

# The Trotter

Number 7

June/July 2009



## Doing the DD!

This year's Dartmoor Discovery was a right terror. But that didn't stop the Trotters giving it their all. Turn to page three for John Tweedie's report.

# News Desk

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

11/7 Otter Valley Rail and River Run  
11/7 Duckponds 7K  
12/7 Wellington 10  
17/7 Chudleigh Carnival 6  
19/7 Haytor Heller  
19/7 Magnificent 7  
26/7 Exmoor Sea View 17  
26/7 6 Moor Miles

Welcome to the June/July edition of The Trotter. There'll be a July/August issue in early August and then a short break before a September edition in mid-September.

We kick off this Newsdesk with a reminder that we need plenty of marshals for the Haytor Heller on July 19. It's normally a lovely day out on the moor, so please do help if you can. Contact Race Director Mike Hicks, on 01626 832688, or [mjhicks@totalise.co.uk](mailto:mjhicks@totalise.co.uk)

It's also not that long until the Totnes 10K, on August 2. This will be the 10th year that the Trotters have organised this gem of a race. Chief Marshal John Skinner needs around 25 marshals to cover the six miles or so of off-road terrain - plus several helpers at the Start-Finish area. Contact him on 01626 776345 or [stephanieross17@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:stephanieross17@tiscali.co.uk) if you can help.

Due to the change of date for the annual Cricket Challenge (now Monday July 27 — see below), we will be doing the trial run for the Totnes 10K on Wednesday July 29, starting from Totnes Pavillion (leisure centre) at 7pm. It would be great to see as many of you there as possible, especially if you intend to help with marshalling. There will still be two sessions leaving Newton Abbot Leisure Centre at the normal time. One will be for the beginners/improvers and the other one will be the 400m session as listed on our website.

Here's an important note regarding the Club Championship. Mark Hamling has spoken to both Frank Elford's Sports and Sarah Wilson at Jeremiah's Journey. For the Autumn Trail, Frank Elford do not know of anybody actively working towards putting on the race this year and the JJ race is in doubt, as incurred costs are rising, leaving less for the charity. MH feels that to be fair to those taking part in the championship and to give as much notice as possible, the following changes will be made to the two races now. If the Autumn Trail or JJ races go ahead they can still be used as wildcards. So, to replace The Autumn Trail, we will use the Ivybridge Beacon Challenge on 13/09/09. And, for Jeremiah's Journey, we will use the Forest Flyer on 28/08/09.

Look out for the Newton Abbot Carnival Fun Run on Friday, July 10. The event starts from Teignbridge District Council Offices, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot. Registration is from 6pm. First race is at 6.45pm — the 2K family run, followed at 6.50pm by the 5K run. Newton Abbot AC is organising this event and it

would be good to see plenty of Trotters running — or helping on the night. In the 2K family run anyone under the age of eight has to be accompanied by an adult and in the 5K run you must be 13 or over on the day to run.

Cricketers please note: the Erme Valley Harriers are this year's opponents for the Cricket Challenge on Monday July 27. Gary Caunter is captain and picking the team. If you'd like a game, please let him know ASAP. The match starts at 6.30pm sharp. We are having a free BBQ (we still need 2 volunteers to cook it!) And there is a bar! So come along and give the Trotters a cheer. With any luck we can retain our trophy.



Finally, unfortunately, Dave Dunn has had to cancel this September's proposed trip to Newton Abbot's twin town of Ay in France, to take in a 15K/30K race through the vineyards and forests. There haven't been enough takers, which is a great pity, but perhaps understandable in the current economic climate. Dave thanks those that were interested and says that he is looking to try to organise this trip again in 2010, with a bit more advance notice. Continental racing is great fun and offers an interesting insight on our sport, so do give it some thought. Turn to page six for Steve Wallace's absorbing account of a recent race he ran in Belgium.



## They clearly thought I might be mad enough to give it a go...



Quietly confident: apparently indifferent to the pain in prospect, Tweeds prepares himself mentally with a nice sit down the back of his van.

The first time I became aware of the Dartmoor Discovery was while I was taking my Springer spaniel for a walk up at New Bridge and Spitchwick Common. At the time I was living in Ashburton and it was a walk I did regularly. On this particular Saturday, I noticed a sign warning motorists of a 34-mile road race across the moor taking place. My initial thoughts were who would be mad enough to want to put themselves through such a gruelling experience? The furthest I had ever run was approximately 10 miles in a race from Haytor to the Ten Tors in Kingsteignton. That course was mostly downhill, and even in my training as an amateur boxer I normally only ran six miles.

Several years later, after piling on the Christmas pounds I decided I seriously needed to lose some weight, and felt that the best way to do this would be to start running. Running on my own was hard so I gave myself an incentive by entering The Great West Run. On the day of the race I finished in 1hr 36min, which I was fairly pleased with considering my longest training run had been 8 miles.

Then one night I got talking to Sue Brown, and she suggested I should go along to the Teignbridge Trotters club training as she felt that I might like it. So the following Wednesday night found me running around the church at Abbotsbury, and taking up the invitation to join the group for a drink at the White Hart after training. It was at the pub that two members (Skins & Smokes) started talking about a run called the "Discovery". They clearly thought I might be mad enough to give it a go. I knew I wasn't anywhere near ready to tackle anything that extreme yet, as I suffered from stiff legs after a flat half marathon. But, after regular training with the Trotters, and two years and two

marathons later, I felt up for the challenge. In 2008, I entered the DD.

My training for the 2008 race went well - I was well-prepared by the day of the race, and completed the event, running alongside Skins, in a good time of 5 hrs 3 mins. It felt so good to successfully complete the challenge and I decided there and then that, by the following year, I would come back and knock a good 10-15mins off my time.

During the next year, I completed PBs in both half marathons (1hr 28 mins) and a marathon (3hr 15 mins 50 secs). I therefore felt sure that this bode well for my DD time, although admittedly I had only done two 2hr runs on the moor prior to the race, but I thought I would be OK.

So on the race day, my neighbour Stuart Moulson and myself left early to get up to Princetown and establish camp for the night. However, when I got there, the weather did not look promising and I decided to ditch the tent in favour of my van. Before I knew it, it was time for the off, so dressed in my bin liner and desert hat (no sun cream needed today) I made my way to the start.

I mentioned to a couple of Trotters that I was experiencing twitches in my hamstring but put this down to phantom pains. At 9.30am, off we went. I set off a bit faster than last year, running just behind Ian Langer as I had during the London Marathon. But by the first drink station I had lost sight of Ian and I arrived at the 10k point and was told that the time was 47 minutes.

## Stuart and Smokes were beginning to fade into the distance

I decided I would try and run up Badgers Hill to keep good time, as I had walked up last year. With that out of the way, I made my way down into Poundsgate. The Tavistock Inn wasn't open as I passed so there was no temptation to stop for a quick half! I continued down the hill to Newbridge, where I had first seen the signs for the race all those years before. I took on a drink and headed on to Holne Bridge.

As I made my way towards Ashburton, I noticed my wife's car parked on the opposite side of the road. My son was waving a banner he had made and my daughter was shouting "Go Daddy Go". Apparently, much to my wife's embarrassment, she had shouted the same chant to half a dozen other runners who had gone through before me! Stopping briefly to see the kids I said to my wife that, although I was glad the weather had not turned out to be scorching as had been feared, I felt the race was going to be a struggle.

Through Ashburton and up the never-ending hill to Buckland. I ran up this in 2008 but this year the rain was coming down heavily and I found the going tough. After consuming a bit of flapjack for energy I started running again, through Buckland and on to Widecombe trying to run as much as I could. I reached the top of the hill, before the decline to Widecombe running beside a guy from Plymouth. As we made our way down the hill, my knee really began to burn so, as I approached the Rugglestone Inn, it was a lift to see Chairman Rog, Skins and Squad cheering me on. On through Widecombe, then turning right and up the hill, I passed Sue Brown who shouted her support, but I couldn't find the energy to talk.

The next thing I heard was "Alright mate" and Stuart came alongside me. We ran together for a couple of miles, but I was suffering from pain in my hamstring and couldn't keep the pace. I then came across Smokes who had stopped for a change. By the marathon point, I was a couple of minutes faster than 2008, which surprised me. But Stuart and Smokes were beginning to fade into the distance and I felt alone, wet, cold and uncomfortable with a never-ending 5 miles yet to go. I tried to out-psyche my body by telling myself I was just starting a short race but this just made the miles seem longer. With about 3 miles to go it finally stopped raining and I just shut everything out and plodded on for the finish.

Chairman Rog passed me in the car about 1.5 miles before Princetown and blasted out that I had 16 minutes to get to the finish line in less than 5 hours, and I remember silently thanking him for his sensitivity. It started raining again and I wasn't holding out much hope of coming in under 5 hours but thought I'd give it my best. Stewart Dunn passed me next and informed me there was a nice cup of hot tea and a warm blanket waiting for me and, as I made it into Princetown, came round the final bend and sighted the Plume of Feathers, I could feel the relief in my legs. I knew it wouldn't be wise to try and sprint in case I really messed up, but it was the best "run-in" I've had.

I said on more than one occasion on the way around, "never again", but this race gets to you like a bug. I must congratulate Stuart on an outstanding run and actually I shouldn't be too disappointed, as I beat last year's time by two minutes, finishing in 5 hrs 1 minute 51 seconds. But next year — next year — it'll be sub-5 hours!



Man with a mission: John's original goal was to shave 10 to 15 minutes off his 2008 time. Oh well, there's always next year, mate...





## My way

Stuart Moulson had a great DD...

After doing the race in 2008 I held back from entering this year, unsure whether I wanted to put myself through all the pain and training. I decided to send my entry off, with thoughts of banishing the hell I'd had at the London Marathon (now there's logic for you).

After spending many lonely miles on the moor, the day finally arrived. I had told myself to relax and just have a steady race, so I felt fairly calm on the morning — until the four visits to the toilet.

First 10k was a similar time to last year, as was the half-marathon point. The weather had changed: it was now raining and cold. Realising at various points that I was feeling better than last year, I felt positive despite my hands feeling very cold — and other parts of my body, too!

Approaching Widecombe, I was looking forward to seeing the supporting Trotters. I made the 20-mile mark in 3 hours. This was when I first thought about trying to get under 5 hours. I felt good for a PB but I wanted that sub-5 hours.

Today was going to be my day! Near marathon point, Chairman, Skins and Squaddie drove alongside. Chairman shouted "Have it, Stu, have it." "It's f\*\*king mine," I replied.

I hit the marathon in just under 4 hours. Another 6 miles in under an hour. Could I do it?

It really was the best race I have ever done. I felt great and, with 3 miles to go, I was so positive I could do it. It was a wonderful feeling coming into Princetown. It was just a matter of how many minutes I could get under the 5-hour mark. My time was 4.54.30.

A truly amazing race, I will be there next year. Thanks goes to all the supporters. It was great to see you all out there.



# Going continental



Steve Wallace discovers that life on the open road doesn't mean that you can't get some decent racing in, even if you don't speak the lingo and you train on beer and chocolate.

In March 2009, I retired from work having spent 30 years in the NHS working with people with learning disabilities and their carers. And, no, that does not mean that I am 65, although after some races it feels that way. Last year my wife, Janice, and I finally bought a motor home, something we had talked about for many years. And what a great decision it has proved to be.

After a few short trips to North Devon, Cornwall, the New Forest and Ireland, we set off in April this year to tour France, Belgium and Luxembourg. The aim being to visit the First World War battlefields and finish up in Belgium to visit our eldest son, who is working there. During the trip, I kept a watch out for any runs that might have been taking place, as I had always wanted to enter a competition abroad.





So we set off with the motor home packed with goodies and dog biscuits for our Lakeland Terrier, Joady, ready to "do" Europe, with me muttering "but I'm going to miss the Ivybridge 10K and the Arlington Court Canter!"

Anyway, after getting over the initial shock that it had cost more for Joady's ferry ticket and pet passport than it did for us, we arrived in France. The first part of the trip was to Ypres and Passendale (Passchendaele) in Flanders then to The Somme and finally to Verdun before a quick visit to Luxembourg and back to Antwerp, Brugge and Ghent in Belgium.

Visiting the many war cemeteries and memorials is a very moving experience. The sheer number of small white crosses not failing to leave you speechless. Thousands and thousands of people lost their lives and many are remembered in the beautifully maintained war graves. When we arrived at Tyne Cot, near Ypres, which is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in Europe, they were playing a recording reading out the names of the people who died in the nearby Battle of Passendale (Passchendaele). The first name we heard was Charlie



Wallace, not a relative but a very eerie moment none the less.

We finished the trip in Brugge and on the final day, May 20, we arrived back at the campsite in the evening to find the street being roped off ready for a road race. What luck! I approached the registration desk ready to sign up for the 7K race — there was also a 3K and a 12K race — when the young lady behind the desk asked my age. "Fifty-eight and three-quarters," says I. Then you must run 12K, says she! A day's sightseeing in Brugge sampling Belgian beer and chocolate was not the best preparation for a race but then Trotters are made of stern stuff.

So there I am at the start, among 350 runners, who do not seem to speak English and with my command of Flemish about as good as Del Boy's French, with no idea of the route. The title of the race should have been a



clue, The Permeke LOOP, yes we ran four 3K loops around the village. After one loop, the juniors dropped out and, after 3 loops, the ladies finished — and finally the men, after 12K of perfectly flat roads, no hills in fact not even a slope. My time was 1.02.29, in case you are interested.

I have since found out that this event was one of a series of twelve races, titled Loopcriterium Het Houtland 2009, each based in a small Belgian town or village. The distances vary from 9K to 15.5K. The one I did was in Jabbeke, a town about eight miles from Brugge.

Walking back to the changing area after the race, I realised we were to be given a memento. Would it be a natty Belgian T-shirt, bottle of beer or maybe a mug? It turned out to be 500 grams of pate! At least the dog was happy...

# Membership Report

Membership Secretary **Dave Dunn** introduces a couple of new members and highlights some significant birthdays.

The dust seems to have finally settled following the whole process of membership renewals. This past month, we have welcomed two new members into the fold, which, combined with a few late renewals, has seen our membership total rise to 168.

Our two new recruits are Claire Scales, 25, from Ipplepen, and Anna Langer, 28, from Kingsteignton.

Claire, accompanied by her friend and fellow Trotter, Natasha Reed, had been a fairly regular attendee at our Wednesday evening training sessions over the past month or two before taking the plunge to officially join our ranks.

Anna needs no introduction to anyone who attends any of the Trotters' social functions, but at this stage it's unclear whether Anna has her sights set on this year's most improved newcomer trophy, or is just legitimising the wearing of her favourite Trotters hoodie.

No matter, we are very pleased to count both Claire and Anna among our numbers.

I must own up to an omission from last month's Membership Report, as I forgot to give a big shout out to Angela Weeks who celebrated her 60th birthday in June. Trotters having landmark birthdays over the coming month are Vicky Ratcliffe (35), Susannah Retallick (40), Eleanor Taylor (50) and John Tweedie (45). Happy birthday and may you all enjoy and profit from your new veteran status.

There haven't been any club records set over the past month, and the two Club Championship races in July over traditional distances, the Launceston Half and the Wellington 10, are not easy propositions, so I've sent the engraver away for a well-earned rest.

That's all, folks, for this month.



John Ludlam



# Captain's Corner

There's lots to celebrate this month, says Clare Youngman.

Well, it's been a busy couple of months with lots of you ladies doing lots of races and performing really well. Well done one and all!

Special mention needs to go to Gia D'Aprano, who has again got a club record, this time in the Over-50 half marathon. What is her secret? Also to the ladies, who won the team prize at The Exterminator, consisting of Tracy Elphick, Nikki Kennard, Sharon Bowman, Julia Proctor and Jane Pirie. A fantastic achievement which beat a strong Torbay AC into second place. Great stuff!

I've only had one notification of a PB, from Michelle Willcocks-Watts – who not only has got one PB but three! They were achieved at Salisbury 10 miles, in 1.20.41, Taunton Half, in 1.47.37 and 47.43 at Bideford 10K. Well done, Michelle – you're obviously on a roll! Please let me know if you have got a PB so I can mention you.

Just so Michelle doesn't feel like she's the only one blowing her trumpet (so to speak!) I also got a PB at the Sandygate Loop

last month where I was the only lady. Which brings me on to my next point. Please try to attend one of the Sandygate Loops. They are great training events and they also count for the Club Championship. So, come on down one Friday evening – you still have July, August and September!

In the Club Championship, there are a few ladies vying for the top spot. Tina, Tracy, Michelle, Eleanor and Sharon have all completed one or two sections. Hopefully, a few more will be joining them as the year progresses. So check out the Race Diary and enter some of the championship races.

Before I sign off, I hope that you are all enjoying the summer running and making the most of the light mornings and long evenings! We had a great Club Camp this year and I would recommend it to you all – even if you have never been camping before. The camaraderie is great, the running is fun and the various type of erections fascinating! (I am referring to the large range of tents that are put up – honestly – you lot!!!)



Milos Erben

# Trip to Treggy



John Ludlam

This year's Club Trip offers a jolly journey west for a scenic but challenging seven-miler set in the beautiful countryside around Launceston. It's a fast one, too, says Roger Hayes.

We're off to Cornwall on September 6 for this year's club trip — the Treggy 7. Launceston Road Runners organise this scenic, challenging but fast 7-mile course in and around the countryside of Launceston.

A list will be available shortly for you to sign up for what promises to be a great day out. Check out the notice board at Newton Abbot Leisure Centre for the list. If you can't make training then please give Chairman Rog a call 01626 773562 or email him at [chairmanrog@sky.com](mailto:chairmanrog@sky.com) to reserve your place on the coach. This year, we hope to be able to fill two coaches with Trotters and their families. There is a 1-mile fun run that starts at 10.15am. The main race starts at 11am.

Once we have collected all our silverware from the prize presentation (there's a huge number of trophies up for grabs,

including M&F Over-50 team prizes), we will head off to the Countryman Inn for a bite to eat and a well-earned beer. The pub has got a massive beer garden and kids play area and has a field attached to it, where we can partake in a game of rounders or football — or both if you've got the energy!

So, get yourself an entry form (available from the Race Diary page on our website) and get it off quick-sharp, as they have a race limit of 400. Entries for the fun run are only taken on the day.

We will have various pick-up points for the coaches, which incidentally won't cost you a penny (what a lovely Treasurer we have!) Further details will be published in the July/August edition of *The Trotter*.

On on!



# Handbags and glad rags!

Do you feel there's something missing in your life but you're not quite sure what it is? That's because you need to go to a proper summer ball! Becky George waves her magic wand and makes your dream come true.

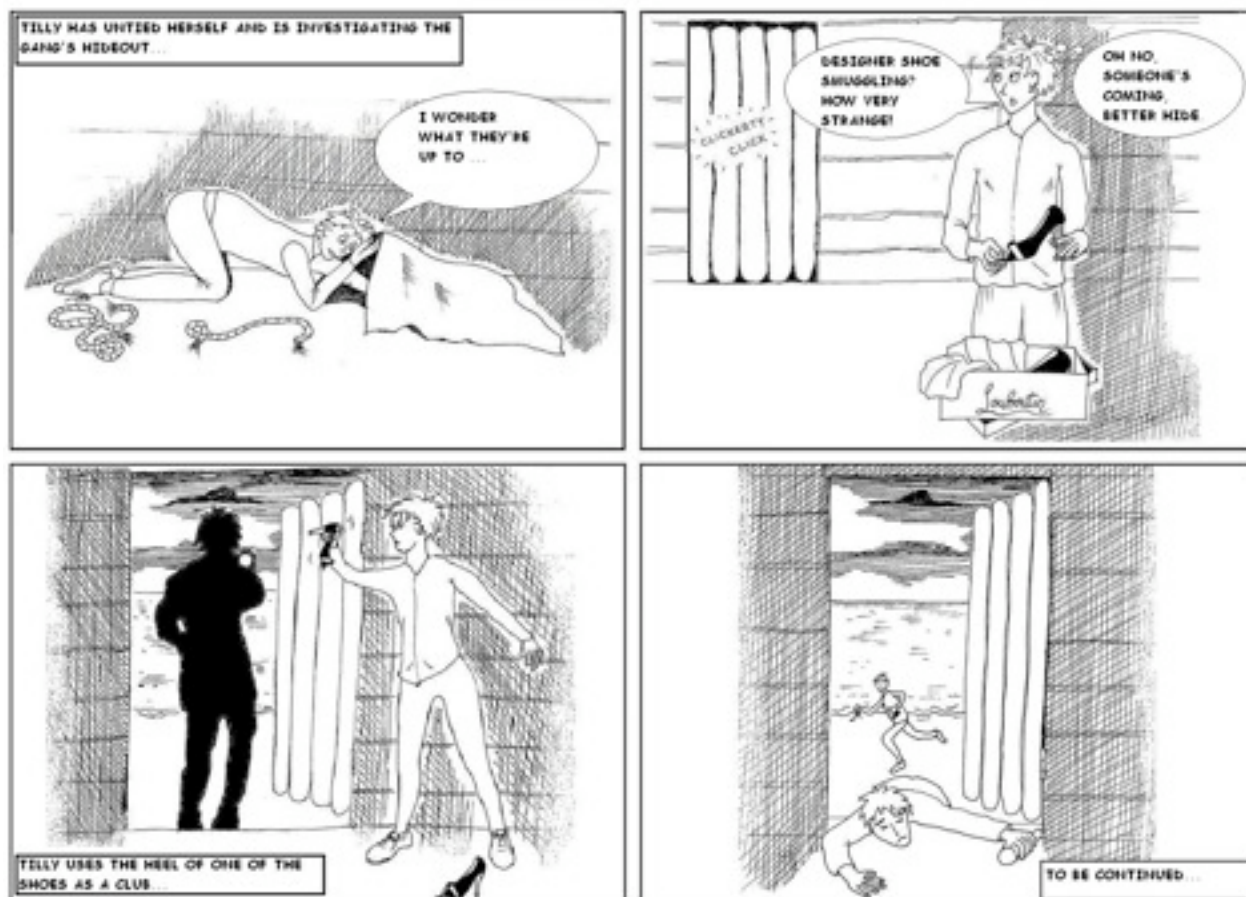
A brand new Trotters social event is on the horizon! Next month's inaugural Trotter Summer Ball promises to be an absolutely fabulous affair. We've got an evening of classy, unbridled fun lined up for you. And nothing beats seeing your club colleagues all scrubbed up and ready to party on down. Here are the details:

- Event: Summer Ball
- Date: Friday, August 7, 2009
- Venue: Torquay United Football Club, Plainmore
- Time: 7pm
- Carriages (well, coach): midnight

Tickets are £10 a head and include a mouth-watering buffet, great live music and free transport by coach there and back from various pick-up points (locations to be advised). The dress code is smart. That means men in suits, please! Ladies, we know we can rely on you to be nothing less than totally gorgeous.

The tickets to the hottest bop in South Devon are on sale now, available on a Wednesday night from myself, or at the pub after training. There are 100 tickets to be had, on a first-come, first-served basis. This event is available to all club members and their partners. I think you'll agree it's a steal! So, hurry along to club night and bag a ticket before they are all gone.





## Who is it?

We've received several guesses at the correct identity of this very jolly little fellow but no one has come up with the right answer yet. So, take a good look at those darling curls and let us know who you think it could be.

The first person to guess this person's identity correctly wins a bottle of zingy Kiwi Sauvignon Blanc. Good luck!

## The Trotter

Editor: John Ludlam

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Next month: it's time to get yourself ready for the Ladies' 10K!

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](mailto:mag@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk)