



Prattle & Run

August 2010



The Thornbury RC Team at the Avon Clubs' Mob Match

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CAPTAIN'S COLUMN

WHY IS IT that running while on holiday is such hard work? Every year I pack my running things with the aim of doing a few easy miles abroad to keep things ticking over. And every year it feels as if I've lost a lung and gained two stone on the journey. Is it just me, or is it the same for everyone? I've just returned from two weeks near Bordeaux and my 4-mile early morning runs were nothing short of endurance tests...or at least they would have been had I not had two canine companions. The dogs belonged to the owners of our *gite*, and they turned my every runs into a pleasure. Polly was a small, sandy-coloured terrier/hound, and Toby was a large, black Labrador/Rottweiler and the minute they heard my feet on the gravel at 7.30am, they were raring to go, up the long gravel drive, on to a quiet country road (smooth as you like, putting the roads at home to shame) flanked by fields full of maize, sunflowers, grazing cattle and the occasional copse.



By and large our runs passed without incident. By calling 'in!' and crouching on the verge, I taught them to wait with me when high-speed locals passed in faded old Peugeot's. Every now and then I had to 're-group' so that Polly could catch up on the hills, her sweet little trot turning into a charge of delight when she saw me waiting. Sometimes Toby disappeared into the maize fields, and would only reappear several minutes later. What he got up to I wasn't sure, but nasty suspicions were confirmed one morning when I heard a commotion in a meadow next to a little roadside house. Toby was madly chasing chickens which had escaped from the garden. After a lot of stern hiss-shouting (hoping no-one would hear) I just about got Toby back when off he set again. Things ended up with me chasing a dog chasing a chicken up a roadside ditch, with all the attendant squawking, barking and shouting. Miraculously, the chicken managed to escape without injury and even more important, nobody came to find out what was going on. So there was no need for my rather lame '*Il n'est pas mon chien*'.

But there was no serious training in France. I tried my hand at a few other sports, but they weren't very serious either. Kayaking on the River Dronne, where the flow was so low and gentle that you could drift downstream for hours with your eyes closed. The only bit of exercise came at rapids and dams, so high and dry that you had to thrust your body weight to and fro just to get over. I went horseriding too, but that was slow and gentle as one of the horses was just recovering from a cough. We also had a lovely pool, but it was too short for front crawl so I simply had to lie back with woggles under my arms and knees...and float in the sun.

On my return to Thornbury I was rather hoping that two weeks of relaxation would have put a 'tiger in my tank' (to quote the old Esso slogan). But nothing could have been further from the truth. So I'm now on a strict regime of mileage and speedwork to try and get in shape for the Midland Road Relays on September 25th!

After that I hope to see some proper running at our Oldbury Power Station 10 on October 3. This year, to celebrate TRC's 25th anniversary, there are prizes of £100 on offer to the first man and woman if they break the course records. So let's hope for some great competition. The men's record, 51min.52sec, was set at the first-ever OPS10 in 1989 and has never been broken. Founder member Dave Matthews recalls: 'That was the year in which its predecessor, the Windbound 15k, ended its short existence. It may be of interest that the first three Thornbury Running Club members to finish did so in under the hour: Steve Crummach 55:27, Nick Langridge 56:50; Pat Morrissey 58:28. I would guess that it might be unequalled in this event for three runners from any club to achieve this, but it is only a guess. We had a total of 22 Club entrants (and finishers!).'

Jacqueline Wadsworth

Some of us regularly have canine company on our runs and according to Country Walking magazine September 2010, researchers in the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, USA have studied 916 adult dog owners and concluded that dog-walkers are super-healthy. They sit for less hours a day, are less likely to use tobacco, have lower BMIs, fewer physical and mental illnesses and enjoyed more social support than non-dog-walkers.

Comrades – The Race of my Dreams

In the last edition of P&R Neil Roff wrote of this race. Here our other TRC Entrant Trinity Booth gives her account

I arrived in South Africa on the evening of Thursday 27th May having been travelling since 9am the previous day, although I did have a 10 hour wait between flights in Dubai. I got to my room at the Hilton hotel in Durban, collapsed on the sofa and it almost felt like I was in a dream, and I really hoped that I wouldn't be waking up any minute!

The following day I had booked a seat on the tour of the race route, although I wasn't sure whether it was a good idea or not, but I thought at least it should give me some reality of what I had to do on Sunday. So Friday morning I got up, got ready, and had a peek outside. It looked like it was going to be a sunny day, so the last thing I did before I left my room was to slap on the sun cream... now I so wished I hadn't!

The tour was good, and it was quite funny how we were all cheerfully chatting away but the further we got along the route, the more we saw the hills, and got a feel of the distance that we would be running, the quieter everyone became. I suspect for the guys who'd done it before it was a reminder of the pain, and for us Comrades newcomers it was a reality shot of what we were there to do.

Later that day my skin started to come out in a rash, and as the evening went on it became worse and very itchy. I thought maybe it was a heat rash so tried to cool my skin and thought it would be gone by the next day. It wasn't... it was worse.

Fast forward to Sunday morning (but only just!).

I had two alarms set for 1am and 1:05. I woke on the first one and had come out of a dream where I'd run Comrades. I had to check myself for a moment because I didn't know if it was real or not!

I'd laid everything out the night before, prepared the drink that I would be carrying etc... all I had to do was shower, dress and go.

I tried not to think about how my skin was feeling. By now it was obvious that it was an allergic reaction to the sun cream that I'd put on on Friday because it was not where I hadn't put it. My arms, legs, shoulders, chest and neck were covered in intensely itchy bumps... the sort of itch that once you start you simply cannot stop. There were times when I was literally tearing at my skin but I just couldn't stop.

I was also trying not to think of the worse case scenario in that I was having to go out and run over 50 miles in the sun with no sun cream on and an allergy covering my skin which could ultimately stress my body into anaphylactic shock.

A group of us met down in reception and we all went off to get the bus to the start, which was about an hours drive away. Within that hour I think I dozed for 5 or 10 minutes.

It was quite cold getting out in Pietermaritzburg and I was glad of the 3 extra t-shirts plus old track bottoms that I'd put on to throw away later, which I'm told would be picked up and claimed by grateful African people. There was about 2 hours to wait at the start, but it went in a flash and all of a sudden I was standing in my pen listening to the African National Anthem, followed by the sound of a cockerel, followed by Chariots of Fire... emotions were running riot as I looked up at the banner with 'COMRADES START' along it. This is it... this is the dream come true... and then the gun fired and we were off on an experience of a lifetime.

It took me just about 2 minutes to cross the line from the position I'd qualified to start in, that time is important because the 12 hour cut off is gun to finish time, so it had to be counted in.

It was still dark when we started, so I couldn't see my Garmin running watch. I didn't want to put the backlight on because that would use battery and I wanted it to last the full race. So I just ran easy, I was reckoning around 9 to 9.30 pace.

Somewhere between mile 1 and 2 I was running alongside another guy from the UK and we were chatting. Then all of a sudden I tripped and went flying literally. I landed and slid across the tarmac. As it was dark I couldn't see how much damage I'd done but I knew I had some of the road in the skin of my knee and hands and it shocked me a bit too. I'd tripped over a cat's eye, which we had been warned about on the tour!

The race markers count down from 89km and when I got to 79km to go I checked my time and was shocked to see that an hour had gone! That was way too slow so I picked up the pace a little aiming to catch up over the next 10k. That was the first mistake of many that I would make during the race.

I was amazed at the support... the race starts at 05.30 and people had come out to line the route so early. The fantastic support was a constant throughout the 56 miles, everyone really urged you and pushed you on... even African teenage kids out on their bikes were saying things like well done, keep going, you're looking great!

I checked my Garmin at 12 miles... 1:56, not quite 20k but I'd caught up a little time. I then suddenly realised that I'd completely forgotten to take any of my energy gels, which I'd usually take every 5 miles.

I took a gel but I knew that I was now playing catch up on energy and that never works. I took another a few miles later and then erratically through the race took them when I thought I could do with one. I think a mild panic had set in.

They call pace groups 'Busses' and I can't remember where it was but I suddenly sensed a big group of people behind me. I looked round to be faced with a huge wall of runners... it was the sub 9 hour bus! It was literally like a bus... as long as and wider than a real bus but of runners all crammed in together running in unison... amazing to see! I felt that if I didn't get a move on I'd either be trampled or be swallowed up so I pushed on.

I went through 42k marathon point at 4.04, which was right on target for the sub 9 that I wanted, but I knew I had some payback due for my early mistakes so I was hopeful but not confident.

In the mild panic and confusion around taking my gels I'd also not taken any food early enough. There were salted potatoes, biscuits, chocolate, and banana, none of which I wanted but I forced myself to have some banana and potato. Then came a time when I really needed something because I felt suddenly very low and weak... but I couldn't find anything and another panic set in.

I stayed ahead of the 'bus' for a while, they caught me on the up hills and I moved on when it levelled out. But eventually they caught me and I couldn't stay ahead, so I joined them. This was

about 45km to go. I hung on to them for about 10k before falling off the back. Shortly after the second and smaller sub 9 hour bus came along and I tried staying with them but eventually fell off the back of that one too.

It was then that I knew in my heart that my sub 9 finish time was gone. But as I passed the km markers I continued to do the mental calculation and hung on to a thread of a hope.

I went through 21km to go at about 6 hours 56 min, so if I could do a half marathon in 2 hours I might still make it. I should say here that my best time for a half marathon is 1.32, but that's not on the end of having already run 43 miles!

But the hills were relentless... the downs were as hard as the ups because with every step on the down my legs cried out in pain and my already bruised and battered toes hammered against the end of my shoes.

I had a small congratulatory moment to myself when I went through double marathon point in 8 hours 37. Obviously my sub 9 was long gone but my double marathon Personal Best of 8.27 was achieved at a race in Kent which is very flat, so if you take off those 2 minutes of getting through the Comrades start that's only 8 minutes over my PB on a much tougher course... I was trying to focus on the positives!

But I then just wanted it all to be over and my last 3 miles were 9:15, 9:28, and 8:56.

As I ran into the stadium I could hear the roar of the crowd, I could feel my emotions rising but tried to stay focused and held it in.

I crossed the finish, at last... I didn't have to run anymore.

I've done it!

I've run Comrades!

I broke down and cried.

My time in the end was 9 hours and 14 minutes

I was in 3,184th position out of nearly 20,000 runners who'd started.

I was 317th Lady of the 3,130 ladies who managed to finish.

And I was 118th out of 1,302 ladies in my age category.

I am really happy with my time, especially considering the mistakes I made, and that my skin was so bad and intensely itchy the whole way with my clothes and hydration pack rubbing on it.

But it now feels like I have unfinished business... so, as bad as I felt physically during the week after the race, as much as it hurt to walk, as painful as my toes were... especially the ones that lost their nails, I guess I'm going to have to go back for another shot at the sub 9 hour time that I know I have in me. Maybe next year...

Trinity Booth

PS Today I have actually booked my accommodation for next year! So yep, I won't be beaten... I'm going back to do it right! *TB*

Thornbury Tri adventures in Hyde Park!



Sandra Webber explains why so much nervous energy is expended looking after the senior (male!) team members

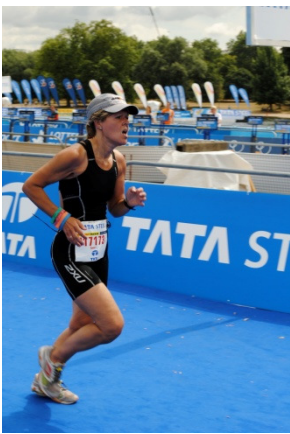
Somehow (you are never sure how things happen sometimes?) 7 TRC triathletes ended up managing to co-ordinate themselves and enter the same event in London's Hyde Park on the weekend of 24th/25th July. The course we were going to race is the same one that the Olympic Triathlon 2012 will use so for the weekend we could pretend to be Olympic triathletes!

We had all done the training (except Arthur as normal) so were prepared for the weekend – apart from one minor detail Arthur still couldn't find a wetsuit that fitted him. After months of open-water practice in Cromhall quarry the rest of us were as prepared as you can be for the swim section of the race. Arthur however decided (on his first and only open water training session) that his wetsuit didn't fit and it was causing him shoulder problems, he borrowed

Lloyd's, he borrowed Mark's, he had a very amusing "try on" session at club the Thursday before but still was unsure what to do??

On arrival at Hyde Park on the Saturday I was expecting such a big event to be taking over the park – little did I know how big Hyde Park was; it took Rich and me 20mins to walk from our hotel to the start line – then the event was big and extremely well organised (as you would expect for an Olympic run through). On Saturday we watched the sprint (shorter) event – the Serpentine where we were to swim the next day looked very big!! And even half the distance looked a long way. The thing that troubled me most was the stories that were coming out from the competitors about the amount of weed in the water, apparently it was awful. This wasn't what I wanted to hear as open water swimming isn't my favourite element of a triathlon! It was a boiling hot day and we had a great time watching the age-groupers and then the elite women race the course. That was amazing to watch – we have got a lot of work to do guys before we are up in this league for 2012!

We all managed to register for the event the next day and kept ourselves happy with carbo loading from the various food stalls. While all this was happening little did we know Arthur was hatching a plan regarding his wetsuit issue and Pete was making a few wrong food choices!



Race day dawned and most of us (Rich and Alan thought they were better than us lot for some reason?) had decided to enter together so we got to start the race together. This made it very competitive!

For the swim start you enter onto a pontoon to Gladiator music. This was very dramatic and heightened race nerves. At this point Arthur joined us but with something missing - his wetsuit!!! Having seen the pros race the previous day non-wetsuit Arthur thought this was the way to go especially with his sizing issues! The only problem was Arthur had forgotten to remove his race belt and number and leave this in transition. We all entered the cold water together Arthur non-wetsuit with his race number flapping behind him as he swam.

The gun went and we were off, race nerves settled and the thick weed was now right in front of our eyes, over our faces, wrapped up in our arms – not nice. Settling into the swim we all exited the water very close together – even Mr Non-Wetsuit had a good swim and enjoyed it so maybe he is closer to being a pro than we give credit for!

We chased each other in and out of transition and around the bike course. The bike is technical and fast – great as you can see who is in front and behind you at all times. Not great if you don't know how to corner properly (training improvement for me next year).

We then chased each other around the run course – around the pathways of Hyde Park while normal people were playing with kids, having picnics and enjoying a Sunday stroll.

We had some support crew there and Caroline took a load of fab photos – thanks to all those who shouted out to us all it was great.

So we all crossed the finish line and recovered. Well that is all but Pete! He crossed the line but didn't recover too well. Unfortunately Pete didn't look too good afterwards in fact I have never seen anyone look so grey after a race he didn't even want his post race cup of coffee. Gill, Petes partner was not that impressed with Pete's condition afterwards he had certainly given it all he had and was paying the price by getting very friendly with a big rubbish bin which he used to empty the content of his stomach numerous times making comments about how he hadn't fuelled correctly for the race!! So Gill has refused to watch Pete race ever again and Pete is now studying pre, during and post race nutrition techniques prior to his next challenge the Little Woody!



So overall a great well organised event, a chance to mix and mingle with our top Olympic athletes, a fab course and a good day out was had by all – well almost all.

On a final note: for wet suit advice DON'T ask Arthur - for racing nutrition advice DON'T ask Pete!

Sandra Webber

Speaking of Pete:

Today Pete Mainstone, this is your...20 Questions!

1. Where were you born? *Newport, South Wales*
2. What is your favourite race? *Les Foulees de La Soie. A series of 11 races in 14 days in various parts of China, similar to The Tour of France with each days time accumulating over the whole race.*
3. What is your favourite film? *Ryans Daughter*
4. What sporting moment are you most proud of, (PB etc)? *The first and only time I scored a hat trick of tries at school believing I was a potential Welsh prospect.....*
5. What is your favourite book? *Flanagan's Run by Tom McNab possibly the book that inspired me to do all the long distance running I have done over the years, more recently 'Birdsong' by Sebastian Faulks*
6. How many years have you been running? *Since 1981, my first race was The New York Marathon*
7. What is your occupation? *Part Time Pensioner, Part Time Complaints Investigator with the Planning Enforcement Team and a retired Policeman.*
8. How many miles a week on average do you run? *On a good week 20 miles, I do swimming and cycling to get fit enough to do long distance running.*
9. What is the first piece of music you ever bought? *My first record was bought by my mother!!! Harry Secombe singing 'If I Ruled The World' that did my street cred the world of good. My first purchase was a Manfred Mann Album.*
10. What is your favourite piece of running kit? *Any good comfortable pair of off road running shoes.*
11. Secret crush? *Jane Seymour we have both grown Old and wrinkly since the crush.*
12. Do you have any pre/post race rituals/habits? *Just tell myself it's only pain!!*
13. Which is your favourite, winter or summer? *It has to be winter, you can't beat a good wet muddy cross country run.*
14. Who is your sporting hero? *Jane Tomlinson, she was such an inspiration in all she did and made me realise that everything I have achieved is very small in comparison to her.*
15. How do you get through 'the wall'? *Tell myself it's only pain and that it is all mind over matter.*



16. Tell us about an embarrassing moment? *I think I am the embarrassing moment to some people!!*
17. What is your current running goal? *Just to keep doing what I do as long as possible and be grateful that I have been fortunate enough to have so much over the years.*
18. When you were a child what did you want to be when you 'grew up'? *Play rugby for Wales (My potential was never recognised)*
19. Do you have any secret ambitions? *Still to play rugby for Wales. I would like to write a book, I often tell stories to my Grandchildren and would like to go one step further.*
20. Why did you start running? *The rugby teams I played for stopped picking me and I needed to something else..*

And: Today, Karen Carr this is your...20 Questions!

1. Where were you born? *Luton – well someone has to !*
2. What is your favourite race? *I hate races so the shorter the better maybe the winter handicap*
3. What is your favourite film? *Something sappy - Toy Story or Up. I'll grow up one day*
4. What sporting moment are you most proud of, (PB etc)? *Completing the London Marathon*
5. What is your favourite book? *Behind the scenes at the museum by Kate Atkinson was the last book I read on holiday. It was very funny and I drove Malcolm mad laughing out loud as I read it.*
6. How many years have you been running? *About 12*
7. What is your occupation? *I work for the planning department in the local council where you can be very nose to see who's building what.*
8. How many miles a week on average do you run? *Three*
9. What is the first piece of music you ever bought? *Two little boys by Rolf Harris. I wouldn't buy it now though!*
10. What is your favourite piece of running kit? *I don't have one although I do like pretty, bright running tops*
11. Secret crush? *If I told you it wouldn't be a secret. I thinks someone else has said that too.*
12. Do you have any pre/post race rituals/habits? *No – I'm not superstitious*
- 13 Which is your favourite, winter or summer? *Summer – there are more opportunities for holidays*
14. Who is your sporting hero? *Malcolm – he played football until he was way too old and is still involved with Thornbury Football Club after 30 years*
15. How do you get through 'the wall'? *Not sure – what are you supposed to do?*
16. Tell us about an embarrassing moment? *When someone brought two dead pheasants into the office I was working in. I screamed the place down then ran a mile!*



17. What is your current running goal? *To get to the top of a hill without walking*

18. When you were a child what did you want to be when you 'grew up'? *Air hostess. Perhaps that's why I like to go on an aeroplane now.*

19. Do you have any secret ambitions? *One last attempt at the London Marathon and to finish in less than four and a half hours.*

20. Why did you start running? *It was all Helen's fault – she gave the impression she enjoyed it. Then I was inspired by Jean Hawkins*

A big 'thank you' to Karen, our Social Secretary, for organizing the 25th Anniversary Summer Social in July.

A selection of photos are in the website gallery.

Midget Jones's* Fell Running Diary

(*distantly related to her better-known cousin Bridget)

12th June 2010 9st 4lb. Runs done: 1 (v.g.), hill sessions 0 (v.b.), calories burned 1625, calories consumed 3700. Mr Jones is going on about the Beacon Batch race. He says it's about 5 miles and goes up, then flat, then down again. Not too bad, then. Might give it a go. A few sessions of concentrated hill work should see me through.

22nd June 9st 12lbs. Runs done 0 (v.b), hill sessions done 0 (v.v.b.), calories consumed 17954, calories burned 1250

9am. Not sure about this Beacon Batch Race as it's described as a fell run. Might go for a bike ride instead.

6pm. Didn't go for bike ride. Feel I ought to do Beacon Batch. Sure it won't be too hilly as it starts near Langford and that's flat.

7pm. We have to set off to the start as it's a mile away. I go with a man (75 years) and woman (FV40) and we agree that one of us will be last. Over several stiles, none designed for short people. Am worried about splinters but reach the start and wait until all the runners are there. Start is up a stony track through trees. No point in rushing; pleasant evening and there's a bit of a bottleneck so most of us walk. Even when the bottleneck has gone quite a few of us continue to walk. I am at the back with a lady from Nailsea. One of the sweepers gives a helpful commentary and suggests we might overtake MV75 and FV40. About five minutes later we do just that. Success! This is part of my masterplan to win the race: I will steadily pick off the opposition one-by-one and be the first FV60 to win. Cheered loudly by a marshal who I know through work. Lovely to have the support. She will be very impressed when she knows I've won. Oh f***. I can see runners at the top of a hill in the distance. Can't be our course, though, as that would mean that it goes up much more than down. The bl**dy path is still climbing then there's a slight turn, another marshal I know, and we go down. Great! We can't be going up that very steep bit.

Yes we can. F***, f***, f***ity, f***. Fifty yards of downhill followed by a dusty, stony, near-vertical uphill narrow path. Mental strategies to the fore. Don't panic. It's only pain. The only way is up (bay-bee, for you and me now), the 75 year-old is still behind you and the sweepers are too polite to say they're getting bored. A flag. A marshal. A right turn and glory hallelujah! It's a flat, sandy path with only a few stones.

Still ahead of the two others by some way. Must be not too far from the finish. Still thinking very positively though I haven't managed to pass anyone else so may not win the race outright.

At last! The path goes down and I set off, graceful gazelle, bounding eland (etc). Half a minute later, the FV40 trots past with encouraging words to me as she goes. Then the MV70, similarly helpful.

I am left with the sweepers. One of them offers me advice on how to run downhill. It was unusual and could be taken two ways. We discuss the possibility of it not being downhill running advice but I need to concentrate and he isn't that desperate. .

The finish is much further away than it should be as I thought we finished where we started. Ten minutes later I discovered that it hasn't moved and run in to a cheering party of three marshals, FV40 and MV70.

Look on the bright side: carb replenishment successfully completed with cider and crisps and no splinters. Hill training starts tomorrow.

Under her pseudonym of Jan Burke Midget is fundraising for Marie Curie Cancer Care. At Club nights she often has oddments of socks (well, in pairs!), water bottles and so forth with an 'honesty bucket' for contributions. This has grown to include books.

If there's anything there you haven't read but don't really want to keep, why not give a donation, borrow it, and give back the book when you've finished? It all helps.



In Short

Congratulations to Emma and Steve Barnes on the safe arrival of Zachery Francis on 22nd July. I don't *think* his dad's bought him a bike yet ...

Well done to the Tri team of Roger Denton, Martyn Green, Rich Phillips and Garry Slater who were 4th Male Over 40 team at the National Triathlon Club Relay Championships at Nottingham on 21st August. There were 237 male teams in all, 33 of them in the 40+ category, and our boys were 41st overall. See the next P&R for full reports.

Looking forward: **September 12th** is the Steve Jones Memorial 10-mile handicap for Club members. Held over the Oldbury Power Station 10 Course it is ideal to test yourself ready for the OPS10, or to have a chance to run the course, then marshal for the event which is on:

October 3rd. Contact John Watt johnwatt@x-presslegal.co.uk or Justin Taylor justintaylor@winfordford.co.uk to volunteer to help.

And the Cross country season starts on **October 9th** with the first Gloucester League race at Bourton-on-the-Water. All the dates are on the website: watch out for further details so that runners can share transport. Everyone is welcome; it's good fun (it is, it is!) and great strength training!

Thank you to all contributors to this edition of Prattle & Run. Items please to me at judy.mills@live.co.uk by **14th October**