

The Trotter

Number 6

May 2009

London Calling



Mark Becker and wife Jo took on the Flora London Marathon, and discovered that there was a lot more to it than 26.2 miles...

When Jo and I decided to enter the London Marathon last year I don't think either of us knew what a journey it would take us on. I had thought for years that marathon training would affect my speed in shorter distance racing and this had put me off until now but we were overjoyed to get our London places in the club ballot.

We happened to read an article in Runners World by a radical coach who suggested your long run of the week should be run at 10-11 min/mile. The athletes he trained said they struggled to run that slowly but he stressed it was important

to keep it slow as it avoided injury while still building endurance in your legs. This would in turn keep you running more frequently and hence improvement would follow. Seemed like a plan to me.

We kept up the speedwork on Wednesday nights and, by combining this with a schedule Jo got from Shades (thank you Shades), we had a routine going.

I loved the long runs and, as they got progressively longer each Sunday, Jo's endurance of my excessive chatter would

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News Desk

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

4/6 Dawlish Dash
6/6 Saltram Park 5K
6/6 Dartmoor Discovery
9/6 Run Exe 5K
13/6 Bampton 10K
14/6 Plym Valley Challenge
14/6 Ruby Run Half Marathon
17/6 Bude Lifeboat Run

Summer is not quite here yet but some of us have already foolishly gone and got ourselves sunburned. So, be warned: coastal breezes can make it feel less sunny than it actually is. Lather on that sunblock, especially for longer runs.

It is not too late to book your pitch at Trebellan Park campsite at Cubert near Newquay for this year's Trotters' Club Camp. If you still require a brochure and booking form (and make sure that you use the booking form headed Teignbridge Trotters printed on white paper), see Dave Dunn at training or drop him an email. The official camp dates are from Friday June 19 to Sunday June 21, but you can stay for as long or as little as you like.

Now that the evenings are lighter, you can enjoy some lovely, scenic Monday night runs. Here are the details for the next, on

June 1. Meet at Teignmouth Golf Club - parking on grass verges nearby, or Postman's Path picnic area carpark just below the golf club.

Run along public footpath across golf course, then flat road out towards Ashcombe, crossing main road. Loop through woods then back across main road and long downhill to Luton. Just past the Elizabethan Inn then a long gradual climb along the 'green lane' towards Lindridge/Humber.

Up 'Humber Down' path through woods which comes out opposite the golf course. Short road section back to cars. Route is around 7.5-ish miles and a mix of road, offroad and (as Dave Dunn would say) one hill! Beers at Elizabethan Inn afterwards. Now, doesn't that sound grand?



The legs grew a bit heavier at 18 miles and I kept thinking of Jo

gain strength. I would yabber on about every subject known to man and after four hours on the road this gave her the determination to reach home and escape my voice behind a locked bathroom door.

The trip to London was soon upon us and we were fortunate to be on the coach with the best group of Trotters you could have. They looked after us and I was especially reassured by Ian Langer's description of the end of the race and how it would be the longest 800m of my life and feel like it will never end. Thanks Ian.

After picking up our numbers on the Friday, Jo and I spent a leisurely Saturday in Greenwich, all pre-race nerves and excitement upon us.

The day of the race was warm and sunny but I'd never felt more prepared.

I'd stubbed my toe on the bed in the night and cracked my toenail which was a tad irritating. But hunting for Jo's lost contact lens in the bathroom took my mind off it. Sigh.

We put on our royal blue and joined up with the rest of the Trotters in the lobby. We all hugged and wished each other good luck and made our way to the start and the thousands of other nutters applying Vaseline as though preparing to swim the Channel. Jo and I said a teary goodbye as we prepared to part and go to our separate pens, like cattle to the slaughter. My best friend and I had done all the training together, pontificated on every marathon detail for months and it didn't seem right that we had to part now.

As we waited for the start the emotion built as Chariots of Fire blared out of the speakers. This was it. A roar in the distance and we were off. The noise from the crowd was deafening all the way and the atmosphere was incredible. Once the pack thinned my speed settled to just under eight minutes a mile. I

kept to this pace and just soaked up a day that I knew would always be special. The sea of bobbing heads in front of me and the eight-foot high bottle of beer that I endeavoured to catch up with made me laugh out loud. The legs grew a bit heavier at 18 miles and I kept thinking of Jo and hoped she was ok. I heard shouts of "go on Teignbridge" which brought my focus back.

By now, I was passing people going wrong. They wobbled and tottered about or were leaning on the barriers, the crowd trying to get them going again. I've been there but it wasn't going to happen today. I took on plenty of fluid at every drinks station and by mile 22 I just had "Sandygate" to go.

The mile markers seemed to stretch apart after that but the screaming crowd urged us all on until Big Ben came into view. It hit me all of a sudden: I'm going to do it. That last 800m was tough but stopping was never an option. After years of watching that finish line on the telly I finally saw it from the runners' side.

I crossed the line and felt that something had changed in me. "I'm a marathon runner," I thought. I was pleased with my time of 3.33.04, considering how warm it was.

I was relieved when I finally met up with Jo again and found that she'd had a comfortable race, finishing in 4.46.10. A group of weary Trotters made their way back to Blackheath and a welcome shower before getting back on the coach. A meal in the pub on the way back and a couple of real ales finished a fantastic weekend that is going to be hard to top.

As first marathons go, London is hard to beat. There is so much support from the crowds and drinks stations aplenty that it's difficult to go wrong.

I'm still buzzing from the memory and it will always be one of the best days of my life.



Membership Report

Membership Secretary **Dave Dunn** brings us up to date with who's who among our new members and scans the horizon for fresh record-breaking runs.

Now that the membership renewal process is just about complete, our current total of fully paid-up members is 162. This is 38 less than the number with which we finished the last membership year at the end of March, and as we have had quite a decent number of new members join us over the past 6 to 8 weeks, it's clear that around 25% of our members have yet to renew their membership. Some of these have indicated for varying reasons that they won't be renewing, while there are others who are just tardy in getting their forms and payment back to me.

However, there's another section with whom we have probably lost contact. Therefore it is vitally important that all members keep us updated on changes to both postal and e-mail addresses, so that we can keep in touch with you.

Another three new members have joined our ranks since the last edition of The Trotter: Belinda Collins, 39, from Kenton; Daryl Milford, 36, from Teignmouth; Tony Stepney, 47, from Ashburton. All three have been introduced to the Trotters by an existing member, which shows that it wouldn't be impossible to greatly increase our numbers, should we

want to, if everybody brought along a friend. But that's a debate for another day!

Belinda is a friend of Michelle Willocks-Watts, and the pair recently ran in the Tekesbury Half Marathon, in which Belinda made a very encouraging debut. Should she improve as remarkably as Michelle is doing, then she will become a real force within our ladies' ranks.

Daryl was pointed in our direction by Roy Brown (remember him??!!). Having briefly flirted with the Coasters, Daryl has committed his running future to the royal blue standard rather than the black and white. Daryl knows all about tracks, but now we can teach him a thing or two about roads and trails!

Tony is a friend of John Tweedie (yes, Tweeds does have a friend!) and admirably completed the London Marathon in the week that he joined us. This was a big step for Tony, as the only other race that I know he's done is last autumn's Children in Need 5-miler at Colyton.

You are all welcome and long may you enjoy your running with the Trotters.



Club Records

In the past month another club record has fallen victim to the running machine that is Gia D'Aprano. Gia's latest record-breaking run came at Exeter in the Great West Run, where her time of 1.43.53 eclipsed the previous mark in the half marathon FV50 category (held by Tina Caunter) by more than three minutes. Gia is now the proud holder of three out of the four club records up for grabs in this category. The one missing from her collection is that for the marathon. So, where's it going to be, Gia? Dartmoor Vale? Eden Project? Or perhaps even Abingdon?

June sees a lot of summer "fun" runs, such as the Dawlish Dash and the Killerton Kanter. Don't get me wrong, these are serious races, but they offer a nice diversion from the more traditional distances on the roads. Our race diary page on our web site has a full list of what's on offer, not only in June but also for the months ahead as well.

However, there are opportunities for club records, or even just plain old PBs in the Bampton 10K, the Ruby Run Half Marathon and, of course, the Torbay Half Marathon. But if I were a betting man, I wouldn't be putting any money on any records in these three races.

Wherever you're racing this coming month, 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 website at www.teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Captain's Corner

Stewart Dunn celebrates some great recent runs and looks ahead to the Erme Valley Relays.

Well it's been a busy period since the last of my reports. There have been many events and many achievements. It's been pleasing to see so many of you out there doing so well. Chief among these was Gary Watson setting a new PW at the Great West Run. Finishing in 1.45 dead! The fact he said he wasn't racing is frankly beside the point. Several other individuals did manage to have a good run. Mark Hamling led the Royal Blues home in 271st position with a time of 1.39.10, followed by Mike Roberts (410th) in 1.42.18. Also worth mentioning is Kevin Besford. Returning to distance running after a gap of 25 years, he arrived at the finish in 2.12.22.

There have also been some marathons during this period. These include London, the Neolithic and Belfast. Although for some the London marathon may only have been a training run on the long road to the alternate goal of the Dartmoor Discovery, several Trotters still posted respectable times. These included Ian Langler, first Trotter across the line in a time of 3.12.42. John Tweedie was close behind in 3.15.50. Also finishing well was Stuart Moulson in 3.56.38.

Not to be forgotten was Smoking Rog Hales, who made the trip across the water to Northern Ireland. As well as sampling the wonderful delights of Belfast, Rog also completed the marathon in a respectable time. Another Trotter with one eye on Princetown, no doubt.

It is with that in mind that you could excuse some for not putting the most into the races they enter, what with the thought of 34 miles of

rolling Dartmoor to contend with. However, this should not detract from what, in my opinion, is a fantastic achievement. Not so long ago, it would have been difficult to see any club member beating Dave Tomlin in a race. But one person above all has risen to the challenge. Not only did he beat Tommo at the Ivybridge 10K, but I feel that there is still more to come from this young man. If he keeps on improving, I'm sure that club records could be under threat. So well done to Ronnie Jones.

Looking ahead, forthcoming events include the Dawlish dash, Dartmoor Discovery and for those of you who don't fancy the 34 miles there is always the Saltram Park 5K. And the Torbay Half Marathon although this is on the same weekend as our club camp, Humm tough choice but I think I'll stick with the camping, thanks!

A reminder that the Erme Valley Relays take place on Friday July 3, at 1900. Last year, I managed to assemble several good teams. I hope to do so again this year. For those of you who don't know about the event, or have forgotten, it is simply a relay race, run by teams of four. Each runner will complete the 2.5-mile course. It's a fast start with the whole first mile downhill, and then about half a mile on the flat followed rather predictably by a mile uphill to the finish. The teams are split up into the usual age categories. I would once again like as many people as possible to take part. Keep an eye out for the name sheet on a Wednesday night. Any questions, just see me.



Only here for the beer



It's verging on the proverbial. Ronnie Jones conquers his demons to achieve what many thought impossible... organising a piss-up in a brewery (just).

Oh, how they laughed as the 0832 from Newton Abbot ground to a halt, just a few miles from the border of the bad lands, known in these parts as Cornwall. Everything had been going so swimmingly... troops gathered, provisions stock-piled, jam offered... and THEN... "Erm, excuse me ladies and gentlemen" (imagine a disinterested robot - a voice so void of emotion it positively dripped from the speakers) "I'm afraid we're going to be here for some time... there's a tree on the line..."

NO! NO! and thrice I say, NO!

Yes, after years of never quite managing to persuade anyone who knew me that I had turned a corner, and the disorganised Ronnie of old was no more and... the prophecy was coming true... I actually wasn't going to be able to arrange a piss-up in a brewery. I'd be a laughing stock.

The saga started several months previously, in a public house... as is often the case with the Trotters. There was I, discussing the finer merits of my favourite tippie, Betty Stogs (kept, to varying degrees of success at the White Hart) with young

Stewart Dunn, when a flash of inspiration arrived. "My..." I thought to myself, "...there are so many Trotters in this establishment with more than a liking for this particular beverage, why not arrange a trip-ett to where it is born? Skinner's Brewery!"

Well, Stewart thought it a grand idea, especially when informed it was free beer for three hours. And so (after several more months of thinking-time) I eventually jolly well booked a slot for the Trotters on the famed Skinner's Brewery Tour (fanfare optional).

When the day arrived, I'd managed to persuade a merry band of 17-ish to make the trip to Truro (I won't name them, for the sake of their good characters, not because I can't remember who was there, or anything silly like that).

So... there we were, back on the train and the clock was ticking, man. My new organisational prowess had meant I had allowed more than enough time to get to Truro and to tackle the short stroll to the brewery, or so I thought. I managed to persuade myself that a crack team of First Great Western

lumberjacks had already arrived on the scene, and were slicing through the mighty oak which had, quite literally, stopped us in our tracks... their curiously quiet chainsaws butchering the bark like a hot knife through lard, when: "Erm, excuse me ladies and gentlemen"... it was face-ache again, the dullest driver in Devon: "... I'm afraid we are going to be here for quite a lot longer than I thought. We're waiting for engineers to crawl here from Penzance!"

Ok, they weren't crawling there, but they might as well have been. We had to be at Skinner's by 12, and it was already well past 1030. We couldn't even join a branch line (geddit?!).

I steadied myself, and ate more croissant and jam. Highly recommended in a crisis.

To cut a long story short... we got there five minutes late. We still had time for the piss-up, but it hadn't happened yet! I could yet fall at the last hurdle.

Right... on to the nitty gritty.

After a brisk, mostly downhill stroll to Skinner's (the brewery reckoned it'd take 30 mins, the Trotters did it in 15 - ON ON!) we finally arrived. It was like a scene from the Middle Ages, the Crusaders first catching a glimpse of the Holy Land.

By the time I'd got to the bar, Chairman Rog (a firm Malibu and Coke man) was already doing his best to look like he was enjoying his pint.

There was indeed, quite a din. It reminded me of the school tuck shop at opening time. So I dived straight in. "Pint of Betty's please..."

And so it continued for several crazy, hazy hours.

At one point we even went on a brewery tour.

I spent my time asking 81-year-old Don, our brilliant tour guide, various imbecilic questions about brewing. He answered. I still didn't understand.

Don was a legend. He was in good shape for his age, and he knew it. You know old people are fairing well when they ask you to guess their age before you even get the chance to say hello. Later in the proceedings, I was rather concerned for Don's health... (yes, someone suggested another naked Trotters photo).

By this stage I was on my third pint. I did have a pasty, for sustenance, but it was too late. I'm afraid this is where my reportage must end.

Suffice to say, I have it on good authority that I did banish those demons... and I can now call myself organised, at last. For there was indeed, a piss-up in Skinner's Brewery!

Eyethankyou.



Graham Penn



Graham Penn



Graham Penn



Graham Penn



Go on, Try a Tri!

When injury curtailed her running miles, Becky George took a deep breath and dived into a world of lycra, lotions and talcum powder...

It wasn't that long ago that Tina Caunter chatted to me about the "earlybird aquathlon" series and I thought "this sounds good, if only I could swim better". Multisport events come in a variety of shapes and sizes and range from swim/run to run/bike/run to kayak/swim/bike/run. There really is something for everyone and I never would have picked up the gauntlet had it not been for a niggling injury after the 2005 London Marathon that forced me to reduce my running miles.

I picked up a kickboard and feeling like a twerp started going to the "masters swimming" at Newton Abbot Leisure Centre. I was put firmly but kindly into the beginners' lane where I underwent the painful process of turning my head-up breaststroke (plenty of opportunity to chat to the ladies next to

me) into a passable front crawl (no chat but plenty to drink if you get the breathing wrong.) I haven't looked back and the first swim/run I entered, I wore my running shorts and crop top.

Nikki and I look the real deal now but we really are only there for the roast carvery we have afterwards.

My first triathlon was in Wansdyke, where you learn pretty quickly what's what. I turned up with a mountain bike and a Sainsbury's carrier bag with my transition things (a packet of jelly babies and a blister plaster). Everyone else appeared to have super-doooper racing bikes with plastic boxes filled with multiple pairs of shoes, gels, bottles, lotions, greases, special belts for their numbers and lots of talcum powder. But it was fun, a real change from road running, full-on from the moment

I turned up with a mountain bike and a Sainsbury's carrier bag

you enter the pool to crossing the finishing line. There is so much to think about that the time flies by and the nice thing about setting off in waves with the slowest swimmers first is that you are never alone in the race and you are never last – in fact you have absolutely no idea where you are until the results are printed.

It is not only a sport for the elite athlete, anything goes. I'm sure I even saw Gary Watson doing doggy paddle at one point in the Wadebridge Tri!! The distances vary, but most triathlons are either Sprint distance (400m swim, 25K bike, 5K run) or Standard (Olympic) distance (1500m swim, 40K bike, 10K run). Here in the West Country, you do have to travel for your races but I would like to throw down the gauntlet to you all to consider the Exeter Tri Club's own race, which has a novice event for wannabee triathletes. It's a mere 200m pool swim, 25K bike and 2.5K run. It takes place in May each year so 2010 could be the year of the triathlon.

Newton Abbot Leisure Centre has swim coaching every Tuesday and Thursday – it now goes by the name “conditioning swim” but is very friendly, every ability welcome and you can choose whether you have coaching or not. If it's sea swimming you are after – Exeter Tri Club have sessions throughout the summer off Teignmouth beach. You meet at 7pm in the car park and swim off the beach with surf lifeguards in a coached session divided into three ability groups. You then have a quick towel down and a 4-5k run along the promenade. You need a wet suit and a pound. For the cyclists amongst you, Mid Devon Cycling Club meet at Abbots social club in Kingsteignton on a Sunday morning at 9am and cycle off for several hours. They are very friendly, stop for coffee and cake and are very happy to see new faces. All the clubs mentioned have websites.

I hope I have set you thinking. It would be great to have more Trotters at these events. If you think you are a weak swimmer, don't be put off: so are many of the entrants, and the swim is the shortest part.



Two wheels good: Nikki Kennard (left) and Becky George (right) push the pedals to the metal as they prove that Trotters make great triathletes

French Fancy



Entre Vigne & Forets

Fine Champagne, beautiful scenery, lots of history and a cracking run into the bargain. Ay's Entre Vigne & Forets run has got the lot, says [Dave Dunn](#). So, come on, what are you waiting for?

Just a quick update on where we are with the proposed trip to Newton Abbot's twin town of Ay in the Champagne region of France, to take in the option of a 30K or a 15K race, together with all the fun and frolics that go not only with a Trotters away day, but also when racing in France, and particularly when guests at a twinning function.

The response from those that wished to register an interest in the trip so far has been a bit muted and unless at least as many again come forward to put their names down as at least being interested, I will have to abandon the idea.

The Chairperson of the Twinning Association has confirmed that we can use the hostel normally reserved for the grape-

pickers as our accommodation during our stay in Ay. This would put us right in the heart of the action and help keep costs down. However, I cannot firm up on prices as I can't seek quotes for the coach hire until I know whether we are looking for a 25-seater, a 40-seater or perhaps even a 50-seater.

So, please, if this trip does appeal to you, and the dates again would be from Friday September 11 to Monday September 14 inclusive, then do just drop me an email to dunnarunner@btinternet.com. Everyone is welcome, along with family members – the more the merrier and the cheaper the overall unit costs.

My favourite run

There are marathons and ultra-marathons. Then there is the Dartmoor Discovery. Every year, this brute of a race claims a few more Trotter souls. Roger Hayes celebrates a unique Devon event.

When Squad asked me to write a piece on my favourite run or an insight into a race, the one event that stood out was the Dartmoor Discovery. Let me take you back to the first time I ever took the Daddy of all races on. It was 2004 and my wheels came off at about the 22-mile mark. Now, for a normal run of the mill marathon, that would mean toughing it out for the last four miles, but of course the DD (as it is affectionately known on the circuit) is no ordinary marathon.

The hills (down as well as up!) are killers, sapping every last ounce of energy from you. So on reaching that 22-mile point and realising I had a further 10 miles to go, I questioned my sanity. For the sensible thing to do would have been to pull out.

I dug in; I got the worst cramp I have ever had in my life. Both hamstrings felt like they had been shot. I couldn't keep

anything down, I was in a mess, a blubbering mess at that! But somehow I finished, vowing NEVER, I repeat, NEVER to return.

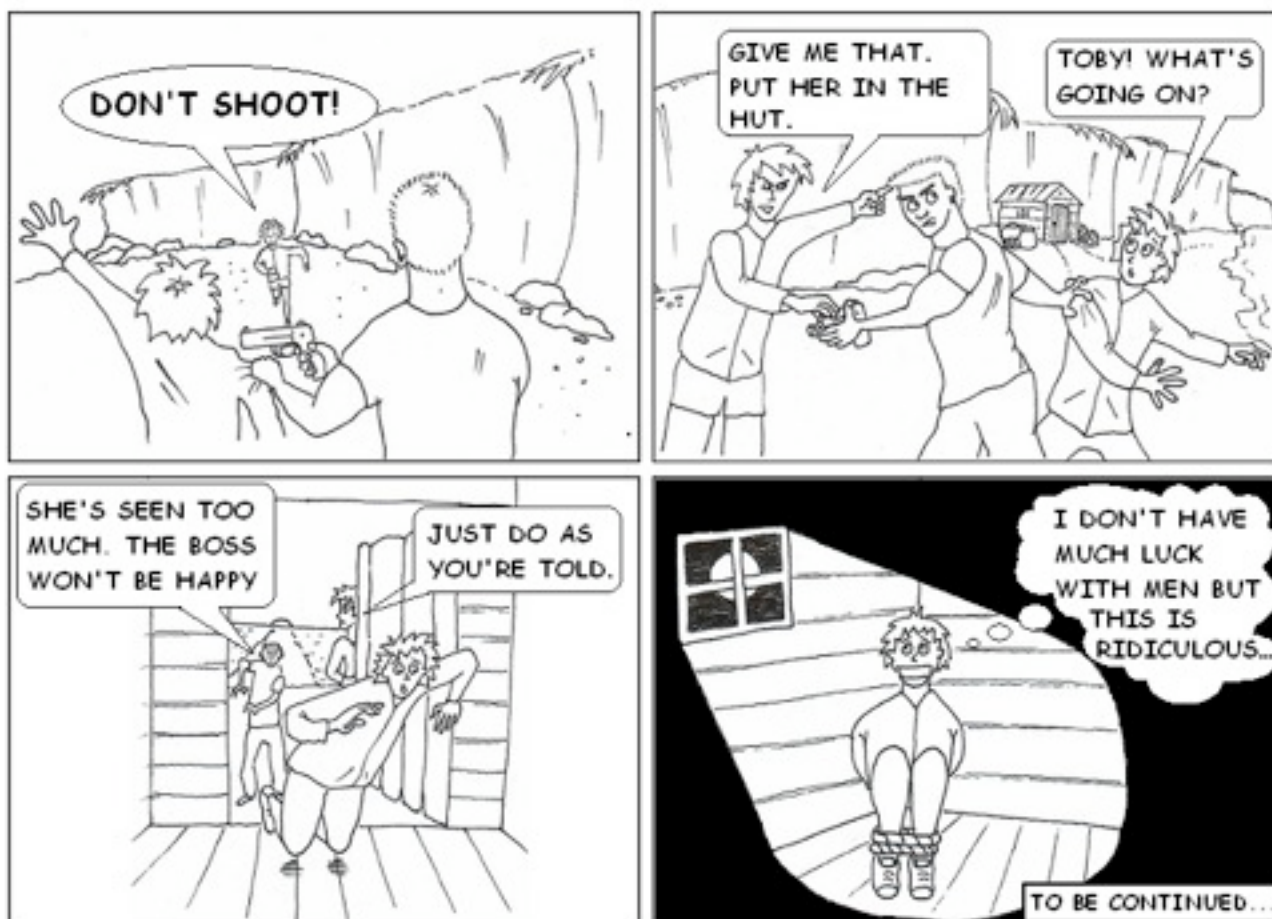
I did the following four DDs!

The race has its own unique appeal, drawing you back year after year. There is no other race quite like it. If a battle with your body and soul is what you want, then the DD is there ready and waiting for you. Over the years I feel I have just about managed to tame the beast, but last year I felt I finally got the better of him. As I crossed the finish line it gave me my proudest most satisfying running moment ever (I came 5th, clocking 4.02.25).

Those among you who have run the race will I'm sure be able to relate to some of the above. For those tempted to take on the Daddy, my message is simple. You'll be back!



Milos Erben



Who is it?

Now, who could the owner of these darling curls be? We especially like the curl at the front but, as you can see, there are plenty to go around. The first person to guess this person's identity correctly wins a bottle of zingy Kiwi Sauvignon Blanc.

Eagle-eyed Eyvoll Aston won last month's competition, correctly asserting that the little lady in red was Michelle Willocks-Watts. A bottle of Spain's most elegant red goes to her. Could you be a winner this month? Keep 'em peeled!

The Trotter

Editor: John Ludlam

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Next month, it's all about the pain and the passion of the Dartmoor Discovery.

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