

The Trotter

Issue 5 October 2021

Perfect timing!



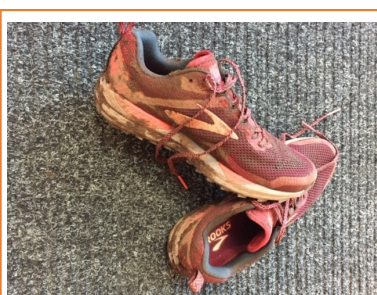
London Marathon stories
Marshalling Points
Members' updates

Welcome



There might be a theme running through the latest edition of The Trotter. I know the lack of it has prevented me from training as much as I would like. But once again I find inspiration here in the experiences of others and a renewed resolve to put on my trainers whenever and wherever possible. Enjoy the issue.

Ali Clayton



**BORN
TO
RUN**

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MARSHALLING POINTS

Nathan 'Lovely' Elphick shares marshalling news



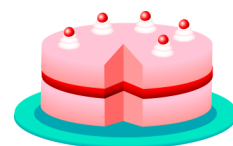
With a welcome return to racing and what seems like normal life slowly getting back to normal, the Club has been able to have a full calendar of events so far this year. The Sibelco Templer Ten next month closing our own races for 2021. Many thanks to those members who have given up their time to help out, we can't put on races without you! That said it does seem quite difficult to recruit members prior to the events and given the large membership number of over 250, it can be very frustrating and disappointing for the Race Directors and Chief Marshals.

Points awarded for marshalling and baking cakes earn you rewards. Anyone with two or more points will get a free entry on the club trip in 2022. Anyone with four or more points is eligible to go in the draw at the Annual Awards evening for one of eight £50 vouchers to be used at a running race of their choice. Anyone with a maximum of six points is eligible to go in the draw for a London Marathon place.

If you spot an error or have been missed off then please feel free to contact me at n.elphick@btinternet.com and I will investigate it and amend where necessary.

Happy running,

'Lovely'



STOP THE PRESS:

Home made cakes needed to sell at the Sibelco Templer Ten.

Please let Tina Caunter know if you can supply one for Sunday 7th November.

MARSHAL POINTS SO FAR

52 members have 1 point

44 members have 2 points

19 members have 3 points

17 members have 4 points

3 members have 5 points

135 members have marshalled in total

10 members have baked 3 or more cakes

84 marshals at Dartmoor Discovery

66 marshals at Haytor Heller

68 marshals at Totnes 10K

52 marshals at Ladies 10K

Liz	Barnett	5	Roger	Hales	3
Nigel	Barnett	5	Deborah	Hart	3
Nathan	Elphick	5	Tim	Hassell	3
Tracy	Elphick	4	Joe	Hornsby	3
Peter	Blakesley	4	Yasi	Jeffery	3
Angela	Blakesley	4	Ian	Langler	3
Bruce	Campbell	4	Alexis	Marsh	3
Lucy	Evans	4	Arthur	Moulson	3
Ed	Hounsell	4	Susanne	Westgate	3
Ruth	Johnson	4	Kate	Williamson	3
Kate	Lenthall	4	Clare	Youngman	3
Stuart	Moulson	4	Chris	Andrews	2
Rod	Payne	4	Helen	Anthony	2
Lucy	Payne	4	Kevin	Besford	2
Neil	Rutley	4	Alan	Boone	2
John	Skinner	4	Chris	Broadbent	2
Derek	Skinner	4	Gary	Brooking	2
Bob	Small	4	John	Caunter	2
Graham	Terrill	4	Tina	Caunter	2
Adrian	Youngman	4	Natalie	Clare	2
Keith	Anderson	3	Tamsin	Cook	2
Ryan	Anthony	3	Reg	Cross	2
Kate	Blackmore	3	Eamon	Crowe	2
Jan	Caunter	3	Bev	Dennis	2
Gary	Caunter	3	Tim	Hartley	2
Andy	Distin	3			
Lizzy	Gorst	3			
Vicky	Hales	3			

Marshal points continued ...

Roger	Hayes	2	Alison	Clayton	1
Caroline	Hayes	2	Chris	Cleave	1
James	Kerr	2	Jim	Donovan	1
Duncan	Knight	2	Roger	Easterbrook	1
Suzie	Mills	2	Ben	Elphick	1
Kim	Nichols	2	Marie Ann	Farrelly	1
Neil	Pallant	2	Dave	Foster	1
Sarah	Pike	2	Susanna	Goffe	1
Tim	Pratt	2	Dominique	Harcourt	1
Bon	Rymel	2	John	Holland	1
James	Saunders	2	Teresa	Holmes	1
Julian	Scanes	2	Sonja	Hughes	1
Kay	Shillabeer	2	Mikey	Johnson	1
Judy	Smallshire	2	Ronnie	Jones	1
Garry	Smart	2	Mike	Jones	1
Dermot	Smyth	2	Richard	Keatley	1
Matt	Steele	2	Sara	Keatley	1
Rachel	Steele	2	Alan	Kember	1
Marie	Taylor	2	Scott	Knight	1
Allen	Taylor	2	Kim	Knight	1
Wilf	Taylor	2	Brian	Lewis	1
Eleanor	Taylor	2	John	Ludlam	1
Sue	Tremlett	2	Steven	Major	1
Jason	Trevenen	2	Chris	McIntosh	1
Ewan	Walton	2	Phillip	Nordon	1
Mandy	Wheeler	2	Gavin	Parrot	1
Russell	Wheeler	2	Maurice	Piper	1
Geoff	Woods	2	Debbie	Proctor	1
Jacki	Woon	2	John	Pullen	1
Mark	Wotton	2	Andrew	Rattlidge	1
David	Adam	1	Christian	Robinson	1
Maggie	Anderson	1	Sarah	Ross	1
Kat	Ashburn-Scott	1	Paul	Sharples	1
Claire	Ayling	1	Sharon	Sharples	1
Alessandra	Baiardi	1	Simon	Sherlock	1
Graeme	Baker	1	Kathryn	Steemson	1
Rex	Barnes	1	Tony	Stepney	1
Sarah Jane	Barr	1	Donna	Walker	1
Jo	Billyard	1	Graydon	Widdicombe	1
Steve	Blackburn	1	Travis	Wood	1
Sue	Brown	1			
Chris	Burton	1			

Coach Coordinator



News and top tip from Joe

Club nights are slowly picking up and the Monday evenings are very well attended. Its good to see the club returning back to some form of normality. Just a reminder to Trotters that getting the sessions done on Wednesdays in the winter will lead to a good start in 2022. Also, it will help keep you in check over the winter period.

Joe Hornsby stands down

It's been a tough time for so many of us during these past 18 months. I know lots of you have told me how grateful you've been to be able to train with the club whilst in between the lockdowns. This has only happened because Joe, our Coach Coordinator, has done an amazing job in pooling our coaches/leaders together and sorting out availability and sessions. We certainly owe him an awful lot.

However, all good things sadly come to an end; Joe has decided to stand down from the role once the next block of sessions end (beginning of December). He's got a big year planned for next year on the racing front and that along with other commitments means he simply won't have the time to dedicate to the job.

I know I speak for everyone at the club by taking this opportunity to thank Joe for all his time and effort during his time as Coach Coordinator.

This now leaves us with a big hole to fill! The committee realise the importance of the role and the probability that we won't have members queuing round the block to apply! With that in mind, it's suggested that the role is divided into two.

One person would oversee the doodle poll, which ascertains coaches/leaders availability and allocate them with their preferred sessions. The other person would have a more hands on day to day kind of role. Sorting out eleventh hour cancellations, collating training numbers and generally being there on most training nights.

Both roles don't necessarily need to be filled by a coach/leader, any member can put themselves forward. If this is something that you think you'd be interested in, then please drop me a line. I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Club training is a massively important part of our club, as it's proved for so many of our members during these troubled times. It would be a tragedy to lose it. Please give it some thought.

On On

Chair

Press and Publicity

James Saunders bows out



It's often mentioned to me how good our press reports are, not just from runners but from members of the public as well. It was only last week that someone from Newton Spurs FC stopped me to say what a great job whoever it was, was doing.

Sadly, James is calling it a day, he's going to continue to write them till the end of the year, after which he's going to take a well earned break. What a fantastic job he's done over the past 3 1/2 years. He's certainly done the club proud - thank you James.

It's an important role within the club, keeping a high profile of the club in the public eye. I'm certain it's helped attract many new members. Some of those large team photos of us all wearing our new club kit look particularly striking.

There is now an opportunity for someone to take over the role until the AGM in February. It could prove to be a nice way to establish if it's the job for you.

There are certain do's and don'ts that come with the role of press and publicity officer, if you are interested, I (or I'm sure James) will be more than happy to go through them with you and to explain how the reports/photos are loaded onto our website.

On On

Chair

Captains' Corner

While Ladies' Captain, Lucy Evans takes a break from the role, Natalie Cusack has bravely volunteered to step up. Here we find out what makes Natalie tick.....

How long have you been running?

I started running when I moved to Devon in 2015. I wanted to spend more time outdoors, so running seemed like a good side hobby to do. Six years later, I can't imagine my life without running in it as it forms such a large part of it.

Favourite distance and local running route?

My favourite distance to race is the marathon. I enjoy both road and trail marathon. Trail marathon is more of a day enjoying the outdoors, whilst road marathon running is more for the achievement and time.

My favourite running route is probably a 5 mile route from my house, up to Teignmouth Golf Course and back into Bishopsteignton. There is a section going downhill into Bishop which overlooks Dartmoor, and on a summer evening it's a great place to see the sunset and race back to the house before it gets dark.

Greatest running achievement to date?

Probably 2019 Race to the Stones 100km. I trained for 9 months for this race. I wanted to finish before it got dark and managed to complete in 12hrs 26mins. Finished with no blisters or injury either, which was a result in itself.

When did you join the Teignbridge Trotters?

I joined in 2018 (I think).

Why did you volunteer for the Ladies' Captain role?

After watching the hard work my partner Joe puts into his role as Coach Coordinator, I decided it was my turn to volunteer some time! We have all had a miserable couple of years with Covid, lockdowns and cancelled races, I thought it would be nice to step forward and do my bit to contribute to a 2022 year filled with team events, challenges and relays. We have an abundance of strong and experienced female runners in our club, it would be really great to team up at a few more events and really make a mark for the Trotters! Finally, I have also volunteered as a bit of a personal challenge, I really struggle with social anxiety, so I am trying to step out of my comfort zone.

What do you hope to achieve in your role over the coming months?

I hope to put together a race plan for 2022, finding out team relays races, ekidens and events the Teignbridge Trotters ladies can represent. I do love a good year plan.

Any personal running ambitions?

I would like to complete a 100mile race in the next few years. I am aiming to run a GFA marathon to try get entry to London as well.



Thanks Nat

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP



Club Champion Secretary Graydon Widdicombe provides an update

Well, it appears that we have at least managed to put on some sort of competition this year, and despite a couple of last minute changes to the schedule due to race cancellations, I am hoping that the remaining races go ahead and we can complete the year. The Cockington Christmas Caper is in this year's competition, I believe for the first time ever, as a replacement race; I have done the event a couple of times before, and it is a great race in the lead-up to the festive period.

I have had a few technical issues getting the software to work with 2021's amended race format, which has meant I haven't been as quick at doing updates as usual, but hopefully I am on top of that now. As always, if you spot any errors with what I have published please contact me directly via Facebook or email and I will look into them.

From my own point of view, I was at Torbay Half and it was great to see so many Trotters in attendance. Ian Langler and I were having a chat in the start area and we both commented that it felt like the first proper race in a long time, and that it was great to pin on a race number, feel a bit of pre-race nerves and get the competitive juices flowing. It is always a popular race for Trotters and this year was no exception.

In terms of the competitions (at the time of writing - 11/10/2021), Garry Smart is again in fine form, and Garry, alongside Alan Kember and Neil Rutley were the only three Trotters who completed the Rock Hard Half, which looked to be a very tough race. Roger Easterbrook is running well, although Bob Small did nick a point off of Roger at our own Sandygate Loop. For the ladies, Deb Hart currently looks to be the one to beat, but there is still some way to go yet, with some great races still to be run and many points up for grabs.

It does look like numbers of finishers of the competition will be down this year, but I hope those that are having a go at the club championship are getting something out of it in terms of motivation, testing themselves amongst some friendly competition and, of course, having some fun along the way.

A quick note also that the John Scott Trophy date has been confirmed now - it will take place on Sunday 12th December. I need to start thinking about the races for next year at some point, so let's hope some more of our local favourites are back on the agenda!

Cheers for now,

Graydon, Club Championship Secretary

Club Membership

Membership Secretary Kevin Besford gives us the lowdown



I am writing this with a degree of excitement having been back myself to partake in a Monday night session for the first time for many months after more than my fair share of injury and set backs.

It was certainly very pleasant to be back and taking part in the first of our new Beginners runs, being very ably taken on by Skins; for those of who don't know that is John Skinner.

I did once say to someone that I seemed to be doing things the wrong way round in that you should start in the beginners and work your way up!

I am sure the new sessions will be a great boon to the club and be very popular both for absolute beginners and those on the comeback from a long lay off.

It is great to be able to run again from the club's home and is good to see so many of you there again on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Joe and his team have come up with the usual variety of sessions and hopefully we will continue to have a strong enough team of coaches and leaders moving forward.

We are, as I write, part way through the membership renewal cycle and whilst we are still experiencing some issues with the online system, it is thankfully not nearly as much as last year and most are renewing easily. Despite what has happened over the last 18 months, our membership levels have stayed at a satisfactory level and currently stand at 272, down from a high of 360. I am sure that over time this will increase before the next renewal cycle in October 2022.

It has been normal in the past to have a write-up of many new members but that has unfortunately been one of the down sides over recent months. My own absence from training has meant I have an awful lot of catching up to do in meeting the many new faces and getting to know a bit about them all.

If you are reading this as a new member in the last couple of months then please feel free to send me a few details about yourself for the next newsletter and inclusion on the website.

So rather than me just putting a list of names here of new members, I thought I would just highlight a small number of returning members who have been away for a while for whatever reason.

Steve (Ronnie) Barker has returned to the fold after an injury layoff and Ben Epps has come back to join us from Haldon Forest Flyers. Also Janelle Penfold has returned and will be joining me back in the beginners.

Membership news continued

I look forward to getting to know everyone new (and old) over the coming weeks and months. I will be a regular on Mondays apart from committee nights but cannot commit to all Wednesdays.

Is there anyone out there who would like to informally offer a hand with the membership?

A prime part of the role is just being there to welcome new runners on nights when I cannot be.

Nothing overly onerous.



It's happy birthday to a small number of members who celebrate notable birthdays coming up in October, November and December:

Andrew Rattlidge 40, Simon Sherlock 40, Stephen (Ronnie) Barker 50,

Becky George 55 and Chairman Roger Hayes 55.

To all of you enjoy racing in your new age category whenever and wherever that may be.

So, to finish on a positive note. Over the years I have had the pleasure of getting and presenting many club record awards. Now that racing is returning on a more regular basis, I have had to request from our engravers on one visit, four club record trophies. Is this a sign of the improvements to come over the coming year?

On On,

Kevin Besford

Membership Secretary

JOHN SCOTT TROPHY NEWS

This year's event will be held on Sunday 12th December at 3pm.

For those of you who are new to the Club, the John Scott Trophy is a great Trotter-only race. It's a 4-mile handicap event. In advance of the race your individual start time will be calculated (based on recent 3k, 5k, 10k, or Sandygate Loop times), with the aim being that all runners cross the finish line within a few minutes of each other. Closer to the event, Graydon will put a post on our Facebook page asking for your times so that he can calculate the start times. You'll have until 7pm on Friday 10th December to let him know.

The course itself starts on the bridge just past the Sandygate Inn, Kingsteignton, and takes runners up a two-mile section towards Gappah, following quiet country lanes. Then, runners turn around and run back the way they came, to the finish. It's a great course as you're always in sight of other runners, either on their way out or on their way back, and of course, the element of friendly competition makes it all the more enjoyable.



Entry into the race is a festively-wrapped present worth £5 (that you bring with you to the race), and then after the event it's a chance to socialise with fellow Trotters over a festive meal and a drink. The person who crosses the finish line in first place gets the first pick of the presents on offer, the second over the line gets second pick, and so on.

The festive roast dinner will be at The Rec at 4.30pm. The cost of the two-course meal is £12 and your menu choices will need to be made in advance for Nicki and her team.

You can book your roast dinner (and make your menu choices) and pay the £12 on our website, where you find Club kit etc, from 1st November. You'll have until Friday 3rd December to book your meal.

Liz and Nigel



SOCIAL NEWS

AWARDS NIGHT 2021 (in 2022!)



It's that time again!

Time to celebrate all our fantastic running achievements of 2021.

Presentation evening for 2021 will be held on Saturday 15th January 2022, at our spiritual home, The Rec, at 7pm sharp. Presentation of the awards is followed by the legendary Trotter disco - a chance to bust some moves or strut your stuff. There'll be a buffet too.

Tickets are just £10 each and will go on sale online at 7pm on Monday 15th November - you'll find the link on the home page of our website.



John Skinner

Return of the mighty Skins

Those Trotters that are long enough in the tooth know the feeling I'm sure. After 30 years of pounding the lanes and moors, lethargy finally sets in. Gone is the body that was once constructed almost entirely of muscle, cartilage and attitude. Its replacement? A flabby bulk that finds itself incapable of heaving its sorry self off the sofa. The allure of donning the kit, venturing out in all weathers, to then moronically pound the streets, has finally lost its appeal. Even the promise of a few pints and a hearty meal, surrounded by likeminded souls in the REC on a Wednesday night can't swing it. In short I could no longer be arsed. Well this was me post COVID, I'm sure I was not alone.

And so it was one bleak winter's morning, I witnessed my denuded body, in the full length mirror mocking its miserable reflection. I swear the belly button perched on the summit of my newly acquired portly midriff was sneering back at me. The brace of Trotters depicted in the form of the club tattoo, scrawled across my upper arm wore a smirk of derision. Clearly urgent action was needed. I know, thought I, I'll go for a run! Tomorrow..... Well the tomorrows passed lazily, and soon the tomorrows drifted into misty yesterdays.

And so it came to pass, one fine summer's morning that I became aware of a distinct irritation on my arm. The pair of athletes imprisoned in the aforementioned tattoo, were actually attempting to escape the apathy of their semi-dormant host in order to take up residence on a worthier limb. Every time Deborah left the house for a run, the itching reached crescendo. It was clear that the tattoo wanted to jump ship. There's loyalty for you! Five DDs I've taken you on! I bellowed at my tattooed companions. On reflection I think this episode probably was the turning point. After all having a row with a picture on one's arm can hardly be viewed as a healthy situation.

As luck would have it, help was lurking just around the corner in the shape, form and fashion of the Erme Valley Relays, probably my favourite event. Something about competing in a team for the club you love, within the context of a largely individual sport, has a joyfully quirky appeal. In fact if you only race once next year I suggest you make it the Erme Valley Relays, it's my belief that it should be included in the club champs. 2 and a half miles, what could possibly go wrong? In the event it all passed rather smoothly, the tiny glitch in the mid reaches of my leg, where I actually died, aside, it was all completely spiffing! So the enthusiasm, though pricked needed more, however the fires had definitely been stoked. I was reminded of a couple of things that day. Number 1... As a wise old chap once said. 'The thing about running is it's really, really hard'. Number 2... As another wise old chap once observed 'run like mad and 'ang on' well those days were well and truly behind me, consigned to the history books.

So it came to pass one fine autumnal morning that I find myself holding the reins of the Teignbridge Trotters beginners group, ably assisted by the mighty Kev Besford. A new start we could say. What with me and Deborah planning on getting hitched in 2023, watch this space, whoever knows what's around the corner. Life's rich tapestry we could say.

Looking out of the window now, the Newton Abbot gloom cloaking the townscape, thin rain slanting out of a slate sky, I'm reminded of the sheer joy of running. And so it is with great joy and relish that I venture out tonight sharing a new beginning with my fellow Trotters.

On on! Remember, it's living.

**The Happy Couple
Congrats!!!!**



A MATTER OF TIME

Club Chairman Roger Hayes on timing chips

We've done the race timing manually for all our races from the very first Haytor Heller, over 30 years ago! This year, because of Covid, we were left with no other alternative but to hire a firm called Timing Monkey to supply us with chip timing at the Heller. It wasn't cheap, over £1000, but boy did it save a lot of stress and manpower.

This got the committee thinking once again about using chip timing at all of our races. We've discussed the subject a number of times over recent years, normally after the Totnes 10K, which would benefit from having it massively. 600 runners crossing the finish line, all within less than an hour apart is no easy task - believe me. The fun run is even worse!

I put together a small working party consisting of Graydon, John Caunter and myself. Having done some research, I found a company in Italy called IDchronos who ticked most of our boxes. One of their customers was Chepstow Harriers Running Club. I spoke to one of their members who uses the equipment; he spoke very highly of the company and offered to show us first hand how it works.

We then had a zoom call with Riccardo, the owner of the IDchronos. He spoke excellent English and we learnt a lot more about the equipment and what it was capable of and how much it would cost.

Graydon, John and myself travelled up to Yorkley (a small village about half an hour on from Chepstow) towards the end of September. We stayed for a couple of hours whilst Paul very kindly went through everything. The timing mats are robust and velcroed together, giving you the option to create a start line of varying distance. The timing chips are bought on rolls of 500 and stuck onto the backs of the race numbers. The accuracy rates were impressive, coming out at over 99%. It was recommended by Riccardo and Paul that we video the finish line as back up, just in case a runner slips through undetected.



Impressively accurate timing chips!



Timing mats

Timing chips continued

Live results can be transmitted back to Race HQ and displayed on a tv screen. These are updated pretty much as each runner crosses the finish line.

One of Chepstow Harriers' members has designed a timing software programme which they use alongside the IDchronus equipment. We also saw this in operation and were equally impressed. Jeff, the man that designed it, very kindly offered it to us free of charge for us to use at our races. It's hoped that we'll be able to use it at the Sibelco Templer Ten for the first time.

We then reported our findings back to the committee and proposed that we go ahead with the purchase. A vote was taken and resulted in a unanimous decision in favour of proceeding.

The order has been placed and it should be with us before Christmas. We hope to arrange a few mock races with our members to test it out before its big reveal at the DD next June.

It was felt that a small team of 4 or 5 members would be needed who could learn how to set it up and use it. That way we could ensure that there was someone in charge of it at each of our races who knew what they were doing. This would reduce the risk of things getting broken or misplaced.

Ian Langer and Liz Barnett have already kindly put themselves forward. If this is something you would like to get involved with, please drop me a line.

I feel we have taken a huge stride in taking our races to the next level. I think we'll probably say, after a few races, that we should have done it years ago!

On On

Chair



Live results transmitted back to HQ

Bob Small

Totnes 10k Race Director, Bob, shares his experiences of this year's race



TOTNES 10K – SUNDAY 1ST AUGUST 2021

I think it may have been in this very magazine, in the summer of 2019, that I saw an appeal for a new Race Director for the Totnes 10K; for the life of me I still can't understand what possessed me to answer that appeal – some misguided notion of 'giving something back' or some other highfalutin idea. I must have thought that, having organised events for a living for the past 35 years or so, how hard can it be? Two years on and I'm older and a lot wiser!

Anyway, back to 2019; the long-term booking arrangements with all the necessary organisations for the 2020 race were well in hand before Christmas but gradually we all became aware of Coronavirus, or Covid 19 as it became known, which was starting to make its way across the world and into the UK. In March of 2020, the first lockdown came into force and, looking back at emails, I see that on the 18th May it was, reluctantly, agreed to cancel that year's race – not an encouraging start to my tenure.

Work started on the 2021 race in about October '20; but even at that time it was far from certain that the race would go ahead but, nonetheless, all necessary arrangements and agreements were in place by Christmas but uncertainty lingered on way into 2021 – in fact until about 14 days before the race! The DD and Haytor Heller both went ahead and I have to say that I'm much in awe of the extra work that Chair and Nige did, with all their helpers, to stage these races in very difficult circumstances. They should be very proud of what they achieved.

Covid made the staging of the Totnes 10K, in some ways, much more simple; if the final lifting of the lockdown on July 19th was extended into August then the race could not have taken place as the Sports Centre could not have acted as the HQ and Dartington Estate were not going to allow groups of larger than 30 onto their land. In fact, the final stage of lockdown was lifted on the 19th July so at last, just 14 days before the due date, we knew we had a race on our hands!

Race Director continued

The final few weeks before an event of this nature are always a bit manic but we, Assistant Race Director Ruth Johnson and I, then had a couple of sudden 'curve balls' to deal with. The first was the very late and completely unheralded decision by Dartington Estate to implement a £3.00 charge on all runners passing through the Estate. Personally, I do not have a problem with the principle of this charge but, at that very late stage, it seriously challenged the overall financial outcome of this year's event. Fortunately, with very careful diplomacy, the CEO of the Estate, Alan Boldon, was moved to agree that, for this year only, the charge would be suspended; it will nonetheless come into force next year.

The second, and very late, difficulty was over the opening of varying gates on the Estate to allow runners to pass through unhindered. After lengthy email 'discussions' and an on-site meeting just 4 days before the event, everything was agreed by both parties. So, we breathed a huge sigh of relief and pushed on for the last few days.

I think it's worth noting how Covid has changed attitudes in many areas of life and, specifically, in relationship to running events around the country. Many Park Run venues have found that managers of the local park or estate are reluctant for them to start again, citing any number of issues which, prior to Covid, would not have caused a raised eyebrow – a number of events in Devon have been subject to such difficulties. At a time when obesity has such a high profile and pressure on the NHS is so well documented, why is it that managers of parks and estates can have so much of 'a dog in the manger' approach when the very health of the nation is at stake? The cost of tackling obesity is huge and so the opportunity for everyone to run or walk 5K on a Saturday morning should be encouraged by all. Enough said....

About a week before the race, Chair suggested we have a chat to check that all was in place; he was extremely perceptive and raised any number of very pertinent points, some of which I could answer and some I couldn't – passing them onto Ruth who just said, 'Yes, all done!'. Chair had said that on the day, time will pass so quickly that in no time at all it will all be over.

As the day of the race approached, Ruth Johnson was at her whirlwind very best; Ruth covers so much ground: organising officials in the start/finish area; organising the drinks stations; purchasing all the necessary food for the barbecue; purchasing bananas for all finishers; purchasing prizes for the women's awards; purchasing chocolates for the Fun Runners; liaising with Chief Marshal Alan Boone and many other last minute things as well. Ruth was a huge comfort to me as well; whenever I showed a sign of worry, she would just say 'Bob, everything will be OK so don't worry!' She was, of course, completely right!

The Wednesday recce run went off very well and afterwards everyone enjoyed a really good meal in one of Totnes's hostelrys, organised by Nige Barnett. That very night the 10K sold out with 625 entries.

Race Director continued

On the Saturday afternoon before the race I had arranged to meet Nigel Barnett and Nathan Elphick at the lock-up to help load the van with all the necessary equipment; arriving early, I parked the car and promptly fell asleep! The next thing I knew Nige was standing by the driver's door window making inane comments at me – I all but jumped out of my skin with shock! They had nearly decided to do all the necessary loading and, when finished, only then come and wake me up - but they took pity on this poor soul, waking me in time to help!

The day of the race arrived and everything just happened! People arrived when they said they'd arrive; the portaloos arrived; the PA system arrived; the medical cover team arrived; the scaffolding for the finish area arrived. Volunteers arrived to help with setting up the finish area; the gazebos for the BBQ, the beer tent and the catering area. Signage around the course was put in place.

Registration in the sports hall, laid out the previous day, was in full swing with on the day entries for the Fun Run and collection of numbers for the 10K. Alan Boone's marshals all arrived and made their way out to their allotted places and, just as Chair had said, the day was under way in no time at all.

The one mile Fun Run was over very quickly and the 10K went off on time; the presentation of prizes for the Fun Run was completed whilst the 10K was underway. And then the runners in the 10K began to return and, in a flash, it was time for the presentation of the prizes for that race. Then it was all over – finished! Yes, a lot of clearing up had to be done but the job was done and there were a lot of happy runners on their way home.

The title of Race Director sounds rather grand but, in fact, there are many other people who deserve so much credit for their part in the staging of the day. Ruth Johnson of course; Alan Boone in his role as Chief Marshal; Nigel Barnett and Nathan Elphick for their great help in bringing everything from the lock-up to the site and setting up the finish area and everything else on Borough Park – then taking it all down again and returning it to the lock-up; John 'Skins' Skinner for his entertaining monologue on the PA keeping us all informed and amused at the same time; our Secretary Liz Barnett for all her work on the website, collating all entries, masterminding on the day registration and much more besides; Ian Langler for his work on the results; Lucy Payne for all her work on the cake stall; Roger Easterbrook for his general help and setting up the BBQ – and then running in the race as well! Chair for always being available to help or pass comment on developments and keeping a general overview; Totnes Caring for looking after the bag drop area and manning the finish area handing out medals and drinks; and finally, all the volunteer marshals who do such a great job around the course. Without any one of these people life would be so much harder and I can't thank you all enough for your time and help. In the last few weeks I've seen a lot of people who ran in the race and they've all said what a great race it is and what a great event it is – 'so friendly, well organised and surprisingly inexpensive to enter' – so that's testament to all of you who helped on the day.

Race Director continued

So to summarise: we had 153 entries in the Fun Run with 129 finishing; 625 entries in the 10K with 543 finishing; two course records were broken in the 10K – Abigail Leiper from Morpeth Harriers broke Annabelle Evans' U18 record in recording 46.38 and Jenny Reay from Exmouth Harriers broke the FV60 record in posting 49.46. We made another £2,000.00 donation to our charity which brings the total amount donated to Totnes Caring over 22 years to £24,555.00.

Roll on next year!

Bob Small

Wednesday 1st September 2021

Marathon Marvels

Two of our Trotters share their amazing London Marathon feats.....

The London Marathon 2021: Jacki Woon



The London Marathon seems to be a rite of passage for runners. Non-runners often think it's the only marathon there is and only give you any credibility if you've done it, despite how many any other marathons you might have done. It certainly is an experience and this year's was a particularly special one for me.

It was a long wait to get to the start line of the 2021 London Marathon. I got a GFA place from doing the Yeovil Marathon in June 2018, then deferred in 2019 because Pikey got a GFA place for 2020 so I agreed to accompany her for her first London experience. 2020 was obviously then cancelled, although I did it virtually, and then we come to October 2021.

I did London in 2012 and 2013, and wasn't desperate to repeat it as there are too many people for my dislike of crowds. With the pandemic that dislike has increased, but this year's London Marathon was different in so many ways.

There were no baggage trucks to take your belongings from the start to the finish. We were sent a bag in which we put any items we might want at the end (food, warm clothing etc) which we delivered to the Excel Centre when we collected our numbers. Our finishers t-shirts and medals were added to the bag along with bottles of water and Lucozade and we were to collect them at the race finish.

Pikey and I went up to London on the Friday afternoon and spent some time exploring Greenwich, where we were staying, and getting some food and wine (it was Friday after all). We got up early on Saturday morning and did a short run around Blackheath to check where we were meeting the other Trotters on Sunday morning for the club photo. Then we headed off to the Excel to deposit our bags and collect our numbers. Fortunately it wasn't too busy and we didn't have to queue. We went around the Expo, which was disappointingly small this year, but we managed to buy souvenir t-shirts and Pikey got her leg taped up. We grabbed some food then headed back to the hotel for a lazy afternoon.

That evening we went for a meal with Julian Scanes and his wife Jen, and Paul Sharples. Obviously there was lots of talk about running in addition to the carb loading but we all headed back for an early, if sleepless, night.

On Sunday morning Pikey and I headed up to Blackheath and met up with the other Trotters for the photo. Only 11 club runners this year, possibly a record low. I know there were some who would have loved to have been there but for one reason or another it wasn't possible.

We had all been allocated Assembly areas. I was in the yellow area with Chairman, Julian, Mike Hooper and James Saunders. It was the area for GFA runners in their 50s. Pikey was in the blue area with Allen Taylor and other GFA runners in their 40s.

London Marathon Jacki continued

It was chilly waiting around but the time passed as we chatted and then we were called over for the off. We discarded our surplus clothing into allocated tubs for recycling/charity donations. Then suddenly our wave was off. I still felt chilly but soon warmed up. Julian, James and Mike were immediately out of sight. Chair ran off ahead but I could see him. I knew I'd gone off fast. A 3:30 marathon is 8 minute miling, but at London you always do more than 26.2 miles so you need to go sub 8 to achieve it. My first few miles were around 7:40. I felt good but thought I was going too fast to sustain.

Of the 8 marathons I'd done prior to this one, 5 of them were between 3:31:15 -3:35:28, the PB of 3:31:15 being at London in 2013. A sub 3:30 has eluded me since then and being another 8 years older I'd lost hope. Although friends had told me I was running well this year, and I'd managed to stay injury and illness free, I just didn't think it would ever happen.

Between miles 3-4 our group merged with another and suddenly there were more runners around. I caught up with Chair and realised that I'd done that mile in 7:10. Chair said that he was aiming for just under 3:30 too as he was saving something back for the Eden Project Marathon the following weekend. He commented that the pace was quite fast. We continued to run together. His watch was clocking the miles just before mine, and both were before the official mile markers. Around the Cutty Sark and on Tower Bridge the crowds were huge, despite the pandemic and requests for spectators to watch from home, and there was so much noise. All along the route there are bands or people playing music. I wouldn't like to be standing near some of them all day, it must be deafening, but passing them by is a huge motivation and you can't help but smile.

Chair saw Tim Pratt on Tower Bridge and we also spotted Jen at one point. We got overtaken by a couple dressed as a camel and also a guy running in flip flops with a backpack and a blanket. Kudos to them, but a bit demotivating when you're running your hardest without those hindrances!

We'd gone over half way when Chair asked how I was feeling. I'd just been thinking about this. I felt I was really pushing the pace and it was hard but I'd come this far and felt that a sub 3:30 might actually be achievable. The weather was perfect, I wasn't too hot or feeling chilly. I knew it was going to be a challenge but thought it's now or never. Chair still had the mental capacity to work out what was needed to achieve a sub 3:30 - my mind was struggling to string much coherent thought together.

As my watch buzzed the 19th mile, I was shocked to see that the pace showed as 6:40! I'd struggle to do a mile at that pace on a standard day! I looked at Chair and he had obviously just seen his pace too, although I think his said 7:10. I thought my Garmin signal must have dropped out or something. I have no idea what happened there but it still shows as 6:40 on Garmin and Strava for that mile!

I have difficulty taking fuel on board during long runs. I had some water at several stations but just took a sip and washed my mouth out. I had a swig of Lucozade at one station too, but that was it.

We got to mile 20. 'This is when the race starts', said Chair. I remember Noel Fowler, a former Trotter member and experienced marathon runner, saying that a marathon is a 20 mile warm up for a 10k race. I was beginning to ache and could feel myself leaning to the right for some reason. My feet were sore. Only 6 more miles!

Soon after that Chair said he was going to cruise in for the rest of the way and leave me to it. He gave me some positive words of encouragement, including saying, 'Stay composed', which I kept repeating to myself.

London Marathon Jacki continued

As the miles clocked by I felt myself drifting into a daze, just focussing on the finish. Now and again I'd think 'I want to stop' but then another part of mind would say no, stop now, even for a second, and it will be too hard to get going again. Just put one foot in front of the other and keep at it. It's only 3 miles, 2 miles etc, you can do that. It's like running from home down to the Rec. Easy peasy. You can't give up on this now, you're so close. You've come this far, just keep it going. One foot in front of the other. Pain is temporary, success is forever.

I could feel myself leaning to the right more and more and my body was aching from it but I couldn't straighten myself up. I couldn't do anything but keep running. I knew I had it, as long as I didn't hit the wall. The miles were getting slower, 8:16, 7:55, 8:18, but I had some leeway. At one point I heard my name and managed to look up to see Tim. He had his hand held out and was shouting words of encouragement, although I have no idea now what he said. I tapped my hand against his and perked up for a bit.

Then there was a marker saying 800 metres to go. That's not far, I thought. Turns out it is after 26 miles! It seemed like forever before I turned the corner in front of Buckingham Palace and saw the finish. The sprint finish I'd envisioned earlier on didn't happen - it was more of a lopsided stumble.

As I approached the finish gantry I just looked for the timing mat so that I knew I had crossed it and could stop and turn off my watch. I'd done it! My Garmin said 3:27:12. I couldn't believe it. I didn't know whether to cry or laugh. I grabbed a foil blanket and found a lamppost to lean on. I looked around to see if I could see Chair finish but didn't.

My Garmin buzzed. A message from my sister: 'Think we just saw you finish on TV. Interview at finish line and you ran cross the line!!! Hope you are ok'.

I straightened myself up, still half smiling and half crying, in disbelief but euphoric too, and headed toward my bag collection point. The 2 ladies there were so lovely, asking me how I got on and congratulating me - no doubt doing the same to every runner but it felt very personal. I pulled the blanket around me, got the bottle of water out of my bag and headed off to the point where I'd arranged to meet Pikey.



Sweet success! Jacki and Pikey

London Marathon Jacki continued

Everywhere people were smiling and the atmosphere was charged with emotion. My phone was continuously buzzing. I talked to complete strangers as I walked, feeling a common bond that brought us all together - a sense of achievement.

I got to our meeting point which was under some trees and I was starting to feel cold so changed into my finishers to-shirt and hoodie and started to read the messages on my phone. I replied to some of them then Pikey phoned as she couldn't find our meeting place. She was soon there and we were in tears again and hugging. She had loved the experience, finishing in 3:48 which whilst not a PB it was only a few minutes off and was fantastic since her injury which played up around mile 17.

We asked a guy nearby to take a photo then set off for the tube and our journey home, talking about our day for most of the way.

It's 3 days later as I write this. I'm welling up as I remember it. I'm still aching a bit, including my back from leaning to the side so much, but I'm recovering. So it's true what they say: pain is temporary (not quite temporary enough, mind you), but success lasts forever and I won't be forgetting that anytime soon. I also broke my own marathon club record by over 8 minutes and whilst I'm sure that won't last forever, it is there for the time being.

Special thanks to Chair for his company and support, Pikey for being my marathon weekend buddy, and the Baps for always being there for training and friendship.

Good luck to everyone with your running goals - believe in yourself and never think you're too old for a PB!



London triumph

Marathons: it's simply a question of time Adam Johnstone

This story began on April 8, 2018, I look up as I cross the line, the clock above my head reads 02:50:29 and I've just completed my first sub-3-hour marathon, in Taunton. It's a shock.

Three thoughts occur to me in quick succession, firstly, wow that was a lot faster than I'd planned, secondly, that this is the good for age (GFA) time needed for the London Marathon qualification taken care of ...and most surprising of all, I knew I could still go faster...!

I had completed the race almost ten minutes quicker than my goal...*a lifetime*...this was the *one-day time*, the time I had almost dared to dream of, almost. It was the time that inspired me to even attempt marathons, in the first place. It was the holy grail and I'd wondered if I could ever achieve this...*but not today*...not mid training block and not as a pre-cursor to the Dartmoor Discovery Ultra Marathon, this was completely accidental.

The thing about marathon running is that it gives you plenty of time, time to think throughout your preparation and to ponder while you tick off the weekly, then monthly mileage. Have you ever wondered why *awesome* is perceived positively whereas *awful* is negative? What exactly is the *second oldest trick in the book*? Is it better to be a *wise man* or a *wise guy*? What's the opposite of *nothing*?, *anything*?, *something*? or *everything*? and the ever present question in most of our heads while running long distances should I be running *faster or slower*?

If such things interest you? or perhaps you feel that now is a good time to consider such matters, then perhaps marathon running could be your thing. You will quickly establish that you must run each race with your head and similar holds true for the long often sociable training runs necessary to achieve our goals and which typically punctuate each weekend.

I would whole heartedly recommend the camaraderie and shared experience for those willing to invest. Every runner has their own unique story and none of us achieves any of our goals in isolation. A huge thank you to everyone that has contributed towards mine. Those who have, inspired, showed and shared the miles with me, offered advice, rehabilitated, given encouragement, and especially those who have challenged me, along the way.



You may envision a marathon as being about the distance covered. The coveted almost mythical 26 miles, 385 yards and for anyone who has ran a marathon before, the physiological landmarks that mark this rite of passage, and which are almost universally experienced by every runner along the way. The adrenaline and ease of the opening few exciting miles, the middle; where you stop racing others and begin to race yourself, the ever-expanding GPS watch updates that punctuates every mile covered, the interval between each notification becoming increasingly longer than the last, then there's *the wall* (the point at which all energy evaporates from the body, often without warning), the dream like state which follows (should you survive) and which precedes the finish line and the often light headed heavy legged "*just hang on*" stage, between.

Adam in training at the Totnes 10k

The London Marathon 2021: Adam Johnstone continued

For me marathons aren't measured by distance or even in the series of events our bodies experience as we transition through each race. Marathons are a measure of time. You see everything takes longer; longer training runs, longer recovery between runs, and especially the duration necessary between races. Such events are irrespective of the biggest wait of all. The waiting for discovery of what might transpire over the following 180 minutes or less, on race day once the gun fires. Because even I have no idea what might happen...after 20 minutes I might possess a vague perception that everything is working (as I find my rhythm); at 60 minutes, I might begin to relax, then on a good day I might start to feel stronger (and begin to press) after 90 minutes; but I won't trust any of this process until I pass beyond 120 minutes without incident, it is not until this point and I can begin the countdown.

It is the ticking off the minutes, until I can be confident, or as sure as I can be that I won't be overtaken by *the wall*. That I can outrun any fatigue, should it become necessary, that I will be stronger, strong enough. This is what matters, even while racing there is always plenty of time, time to take it all in, time to make tactical changes, time to enjoy the race itself, for some there's even time to chat because this is a collective experience, and this is what I love most.

As race day draws closer, training becomes less and less about the quest for increased fitness and more and more about calibration of effort and the striving to remain relaxed throughout the process. The pursuit and refinement of efficiency, of doing more with less. Runs are no longer about seeking speed but are about finding controlled comfort and zen.

Fast forward past all the pondered questions, the miles covered, the shoes replaced, and the training completed. Its now 1274 days since Taunton Marathon (a lot of time has passed). I am finally here, the London Marathon. I stand in the race pen, ready to start and once again I am counting down the minutes. This time, I am counting them down so I can forget all about time and simply run.

To be released without the burden of time or distance. We are all tightly packed together. I look around, some people look nervous, others focussed. A smile passes between me and a fellow runner...this is it! It's a rolling start, we jog as one collective making our way towards the line. We are off, we are all running, we are all together. I am almost ready to forget about time, completely, but not quite yet.

We cross the start line, it is time! We push, we tick off the first few mile markers, I check in with my body...*I feel good*. I look at my watch and check in with my head "*why am I going so fast? How am I going so fast? Am I actually going this fast and most important of all, will this all last?*"... sometime later I check back in again I *still* feel fine. So be it, the calibration is almost complete, I forget about the clock and miles and take in the race. The mantra train hard, race easy feels apt. I've set my pace and now I'm beginning to carve my way through the field. I want this feeling to last, to remain for as long as possible. I see fellow Trotters, friends and training partners along the route and hear support shouted from the crowd, as *en masse*, we run together and strive towards the finish line.

The London Marathon 2021: Adam Johnstone continued

In the meantime, there are still many thoughts to mull over such as movie double bills unlikely to ever see the light of day: (Who Framed Roger Rabbit? The Man Who Wasn't There); (Schindler's List/Lost in Translation); (The Shining /Rear Window), (What's Eating Gilbert Grape?/Jaws); (Good Will Hunting/True Romance); (Fargo/Argo)...etc.

This time, after the contemplation is over, when I look up and cross the finish line, I see 2:47:47...I've done it! Three thoughts occur to me as I do so, firstly, I've finally completed the London Marathon, secondly, I've officially ran a new personal best and thirdly, this time I couldn't have done any more, not today.

Later, as it turns out I actually finished in a time of 2:42:39 (owing to the staggered start). I'm told this means I have qualified for a *championship place*. So, I now have two more new questions, *what is a Championship place* and *can I go faster next time?*

There will be plenty of time to figure out such questions. I've no doubt they will be joined by many others during the training runs to come. This time, hopefully I won't need to wait another 1000 days to find the answers. While I try, its likely I will fall short numerous times before I succeed. This is the marathon runners' lot and the reward for the whole process. Hopefully given time, perseverance, and patience it is a question of *when* rather than *if* and is a question I will be able to answer in the affirmative soon but then again, it's all just a matter of time anyway and after all only time will tell, such things. On, on!



Adam in celebratory mood

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A huge thank you to all contributors to this edition of The Trotter and to Keith Anderson for his proofreading skills.

If you are thinking about writing something for The Trotter, please do! Whatever your running story, however far you run (or support), drop me a line at the above address. Its great to have a variety of contributors.

