

The Trotter Special Christmas edition



**Who won what in 2024
Graydon conquers the Majors
Del's Nervous Nineties!**

Christmas Greetings from Chairman Rog

Where has that year gone? It seems like only yesterday that I was collecting £10 from our January intake of Couch to 5K'ers. So many great times to look back on - 2024 has certainly been a good year to be a Trotter.



One of my favourites was at the DD: the excitement at the possibility of both the male and female course records being broken. It didn't quite happen but it was mighty close. The quality of the field this year was the best we've ever had. I felt so pleased for Liz (Race Director) as she works so hard in ensuring the race and indeed the whole weekend is a success. As a club we are very lucky to have her.

Also among the highlights were the two relay events that I took part in. Sadly I was away for the Erme Valley event, otherwise I would have made it a hat trick. The buzz is something I don't seem to get at other races - there's something magical about a relay race. They are certainly proving more and more popular with the club. The mass of royal blue vests has certainly turned a few heads this year! My heartfelt thanks to our club captains; Ben and Debbie Elphick. They've done a great job in putting together the teams and coping with the rather stressful race day duties.

The success of the Couch to 5K has been something to be proud of. Skinns and his band of helpers have done a magnificent job throughout the year. The feedback we've received has been so encouraging. It's great to see so many of them move up through the groups; something I'm sure, if you would have asked them when they first started, many wouldn't have believed possible.

If you attended our Presentation and Awards night on Saturday, I'm sure you were as impressed as I was with the amazing talent we have at the Trotters. Some of the times recorded were incredible. The evening was a wonderful way to celebrate individual successes and enjoy a party with fellow club mates.

It's fantastic that we have so many members who are so passionate about the club. I think this shines through within this special Christmas edition of the Trotter. My thanks to all those who have contributed. A special thank you to Keith Anderson for proof reading.

Enjoy the read, have a great Christmas and I'll see you next year.



Club Championship Secretary, Deb Hart, summarises a great year



The Club Championship this year saw 16 ladies and 16 men complete the required six races from four sections to complete the Championship. A special mention to Sue Tremlett and Steve Weeks who travelled far and wide competing in 14 races each – that's what you call commitment.

A whopping 63 of you entered the South Devon Relays, including quite a few who had never competed in a relay before. It was a pleasure to see so many Trotter teams winning silverware (in this case, in the guise of wine!). A big well done to our ladies' and men's captains, Debbie and Ben Elphick. No mean feat in organising you all into teams.

Turning to our Club Champions this year, for the ladies, Mel Brooks bursting onto the scene, running brilliantly to finish first in the Championship and completing it in the first half of the year with 299 points. Well done Mel. A mention to Lucy Payne, who was the runner up. Lucy has come back from injury and has made a mighty effort this year.

For the men, Roger Easterbrook, fourth time a winner, with the maximum points of 300. What can you say about the man that hasn't already been said! Phenomenal gurning Roger and in Roger's own words "if you don't gurn you haven't run hard enough". Well done Roger. A mention to James Saunders coming second with 296 points, great effort.

Congratulations to all of you who completed the championship.

Turning to the 2025 Championship, as with every year, we are trying to support local club races wherever possible and have been in conversation with several clubs to let them know we are supporting their races in the hope that they will support us, which has been the case in recent years.

We have a few different races for 2025, so why not give them a go? Please be aware that some of these have a relatively small race limit and will therefore fill up quickly. The Muskies 10K for example, which takes place on the 31st May, has a race limit of only 150.

The format for next year will stay the same, with **16** club selected races. **Six** of these races must be completed and runners **must complete at least one race from four of the five categories and two from any category** in order to qualify for the Championship.

Do remember to check out the Club's Race Diary which is superbly kept up to date by Eleanor Taylor.

It would be great to see even more of you enter the Championship in 2025, so get those diaries out!

Happy running and Happy New Year to you all.

On On

Ladies` Final Standings

Position	Name	Points	Races completed
1	Mel Brooks	299	6
2	Lucy Payne	296	8
3	Liz Nuttall	295	8
4	Helen Anthony	291	6
5	Chloe Weeks	289	12
6	Sue Tremlett	289	14
7	Sharon Sharples	279	11
8	Kathryn Steemson	276	7
9	Kim Knight	273	7
10	Sarah Blanchard	264	9



Podium finish for Liz

Men's Final Standings

Position	Name	Points	Races completed
1	Roger Easterbrook	300	9
2	James Saunders	296	7
3	Alan Kember	293	8
4	James Long	288	8
5	Steve Weeks	286	14
6	Duncan Knight	284	9
7	Andy Gilson	281	8
8	Neil Rutley	272	7
9	Ian Langler	271	8
10	Paul Sharples	270	11

Race	Total number of Trotters
First Chance 10K	34
Oh My Obelisk	25
Looe 10	19
Bideford Half Marathon	37
Feighan Fury	16
Fast Friday 10K	23
Ottery 10K	26
Dawlish Dash	31
Chudleigh Road Race	40
Forest Flyer	24
South Devon Relays	63
Truro Half Marathon	12
ColyTen	22
Trot Challenge	11
Cornish Marathon	5
John Scott Trophy	40

Special mention to the following Trotters who all completed the Club Championship;
Tim Synge, Chris Andrews, Eamon Crowe, Adam Doherty, Pete Aston, Kevin Besford,
Jo Randall, Dom Harcourt, Sam Galvin, Cheryl Dunn, Nicky Swann.



2025 Championship races

Date	Date	Date	Notes
05/01/25	First Chance 10K	10K	
12/01/25	Oh My Obelisk (13M)	Half	
16/02/25	Dalwood 3 Hills	Long Misc	
09/03/25	Bideford Half Marathon	Half	
23/03/25	Feighan Fury (10M)	Mixed	
21/04/25	Easter Bunny 10K	10K	
04/05/25	North Dorset Marathon	Long Misc	
31/05/25	Muskies 10K	10K	150 entry limit
19/06/25	Dawlish Dash	Short Misc	
12/07/25	Forest Flyer	Mixed	* CC nominated race.
01/08/25	South Devon Relays	Short Misc	Free entry for Trotters
21/09/25	Honiton Hippo (7M)	Mixed	
12/10/25	ColyTen (10M)	Long Misc	
19/10/25	Herepath Half Marathon	Half	
30/11/25	Budleigh Blister (10M)	Long Misc	Date TBC
07/12/25	John Scott Trophy	Short Misc	Trotter only race

Captains Corner

Men's Club Captain, Ben Elphick, looks back on another great year



What a year we've had! My third as men's captain and it really has felt like a year of discovery with a vast array of fresh faces joining, in part due to the wonderful Couch to 5K program. Skinns has done a remarkable job once again coaching and encouraging runners, with most completing the course and joining the club. This played a big part in almost breaking our highest membership total on record. We have also had some bright young stars join with Alex Sparks and Oli Reynolds taking the racing scene by storm. Both with individual wins and top three places as well as a relay victory at South Devon.

Speaking of the relays, I really want to thank everyone who got involved and took part racing this year. For myself as captain it has been an honour and a privilege to lead such an amazing club filled with such talented runners. It has definitely been by far the most successful. Our MV50 and MV60 teams winning all three events. Our senior team winning overall at South Devon and taking third overall at the always tough Erme Valley, and last but not least Our MV70 team winning at South Devon. I really hope we can continue to be as successful next year but most of all that everyone who comes has a great time running and having fun with fellow Trotters.



In mentioning the arrival of a couple of exciting young runners we must of course remember how fortunate we are to have incredible veteran runners still pushing the boundaries of what we believe is possible. Two such runners dominating their age categories are Bob Small and Alan Kember, breaking club records for fun it seems. With Bob setting new standards by taking a clean sweep with the 10K, 10 mile, half marathon and full marathon V75 records. Not to be outdone, Alan on his way to setting personal bests (yes PBs at the age of 66) in 10K and marathon distances. He also broke two club records in the V65 category. Not only that, Alan and Bob have also represented England this year against Wales at the Manchester half marathon, truly amazing.

Looking to 2025 I have a few members that I believe are in for a promising year ahead. Having joined last year after completing the Couch to 5K, Trevor Irons has been progressing through the training groups and flourishing on the racing scene with top 3 age-group finishes at Haytor Heller, Forest Flyer and Totnes 10K, before landing his first win at ColyTen. He faces stiff competition in the V70 category from Roger Moss, who qualified for

London Marathon by beating the good for age time by 18 minutes. He's been looking strong of late and with a solid training block behind him, could some of the club records be in jeopardy from either of these two? My third tip for great things is Tim Pratt. Tim has battled back from a long injury with 2024 being his first full year, showing signs he is nearly back to his very best. I feel a few new PBs will be on the cards, and the current fastest runners in the club had better watch out.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all the worthy winners from the awards night, well done to you all. I would also like to thank each and everyone who works so hard behind the scenes, without you we wouldn't have such a wonderful club to call Our running home.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.



Are you feeling camp.....?

As you know the Trotters stage an annual Club Camp. It's usually the second or third weekend in June and is a great way for Trotters to chill out together and enjoy the Great British Summer! (Oh, and there's usually a bit of running involved too!) Over the years we've been to some fantastic campsites, alternating between Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset – there's plenty to choose from.

For the past six years Nigel and I have enjoyed organising Club Camp but it's now time to put away our tent! Maybe it's our age (or the motorhome that we hired!) but camping is no longer for us and so we're looking for someone else to take on the role.

There are just two criteria. Firstly, the campsite should be within a two-hour drive of Newton Abbot and secondly, the site should have something for everyone; a swimming pool always goes down well, as does a 'Club House' for a few beers and some light-hearted evening entertainment - you can't beat a bit of bingo!

We usually start our research for a site around Christmas so that we can get details out to members early in the new year. Whilst we try to get a good deal on price, it's not always possible but always worth a shot.

As Camp organiser it's an opportunity to come up with some games – the sillier the better – for the Saturday night. You may have heard the story about Smokes running into the hedge with his Trotter hoodie on back to front.....with the hood up!

Don't forget, anyone with four or more marshal points from the preceding year can claim £10 per night (up to £20) from the Club, once they've been to Club Camp. If you're interested in taking on the role, please let me or Nigel know.

Liz Barnett



Trevor Irons the Reluctant Runner

Having won the award for the Most Improved Male, the Trotter discovers what makes Trev tick!

I joined the Trotters in Nov 2023, having signed-up for the C25K September '23 class. Not having run for the sake of running since my 20s (I'm now 70), I was pestered by some cycling friends to give it a go as a route to competing in triathlons.



I was very reluctant to start, but the C25K seemed the ideal opportunity to dip my toes in. My initial goals were to be able avoid injury, to run 5K without stopping and, most importantly, to try and find the joy of running, which had previously eluded me.

I was very lucky that the class of September '23 was a lovely group of people, led by Skinns, Deb, Stuart, Kevin and others. Lots of fun and group motivation made me look forward to every session. Also, from the very outset, I found everyone in the club friendly, encouraging and helpful, so joining was a no-brainer.

After graduating from the C25K, we were all encouraged to move through the club-night groups and I think that I speak for all the group in saying that we were made to feel very welcome and comfortable as we did so. It was this friendliness that brought me back most weeks and eventually find the elusive 'joy'.

Since then, and being inspired by club runners like Bob Small, I have entered a few races - with age-group top-three finishes in Haytor Heller, Haldon Forest Flyer, Totnes 10K. In the winning team in the South Devon Relays and won my age-group the ColyTen. I've also won my age-group in all three triathlons that I have entered (there is not a lot of competition up there!)

Almost as much fun as the running, was helping with marshalling a couple of club races and I look forward to doing more of this in 2025. The tremendous success of the club races is a great testament to all those members and officers in the club who contribute a lot of time and effort. Like many clubs of this type, a great deal is owed to these people who make the whole thing tick.

Having started running as an ancillary sport and a route to triathlon competition, I am now thinking that I enjoy the simplicity, purity and peace of running more than anything and this may end up as my main sport. This is, in no small part, down to the friendliness, help and support of all the lovely people in the Trotters. I am thankful for that and look forward to being part of this for many years.

On On



Big G Nails The Majors

Graydon gives the Trotter an insight into his incredible achievement

It's been quite a journey, which I guess technically started back in London 2010 when I didn't have a clue what I was doing in terms of running. I had secured a charity place via the company I was working for at the time, and got around the event...just. A particularly low moment that day was me scrabbling around in the gutter trying to find a bottle with a decent amount of Lucozade in it, and it was a long day out (5:15). The thought of Majors, running clubs or other marathons couldn't have been further from my mind, as it was definitely a 'never again' moment. Regarding London though I have since done it via the ballot and also via Good for Age, so I suppose I've done the trifecta in terms of how to enter that race! All the other Majors I've only done once.

I did do Berlin in 2019, via the ballot, but it was only really when I got a qualification time for 2023's London, Boston and Chicago that the Majors really became 'a thing' for me. Coming out of Covid in the best shape I've ever been, I managed 3:06:14 in Seville 2022, and that was enough to get into Boston and Chicago where qualification was under 3:20 for my age group (45-49). My Seville time was also enough for an entry into London 2023, but it wasn't enough for New York City, where the standard was sub-3:05. Tokyo is a different ballgame entirely as they wanted a staggering sub-2:28. So if I wanted to do New York and Tokyo I needed to find a different way in.

In terms of my times for the 6 Majors, they are summarised below. Yes, that London time just over 4hrs is mildly irritating! I got injured with plantar fasciitis in May 2022 and I'm only just seeing the back of it, so Boston, Chicago, Tokyo and to a lesser extent New York were all run managing that.

					
TOKYO	BOSTON	LONDON	BERLIN	CHICAGO	NEW YORK
2024	2023	2017	2019	2023	2024
3:58:40	3:41:36	4:00:59	3:27:03	3:52:37	3:55:47

I suppose a valid question for all this is - why? Why did I want to do these races? It's a mixture of a few things I suppose, but firstly I love to travel and run marathons in whatever location I am going to. I'm someone who searches out locations of marathons and thinks 'oh, that will be an interesting trip' and then I go ahead and plan a trip around the marathon and to do some sightseeing at the same time. Outside of the Majors and UK, I've been lucky enough to do many marathons across 11 other countries, and I've loved it, and have visited places I otherwise wouldn't have. Secondly, these Majors are obviously iconic races. I have watched them all on TV numerous times. The crowds and the scale of NYC, Berlin being flat and fast, that incline at the end of Chicago, the uniqueness of the Boston course, athletes running past the temples in Tokyo. I felt I knew these races, and I suppose when I realised I could get entries for Chicago and Boston, I just knew I wanted to experience them



all, explore the cities, and come away with some great memories.

You can get charity entries for all these, and also go via sports tour companies, but I never looked into sports tours as I like to have flexibility when I'm away. But for Tokyo, I did go via a charity, and like most people just paid the money myself to get a spot, as you pay upfront. It's not like London, as you bid an amount to a single charity from a set list, and hope for the best. Amazingly, I bid just over the minimum required and secured a place for a small charity, and getting that email confirmation was very exciting. Then Christa, my partner, and I needed to decide what we wanted to do, and so we then got busy planning an amazing trip where we spent 3.5 weeks travelling around Japan; we spent 6 nights in Tokyo for the race, and then the rest of the time travelling around the country, and it was an amazing trip. We visited Mount Fuji, Kyoto, Nagano snow monkeys, Hiroshima, Nara and Miyajima amongst other places, I ticked off a Japanese parkrun, and sampled lots of nice food. It was really a brilliant trip.

But Boston. What can I say about this race? The whole weekend was simply fantastic, but in the year prior to the race, American runners in particular go a bit crazy. Think London hysteria, but multiplied by 10. What is the qualifying time? What colour will the iconic jacket be this year? The medal design? What hotel shall I stay in? What wave am I in with this qualifying time? It's an odd thing to be a part of, and I did get swept up in it pre-race. The thing is, the "BQ" (Boston Qualifier) is just a massive thing in the US for marathoners, and runners strive for it year in, year out. I think what makes it extra special is that, unlike London, the vast majority of the runners at the race are qualifiers, which does give it a very different atmosphere. I love London, but Boston is just very different. And I have to say, the goody bag at the end was the best I've had as well!



For 2023's Boston race, it was 10 years since the terrible bombings that killed and injured innocent bystanders and runners so close to the finish line, and that terrorist attack has left its mark on the city. But, the people were so incredibly welcoming, 'Boston Strong' signs were all over the place, and I didn't feel nervous to be there - honestly, I was proud to be there - and everyone I spoke to welcomed me. This is one crazy race though. The organisers even rank the runners and give them their race number based on their qualification time. So if you see someone walking around with a red race number 1023 you

can't help think to yourself 'wow, they must be quick', as their number is so low. My race number was 9099 out of the 30000 or so race entries, so my 3:06 qualifying time made me very much middle of the pack, starting in Wave 2 of 4. And the course is very unusual for a Major. It's a point-to-point, basically straight-line course, starting in the fairly small town of Hopkinton, so getting the runners to the start line is quite a logistical challenge. Runners pile onto what seems like 100s of yellow school busses lined up at Boston Common, near where the race finishes, to get to the start...just to have to run back again. And it's a tough course, with the Newton Hills and famous Heartbreak Hill where many a racer's dreams have unravelled just a few short miles from the finish.

London has Tower Bridge. New York has coming off the silence of Queensboro Bridge and hitting the wall of noise that are the screaming crowds on First Avenue; they're so loud it's almost a physical experience as the noise hits you. Berlin has running through the Brandenburg Gate. Tokyo has running past numerous shrines and torii gates together with the opportunity of seeing the elites - I saw both Eliud Kipchoge and Sifan Hassan on the course that day. Chicago has the start and finish in the centre of the city, making logistics easy in what is a wonderful city. All unforgettable memories and ones that will stay with me. But, my favourite? Getting over Heartbreak Hill in one piece in Boston at mile 21, and trying to hold it together to the finish. And



then, emerging from an underpass, it's what we've all been waiting for and the excitement in my group is tangible - "Right on Hereford, Left on Boylston". Seeing my partner right there amongst the hordes of spectators on Hereford Street, turning left onto Boylston Street and looking up to see the the finish line a few hundred metres ahead. Running past the permanent memorials to commemorate the bombings, my mind wandered to what happened that day and my thoughts were with those impacted and this amazing

city, and then finally I crossed the line. I've done over 100 marathons, but that one got to me and I just about held it together. What a race that is. It really was amazing and words don't do it justice; it is one I would love to do again. In 2023, I actually did London 6 days after Boston, but that's a whole other story in itself.

New York was my 6th and final Major, and on the Saturday I had the opportunity to do a shakeout run with other 6-star hopefuls, and former London and Chicago champ, Deena Kastor, finishing in Times Square. For the race, I had actually managed to secure one of a few hundred spots via the virtual marathon route into the race, so I ran a marathon on NYC marathon day in 2023, and that secured me a spot in 2024's in-person race. The race that starts literally with a cannon going off, and with Sinatra's "New York, New York" playing. It takes runners through all 5 boroughs of New York as it begins on Staten Island, and then turns north through Brooklyn and Queens. Next, runners head west across the Queensboro Bridge into Manhattan, north into the Bronx and back to Manhattan through Central Park. It also goes over five bridges, a couple over a mile long, but it's not just the bridges that make this a tough course; a lot of the roads are undulating, including the last few miles around Central Park. But it's a great way to see the city and all the areas feel very different, making it a really enjoyable event from that perspective. And the crowds? They're completely bonkers. Everything about it really is an assault on the senses, and the whole scale of it is extremely impressive to witness. Our busses to the start even had a police escort, for goodness sake!



After crossing the line I was ushered through to pick up my World Marathon Majors finishers medal, and it began to sink in that I'd done it. All those plans, all that training, the managing of injuries and illness, and here I was with the medal around my neck - I'd done it! So many memories, experiences, interactions with locals and other runners, seeing the sights of these brilliant cities, and just trying to take it all in.



I feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to do all six; it's not just the training and racing, but the different logistics of getting entries into the races and the planning takes just as much effort as the training, but it's been a brilliant few years participating in these iconic events. I know I am very lucky to have done them all. My non-running partner has visited these Majors with me too and she is an expert at buzzing around the cities to get good spots - a proper 'spectathlete'! She saw me 6 times in Tokyo, 5 each in Chicago and Berlin, 4 in London, 3 in New York and twice in Boston. It is hard work being a spectator at these races and she tells me that, for her, Tokyo was the easiest to get around.

Very soon after I finished New York, Sydney was officially announced as the 7th major. It had been widely predicted and everyone with an interest knew it was going to happen, but it's official now, and I'm really glad I got the 6th star before the 7th was formally introduced.

Will I do Sydney? Never say never, but Abbott have said there will be the 8th and 9th coming along in due course, as Shanghai and Cape Town will probably be added in the coming couple of years or so, to make it 9 Stars.

For next year, I've a few other running-related plans, but Sydney is not completely off the table for a future year. We'll see, but for now I'm happy to have completed these six brilliant races, that are all unique in their own way. It's been brilliant.



Trotters keep on giving!

Giving to charity, especially local ones, has always been of massive importance to the Trotters. Over the years we've donated tens of thousands of pounds. This year has been no exception, as the list opposite shows. And we're not quite done for the year either! The proceeds from the giant Christmas Card that you've hopefully all signed and donated to (and the £5 entry fee for the John Scott Trophy) are being donated to JAY'S AIM. With the club matching the total raised, it looks likely to be over £1000.



It's a feather in our cap, not only to stage some fantastic races, at very reasonable entry fees, but also to be able to donate such large sums to so many great causes. Below is a photo of us presenting Pete's Dragon with their cheque.

Devon Air Ambulance	£100
Dartmoor National Park	£838
Pony Club	£220
Totnes Caring	£1500
Pete's Dragon	£434
HITS Foodbank	£500
Total so far	£3592.00



Membership Secretary, Graydon Widdicombe, sums up the year.

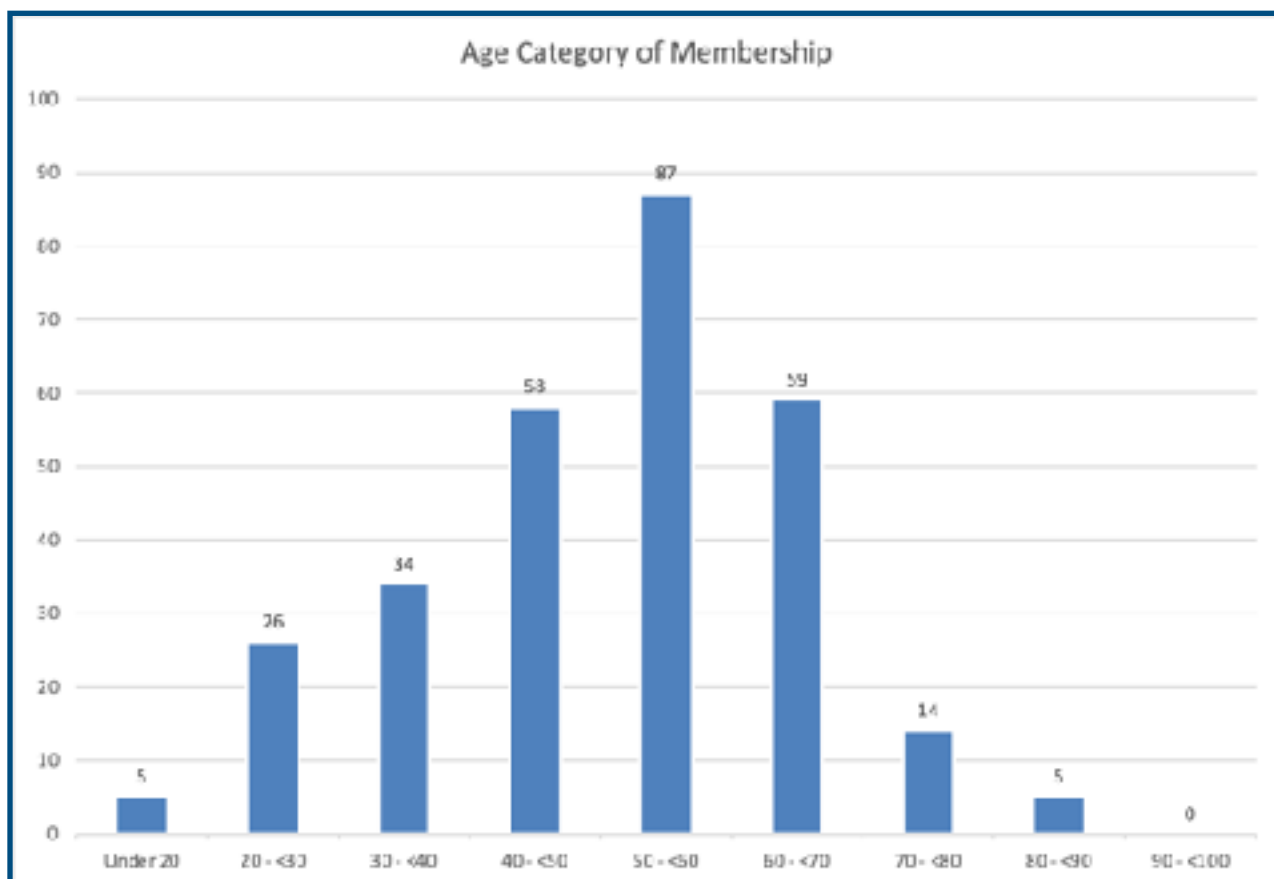
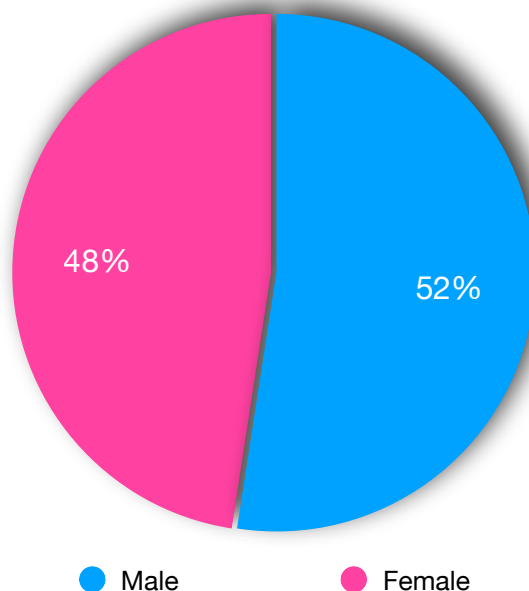
2024 has been a good year on the membership front, with the Couch to 5K programme being another success, which has resulted in 19 participants formally joining the Club following the completion of their course.

For those that may not know, the club runs three courses a year at the cost of £10 per person, and if a participant subsequently joins the club they get their £10 refunded, which is great value.

September/October is a busy time of year as it involves closing down the previous membership year, and beginning the next (current) one. In that regard, we finished the 2023/2024 membership year on 344 members, which is actually a joint record for the club, tying with 2019, so it is good to see membership numbers so healthy.

In terms of where the membership stands now, we currently have 294 members, and 76 didn't renew before the renewal window ended, which is about normal.

Gender Breakdown of Membership



Roll of honour

Who won what in 2024?

Men's Club Champion: Roger Easterbrook

Ladies' Club Champion: Mel Brooks

Men's Fastest Marathon: James Long (2:56:57)

Men's Fastest Half Marathon: Hamish Rae (1:14:51)

Men's Fastest 10K: Hamish Rae (34:21)

Ladies' Fastest Marathon: Helen Anthony (3:08:59)

Ladies' Fastest Half Marathon: Susanna Pratt (1:29:45)

Ladies' Fastest 10K: Chloe Olford (39:22)

Most Improved Male: Trevor Irons (nominees: James Long, Phil Reynolds, Alan Kember, Tim Pratt)

Most Improved Female: Chloe Olford (nominees: Chloe Weeks, Lucy Payne, Jade Reid, Cheryl Dunn)

Most Promising Male Newcomer: Alex Sparks (nominees: Darin Dodd, Ben Akyol, Oli Reynolds)

Most Promising Female Newcomer: Michelle Doherty (nominees: Abbie Barnett, Freya Morrissey, Tia Tarr)

Committee Cup: Stuart Moulson (nominees: Dominique Harcourt, Deb Hart, Debbie Elphick, Caroline Hayes)

John Scott Trophy: Chris Andrews Ross Cup: Derek Skinner

Coach of the Year (Dennis's Cup): Clare Youngman

A night to remember! (Thank you Foxy for the great photos)



Chair



Our Club Captains



Helen



Alex



Chloe



Clare



Stu



Nigel finally won something!



Trevor

Who's who in 2025

Dartmoor Discovery

Saturday 7th June

Race Director: Liz Barnett

Assistant RD: Roger Hayes

Chief Marshal: Nigel Barnett



Totnes 10K

Sunday 3rd August

Race Director: Rod Payne

Assistant RD: Lucy Payne

Chief Marshal: Derek Skinner



Haytor Heller

Saturday 6th September

Race Director: Kim Knight

Assistant RD: Duncan Knight

Chief Marshal: Debbie Elphick



Ladies 10K

Sunday 28th September

Race Director: Debbie Elphick

Assistant RD: Jacki Woon

Chief Marshal: Nigel Barnett



Sibelco Templer Ten

Sunday 5th October

Race Director: Roger Hayes

Assistant RD: Liz Barnett

Chief Marshal: Nigel Barnett



Sparksy is on fire!



Alex Sparks joined the Trotters in February of this year. Little did I know when I spoke to him on his first training night, how good a runner he would become!

It was Mandy Wheeler and Helen Anthony who played a big part in recommending Alex to the Trotters, as they both knew his Auntie and spoke highly of the club and what it could do for Alex.

Turn the clock forward and by Alex's own admission, joining the Trotters has changed his life! A young man who didn't really socialise beforehand, threw himself head first into the club and is loving every minute.

Alex says; 'It's been brilliant, I've loved all the training, the races and most importantly, all the Trotters I've met. I love putting on that royal blue vest and being part of a team. I tell anyone who will listen, what a great club the Trotters is'.

Alex certainly didn't waste any time in donning that royal blue vest and entering races. His top 5 record is pretty impressive, as you can see from the list opposite.

It's been a good year so far as promising newcomers is concerned, but I think there's little doubt as to the worthiness of Alex winning the award for this year's most promising male newcomer.

One of his goals for next year is to improve on his marathon PB of 2:57. He's entered the Seville Marathon in February, where it would take a brave person to bet against him knocking that time out of the park!

During my time as a Trotter I've witnessed certain runners dominate the fastest times. Dave Tomlin did it for a number of years, then there was Jamie Barnett, now I think we could be about to witness the 'Alex Sparks years'. I for one am very excited to see how it unfolds.

Templer Ten ~ 1st
Honiton Hippo ~ 1st
City to Sae Marathon ~ 1st
Dawlish Dash ~ 1st
Lustleigh 10K ~ 2nd
Burator 10K ~ 2nd
Ottery 10K ~ 2nd
Drogo 10 ~ 4th
Haytor Heller ~ 5th

LONDON BECKONS

Members who got the maximum 6 marshal points this year, who let Liz know they wanted to be included in the draw for the club's one London Marathon place.

Liz Barnett ~ Nigel Barnett ~ Ben Elphick ~Debbie Elphick ~ Nathan Elphick ~ Deb Hart ~Roger Hayes
Ian Langer ~ Stuart Moulson



The lucky winner was Deb Hart

£50 RACE VOUCHER

The lucky eight members who won one of the 8 x £50 race vouchers, that were on offer to all those who got 4 marshal points or more this year, and let Liz know they wanted to be included in the draw (there were 21 in the draw).

Jacki Woon
Debbie Elphick
Ben Elphick
Caroline Hayes
Ian Langer
Nigel Barnett
Liz Barnett
Susanne Westagte



27 Trotters have entered the DD

Helen Anthony
Oli Reynolds*
Kurt Read
Kate Williamson*
Kris Ward
Andrew Rattlidge
Freya Morrissey*
Roger Moss*
Neil Rutley*
Jo Randall
Jason Trevenen
Caroline Clark*
Eamon Crowe
Adam Doherty*
Derek Skinner
Sharon Bowman
Graydon Widdicombe
Ewan Walton
Paul Sharples
Andy Gilson
Allen Taylor
Roger Hayes
Stuart Moulson
Kathryn Steemson*
John Pullen*
Lucy Evans
Chris Andrews*

* DD first timers

Club Records A Plenty!

What a year for new club records. Last year was pretty amazing with 14 being set, but this year we had an incredible 17 new club records. We got off to a flyer when four records went at the First Chance 10K in January. Mel Brooks set a new FV45 in that race in what was her first race as a Trotter - not a bad debut!

Mandy Wheeler then claimed a new FV50 record at the Rome Marathon, one of two records this year to be set on foreign soil. For the second time in the year, there were another four records broken at the London Marathon. Susanna's time of 3:14:28 was arguably the pick of the bunch.

Bob Small, our truly inspiring 'super vet' knocked 23 minutes off the MV75 Marathon record at Richmond, which had only just been set by Pete Kirby at London! That was one of three club records that Bob set during the year, a feat equalled by Jacki Woon, who set new records in the FV60 Marathon, Half and 10 miles, and Mandy, who added the FV50 10 miles and 10K to her Rome marathon record.

It's a well known fact that some courses seem to lend themselves to quick times, this was certainly the case with the Bideford 10 miler, as it made it a hat-trick of times during the year that four records were broken at the same race. Chloe Olford managed to beat Stef Ross's SF 10 mile record that had stood for 26 years. Chloe wasn't even born when Stef set that record!

It's been one heck of a year, can 2025 surpass it? Only time will tell.

Bob Small	10K MV75	50:50	First Chance
Alan Kember	10K MV65	42: 23	First Chance
Mel Brooks	10K FV45	40:35	First Chance
Chloe Olford	10K SF	39:22	First Chance
Mandy Wheeler	Marathon FV50	3:24:49	Rome
Helen Anthony	Marathon FV45	3:08:59	Manchester
Susanna Goffe	Marathon SF	3:14:28	London
Jacki Woon	Marathon FV60	3:37:30	London
Alan Kember	Marathon MV65	3:30:27	London
Pete Kirby	Marathon MV75	4:53:06	London
Bob Small	Marathon MV75	4:30:23	Richmond
Jacki Woon	Half Marathon FV60	1:43:56	Exmouth
Chloe Olford	10 Mile SF	1:04:19	Bideford
Mandy Wheeler	10 Mile FV50	1:13:43	Bideford
Jacki Woon	10 Mile FV60	1:15:15	Bideford
Bob Small	10 Mile MV75	1:20:35	Bideford
Mandy Wheeler	10K FV50	43:11	Benidorm

Nervous Nineties!.....

A title familiar to all cricketers but also very relevant to those runners approaching 100 marathons. The Trotter asks Derek Skinner how he's coping now he's on 93!

So when did it all start? It was the Amsterdam Marathon back in 2012. I finished in 3:41:55. I was pretty pleased with that time.

How long had you been running? It was about a year before I did Amsterdam. I was climbing mountains at the time, getting myself fit in the gym and doing some treadmill running, when I was approached by one of the trainers, she invited me to join her Monday running club. A few years after I found the Trotters, the rest is history as they say.



What's been your favourite one? Blimey that is a tough one, as they're all so different. Some stick in the memory better than others. I do enjoy a foreign marathon and I wonder if this counts as one? I'm going to count it as one, as you take a ferry! I did a back to back ultra in May 2014. 32 miles on the first day and 34 miles on the second day, all around the beautiful Isle of Wight. The weather was perfect (hot), the scenery was just spectacular and I felt great, and I raced it with my brother.

Have you done many ultras? I've done 18 so far. With a few more lined up before my 100th.

Talking of your 100th, when did you decide to actually go for it? Well I never really decided to go for a 100, I could probably put that down to Chairman Rog. I had reached over 50 and Rog was going for his 200th, so we did quite a few marathons together and it just kind of built up. I guess when I got to about 80, I started mapping them out and thought reaching 100 may be achievable.

You mentioned you had a few more ultras planned, what exactly have you got left to do? I've been doing one a month for quite some time now. It seems to have worked, so I've kept with it. My path to my 100th looks like this: December ~ Portsmouth Marathon; January ~ Pagan Trail, Chagford (28 miles); February ~ RED Winter Challenge Marathon; March ~ Original Marathon (London); April ~ Paris Marathon; May ~ Howum Ultra, Wales (30 miles); June ~ Dartmoor Discovery Ultra (100th).

Are the nerves starting to kick in? Not really. I'm just being really mindful about not getting injured. The last thing I want to go and do is twist an ankle or pull a muscle!



Chair, Nige and Del during the Jurassic Coastal Challenge Ultra

Why choose the DD for your 100th? Why not. We all know it's a tough race but it's one of the most iconic ultras in the UK. I've seen first hand, how, for your 100, you're supported all the way round to help you get to your goal, and I want and will probably need that. Plus the Trotters just make a real effort to make it a special day/night....



A well earned rest or more of the same once you reach that magical number? Never say never! I'm not saying I won't run another marathon, but I will probably drop down to half marathons and 10K's, as there is a lot of weird and wonderful ones out there to try that I haven't done yet. I'll maybe train and have a try for my good for age for London, but hey that's in the future, and you never know what's around the corner. Just to keep running is a goal in itself...

See you on the start line at the DD. Can't wait 😊

Three in a month!

At the request of Dartmoor National Park, we've had to move the Haytor Heller from its traditional slot in the racing calendar (July) to the first Saturday in September. This is because of the bird nesting season.

Our Ladies 10K has had to move because of the clash of dates with the Torbay Half Marathon (you can read about my rant on page 17). It will now take place on the 28th September.

A week later the Templer Ten takes place (6th October).

Unfortunately I only found out about Torbay's confirmed date after I had applied for my race permit and made all the necessary arrangements to stage the race in October.

We know this isn't ideal and in all likelihood the Templer Ten will move its date to early July in 2026.

However, that leaves us with staging three races in the space of one month. We know it's a big ask, we're going to need you more than ever. Please put those dates in your diary and if you can, when the call to arms comes around, put yourself forward for marshalling.

If every member offered to help in just one of the three races, we'd easily have enough cover. When put like that, is it really that big an ask!

Captains Corner

Ladies` Captain, Debbie Elphick, certainly loves the relays!

What a year it has been! I first want to say a massive well done to each and every one of you! We all deserve awards for our achievements this year. It is not always easy to balance running with work, family life, horrendous weather, and injury but we still get out there and do our best.



I would like to give a warm welcome to all the ladies that have joined after completing our C25K programme this year. Well done to you! I remember well how difficult it is at first, but you've done it. Keep up the great work! I would also like to welcome all new Trotter ladies. It has been great to see so many new faces this year.

A real highlight for me this year has been the summer relays. We had a brilliant time and great success! At the Run Exe relays we had two winning teams, the FV40 team made up of Helen Anthony, Mel Brooks, Claire McKenna & Liz Nuttall, and the FV50 team Mandy Wheeler, Kathryn Steemson & Tracy Elphick won their category. At Erme Valley our FV35 team won, made up of Claire McKenna, Debbie Elphick, Joanna Randell & Freya Morrissey. And finally at South Devon Relays our FV50 team won again consisting of Eyvoll Aston, Kim Knight, Shaz Sharples & Clare Youngman. Our Senior team were 1st place overall for the second year in a row, well done to Chloe Weeks, Susanna Pratt, Freya Morrissey & Helen Anthony!

It is fantastic to have such a high Trotter presence at these relays. Thank you so much to everyone that took part. For some it was the first time they had taken part in a relay race, and they really pushed themselves out of their comfort zone and had a great time. A special mention to Abbie Barnett who ran the Run Exe relays just weeks after finishing the C25K programme. I would really encourage you all to take part in the relays next year. It is a great opportunity to put on your Trotters vest and soak up the atmosphere of being part of a fabulous team of women.

Moving on to another highlight. It was my first year as Race Director of the Ladies 10K and it was great to see 33 of you brave the torrential rain to take part. Freya Morrissey was first FV35 in 44:20. Mel Brooks was first FV45. Liz Nuttall was second FV45 in 43:16. Eyvoll Aston was third FV50 in 53:44. Lucy Payne was second FV70 in 61:01. To complete a great day's work, we also won the First Ladies team with Mel Brooks, Chloe Weeks, Liz Nuttall and Freya Morrissey. It was also great to see our youngest Trotlette Lucy Ayling run her first ever race and win 3rd under 18. Well done, Lucy! Well done to Jade Reid and Tia Tarr who both ran PBs. For me, the lady of the day had to be Mel Sheehan who ran the rather hilly course, in the pouring rain at 8 months pregnant. Welcome to the world Ralph, your mummy is pretty awesome!! Looking forward to next year's race and seeing you all there.



Mel & Ralph enjoying the Ladies 10K

I would also like to thank the ladies that were part of the rounders team for the inter-club day at the REC back in August. We took it very seriously this year having practice evenings in the run up to the event. Although, we yet again proved our sport is running and not rounders, we had great fun and were definitely the best-looking ladies out there. Haha! Joking aside it was lovely to get together.



Finally, well done to everyone that has taken part in the club championship this year. It has been brilliant to see so many of you take it on. I would like to give a special mention to Lucy Payne for completing the championship after 2 years off running with injury. What a comeback!

That just leaves me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Running Year.



Wednesday 12th February

8pm at the Rec

Training starts at 6.30pm

From Couch To 5K to becoming a Leader at the Trotters

In the first of two interviews in this Christmas edition of the Trotter, we learn all about a rather remarkable lady.

Name: Yasi Jeffrey (pronounced Yossi)

Age: 59

Lives: Teignmouth

Family: I live alone as my grownup kids have moved away. My son is 25 and lives in Manchester and my daughter is 29 and lives in Southend. I also have a 19 months old granddaughter.



Occupation: I was in education for many years but left education in December 21. Since then I've been working in the charity sector, most recently for Volunteering in Health as a wellbeing coordinator. VIH is a small local charity and it would be wonderful if we could raise money for them. I'm also studying to become a counsellor.

When did you start running: I was inspired to try running for the first time because of a friend who was an enthusiastic runner but I had several attempts before actually completing Couch to 5K in 2014. I spent months after that running for 30 minutes up and down Teignmouth seafront with my friend Julia Street. By my 50th birthday I had worked up to running 10K and a teacher friend sent me a link for the Great West Run half marathon and I entered! It was an incredible journey. I followed a training programme and loved the sense of freedom and joy I was getting from running. Before running I wasn't sporty and hated getting sweaty. I started running with Steph Ross leading up to the race and once I'd achieved my first half marathon (my first race of any kind) I felt I could try the Trotters with Steph because somehow the half marathon achievement made me 'good enough' to join a running club. That was October 2017 and was the best decision I made. The club means a lot to me and being part of this community has been my most significant support network for my mental health and wellbeing. It's given me opportunities to challenge myself and believe in myself and to manage all the stresses that life throws at me. I started running on my own but what keeps me running is the power of the group and the community.

PBs: This is really hard as I'm not a fast runner and rarely enter races. I don't keep a record of race times so I've had to look these up. My park run PB is 28:55, 10K PB 59:52 Ladies 10K 2022, half marathon PB 2:15:02

What's your favourite race: The Great West Run meant so much to me because I never thought I could run and I was doing it just for me. The most memorable was last year's John Scott. Up to that point I hadn't done any of the Sandygate Loop trials or the John Scott Trophy and only entered because a lovely friend persuaded me. I was extremely nervous but being runner up was a proud moment.

What motivates you to go out on a cold, wet dark evening: I know I always feel better after a run and I love that feeling. Having a Teignmouth lift share group is also a motivator. When you offer to drive or say yes to a lift it's harder to change your mind.

What other sports do you take part in: I love a sea dip and recently tried rowing.
I started skiing three years ago and am slowly becoming less petrified of the slopes.

What else do you do with your time: I'm studying for a level 5 diploma in Counselling, that takes up a lot of my time. I love cooking and travelling to Southend to see my granddaughter every month.

Favourite 3 films:

Just watched Otto and loved it.
My Christmas go to is Love Actually.
I still feel inspired when I think about Schindler's List.

Favourite 3 bands/singers:

Ed Sheeran
Nick Cave
The Chemical Brothers

Three people you'd invite to a dinner party:

Simon Armitage could entertain us with his wonderful and thought provoking poetry.
I think Jessica Gunning could be very funny as her character in the Outlaws.
Brian May, because he would provide the most divine soundtrack for the evening,



Favourite holiday destination: I loved the snow, cold, and the wild landscape in Norway

Top three pet hates:

Being rushed as I like to do things thoroughly
Any kind of fancy dress/dressing up - it's really out of my comfort zone
Mud! It gets everywhere and reminds me of Glastonbury 1998

Running goals for the 2025: To keep running, avoid injury and enter a few races.

Trotters training nights over Christmas

Mon 23rd December ~ As normal

Christmas Day ~ No training

Monday 30th December ~ No training

New Years Day ~ No training



John Skinner turns the clock back!

2020 AD. Well now, Covid didn't suit everyone, this is true. Enjoying the unseasonal sweltering sunshine, whilst sipping chilled Gin & Tonics, contemplating a seafood luncheon and reading about 'these challenging times' in the newspaper, I was struck as to how singularly unchallenging these times actually were, I broke out a fine cigar and listened to the birds tweet, tweet tweet tweet. Going for a walk, for instance, now, this simple enterprise would normally cost 50 sovs? During covid.....FREE! Then as abruptly as it had begun, it ceased. Back to the real mundane world we trudged. A bedraggled retreat sprinkled with fragments of pessimistic dust. Rediscovering our road crossing skills, spending our unspent pennies on stupid items. It seemed we had learnt nothing

On a personal note, the biggest casualty was my running. When covid hit, I was getting on a bit, 60 ish and losing interest, and without the club to attend, my 'mojo' waned. My urge to 'get out there' dwindled. Lots of you know what I'm talking about

No bad thing, thought I, I can develop new hobbies. I did. Unfortunately, wine tasting and loafing on the settee watching Minder, [great period, character driven London drama by the way, you should try it] began to prevail.

You can never keep a True Trotter down however, so with my memories securely intact, I sprung from the sofa, flung open the front door and burst forth into my familiar surroundings. The Teignbridge Trotters.

What becomes easy with practice\training, becomes, without due diligence, in the words of the great Watsa, 'really really hard'. I was knackered quickly, and without a properly structured and curated backend of elite running clubs there was nowhere to start.

Fate stepped in. The Trotters, always innovative, decided, in the new post covid era, to reinvigorate the beginners section and it was deemed that yours truly was the perfect fit. I could start anew with like minded people determined to make a fresh start. Following several months of tinkering, the Trotters C25K programme was born.

It's very difficult to describe the vicarious pleasure one gleans from the achievements of others. To witness the progress and joy of my fellow C25Kers, to observe them climb the ranks of the TROTTERS makes my heart swell. I am so proud of you all.

Over the decades this club has given me so much. Rich memories, great friends, a blinding tattoo. I've travelled far and wide with the Trotters. Most memorably the club led me to my beautiful fiancée Deborah. You never know what's around the corner at this great club.

When I undertook the role of overseeing the C25K group, I envisaged it as giving something back. Turns out it was much more.

Teignbridge Trotters, your club, the gift that keeps on giving.

On On.





Not a bad first year!

As you know the Trotters were invited to join the *InStep* race series for the first time this year. A competition very similar to our own Club Championship. We were one of ten running clubs taking part.

And what a first year we had! We were second ladies team and fourth men's team.

Sadly the last race of the series was cancelled (Budleigh Blister) which meant that a number of our members failed to finish the series. However, that didn't stop Mel Brooks from winning the Ladies event, adding to her Trotters Club Championship win as well. There were also age category wins for Chloe Weeks and James Saunders.

The first two races in next year's series just so happen to be the first two races in our Club Championship. So hopefully we can get off to a flyer, not just as individuals but also in the team events.

Table of winners in each category

Female Overall	Mel Brooks	Teignbridge Trotters
Senior Female	Chloe Weeks	Teignbridge Trotters
FV35	Jenny Debenham	SWRR
FV45	Mel Brooks	Teignbridge Trotters
FV55	Mary Daymond	SWRR
FV65	Eleanor Wood	Axe Valley Runners
Male Overall	Oliver White	Exmouth Harriers
Senior Male	Oliver White	Exmouth Harriers
MV40	Jamie Howard	SWRR
MV50	Edward Pickering	SWRR
MV60	James Saunders	Teignbridge Trotters
MV70	Ron Seward	Axe Valley Runners

John Scott Trophy Results

Starting Position	Name	Start Gap	JST Time	JST Position	Individual Time	Individual Position
12	Chris Andrews	0:13:00	0:48:37	1	71m 41s	26
10	Sue Tremlett	0:12:50	0:48:54	2	36m 4s	27
4	Yasi Jeffrey	0:07:50	0:49:13	3	41m 23s	37
6	Samantha Galvin	0:11:30	0:49:26	4	37m 56s	34
15	Michelle Doherty	0:14:25	0:49:30	5	35m 5s	22
9	Matthew Stout	0:12:40	0:49:49	6	37m 9s	31
2	Julie Webb	0:02:15	0:50:11	7	47m 56s	39
18	Pat Atkins	0:15:00	0:50:14	8	35m 14s	24
19	Eamon Crowe	0:15:40	0:50:17	9	34m 37s	20
17	Neil Tampkins	0:15:00	0:50:21	10	35m 21s	25
30	Ben Tampkins	0:20:00	0:51:08	11	31m 8s	13
36	Duncan Knight	0:24:15	0:51:09	12	26m 54s	8
37	Chloe Weeks	0:24:40	0:51:22	13	26m 42s	7
42	Roger Easterbrook	0:26:10	0:51:26	14	25m 16s	3
14	Sarah Blanchard	0:14:10	0:51:39	15	37m 29s	32
31	Tim Synge	0:20:10	0:51:42	16	31m 32s	14
25	Laura Holland	0:18:20	0:51:46	17	33m 26s	17
26	Charlie Churchill	0:19:10	0:51:53	18	32m 43s	15
11	Stuart Moulson	0:12:50	0:52:02	19	39m 12s	35
23	Paul Sharples	0:17:00	0:52:05	20	35m 5s	23
33	Derek Skinner	0:22:00	0:52:09	21	30m 9s	11
38	Ian Langler	0:24:50	0:52:12	22	27m 22s	9
16	Lucy Payne	0:14:25	0:52:14	23	37m 49s	33
41	Ewan Walton	0:26:10	0:52:15	24	26m 5s	4
20	Sharon Sharples	0:15:40	0:52:17	25	36m 37s	30
46	Alex Sparks	0:30:30	0:52:20	26	21m 50s	1
22	Caroline Clark	0:16:40	0:52:45	27	36m 5s	28
35	Alan Kember	0:23:00	0:53:07	28	30m 7s	10
34	Craig Churchill	0:22:30	0:53:07	29	30m 37s	12
43	Steve Weeks	0:26:35	0:53:09	30	26m 34s	6
24	Kevin Besford	0:17:00	0:53:20	31	36m 20s	29
45	Jacob Day	0:30:00	0:53:25	32	23m 25s	2

44	James Saunders	0:27:00	0:53:32	33	26m 32s	5
32	Jo Randall	0:21:00	0:53:43	34	32m 43s	16
27	Kim Knight	0:19:45	0:53:53	35	34m 8s	18
28	Adam Doherty	0:20:00	0:54:26	36	34m 26s	19
29	Trevor Irons	0:20:00	0:54:50	37	34m 50s	21
1	Claire Farrar	0:00:00	0:54:53	38	54m 53s	40
8	Steve Clarke	0:11:45	0:54:59	39	43m 14s	38
13	Steph Ross	0:13:45	0:55:06	40	41m 21s	36

40 runners took part in this year's race, that was eight up on last year, when we had 32 take part.

Graydon did a great job sorting everyone's handicap times out, not an easy task I can assure you!

Unfortunately, he made an error whilst calculating Alan Kember's time. This was brought to our attention by Alan (thanks Alan). The results have been adjusted accordingly.



L to R: Sue (2nd), Chris (Winner) and Yasi (3rd)

Chair's fears for the future of the much loved club race!

I was doing a bit of research for possible races for our 2025 Club Championship and it struck me how few races there are nowadays organised by actual running clubs!

Back when I first started running in the late 80s, just about every race was organised by a running club. Most of them have either long since gone or are now organised by running event companies.

It's strange really when you stop and think about it, because back in the 80s/90s there were fewer running clubs with fewer members. The Trotters for example had less than 100 members, and yet there were loads of races organised by clubs.

So why the change? I guess the biggest reason there are fewer races, particularly road races, is because of the increase in traffic on our roads and the cut backs in the Police force. Back then the Police would happily get involved with traffic management and for free!



Now race organisers are having to pay for private traffic management companies, road closures etc. The traffic lights we had to use at the DD this year cost the club £800. As a result of this there are far more off road races than those held on the roads. The DD is now the only single lap road ultra in the UK.

I believe running companies have a place in the racing calendar, but I fear in another ten years time they maybe all we're left with! That would be a huge loss, because many of the races organised by clubs are runners' favourites.

What doesn't help is the entry fees that most of these companies charge. They certainly aren't cheap. Another downside is that the majority of them don't worry about clashing with long established running club races. Two good examples of this are Purple Gecko Events, based in Cornwall, who are staging a half marathon in Haldon Forest on the same day the Dawlish Coasters are staging their half marathon. The other example affects the Trotters, because Taurus Events, who organise the Torbay Half Marathon, are staging their race on the same day as our Ladies 10K in 2025. We've had to move our race!

Back in the day, running clubs would work with each other to ensure races didn't clash. In fact they still do today, albeit on a smaller scale due to the lack of races.



I do worry for the future of our sport and in particular races organised by running clubs. If all we're left with is running event companies, then many of us simply won't be able to afford to race on a regular basis.

Our 2025 Club Championship races reflect our support for our fellow running clubs and their races. Please do your best to support them.

I'm a Trotter, get me out of here!

It's not often your son treats you to a holiday of a lifetime, but that's what son Scott did for Chris Andrews. They even managed to get a half marathon in! Chris tells the Trotter all about it.

When my son Scott told me he was taking me on holiday, I had no idea what was in store for me! Thailand was the destination, starting with a three day trek in the jungle (The Mighty Jungle) in Chiang Mai. We trekked around 10 miles a day in tough terrain. It was hilly and very humid. We were climbing over rocks, walking through streams, and swimming in waterfalls (that was lush), battling down bushes and of course watching out for poisonous snakes and spiders on route! We saw some elephants bathing in the river, which was a truly remarkable sight.

We were carrying heavy rucksacks during our trek, making sure we had essentials; water, insects sprays, and toilet paper! Unfortunately, not everyone completed the course and ended up having to quit, but thankfully with all my Trotter fitness training runs and races, I managed to keep going and didn't have to say.... 'Get me out of here'.



On the last day of our trip we took part in the Bangkok Half Marathon - a strange race as it started at 3am! There were other races taking place, including a full marathon, which started at 12.30am and a 10K which went off at 4:30am. Rather surprisingly the half marathon had considerably less competitors (1027) than the other two distances. The idea of the staggered starts was that everyone finished more or less together. The cost of the half marathon was £45 plus an overseas 8% charge.



When you registered you were given a different colour vest which represented the distance you were running. A yellow one for the full marathon, purple for the half, blue for the 10K and green for the 5K. However, Scott and myself wanted to run in our own vests. Mine was my Trotters vest, worn with pride, and Scott wore his with the words "I want to beat my Dad". This put a smile on the Thai people faces, who seem to be always happy and smiling!

The course was, if I'm honest, a bit boring, as it was run on a closed overhead motorway with concrete borders and no spectators or atmosphere (obviously normal people are fast asleep at that time of the morning!) You looped back and saw runners coming back the other way. Having said that, it was very colourful seeing all the vests knowing which race they were competing in.

There was plenty of water stops on the course, every 2K, and a lovely sight was seeing fresh melons and bananas at the water stations! Toilets are provided with plenty of medical aid too (I did see about three or four people collapse).

The conditions were very humid and hot, with humidity at 88% and temperatures of 26 degrees even at that time of the morning. What I did see which I thought very strange, towards the end of the race in the built up area, they closed the route very temporarily to let traffic through, good job I wasn't going for a PB! Some runners were not happy about the situation, but you have to give way as it is a very vibrant city, noisy, chaotic and very colourful.

At the end of the race you were given a goodie bag with a purple t-shirt for us, food, ice lolly, glucose drink and a fantastic bling medal. All in all it was a very well organised race with plenty of smiling Thai people, who seemed to like us (well who wouldn't) and runners from all over the world. Each runner had their national flag on their race number.

We pretty much headed straight for the airport after finishing, as our flight back to the UK was at 1pm. Boy did I sleep on that 13 hour journey back home, but I had such a amazing time and achieved something that I would never thought I would do at my young age. However, if it wasn't the support and encouragement from my lad (who introduced me to the Trotters) I'm not sure I would have made it. I can not thank him enough - he is one hell of an amazing son!



Quite a debut year!

Mel Brooks joined the Trotters in January. By the end of the year she'd won the Club Championship. Here she tells the Trotter how much she's enjoyed taking part.

I joined the Trotters this year and was really looking forward to taking part in the Club Championship, especially after hearing so much about it from friends who are members.

Taking part has been a great experience. It's pushed me to enter events I might not have considered otherwise. The races always have a fantastic turnout of Trotters, so it's been a great opportunity to get to know everyone better, and the camaraderie of all taking part together really adds to the day. I particularly enjoyed the Chudleigh road race. It's challenging but always has a great atmosphere and lots of support.

The Championship scoring is all based on age grade. This totally levels the playing field and makes the competition really interesting, as it's all based on performance relative to our age.

I'm already looking forward to next year's Championship and can't wait to challenge myself with some new races.



When is a marathon not a marathon - when it's an Ultra!

In our second interview, the Trotter gets to know a man who sold ice creams and fed tigers!

Name: John Pullen

Age: 47

Lives: Kingsteignton

Family: My wife Jo, and daughters Emily 14 and Lara 11



Occupation: I've had a range of jobs since leaving school, including being an Ice-cream man and working with the big cats at Dartmoor Zoo. I then qualified and worked as an Environmental Health Officer, initially dealing with nuisances including noise complaints, filthy and verminous premises etc, I later specialised in housing. I now work as a property developer and manage some rentals.

When did you start running: I really didn't like sports at school and would walk the 1500m! I started running in my twenties. I joined the Trotters around 2019 when I moved to Kingsteignton, as I wanted to meet like-minded people and improve my running. It took me a long time to join as I'd lost fitness and I wanted to be able to run 4/5 miles first. It's great that the Coach to 5K group has started as I would have joined sooner if that had been going at the time. I choose the Trotters as there is such a range of ability and the looping rule means you never get left behind!

PBs: 5K 22.39m at Teignmouth Park Run

10k Eastleigh 10k 45mins approx. (long time ago!)

10m Great South Run 1hr15m

1/2 Marathon - Oh my Obelisk 2hr 5m

Marathon – I ran the virtual London marathon in 2021 around Exeter and then to Teignmouth. I ran in 4hr 24mins. By accident this was also my first ultra, as the London marathon app kept pausing in my bag. After the first 2 miles I got the phone out and according to the app I hadn't yet started!

After some strong language I decided I really wanted the medal, which meant clocking up the correct distance on the app. The only option was to add a lap of Exeter quay. By the time I got to Teignmouth where my kids were waiting with a banner, I'd already run 28.5miles on my watch and reached the 26.2 on the app. I felt so good that I carried on going, much to the confusion of my kids, completing another lap of Teignmouth Promenade to reach 30miles.

What's your favourite race: The Haytor Hellor is my favourite race. The support from the club members and the challenge and beauty of the off road course make it special. I don't know any other races in which you have to climb up granite boulders.

What else do you do with your time: Having two kids and working for myself I don't tend to have much spare time. If I have time, I enjoy walking on the moors or coastline often Geocaching at the same time. We have a motorhome and enjoy camping in the UK or abroad. I enjoy combining the camping with attending Parkruns. I will plan the holiday around the closest location and either run or cycle from the campsite. In the Netherlands I cycled 12miles though the middle of the Hague to get a Z at Zuiderpark parkrun (for the Parkrun alphabet challenge). Whilst staying near Corfe Castle I cycled via the Sandbanks ferry to get to Poole parkrun.

Favourite 3 films: Dawn of the Dead, 1978 as it was the start of the Zombie genre. Where Eagles Dare. I loved this as a child and was always trying to work what was going on with the double agent plot. Dune or Lord of the Rings. I enjoy watching these with my daughter.

Favourite 3 bands/singers: The mighty Levellers. The Levellers were the first group I really got into as a teenager and have seen them 10+ times. My sister lent me a tape of the album Levelling the Land, and I was hooked. They shaped a lot of my opinions. I also enjoy the Foo Fighters and Snow Patrol.

Three people you'd invite to a dinner party and why. Trump, Putin and Zelensky. No one's allowed to leave until they have sorted it out.

Favourite holiday destination: Spain. It's hot, it's less than 3 hours on a plane and I know the Spanish for 'Can I have a large beer'! My favourite area of Spain is the north as when I finished university I walked the Camino de Santiago across the Pyrenees.

Top three pet hates:

Long, slow queues of any sort.

When my log burning stove doesn't light the first time.

BBC weather app – It seems to state it's going to be raining on Tuesday, when what it actually means it's a 37% chance of rain at 3pm and the rest of the day is dry.

Running goals for the 2025: My running goals of 2025 are to try and avoid injury. I have currently run at 21 different park runs, so will aim to get that up to 25 or more and get to 100 park runs in total and work on completing the alphabet challenge.

I'd like to improve my current 5K time and hopefully run a marathon again next year. I haven't decided which one yet as so many to choose from, probably a trial run (hilly but not too hilly) although if training goes really well, I may have told a couple people I'd run the DD....



Trotters Christmas Away Run

We're looking for someone to stage the traditional Christmas away run again this year.

It would take place on Saturday 28th December. Ideally there would be two groups going out. The first would be roughly 6 miles at 10/12 min/mile. The second would be roughly 10 miles at 8/9 min/mile pace. Both runs would start at 10am.

What normally happens is that both runs finish at about the same time. The host then offers up some hot food. Boonie's done Shepherd's Pie and Curry in the past. Last year we did home made soup, roast potatoes and other nibbles.

If there are a couple of Trotters out there who fancy leading the runs and hosting afterwards, I'd love to hear from you. It's a great way to see out the year.



Top 5 (as at 17/12/24)

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|-------------------|------------|
| 1. Nigel Barnett | 214 points |
| 2. Nathan Elphick | 212 |
| 3. Oli Reynolds | 211 |
| 4. Andy Distin | 208 |
| 5. John Caunter | 205 |

Manager of the month

August: Arthur Moulson 41pts

September: Nigel Barnett 60pts

October: Clare Youngman 65 pts

November: John Caunter 57pts



John



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