

The Trotter

Number 5

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Back to basics

To kick off a series of articles focussing on beginners, Alastair “Big Al” Lee shares his feelings on being a beginner again, after a long-term hip injury that required an operation.

Can you remember being a beginner?

I can't either. But I'm experiencing it all over again, thanks to a dodgy hip the quacks decided to resurface.

Thirteen months after my last race I'm training again — but very differently.

No longer am I straggling behind and holding up the speed demons at Brunel. No, now I'm holding up the entire club on Wednesday nights.

If that's not bad enough, Squaddie added insult to injury, suggesting I write a piece for the Trotter on being a beginner.

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News Desk

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

3/5 Great West Run
3/5 Saltash Half-Marathon
9/5 Ivybridge 10K (Club Championship)
17/5 Bideford 10K
17/5 The Exterminator
17/5 Ottery 10K
17/5 Cow Pat Canter
24/5 Plymouth Half-Marathon

As I write, the Met Office has just proclaimed that this summer will be a “barbecue summer” with below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures. Whey-hey! That is some cracking news to relish in these days of credit crunch and apocalypse. We shall be skint and disease-wracked but at least we shall be burnished a deep nut-brown from all those summer runs we’ll be out enjoying.

Speaking of barbecues (now how’s that for a link?) here’s a reminder that the Chairman’s BBQ is on Sunday, May 24, at 1530. The address is 69 Teignmouth Road, Teignmouth TQ14 8UR. All Trotters are welcome, including children.

Another reminder: It’s not long until that fantastic spring club outing to the world-famous Skinner’s Brewery in Truro, on Saturday, May 16. Skinner’s Brewery is renowned for its Betty Stogs real ale, which won the Champion Best Bitter of Great Britain award in the 2008 Great British Beer Festival at Earl’s Court.

Ronnie has all the details: ronjones30@googlemail.com

Club Camp organiser Dave Dunn has an important announcement to make regarding booking arrangements for the camping weekend, which is June 19-21.

“I issued an incorrect booking form with the brochures handed out at Newton Abbot Leisure Centre the other Wednesday,” he writes. “So please don’t use the green four-page form that was to be found inside the brochure, but instead the double-sided A4 sheet on white paper that I have been handing out since. That way you can be sure to be booked on to the camp site at Trebellan Park at Cubert with the rest of the Trotters, and not their sister site at Treago Farm a couple of miles away. If you’ve got any concerns over which form to use, or want any other information on what promises to be fantastic weekend of training and fun, you know where to find me on a Wednesday evening.”



John Ludlam

Did Tommo find his last race easy? I don't think so

Well, talk about a knee-jerk reaction. After I'd got over the urge to punch him I remembered my first Wednesday back: ten-minute miles at best, and I had to walk the last half mile back to Newton Abbot Leisure Centre. So he had a good point.

As you may know, it's Squad and Pistol Pete who give The Trotter and our website their polished look. They know their onions. So I thought long and hard when Squad gently guided me with one of his questions for this piece.

"What's your angle going to be, Al?"

"It's fucking hard" was my reply, to be honest. But then I thought, what tosh! All running is hard.

Did Tommo find his last race easy? I don't think so.

How chuffed I was with my last six-mile run. Yet two years ago I would have dismissed it as a gentle amble on a Monday night.

So, what was my angle going to be? My last run gave me the fodder needed for the next few paragraphs.

For me, being a beginner — and I think it's the same for seasoned runners to be honest — is all about feeling an improvement.

I still can't describe my childish delight when I finished one race ahead of a Trotter who I had never thought I would beat in a million years. But it's the same feeling I got when I ran a whopping six miles the other Wednesday and didn't feel out of puff or knackered (four months ago I was still on crutches).

That's what you get when you're a beginner: a real kick from running a distance you didn't think you could, or nailing a time you thought was out of reach.

And it's these highs that propel you forward.

Of course, we all know what happens, the highs become less and less frequent — but that just makes them all the sweeter when they happen. You have to be a runner to understand the glee you get from a PB.

The trouble is, the better you get, the more elusive they become. And that would take the edge off running for a lot of people. But not for a Trotter. Yes, there's no substitute for the childish delight of a PB. But acting like a five-year-old and topping up with all the childish fun you can handle on any of the socials is pretty near.



Membership Report

Membership Secretary **Dave Dunn** tells us who's who.

Thank you to everyone who has sent me their renewal form and subscription. It makes my life so much easier if I'm not having to chase you for money. Let's face it, these days I'm usually just chasing you in training!

There are several of our members from last year who won't be renewing their membership. Sarah Fox has injured her hip, while Dave Lickman and Helen Robbins have both been so ill that they have had to give up their running, for now at least. But, as we say farewell to old friends, new acquaintances appear every week at Newton Abbot Leisure Centre.

The past few weeks have been very productive in signing up new members. There have been eight since the last edition of *The Trotter*. Three of these have joined us on family membership terms, while the other five are all completely fresh to our ranks. The new recruits are:

Rachel Besford, 16, from Newton Abbot; Bruce Campbell, 42, from Newton Abbot; James Canning, 36, from Exeter; Nathan Elphick, 38, from Heathfield; Peter Lander, 39, from Kingsteignton; Jenna Manion, 27, from Chudleigh; Susannah Retallick, 39, from Ashburton; and Christian Robinson, 29, from Kingskerswell

Rachel is Kevin's other daughter and remarkably shares the same birthday as her older sister, Siobhan. Rachel becomes our youngest current member.

Bruce has already experienced the delights of the Sandygate Loop within days of signing up, and showed that he will feature prominently now he knows his way round.

James had already competed in half a dozen or so half marathons prior to joining our ranks and immediately improved his PB down to 1.52 in the recent Taunton half, just off the back of three or four training sessions with us.

Nathan is Tracy's other half and has decided that, if you can't beat them, you might as well join them. Mind you, Nathan would have to go some if he's ever going to beat Tracy!

Peter has started his Trotters life in our Wednesday beginners group. Now that we offer an intermediate training group, it probably won't be long before our coaches are suggesting to Peter that he takes the next step up.

Jenna is a friend of Anna Caunter and the pair have been seen lately trying their hardest in the Wednesday endurance training group.

Susannah blazed a trail followed recently by Chris Moyles, Cheryl Cole and others when she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 2007 to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. So stamina should be no problem!

I saw Christian, who has Vicky Hales for his mother, in action on the Brown Willy Run on New Years Day. Off no training at all, he soon showed me a clean pair of heels. So, once Rog gets hold of him, I'm sure he'll be an awesome prospect.

In other news, Caroline Hayes will be celebrating her 40th birthday during the month of May, while Life Member and former Chairman, John Scott, turns 65. Congratulations to both of you!



John Ludlam

Record breakers!

Dave Dunn announces some stunning performances.

As predicted here last month, Tom Burman duly ran a corker in our own Teignbridge Ten to break his own club record for a junior over 10 miles, stopping the watch at 1.06.03.

What I failed to notice, though, was that Tracy Elphick had broken Vanessa New's 16-year-old record for 10 miles in the FV35 category. She clipped 20 seconds off Vanessa's time set in a race called the Guy Fawkes 10, back in 1993. Tracy's record-breaking effort of 1.11.39 came in the Plymouth Hoe 10 in February.

The month of May gives plenty of opportunities for attempts at personal bests at both 10K and the half-marathon distance, although you would have to be right on top of your game to achieve this in the racing on offer. 10K's abound with races at Ivybridge, Whitemoor near St Austell, Bideford and Ottery St Mary. Perhaps the best chance of a club record at this distance would come from Gia D'Aprano at either Ivybridge or Bideford.

May is a big month for half marathons, with large turn-outs expected in both Exeter and Plymouth. By contrast, Saltash offers a somewhat quieter — though quite difficult — alternative to the Great West Run. Again, look for Gia to add yet another club record to her collection, with Tina Caunter's FV50 mark of 1.47.15 in her sights.

Wherever you're racing this coming month, have a good one, and don't forget to tell Graham Penn, our Press & 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.



Andrew Ludlam

Marathon moments



Hot off the presses, here is the Race Report and some early impressions from the Trotters who took part in the Flora London Marathon. Thanks to Stuart Moulson for the photographs.

Twelve Teignbridge Trotters headed to Blackheath on Sunday for the 29th Flora London Marathon, writes Press and Publicity Officer Graham Penn. This huge event, one of the most popular in the UK racing calendar, was the brainchild of Roger Bannister pace man and Olympic champion Chris Brasher, back in 1979.

The London Marathon has grown in size from 6,255 finishers at its inauguration in 1981, to 34,497 in 2008, many running in support of a variety of worthy causes. One such individual was Trotter Rod Payne, who raised the sum of £1,700 for PHABkids, a charity dedicated to "promote and encourage people with and without physical disabilities to come together on equal terms, to achieve complete integration within the wider community and to make more of life

together". Rod, who last ran the race fifteen years ago, achieved a time of 4.34.20.

The grim weather forecast proved to be misleading, as there was glorious sunshine throughout. The heat however did not deter Ian Langer, first Trotter across the line in the Mall, in a very respectable time of 3.12.42. John Tweedie was close behind in 3.15.50.

Other runners taking part were: husband and wife team Mark and Jo Becker (3.33.04 and 4.46.10 respectively), Cathy Burgess (3.54.45), Julia Proctor (4.01.30), Nikki Kennard (4.10.22), Jan Caunter (4.15.33), Mark Wotton (4.23.51), Graeme Baker (4.27.06) and Samm Gee (5.08.23).

It was a day of mixed fortunes and emotions for the Trotters, as it was for most of the runners participating in such a large-scale event, writes John Ludlam.

Ian Langer ended up having a better run than he intended. “I’m planning on doing the Dartmoor Discovery in June, so London was really only meant to be a training run for me,” he told *The Trotter*. “I started off steady but, when I got to about 10 miles, things were going so well that I speeded up a bit. It was pretty hot and congested — and there were some rather unpleasant

smells around Canary Wharf — but all in all it was a really enjoyable day.”

Julia Proctor had an unfortunate final week in the run-up to the event. “It all went wrong on the Wednesday before in the woods, when I achieved an Olympic-standard back flip without the benefit of a crash mat! Having said that, taking it steady had its advantages in that I was actually aware of and appreciated my surroundings and the crowd so much more than ever before. I didn’t cry (much!)”



Jo Becker, who was running London for the first time, along with husband Mark, is still on a high. “I would highly recommend London as a first marathon,” she says. “What an atmosphere! It was more like being in a carnival than in a race. It was such a lot of fun!” Look out for an in-depth report from Mark and Jo in next month’s edition of *The Trotter*.

Things didn’t go so well for Stuart Moulson. But, in true Trotter style, a setback has not weakened his resolve. “I felt

that I had an awful marathon. I didn’t enjoy this year at all. It all fell apart at about half-way — which made it a very long race! It just wasn’t my day, although I can’t really work out why. But it was a great sporting event to be part of and I will certainly have a go again. I’ve already entered the ballot for next year!”

That’s true grit, Stu. We’ll all be rooting for you — and your fellow London marathoners — next time around.



Captain's Corner

Clare Youngman is pleased and proud of the girls.

Firstly, I must congratulate all of the Trottettes who have recently run a marathon — Paris, London, Tresco — we have certainly been getting about. All that hard training paid off and I hope each of you is pleased and proud of your performance. I'd like, in particular, to congratulate Cathy Burgess, who did under 4 hours for her first marathon — a fantastic achievement. Also to Nikki Kennard, who finished the marathon in just over 4 hours after missing five weeks of training due to back problems.

Hats off to Tracy Elphick, who recently got the Club Record for 10 miles at this year's Plymouth Hoe 10 — a great achievement. Also to Gia D'Aprano for the 10K over-50 club record at Plympton AND 10 mile over-50 club record at Plymouth Hoe. What else will she do this year? It's still only April!

If I haven't mentioned you and you have achieved a PB or you simply have done an event you are proud of, then please let me know (clare.youngman@nhs.net) so that I can mention you. I will endeavour to monitor the race results, etc., but I do apologise in advance if I miss your performance.

It's great to see so many ladies turning up each Wednesday night for training. I do hope that you will take advantage of the

focus group training we are now offering (see page 10 for more on this initiative).

Last month, I wrote an article on the Sandygate Loop and I want to encourage as many ladies as possible to turn up for the loops during the summer. Please try at least to come to the one on Friday, June 26. I would like as many ladies as possible to turn up to this event. It's a great evening, with the added opportunity of a drink, food and a chin-wag afterwards in the Sandygate Inn.

Also listen out for shouts about a ladies night out. I'll be trying to organise one soon. For the uninitiated, this usually involves a bite to eat, a few drinks, maybe even some karaoke, where we prove that the Trottettes really do (not) have the 'X' factor!

Finally, an event to bear in mind is the Erme Valley Relays, which are held early in July each year and consist of a 4 x 2.5-mile relay. I want us to enter as many ladies' teams as possible. So, whatever your level, please support this great team event. The date for this is still to be confirmed. We'll let you all know as soon as we have it.

Keep fit and safe and happy running!



Milos Erben

Bubbling up



Dave Dunn has a great idea for a club trip with a difference. “Vive la difference!” we say.

The Newton Abbot Twinning Association has asked us if we would consider travelling to our twin town, Ay, in the Champagne region of France, to participate in a local race there on Saturday, September 12.

The race, entitled “Entre Vignes et Forests” (which translates as “Between Vineyards and Forests”), offers two off-road courses, one of 15K and the other of 30K. Further details of the race can be found on www.lachampenoisedelavalleedelamarne.com. I can tell you that these events are rated very highly among French trail races.

I want to judge the interest in such an adventure. So, if this sort of thing appeals to your inner Gaul, please email me at dunnarunner@btinternet.com or leave a message on 01626 353873.

The intention is that we would travel by luxury coach, departing Newton Abbot early on the morning of Friday, September 11, to arrive that evening in Ay. No doubt after a warm welcome from our hosts, we would settle down to a good night's sleep, to be fresh for the racing the following afternoon.

The Saturday evening promises a night of eating, drinking and dancing, topped off with a fireworks display as the town celebrates the start of the grape-picking season.

I envisage Sunday as a free day when the coach could be made available for a day trip to say Paris or some other place of interest, before we make the journey home on the Monday.

I've yet to determine where we might stay, as that would depend upon numbers, but I am in touch with the chairperson of the Twinning Association, who is talking to her French counter-part to see if we could stay at the hostel used for the grape harvesters.

I see this as a trip for both runners and their partners, and with two distances on offer, there's no reason why anyone should be precluded. To make the coach hire viable we would need around 40 people in total to make the trip. I can't yet give you an idea of the likely costs, as this would depend on the uptake and our accommodation, but if you could register your interest, I'll say more about this in next month's issue of The Trotter.

So please contact me if you fancy a sparkling weekend away – I promise you it will be one to remember.

Pulling focus

Ladies' Captain and club coach Clare Youngman reveals a brand-new training initiative that could mean some PBs will be up for grabs in late August.

I suspect the observant members among you will have noticed that the 'Speed Group' is now called the 'Speed Group / Focus Group' in the Wednesday night training schedule. This is because we are now offering a structured 10K training programme which incorporates a speed session on a Wednesday night. We have also created our own full 10K Beginners and Experienced training schedules with structured sessions over each week to take you right up until race day. These will be posted on the website soon.

The target race is the Torbay Regatta 10K on August 23. This is a Club Championship event and the idea is that we offer a progressive training schedule which will help you to achieve a PB for either the event or the distance. If this proves successful, then future focus groups will cover other distances, such as 5K, 10 miles and half marathon.

The key point of the Focus Group is that the sessions will be aimed at ALL running abilities and they will be progressive over time. So, for example, for the experienced runner they may start as 10 x 80 second efforts and progress over the weeks up to 16 x 80 second efforts. For the less experienced runner, the number of repetitions may be less, but they will also increase over the weeks. So, although they may start at 6 repetitions, they will progress to up to 12 repetitions.

The full schedules are also designed to be progressive and it is optional whether you choose to follow the whole weekly schedule or not. Depending on the level of interest shown, some Sunday runs may be organised which will fit into the suggested training schedule, but this will depend on numbers and availability of coaches.

Essentially the coaches and the club are attempting to provide you with the framework to build and focus on a specific event. This is new idea which we hope will benefit you. If all this seems to be quite formal, please don't worry. The idea is that we will still have fun during the training. We all want to enjoy ourselves!

Essential points to note:

1. The focus group is open to all abilities.
2. The coach for the group will change each week as the coaches work in a rota system.



3. Any runner can choose to join in the session whether they are training for the focus race or not.

4. The runner is not expected to be following the suggested training schedule. However, the coaches will recommend that runners progressively increase the tempo and volume of training in order that the final goal can be achieved.

If you have any feedback or comments, then please speak to Jan Caunter (Head Coach), or any of the club coaches.

Insider Information

The Torbay Regatta 10K (August 23) has always been popular among Trotters. This year, the event's status as the first race to be targetted by the club's new Focus Group means that it will be one of 2009's big ones.

John Ludlam mines his memory for some hints and tips.

The first thing you have to remember is that the Torbay Regatta 10K is an evening race — in the middle of a bank holiday weekend. So, go easy on the beer and barbecues if you have any ambitions concerning your time.

Don't expect to turn up a few minutes ahead of the start (at 1900), especially if you need to visit Race HQ first. Traffic will be heavy in Torquay and parking will take a while. Furthermore, Race HQ, at the Riviera Centre, is a good three-quarters of a mile away from the start, at the marina. So, allow yourself plenty of time. Relax and warm up as you jog gently to the marina.

The event has quite a "big race" feel to it, so be prepared for some real butterflies if you haven't raced much before. The Torbay 10K was my first-ever road race and I can still remember how much my knees were shaking as I set off in complete bewilderment among a sweaty press of gaudily-vested club runners. So, try to take a mental step back and focus on your goals. A few deep breaths may help.

The undulating section between Torquay and Paignton can be testing for the novice. Keep it steady on the uphill sections,

focussing on an experienced-looking runner in front if you can. Try to move things along a bit on the downhills, leaning forward slightly from the waist and letting your legs turn over a bit quicker. Look out for one of Gary Watson's downhill coaching sessions over the summer for more tips on running downhill.

The middle section is a hard, flat slog twice around Paignton Green. It can get pretty warm at this point: the race is renowned as a hot, muggy affair, so take advantage of the water stations. But don't do what I did on my first Torbay 10K and suck water from a sponge. The taste is so awful that it will linger in your mouth for days afterwards.

The undulating gallop back can be tough or exhilarating, depending on what sort of a run you're having. Try to spare a moment to check out the views over the bay and remember that the finish is a lot closer than the marina, so be ready for a mad dash up a short hill on the Paignton side of Torquay.

Above all, enjoy yourself and soak up the atmosphere of a classic south Devon race.

Have a good one!



Time and motion: Sq finishing the Torbay Regatta 10K in August 2000, wearing £20 Hi-Techs and a pair of ragged shorts borrowed from Smokes.



Who is it?

Now, who could this be? Whoever they are, they know how to engage the photographer's attention. And they're showing an early interest in snazzy costumes. A bottle of fine Rioja is yours, if you are the first to guess who this Trotter is.

Last month's competition was won by Jimmy Donovan, who correctly guessed that the little fellow in the sandpit was none other than our beloved Chairman, Roger Hayes. Jimmy's drinking Rioja this month. Next month, it could be your turn...

The Trotter

Editor: John Ludlam

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Next month, we bring you an in-depth report on the London experience from a pair of FLM virgins.

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.

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