



Blundell's

FOUNDED 1604

The 143rd Russell

Saturday 4th March 2023



Open Russell - Crossing the River Lowman 1951

This event, named after the famous Blundellian and West Country clergyman John 'Jack' Russell was first run back in 1877. Not surprisingly this was in part response to the English National Cross Country Championships starting the year before, and who better, but to name the event after than the famous 'sporting parson', a talented pugilist with a passion for rural sports and dog breeding. And the Russell was born and is in its 143rd year at Blundell's.

The Russell has run every year since its inception in 1877, para a couple of irregular occasions due to various epidemics and weather. It even went ahead during the Second World War, when there was a shortage of shoes in 1945, but had to be split over two days!

The Russell has become a rite of passage for Blundellians and is one event that every Old Blundellian can remember vividly - for better or worse!

From it's simple beginning, the race grew and grew and thanks the extensive Blundell's Archives here are some of the most interesting Russell Run facts:

- **In 1877** the winner of the first ever race was Ernest Courtenay Saunders (1876-79)
- **Late 1880s** Blundell's produced its first great all-rounder, Cyril Woollaston Gooch (1881-87). His achievements were formidable; he was in the 1st XI for four years, the 1st XV for three years, he won the Russell four years in succession.
- **In 1891** The Russell was postponed because of a blizzard.
- **In 1894** saw the first Junior and Intermediate Russell races.
- **In 1899** Hugh Lewis Owen (Day Boy, 1895-1901) won the Russell in spite of being bitten by a dog at Crazelowman. He ran past the winning post straight into Tiverton to get his leg cauterised.
- **In 1914** the River Lowman was so flooded, the competitors literally had to swim across.
- **In 1917** The Russell was cancelled due to "Boche Pimples" (Rubella).
- **In 1919** it was announced that The Russell was to be a team race, with the first six runners in each category across the line to count for the House competition. This was won by Petergate with 41 points.
- **In 1932** on account of widespread Scarlet Fever, the Russell was cancelled.
- **In 1960** The Russell start was signified by a hunting horn. An ITV sports programme showed a short film about The Russell.
- **In 1970** John Stanton (Headmaster 1959-71) changed the Russell into a house team-based event. Exemption was to be obtained only on medical grounds, prompting the invention of ingenious deceptions. One method was to rub sand on various parts of the body to produce a hot rash resembling a dermatological condition. The Sanatorium nurses soon named this 'Russell Fever'.
- **In 2020 & 2021** due to Covid Lockdowns and restrictions the Russell was cancelled but the School held two cross country events in the Autumn of 2020. The points scored in these two events contributed to the main run which took place in Spring 2021.

Right: HL Owen's cup for winning the Russell in 1899.





Above: A wet Russell



Above: Russell 2022

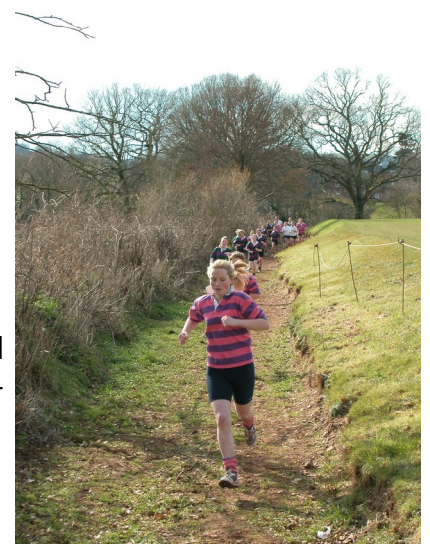
This will be the 143rd year that the event has been held and it is with much gratitude to our local farming community and neighbours that it can continue to take place. Particular thanks go to Mr & Mrs J Hull, Mr and Mrs S G Dibble, Mr P Brind (Great Western Canal Trust), Mr and Mrs M Frankpitt; all of which grant access to their land. Also, many thanks go to all of the other local residents en-route whose tranquillity is disturbed by the event.

The results from the Cumulative Points Competition that has been running throughout the term and, as last year – The Russell day results will also count. It has been a closely-fought competition where runners of all abilities give everything in pursuit of the House Prize. This is the only competition in the School whereby every single pupil's efforts count, and therefore every effort is rewarded. It never ceases to amaze those who watch how every single Blundellian just gets on with the running, gaining points for their House and never moaning despite the wind, rain, hail, snow and mud. True Blundellian spirit is shown in every race. There have been some great performances this year already with some very strong runners emerging – showing the potential Russell winners of the future. Note - Westlake compete for their old Houses.

Individual trophies are presented to the winner of each race, plus a cup for 'Second to the Russell'. There are also **team competitions** taking place comprising teams formed from the Boarding Houses. In addition, there is the **Berry-Barker-Ballance-Cup for Endeavour**. This is awarded to the runner who has made the most spirited effort and improvements in their fitness over the years.



Left: Russell
1948



Right: Russell
2004

The Russell 2023 – Results so far...

Practice Races: Top 3 finishers

Junior Boys Race 1			
1 st	Zinzan Sargent	10	OH
2 nd	Daniel Harrison	10	FH
3 rd	Fletcher Wickham	10	OH

Junior Boys Race 2			
1 st	Zinzan Sargent	10	OH
2 nd	Fletcher Wickham	10	OH
3 rd	Daniel Harrison	10	FH

Junior Girls Race 1			
1 st	Daisy Holdsworth	10	GH
2 nd	Pippa Sproul	10	NC
3 rd	Molly Richards	10	GH

Junior Girls Race 2			
1 st	Daisy Holdsworth	10	GH
2 nd	Molly Richards	10	GH
3 rd	Iris McDermott	9	NC

Senior Boys Race 1			
1 st	Ben Fitzherbert	13	OH
2 nd	Harrison Blake-Pead	12	FH
3 rd	Ben Coen	13	FH

Senior Boys Race 2			
1 st	Freddie Bush	13	P
2 nd	Lucas Yapp	12	P
3 rd	Jacob Cole	13	OH

Senior Girls Race 1			
1 st	Lucy Fitzherbert	11	NC
2 nd	Amelie Coen	11	GH
3 rd	Bella Peyton-Jones	12	GH

Senior Girls Race 2			
1 st	Lucy Fitzherbert	11	NC
2 nd	Amelie Coen	11	GH
3 rd	Gemma Dilks	12	GH

House Competition: Current Positions

Junior Boys	
1 st	Petergate
2 nd	Old House
3 rd	Francis House

Junior Girls	
1 st	North Close
2 nd	Gorton House

Senior Boys	
1 st	Old House
2 nd	Petergate
3 rd	Francis House

Senior Girls	
1 st	Gorton House
2 nd	North Close

Programme of Events and Routes – The Russell 2023

2.00pm to 4.00pm Food, drink and snacks are available throughout the event. Cash & card accepted

2.00pm	Year 7 & 8 School House	3.8km
2.15pm	Year 9 & 10 Junior Girls	6.9km
2.30pm	Year 9 & 10 Junior Boys	6.9km
2.45pm	Year 11, 12 & 13 Senior Girls – The Russell	8.1km
3.00pm	Year 11, 12 & 13 Senior Boys – The Russell	8.1km
3.25pm	The OB, Parent and Guest Russell – The Open Russell	8.1km
3.45pm	The Fun Run	3.8km

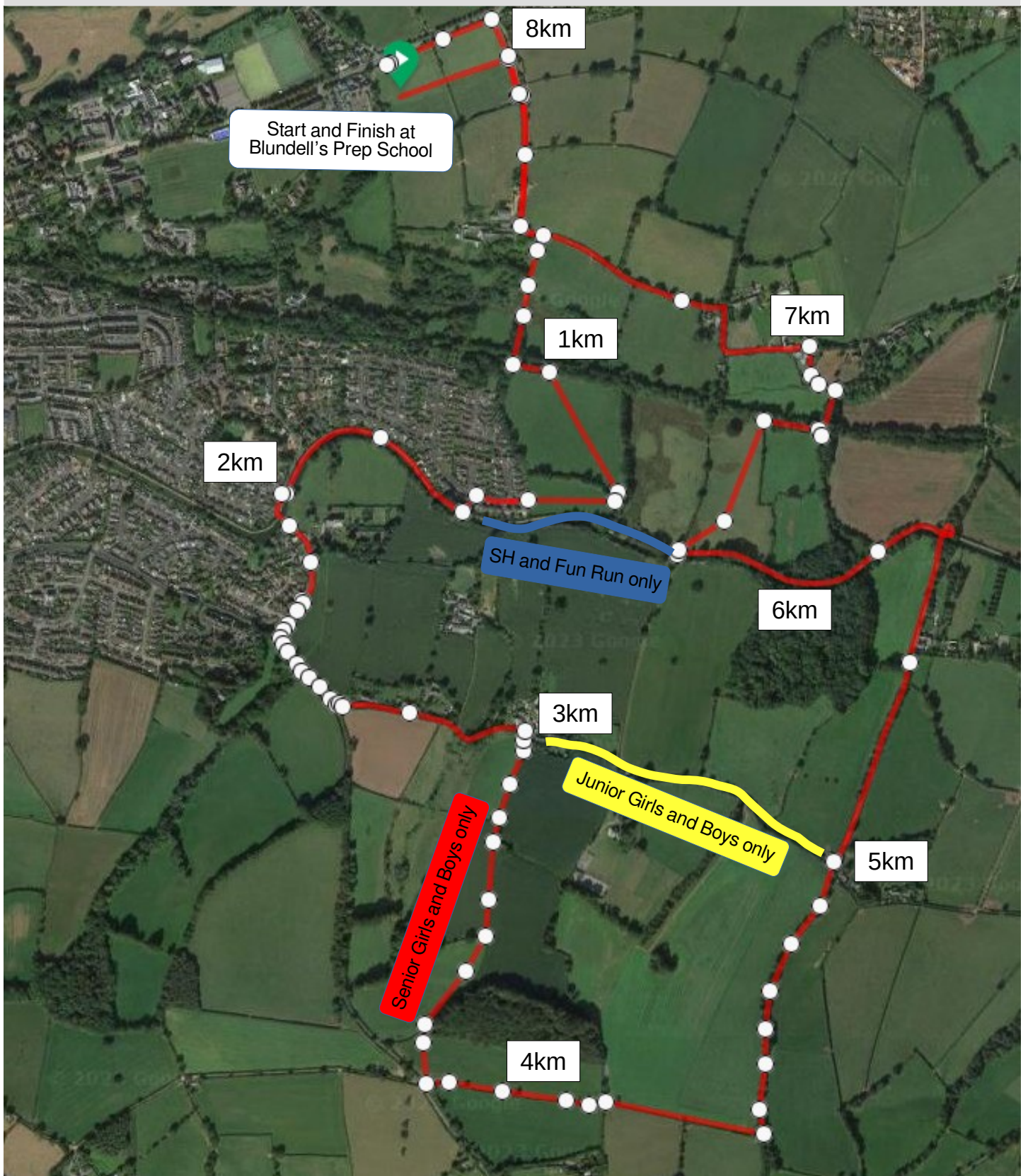
All students from year 9 to 13 who are not in the above races will take part in the Fun Run.

Old Blundellians, Parents and Guests are very welcome to take part in **The Open Russell** and/or **Fun Run**.

Below and Right: Russell 2022



The Russell 2023 - Routes



“IF IT DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU,

IT WON'T CHANGE YOU”

- FRED DEVITO

Photos clockwise from below:
 Russell 2022, SH 1924, Russell
 2021, Russell 1948, Russell 2022,
 Russell 2022, Russell 2021





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We hope that you have enjoyed this years event. If you have any photos or footage of The Russell that you would be happy for the Archive to hold in it's collection, please send it to Cathy Flavelle at archive@blundells.org.

UPCOMING: Blundell's One Day Event



MAIN SPONSORS



Sunday 24th September 2023
Pontispool Equine Centre, Taunton

"Thank you to the volunteers who have kindly given up their time to provide and sell refreshments in support of the One Day event and Blundell's charities."



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Blundell's School
Tiverton, Devon, EX16 4DN
Tel: 01884 252543
Email: info@blundells.org