

Dennis Milstead

Forever A Trotter

RIP xxx



A True Gentleman

As Chairman of the Trotters I wanted to produce a fitting tribute to Dennis. He had the rare ability to be able to mix in many different circles. He was a wonderful guy, a true gentleman with a great sense of humour who was always there to encourage others.

Dennis joined the Trotters in May 2006. His laid back approach and genuine friendliness saw him settle into the club very quickly. He soon made friends and became a regular at our Monday and Wednesday training nights. By his own admission he was never one of the quicker runners, but that didn't stop him enjoying his running, far from it.

He was a man who liked a challenge and was never afraid to push himself that little bit further to achieve his goal. None more so was this true than when Dennis took on the Dartmoor Discovery in 2013.

He'd trained hard leading up to the race, completing the London Marathon in a time of 4:37:35 as part of his training. A weekend spent in the capital with fellow Trotters staying at the Clarendon Hotel that he enjoyed immensely.

I remember having a conversation with him a couple of weeks before the DD. He was concerned about making the cut offs. I assured him that all his training would stand him in good

shape and he'd be fine. He simply gave me one of those 'Dennis' raised eye brows looks!



Sure enough he finished the gruelling 32-mile Ultra Marathon. He had made it to the marathon cut off point with less than three minutes to spare - perfect timing!

The relief (not a lot of joy!) can be seen in the picture above, as Dennis holds his arms aloft as he crosses the finish line. Of course the joy soon followed as did the obligatory pint of real ale. This was followed by one or two more in the Plume of Feathers - Dennis was certainly a true Trotter!



Debating Skills

Dennis was elected onto the committee at the 2012 AGM. He was one of the seven general members that were part of the 13 Trotters that make up the committee. He was certainly no shrinking violet and enjoyed a lively debate, some of which took our meetings way past 9pm!

He always kept very calm and composed and made a lot of sense with what he said. He was a keen supporter of equality and was always keen to do the right thing for the club. Next month I will have served on the committee for 20 years. During that time I've obviously worked with a lot of members. I can honestly say if I had to choose my all time strongest committee I would definitely have Dennis in it.

Sadly there is now a vacant position on the committee. We thought long and hard about keeping the position vacant until the next AGM as a mark of respect to Dennis. However, we all agreed that he wouldn't have wanted that. Especially if there are members wishing to stand. Therefore I am inviting anyone that's interested in standing as a general member to let our secretary, Mark Becker, know by the 12th October. The committee will then vote and co-opt the successful person, who will be invited to join us at the November meeting.

Those wishing to stand, whilst letting Mark know, are encouraged to put in writing (no more than 75 words) why they would like to serve on the committee.

The committee meet at Kingsteignton's Royal British Legion on the second Monday of each month, apart from the December meeting which is held on the first Monday of the month. Meetings usually last a couple of hours and are never dull!



'Oh Bugger' by Dave Dunn

The first time that Dennis really came to my attention was at the 2007 Ruby Run half marathon. The route that year was point to point Hatherleigh to Holsworthy. After finishing in Holsworthy you could collect your kit bag which you had deposited in Hatherleigh, have a shower, change and board a coach back to the start where you had left your car. This is what Watser, Smokes, Jimmy 'One fish' Donovan and myself did, but as the coach was just about to leave, Dennis boarded still in his Trotters vest and race number. "Where's your clothes?", we asked. "Back at the start" Dennis said. "Didn't you deposit your bag before the race?", we asked. "Yes" replied Dennis. "Then your bag will be in Holsworthy" we explained. "Oh bugger" said Dennis, as by this time the coach was already well on its way back to Hatherleigh. Watser, our driver, offered Dennis a lift back to Holsworthy once we got off the coach. "You're all too kind" said Dennis "I'll buy you all a drink when we get to Holsworthy". Dennis was duly reunited with his clothes but then realised that all his money was still in his car back in Hatherleigh! I lent him £20 so that he could keep his promise, but this episode might explain why he wasn't too keen on racing. He really should have won the Horses Arse trophy that year!

Wonders of the White Hart

We may not have an official club house, but what we do have is the White Hart. A Wednesday weekly pilgrimage to our adopted home was always a must for Dennis. A beer and a bag of nuts followed by the now famous spread that landlady, Carol, so kindly lays on each week, was Dennis's perfect Wednesday night out.

Sharon 'Fizz' Bowman remembers the happy times she spent in Dennis's company. *He was always such fun and full of laughter. He had a very caring nature and was always special to me. Checking up on how my life was; he so wanted me to find my 'special someone'.*

Fizz goes on to recall; *Apart from the White Hart we also had our 'Cider Mondays' and post committee drink in the British Legion. As you can tell, there is a bit of a pattern forming here! I will miss him dreadfully. The White Hart won't be the same without him.*

Roger 'Smokes' Hales also has fond memories of the time he spent with Dennis in the White Hart. *The bugger would always turn up late. Half the time we'd already started on the grub. He liked a drink, as most Trotters do, but what he really liked was a good old natter with his mates.*

It was Dennis who first encouraged me to pop various things in Trotters bags, coats and hoodies, anything really. My favourite was chicken nuggets, they would give a good pong when eventually found a few weeks later. So guys, you now know who to blame!

I shall miss my mate, I always had a soft spot Dennis. Good un's like him are what made my Wednesday night.



Pre Drink Drink by John Skinner.

First in last out. This was Dennis's changing room philosophy, such was his love of dressing room banter. It was during one of these jovial sessions that the legendary G.L.C was born; An exclusive club comprising of four members, Dennis providing one corner of this formidable square. Every wednesday the G.L.C would convene, covertly, in a Newton Abbot hostelry for a pre drink drink, the purpose of this gathering was to discuss the important issues of the day, prior to our somewhat tardy appearance in the White Hart. I shall forever value those fleeting moments with the man, the old Dennis smile forever etched in my minds eye.

A real passion

One of Dennis's great loves was the Trotters annual club camp. When Anna Langler became pregnant with twins, she understandably decided that she might have more than enough on her hands to continue organising it. When the plea for a new organiser to come forward was put out, Dennis jumped at the chance. The last thing he wanted was to see something he had a real passion for, fall by the way. In 2012 after doing plenty of research Dennis choose a site in Widemouth Bay near Bude. And what a great choice it was.

This year we went to Woolacombe and stayed at the Woolacombe Bay camp site. It was widely regarded as one of the best, if not the best site we have stayed at since the club camp was introduced back in 2001. I was fortunate enough to spend the day on the beach with him and his son, Ollie, along with a small group of fellow

Trotters. One of those present was his friend, Mark Hutchins. Mark recalls, *I have only been on one club camp but Dennis made us feel welcome and added to the pleasure. When I disappeared into the distance on my kayak, Dennis kept an eye out and showed concern – he was that sort of bloke, always putting others first. But he also made a joke out of it when I returned and laughed that Chair was worried about the Trotter's insurance on lost kayakers! He made us laugh all the way back to the car as we lugged 3 kayaks over sheer sided dunes and went the wrong way twice! He was someone who could laugh at everything in life which made any time spent in his presence unforgettable.*

Club camp without Dennis will be like strawberries without the cream – something special will be missing.

Club Camp lives on...

Hi all, I'm Stuart Moulson and I will be organising our 2015 Club Camp.

I would like to introduce myself. Most will know who I am, but for those that don't (you're the lucky ones) I joined the club in 2006. Two years previous I had had an accident where I fell and broke my back. After making a good recovery I felt I wanted to lose weight and get fit. I'd set myself a target of running a marathon! I started my training and thought it a good idea to join a running club. Little did I know how joining the Teignbridge Trotters would affect my life. For starters I lost three and a half stone! More importantly over the years I have made some wonderful friends.

One of the highlights of the year has always been the Club Camp. For those who haven't attended, it's simply a weekend for Trotters and their families to get together and have fun, oh and a bit of running thrown in too! My two children and I have always looked forward to it, even counting down the months before. We have had some wonderful times shared with other Trotters and their families.

As you are aware over the last few years Club Camp has been excellently organised by our recently departed and much loved Trotter, Dennis Milstead. Dennis and I joined the Trotters within a month of each other and have had some great times together, training, running and on many social occasions too. He was an easy man to get on with and became a much loved friend and character to many within the club. Myself and others have spent some great camp weekends away with him, I will miss him dearly. Dennis and I used to run into the sea together whenever we had the opportunity, when running on a beach. So who is up for it next year? I have even sat with him eating porridge in the rain and with his Christmas tree nearby! So many fun memories.

I've always fancied organising the Club Camp one day, but thought it might be when Dennis retired from the role and not in this way. So, I take over in very sad circumstances and it's a big act to follow, but I will do my very best to honour Dennis and make it another great Club Camp.

Ladies' 10K

This was the 21st staging of our Ladies' 10K race, dedicated this year to Dennis. Never before had a Trotlette won it, until now! Helen 'Zippy' Anthony (below) stormed across the finish line in a superb time of 39:27 to claim a little bit of Trotter history.

We had 189 ladies enter the race, which was four more than last year. In near perfect running conditions, 32 Trotlettes finished the undulating race, which was another record and we won the first team prize with four of our ladies all finishing in the top 10. What a fitting tribute to Dennis, he would have loved to see that wave of royal blue surge past him as he stood at his marshal spot. Ladies, you did him proud.

A huge thank you to all those that helped out in whatever capacity. Particular thanks to our joint RD's, Lucy and Fizz and to chief marshal, Emma Pearcy.



It was wonderful to have Dennis's wife, Jacque and his daughter, Cameron, both there to support the race. The runners joined me in a minutes silence before the start of the race. After which there was a spontaneous heart warming round of applause. Jacque then got the runners on their way with a loud blast of the air horn.

£2 of the entry fee goes towards Mr Dewhirst's (the campsite owner) chosen charity, which is research into the prevention of bowel cancer. We were delighted to present him with a cheque for £378.

It was great to see so many of our new members take part. Everyone seemed to have a smile on their face, none more so than Mel Dunn (right). With a bit of luck and some canny targeting lets hope we can get the numbers back up to 300 for next year.



© Claire Baldock Photography 2014



Pre race line up of Trotlettes

First to arrive - last to leave by Stewart Dunn

As most of you will know I was lucky enough to have been a close friend of Dennis and therefore I got to spend a lot of time with him. He also confided in me many different aspects to do with running, cycling and the Trotters in general.

One thing that I will always remember about Dennis is how he always arrived at running early. He would be one of the first to get into the changing rooms but he'd also be the last to come out! Usually midway through the Chairman's shout. Now to most people this would seem insignificant behaviour but I knew what was going on.

Dennis would usually arrive at training in a despondent mood, still mulling over the days trials and tribulations in his head. He would do this until he could engage some unsuspecting person into the conversation about how they felt they would run that night.

It was a well-known fact between me and Dennis that anyone who said they were feeling a bit rubbish or were just 'going to take it easy' were actually going to have a storming training session. To me this was always an interesting thing to see because what Dennis was actually doing was using the thoughts and feelings of others to give him the strength to get out there and run.

It's strange in a way because we all used Dennis's passion for the club as a source of strength ourselves. I guess a way of summing it up would be to say; as Trotters, and as a club we are so much greater than the sum of our parts. I think Dennis realised this and he knew what he could do to ensure the club maintained a healthy respect for having a good time whilst doing something that might not always feel terribly enjoyable at the time.



Dennis's Cup by Tim Hassell

Now that I sit and reflect I consider myself extremely lucky and honoured to call Dennis a good friend but that said I can only imagine that anybody who crossed paths with Dennis would come to think of him as a friend. Dennis was that kind of a bloke, one who made people feel at ease and talked to them as if he had known them for years. He would always make a point of talking to new Trotters and take time getting to know a little bit about them.

He also had an infectious sense of fun and the ability to smile and see the funny side of almost everything (apart from the time a bouncer refused him entry to a bar the night before the London Marathon because he was wearing trainers – Dennis did end up winning the argument, got a beer and became friends with the bar owner but the bouncer was definitely not going to get a Christmas card).

Dennis was always a very positive person and always gave words of encouragement to those around him and for this reason the idea of the committee to present a Coach of the year Cup in his name is entirely appropriate. He will be dearly missed but not forgotten and this cup will help ensure that.

Whether Dennis was out running, on his bike or partying in Ibiza he always gave it everything. He was a competitive man, who strived for the best but also wanted to have fun (and a little mischief) along the way. In essence he was someone who sums up a true Trotter.

Thank you by Jacquie Milstead

Trotters meant more to Dennis than just the training, races and PB's. It was about the underlying spirit of the Trotters, the inclusive nature of the club and sharing time with people who were together for one main reason; their interest in running regardless of their background. Dennis loved the camaraderie that united the club, enjoying the friendship and support whether it was running or socially.

While wearing his Trotters hoodie everyday with pride, he would enthuse about the virtues of running to anyone who would ask about the club. In particular, he would encourage women to take up running in his gently persuasive way, including my daughter, my friends and myself.

He took his role on the committee and coaching very seriously and was so pleased when he was given the responsibility for organising one of his favourite annual events: the Club Camp. Club Camp was his idea of the perfect combination: being outdoors, getting fit and having fun and this year's camp surpassed all his expectations of a great weekend away with like-minded friends.'

'Thank you to all the Trotters for all the kindness and support you have given to my family over the past few weeks. I am sure Dennis will still be gently encouraging us all to go that extra mile, whether it be running or in our lives, with a bit of light-hearted banter on the way.



Sibelco, who own the land where Dennis passed away, have very kindly agreed to allow us to name the footpath after him and erect a sign in his memory. It will hopefully look something like the one opposite.



Final word by Chairman Rog

Putting this together for Dennis brought all the great memories flooding back. He touched so many of our hearts, something that is clearly evident in the stories and tributes from fellow Trotters who have kindly contributed to what I hope you agree is a fitting farewell to one of our family. He was without question a very special person. We will all miss him hugely but one thing's for sure, we will never forget him. RIP xxx