fitter, faster, stronger (and younger) than I so the news this week has come as a

great shock. I reflect on the many hundreds of hours spent together and I, like so many running colleagues, have such fond memories that will live with us forever.

Ray Graham

Further tributes from former running colleagues

Nick Thorp :- “I actually can't remember the exact moment Glenn joined the lunchtime running gang at LV, but he was soon an integral member of that group that went out at lunchtime. Ray has beautifully evoked those times so I won't regale everyone with the same memories of Glenn as those.

My appreciation of Glenn grew further when we both entered the London marathon for 2011 and trained together through those long winter months. We put the world to rights on many occasions on our long training runs and shared our hopes and fears for the future. We then



shared a lovely weekend together on the actual race weekend with our partners. In fact Glenn got me round that day as I was having a 'bad one' from about mile 14. I knew he could go on, but he insisted we finish together, which we did in just under 4 hours. He was that kind of guy. All those sayings that Ray mentioned could be a source of irritation occasionally, but it's how I remember him most fondly now.

I hadn't seen Glenn for a few years until I just happened to bump into him just before this past Christmas. He was going to pick up Harrison from St Marks school. We got to talking about running, and realised we were both having our own personal battles with cancer, and our running had taken a back seat. In our usual black humoured fashion we laughed and joked about our various encounters with chemo, hair loss (not so noticeable in my case!!) and how tired we'd been. I even showed him my operation scars!! He was in good form and I failed to realise the extent of his own illness. Bless him, Glenn was always one to play things down, so I imagined he was through the worst and on the mend, like my own situation. We parted in our usual way, promising to meet up soon after Christmas for a 'jog' round the estate. When Guy passed on the news to me I was a bit stunned to say the least.

He was a one of kind guy, and his passing is a terrible tragedy at such a young age. I'll miss him. Rest in peace matey."



Guy Bates :- "Thank you Ray for putting into words what the lunchtime runners knew about Glenn.

I'm in no doubt we will be talking about him and recalling memories for many years, and I will be forever grateful for him "driving me on" through training and during the London marathon, making it an experience I will treasure forever."

Elise Dixon :- "A total legend and I had completely forgotten that he actually brought his yellow cards out on runs.

You've captured him perfectly and brought back some lovely memories.

Janis Rogers :- "I loved to run with Glenn, I was one of those with lesser pace, he always made me feel happy to just be out, and the banter with him and Nick T was great at taking my mind off the distance. He was truly a top bloke."

Kevin Trowbridge :- "Really nice words and you have captured Glenn perfectly. Glenn always made me laugh when he would say to me 'are you driving it on..' knowing that he could easily leave me standing.

Such a lovely genuine guy. He will be missed by everyone who knew him."

James White :- "I agree with everything you've put Ray. A wonderful gent...quirky, occasionally grumpy, but funny, interesting, supportive and a bloody good runner. He had the ability to run with anyone. He would always make time to run with slower or injured runners if need be. His use of imaginary red and yellow cards and telling people to stop "blazing" or "driving it on" was just his way of making the group more sociable and ensuring that everyone was included.

His character, his chat and his sense of humour will be sorely missed on future lunchtime runs.

It just so happens that a post came up on my social media today - *'ON THIS DAY 3 years ago - Huge thank you to Simon Jury for organising the LV= mile PB challenge today. With the help of Glenn and Guy I managed a new PB of 6:13 along the Canford Cliff Rd course. Next target, sub 6:10.'*

I remember it vividly...I was destroying myself trying to nail the mile as fast as I could. Out of nowhere Guy Bates and Glenn pop up on my shoulder to encourage me through the last couple of hundred metres. When I finished I curled up in a ball on the pavement trying not to be sick, while Glenn just chuckled and reminded me that he was still above me on the leaderboard. 😊

Geoff Bates :- "Such sad news. Lovely words Ray - I enjoyed many years of lunchtime runs with Glenn and they were always better for having him support the group and entertain us with his stories."

Dan Barfoot :- "So sad to hear this as only talking about Glenn with an LV colleague before xmas. I don't think I'd have got to know Glenn had it not been for WRC, showing how important these types of clubs are. Definitely one of a kind, not wrong there Ray.

One short story was after a hot run with Glenn "pushing it on" I took off my running vest to cool down as we headed back to the gym and was promptly told "that wasn't the done thing Mr Barfoot" whilst on LV site. Always one for the rules which I respect - but at the same time

bringing a brilliant sense of fun and humour!! Let's say I never disrobed again - never forgotten always remembered... RIP Glenn “

Sharon Glenister :- “Ray, you have summed Glenn up perfectly. I'll never forget him.

I just hope someone remembers the Glenn back passage route otherwise we'll not get back to work!!

Our loss.”

Jason Howells :- “Top guy, such sad news. I'll never forget my first 'Glenn's back passage' variant and saluting the bald eagle. Rest easy Glenn.”

Aaron Beaton :- “Bang on that is Ray, he was a legend indeed. I used to love hearing his stories

Vicki Roscorla :- “Such sad news, I remember Glenn's stories providing entertainment on many runs. Lovely post Ray x”

John Amos :- “Great write up Ray. I remember fondly his tales in the changing rooms of being a magistrate and Rugby official. He was a great character and it is very sad news.”

Richard Walter :- “He was an absolute legend. Thanks Ray - you couldn't have put it better.”

David Green :- “A very lovely man and this is a fitting tribute, thank you Ray.

Barry Julyan :- “I remember him well. He was a great guy and we used to have a laugh at LV.”

Kim Brooks :- “A lovely tribute Ray. “

Amy Clayton :- “Lovely words Ray. I remember Glenn well, he always made everyone feel welcome and included.”

