

The Trotter

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Culture vultures



With a reputation as one of the classier events out there, the Florence Marathon has got to be worth a go. John Skinner books into a room with a view (well, sort of) and tells us all about it.

The benefits of being a member of a running club are many. The most obvious, I suppose, would be the fitness aspect, but let us also consider how well we runners acquaint ourselves with the local environment. Bounding across the Devon countryside affords us the opportunity to unearth

nooks and crannies that yer average couch potato could never get close to! Also there's the social side, and if you are fortunate enough to be a Trotter, then, obviously, you've hit the jackpot.

Turn to page three

News Desk

Look out for these races coming up over the next few weeks:

- 1/2 Winter 3K Series, Exeter Track
- 7/2 Mounts Bay 10K
- 7/2 Fulfords Great West Run 5
- 7/2 Oh My! Obelisk
- 13/2 The Nightrunner
- 14/2 Westward League Cross Country, Bovey
- 21/2 Plymouth Hoe 10
- 21/2 Hestercombe Hurtle

Welcome to the January 2010 edition of *The Trotter*. There's lots of news already, as Roger Hayes reveals...

I start this month's round-up of news with an urgent plea. We desperately need a chief marshal for our Bovey Tracey Cross Country which takes place on Sunday, February 14. Howard Cotton is the Race Director, but it's unfair to ask him to operate without a deputy, let alone a chief marshal. So, please, if you feel you're up to the task, then contact me and I can put you in touch with a very grateful Howard.

On the subject of races, we are unfortunately looking for a new race Race Director for our Ladies' 10K (which takes place in September), after the disappointing news of Michelle Willocks-Watts's resignation. If you are interested in the job then please contact me and I'll be happy to tell you what is involved. It really is a perfect opportunity for someone who wants to get more involved and give something back to the club.

Have you got a place for this year's Virgin London Marathon but don't know how to get there or where to stay? Then the following might just be what you're after. Mike McElheron from Torbay AC organises a London Marathon trip. A coach leaves Torquay on the Friday morning with pick-up points at Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton before travelling to London.

You'll arrive around about lunch time, staying for two nights at the Clarendon Hotel on Blackheath (400 yards from the blue start!), giving you plenty of time to make your way into the capital to pick up your race numbers. A meal at the hotel on the Friday evening and an "as much as you can eat" pasta meal on the Saturday night are included in the price. As is breakfast on both mornings and a meal on the journey home on Sunday evening (you'll stop off at lovely country pub).

The price for the trip is £240.00 per person, based on two sharing (great way to make friends!), if you want a single room, the cost increases. Mike requires a deposit of £50.00 and can be contacted on 01803 409968. I speak from experience having been on the trip 11 times. It's very well organised. The hotel is superbly situated for the start (no queuing for the toilets) and the food is excellent.

Another reminder that our AGM is taking place on Wednesday, February 24, at 8pm (training starts at 6.30pm that night). All positions (officers & general committee members) are available. If you wish to stand you will need a proposer and seconder.

Paper versions of *The Trotter* are available from John Caunter at the cost of £1 each. They will be available on a first come, first served basis for the first two Wednesdays after its release.

Please note that all those who complete this year's club championship will NOT get free membership for 2011 as stated in *The Trotter* last month. The committee did it as a one-off for last year, in the hope of encouraging more members to complete the championship.

The cut-off date for the fastest times and final club championship race for 2010 will be Sunday, November 28. This will allow me more time to get organised. I struggled big time last year with only four clear days before the Dinner & Dance!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Graham Penn (or Inky as we all know him) on winning the award for Teignbridge's best sports reporter. It's a fantastic achievement, as 2009 was Inky's first year as our Press and Publicity Officer. Well done mate. Keep up the excellent work.



Pisa is a delightful little town. It's got a leaning tower and everything.

Every weekend, the Royal Blues starburst all across the region to compete in a wide variety of races, while sometimes we journey much further afield. Those lucky enough to have been on the legendary Venice venture will not want to miss out on the October Athens marathon trip for instance (see page nine). What a wheeze that one promises to be! It is plain to see that the opportunities offered by the running are many and varied and last November, Steph and I, along with Smokes and Vicky travelled to Florence for the marathon — Steph and Smokes to compete, Vicky and I for the crack.

It's one of those bits and bobs journeys. After taxi, train, train, taxi, plane, train and finally train, we emerge wearily from the station into the marble and terracotta beauty that is Florence — and head straight into the poshest looking bar on the square. Perhaps not the wisest move, when you are in Florence on a limited budget, but what the hell! Suitably sated we head into the centre of town to locate our altogether more frugal accommodation, a cosy hostel right at the hub of the city.

Steph seems concerned with what could, I suppose, be viewed as one or two safety issues — there does appear to be an alarming amount of exposed wires and flexes hanging from holes in the wall — but I prefer see the bright side and wax lyrical, championing the quaint charm of the rough and ready Tuscan culture. We settle in and with the marathon only hours away, do the only sensible thing possible and sally forth into the Florentine night to drink loads of wine and eat loads of food. In town we meet up with some Italian friends who we haven't seen for a couple of years. As Alessandra and Eduardo have travelled all the way from Milan to lend support on the big day, it seems churlish not to join in with some more wine and brandy and things. The upshot of all this is, that even though it's the eve of the race, we stumble into our room at two-ish in the morning. No skin off mine and Vicky's noses, but for Steph and Smokes, hardly ideal.



The morning of the race and Florence is sparkling, the crisp Italian sunshine illuminating the magnificent marble edifices that pepper this breathtaking town. I notice, however, that neither Steph nor Smokes are sporting the same sheen. What with the somewhat boozy and late night, coupled with Smokes'



complete and utter lack of training I fear the worst. Smokes' words on waking: "f**king hell, this is going to be a struggle" don't exactly instil confidence, either. With a kiss and a thumbs up Vicky and I send the pair off to the start, before strolling off along the banks of the River Arno for a coffee and a pastry. Who knows? We might even risk a naughty limoncello.

Now, the Florence Marathon is a great watch, and with a bit of thoughtful planning and some nifty footwork you can get yourselves to eight or nine separate viewing points. So, with a renewed sense of buoyant optimism, we make our way to the first and await our intrepid duo. The atmosphere is electric as the front runners pass and before long we pick out Smokes, with Steph hot on his heels. I snap off a couple of photos and emit roars of encouragement only to receive in exchange, "How about a drink you half-wit" bellowed back at me.

The race unfolds and, after ten miles, it's becoming clear that, for Steph, the wheels are beginning to work themselves loose. With no sign of Smokes, I'm beginning to suspect that his wheels have already dislodged themselves and are sinking to the bottom of the Arno. This latest development demands drastic action, and Vicky and I decide to split, with me following Steph, and Vicky waiting for Smokes. For the marathoners, the remainder of the race is a thankless slog. For yours truly, however, it presents the ideal opportunity for some speed sightseeing and a couple of crafty beers.

I won't bore you with times, save to say that nothing spectacular was achieved. But, let's face it, when you are in Florence, who really cares? So, it is with smiles on our faces that we reconvene in our local bar for some post-race light refreshment. We bid farewell to Alessandra and Eduardo and, exhausted but happy, we decide to hit the hay ready for Pisa.

Pisa is a delightful little town. It's got a leaning tower and everything — and this time our hostel really is spot on, overlooking the famous Piazza Garibaldi. With the marathon out of the way we are free to relax, the ensuing adventures being another story altogether. All in all, we had the most brilliant time. So, with this in mind, I say it's "On on, Trotters on tour in Athens!" Be there or be very square.

Membership Report



Membership Secretary Dave Dunn welcomes some new members for 2010.

Hello and welcome to my first Membership Report of this new year. Don't be confused though, as our membership year starts again on April 1 and runs through until March 31. At next month's AGM, you will have the chance to vote on the level of membership fees set for the coming year. It is also your opportunity to change anything written into our Constitution, provided that you put your proposal in writing, get it seconded and submit it to our Secretary, Mark Becker, in good time. So, it's important that you attend our AGM. Into the bargain, you get to train beforehand, and then come for a pint down the White Hart afterwards. What more could anyone want.

Once the AGM has decided the fees for next year, you will all be invited to renew your membership for the coming year. For those of you with email, this will be sent electronically, but for those of you without such technology, it will be done by the old-fashioned method of posting it out to you. Unfortunately, we do not as yet have the ability to receive payments electronically. This is something I would like to see happen for next year.

There are 18 of you, however, who won't have to worry about paying your membership fee this year, because you successfully completed last year's Club Championship. I will, however, still require you to complete and sign the renewal form so that we have a proper audit trail.

The lucky 18 are: Graeme Baker, Sharon Bowman, Tom Burman, John Caunter, Tina Caunter, Jimmy Donovan, Dave Dunn, Matt Dunn, Tracy Elphick, Mike Eveleigh, Roger Hales, Ronnie Jones, Steve Rawlinson, Eleanor Taylor, Wilf Taylor, Stephen Wallace, Syd Willocks and Mark Wotton.

Your committee has decided that 18 was not a sufficient number to warrant extending the offer to this year's Club Championship. If you don't like some of the things your committee does, why not try to change it from within and stand for election to the committee at the AGM?

Right, that's enough politics, on with the show! I have two new members to introduce to you this month – Simon Boobyer and Craig Churchill, who are both 32 and both from the Bovey Tracey area.

Simon is the partner of Emma Sidebotham, who has renewed her membership from last year. They have both been seen striding out towards the head of the pack on Mondays and I hear that Emma turned in a couple of pretty tidy time trails the other week down at Brunel.

Craig is a familiar face on the local racing scene in his Teign Valley vest, and has joined us as a second claim member to take advantage of the wonderful training we offer each and every week on Wednesdays.

Simon, Emma and Craig lift our membership total up to 189. I don't think we'll make 200 before the end of March, but this is the time of year when folk make New Year's resolutions about health and fitness, and there's always the London Marathon factor, so you never know.

The following members will also be celebrating landmark birthdays during February: Mary Goulden (35), John "Squaddie" Ludlam (50) and Steve Rawlinson (55).

Happy birthday to all of you, and may you all enjoy running under your new veteran status.

Record breakers



It seems that 2010 may be an exciting year for our record books. **Dave Dunn** fills us in on a young man in a hurry...

The first record of 2010 has been set by Tom Burman, who improved his own 10 miles Junior Male club record by a whopping 2-and-a-half minutes when stopping the watch on 1.04.26 in the Storm Force 10 down at Camborne this month. Tom is obviously justifying why he was awarded our most promising male newcomer prize at last month's Christmas bash.

Don't be surprised to see Tom surpass even this effort in the upcoming Plymouth Hoe 10, a race that always offers good opportunities for record-breaking. We still have a vacancy in our record lists in the Female Vet 55 category at 10 miles, so the race could be on between Angela Howells, Judy Smallshire

and Marion Witham to write their name on to the roll of honour, and bag a nice memento into the bargain.

Elsewhere, there's a 10K on Sunday February 7 at Mounts Bay in the far west of Cornwall that might tempt some of you, but otherwise the racing on offer next month is of the hard and/or off-road variety.

Wherever you're racing in February, have a good one. And don't forget to tell Graham Penn, our Press and Publicity Officer, all the juicy details. A full list of all our club records, as well as Graham's contact information, can be found on our web site at www.teignbridgetrotters.co.uk.

Club Camp 2010

Just a quick note confirming that our 2010 Club Camp will be held over the weekend of Friday 18th to Sunday 20th June at Polmanter near St Ives. This site was successful in our recent poll of all nine campsites visited by the Trotters since we started our annual jamboree back in 2001. I will publish details of how to book and the rates negotiated in an upcoming issue of *The Trotter*. Meanwhile, put the date in your diary – it looks like being a busy summer!



Absolute beginners



We all have to start somewhere. For the first time, the Trotters can offer new members with no running experience a pathway into the sport. John Ludlam finds out more about this exciting move.

From Monday, February 1, the Teignbridge Trotters will be offering something new to our members – a complete beginners' group. The group has been created to attract members who are wholly new to running and to guide them through the initial stages of taking up the sport.

The introduction of the beginners' group means that there will be some reorganisation of current training arrangements. There will now be two groups on a Monday – the new group and the existing group. The new Monday night group is not suitable for anyone who is capable of running five miles, so members of the existing group should stay where they are. That group will continue to go out for a five- to seven-mile social run. Faster runners in this group will be encouraged to

double-back when prompted. Those at the back will be given enough time to recover at re-group points before everyone sets off again.

Meanwhile, in the beginners' group, our coaches will advise and support each new runner, overseeing the progression from run/walk sessions to five-mile runs that can be completed without stopping. The ultimate goal is for members of the beginners' group to become comfortable enough to make the next step up to join Monday night's other group or any one of the four groups on a Wednesday.

So how will Wednesday nights look after the reorganisation? The principal change will be that the

There will now be two groups on a Monday.

existing “beginners” group will no longer exist. In truth, this was never a true beginners’ group, as entrants already possessed some running ability. In its place will be a social run, aimed at members coming back from injury, slower and improving runners who don’t wish to take part in any of the speed or endurance sessions, or new members finding their feet. In common with the Monday night social run, faster runners will double-back and there will be re-group points for slower and improving runners to recover.

In addition to the social run, there will continue to be three, different, structured sessions, offering more challenging exercises designed to build endurance and speed for experienced and improving runners. These sessions are open to all abilities: you can push yourself as hard (or as gently) as you like.

Club Chairman Roger Hayes says he is delighted that the Trotters are taking this exciting step.

“As a club, it is something that we have thought about for some time and, with the increased numbers of qualified coaches we now have, we feel we are in a position to offer a quality experience to encourage complete beginners,” he told *The Trotter*.

One popular aspect of Monday night training is to remain unchanged. The successful Monday night “away runs” during the summer months will continue. They will take place every other week and will include various scenic routes within the area (hopefully including Dartmoor). Many will have the option of a pub at the end! We will still offer both Monday night sessions (with qualified coaches) from Newton Abbot Leisure Centre when the away runs take place.

Details of all our training nights can be found on our website by clicking on the Club Training link. If you have any comments (good or bad) regarding training, then Coach Coordinator Jan Caunter would love to hear from you. You can email her at info@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk



Treehugging Trotters!



“Off road” and “fun” are not mutually exclusive phrases for the Trotters but, as Ronnie Jones explains, there’s more than one way to skin a cat...

Now, us Trotters are well known for getting up close and personal to the great outdoors. Take a look at our feet: we haven’t got a pair of pristine pumps between us.

We think nothing of bounding through rivers, wading through mud or flying through forests for fun, often in some of the most beautiful woodland and country parks around. If only we had time to admire the view, instead of keeping our eyes firmly fixed on terra firma, to watch out for nasty rocks and tree roots!

Well, you lucky people, now you can!

Think weekend away. Think a bit of exciting outside work. Think a whole lot of fun (and it’ll only cost you £20!)

What I’m talking about here is two different types of National Trust working holiday. The first one is a weekend away, staying in a National Trust basecamp at Beach Head in Cornwall, about eight miles from Newquay, five miles south of Padstow. The second is a day of tree planting at Castle Drogo.

Here’s how the Cornwall holiday will work:

Date: Friday March 5 – Sunday March 7.

Friday night: arrive, have a few drinks.

Saturday: work for a few hours. Not sure what we’re doing yet but it could be anything from planting trees to building a footpath.

Saturday evening: more fun and frolics in the barn.

Sunday: We have the morning to ourselves. So after knocking the barn back into shape, it’s off for a run. On on!

Accommodation: A converted two-storey barn at Pentire Farm, St Eval, on the remote north Cornish coast near the Bedruthan Steps with magnificent views over Park Head.

Cost: Hiring the barn is not much more than £20. The only other costs are food, beer, etc. and petrol.

Here’s what the days out at Castle Drogo will look like:

Date: Any weekend between now and May

Saturday: arrive... plant some trees er... that’s it.

Saturday evening: off to the pub.

Accommodation: There may be a chance the National Trust could find us somewhere to stay on the Saturday night... and after working at Castle Drogo, there may be a chance of going for a run in the grounds on the Sunday morning.

There is a catch. Whilst we can arrange the day’s work at Castle Drogo on pretty much any weekend (races permitting) over the next few months, the working holiday near Padstow is limited to 14 people and is on a set date.

These holidays are very few and far between.

A few more of you can come along, but you’d have to camp in the barn’s garden.

So, if you think this might be your cup of tea, drop me an email ASAP: ronjones30@gmail.com

I’m conscious a weekend away could well get in the way of racing or training. I’m testing the water with this. If it looks like it might be something you want to do, I’ll arrange more of them. I’m not sure what the uptake is going to be.

What I am sure of, though, is that I’ve done loads of these over the past ten years or so, and have always had a great laugh.

Let me know what you think. On On!

A short history of marathon running in ancient Greek

Well, says Steph Ross, Benidorm was brilliant, Nice was nice, Venice was very nice and Florence was fantastic. But what about The Next Time?



While we can only fantasize about a Summer Holiday with Cliff Richard, an autumn break with our Chairman could be within our grasp! After all, he is quite Cliff Richardesque. So, how about a trip to Athens, to run the “Classic Marathon”? Here is the brief.

Two and a half thousand years ago, in the year 490 BC, a Greek soldier named Pheidippides was dispatched from the Battle of Marathon to deliver tidings of victory over the invading Persians to the Greek capital of Athens, some 26.2 miles away.

Euphoric and no doubt charged with adrenalin, the intrepid Pheidippides ran the whole distance, thus giving birth to the marathon. Sadly, our luckless hero never lived to bore his friends and family with mile-by-mile accounts of his achievement. On completion of his mission Pheidippides shouted “Viki” (meaning victory, in ancient Greek) and promptly collapsed through exhaustion, never to regain consciousness.

(Interestingly, exactly the same thing happened when Smokin' Rog Hales finished the Florence Marathon. “Viki” in this instance, however, was his wife, Vicky, who happily was able to revive him with coffee and fags!)

In this day and age, due to the invention of carbohydrates, and to modern discoveries such as training shoes, Raybans and

Lycra, it is now possible to run a marathon and survive. Indeed in recent times it has become a popular sport!

To commemorate the passing of 2.5 millennia since the inaugural marathon, a race will be held over the classic distance, along the original route, on the 31st of October 2010. For those who still feel that “they might die”, 10K and 5K races are being staged simultaneously.

The big question is, how many Trotters can succeed where Pheidippides failed? And live to bore their friends and family senseless? If you're interested in having a go, entries open at the beginning of March this year, and may go pretty quickly, due to the momentous historical significance of the occasion. Check out the website: www.athensclassicmarathon.gr

The cost of entering is €90. Athens is accessible by Easyjet from Gatwick. Flights will be available in April and should cost approximately £50 return if booked early.

Dormitory accommodation at the Hostel Aphrodite (Hostel of Lurve) is available for as little as €12 per night. Private or double rooms are more expensive, but still good value.

So, come on Trotters, let's show poor Pheidippides what a true royal blue Trotter can do! Anyone interested in this most historic of jollies can register their interest and find out more from Steph Ross, John Skinner, Chairman Roger or Andy Ludlam.

Now that's what I call a pub crawl



Local runner Shaun Chillingworth is planning to run 60 miles from Teignmouth to Saltash, in order to raise money for The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. He needs a bit of company on the first leg. Any takers?

Shaun, along with his brother Glynn and sister Tracey, are aiming to raise £5,000 for The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in memory of their late father, Graham. It costs £5,000 to breed and to fund the basic training of a new guide dog puppy.

Graham helped to purchase numerous guide dogs through fundraising activities while he was the landlord of various pubs in Teignmouth and Saltash. Shaun will therefore run the 60 miles from The Teign Brewery Inn, Teignmouth, to The Union Inn, Saltash, while Glynn will cycle the distance, both arriving on what would have been Graham Chillingworth's 60th birthday, on April 16, 2010: "60 miles for Graham's 60th".

The money raised will go to help the charity provide a fully trained guide dog to a blind or partially-sighted person, giving them life-changing freedom, mobility and independence.

"We wanted to mark our Dad's birthday by doing something special, and raising money to support Guide Dogs was something he was immensely proud of," Shaun explains. "We thought that if we could raise enough to purchase a guide dog in his memory then we would have to come up with something special. And 60 miles for his 60th had a certain ring about it!"

Shaun thought that some Trotters might like to accompany him on the first leg of his odyssey. He leaves the Teign Brewery in Teignmouth at 10am (tbc) on April 14. The first leg will be to St Marychurch, via Shaldon Bridge — a distance of approximately 10K. If you'd like to help see Shaun off in style, please let Graham Penn or Roger Hayes know. It would be great to see a few Royal Blues giving Shaun a guard of honour for this very worthy cause.

If you wish to sponsor Shaun, Glynn and Tracey in their fundraising efforts please visit their website: www.justgiving.com/Chillingworth

Feel the FORCE

A hardworking cancer charity based right here in Devon is spearheading fundraising at Exeter's Great West Run in May. You can help to make a difference, writes Syd Willocks.

The 26th Great West Run around Exeter's city centre will take place on Sunday, May 2.

For the third year running, FORCE Cancer Charity, based in Exeter, has been selected as one of the official charities. Running has never been a big fundraiser for the charity in the past but, over the past couple of years my daughter, Sarah, has been on a mission to change this.

In 2009, she secured 66 runners for the event. They raised nearly £13,000. For 2010, she is looking for up to

100 runners to don their trainers and hit that "exhilarating" two-lap course all in the name of a very worthy charity. So, if anyone is interested in running for our local cancer charity this year, please call Sarah on 01392 402875.

FORCE also has to find 20 volunteers to help set up and then hand out t-shirts, medals, water and fruit. A commitment of 8.30am to 2pm is needed on the day. If anyone is available, please let Sarah know on the above number or via email sarahfr@forcecancercharity.co.uk



Social whirl

There's more to life than running 10Ks and banging out hill reps.
Rod Payne brings us up to date with 2010's busy social calendar.

Another year is under way and we can look forward to our usual diverse mix of social activities.

The first four months of the year are quiet socially and we are open to suggestions for social activities. Ronnie's trip to Skinner's Brewery was a good example of impromptu socialising last year and we are looking for similar innovation this year. Come forward with your ideas.

First up is the **Chairman's Barbeque**. This will take place on **Sunday May 30 at 3.30pm**. This is always a great event with mad goings on. Everybody is welcome but you are asked to turn up brandishing a bottle or three to lubricate proceedings.

Looking forward to June, we have the extremely fun packed and frivolous **Club Camp**. This takes place over the weekend of June 18-20. Stay longer if you wish. Following the ballot to choose our favourite campsite, Polmanter in St Ives came out on top. Their memories must be poor because they are welcoming us back this year. So come and join the crew and make this a weekend to remember. Dave Dunn is the man in the know for this trip. More details to follow.

After the success of our inaugural **Summer Ball** in 2009 we are looking to repeat the experience this year. Your committee is trying to fix a date and location so watch this space.

There is a **Boys' Weekend** planned for **July 3-4**. The minibus leaves Newton Abbot Leisure Centre at 8am on the Saturday with Tarquin at the helm. After a stop-off for breakfast, we arrive lunchtime and erect Watsa's massive tent. Then on to the Ale

Trail. Drinking alcohol is mandatory and the weekend is not for the faint of heart. On Sunday we run the **Callow 5** (it's a toughie). The first 17 names to Chairman are on the bus and secure a berth in Watsa's massive erection. Beyond this number you will need to make your own way and provide your own tent. Just a note — this clashes with the Bovey Half.

The weekend of **July 17-18** will be busy. This year's **Haytor Heller** has moved to **Saturday, July 17, at 6.30pm**. The race will be followed by a BBQ and entertainment. Buzz Tyrrell is our new race director this year. Marshals will be required, so let's all help to make it a success.

The Heller is followed the next day by the **Club Trip**. This year the coach is taking us to Saltash for the **Magnificent 7**. This race is accompanied by a 1.5 mile fun-run. The race is popular so, as soon as entry forms are available, we need to get our entries in to avoid disappointment. To make a day of it we will stop at a pub on the way back. This is a great family day.

We have already fixed a date for the **John Scott Memorial Trophy**. This year it will be on **November 21**, so put it in the diary. This is a handicap race – anyone can win it.

Watch out for the annual **Snooker Tournament** to be held during **October and November**.

This year's annual **Dinner and Dance** will take place on **December 11**.

The full social programme for 2010 will be finalised over the next week or two and will be posted on our website.

The Trotter

Editor: John Ludlam

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Next month: *The Trotter's* Top Ten 10K Tips!

Have you got a Trotters story to tell? Is there a feature you'd like to see included? We'd love to hear from you.

Tel: 01626 773811 Or email: mag@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk