

Prattle & Run

Thornbury Running Club Magazine

April 2008



21 years ago ... and see page 3

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Editorial

So, it's April, nights are drawing out, we're in BST – and as I edit this it's snowing! Still, I am confident that we will soon be muttering that it's too hot to run.

Good luck to all our London (and other marathon) runners. Nearly there!

With summer comes the Triathlon season, of interest to an increasing number of our members. If you have an urge to trying-out this popular sport, speak to any of our regular competitors. Alternatively, if like me, you swim like a brick, and your cycle needs stabilisers, I am sure TRC will continue to provide plenty for the runners.

Many thanks to all the contributors to this edition, especially to Jacqueline who is intending that a regular Triathlon update will be included.

Articles for the next edition to me please by Monday 2nd June, on hard copy or e-mail to judy.mills@avonandsomerset.police.uk

The Caretaker

Two months on and the four groups appear to be working well.....

The top group has now become quite elite, with some very fast runners in it: sometimes there is one slower runner with them.

It has been suggested that the club would benefit from a 5th group...One which caters for the too-fast-for-Arthur's-group but too-slow-for-the-Top-group. At the moment I propose not to change anything, however if we had more people migrating to the top group, we would see that this group would accommodate the runners more, which in turn would encourage more to move up as there would be a better cross section of ability. (*Got that? – Ed*)

There are no doubt runners in Arthur's group which could quite easily move up...This is probably the case in all the other groups....Nothing is Mandatory !!!! Yet...



Off road will now be part of the Thursday night runs, so don't wear your best shoes for the messy farm yards etc.....

Please can I urge people who take their turn to do teas (some still avoid it) to bring 2 pints of milk with them and to clear the equipment away at the end...

It lives in a cupboard, the tea fairies makes sure it is ready for the start of club, so please help out by putting it away at the finish....

Cotswold Way relay is now confirmed as Sat 28th June 2008, so please put your names on the sheet provided at club if you wish to run in it....

Monday night cycling is now starting 7th April 18.15 hours, meet in the lay by just up from the West Midland Farmers (Countrywide) This is a 9.6 mile time trial course.

Triathlon season is underway with a few events coming up soon. Please affiliate to the club Tri Section if you wish to join in with the cycling events organised by the various volunteers. The section has over 30 members now. There is also talk of the Section hosting an Aquathon next year. Speak to Sandra Webber (Race director) if you would like to help.

Caretaker Captain 45!

THORNBURY RUNNING CLUB

THE BEGINNING

The Club Inaugural General Meeting took place on 12th December 1985, but before that date a considerable amount of work and thought had been done to enable a firm proposal to be put to those present at the meeting.

It is fair to assume that the idea germinated early in 1985, when the late Terry Morgan and I had first become mutually acquainted as a result of our representing Rolls-Royce in races such as the Sun Life 5 and the Rank Xerox 10k Series. Terry was a very capable athlete, for example able to complete the Sun Life course in under 30 minutes and 10 miles comfortably under an hour. I believe that we have only ever had 4 members capable of those times.

Subsequent to those events, Terry occasionally called into my office at Rolls-Royce (no doubt delaying the starts of meetings he was due to attend!) to ask "When are we going to start a running club, Dave?". This was at least partly due to his awareness of my membership of the committee of BAC Squash Club for 13 years. More relevant was the fact that in 1980 I had been one of the 3 founders of Thornbury Squash Club, and was thus aware of the general procedures and requirements for creating a club.

(Note – the other founders of the squash club were Ralph Denning and the late George Pardington, both of Rolls-Royce, so this company was the source of much of the creative activity in Thornbury sport at that time)

Having realised that Terry was not going to give up on these reminders, I mentioned the idea to a few members of Thornbury Squash Club between (and perhaps during) games at Club Nights, and found that we had support from 3 members - Russ Lawton, Dave Bratt and Les Jones. In particular, Dave had previously competed in athletics for the R.A.F., and was thus likely to have relevant knowledge and experience to complement Terry's and mine. Finally, we knew something of Ray Daniels' race results ("the flying postman"), as he was another sub-hour 10-miler, and he agreed to join us. These were therefore the 6 people who were subsequently to become known as the "founders" of the Club. Russ was subsequently destined to be a Chairman of the Club, and Dave issued the first Club newsletters that preceded the notorious Prattle & Run

In the later months of 1985, we had a series of meetings at my house to ensure that we had a sound foundation for a club. I knew from experience with the Squash Club that it was important to have answers to all the foreseeable questions at a meeting, not least of which was the identification of a base from which to hold Club Nights. Also, as I had previously completely re-written the Constitution and Rules of BAC Squash Club and had also written the first version of the corresponding documents for Thornbury Squash Club, it was not a surprise to find that I was expected to do the same for this Club. It was a relief that my 5 colleagues had little to suggest in the way of additions or changes to my draft, and the only outstanding issues were the Club operations base and the Club colours.

In reality, there were few sensible options for the base, and it resulted in a straight decision between the Castle School and the Leisure Centre. The relative strengths were the cost and convenience (for variety of routes) of the school and the facilities of the Leisure Centre. We are still using the choice we made then, albeit in a different (and better) building.

The choice of Club colours was more hotly debated (in a nice way, of course!); I had suggested blue with a bottle green band, but the majority preference was for blue with a red band. However, with true British compromise, we agreed to put the choice to the inaugural

meeting, and the result is now history. (I cannot resist adding that my choice would have avoided the subsequent clashes with other local club colours – Chepstow Harriers and Bourton Road Runners).

This, then, was the foundation of the proposal to be put to the inaugural meeting on 12th December. Shortly before that, we also became acquainted with a few other keen runners, including Paul and Judy Nutting, Tom Watts, Chris and Marian Humm, so we were able to collect a few more ideas on the proposal.

The meeting was held in the Cossham Hall (although the minutes refer to the Armstrong Hall, of which the Cossham Hall forms a part), and there were 15 present. It was agreed that I should act as Chairman for the meeting and Russ as Secretary. In addition to all those mentioned above, there were Paul Burgess, John Garratt, Phil Green and Ron Nutt, making a total of 15 members. Those additional to the founders were subsequently known as the “founder members”, 9 in total. John Garratt had a recurrent knee injury and I believe he did not participate in any Club events or renew his subscription.

Regarding the Club colours, the minutes were slightly inaccurate in first not mentioning both of the alternatives considered and then stating that the voting was 11 to 3! The then prevailing dependence on a typewriter (instead of a PC) persuaded us that a re-issue was unnecessary.

Finally in this episode, the Club officers were elected as follows – myself (Chairman - we did not have “chairs” in those days!), Chris Humm (Secretary), Russ Lawton (Treasurer) and Terry Morgan (Club Captain). The additional committee members elected were Dave Bratt, Les Jones, Judy Nutting, Marian Humm, Phil Green, and Ron Nutt (who did not attend any meetings).

Dave Matthews

Tough Guy 2008

Arthur probably summed it up when he described Tough Guy as ‘extremely silly’. And when you look at the volunteer team, some of us certainly come into that category.

Well, it was Garry’s idea. He had competed before, when he dragged and cajoled a team of young virile workmates round the cold, wet muddy course. It seems the majority lost their energy, testosterone and sense of humour on the way. So he thought he would put some of TRC to the test.



The ‘team’ soon comprised a fair proportion of Ironmen – Mark and Jo Williams, Trevor Roberts, Rob Hopkins and of course Garry. Emma Brown and Judy Mills seem to have a reputation for having a go at anything, Matt Sanderson was keen, and Steve Hales jumped at the chance when Rich Phillips had to drop out.

Tough Guy is a total smack-in-the-face for the health and safety brigade. It involves a relatively short warm-up run, followed by an obstacle course over and under earth, air, fire and water. Being run in January, conditions can be quite demanding. Niceties such as safety harnesses would see you laughed off the course!



Having entered, the competitors received a number of mailshots from the organiser Billy Wilson aka Mr Mouse. On one side we were given the picture of a kind old gentleman who runs a horse and donkey sanctuary; on the other a totally mad frustrated General who liked to send his temporary troops into as much unpleasantness and danger as possible. I know all three female team members began to wonder what on earth they had let themselves in for!

The day dawned, pleasantly mild and dry, and it was good to be able to travel together

in the Baptist Church mini-bus – many thanks to Jim Godden for organising this and being our chauffeur, supporter and photographer.

The venue was soon a seething mass of humanity; security staff, supporters including Matt's parents and sister, foreign competitors, large Forces teams and Smurfs. We staked out a TRC corner in a barn, changed and calmly awaited our fate.

The Start is staggered, with preferential treatment given to those who had competed previously. This gave TRC runners a disadvantage, but as soon as we were released Rob hared-off to make up as much time as he could. The other eight of us were going to stay together, working in buddy pairs to make sure we all had help if necessary, and all finished. Our start would have been quicker if Mark hadn't been in a Portaloo...

The main problem with the run was the jam of non-runners struggling on the 'slalom', a steep bank which we had to run up and down about seven times. This led into woodland obstructed with cargo nets and large round silage bales, and we were thankfully well warmed-up before the water-filled ditches. Soon the climbing started – first just 3m walls of timber, then 40' high frames of wood, rope and netting. Lots more ditches, tyres and underground sewer pipes to crawl through, burning straw to run over, and a lake where you had to dive underwater to get to the far end. One of Trevor's shoes disintegrated; we all donned swim caps to keep our heads from the worst of the wet and cold, and the word 'mud' clearly had several meanings, colours and scents!

It was all over in about 2-and-a-quarter hours, though Rob took a lot less. Our finish medal was akin to a horse-brass, we were given tea and a survival blanket, and gave up on the 'showers' which were in any case full of naked men. You can have too much of a good thing!



So, did we win? Well, Mr Mouse would have it there was no real winner because no one completed the course by taking the exact correct approach on every obstacle. Conversely, we all won; it was an achievement, it was cold, wet, but in its way it was fun! It was a chance to face your fears, be it heights or enclosed spaces, and yes, I would do it again.

Ed.

Severn Walkway Relay

When I offered to sort out teams for the reinstated Severn Walkway Relay this year I didn't think that it would mean the discovery of a poem published several years ago and long-since forgotten. Very little is known about the author: he seems not to have been a runner and so we must suppose that he was merely an admirer, impressed by the exploits of Thornbury Running Club members.

Youth and Age on River Severn

By
John Butcherman

Down beside old Tewkesbury Abbey
Down the twisting Lower Lode Lane
Stand a group of cheerful runners.
It's that Thornbury lot again.

Off they go into the distance.
"Keep the river on your right!"
Give the Abbey just a quick glance.
"Hope we're home before it's night."

Meanwhile, further down at Wainlode
Yet more runners stand and wait.
Waiting for... "Who is it? Arthur?"
Thought as much. He's always late."

Off they go from the Red Lion
"Keep the river on your right."
"Come on, folks, just keep on trying.
Hope we're home before it's night."

On and on they quickly gallop
Running legs and taking turns
(Can *you* find a rhyme for "gallop"?)
Sun is shining, fever burns.

On through Gloucester, Rea (near Quedgeley),
Water End and Framilode,
Arlingham and then to Frampton,
Running strongly, never slowed.

Onwards, onwards, on to Purton,
(Meeting place: the Berkeley Hunt)
Onwards, onwards, steps so certain,

Slow at back, fast ones in front.

Next to Berkeley Power Station,
"Keep the river on your right."
Scenes of happiness, elation:
"We might get home before it's night."

Next the Windbound, dry as dust now,
End of relay's getting near.
"Wish the flipping place was open.
I could really use a beer."

And at last - Aust Service Station!
"We got home before the night!
No-one got lost - joy and elation!
We kept the river on the right!"

Critics have said that Butcherman's interpretation of the Severn walkway Relay was unclear so I will try to clarify the race organisation and route.

For several years Thornbury Running Club put on the race for members only. I ran a section in 2004 and the race hasn't happened since. I hope there's no connection between the two.

Butcherman's poem does give a good general outline of the route. It starts near Tewkesbury Abbey and continues downstream along the Severn until Aust, about 56.25 miles. The most important thing to mention before we get any further is that

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO RUN ALL OF IT.

It is split into eleven parts, known as Legs. (Please note the use of capital letter to distinguish them from legs.) They could also be called Stages (not stages - too dramatic) or Sections (too clinical). The lengths of the Legs vary from 4-and-a-bit miles to 6-and-a-bit and, as water flows down a slope, all downhill, though I'm sure some Legs will go uphill in some places.

LEGS ARE BETWEEN 4 AND 6.25 MILES¹

There will be as many teams as possible and there will usually be two runners from each team running each Leg. Runners on each Leg start at the same time and each person times themselves.

¹ Differentiating between Legs and legs is a good idea until you use Capslock.

RUNNERS TAKE THEIR OWN TIMES.

I will be trying to match runners of similar pace on Legs because of safety issues and so that there can be some element of competition. At the end of the Leg, each runner should ring/email a designated person with their running time. If two runners run a leg but do not run together, the finish time of the slower runner will be counted for both runners. If there is no runner on any leg, the time given will be equal to the time of the slowest other runner on that leg, plus five minutes.

IT'S BETTER TO HAVE A SLOW RUNNER THAN NO RUNNER.

Each Leg is run from A to B but in previous years some runners have run back to the start point after completing their Leg. Runners should liaise with people on the same/previous/next Legs to make sure they have transport to/from the start/finish of each Leg.

IT'S A LONG WAY BACK IF YOU DON'T SORT OUT TRANSPORT.

The runners on (say) Leg 2 do not wait to start until the leg 1 runners have arrived. Leg 2 (and 3, 4, 5, etc) runners start together whether or not the runners from the previous Leg are there. All runners will be notified of all start/finish points by Grid Reference. There are no maps of the course but the route is waymarked.

IF YOUR FEET ARE WET YOU MAY NEED TO BEAR LEFT A BIT

Legs will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis, so if you have a preference for a particular Leg don't wait too long before putting your name down. There will be a form for you to complete and return giving your details.

A trophy and a reward of a more ephemeral nature will be presented to the winning team at the evening social.

Jan Burke

With London a mere week away as I edit this, it may be too late for the below – but there are other marathons ... With thanks to Jonathan Pye and Peak Performance.

Marathon Running - the six most common training mistakes (and the strategies you should be using)

If you run marathons or are preparing to run your first marathon, you may be interested in the following experience of a runner from the States:

"Recently, I trained for a marathon, which took place in June of this year. Starting back in December, I used two-week 'cycles', with long runs every other week. The duration of the long runs gradually increased to 21 miles, and I completed three 21-milers before the actual

marathon, with the last one three weeks before the race.

I tapered down to a long run of just 14 miles two weeks before the marathon - and nine miles one week in advance of race day. Throughout the training period, I carried out 'tempo' efforts at about an 8:00 per mile pace every week on Wednesdays. These tempo sessions included the following:

1. Five miles non-stop at 8:00 pace,
2. 4 x 2 miles at 8:00 pace, with two-minute recoveries in between,
3. 7 x 1 mile at 7:50 tempo, with one-minute rests, and
4. 8 x 800 metres at 7:40 speed (two weeks before the race), with one-minute rest intervals.

I also did your 'greyhound' workout (6 x 100 meters) during the week before the marathon. I wanted to run an 8:57 pace during the marathon, which would have given me a final clocking of about 3:55. During the cool months of December through March, I was able to run comfortably at an 8:20 pace for 18 miles without stopping, so I felt very confident about reaching my goal. However, as the temperatures began to heat up, I began to complete my longer runs more and more slowly, getting up to around 9:00 per mile toward the end. Still, this didn't worry me too much, since my goal speed was 8:57, and the marathon was to take place in a city with fairly cool weather. In addition, my tempo runs remained fast, even though I never advanced beyond eight miles of tempo running per workout.

My typical schedule:

Monday: Four- to eight-mile run. For this workout, I simply ran at an easy recovery-day pace of about 9:15-9:30 per mile, with steady effort, and the length of the run gradually increased from four to eight miles. I also strength-trained on this day, using leg presses, leg extensions, calf raises, leg curls, military presses, lat pull-downs, tricep extensions, bicep raises, seated rows, Roman-chair exercises for my stomach, and 'flies'. I carried out this resistance routine for three months and then shifted over to two months of explosive stuff (primarily jumps and step-ups). During the two weeks before the marathon, I completed no strength training at all.

Tuesday: Cross training, starting with a 10-minute interval of cycling, a 10-minute interval of stair-machine work, then a 10-minute burst of cycling and building up to 20-minute intervals of each over the six-month training period. My goal was to increase turnover and leg strength.

Wednesday: Tempo runs (see above)

Thursday: Another steady run at 9:15-9:30 pace, building from four to eight miles over the six-month preparatory period. I also strength-trained on this day (see Monday).

Friday: Total rest

Saturday: This was my day for long running. I started at 14 miles and built up to the three 21-milers mentioned above. For the 'off' week, I ran 12 to 13 miles at 8:50-9:00 pace.

Sunday: I 'aqua-jogged', increasing the duration of the workout from 30 minutes initially to about one hour during the last two months before the marathon. The idea was to exercise in a fairly running-specific manner while removing lactic acid and going easy on my legs. I employed a steady, moderate intensity.

What happened in the actual race:

This schedule eventually involved about 36 miles of running during 'off' weeks - and approximately 45 miles during weeks which included the longer runs. I believe that I tapered well before the marathon: I cut mileage in half two weeks before the race and to one-third of

normal during the week before the race. I also rested for two full days before the race.

During the last week before the race my quads felt especially heavy and unresponsive. Being conservative, I ran the first mile of the actual race at 9:00 pace and then settled in to 8:40 pace for the next 17 miles. I used energy gels to keep my leg muscles supplied with energy and drank plenty of water. However, after 18 miles my quads felt really heavy, and I was forced to slow my pace. By the 20-mile mark, I was beginning to feel very emotionally upset (disappointed that I had trained so hard and yet was having serious trouble with the race), and my legs actually began to wobble. I walked at about 20 miles and then ran at a slow but steady pace for the last six-plus miles, finishing in an extremely disappointing 4:08.

Here's my real dilemma: I don't know how to change my training so as to get a better result next time. I could move the tempo runs up to half the race distance (13 miles), instead of eight. I could do longer runs of 22 to 24 miles, instead of just 21. I could carry out longer speed sessions, ie with more quality intervals than just 8 x 800. I could conduct strength training more frequently than twice a week (truthfully, though, I felt and looked stronger).

I had run three previous marathons in around 3:57, without an organized training plan! This was the first time I used a good schedule, yet I ran 11 minutes slower than usual and had lots of trouble late in the race. The weather on race day was absolutely beautiful - cool (50 degrees) and low humidity, so I can't attribute my poor performance to environmental conditions. What should I do to help ensure that my next race goes much better?"

That's a situation that many of us have been in: despite months of very careful preparation and diligent work, a race turns out to be somewhat disastrous. Marathon running can be a very humbling experience!

So what went wrong?

This runner's basic marathon-training plan was a relatively common one, yet it was inherently flawed. To understand why the actual marathon race went south, simply focus on one key aspect of the training: this runner was moving along at goal marathon speed or faster every Saturday during the six-month period, for at least 12 miles on 'easy' weekends and for as many as 21 miles on 'long-run' Saturdays! Three weeks before the marathon itself, the runner in effect ran 80 percent of a full marathon (21 miles) at approximately goal pace. Two weeks before the race, the runner covered over 50 per cent of the marathon distance (14 miles) at race pace, and one week before the big event he ran more than 33 per cent (nine miles) of the full race. By the runner's own admission, the average speed of these runs decreased steadily from March through June. Thus, the increase in temperature which corresponded with the beginning of this training slow-down is probably a red herring; what caused the decrease in speed was most likely not the upward movement of mercury in the thermometer but the relentless pounding away at race pace, week after week.

One week, the runner covered approximately a half-marathon at goal race pace; the following week he ran as much as 80 per cent of a full marathon at race speed. Small wonder the quads began to feel sluggish as the race date approached! In general, it is not a good idea to carry out a long run every weekend, because recovery from one long run is seldom complete before another long effort is started. Thus, muscle and connective-tissue stress accumulates over time, and running capability tends to decline. When each weekly long run is carried out at planned race pace, rather than an easier tempo, the situation becomes even worse.

This runner also incorporated a large number of very damaging - yet fairly common - training mistakes into his overall programme. Here they are:

Mistake no. 1

Carrying out three long runs during the four-week period before race day - a 13-miler four weeks before the race, a 21-miler three weeks before the marathon, and a 14-miler two weeks in advance of the big day (we might also count the nine-miler at race pace one week before the marathon, which would give us four long runs in the pre-race month). For a runner with average leg strength, it takes at least a month to recover from strenuous marathon training so that the race itself can be completed with rested, healthy leg muscles; scientific research suggests that during this month before the race no workout should cover more than about 10 miles. This principle was violated three different times by the runner above, and as a result his quads were not really ready to race on marathon day - they were still reeling from the punishing training which had been conducted.

Proper strategy: to promote better recovery while still enhancing the ability to run marathon-type distances, carry out a long run every two to three weeks (not every week), gradually increasing the duration of this effort to 22 miles, only 10 to 12 of which are covered at race pace; on alternate weeks, complete shorter-duration quality training. Complete the last long run at least four weeks prior to race day.

Mistake no. 2

Carrying out just one workout per week at faster than goal marathon pace. For endurance runners in general, max running speed is a good predictor of marathon potential, and for individual runners improvements in max running speed almost always lead to upgrades in marathon performance. It is difficult, however, to enhance max speed when only one 'speed' session is completed per week, especially when that 'speed' session is more of a tempo run than a higher-intensity effort.

Proper strategy: complete at least two faster-than-marathon-pace workouts per week, mixing interval workouts at 10-K, 5-K, and 3-K pace with neural training (see Mistake no. 3) and placing less emphasis on tempo runs.

Mistake no. 3

Failing to complete any neural training, i. e., failing to train at VO₂max speed (i. e., vVO₂max) and omitting 'super sets' from the overall programme. It is certain that vVO₂max workouts produce more gains in vVO₂max, lactate threshold, and running economy than any other type of training session; these three physiological variables are great predictors of marathon success. It is likely that super sets have a similarly strong physiological effect.

Proper strategy: carry out a neural workout every 10 to 15 days during the early stages of marathon training - and every week during the last eight weeks before a marathon.

Mistake no. 4

Emphasizing non-running-specific strength training. For the first four months of the pre-marathon training period, this runner emphasized strengthening exercises which involved isolation of particular muscles or muscle groups and seated or lying-down postures. These kinds of exercises are likely to have only a small (or no) impact on actual running strength (i. e., the ability to consistently take longer strides and the ability to be more stable and economical when the foot is on the ground during the stance phase of the gait cycle; if you doubt this, read Owen Anderson's piece on one-leg exercises earlier in this issue).

Proper strategy: start preparations for a marathon with six weeks or so of whole-body strengthening, with an emphasis on exercises which involve most of the muscles in the body simultaneously and which avoid seated and reclining postures. Then move on to hill training and exercises which duplicate key aspects of the gait cycle, including one-leg squats, high-

bench step-ups, one-leg hops in place, bicycle leg swings, reverse bicycle leg swings, eccentric reaches with toes, and arrested step-downs, focusing on weight-bearing exercises which require high degrees of coordination and must be carried out with full body weight supported by one leg at a time. Finally, finish with about eight weeks of explosive work, including hops, bounds, sprints, one-leg squats with lateral hops, in-place accelerations, Indian hops, drop jumps, and high-knee explosions. These moves enhance the ability to run fast, and as max running speed increases, it drags marathon pace along with it.

Mistake no. 5

Using gels during the marathon itself. This is very tricky business, since exactly the right amount of water must be taken in with each packet of gel. Take in too much water - and you end up with a hypotonic sports drink in your gullet which delivers too few carbs to your leg muscles. Take in too little water - and you concoct a syrupy goo within your intestines which actually drags in water from surrounding tissues and spurs diarrhoea. Pour sports drink down your throat along with the gel, and you might as well begin scouting around for a Portaloo.

Proper strategy: it is possible to use gels during the race, but you'd better have a sports-drink expert or exercise physiologist calculate your water intake for you. It's far easier to simply use sports drink throughout the race (remember never to mix sports drink with water), a practice which will increase your chances of avoiding GI upsets and delivering enough carbohydrate to your muscles.

Mistake no. 6

Employing a training programme which is devoid of variety. Note that although our marathon runner attempted to make the overall training schedule progressive by broadening the duration of the cross-training (aqua jogging, stair-machine, and bicycle) workouts, the easy runs on Monday and Thursday, and the Saturday long run, the programme is monotonously similar from week to week. Although the workouts get longer, the types of training sessions utilized do not change.

Proper strategy: avoid a too-heavy dependence on tempo and long running, substituting an array of higher-quality workouts, including neural sessions (see Mistake no. 3), lactate-stacker workouts (two-minute intervals at close to max pace, separated by four-minute recoveries), hill climbs, fartlek efforts, speed-strength circuits, 800-metre intervals at 3-K pace, 1200- to 1600-metre intervals at 5-K speed, 2000- to 2400-metre reps at 10-K pace, and competitions ranging in distance from 5K up to the half-marathon. These kinds of exertions will have a much broader - and larger - impact on the key physiological variables which are important for endurance-running success, including $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$, lactate-threshold running speed, and running economy. They will also promote the ability to run faster, which is critically important for all types of racing.

Final Points

Completing our analysis, it's important to bear in mind that aqua jogging does not remove lactic acid from the leg muscles (see Sunday's workout above); in fact above a fairly minimal intensity, it will actually increase muscle lactic-acid concentrations. In truth, there's no need to fret about lactic-acid levels in the muscles. Most of the stuff is removed or metabolized within minutes after a workout is over, and lactic acid does not cause muscle soreness or stiffness. Note, too, that this runner can run much faster than 4:08 - or even 3:57 - for the marathon. If he can complete 18-mile runs at 8:20 pace relatively early in the overall preparatory period (as indicated in his letter), then the range of paces between 8:00 and 8:20 - not 8:57 - can be utilized to select a reasonable goal velocity, depending on how aggressive one wants to be at goal setting. An 8:20 pace would of course produce about a 3:38 marathon - and automatic qualification for Boston for this runner. That can happen without problem, as long as he doesn't get burned out during training.

Remember that it is your overall fitness which will determine your success at marathon racing, not the quantity of miles in your training log or even the number of long runs which you have completed. In fact, too many training-log miles will make your legs feel like logs on race day. The idea in marathon training is to 'peak' in neural and physiological fitness and in the ability to run long at goal marathon speed about a month before the race - and then to reach an even higher 'peak' in marathon capacity over the last four weeks by combining less total running and greater rest with the right amount of intense - but not prolonged - training. If you can pull that off, while retaining your confidence, you will have the greatest chance of running your best-possible race.

Field of the Cloth of Gold

The previous week's run (should have been no more than fourteen) went slightly awry and ended up as almost sixteen very slow miles. It left me undecided: should I try and do another sixteen-miler by myself or reduce the distance and have others around me at the Reading Half? I was still dithering on the following Saturday until I realised that without a car I was going to find it tricky to get to Reading for the half marathon the next day. No great problem: at least I could have a lie-in. As we all know, the best laid plans, etc..... I was offered a lift by a customer so leapt out of bed at 5am on the Sunday morning so that Wilf could drive me to Bradley Stoke.

I didn't know Trudi and Sophie very well but they were great company and we soon reached Reading, parked and set off towards the runners' village. I would like to mention here the very high quality and smoothness of the tarmac in the car park. I had an impressive view of it from very close range when I tripped on a speed bump and fell flat on my face. I was very upset, not because I was badly hurt but because I lost a large chunk of the banana that I'd been eating. Still, at least I was stacking up potential excuses ("The pain in my knee was so bad I could hardly walk," "I hit the wall really badly - I'd have done 1:30 if I hadn't lost that chunk of banana...") and practised limping so that the walk breaks would elicit sympathy from spectators. It was a shame that I was wearing tights rather than shorts: a bandage would have added to the picture.

I headed for the Sweatshop tent, greeted the people I'd met before and introduced myself to those I'd spoken to on the phone. I chatted briefly to John Francksen, got changed, left my bag and headed for the start. I didn't quite get as far as the correct (green) pen as the hooter for the start of the wheelchair race went while I was still walking along so I joined a mob of others with green numbers and waited our turn. The hooter sounded. There were several thousand in front of us so we waited while the announcer gave a running commentary: "The leaders are just going through the first mile" then the second and third miles. Then, after thirteen minutes, we were off at last.

I don't remember the sequence of the route but have a series of (possibly jumbled) snapshots of places and events. There was definitely a drag of a hill at about mile 2 with some very cheerful marshals on it. There was another encouraging marshal at about mile 4 or 5½ or maybe it was 1½. Whatever the distance his cries of "Well done! You're doing great!.....Bi-i-ig Issue!" kept us cheerful.

A few miles later (or earlier) we came to an area rich in speed bumps. It may have been at 3½ miles, or just before mile 7, or maybe it was the running equivalent of Platform 9¾ at Kings Cross. We had, I think, passed the Lucozade as the *schlupf, schlupf*, of feet sticking to the floor was fading. Or getting louder. Given my earlier close encounter with Reading tarmac I was worried that I might do a repeat performance but need not have worried: placard-wielding

marshals were out in force with their battle-cry of “Mind the humps..” I’m not sure if it was a runner or a marshal who started with “Let’s hear it for the humps, then,” followed by a cheer and this, in its turn, replaced by “Come on, you hu-umps.”

My knee was becoming increasingly painful though the pain was not constant. At about mile 7 there was another hill, shorter and sharper than the first. The pain in my knee was such that I had to walk up it (funny, that happened at the first hill as well). There was a pub at the bottom of it with its own refreshment station outside: a trestle table with plastic cups with just enough beer to quench a thirst. The temptation was great but I carried on, conscious of my duty to make other people look good in photographs as they ran up the hill while I struggled up behind them, a look of suppressed agony on my face. Fortunately the hill didn’t last too long so I could return to my usual expression and carry on running.

Just after mile 9 my eyes met a scene of carnage which spread across the road. Hundreds of bodies lay on the floor, trampled underfoot as uncaring runners passed by. What had happened? Had they been slaughtered? Had they flung themselves like lemmings onto the ground? Was mile 9 always the site of the Great Jelly Baby Disaster? Bertie Bassett had deserted them in their hour of glory, a cruel and callous leader of his troops. He is shown on the course map, denoting a jelly baby station. Maybe they just missed the train and went to sleep.

My lack of training was showing. My mind doesn’t normally go into free-fall until I get to 18 miles.

Several bands of various types kept us entertained en route, the highlight for me being the samba band under a flyover. Somewhere around here, or maybe it was around there, or possibly both or more than that, I saw several rather handsome buildings. I haven’t a clue what (or, as indicated, where) they were but they mostly were red brick and some were probably Georgian. A very pleasant surprise as I had been under the impression that Reading was a very modern, not-too-attractive town.

From Mile 10, the route goes along a dual-carriageway, heading back towards the Madejski Stadium, gets very close to it, does a rather nasty out-and-back along a road in Green Park, then – finally – heads to the stadium. We ran past those who had finished, looking like an epic version of a primary school historical play, all draped in gold foil blankets. We ran through the tunnel and into the stadium, raced for the finish line, and headed off out of the stadium. I stopped to hug/lean on a man standing to one side (I don’t like to waste an opportunity and he didn’t seem to mind), got my foil blanket and was attacked by a terrible case of the dithers: should I wear it gold side out (very special as I’ve never had a gold blanket before) or silver side (it’s the rebel in my soul). When I found that it was twisted at the back I settled for the “Sod it” version and carried on. I went on to have the medal hung round my neck, timing chip removed and to collect my goody bag.

Back to the tent to put on warm clothes, meet up with Trudi and Sophie, and then we set off back home, fortunately avoiding another close encounter with the car park tarmac.

All the people I know who did the race have used expressions such as “faultless” to describe it. I’ve passed their comments on to my Operations Manager who is one of the race organisers. He has taken note of them and assures me that he will let me lean on him again in future.

Erratum: The word “station” has been omitted after “Lucozade” in paragraph 5 of Jan’s account of her run at Reading. We would like to apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

Running – and living – Tasmania

It's about a year since Andy Sides left us to work in Tasmania. Here's an update.

Tasmania is a great place for the outdoors: beautiful scenery, lots of mountains and not too many people to share it with (population 0.5 million and about the size of Ireland). There is a lot of wildlife in Tasmania . Wallabies, padmelons, bilbys, echidnas, platypusses and other odd marsupial creatures plus a few invaders (feral cats, rabbits and maybe a fox or two). Unfortunately a lot gets killed on the road and it is often referred to as the road kill state.

I am out here on a 4 year 457 visa. We said initially that we would stay for at least two and then review the situation. We're enjoying the life style but I do find work a bit more stressful than the job I had in the UK.

Running helps relieve the stress and I have been doing quite a bit since I got here. My nine year old son, Fiachra, has also got into the running and participated in the Little Athletics programme over the summer. It has just finished. It is a very well organised programme that runs all across Australia with each state and region running programs using the same formula (a bit like a franchise). Every Saturday morning he would compete in about 4 or 5 track and field events with times, distances etc being monitored and personal bests recorded. He loves it. He is also involved in cricket, swimming, rugby and 'footy' or aussie rules and is really enjoying himself. A paradise for a nine year old boy.

We also joined a local running club called [Newstead Harriers](#) and I get out with them quite frequently. Their cross country programme in the winter is excellent for all the family as they have something for all ages. There are usually three courses 1-2 km for the small kids, 3-4km and around 10km for the more serious runners. Result is quite a mixture of people turn up and there is a raffle/afternoon teas after the racing is over and sometimes a bit of football or on one occasion a tug of war on the beach to entertain the younger members. A lady called Shirley Brasher (mid 80s) with a cupboard full of world veteran masters gold medals is a very active member of the club and quite a character, she has won numerous other awards for her efforts e.g, Tasmanian woman of the year.

The last time I looked at the Thornbury website it appears that the number of runners is still growing as is the overall standard. Pete, if he is still selling the kit, must be making a fortune! I wear my Thornbury singlet in any competitive event I enter here: given the size of the population there are quite a few and I've competed in a few 'large' 10k races with up to 1000 competitors in the Launceston 10k.

We live near a country town called Exeter on the west side of the Tamar Estuary (we could still be in the South west of England). If you have Google earth you can find our house at 41.15.39S 146.56.24E elev 175 ft Red roof. Our e-mail address in Tasmania is: ammcsides@gmail.com. If anyone is out this direction please drop us an email and don't be shy about calling in. I can organise a nice run or two along the banks of the Tamar or along a deserted beach.

Andy Sides

Inspiration for anyone who things they may be getting past it.

Buster Martin is believed to be the UK's eldest employee at the age of 101. Martin works for Pimlico Plumbers as a van cleaner, and notably refused to take a day off on his 100th birthday. Martin also received coverage in the media for fending off an attack from a group of youths in late February 2007; his heroics were cited by the previous Liberal Democrat leader Sir Menzies Campbell as "living proof of why people should not be written off once they pass retirement age". Martin stated that he will not retire from working

Buster Martin was born in France, but came to England at three months old. Martin has not disclosed his real first name; he says that "everyone's called me Buster, [for] as long as I can remember". Martin entered an orphanage after the death of his parents (of now-unknown causes), but was thrown out at the age of ten "for eating too much and growing too fast". He travelled to London, and found work running errands for stallholders in Brixton market, the beginning of nearly 90 years of work

He met his future wife, Iriana, at the age of 13 (she was 12). They married a year later in France; the couple stayed together for 35 years, and had 17 children. He left the market at 14, and joined the British Army and Navy at 15, where he became a physical training instructor. He served in World War II, and left the Armed Forces in 1955 after reaching the rank of regimental sergeant major. After "taking up a wide range of trades" he returned to the market, where he worked until he was 97. After complaining of boredom, he then resumed work, starting at Pimlico Plumbers in London on a twenty-hour week (three days a week) three months before his 100th birthday

On Martin's centenary, Pimlico Plumbers insisted that he take the day off to celebrate. However, he turned up for work; his colleagues then threw him a surprise party at the company's headquarters and organized a tour of Chelsea's Stamford Bridgeground. Until last year, Martin had never taken a day off for sickness in his ninety years of work, until an ingrown toenail forced him to take a few months' leave of work

Martin has announced that he will be participating in the 2008 London Marathon. If he completes the 26 mile course, he will be the oldest recorded marathon participant in the world, beating the previous record-holder by 8 years.

Buster Martin



Buster Martin on his 100th birthday

Born	1 st September 1906 (age 101)
Residence	Lambeth
Occupation	Van cleaner
Known for	Oldest employee in the UK
Spouse	Iriana Martin (deceased)

Cross Country Season 2007- 2008

We have now finished the season and plans are already in hand for next season (well when I say plans... it's been talked about..... well it was mentioned in passing....)

I know that everyone has followed with great interest the talk on Thursday nights about the Saturday or Sunday races wishing they could be part of this team... don't forget you can. The season finished on a high with the last race being at Blaise Castle in the Gwent League with both men's and ladies' teams finishing in their best positions of the season and

Martin Green having his best position since he started. As teams both men's and ladies' finished in their respective divisions high enough not to get demoted, the men finished in 5th out of 12 teams and overall in all the divisions came 19th out of 79 teams. A very respectable finish considering some of the teams in the league. The ladies finished 6th in Division 2 and 19th out of a total of 48 teams. The ladies are very capable of being promoted from their division to the top flight, it is probably the strongest the ladies have been for many years mainly due to the fact that there is now strength in depth. The men's team have tremendous strength however it is always difficult to get a strong team for each race. In the club championship 5 men finished having done 6 or more races and the ladies had 2 finishing 6 or more races.

The overall men's champion was Martin Green with 150 points followed by Rob Hopkins on 144 with Nick Langridge on 139. The ladies' was won by Emma Brown with 147 points followed by Judy Mills on 139. The age adjusted champions were Nick Langridge and Judy Mills.

The photo shows the TRC team prior to the English Cross Country championships at Alton Towers in February. All the top clubs were there, with their posh tents – while we left our kit on a little patch of muddy grass...

Next season the teams will be managed by Bob Tyrell for the men and jointly by Emma Brown and Maddie Parrott for the ladies: please support them in their efforts to get teams to the races and I would encourage male runners to support the ladies on the day, and vice versa.



Thanks to everyone that has taken part in the 2 years that I have managed the teams: I believe that as a club we have maintained a very strong interest in this team event that to my knowledge we have taken part in for at least 16 years.

Pete Mainstone

There may still be some people wondering why Pete has given-up the Cross Country section after only 2 years. Not to mention his other 'jobs' of Welfare Officer and Purveyor of Kit.

Well, Pete has decided to go and do some good somewhere else in the world!

[Child Action Nepal](#) (C.A.N.) is a charity which runs an orphanage in the Kathmandu valley. This is home to 20 children aged between 8 and 17, orphans and street children who, because of the caste system in the country, would have no hope in life without either an education, or the ability to speak English, or both. The orphanage provides a home for these children so that they can attend school, and have a structured lifestyle. And for a few months over our winter, they will also have Pete.

You may be concerned about the prospect of these disadvantaged children acquiring a Welsh accent, but Pete is not actually there to teach them, though he will talk to them. He's quite good at talking ...

His travel and accommodation will be self-funded, and he will live with a local family who probably do not speak English (or Welsh), but he will spend his time helping with the day-to-day lives of the children – help them get up and ready for school; play with them and help organise activities in their leisure time.

In September he will be flying to Nepal, where he will first take a trek in the Region of Everest Basecamp. At the end of October he hopes to join the orphanage, and he has planned to remain until the end of February.

Before being accepted, Pete had to submit a CV with references. I only have access to one of those, which he has kindly given me permission to reproduce below.

There are still some months left before he leaves, so plenty of time for him to tell you more about the project, but I'm sure we all wish him all the best and wonder whether he is going to teach the children cross country running – or rugby.

Reference re Peter Mainstone

I have known Pete for around 25 years, initially as a work colleague but for most of that time I have been forking-out vast amounts of money to him, either for plane fares, for vehicle hire or for running kit. As far as I know I have always had value for money.

Pete is a retired police officer, and when I first knew him spent much of his time as a Schools Liaison Officer where he was known as 'Pissy Mainstone'. This is his own fault as, with his Welsh accent he can't say 'PC' properly. He is still remembered, often for things he hasn't done as much as for things he has.

Later in his career Pete was involved in the investigation of offences committed against children, and it was during this time that he earned the label of 'bat-eared Welsh bastard' His father took issue with this, but with only one part of it.

Pete is proud grandfather to three girls and a boy. He loves to spend time with them, and to tell them fairy stories which unfortunately they believe so that for years afterwards they go round with the impression that Auntie Karen was born with two heads.

I have spent a lot of time with Pete as we have a shared interest in running, which has taken us to Scotland and Russia as well as many locations closer to home. When we have stayed in places where there are children he is always ready to play with them and has an easy, relaxed manner with them. This may be because he doesn't have to get down to their level, physically or intellectually.

Pete is totally trustworthy in every way. He was always the officer allocated to work with the younger, attractive female police officers, much to the annoyance of some of his contemporaries. This was because he was considered 'safe' with them. Physically, this was true: what went on in his mind, only he can tell you. He does have a strong sense of what is right and has always tried to make life better for those he meets. He has been instrumental in raising many thousands of pounds for several charities, though usually his friends find themselves dragged-in and committed to spending weeks at a time in a camper van with him while he washes parts of his anatomy in the sink. However, in my experience he doesn't snore, and his manners are better than many others with whom I have shared sleeping quarters.

For some years, in fact ever since he retired from the Police Service, I have been aware that Pete has been looking for the right opportunity to do voluntary work, so this venture is no surprise to me. Because of the running, walking and triathlons he thinks he is fit and well, and as his travels have previously taken him to Nepal, he knows and understands something of the challenges which he will encounter. Despite

having a very pleasant partner who is gracious enough to allow him to go gallivanting, you should be aware that in no time at all he will be declaring undying love for any of the female volunteers. If their English is poor, it won't concern him, he will just use sign language.

I believe that Pete would make an invaluable member of any team and that he will leave a lasting impression on all those with whom and for whom he works. He continues to receive Christmas cards and e-mails from women he has met over the years from all around the world - which reminds me: don't expect him to engage in any work which involves using computers. He can almost master his mobile phone, but needs someone to read out the text messages to him.

If you decide to use Pete's services I can promise you will never forget him.

I received a complaint when I put out last month's edition of P&R. Someone said: "Graham says there's not enough sex!" So here, especially for Mr Bishop ...

Over 60s want more sex

A wish list of goals for the over 60s includes learning to cook, playing a musical instrument – and having more sex, according to new research.

A survey of 1000 over 50-yr-olds found that many intended to travel more, write a book, do a parachute jump or take up a new hobby when they reached 60.

Some of those polled by the Generation Xperience campaign to promote events for older people said they wanted to become a volunteer or raise money for charity, while others just wanted to eat more cakes or have more sex.

Psychologist Dr Aric Sigman said: "Far from fulfilling old-age stereotypes, this list of personal goals highlights how people are expecting more from older age.

"While some ambitions may be firmly rooted in fantasy, this age group has many goals that are about achieving a sense of purpose and self-fulfillment. It's great that later life is approaching with such a sense of optimism."

Western Daily Press

Triathlon

at Thornbury Running Club



NOW THAT spring has sprung and the triathlon season is upon us, this page will be a regular in Prattle and Run to keep you up to date with TrcTri, the club's triathlon section. Anyone can join - whether you want to take part in triathlons, or just want to mix some swimming and / or cycling with your running. It costs just £5 (see Gareth Thomas if you haven't already paid)

which covers TRC membership of English Triathlon. Individual ET members get a discount on the joining fee.



Plans are afoot to kit out TRC triathletes out with our own club trisuits. The project is 'embryonic' at the moment, but Garry Slater would like to know how many of TrcTri's members will commit to buying one - the cost would be around £45 and the suits would be made by the same firm that manufactures North Devon's kit - see picture. If there's enough interest we can go ahead and ask for some designs to be drawn up. Having our own trisuit begs the question, what name do we use on the kit? Thornbury Tri is popular. TrcTri? How about Thornbury Tri-ers? Perhaps not.

The axe which is hanging over local swimming pools has had its effect on the South West triathlon calendar. Minehead Triathlon, due to have been held in July, has been cancelled because West Somerset Council is closing the town's Aquasplash Pool, where the swim leg is held. Pity the poor townspeople who now have to go to Bridgewater or Taunton for a dip. Better news for Burnham-on-Sea Triathlon (June 1) - it's going ahead, despite proposals to close Burnham's pool. However, take note: the triathlon is now full up. As for the pool's future, bids are being submitted to Sedgemoor District Council by parties interested in taking on the pool's lease. A decision on its future is expected this month. Lots of us started our triathlon careers at Burnham - let's hope there's still a pool there next year.



If you want to find training partners, take a look at the club noticeboard, just outside our meeting hall, and you'll find a list of paid-up TrcTri members - 31 at the last count.

Our regular summer Cycle Time Trials have re-started every Monday evening, beginning at 6.15pm. When the evenings get lighter, the start time will get later. See Pete Mainstone for more details.

Meeting place: cycle out of town on the Gloucester Road, turn right just after the Countrywide store, meet in the lay-by. Cycle on up the hill to the A38 and **the start** is at that junction. **The route** is just under 10 miles: cycle north on the A38 until you reach the primary school at Stone; turn sharp left; cycle down the hill; turn sharp left at the bottom. Continue on that road, through Rockhampton, past the rugby club, until the junction with Gloucester Road; turn left, put your head down, grit your teeth and make it hurt until you're back at Countrywide!

Meanwhile TrcTri weekend cycle rides continue, they're listed below with the ride leader, and categorised according to difficulty, from 1 to 3. If you're new to cycling, start off with a Cat 1. Fit old hands can go straight to Cat 3.

- Sun, April 13: Cat 1, Richard Illingworth, 8.30am, Castle School
- Sat 19 April: Cat 2, Bob Tyrell, 8.30am, Castle School
- Sun, 27 April: Cat 3, Ray Sunnucks, 8.30am Ship Inn, Alveston
- Sat, 3 May, Cat 1., Arthur Renshaw, 8.30am Castle School
- Sun, May 4, Cat 1, Richard Illingworth, 8.30am Castle School
- Sat, May 10, Cat 2, Jo Williams, 8.30am Ship Inn
- Sun, May 18, TBA



Nota bena: The £5 we pay to join TrcTri covers insurance for club bike rides. If you haven't paid, it's never too late - see club secretary Gareth Thomas. And if you're wondering whether or not to pay up, consider this: it may be you involved in the incident that leads to the club

being sued! Remember also that club insurance is not personal insurance - it's wise to get yourself covered.

It ain't what you do it's the way that you do it so with that in mind, a stroke-technique session is being organised for TrcTri swimmers. When going to press it was still in the planning stage - listen out for announcements on club night.

Open water swim sessions at Lake 12, South Cerney, near Cirencester will be starting in a few weeks for those keen to get in some wetsuit practice. In the past sessions have run from 8.15-9.30am every Saturday; club members usually get together and share lifts. Once again, listen out for announcements on club night.

Pool swimming: if you want company, a lot of club members go to Bradley Stoke pool on Wednesday 8-9pm, or 9-10pm (serious swimmers), and Saturday 5- 6pm.



One to watch: Physio Ray Sunnucks is usually found kneading sweaty limbs on club night, but in his spare time he's put in a hard winter's training on the bike and is now flying up hills like a bullet. Goodness knows what he'd be capable of if he took that flapping rear-view mirror off his handlebars.

And finally, get in touch if you have any news, dates or results for the next edition of Prattle and Run, or if you want to nominate anyone for 'One to Watch'.

Email: jacquelinewadsworth@btinternet.com.

Triathlon at Thornbury Running Club

FOR SALE

Furniture for sale at £100, buyer collects -

- 1 table with 4 chairs
- One wall unit
- One sideboard
- Nest of tables
- Lamp table

All in Cherry

All good condition

See John Grimsey
(john.grimsey@apakgroup.com)
for details

