

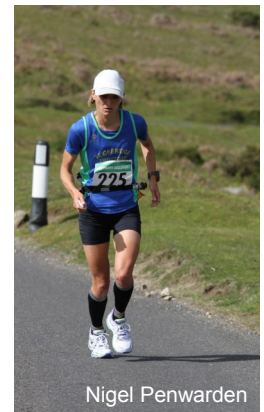
THE TROTTER

Teignbridge Trotters Newsletter

Number 6

June 2015

Trotters Who Tamed Dartmoor At First Attempt



Chairman Rog reviews the 2015 Dartmoor Discovery

It's real joy to shake each runner by the hand as they cross the line having completed the DD. There are so many different emotions; tears, pain, anguish, elation, relief. You name it I see it. Having run the race many times I know only too well what it's like to cross that line.

This year I felt so proud to welcome the 1st lady across the line. For it was our very own Helen 'Zippy' Anthony. She became the first Trotlette to win the Dartmoor Discovery. It was surely Zippy's greatest running achievement to date. Her winning time was 4:18:29 and was a massive 13 minutes in front of her nearest rival and second place lady, Di Roy.

Zippy along with Hannah Walsh and Jo Randall won the 2nd ladies' team award. To complete the line up of winning Trotters, I must mention Paul Sharples (SNR) who was 2nd MV55. All four winners were DD virgins.

Of course none of the aforementioned could happen without the fantastic help from you, our club members. You were the ones that ensured the race was the success it was. On behalf of my DD committee - THANK YOU.

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NEWS DESK

Chairman Rog with the latest news.....starting with The Templer Ten

There's lots to bring you up to date with since the last edition of the Trotter. Let me start by introducing you to our new Race Director for the Templer Ten; Ryan Anthony. Ryan will be supported by Nathan Elphick who becomes the new assistant RD. They were the only ones to apply for the roles which is some what disappointing considering our massive membership. That said, I think the pair of them will make a great team. They've already made a start with this years race by finding a new Race HQ and a new course!

The race will start and finish from Stover School. The facilities on offer far outweigh what was on offer at the Passage House. The grounds within the school are ideal for incorporating part of the new route, which will be pretty much all off road. As most of you know, the roads around Kingsteignton are getting busier and more dangerous each year. With the introduction of a traffic management plan, it was unlikely that the race would have been able to continue without expensive road closures. It was time to move!



Ryan enroute to Haytor...

Westward League Cross Country

We were so impressed with what was on offer at Stover, that we have decided to move the Westward League Cross Country event there as well. Our hand was somewhat forced by Parke Estate, who weren't happy with the number of cars exceeding their limited parking spaces. They asked us to consider limiting the entrants (something we couldn't do) and to introduce a park and ride for entrants (too expensive). It will be a shame to leave Bovey, as the course was certainly considered the best one on the circuit by most runners who took part in the series. However, we're confident that the new course will be equally as good and hopefully just as well received.

Race Catering

Both the aforementioned races will now be able to offer refreshments. Tina and John Caunter have decided that the time is right to step back from doing the catering at all our races. They will continue with the DD, Totnes and the XC. That means we are looking for a new catering team to cover our other three races.

If you would like to know a bit more of what is involved please drop Tina a line; tiki.caunter@sky.com On behalf of all of us at the Trotters, I would like to say a huge thank you to the pair of them for all the years they have been producing those lovely cakes and such like. You've done the Trotters proud.



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Haytor Heller Recce Run and Meal

Talking of food and races; Ryan has kindly organised a meal at the Welcome Stranger in Liverton after the Haytor Heller recce run which takes place on Wednesday 15th July. More details will follow via our Trotters Facebook page, but for those not on FB you can book your place now by letting Ryan know; ryan@ta-gas.co.uk

Totnes 10K - New Race Director

Other changes to let you know about are that Ruth Johnson is the new assistant RD for the Totnes 10K. Ruth takes over from Noel Fowler who has left the Trotters to join Maverick Runners, a new running club set up by former members of our club. I wish Noel well and thank him for his time and effort as my assistant not just for Totnes but also for the DD as well.

Committee Changes

With Stewart Dunn's resignation from the committee, there was a vacant position as a general member. We had three members stand for the post; Sarah Schutte, Ruth Johnson and Stuart Moulson. The committee took a vote, with Ruth gaining the most votes, she was duly co-opted on. Thank you Stewart for your passion and dedication whilst on the committee and welcome aboard Ruth. A reminder to all club members that copies of the minutes are available on request from our club secretary, Mark Becker.

Club Training Venues

As I write this report I'm not sure whether we'll be back at Coombeshead College (CC) or still at Teign School. Phase three of the redevelopment is about to start at CC and it's not clear if we will be allowed back there to train. I must say that I've enjoyed my time at Teign School. The facilities are certainly a big improvement on CC and the training runs, particularly on a Monday, where we've been able to run many different routes, have been interesting and refreshing.

On On
Chair

Membership News

The latest comings and goings with Membership secretary, Kevin.

Our member numbers now stand at a healthy 249.

Since the last edition of the Trotter I have registered a further 17 new members all listed below. It seems there are new runners trying us out on a weekly basis and I expect our member numbers will continue to grow steadily.

Laura Brown is 25 and from Dawlish having moved to the area from Launceston and has done a number of 10k's. Laura has a target to break the hour for 10k this year. I am sure we can help with that. Laura is partner of Dave McMorrow who also recently joined us.

Anne Dyke 43 and Ian Dyke 45 are the newest additions to our growing contingent in Chudleigh. Neither have previously had any inclination or desire to run but being avid Snowboarders saw us as a friendly way to keep fit for that. Having enjoyed their initial sessions, they are now possibly going to run some 5k and 10k events.

Kevin Brown, 33 from Dawlish is brother of Laura. Kevin has already sampled the delights of Sandygate Loop and has elected to be an EA member so expect to see Kevin racing in the Trotter blue.

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Liz Barnett, 44 from Kingsteignton is wife of Nigel and mum to Jamie and joined on a family membership.

Kathryn Steemson, 42 from Liverton has been running for about a year after being introduced to Park Run by a friend. She has since run a 10k and has now signed up for the Torbay Half at the end of June. This will be her first Half Marathon.

Kevin Woodard, 31 from Ashburton has not done any running since 2006 when he snapped a cruciate ligament. Prior to that Kevin had run for Torbay AC and for the Army. He comes with a determination to get back to racing fitness and compete in Trotter colours.

Caroline Donald, 56 from Newton Abbot. Caroline has been running on and off for about 5 years up to a couple of miles. She has been sampling the beginners groups in recent weeks and has a goal to enter a 10k race and presumably finish it well.

Joshua Taylor who is 15 is son of Allen and Marie. He became a new member on his 15th birthday and hence became the youngest Trotter for the time being. Josh should be a very useful addition to the junior team at Erme Valley.

Carrie-Anne Labdon, 26 from Kingsteignton, makes a return to the Trotters after a few years away for the birth of her first child. Carrie-Anne did a London Marathon last time around and has elected to join EA. Expect plenty of racing activity.

Sue Hewings, 52 also from Kingsteignton is returning to the fold after a time away. Sue is Carrie-Anne's mum. Many Trotters will know Sue from before and it will be good to see her back with us on club nights.

Neil Rutley, 53 and from Buckfastleigh. Neil has been a regular at training for a few weeks and was previously with Newton Abbot AC so should prove a very capable Trotter.

Aiden Reynolds, 16 is from Newton Abbot and is the son of Jess Whitehouse. Another useful addition to our growing junior ranks.

Mark Gilligan, 45 is from Kingskerswell has had a year off running due to the arrival of twins. He has previously done half marathons and one full marathon and has signed up for this years Torbay Half.

Claire Ayling, 37, from Newton Abbot is the other half of James.

Benjamin Mukherjee, 38 is from Newton Abbot and is not so much a new member but more a returning one having missed the renewal cut off this year. Welcome back Ben.

Kirsty Golden, 24 is from Buckfastleigh. Kirsty has run a number of 10k events and has knocked 25 minutes off her time in the last 12 months. Looking to do her first half marathon next year in hopefully sub two hours.

A small number of members celebrate notable birthdays in July and August. Emily Levey 35, Caroline Clark 45, Julian Head 50 and Rob Cowling 50.

Happy birthday to all and best of luck in your new age categories on race days.

Kevin Besford

Membership Secretary



The feedback we get from those that take part is always so complimentary. Many of them class the DD as their favourite race of all time. There are so many reasons as to why that is. Certainly the wonderful atmosphere in the finish holding area is quite unique to anything else I've ever witnessed.

It goes without saying that we are always looking for ways to improve the race. Our wash-up meeting will no doubt unearth ways we can tweak things to help raise the bar that bit higher.

DD TROTTER HALL OF FAME

Name	Completed DD's
Roger Hales	15
Ewan Walton	12
Stuart Moulson	9
Robert Tinnyunt	8
Dave Tomlin	8
Roger Hayes	7
Chris Wride	7
Dave Dunn	5
Sally Ingledew	5
John Skinner	5
John Tweedie	5
Mark Wotton	5
Julia Proctor	4
Sharon Bowman	4

We had 208 runners start the race and 194 finish. We had 14 Trotters complete the gruelling 32-mile course. This was actually the lowest amount since we started staging the race in 2011. We had 81 newcomers finish the race and there was one course record broken, which was the FV50 record.

Smokes, Ewan and Stuart Moulson continue to dominate the Trotters hall of fame as you can see from the table opposite. The total number of times a Trotter has completed the DD now stands at 189. This is over 100 more times than the club in second place.

The date for next year's race is Saturday 4th June and entries will open on the 4th January.

On On
Chair

2015 Club Trip

Kevin Besford provides the details for this years outings

For 2015 we are going to the Cotleigh Canter on the 20th September.

This is a lovely village race with the option to run 10k or 5k and an additional fun run for the youngsters. So something for everyone. The Race Director was so pleased that we wanted to choose this race for our Club Trip that she changed the date for us so that it didn't clash with our Ladies 10K.

There will be regular updates in the Trotter when entry forms are available and of course entry is free if you have the requisite number of points from helping at Trotter races. This means you will have a bit more cash to spend at the chosen pub afterwards of course. If you have to pay the race entry I have negotiated a £1 discount.

The entry form can be found via the race diary page on our website. **Please return entries to me even if you are not eligible for the free entry as you will still get a £1 discount.**

We will be making use of the usual double decker bus and looking to fill it. Details of bus pick up points and times will be announced much nearer the time.

We have been on the onerous task of checking out some suitable pubs to ensure the food and beer is good and have chosen a venue that ticks all these boxes. It has a sizeable beer garden as well. We will reveal the chosen hostelry and menu nearer to the time.

If you haven't been on a club trip before and are not sure if it is for you then just ask any of the many Trotters that enjoy the trip each year and they will convince you to join our great day out.

So make a note in your diaries for 20th September to make sure you are free for the annual Trotters day out.

On on

Kevin



HONITON RUNNING CLUB

invites you to

THE COTLEIGH CANTER

Sunday, 20th September 2015 10.30am

(Fun Run 10.15am)

Road 10K & 5K + 3K Fun Run

The 10K is 2 laps of the 5K route.

Fun Run minimum age 9 years unless accompanied by an adult.

Race HQ and Start/Finish – Cotleigh Village Hall, (nr. Honiton)

Toilets and Parking (Please follow directions for parking)

Prizes for 1st/2nd M/F in each event inc. Fun Run.

Goody Bag for main race runners, Medals for all fun runners

Prize for 10k/5k male and female course records

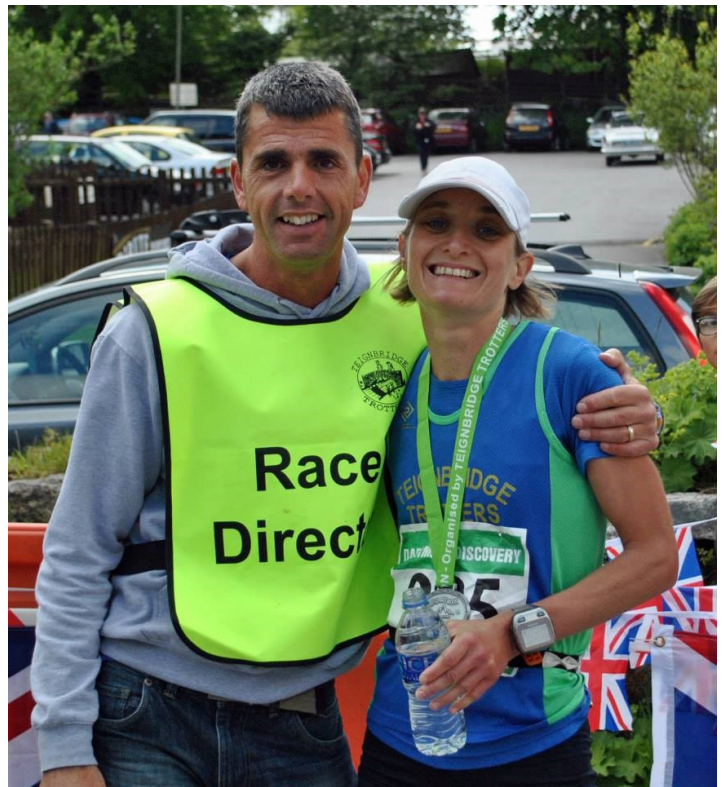
Entry fee Adults £10.00 or £8.00 for Running Club members + £2 on the day

Fun Run £3.00

Dartmoor Discovery - A Journey Worth Taking

After a truly inspiring performance, Helen 'Zippy' Anthony tells us how she did it!

I have been a member of the Trotters for a while now and have somehow managed to resist the temptation of the DD. Having marshalled and supported a few times, I'd decided that 32 miles of brutal hills was out of my comfort zone and quite frankly unnecessary. So, what changed in 2015? Having tackled a few tri's last season, I decided that I would dedicate 2015 to triathlon training. I wouldn't take up my London marathon place and would have a break from long distance running. January came along, but I found the absence of a spring marathon target was eating away at me! Tracy Elphick dangled the bait regarding the DD and it didn't take much for me to bite. I came to the conclusion that, without a flat spring marathon to train for, I would be able to concentrate on the type of training required for the DD and all the tri stuff went out the window! Lots of other trotters had entered the race so this year would be the year.



Helen and Chairman Rog at the DD finish

In went the entry form and I had an ultra to train for. I had no idea where to start so joined in with those marathon training and listened out for some gems of advice from long distance greats. Chairman Rog "run lots and lots of hills", Noel Fowler "do high mileage weeks", Peg Wiseman "don't neglect your speed work". I wasn't sure how this would all fit into a training plan but started by picking out some tough races that involved lots of elevation. I decided not to taper for most of these races but just use them to gain the hill training, thus keeping with the speed and mileage during the week. The Blackdown Beast, Dalwood 3 hills challenge, The Grizzly and The Exe to Axe all featured in the plan. I was in two minds about including a marathon race like most others but just couldn't seem to find one that was hilly enough on a suitable date. Instead, I figured a long run over DD territory would suffice but, as always, doubted whether this was right!

I built up the mileage steadily over the months and kept up the speed work and racing where possible. The Dalwood 3 hills challenge and the Exe to Axe were two races I had never tackled before, and were two of the toughest races I have ever done but I knew they would stand me in good stead for the big one! As the marathon runners began to taper for April marathons I still had more weeks of high mileage to go but had come this far and with no marathon time to show for my training efforts, it was all about the DD now! Lots of runners seem to be changing their minds and the reserve list was exhausted but I'd invested too much to go back now.

Three weeks until race day and I find myself packed for a week's triathlon training holiday in France that I'd booked before the DD was even on the radar! I would be based in central France for a week, with not a hill in sight. I figured I'd done hills to death so would enjoy the holiday and take it easy. Although the hot tub and the evening wine drinking session were very relaxing, day one started with a 72 mile cycle and I'd clocked up 200 miles by the end of the week (including 30 miles of cycling time trials) and picked up a calf strain!! Panic, panic, had I undone all the good work that I'd put in? Only 14 days to go so all I could do was stretch, rest and hope everything settled down, with the help of pre-race massage from Craig Hobson.

Race day arrived and I'd gone through my hydration and nutrition strategy basing it on what I'd used in

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marathons in the past. The forecast was for it to be hot but on arrival in Princetown there was a brisk wind and that was more of a worry. The relaxed atmosphere at registration suited me and kept the nerves at bay. I was even able to sit in the nice warm café with some trotters who were enjoying a fried breakfast. The trotter contingent had reduced to 14 with a number of us taking it on for the first time. The start was similar to a local race with lots of banter from runners about the ridiculously difficult challenge we were about to put ourselves through.

From the off, I fell into step with Sarah, a mud crew member who I'd chatted to at a few off road races recently. I still wasn't completely sure what pace to run, but she had been 2nd lady the previous year and was a very experienced ultra runner so I figured it was probably a sensible place to be. The pace felt comfortable, although I was mindful of the significant downhill in the first section. Then came the first decision; Dartmeet hill: to run or not to run? Those around me were running so I would do the same. I passed the family at the bottom and a few friendly trotter faces on the way up but reached the top in one piece feeling pleased with myself. I had naturally moved ahead of Sarah who had mentioned she had done a 52 mile race the previous week and her legs were feeling tired. I decided to continue with the pace which felt comfortable, expecting to see her again at some stage in the race.

Several trotters drove by and shouted or waved. There were lots of marshals doing a sterling job on the roads and at the water stations all the way to Ashburton. I was still very aware the first third of the race was going to be easy in comparison to the second two thirds and kept asking myself if I was going too fast, too slow and whether I was still breathing steadily.

With a renewed confidence from running the first hill, I started the upward incline out of Ashburton shortening my stride but feeling sure I could run all the way. More trotters popped up to help me to the top. I had run the next part of the course during training so was ready for the desolate lanes that followed. Again, it was a comfort to see the odd trotter and occasional runner but my focus now was to get to Widecombe-in-the-Moor, where the family would be. The welcome there was fantastic, exaggerated by the quiet lanes before no doubt, but lots of noise and encouragement which caused the eyes to well. My quads were beginning to let me know that they had covered nearly 20 miles, something I was expecting. It was the next 12 miles that was the real test so it was time to breakdown the remaining mileage and start believing I would get through. Just two 10ks to the finish, a lot of which was on remote lanes and roads. Every friendly face was welcomed as tiredness in the quads gradually increased. The family were mobile and came past again. A lovely reception of happy trotters awaited me at marathon point and gave me the huge lift as I hit the last 10k. As I approached the final winding road to Postbridge with both quads seriously aching, my right calf began to twinge as if cramp was on its way. I took another gel and told myself to just keep running whilst trying to relax. A couple more miles done and the family were keeping me going, stopping frequently to will me on. Then the left calf also started to twinge, I really didn't want cramp to ruin everything now so tried to adapt my running style to run more flat footed whilst trying to manage the nagging pain in the quads.

After not seeing another runner for a long time I came across Tommo at around this point. Things hadn't gone well for him and he was having to walk but I still spilled all my problems out. He told me to keep up my fluid intake and encouraged me to keep going with an amazing amount of enthusiasm. It was all about gritting the teeth and hoping that cramp didn't get me now. A couple more climbs into Princetown and I was home. I passed a few more trotters strategically spread at the Two Bridges and Princetown junctions to reach the welcome sight of Bones! Over the hill and I could hear the sound of Skins on the mic, after the final stretch of quiet miles, the noise of the trotters welcome into Princetown was priceless. So many friends and family, cheers and smiles (and a few tears) everywhere and everyone delighted to see me come in successfully and as first lady. I couldn't have been more proud of myself, my family, and my club. The Dartmoor Discovery is most definitely a journey worth taking, especially if you've got the privilege of doing it in a trotter vest.

Zippy xx

Captain's Corner - Men's Report

Lance 'Skippy' Mason covers some upcoming events and reviews the men's recent performances.

I'd like to start by offering our new members a very warm welcome to the Trotter family. It's great to see so many new members joining the club who enjoy their training and have thrown themselves into many races including club championship ones.

Some new members I've yet to meet. I've not been at club myself much due to injury other than to recruit members for the Erme Valley relays. This year it takes place on the evening of Friday 3rd July. It's a great club get together, complete with an eye balls out race over a 2.5 mile course. There are four runners to a team and it's part of our club championship.

There's also an opportunity to collect points for marshalling our race, the Haytor Heller on Saturday evening 18th July. If you wish to be part of either of these events, please contact me. Alternatively, you will probably see me at races taking photos or cheering you on.

And so to the men's recent performances. Dave McMorrow & Tim Pratt who are both new members had a go at Muskies madness and the mini DD (Dawlish Dash) and returned with great times. Both races had a great showing of the royal blue vests. The club championship is now hotting up with our chairman Roger Hayes at the top of the pile and Mark Hutchings and Keith Anderson putting in a bit for honours. Can anyone out SMART Chair? (There's a clue in there!). Only two men have actually completed the championship; Roger 'Smokes' Hales and Dermot Smyth. Now they can sit back and pick and choose where to improve their lowest points. There aren't many races left in some sections so check your diaries and the rules so that you don't miss out on your own achievement and secure a championship finishing place.

Recently, Kevin Besford completed the Edinburgh Marathon in a respectable time of 4.22.51. In doing so,



he raised money for the Alzheimer's fund in Scotland. Well done Kevin!

Mark 'Wurzel' Wotton completed the Langport Marathon on Saturday 13th June and the next day, was off to the Yeovil Marathon. Joining him were Stephen Barker and Keith Anderson who was targeting a sub 4hr time. Results were Stephen 3.38.08 and Mark 4.59.45. Unfortunately, Keith had to pull out at the 20 mile check point.

Allen Taylor undertook the South Downs Way 100 mile

Stephen Barker (left) and Allen Taylor on the Imerys Trail back in May this year.

race which started at 6am Saturday 13th June. The race started in Winchester and finished in Eastbourne. His times are as follows 22.6 miles: 3.41.22 and 62nd, 35.1miles: 6.11.38 and 63rd, 54 mile: 9.48.25 and 50th, 69.8 miles: 13.26.07 and 39th, 83.3 miles: 16.26.15 and 31st, 100 miles: 20.34.54 and 27th overall. What a fantastic achievement!

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Now rewind a week or two for the Trotters main event in our calendar year; the one and only DD - DARTMOOR DISCOVERY. A 32 Mile road ultra from Princetown to Ashburton and back via Widecombe. This is a fantastic event. Whether you help organise, look after runners, marshal, take photos or provide general support, you cannot but admire our great club and be proud of our achievements.

To the runners and their times; Paul Sharples (senior) 5.24.11 and also 2nd 55 vet, Martin Randall 5.35.10 who ran with his wife Jo. Derek Skinner 5.37.03, Ewan Walton 5.45.13 (his 12th DD). Mark Hutchings 5.46.26, Peter Kirby 5.47.46, Roger 'Smokes' Hales 5.50.33 (his 15th DD). Stuart 'Steptoe' Moulson 5.55.58 (his 9th DD). Travis Wood 6.00.20 and Mark 'Wurzel' Wotton 6.06.14. I'm sure you wouldn't begrudge me in saying a very well done to all our ladies who took part too. Hats off to all!

Sorry if I've missed out anybody's achievements. Do remind me and I will try to correct this in the next report.

SO ON ON. Great running!

Lance

Captain's Corner - Ladies Report

Helen reviews the ladies performances.

The Trotettes have enjoyed more successes over the last couple of months. The Haldon Heartbeat attracted seven of us, all of whom had a great run. I emerged as first lady and Jacki picked up 1st V50. Although a ladies team prize wasn't awarded, had it been, we would have swooped that too as Hannah Walsh was placed 5th lady and Jo Randall 8th.

The London marathon provided hours of entertainment for most of us this year as we were able to track our runners around the course. True to form, Mandy Wheeler proved yet again what an outstanding endurance runner she is, finishing with a superb time of 3:21 in only her second marathon. Katherine Josephy also put in a great performance crossing the line in a great time of 4.05. Sally Ingledew and Jess Parkes decided to soak up the carnival atmosphere and ran a lot of the course together, coming home 4.44 and 5.18 respectively. Tara Carter also ran, coming over the line in 6.10.

Six ladies raced the Crediton Crunch. Just a week after her marathon Mandy Wheeler managed to net the 1st V40 trophy and good performances were put in by all other ladies running; Hylda Stewart, Eleanor Taylor, Tamsin Cook, Lisa Godfrey, Kim Nichols and Katrina Zapple.

The North Dorset Village marathon attracted those training for the Dartmoor Discovery. On an undulating course, our ladies dug in for some fine times. Tracy Elphick was first home in an admirable time of 3.32. Hannah Walsh, who has made racing a main feature of most of her weekends, stormed home with a pb of 3.35 and claimed 1st SF. Jo Randall was unfortunate to pick up an injury on the way round but managed to soldier on and finish in 4.15 and Shaz Bowman enjoyed the undulating course with a friend to post a time of 5.00.

The Ivybridge 10k was a big success for the trotettes as it saw Melanie Dunn win the ladies race with a new pb, her first race win I believe. Mel has been gradually improving her times over all distances and her winning time of 40.51 was a whopping 3 mins quicker than the previous year. Melanie Hooper also reduced her pb by 3.5 mins with a time of 1:01:45. Hylda Stewart put in another solid performance to claim 2nd V55 in a time of 49.31. Abi Blee finished in 48.38 and Eleanor Taylor 54.09.

South Devon 10K presented a tough multi-terrain course which didn't deter new member Kathryn Steemson. She had a great run and completed it within the hour in a time of 59.24, Katrina Zapple finished in 1:03:40 and right on her tail was Kim Nichols in 1:03:58.

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The Clays Imerys marathon and half marathon take place over difficult terrain and attracted just Sally Ingledew and Hannah Walsh. Sally took on the marathon finishing in 5.35 and Hannah the half, and still only two weeks after her marathon, completed in 1:45.

Muskies Madness undulating 5 miler had a few issues with sign tampering on race day making the finish time irrelevant. Six ladies tackled the course with Mandy Wheeler taking the 2nd V40 prize and Hylda Steward 1st V55. All ladies put in a great effort whether they ran 4 or 5 miles.

Hannah Walsh was out in her racing vest again at the Egdon Easy 10k and bagged a pb over that distance too in a great time of 41:55. Hannah is in great form over all distances and no amount of mileage is slowing her down.

The Run Exe 5K series kicked off on 14th April and only Jennie Roberts and Hylda Stewart have had a go so far. Both have achieved great 5k pbs with their bests being 23.32 for Jennie and 23.41 for Hylda. Jennie is currently in 3rd place in her age category and Hylda 2nd place with three races left in the series. Although it's too late to complete the series now, if anyone fancies a stab at a 5k pb, here is the link to entries: http://www.city-runs.co.uk/events/run/run_exe_summer_5k_series/

A nice little collection of trotettes turned out for this year's Dawlish Dash. Another tough little race and some super times posted with lots improving on their times from the previous year. Jacki landed the 3rd lady prize in a time of 27.31 and other times were: Kirsty Bowman (30:24), Jennie Roberts (30:40), Shaz Bowman (31:21), Donna Walker (31:43), Eleanor Taylor (32:13), Lisa Godfrey (33:07), Tina Caunter (33:23), Charlie Rice (33:52), Bev Dennis (35:04), Kim Nichols (35:59). Three days later Lisa Godfrey was in action again at the Swithland 6, posting a time of 54.17.

On to the Dartmoor Discovery, the mother of all local races staged by our very own club. Four ladies pitched up on race day ready to take on the challenge of 32 Dartmoor miles including 3600ft of elevation. Myself, Hannah Walsh and Jo Randall taking it on for the first time accompanied by DD veteran Shaz Bowman, looking to clock up her 4th only two days after her last race. And what a great day we all had, all completing the course in excellent times and the accolade of a shiny DD medal. I'm extremely pleased to be able to call myself the 2015 DD ladies champion and equally proud to have shared 2nd ladies team prize with two other DD virgins, Hannah and Jo. We were unlucky to lose out by only 6 position places to specialist ultra runners, Mudcrew.

The East Allington 10K took place on 7th June in memory of Claire Widdicombe. I very much wish I could have been there and was very pleased to hear what a lovely event it was. Eleven trotettes took part and enjoyed the challenging course. Well done to all ladies that ran; Eyvoll Aston, Sarah Schutte, Hylda Stewart, Emma Percy, Lucy Payne, Angie Blakesley, Caroline Clark, Ruth Johnson, Katrina Zaple, Sarah Ross and Maggie Garrett.

Well done to all ladies that have been racing hard and putting the effort in at training. Keep it up and let's not forget the club championship. It's not too late to get the races in and there's still all to play for. Torbay half marathon, The Erme Valley relays, Otter rail and river run and Chudleigh Carnival 6 are all great local races and don't forget to get our entries in for our very own Ladies 10K in September.

Good luck to our ladies who have got some big events still to come this year.

Zippy

xxx

Trotters Support Through Difficult Times.

Graydon's Story

After 12 traumatic months, Graydon shares his thoughts and hopes for the future.

This is quite hard for me to write, but I've been told that I do have a story to tell so I started drafting something that other people in the Trotters may like to read....and here it is. I suppose I should warn people that it is a tough story and if you want to skip over this to another article in this edition that is totally fine. For some of you, it may bring back some of your own memories too.

I'm not necessarily looking for sympathy here though. Rather, my hope is that other people in the Trotters may find it useful to read in some way or another. Also, I know some people are worried about speaking to me about things, but I'm happy to talk about Claire and what happened, so please don't worry about that. Alternatively, if people don't feel they want to talk about Claire to me, that is fine too. We're all different.

It's also not really running related, although running has been a massive help to me these last few months.

Setting the Scene

I suppose I should set the scene a little bit. Back in September 2014, my wife and I were both 38 and we were expecting our first baby, to be born later that month. Claire and I had been together since we were 16 years old, and we'd never known anything else. For example, we'd been through A-Levels together, got our first flat together to study in the same city at University, got our first jobs (hers a teaching job, mine as a software developer at BT), set up home together, got married and had many great holidays together. All the usual things that happy couples do, and for us having a baby was the next step and we were immensely excited. We'd had a great life, and the baby was the next phase for us and we'd been busy preparing as best we could for the imminent arrival.

We had thought the pregnancy had gone well and we went into hospital on 17th September, when Claire was 38 weeks pregnant and was having contractions. I'm not sure how much detail to go into here, but just a few hours later we were told the news that the baby didn't have a heartbeat. Claire and I were obviously devastated as up until that point we hadn't known anything was wrong (just 2 days earlier, the heartbeat was there at a standard check up), but at that time the doctors still had to deliver the baby so that was the focus for that hour or two. Claire was so brave, and when she had to go down for a small operation after the baby was delivered, I'll never forget her looking up at me and saying "If anything happens Graydon, know that I love you". She knew I loved her, but to this day I cannot remember if I said "I love you too". I hope I did, but I fear that I did not.

She was taken to theatre and just a few seconds later I was left alone with the baby and I immediately broke down. We hadn't known the sex of the baby, but there I was with our seemingly perfect baby boy – perfect in every way, but unfortunately and unbelievably he wasn't breathing. He had never drawn a breath at all. Claire and I named him Jay.

17th September will stick in my mind forever, but I'm afraid my story gets a whole lot worse as on 20th September 2014 my beautiful wife – my soul mate, my best friend, my confidante, my lover – passed away due to a pregnancy related issue. When I read that back, in some ways I still can't believe it is true, but deep down I know that it is. I was with her when she died, and she was heavily sedated so I hope she passed away peacefully. However, one thing that I cannot get over is that she must have passed away feeling desperately unhappy. I'm welling up as I'm typing this but after 22 years together, in three days we had lost our baby and then Claire was dead. I can't imagine that she died happy and to this day, that fills me with great sadness. For me personally, to go from one extreme of happiness at what we thought was the imminent arrival of our baby and our new life, to one of extreme shock and despair is still something

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I'm trying to come to terms with. Those hopes and dreams aren't there anymore and I have to continue to try and learn to live with that.

"Moving On"

After the initial shock of the whole tragic event, Claire then had to have a post mortem and once the cause of death was confirmed I was able to organise the funeral. This may sound a strange thing to say, but in some ways the day of the funeral was a good day, and I thank those Trotters who were also able to attend.

The journey from our house to the crematorium was the toughest journey I've ever had to make as seeing the two coffins in the back of the hearse – one black one for Claire and a small white one for Jay - was extremely tough. But when the limo pulled up outside the building and I saw that it was packed (there was standing room only, and they had to open the doors at the back to allow people enough room), I knew she was going to have a good send off, which is what I wanted. The funeral had the music we loved including songs from Muse and Guns N' Roses, plus the running related songs Chariots of Fire and The Trap (the tune the BBC use for the London Marathon coverage). Claire and I were both runners, so the music seemed perfect to me. My brother-in-law read a speech on my behalf, her school read a speech and the kids prepared a CD of them singing a song called "Sunshine in my Heart", which was brilliant and upbeat. After the funeral, I held a Wake at a hotel, where I insisted on having chocolate fudge cake available. Claire would have eaten that morning, noon and night if she could have got away with it! Even if the funeral was taking place tomorrow, I wouldn't change anything about the day itself, and I'm really happy with how it went. I look back on it now and I know that I did a good job of it.

After the funeral is when things started to hit me. Over the next few weeks I felt numbness, anger, confusion, guilt (I tore myself up over the "what ifs?", "could I have done anything differently?"), anxiety, desperation, despair and lots of other emotions. I remember saying to my father-in-law "I don't know what to think", and that was true. I literally didn't know what to think, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know if I wanted to be on my own or if I wanted to surround myself with people. I can't lie; it was tough. Extremely tough.

I had well-meaning people coming up to me and telling me I needed to "move on", but that was the last thing I wanted to do. I wanted to roll back the clock and see if something else could have been done that would have changed the outcome. I still hate the "moving on" phrase now, as to me it implies somehow forgetting Claire and I never want to do that. She was my life and she will always have a place in my heart. I prefer the phrase "rebuilding my life", as that to me signifies that Claire and Jay will in some ways be the foundations of my life, and that to me feels right.

Then, four months to the day since Claire died we had some more tragic news as Claire's sister, Steph, was killed in a cycling incident in London, the city in which she knew and loved. A few of you met Steph on one of the Newton Abbot Friday sessions and she also marshalled with me at the Templer Ten, and she managed a Good For Age for London 2015, but sadly her number never got used.

Throughout those last 4 months, Steph had been the person I had turned to the most and I also know that I had helped her a lot too. We had each other's best interests at heart and when we weren't together we phoned or texted most days. I had known her since she was 7 years old, and she was more like a sister to me than an in-law, and she treat me more like a brother. After Claire died, I had stayed with her a few times in London, we spent Christmas together....and then on January 20th she was dead. It just didn't seem conceivable, but there we were organising another funeral for a young, vibrant woman who had had her life in front of her. The day before she died, her and her boyfriend had an offer accepted on a house and they were busy planning their future together. Steph was 29 when she died.

I won't go into too many details here, but how the press handled the two deaths still annoys me when I think about it. Basically, what they didn't know they made up, but in doing so they got some key details incorrect (particularly around Claire). I had to step away from the keyboard as I was tempted to respond to

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some of the comments on the news sites, but I'm now glad that I didn't respond. As I was reading the comments I knew that I shouldn't be reading them, but I was somehow drawn to them. At the time, on top of everything else I was trying to deal with I felt I was in the middle of some kind of media storm. I had random people contacting me on facebook (a couple of who "liked" some pretty strange pages relating to death and stillborns), I had someone from a newspaper call me up, there were cycling groups jumping to massive conclusions about Steph's case (by the way, I'm a cyclist too); it was all almost too much to bear and wasn't what I was used to dealing with.

Clichés

After Steph died, I remember thinking about a cliché "live each day as if it's your last" (or words to that effect, anyway) and I now think I have a full understanding of what that phrase means. Not in a morbid way and certainly not in a reckless way as that's not my style, but I have begun to think about what is important and what is not so important, and to try and live life to the full as best I can. I feel I have to do that for me, but also for Claire and Jay as to do anything less would be an insult to them and I cannot allow that. To me it's almost a conscious decision; I can either wallow and mope around, or I can get out there and "do stuff" ("Get busy living, or get busy dying", is a phrase that film buffs may recognise, from *The Shawshank Redemption*).

Don't get me wrong; often it's extremely hard and on occasion I do just curl up in bed and not get up. But those days are rare, although I do allow myself them when I feel I want or need them. I have come to trust my gut instinct on things, and just go with what my instinct is telling me, as it is usually correct. But, it certainly is a rollercoaster of emotions (another cliché, that happens to be true); some days I feel I'm doing okay but then the next I'm down again, and what sends me down can be something really tiny. But I do know that I bounce back up from these down times and that knowledge helps me. At the start, I was worried that I'd never recover from the down swings, but I do. Another cliché I've rolled out a lot is "I'm taking one day at a time", although in the early days it was more like taking one hour at a time.

The first anniversaries of things are probably the toughest; for example, Claire's birthday, my birthday, the first Christmas and New Year without her, our anniversary. Of course, I haven't yet got to the first anniversary of Claire's death, but I will be taking the week off work as I am fully expecting it to be very tough indeed.

Recently I'm remembering more and more of her "funny little ways", and currently the memories are tinged with sadness, even though when she was here I never really noticed some of the things. How she put her earrings in. How she sipped her hot tea. How she buttered her toast. The way she pulled the seat forward in the car after I'd been driving it. Just the way she looked at me with those eyes and her smile, and knowing that she didn't look at anyone else like that. 1000s of minute things, and in many ways those memories are tougher than the tragedy of it all.

At the moment though, for me, "doing stuff", means running, travelling (having never travelled on my own before, I've been to Bruges and Tunisia on my own, and also to Rome with friends), seeing friends but also getting back to work.

Throughout all this, I have to say that BT, my colleagues, my GP, my close friends and of course people from the Trotters have been brilliant. I couldn't have got this far without them. Everyone is different, but I just felt I needed time away from work and I feel lucky that BT (and my GP) helped me do that. As I type this (May 2015), I'm at the start of my second week back on a phased return. It's tough being back as it feels like the start of my "new life", and of course that is one without Claire. However, I know it's what I need and in some ways I'm excited to be back and I know my managers and colleagues will support me as best they can.

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Support

A lot of people say to me “You’re so brave” and I know what they mean and I really do thank them for their kind words. But in many ways I don’t feel brave although I do feel I have done all I can to help myself these past few months. As well as running (this still gives me a natural high and allows me to clear my head), trying to keep eating healthily, speaking to my close friends openly about what I am thinking and feeling and taking time away from work, I have also received a lot of support from a group called Widowed and Young (WAY) <https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/>

There are unfortunately a large number of people out there in a similar situation to me, and WAY have local groups all over the country and they organise national events too. For me, it’s just nice to meet up for lunch and a few drinks with people who “get it”, even though all our circumstances are so different. The thing that is difficult to get across is that losing your partner impacts everything in your life, and those at WAY understand that.

As a man, I read with interest an article following Rio Ferdinand’s tragic loss of his wife. Rio’s circumstances are totally different to mine, but the article describes how men often find it more difficult to ask for help when they become widowed. The article mentions WAY and also has a nod to those without children, and WAY does cater for those people too in a subgroup called WAYWOK (Widowed and Young Without Kids). I really would recommend WAY to anyone who finds themselves in a similar situation to me – men and women – as I have found it invaluable.

I have also been seeing a bereavement counsellor from Cruse, who are going to make a “case study” out of me as they seem especially impressed with how I have handled the last few months. I’m almost embarrassed by that as I don’t think I’ve done anything particularly noteworthy, but I suppose if I can help anyone else in a similar situation then I would like that.

If you’re a parent who has lost a son or daughter, there is The Compassionate Friends who may be able to offer support. I haven’t used these myself, but I’ve heard good things about them.

I don’t really know how to close this off. I have tried to be honest, but also show it is possible to get through something like what I’ve been through, even though it is still only early days for me. In some ways, I am cautiously optimistic about the future, but in other ways I’m absolutely terrified. I will never forget Claire and Jay, but I hope that I’m over the worst of the rollercoaster ride and things will start to become a bit easier over time. However, it’s a long journey and it’s still only around 8 months since my life changed forever, so I know I still need to take things day-by-day. But all-in-all, I feel I’m doing okay.

I hope people can take something away from my story, even if it’s only something small and if you’ve got this far, thank you for reading.

Take care,

Graydon

Roger's Epic Bike Ride

Roger Easterbrook shares his plan to embark on a road trip from London to Totnes in one day.

I have foolishly decided to cycle from London to Totnes estimated at 240 miles, in one day on June 27th. Whilst I can ride a bike, I am not a member of a cycling club. As a Trotter I am always up for a challenge, the three legged races at Shaldon and Teignmouth are favourites. The journey will be tougher knowing that the Trotters will be getting refreshed at the Redrock Brewery whilst I am somewhere enroute.

I will be starting my epic ride from an infamous Trotters location, the home of Del & Rodney Trotter, Peckham, South London, where I used to live. This effort is raising funds for Dangerous Dads. This group was launched in December 2007 in response to a recognition by Totnes Children's Centre, working in partnership with Devon County Council Children's Services and South Hams District Council. They identified the need to support the needs of fathers and encourage them to become more actively involved in their children's learning. It receives some funding from the excellent Action for Children charity.

Sadly I will not be able to make it to The Redrock Brewery party, as the route from Exeter heads toward Mortenhampstead, before travelling down the Teign Valley, toward Newton Abbot, and finally to Totnes. The detour and enticement of Trotters and Redrock beer could scupper completion of the trip!

If you would like to support this worthy cause please have a look at their website:

<http://dangerousdads.blogspot.co.uk/> and <https://www.justgiving.com/dangerousdad>

Many thanks, Roger Easterbrook



Roger with his son Toby and Totnes Mayor Jacqi Hodgson

Contact Us

If you have some news or gossip that needs sharing, feel free to have a natter with us during club training or contact us via facebook or the Trotter mag email address below.

mag@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

(No pills, porn or abuse please)