

The Trotter

Issue 1 September 2020

The long road back to racing

Virtual vs actual races

Return to official training

News from behind the scenes

Welcome



Welcome to the latest issue of The Trotter Magazine. Much has happened since the last edition back in February. With so much uncertainty around, it's fantastic to see the return of formal training from our club home, The Rec in Newton Abbot. Check out our website for more information.

Whatever our personal goals, whether it's recovering from an injury, training for an extreme ultra, achieving a PB, or supporting from the side-lines, a shared love of running keeps us moving forward. And of course the friendship and support of fellow club members, as always, is invaluable. Enjoy the issue.

Ali Clayton



**BORN
TO
RUN**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

News

Hot off the press from this month's committee meeting ... 3

Report from behind the scenes during lockdown ... 4 & 5

Regulars

Club Championship ... 6

Coach Coordinator ... 7

Members' update ... 8

Features

Virtual v actual races - what's it all about? ... 9 & 10

Unsung hero - an interview with our club secretary ... 11 & 12

Alternative training - a diary during lockdown ... 13, 14, 15

Away runs - a competitive streak revealed ... 16

Race preparation - Bob Small shares his insights ... 17, 18, 19, 20

Contact details

Get in touch ... 21

NEWS: HOT OFF THE PRESS



Monday night training is back. After the great success of the month's worth of trial Wednesday night sessions, I'm delighted to announce that Monday's social runs will return, hopefully by the beginning of October. The sizes of all the groups will increase from six to eight, thus allowing more members to book onto a session. Such has been their popularity that most of the sessions were full within hours of becoming available.

Please arrive in plenty of time, check in with me and make your way onto the field at the back of the Rec. There is hand sanitiser and toilets are available.

There is a new chef at the Rec. I tried the food for the first time last week after training and very nice it was too. There is no need to book in advance, you can order your food once you're showered. And yes the changing rooms are back open! A bit of normality returning? Well let's hope so.

The 'rule of six' still applies to going for a run with your mates; please don't get that confused with the Trotters official Covid-secure training!

Hopefully see you soon on either a Monday or Wednesday night - or both!

Chair



Grub's back too! John Skinner tucks in.

NEWS AND ANALYSIS

Club Chairman Roger Hayes shares committee news



Ali, our new editor of the Trotter magazine, has asked me to write a piece about what went on behind the scenes during the pandemic. Before I do, I would just like to say how great it is that we are all able to read Ali's debut edition. Thank you Ali for taking on the role, it would have been tragic to lose such an important part of our club.

Right, onto my piece on behind the scenes. Let me take you back to the beginning, a date I remember well as I tore my right calf muscle on the last official Trotters training night - Monday March 16th. Seems a long time ago now!

On that day, Matt Hancock told the House of Commons that all unnecessary social contact should cease. I called the committee together for an emergency meeting on the 17th, it was to be our last face to face meeting. We decided to suspend all official training with immediate effect. It was a week later, on the 23rd March that Boris Johnson told the country that people must stay at home and certain businesses must close, effectively putting us into lockdown.

The Rec shut its doors along with thousands of other businesses throughout the UK. Everyone's lives changed, almost overnight, such was the speed of the new daily rules and regulations and the alarming rate the virus was sweeping the country.

During that emergency committee meeting in March, it was decided to cancel the Club Championship and the Dartmoor Discovery. Neither decision was an easy one to make but we had little alternative. It was the first year the DD had gone to online entries, having used Eventrac for the first time. We also decided to suspend entries for the Haytor Heller and Totnes 10K.

Making the 400+ DD refunds was a time consuming experience as each one had to be done individually, that included payments received for camping and the pasta party, hence the 400+ refunds. I'm pleased to say that the new system worked well and there were very few problems. Although it broke our Treasurer's heart to see all those thousands of pounds disappear from our account!

Our April committee meeting was a first for me - a Zoom meeting! Having to chair a meeting with 12 others was an interesting experience. It was something that over the following months I would get very used to, not only with the Trotters but with the Rec Trust as well.

A decision was taken during our May meeting to cancel the Heller and Totnes. I suggested staging a virtual Totnes 10K race but after much discussion this was rejected. Graydon did a grand job in organising a couple of Trotter quiz nights via Zoom. This was the first time many of us had seen our fellow club mates. A lovely time was had by one and all.

Committee News continued

During the pandemic many people took stock of their lives and adjusted/alterd them accordingly. Karen O'Brien was one such person. She decided to stand down as coach coordinator, a job she had done so well since taking over from Mark Walker. Joe Hornsby was formally accepted as Karen's replacement during our July meeting. In addition Ali Clayton was approved to become the new editor for the Trotter magazine.

It was during that July meeting that we decided to cancel the Ladies 10K. It wasn't all doom and gloom though as the virtual Totnes 10K got the green light! The entry fee was set at £8 and all profits would go to Totnes Caring. This was to prove a success with 114 taking part, allowing us to present Totnes Caring with a cheque for £456.

Unsurprisingly we didn't have a single new member join the club during lockdown.

With restrictions being loosened and new Government and EA guidelines being announced, I arranged an additional committee meeting in July where we discussed at length the prospect of retuning to some form of official training. Coaches/leaders and members were canvassed for their opinions and preferred choices.

Another additional meeting was arranged for the beginning of August. We discussed the data that the surveys had presented. It was clear that we didn't have enough coaches/leaders who were willing and able to cover both Monday and Wednesday night training. Therefore, as a result of members voting 53 to 46 in favour of Wednesday rather than Monday, it was agreed that Wednesday night training would start on the 12th August.

As you can imagine there was a whole host of things that needed to be put in place before the 12th. Myself and my small dedicated team of Joe, Gary Brooking and Graydon worked hard to establish an online booking system, create the various risk assessments and a coaching rota. I became the Covid coordinator, only because no one else fancied it, and we were good to go.

That first Wednesday I arrived at the Rec nice and early, set up my hand sanitiser station, checked my lists of members that had booked their place and waited for everyone to turn up. I have to admit I was rather excited at the prospect of seeing people I hadn't seen in months.

The night was a great success, social distancing was respected and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. It was the first step on the path to normality and I for one was thrilled to be back.

As I write this piece I have just learnt that Stover School won't be able to accommodate us this year for our Sibelco Templer Ten. That means all five of our races have fallen foul to coronavirus. What a year!

That pretty much brings you up to date with where we are now. I hope my report has given you an insight into what went on. No one knows for sure when we will reach the end of that path to normality but let's hope it's sooner rather than later.

On On

Chair

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Club Champion Secretary Graydon Widdicombe gives us the low down



Well, what a year this has been for the Club Championship. Nothing really got going, did it, with everything grinding to a halt in March. It's a shame we had to cancel this year's competition, but with races being pulled and Trotters not really being able to put anything on safely as a replacement, the decision was that we had to cancel.

It wasn't really a decision I suppose, as we had no option with the Government safety guidelines, but it's still a real shame as we know the competition is a favourite of many members.

Of course, I'm already thinking about next year, as is Eleanor (Taylor) who is busy trying to get races into the race diary. And the club's committee will be discussing the prospect of staging a competition in more detail at October's committee meeting.

Being honest, as it stands, I'm not sure what will happen next year. Usually, I go to Committee at November's meeting with a draft list of races, and after some discussion and any amendments, they get signed off there, in plenty of time to start the next year's competition. This means that late October/early November, Eleanor and I get our heads together to come up with a draft list of races, and to do that we usually have a very good idea of what races are happening in the first half of the following year, at the very least. Even races later in the year often fall on the same weekend each year so we can make a good start on any races we want to include.

The question is whether we will have that information in October/November this year? It remains to be seen I suppose, but it's likely that some Race Directors may be reluctant to put races on early next year, as it's possible some will want to avoid incurring expenses in case of cancellations. Or will some decide to move their events from the Spring to the Autumn/Winter to have a better chance of them going ahead? Or will some go ahead but with reduced entries, and if so, is that a fair race to include in a club competition?

At the moment we just don't know how things are going to progress, but if we can put some kind of competition on next year, we'll do our best to make it happen. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

Graydon Widdicombe
Club Championship Secretary

Coach Coordinator

Joe Hornsby describes his new club role

Hello, for those who don't know me, I am Joe Hornsby the new coach coordinator for the Teignbridge Trotters. I started this role in July, having taken over from the previous coordinator, Karen O'Brien. This little piece is about what the role of coach coordinator entails and what has been going on behind the scenes in the "new normal" training nights.

The main role of the coach coordinator is to ensure that training sessions go ahead as planned, so coordinating coaches/leaders for club nights through the use of online polls, to find out availability/preferences and then plan out training for the next 3 months is the main job. I try to ensure the coaches get an even spread of leading/coaching where possible. Then beyond that, the role is mainly keeping an eye out for last minute changes due to absence/illness/work commitments and trying to solve it when I can. That said, most of the time a selfless volunteer is willing to step in and help out. Finally, there are meetings held in which coaches can raise issues they may be encountering and suggesting possible solutions/improvements to the running of club nights.

The success (or failure) in the role of a coach coordinator, from my brief experience so far, is purely down to the self-sacrifice of the coaches and run leaders. Club nights genuinely depend on volunteers to work and without naming particular individuals, I am so grateful for the outstanding coaches and leaders who put themselves forward without hesitation to get involved and lead. I know that isn't an easy decision to make for most, particularly in this current situation.

For myself and the club, you have gone above and beyond to ensure Wednesday nights have run successfully. For that I am so thankful!

For more information about our fabulous coaches and leaders, please go to our website teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Club Membership

Membership Secretary Kevin Besford gives us an update

It is virtually a year since we had an edition of the Trotter Magazine and what a year it has been. Have any of us experienced a year like this one with all the problems caused by Covid-19?

At least we are now open for business again, albeit in a small way, with just pre-booked groups going out on a Wednesday. Hopefully by the time you read this, we will be doing something similar on Mondays and hopefully with larger groups and be well on the way to getting fully back to normal.

Understandably during the lockdown period and while we have been out of action, the arrival of new members has been non-existent. This has now started to slowly change and we have seen a small number of new faces. A bit more detail of these is further down this write-up.

Our membership renewal cycle will be underway very soon and the online system has already been set for the new year, which will take us to October 2021. Renewals are due on 1st October and are considered overdue if not paid by 31st October.

For any new members joining now there is effectively an extra month at the start for free. Our fees remain unaltered from the previous year and are great value when compared with many other similar sized clubs.

When lockdown came along our membership stood at exactly 300 whereas when we last had a full year we reached the number of 344 members, which is an all time high for the Trotters. Perhaps we will get back to that in the coming year. As I write we stand at 302.

It has been normal in the past to have a write up of many new members but of course, as previously mentioned, in the circumstances, this is very minimal. In fact I have only four members to report on though there has been an increasing number of email enquiries from prospective members.

The first new member will need no introduction for many of our members.

Brian Lewis, 48, from Torquay has joined us. Brian is well known for being the first Race Director of the City 2 Sea Marathon and Ultra and Brian has run many marathons and Ultra's himself. Brian's very first race was in our own Totnes 10k, which he returns to each year, obviously excluding this year.

Maggie Butt from Newton Abbot has rejoined us after a spell away and like Brian will be known to many of us. Maggie has a determined streak about her, whatever run she does.

Rod Payne, husband of Lucy has also come back to the fold after a period away with the Haldon Trail Runners.

Lastly in this issue, **Paul Conlan**, 63, from Shaldon has joined us. Paul has moved to the West Country from Surrey and has previous marathons under his belt. Paul has already joined in my weekend social runs and will no doubt become familiar at club nights as time goes on.

.....and those all important birthdays

It's **Happy Birthday** to quite a number of members who celebrate notable birthdays coming up in October, November and December..

Emmeline Williams 35, Debbie Proctor 35, Jo Randall 35, Elise Korman 40, Claire Atkinson 45, Graydon Widdicombe 45, Catherine Barnes 50, Gary Clark 50, Duncan Knight 50, Jan Caunter 55, Jutka Molnar Sansum 55, Claire Gillard 60, Steph Ross 60 and finally Paul Sharples 65.

Happy birthday to all and best of luck in your new age categories on race days whenever that may be in the future.

Kevin Besford

Membership Secretary



VIRTUAL VERSUS ACTUAL RACES

Graydon Widdecombe gives us his divided opinion

Before I start, I have a confession to make. Before Covid kicked off, I'd never taken part in any form of virtual event. To be totally honest, they were never something that interested me as I thought if I wanted to go out and run a 5K or a marathon or whatever else, I can just do it; generally, I don't need a virtual event to encourage me out the door.

Also, medals aren't overly important to me, so the lure and associated cost of a medal does nothing for me. Plus there is always that gnawing doubt that GPS/Strava can get the distance wrong, so personally I don't count training runs as PBs.

But get me into a race, in my Trotters vest with my race number pinned on, chatting to other Trotters at the start, that nervous atmosphere, toeing the start line, any time of year, on any terrain - I guess that for me is a "real" race and I don't think it can be replicated in a virtual event. Too traditional? Old school? Not moving with the times? Maybe, but that's just my own thought on it.

To be honest, it still is to some extent, but when Covid hit I did do a couple of virtual events that Trotters were involved with. Firstly, I did the Erme Valley Relay 5K, organised by the excellent Erme Valley Harriers. This was something a bit different, in my own mind anyway, as there was a team element to it, and the "real" Erme Valley Relays is one of the best club events around locally.

Foxy and Lucy put a few teams together and there was a lot of chat on the Messenger group, which I really liked; where were we going to race, would it be flat, what about the weather, etc. Not the same as meeting face-to-face, but at least it was something.

Unlike a race, we had the opportunity to pick our start time over the weekend, and also the course. I looked at the forecast, dodged the heavy wind and found the fastest, flattest route I could find locally - 3 out-and-backs along Paignton Green. I donned my Trotters vest that morning, ran the mile down to the race start and was feeling really up for it. The motivation to do well for the team meant I had something to focus on, which was great.

In the end, I didn't do as well as I'd hoped (20-dead), but I got back home, messaged everyone on the Facebook group, and the team element kicked into play. I think I was the first one to post a time that weekend and from there on there was lots of support and chat as the weekend progressed and people posted their own times. It was great from that perspective, and a couple of people had two cracks at it over the weekend; again something that can't be done in a real event.

The second virtual I did was the Trotters virtual Totnes 10k and again my motivation for this was really to support the club a bit, and get a small memento for what - let's face it - has been a strange year. It was really affordable too, which appealed and the charity element was a great idea, I thought. This time I did 10 laps(!) of Brunel and posted a good time for me (40:21) and having the medal turn up a few days later was a nice way to celebrate the event.

Gorgeous Totnes 10k medal



VIRTUAL VERSUS ACTUAL RACES CONTINUED...

All the way through lockdown and as restrictions started to ease a bit, I'd been keeping my eye out for "real" events. I've had a lot of marathons cancelled this year - Frankfurt, Warsaw, Chester, Cornish, Windermere, Dartmoor Discovery, the list goes on - and I was keen to get back to some form of racing when safe to do so.

I was eyeing the various event sites to see what was available and as soon as a local 5K came up, I was booked up within minutes of it opening. What with parkrun, I very rarely enter a 5K race, but I just wanted to get my name on a start list and give it a go. In this case, it was the Run Exe "Turn and Burn" 5K held on a nice, if a little windy, Wednesday evening.

The way it worked was there was a limited field of 60 runners, and we went off in pairs, 60 seconds apart. I went out 7 mins after the official start, and then the organisers knocked 7 mins off my clock time at the end to give me my race time, on what was a measured course. So, it's not a "real race" as we know it I suppose, but it's as good as we can get for now, and it felt brilliant to be out there representing the Trotters again. That buzz around the race start and finish, even in a socially distanced way, can't be replicated virtually, not in my mind anyway. And to top it off, I bagged a PB that evening, so I was delighted and went home happy.

That brings me to another point as, I'm not sure what it is, but I find that I can always get more out of myself at a race. Whether it's the friendly competition, the adrenaline, the fact you have others around you doing the same thing, or for any other reasons. Personally I struggle to replicate race paces in training so for me, this is another advantage of races, I suppose.

So there we have it. That's my view on the Virtual vs Actual race debate. Really, I don't think my view has changed much, but I know many people love virtual events, which is great. Anything that motivates people to get out running is fantastic, but generally I much prefer a blustery event in the depths of winter with a course like Drogo 10 opening up in front of me.

The question is, will I enter the London Marathon virtual event? Hmmmm, I'm still undecided on that one...



BEHIND THE SCENES.....

An interview with club secretary, Liz Barnett



Liz and Nigel on official duty

Unsung Hero

Local born and raised Liz became a Trotter in April 2015 and has been working hard behind the scenes as club secretary since February 2016. Here we find out about one of our essential committee members.

How did you get involved with the club?

It was on New Year's Eve, thirteen years ago, that Nigel was challenged by his eldest brother to run the Great West Run; we were all totally shocked when he said yes! He had, of course, had a few drinks but in the cold light of day, whilst regretting it slightly, he decided to train and complete the race. He did just that. Me, Jamie and Abbie went to watch him finish. It was at that point that Jamie thought that if his dad could do it, so could he. The rest, as they say, is history; Nigel surprised himself by enjoying running and continued to do so, training a couple of times a week with some friends. Jamie trained with Nigel for a while, until Nigel could no longer keep up with him.

A few years later, whilst having my hair cut by Caroline (Hayes), I mentioned that Nigel and Jamie had really taken to running. She said she belonged to this great running club and that they should go along to a training night. Nigel also knew a couple of people who were already members so both he and Jamie went along, and they never looked back.

This of course meant that they started to enter more races. They even suggested that I started running but that was a step too far for me! I happily went along to each race to support them (i.e. hold the bags and coats!). At one of those races, Nigel very kindly offered my services to help hand out entry forms for Trotter races. I subsequently did this at numerous races. Nigel then marshalled at the Haytor Heller and really enjoyed being involved. He then took on a role for the Dartmoor Discovery (DD) and that particular year, I marshalled out on the course with Jamie and Abbie. Over the next couple of years, we helped out at all the Trotter races.

It was at the DD the following year, having helped out at Race HQ, that Roger (Hayes) asked if I would consider putting my name forward for Race Secretary and Assistant Race Director; Noel Fowler was standing down from the role and so Roger was looking for a replacement.

In October 2015, there was a vacancy on the Committee. Having previously been on a couple of Committees, I decided to put my name forward. I saw it as a way of getting involved with something that both Nigel and Jamie loved. I was very pleased to get the email saying that I had been voted on.

Before I knew it, I was Club Secretary! When Nigel took over as Race Director for the Haytor Heller, I took on the unofficial role of Race Secretary too.

A couple of years ago, Roger announced he was no longer going to be Entries Secretary, so I volunteered for that as well.

Why did you decide to become club secretary?

Shortly after joining the Committee, Mark Becker, Club Secretary at that time, announced that he was stepping down from the role at the next AGM; I am sure the two weren't connected! After much thought, I decided to put my name forward; I have always enjoyed doing paperwork and organising things. All my working life has been administration based and so this would just be a continuation of my day job.

I also like to know what is going on (nosey, Nigel calls it!) What better way to be in the thick of it!

As Club Secretary I have numerous responsibilities but basically, I'll do anything that is required by the Committee (that is not covered by another Committee member); it's easier that way!

Biggest challenge to date?

Well, this came at the end of my first year as Club Secretary. The AGM! I knew I had to write a short report covering the past 12 months and then actually read it out. It was so far out of my comfort zone. I had butterflies in my stomach for days beforehand. However, like they say, every day you should do one thing that scares you.

I think my biggest challenge is yet to come though; ask me the same question in a couple of years, when I am Race Director for the DD, and the AGM will pale into insignificance!!

Best memory as a Trotter?

That would have to be the first Club Camp that we went on. It was at Woollacombe in North Devon and the weather was fantastic. We arrived a little late but were soon emptying the car and putting up the tent. We couldn't understand why we were missing a tent pole and just as our 'heated discussion' began, we saw our rogue pole walking away! Smokes had encouraged his grandson to hide it. On the first morning, we woke up to a pitch full of empty bottles and cans (even Nigel couldn't have drunk that many); Smokes had used our pitch as the camp dustbin!!

If you haven't been on a Club Camp before, I fully recommend it. Next year we're going to Watermouth Cove, hopefully!

When you aren't carrying out club duties, what do you do?

I work for the Environment Agency and have done for nearly 31 years. I am a Permitting Officer based in Exeter in the Water Resources Team. I determine applications for Licences to Abstract; a legal document that gives the holder the right to take water from rivers, boreholes etc. Yes, it is about as glamorous as it sounds but I enjoy it.

What are your passions away from the club?

We love to go on weekend breaks and holidays, ideally abroad but that's obviously not happening at the moment. Camping is something that I would never have thought I'd enjoy – I need my creature comforts – but over the last ten years or so we've had some of our best staycations in our tent.

And of course, shopping, who doesn't like a day out shopping!

Tell us something that we wouldn't know about you.

In the mid-eighties, I served lunch to Richard Attenborough when he visited Exeter for a conference. I don't suppose it was memorable for him, but it's my only claim to fame!

Many thanks Liz

ALTERNATIVE TRAINING

Deb Hart and John Skinner share their training schedule during lockdown....

23 March 2020 – Boris – Covid19 – Lockdown – No Socialising – No Running Club

What was one to do with Boris telling us we were going to be rationed to only having a daily allowance of one hour's exercise? This meant we would not be able to run with our Trotter family but we needed to keep up our fitness and thirst for running. Hence the birth of Deb and Skinns Covid-19 training diary. Here's a month's worth of our training regime from sit ups (Skinns) to doing full body workouts (me), running, walking and doing the Powderham Road 800 metre loops (me). Skinns tapering off slightly!! On on...

Week 1

① W/C DATE 20/3/20

Deb & Skinns Covid-19 Training

	ACTIVITY	WEIGHT/DISTANCE	TIME
ME MONDAY	Rest	DAY	800 laps
TUESDAY	Sit ups	15	16
SKINNS	Run	3 mins	23.56
DEB	Arms Run		4 laps WH
WEDNESDAY	Sit ups	17	22.47
SKINNS	Run	4 mins	3 laps WH
DEB	Arms Run		5 laps WH
THURSDAY	Sit ups	19	28.56
SKINNS	Run	4 mins	34.18
DEB	Arms Run		6 laps
FRIDAY	Sit ups	21	33-17
SKINNS	Run	5 mins	39.55
DEB	Arms Run		7 laps
SATURDAY	Sit ups	23	25.58
SKINNS	Run		2.8 WH
DEB	Run		26.01
			2.8 laps
SUNDAY		23	JOGUMS
SKINNS	Full Body	4 mins	4 LAPS
DEB	Run		EFFORTS

TRAINING

ME → 1 2 3

DEB → 4.39 4.13 4.13

PS 4.13 4.13 4.13



②

w/c.

DATE 30/3/20

Week 2

	ACTIVITY	WEIGHT/DISTANCE	TIME
MONDAY JOHN DEB		23	REST
TUESDAY JOHN DEB	SIT UPS RUN WIPPER 300 RUN	25	26.22 8x2 8 mins 32.04 6x3
WEDNESDAY JOHN DEB	run RUN	27	28.36 8x2 42.11 8x4
THURSDAY JOHN DEB	run/jog RUN		26.00 25.37 218 laps
FRIDAY JOHN DEB			REST
SATURDAY JOHN DEB	Jog Jog		20.46 3x800
SUNDAY JOHN DEB	efforts		4 laps efforts



OH NO!

4.08 P.B.
4.06 P.B.
4.17
4.08

(3)

w/c

DATE 6/4/20

Week 3

	ACTIVITY	WEIGHT/DISTANCE	TIME
MONDAY		REST DAY	
TUESDAY JOHN DEB	Run RUN	2x800 3x800 laps	15.00 12.37
WEDNESDAY JOHN DEB	WALK WALK	1 hour 1 hour	
THURSDAY JOHN DEB	run RUN	run/jog 2x800 1.5 mile of 8	24.09
FRIDAY JOHN DEB	WALK WALK	1 hour 1 hour	
SATURDAY JOHN DEB	WALK RUN	1 hour 6 1/2	55.32
SUNDAY JOHN DEB	efforts 700 mtr laps	4x800 metre laps	4.14 4.16 4.24 4.09



TROTTER STRETCH

④

W/C

DATE 13/4/20

Week 4

	ACTIVITY	WEIGHT/DISTANCE	TIME
MONDAY		REST DAY WALK	1 hour
TUESDAY JOHN	RUN		
DEB	RUN	2.31 miles	2x 800 + 1x 8 = 23.30
WEDNESDAY JOHN	RUN	2x 800 laps	
DEB	RUN	2x 800 laps 84.14 miles	37.35
THURSDAY JOHN	WALK	1 hour	
DEB	WALK	1 hour	
FRIDAY JOHN	WALK		
DEB	RUN	5.22 miles	44.04
SATURDAY JOHN	RUN	2 laps x 800	
DEB	RUN	2.74 x 1000	24.31
SUNDAY JOHN	RUN		4.14 4.10 4.14*
DEB	RUN		4.10



BORN TO RUN



Week 5

⑤

W/C

DATE 20/4/20

	ACTIVITY	WEIGHT/DISTANCE	TIME
MONDAY JOHN	WALK	5 miles	
DEB	WALK	5 miles	
TUESDAY JOHN	RUN		
DEB	RUN	2.70 1800 2x 800 laps	24.47
WEDNESDAY JOHN	WALK	4.5 miles	
DEB	WALK	4.5 miles	
THURSDAY JOHN	WALK AROUND THE BLOCK		
DEB	RUN	4.29 miles	38.45
FRIDAY JOHN	RUN	1x 800 2x 800 1200	
DEB	RUN	2.57 miles	2.57
SATURDAY JOHN	WALK	4.4 miles	
DEB	WALK	4.4 miles	
SUNDAY JOHN			x 3 laps
DEB			4.02 P.S.

HAD NOW FOR A WELL EARNED DRINK



4.22
4.04-

AWAY RUNS

John Skinner rediscovers a competitive streak

Trotters in Deal

With the end of lockdown came the opportunity to spread our wings a little. So, with our new found freedom, Deb and I decided to take a train cross country to the charming seaside town of Deal. Elegant and avant-garde, this jewel of East Kent sits on the tumbling shale banks of the English Channel. Choice!

As any Trotter will tell you, one of the pleasures of travel is the prospect of fresh runs to be had; exploring new landscapes. Then there is the obligation to spread the legend of the Teignbridge Trotters. So, with that in mind, we set off on our morning run sporting the hallowed club vest; the implications of this schoolboy error lost on me as we set off.

It was a lovely morning and we began on the sea front, heading east towards Sandwich, the flat expanses of dunes and marshland, speckled with dilapidated WW2 defence installations, sprawling lethargically towards the Thames Estuary, drawing us in. We had plumped for a simple 6 mile out and back route, 3 out 3 back, a gentle saunter to be sure. It was earlyish and we passed two fishermen already nursing ice filmed glasses of draught lager, doubtless hair of the dog material. The gulls dipped their wings and circled overhead; the air was fresh with the smell of brine.

The 3 miles out were taken at a most leisurely pace, very pleasant. However, I sensed that Deb needed to open up and embrace a far brisker pace, whilst I, quite frankly, was happy with nothing much more testing than a gentle plod. With this in mind, it was decided that Deb would forge ahead and that I would be allowed to malingering some way behind and enjoy the smoky green, marine blue of the busy Channel. I looked out towards France and saw the grey shapes of tankers silhouetted against the shimmering sky and wondered where they were headed. The bright sun clipped the white caps and the Goodwin sands shone yellow in the distance, up ahead, Deb at first became a dot before vanishing completely.

My contentment now complete was, however, to be short lived. As I left the rough track that ran alongside the Royal Sandwich Golf Course, re-joining the somewhat firmer terrain of the arrow straight sea wall, I became aware of a figure clad in the baggy attire of the would-be park runner, sweating and huffing along behind me. As I plodded on, the startling realisation that he was gaining on me sent me spinning into a sort of naked panic. It had become apparent that my Trotter club vest was acting as a target for any budding fun runner, eager to take the scalp of an actual club runner; the 'Born to run' motif with its elegant flourish, like a red rag to a bull. I could physically feel his beady eyes burrowing through my vest, digging a hole into the recess of my soul. Needless to say, with my honour and dignity, and indeed that of our beloved club, challenged, I was left with little choice. It was game on!

The long ago buried competitive streak kicked in and I pressed my foot on the secret pedal, 'that will learn him'. My surge of alleged pace, however, merely served to drive our friend to discover previously unmined reserves of effort and energy. I'd started something; any lingering ambiguity vanished. We both now knew it was a race. Still he gained, still I gathered speed, and so it went on. And on until...

No need to report the result. The class of the club runner will always prevail. Fellow Trotters, you can rest assured, the honour of the club remains untarnished, but in the words of Gary Watson 'I nearly died'. I'm definitely not doing that again.

So, to the moral of the tale. If you fancy a nice little anonymous stroll, don't don the club vest. You may as well paint a target on your forehead. You will be challenged, you will bite.

John Charles Skinner.

Race Preparation

Bob Small gives his views on mental and physical preparation for races and shares his success at the Bideford half 2020.

Trotter Confidential orBob Small's simple scribblings.



Sport is a fascinating subject, especially if one is involved in one way or another; surely, there can be very few people who do not have some interest in sport whether as a participant, coach, administrator, parent or as an armchair supporter?

One part of me is just as an armchair supporter; of the England rugby team; of Exeter Chiefs; of the England cricket team; of British athletics and world athletics and, yes, even the England football team - sometimes! Then there's Aston Villa. Ah, now there's a name to conjure with! How many times have I been to Villa Park, or other grounds, to support my team? Six, seven times - perhaps; so I can hardly be said to be the most ardent supporter, so why is it that I have to check to see how they fared every time they play? If they win, I'm happy, if they lose, I'm unhappy - these feelings don't last long it is true but none the less they're there. Why is it that Aston Villa is so much part of me? I was brought up near Birmingham and both my parents were Villa supporters and I suppose that's it. But I still can't quite understand why the affiliation runs so deep when my interest is so limited; but maybe that is the very essence of sport.

Then, the other part of me is deeply engaged in active participation, both as a competitor and as an organiser in golf and, to a lesser extent, running; but, for the purposes of this piece I'll restrict myself to the running part of the agenda! And here is the very nub of my musing and it concerns the psychological approach to sport and, in this instance, to racing.

In a previous life I was quite a good track athlete; totally committed; trained assiduously every day, if not twice a day; answered the calls of the club and county to run where and when I was required but, despite participating at a good level I really didn't perform to the level I could - or should - have. Why was that? I now know that whilst my physical approach could hardly have been faulted, it was my mental approach that let me down very badly. If only I knew then what I know now! There were no such creatures as sports psychologists in those far off days.

It has been said that 50% of preparation is physical and 50% is mental; that might be slightly over egging it but it serves to emphasise the point. Having said I would restrict myself to running only, I'm going to depart from that promise for a moment or two. Some while ago, in a quest to improve my golf, as well as out of general interest, I booked a series of 'chats' with a sports psychologist. Having read very widely on the subject I was, to a point, quite well versed in any case but was most interested in how the sessions would work and then to see if improvement followed.

Trotter Confidential

I didn't reveal to my fellow golf club members that I'd embarked on this course of action - for good reason; whilst all and any of them would happily go to a golf professional for a practical lesson, or even a series of lessons, very few, if any, would consider seeing a sports psychologist. Why? I would suggest there are a number of reasons:-

- Fear of being classed as a bit 'nutty' by their club mates
- Thinking that this is only for 'top golfers' and not for them
- Uncertain about spending the money on a course of action alien to them when the outcome is uncertain
- The time involved

Interestingly I very recently read a report on an interview with Jack Nicklaus and Jackie Stewart; at some point in the interview sports psychologists came into the conversation and Nicklaus became quite animated saying 'What do they know? Have any of them participated at the top level? How can they possibly know what it's like in the furnace of competition on the home stretch?' (Not his exact words but an approximation.)

Another quick, relevant apocryphal story about Jack Nicklaus. He had been giving a talk to a group of golfers in America and made the statement that he had never three putted on the final green to lose a major. One of the audience, knowing this to be untrue - Nicklaus having done just that at a certain major - asked Nicklaus to confirm that this was not the case; Nicklaus confirmed that he had indeed never three putted on the final green to lose a major. The audience member was amazed that he should deny it in public. The talk finished and Nicklaus left, then one of Nicklaus's IMG management team approached the audience member and confirmed that Nicklaus had indeed three putted on that occasion, BUT, and here's the interesting point, it transpires that any such 'bad moments' are permanently erased from his memory. Clearly Nicklaus has no need for any outside psychological help - he's his own very best shrink! Possibly, probably, that is why he is the outstanding golfer of our time - if not ever.

My golf game did continue to improve following my visits to the sport's psychologist, but I'm not certain how much of that was due to those sessions. My normal practical lessons and practice were as much a part of my improvement but, none the less, it was an interesting experiment. But it became academic when running once again reared its head in my life!

So, back to running.... different sports have very different elements requiring different mental approaches but certain key factors must be considered to be constant:-

- Setting of targets or goals for the coming season
- Setting of targets for particular competitions
- Developing a plan to execute in specific competitions - whether that be in pure competitive terms against the opposition or in delivery of a PB
- Mental rehearsal in delivery of that plan
- Absolute belief in that plan
- Preparation on the day of competition
- Execution of the plan - for better or worse!

Then after the race:-

- A critical analysis of performance after competition - did I follow the plan? If not, why not?
- If yes, what was the outcome? Target achieved?
- Did I underachieve? If yes then try to identify and understand the reasons.

Trotter Confidential– Training

Racing a half marathon last September in Maidenhead, I had fully prepared following all the above points. I had two specific aims - one was to better my then PB of 1hr 47mins 56 seconds, the other to break David Taylor's club over 70 age group record of 1.46.35. In posting a time of 1.47.19 I achieved the first and failed by 44 seconds on the second. Success and failure – those twin imposters.

I was so disappointed with myself, not because I didn't follow my race plan as I had, very closely, but because my race plan was flawed from the outset and I was cross with myself for not realising it. Simply, I ran the opening 5 miles too slowly – hoping to save energy for the final 8 miles - where I would accelerate and play catch up. I accelerated too fast and ran out of gas over the last mile or so. Right then and there I started planning my next attack on that record – at Bideford in March.

The training went well and this was proved by a good 10 miles at Bideford in October with a new PB and club age group record of 77.46. The WAVA age grading calculator suggested that my equivalent time for the half marathon would be 1.43.35; I thought this beyond my capabilities, 1.45 being more realistic.

Training continued with a new dimension added as Peter Kirby and I began to meet every Tuesday for a track session at Exeter Arena; Peter is aiming more at the marathon but we both firmly believe that relative speed work is a very important part of the training mix. We find it brings good mental discipline and we enjoy the effort as well as each other's company.

Christmas and the New Year came and went - then the weather went down-hill. The National Masters 10 Mile Championships in February was cancelled because of Storm Ciara – a nuisance this as I wanted to use this race as a guide to my form. Training had to be fitted around the continuing atrocious weather conditions. The Looe 10 miles, just 2 weeks before the Bideford Half Marathon, gave no clue as to my form - other than running uphill and down dale is not my forte and that Nathan 'Lovely' Elphick can outspurt me for the finish line!

So, the day of the Bideford Half Marathon dawned and there I was, really no nearer knowing how fit I was or what kind of form I was in – not ideal when planning to run a PB! Non the less I planned, simply, to run 8 minute miles which would bring me home in about 1.45. All my 'day of competition rituals' were completed; the way in which the race number is pinned to the vest; the way in which shoe laces are tied; the way I apply Vasaline to my eyebrows to stop sweat running into my eyes; the amount of liquid I take on board before a race. Silly things maybe – but each one important and I worry if I don't do all of them in the correct manner.

Warming up I felt quite good, legs moving very easily. So I lined up in front of the 1.50 pacer with the 'sub 1.45' pacer a little in front. (what 'sub 1.45 meant I didn't know!). The first mile is always a little difficult, trying to settle into a smooth style whilst overtaking slower starters and, at the same time, trying not to get in the way of those overtaking me; the first mile marker came into view – 7.47 – too fast! What should I do – back off? I was moving very easily but I had to make a decision there and then – stick with it for a while as I could always back off a bit later if need be I thought; I committed myself to the faster pace and so, already, my race plan was in jeopardy.

Miles 2 and 3 ticked by very easily and in front of schedule and I now found that I was closing on the 'sub 1.45' pacer whom, I determined, I would run with but definitely not pass. By mile 4 I was with the pacer but was 2 minutes in front of schedule – worrying in one sense but also comforting to know that there were 2 minutes 'in the bag' so to speak. The pacer would get away a little on the hills but I clawed him back on the flat. Now we were onto the Tarka Trail and heading for the half way point but I knew that somewhere in the next 3 or 4 miles I may have to pay the price for the faster pace and, duly, at 9 miles it happened. Now the running was tough and suddenly the pacer was 2 yards in front, then 5, then 10; either he was running faster or I was slowing – or a bit of both, whatever, it was going to be a tough, lonely, last 4 miles.

Trotter Confidential: The finish line

Then those niggling doubts began to bob up and down in my mind 'who wants a PB anyway; who cares about a club record?' These negative thoughts have to be shut out and replaced by positive thoughts – difficult when it's hurting! The 10 mile marker came and I was still 90 seconds in front of schedule and then – hey, what's this? My stomach had suddenly, out of nowhere, turned a somersault and I was in danger of embarrassment so I had to stop; 15 seconds rest and everything seemed to have righted itself so I set off again. Strangely, this tiny respite seemed to have given me a new lease of life; the pacer was about 150 yards in front but now I was holding him into the last 2 miles - I was definitely closing the gap on the pacer.

**Bob running a blistering
pace at this year's
Bideford half**



The last mile or so is the same for both the Bideford Half Marathon and the Bideford 10 and I'd raced both so knew it quite well; before going to sleep for the past couple of months I had played this last mile over and over in my mind and now it seemed to pay off as, although very tired, I seemed to cover the ground with relative ease. 800 metres to go. Turn right onto the bridge and there, right in front of me, is the sub 1.45 pacer! I pass him with ease and head for home as fast as I can, turning right at the end of the bridge onto the quayside. 500 meters to go, 400, 300, 200 and then the last 100 meters and, finally, over the beautiful haven of the finish line. The index finger on my right hand presses the stop button on my watch on my left wrist but I'm too tired to even look at it; I stop dead and bend over pulling in great lung falls of air – for a little while I can't move but then, gradually, begin to move away from the finish line. Only then did I look at my watch – 1.43.57! Then, there is Nathan 'Lovely' Elphick; after the last 103 minutes of discomfort and, yes, even pain, his words of congratulations and praise are, momentarily, like luxuriating in a deep, warm, pool of water. Interestingly, after the Bideford 10, the WAVA calculator indicated I could run 1.43.35; my actual official chip time was 1.43.56 so I was just 21 seconds adrift. My average pace had been about 7.57 per mile or thereabouts.

So, what do I learn from this most recent experience? Planning and forethought is vital – for me at least. I had the advantage of knowing the course; others seem not to mind whether they know the course or not, for me it's vital. I'd set my target for this particular race; I'd developed a plan; I'd rehearsed that plan in my mind; I'd had belief in the plan and had prepared as best I could. On the day, it's true, I'd stepped slightly outside the plan, but my belief in self was strong. All of these are mental processes which back up the physical preparations – one supports the other. I've learned that, for me at least, it's not good practice to start an important race with the aim of just seeing how far up the field one can get. Aims and objectives are key to success.

Job done... ..till the next time!

Contact us

President: Tina Caunter president@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Chairman: Rog Hayes chairman@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Secretary: Liz Barnett secretary@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Treasurer: John Caunter treasurer@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Membership Secretary: Kev Besford membership@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Club Championship: Graydon Widdicombe clubchampionship@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Press & PR: James Saunders press@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Men's Captain: Andy Fox menscaptain@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Ladies' Captain: Lucy Evans ladiescaptain@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Cross Country Captain: Wendy Goldthorp crosscountrycaptain@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

Mag Editor: Ali Clayton mag@teignbridgetrotters.co.uk

A huge thank you to all contributors to this edition of The Trotter.

Don't forget to contact me about ideas for your club magazine!

