

November 2010

The boys done good!

See the reports from the National Triathlon Relays – page 4

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Editorial

I think it's a question asked by many editors – is anyone reading this? I'll tell you what, if you are, just click on this link judy.mills@live.co.uk and tell me so. Easy! I am aware that there are issues with having Prattle & Run only online and I am still looking for an economical way to produce some print copies – though they will of course have no hyperlinks and may be only black-and-white. While you're sending me an e-mail, why not tell me your thoughts on that as well?

I enjoy doing P&R partly because I enjoy reading other runners' tips, race reports and the like and I'm sure I am not alone in that. I am very grateful to everyone who takes time to send me articles. As always, a special thanks to Selina and Jacqueline who if not themselves penning words of wisdom are cajoling someone else to write something.

As another year flies past, it's time to make the Christmas Cake and plan the party season. The cross country season is upon us and the triathletes can have a rest from competing though they may still be out breaking the ice on Cromhall Quarry for a quick dip. I hope to produce one more edition before Christmas, so please, articles to me by December 6th. E-mail address again so you can't possibly miss it: judy.mills@live.co.uk

CAPTAIN'S

COLUMN



WARNING: I'm going to propose something that probably won't make me universally popular at next February's AGM – changing the club's name from Thornbury Running Club to Thornbury Running & Triathlon Club. I'm not trying to be controversial, but I think our name should reflect what we are. And triathlon is now such a big part of our club that to call ourselves just a running club no longer seems adequate. Consider the following:

- The club is affiliated to the British Triathlon Federation;
- We stage our own successful aquathlon every March;
- A lot of TRC members compete in multi-sport events;
- Our men's vet team came 4th at the National Tri Relay Championships this year;
- We organise weekly cycle training sessions (chain gang, weekend rides, velodrome);
- We hold regular meetings to discuss TRC triathlon and cycling issues.

The growth of triathlon at Thornbury Running Club reflects what's gone on throughout the country in the last decade, with runners taking up the challenges of triathlon, duathlon and aquathlon. It has advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, triathlon has brought in new members who were attracted by our involvement in multi-sport; it's provided an alternative interest for members who were previously just runners; and triathlon injected energy into the club. On the minus side, triathlon has sometimes compromised our running ambitions. For example, we may have had a larger turnout for the Avon Clubs Mob Match in July, had it not clashed with the London Triathlon the same weekend.

Whatever the pros and cons, Thornbury Running Club is no longer just a running club. A new name needn't affect our running. However, if we became Thornbury Running & Triathlon Club, I would expect the tri section to show its commitment by nominating someone to represent triathlon on the club committee. I would also suggest that everyone who takes part in training sessions organised by the tri section should to join the club, whether they're runners or not.

Admittedly, Thornbury Running and Triathlon Club is a bit of a mouthful and far too long to print on club kit. We could be known as TRAT, of course, or we could simply have THORNBURY on our vests, trisuits, sweatshirts and t-shirts when new stock is ordered.

The ideas above will be discussed by the TRC committee in November. If you have views that you'd like to put forward, please get in touch with a committee member ([listed on the website](#)) - and don't forget to come along to the AGM next February.

Jacqueline Wadsworth

The Last Letter or the Riga Marathon

So it was finally here. After eight marathons since 2003 and the thirteenth in total we were in Riga, Latvia on a Running Crazy trip (to be recommended) to complete my marathon name quest with a letter "R". Tracy was with me as the weekend was very near to our 25th wedding anniversary, which was a nice coincidence. Our flight on Ryanair from Bristol was uneventful, even managing to get extra legroom (also, more importantly on the way back,) and we landed at Riga on the Friday before Sunday's race to bright sunshine and heat – oh dear. The forecast was meant to be cooler but I had my doubts as the skies were clear. We made our way to our hotel by one of most frightening taxi rides (mad driver) I have ever endured, but we got there in one piece. Malcolm from Running Crazy met us at the airport and was looking after us for the whole weekend (I would go again with them, thanks Malcolm).

We walked around Riga old town in the afternoon which was interesting as Latvia was part of the Soviet Union until 1991 and German occupied during WW2. If history and museums is your thing then Riga doesn't disappoint, luckily it is ours. A pasta dinner and an early night completed a good day.

Saturday dawned bright and warm – again. Breakfast was fine apart from the disco music blaring on the radio! We had to attend a meeting in the evening in the lobby to collect race numbers, t shirts and arrangements for race day. In the meantime we spent the day exploring Riga and there was plenty to see. There are plenty of shops as well as museums but we made sure we relaxed as well – I was running 26.2 miles the next day! I felt good but had some disruption to my training for various reasons. I knew I would get round but I wanted to give a good account of myself.



The pasta party on the top floor of a Riga hotel later that evening was good but - they ran out of pasta. So we had to wait while they cooked some more and even the elite African athletes had to wait! And so to bed.....to be woken by a party of noisy Poles through most of the night!

Sunday morning dawned – bright and even warmer with clear skies. The hotel had put on an early breakfast and we set off for the site on a local bus (good services) for the start. The marathon course comprised of a 14km circuit that had to be covered three times for the full 42km. There were about 9000 runners. Other events were a half marathon and relay marathon. I opted for cap and sunglasses and decided to run conservatively for two laps as the temperature was in the 20's, and we hadn't started yet! I learnt later that this weekend (23rd May) was the same as the Edinburgh marathon, where another Thornbury runner collapsed with heat exhaustion near the end – my thoughts were with her when I got home. The course took us through the old town over cobbles (ouch), out around an austere residential area near the ice hockey stadium (lonely) and out over a suspension bridge & back, so we had to cover it six times in total!

My strategy was working well, even the PowerAde energy drink was agreeing with me after my experience in Frankfurt (I made sure it didn't make me feel sick). The sun was hot and the building thermometers were reading 23-24°C. Malcolm kept appearing taking pictures and offering encouragement. Tracy had settled herself at a roadside with the other spectators in the group. I saw the odd British runner but not many. After I went through the start/finish area for the second time to start my last lap (sob) I met a young Latvian guy who had opted to trade up to the marathon. We talked and I was astounded to discover that the furthest he had run in training was 10K! He did finish though which is probably testament to youth! On the last lap I was interviewed on Latvian TV by two guys on a tandem, the one on the back had the camera! I did talk for a while, but all I wanted to do was get over that damned bridge AGAIN so I was glad when they went on their way. I was drinking as much as I could but

you do get sick of it towards the end of a marathon don't you? I wanted pizza at one point.



Finally I shuffled across the cobbles back through the city where the support was very good and turned into the finishing straight. Malcolm was there to tell me to keep my arms going and I was across the line in 4hrs 51mins and 1sec. A slow time, but it was a tough day and I had made it inside five hours as I had with my other marathons. I collected the last medal of the set and hobbled my way over to stretch. Tracy had been there to see me finish and we waited to see our other runners home. I saw my Latvian friend finish and he

thanked me for my encouragement on our final lap. Then we made our way to a café with the rest of our party to swap experiences, relieved that we had all made it.

A quick shower and rest then I had an appointment to record a podcast with Julia Armstrong. Before the trip Running Crazy had asked me if I would record a podcast with Julia as part of her self-help business as someone who was "inspirational" (why I was asked I have no idea). If you have nothing better to do and would like to listen to it, the link can be found on the TRC website or visit www.juliaarmstrong.com. Anyway, Julia, who was an elite marathoner with a PB of 2:43 and represented England at the 1986 Commonwealth Games, was waiting for me in the lobby, having run a ridiculously quick half marathon, and we recorded a podcast that I hope is informative and interesting – I will leave you to judge!

That evening we all went out to one of Malcolm's haunts for a celebratory dinner and a few drinks, including a visit to the Skyline bar – a must see in Riga as the highest bar in the city. Come Monday morning we had some time to visit some sights in

Riga we didn't manage before including the Occupation museum, which I would highly recommend if you visit Riga. The flight back on the much maligned Ryanair was good again despite a delay and we got back into Bristol by early evening.

I was happy I had completed my quest but had already started to think about other challenges post-recovery. My daughter wants to cycle from John O'Groats to Land's End next year for Dementia UK as well, which will most likely take place in September 2011. As I am 50 next year, I am looking at the 50 mile Challenge in Kent in July, just after my birthday. I am still in the London Marathon ballot and I thought I would try a triathlon later this year. So there is still plenty I want to achieve and would like to thank everyone who sponsored me for this marathon and all the others I have tackled over the years.

And for the record:

- Frankfurt
- Riga
- Amsterdam
- New York
- Cardiff
- Kent Coastal
- Snowdonia
- Edinburgh
- Neolithic

John Francksen

Just as the last P&R was going online four of our members took part in the National Triathlon Relays. Here we get a taste of the event from both the competitors' and the spectators' points of view.

Thornbury Triathlon Four Go Fourth

Thornbury Running Club has shown itself to be a name to watch on the national triathlon scene after coming 4th in the National Club Relay Championships at Holme Pierrepont on Saturday. The team of Roger Denton, Garry Slater, Rich Phillips and I successfully negotiated the complicated logistics and tricky conditions of this years race to put our marker down nationally as a triathlon club to be reckoned with.

Thornbury Running Club has slowly been developing over recent years an ever stronger triathlon contingent. I have been enviously watching the success of many of the members and decided to return to triathlon in 2010 after a five year break. The motivation was partly jealousy but also the knowledge that as a 40 year old before year end I could be competitive in the V40 age group. Rich came up with the idea to compete in the national relays early in 2010 and the team were all enthusiastic to take part. Roger had to race way outside his normal long distance comfort zone and Garry had to fit in four weeks worth of dedicated swim and run training around family life. Without the special efforts of these two we would not have had such a competitive team

The National Club Relay Championships are over a 400m swim, a 15km bike and a 5km run. With British Triathlon National Honours at stake there is some serious racing on the completely closed course. The day was overcast with heavy rain showers making the bike course very slippery. Roger opened the Thornbury account with a solid swim on the first leg mixing it up with 237 others on the tight, open water course. Garry was next, followed by Rich then me. Once we had all swum then it was on to the bike. Rich proved to be our very own Rainman as each time he set out on his leg the skies opened and gave him a drenching. Nevertheless he was one builder that was not going to stop work and drink tea because of a few drops of rain. As always, I managed to pilfer some of Roger's bike bling after he had completed his leg in order to pimp up my ride and help me on my bike leg. We all managed to stay upright on the bike which under the conditions was a notable achievement.

As all of us are strong runners we pulled back a few more places on the final leg to finish 4th V40 and 41st out of 238 teams overall. The split times in the results bear out, how it felt at the time, that everyone gave their all for the team. This is a unique event and one that I thoroughly enjoyed. Having now had the experience I think we can come back stronger in 2011. I plan to enter a Thornbury male team again in 2011 and believe the club's ladies have plans too. I shall help organize the team for 2011, it need not be a vet team again, so please let me know if you are interested and I will arrange team tri-outs nearer the time.

As you can see from the photo taken after the finish we were all really pleased with a fantastic result and I would like to thank the club on behalf of the team for their support.

Martyn Green

The National Triathlon Relays – from a spectator’s standpoint

Well they weren’t joking when they say this event is the equivalent of Glastonbury in the triathlon world. Here I am at 7.30am walking through a field of mud, broolly up, following Rich who is trying not to get his time trial bike stuck in the swampy field. We have battled through the tramlines of Nottingham city centre and arrived at the National Water Sports Centre for the event. The other 3 team members are on their way up the M5.

Loads of people walking around the site and then I see loads of tents! First I think great there is a big expo here for me to spend the day shopping – unfortunately not. As we approach the race headquarters it seems every team taking part has set up mini camps for the day inside their own branded tents. Wetsuits, bikes, tri kits, some even had their own bbq’s going, were all stored inside each team’s camps. I began to panic at this point: where were our team of four going to base their camp? We had no tent – didn’t even know we needed one?!!!!

By this time Rich had gone off on his practice lap (I had made a big mistake yesterday driving up and read to him that as long as he was off the track by the first race at 8.15am he was allowed to cycle round the route) So much for my weekend away lie in, the alarm went off at 5.45 as normal!!!! I then found what was to be my camp for the day – the canteen, so after Rich returned from the practice lap that is where we had cooked breakfast – a lot of tri people were in there carbo loading like us and t-shirt poker was already in full swing as we ate.

There were just loads of people wandering around in the rain the whole event was manic. I think the aquathlon is difficult to organise, organising an event like this must be a nightmare.

In the morning the mixed and female teams were racing and at this point I was so glad we had come up early in the morning to watch as the process of the relay was chaotic to say the least. Watching from the balcony above the swim start gave us a great view of how the “handovers worked” and it was obvious which teams had done this before. Some had really slick processes, others were clueless and spent ages in transition trying to find the next member of their team, some people getting very angry when they couldn’t locate them in the “holding bays”!! I had visions of our team of four mamils (middle aged men in lycra) having blazing rows at T1 at this stage!

It was amazing to watch and the transitions were complicated. Athletes of all abilities taking part in this event but some seriously good quality teams at the top end of each category were out to play today.

The rest of our team arrived and we shared our experiences of the morning. We then walked the course and they decided on their handover strategy (which actually worked like a dream in the afternoon race). It looked like Thornbury Tri had done this before it was very slick. The rain continued to fall and the morning’s events finished about 3½ hrs after the start – as you can imagine each member of each team has to complete a sprint distance tri so it takes ages! Last years event apparently was in glorious sunshine and the famous team tents were used for sun shades not rain shelters.

The atmosphere of the event is great though and good team spirit from the clubs – we had met up with a few folk we know Martin Rogers’ West Country Tri team were there, the Somerset Tri Lot, Evolution and Tewskebury Tri to name a few.

The guys decided in the absence of a tent the Thornbury Tri HQ was going to be a bench

Roger went first in the swim, followed by Garry, then Rich then Martyn and throughout the whole race the guys raced fantastically giving all they had for the sake of the team. It was difficult as a spectator keeping track of who was where but there was always someone back at our bench changing into the next bit of kit! The conditions were dreadful and the heavens really opened, I personally was glad when they were all back safe at the end.

Its definitely a different type of event, the weather was horrendous but the boys did great (came 4th in their vet category).

It would be good for us to get a few teams together next year – Oh and get ourselves a team tent!!!

Sandra Webber

Tea Duty

Please help with the luxury of having tea, squash and biscuits at the end of your club run on a Thursday night, by volunteering to carry out 'tea duty'. If everyone took their turn, we would all only to do it ONCE every couple of years!!



have

Do not want to volunteer - because you do not know what to do???? Please read the following simple guide!

- Val James has the key to the locker in the Female changing rooms where all the tea equipment is kept. Val and Carol Bishop usually collect all the equipment.
- If you are on tea duty, you need to turn up at about 6.45pm - to help set out the cups/ tea etc. (Val James and I will usually be there to help as well.
- **All the provisions are provided - all you need to do is to bring 2 pints of milk.**

If you are on tea duty, we ask that you are also the person that stays at Turnberries - while the club members are out running - just to ensure the safety of members' belongings.

Tea should be ready from about 8pm onwards.

Once all runners have returned, you must help to clear away the equipment, Val James and I are usually also there to help.

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT!! IF YOU ARE STILL UNSURE PLEASE ASK ME.

Jo Williams

When TriHard Events hosted their 7th annual Helvellyn Triathlon on Sunday 5th September 2010 at Glenridding, TRC's Maddie Parrott and Adrian Savery joined them. The website tells us:

"The mile long swim in Ullswater, 38 mile bike section and 9 mile run doesn't sound too bad until you examine the route in detail. Then it dawns that the cycling leg is a road based loop around the Helvellyn massif and includes a climb of the infamous "Struggle" to the top of the Kirkstone Pass. This is immediately followed by a run to the top of Helvellyn (at 949m England's 3rd highest mountain) via the airy Swirral Edge before heading back down the zig zags to finish at Glenridding. It's no surprise then that Triathlete Europe Magazine rates the Helvellyn Triathlon as one of the 10 toughest triathlons in the World. "700 competitors took to the start line early on Sunday morning. The water temperature in Ullswater was a fairly bearable 16° C, however, a gusty wind made it relatively choppy on the return leg back to the shore. The fastest swimmer was out of the water in 21 minutes exactly."



Adrian's account:

Hell-vellyn?

After building my confidence over the last couple of months in the lake at Cromhall, I was beginning to feel like an Olympic swimmer. So, I started the swim right at the front of my wave. Immediately after the start, what seemed like all 200 swimmers in my wave proceeded to absolutely batter me - swimming into me, over me and generally through me! I struggled to get in any sort of rhythm and spent most of the time doing some sort of doggy-breaststroke-paddle! My swim put me in about 450th position, and on this basis alone, I don't fancy my chances for 2012.

The bike went well. Maddie's pre-race bike course briefing of "its flat apart from two climbs" failed to mention all the other undulating bits and wind. Regardless, I felt good all the way round, constantly overtaking and even felt a bit like Alberto Contador on the infamous Kirkstone Pass 'Struggle' climb - albeit fatter, less tanned and slightly slower than the Spaniard. I was about 80th quickest on the bike, which I was pretty chuffed with.

I burst out of transition for the run section, which didn't last long. Until the foot of the mountain to be exact. As I looked up, there was a procession of zig-zagging triathletes walking up the staircase-type path. About two-thirds of the way up, the path flattened out towards Swirral Edge. If Swirral Edge is the safest route to the Helvellyn summit, I would not like to see the alternative! The high winds were thankfully blowing us towards the rock face that we were clinging to, with both hands and knees. I'm sure it was a lovely view but I must admit I couldn't look down! Upon reaching the top it was flat for a bit then down the steep, loose and generally perilous zig zag descent. I was really disappointed with my run, without my dodgy knee I could have gone a lot quicker.

I definitely recommend it though, I'll be doing it again next year! I've been recovering in the Algarve. I wish I could do that after every race!

Adrian Savery

Today Jim Godden, this is your...20 Questions!



1. *Where were you born?* Ipswich, in Suffolk
2. *What is your favourite race?* Has to be the London marathon or the now defunct 30hour Ace race adventure race
3. *What is your favourite film?* Saving Private Ryan
4. *What sporting moment are you most proud of, (PB etc)?* London marathon PB 3:04 or winning the ace race series.
5. *What is your favourite book?* Anything by John Grisham

6. *How many years have you been running?* Too many – off and on for 30 years !
7. *What is your occupation?* Work in IT (sat in front of a computer all day !)
8. *How many miles a week on average do you run?* Depends on what I am training for, anything from 0 to 40 miles per week
9. *What is the first piece of music you ever bought?* Rock around the Clock – Bill Haley (on 78 lp !)
10. *What is your favourite piece of running kit?* My INOV-8 shoes
11. *Secret crush?* Cheryl Cole or Keira Knightley – Aim high !
12. *Do you have any pre/post race rituals/habits?* Adventure racing or marathon – Go gels Shorter races – thinking why am I here !
13. *Which is your favourite, winter or summer?* Winter, much more challenging.
14. *Who is your sporting hero?* I suppose Paula Radcliffe, although Jessica Ennis is very good to watch !!!!
15. *How do you get through 'the wall'?* Never met it yet, my legs seem to give way before the rest of me, probably due to taking go-gels on marathons.
16. *Tell us about an embarrassing moment?* I don't get embarrassed, am happy to do anything anywhere !
17. *What is your current running goal?* London marathon – under 3 hours and better than Roger Denton !
18. *When you were a child what did you want to be when you 'grew up'?* A farmer !
19. *Do you have any secret ambitions?* Yes, but then they wouldn't be secret !
20. *Why did you start running?* Started orienteering, and found I was reasonable at it.

Today, Jan Burke, this is your...20 Questions!

1. *Where were you born?* Crumpsall, Manchester
2. *What is your favourite race?* The Cape Wrath Marathon. It seems fairly mad to have a marathon with two ferry trips involved but you do get a sit down for ten minutes after 22 miles.
3. *What is your favourite film?* Amelie.
4. *What sporting moment are you most proud of, (PB etc)?* I haven't had it yet! In the meantime..... Cape Wrath mara 2010 (very little training but got up the last mile better than ever before), 5k PB last October and in 2006 being invited by Nike to represent the UK in the Hood to Coast Relay.*
5. *What is your favourite book?* I tend to read a book, enjoy it, then forget it but "French Revolutions" by Tim Moore sticks in my mind, as do "Feet in the Clouds" by Richard Askwith and "The Art of Possibility" by Ben Zander and Rosamund Stone. The book I look at most often is Paul Blakey's "The Muscle Book."



6. *How many years have you been running?* I started on 12th April 1999 at 7pm.
7. *What is your occupation?* Assistant manager of Sweatshop Bristol.
8. *How many miles a week on average do you run?* Umm..... At the moment it's about 15 but it has been known to struggle to 30. I'm not fast enough to do much more unless the weeks get longer.
9. *What is the first piece of music you ever bought?* I think it was "Magic Moments" by Perry Como. It was a very long time ago and my taste in music has got a bit livelier since then.
10. *What is your favourite piece of running kit?* I guess it has to be my Garmin 405. It's great for motivation.
11. *Secret crush?* Chocolate and chilli ice cream, pink pepper ice cream, lavender ice cream. Spot a trend here? These are the only crushes I'm prepared to make public.
12. *Do you have any pre/post race rituals/habits?* Pre race I make sure my number is central, straight and doesn't rub on my arms, go to the loo about ten times. I don't think I have any particular post-race ones.

13. *Which is your favourite, winter or summer?* I don't mind, so long as they keep on coming.

14. *Who is your sporting hero?* I have at least two: Haile Gebreselassie and Jane Tomlinson, plus a few “normal” ones whose names won’t be familiar.
15. *How do you get through 'the wall'?* I’m usually going slow enough to see it coming and take evasive action: eat a gel, imagine counting trees along Ladies’ Mile, imagine someone to run with me and keep me going, count my steps, follow an interesting runner and “road kill” (count people I pass if there are any visible runners. If desperate I count spectators).
16. *Tell us about an embarrassing moment?* The first time I did the London marathon I needed a pee at mile 1. I didn’t want to stay in the queue so nipped round the back of the Portaloos. It was only when it was too late to do anything that I realised I was on a bridge (with metal railings) over a dual carriageway. When a few cars sounded their horns I was hoping they hadn’t recognised me but then realised that not many people would have been able to from that angle!
17. *What is your current running goal?* I have several but I’m not saying. You will know when I’ve reached any of them!
18. *When you were a child what did you want to be when you 'grew up'?* A vet. I never became one and I still haven’t grown up.
19. *Do you have any secret ambitions?* Yes.
20. *Why did you start running?* I was convinced that if I waited another day (my 50th birthday) I would be Too Old and my hair would turn grey, my skin would go wrinkly and all my joints would start to creak. Ah well, can’t win ‘em all.
- * It’s all true though more a case of being over-generous with the truth than economical with it.

The statistics section:

1. Why ALL runners count in the cross country races!

The 2010-2011 season started all in a rush on 9th and 10th October with races from each League on successive days. In both there were full Thornbury men’s and ladies’ teams running to put us well on the league tables all round.

It might be tempting to look at the list of TRC runners going to any of the Gwent or Gloucester fixtures and think ‘not much point in me going; I ‘m not going to make any difference to the team result.’ Wrong! Look at the results from the first races of the season:

ignoring the fact that ‘something’ could happen to the faster runners, so the slower ones would score, the runners who didn’t come in the first 3 ladies/first 6 men had the effect of pushing other teams lower down the table.

in the Gloucester League race:

Ladies scores: 32, 52, 72, for the team (86, 93 didn’t score) 17th team BUT runners in 20th – 25th team scored runners below our 4th and in 2 cases 5th placed runner.

Men: 61, 62, 69, 74, 105, 139, (153, 165, 166, 173 didn’t score) 13th team BUT 2 teams scored a runner below our 7th. Stroud had 2 runners below.

So we need you all!

2. Faster men

Mo Farah became the first Briton to run the 5,000m in under 13 minutes at the Diamond League meeting in Zurich but could only finish fifth in his race.

Farah broke David Moorcroft's 28-year-old British record of 13 minutes 00.41 seconds, finishing in 12:57.94 in a race won by Ethiopia's Tariku Bekele

So how have British times improved? Thanks to Garry Slater who submitted the below:

Progressive British male records at 5,000m:

Time:	Athlete:	Date:
15:29.2	Charles Bennett	22 Jul 1900
15:01.2	Arthur Robertson	13 Sep 1908
15:00.4	Herbert Johnston	25 Jul 1926
14:54.8	Tom Evenson	30 Aug 1931
14:48.2	Peter Ward	24 Jul 1937
14:42.0	Peter Ward	22 Aug 1937
14:31.6	Peter Ward	4 Sep 1937
14:08.6	Sydney Wooderson	23 Aug 1946

14:02.6	Gordon Pirie	29 Aug 1953
13:51.6	Chris Chataway	13 Oct 1954
13:36.8	Gordon Pirie	19 Jun 1956
13:33.0	Mike Wiggs	30 Jun 1965
13:29.0	Dick Taylor	3 Aug 1969
13:22.8	Ian Stewart	25 Jul 1970
13:22.2	David Bedford	12 Jun 1971
13:17.21	David Bedford	14 Jun 1972
13:14.6	Brendan Foster	29 Jan 1974
13:00.41	David Moorcroft	7 Jul 1982
12:57.94	Mohamed Farah	18 Aug 2010

I tried to do the same for British women, but found it hard to find sufficient records, partly because 3000m was more accepted as a women's distance. What I did find shows a certain, if predictable dominance!

15:14.51	Paula Fudge	Knarvik	13.09.1981
14:48.07	Zola Pieterse	London	26.08.1985
14:46.76	Paula Radcliffe	Köln	16.08.1996
14:45.51	Paula Radcliffe	Bruxelles	22.08.1997
14:43.54	Paula Radcliffe	London	07.08.1999
14:32.44	Paula Radcliffe	Berlin	31.08.2001
14:31.42	Paula Radcliffe	Manchester	28.07.2002
14:29.11	Paula Radcliffe	Bydgoszcz	20.06.2004

3. Faster Old Men

In case the above is a bit daunting for some of our older readers, and with particular regard to the Vice-Chairman who has recently celebrated a significant birthday, here, from the BMAF website, are the times you need to beat:

British Master Vet 60 records

5k	16:43	Steve James	Southport	18.8.98
10k	33:29	Steve James	Eastleigh	15.3.98
5 miles	27:25	Laurie O'Hara	Hillingdon	27.2.92
10 miles	57:04	Steve James	Leyland	10.5.98
Half marathon	75:53	William Stoddart	Arbroath	28.6.92
Marathon	2:46:26	William McBrinn	Lochaber	21.4.91

Oh, that Michael Johnson!

ANYONE who watched the Oldbury Power Station 10 earlier this month can't fail to have been impressed by the man who led from start to finish. Michael Johnson won in 50mins 19secs, smashing the 21-year-old course record by 1min 33sec.

Always ready to be impressed, I had a chat with him afterwards and heard that he was using the OPS10 as a hard training session to prepare for the Welsh Half Marathon Championship in Cardiff on October 17. Michael went on to come fourth in that race, finishing in 64min 04sec, beaten only by three Kenyans (and one of those was only one second ahead!). He now holds the Welsh Half Marathon, 5km and 10km titles.

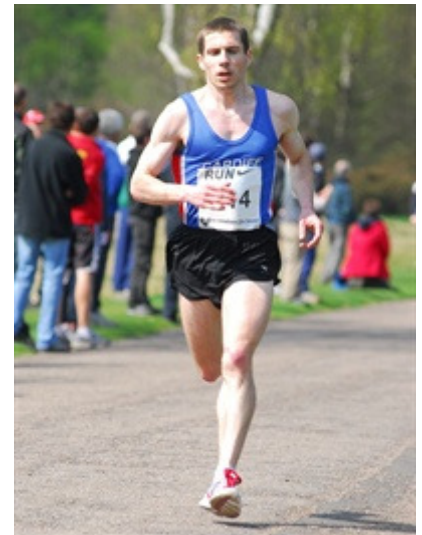
After the OPS10 I sent him an email asking about the training that was needed to be able to churn out 5min miles as he did. Michael obligingly replied by sending a typical week's training schedule (90-120 miles a week) plus an explanation of what works for him as he sets his sights on the 2014 Commonwealth Games marathon in Glasgow. But first, some background....

Michael, who's joining Bristol & West AC, grew up in Winterbourne where his main sport was gymnastics. Training at Fromeside for several hours most days, he reached national level for his age. Then came an accident. 'A nasty broken leg during a tumble when I was 16 year caused me to realise that I was not invincible,' he said. 'I was never able to throw myself around in quite the same way.'

He drifted away from gymnastics and took up running while at Cardiff University. 'Typically I would run four times a week, with most being at a comfortably hard pace for 45 minutes or so, perhaps longer if I was exploring or if I got lost. I joined the athletics club at Cardiff University and ran a few cross-country races. I was quite good, and steadily my position in the Gwent League improved from the mid-30s to the mid-20s.'

Running went on the back-burner when Michael moved to London to complete his optometry training at Moorfields Eye Hospital. After qualifying as an optometrist he returned to Cardiff and worked in the valleys, then returned to university part-time to do a PhD.

At the age of 25 he decided to make the most of his talent and joined Cardiff AAC. 'There was a fantastic pack of runners who would zoom around Roath Lake every Tuesday evening and then go to the 2-for-1 pub afterwards and eat two meals each. I tagged along behind and began to realise what proper training was. My idols spoke of running twice a day and of 100 mile weeks, which were things I had never conceived as possible. After running 32min for 10k my aim became to run 30min for 10k by the time I was 30.'



Over the next year the Cardiff group broke up as they settled into jobs or family life. 'It was a shame. I trained on my own almost exclusively. I read books on training and spoke to everyone about what to do, and most importantly I thought a lot about why, how and when. I moved to Bristol to work at the Eye Hospital in 2007 and all my runs were done on my own.

'The day after my wedding (*to Hayley, who ran her first 10 mile race at Oldbury*) I ran for Wales in the Great Manchester 10k run with the aim of breaking 30min. I was swept along for the first half in 14.30 and then the wheels fell off. I finished in 30.11 in some distress and was devastated. A few weeks later I ran 29.51 in Cardiff at the age of 29 years and was on top of the world.'

But a few weeks later, pain in his foot brought him crashing down to earth: 'One of my toes began to point the wrong way.' An orthopaedic surgeon said that surgery was the only answer, but Michael decided to put his future in the hands of a podiatrist ('who became my new best friend') who designed and constructed some orthotics to make things less painful. Over the next year things slowly improved.

Standard Week's Training (Total mileage: 90-120miles)

Mon: 6m & 10m (include strides or short hills)

Tue: 6m & Fartlek [2m warm-up, 200m float (45sec) + 8x400m effort (64-68s), with 200m float + 1m warm-down]

Wed: 4m & 10m

Thursday: 13m quick & 4m

Fri: 6m & (1m warm-up, 3-4x10min @ HM speed, 1m warm-down)

Sat: 6m & Fartlek [3m warm-up + 2x (2x1.30min, 4x1min, 4x30s, 4x15s) with float same as effort + 3m warm-down]

Sun: 2-2.5h run

Current Training:

"I intend to run the marathon at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in under 2h15min. On the journey I expect to run 5k and 10k close to 14min and 29min. The primary aim of my current training plan is to be sustainable, because I think that it is only through long-term consistency over years that improvements in fitness occur.

"I have found that it is not total weekly mileage that matters, but the number of long runs; 10m and 10m in a day is not as beneficial as 4m and 16m. Every week I include a 2-2.5h run, with no regard to speed, to improve my structural robustness, and a 13m run at a quick but maintainable pace (5.30 to 6min/mile).

"Long reps with short recoveries get me fit quick, but in a few weeks leave me feeling knackered. They are like races. They are also hard mentally on your own because you when you stop you have time to think how hard the next rep will be. Instead I typically do two fartlek sessions a week that consist of hard efforts (4.10-4.40min/mile) and moderately hard float recoveries (5.30-6min/mile), which better simulate racing - you do not get to stop and you learn to recover while running fast. I run to a perceived effort without regard to exact times. Reliance on a watch stops me listening to my body. I use a watch to tell me how fast I ran.

"There is also a weekly tempo run session at about HM speed, something like 3-4x10min at 5min/mile, which I often run on a treadmill, although on the latter I need to increase the speed to 4.48min/mile (top speed) to simulate the effort in the real world.

"I also feel that everyone needs to work on their pure speed, all the time, and to this end I try to include strides during easy runs, and some short hills (80-150m) with walk down recovery. The week before a major race I will run about 5k on a track, sprinting the straights and jogging the bends."

- Michael and Hayley both work at the Bristol Eye Hospital, but shortly they plan to take over an established optometry practice in Thornbury, which will be called Johnson & Furze Optometrists and Opticians. 'We will provide primary eye-care and spectacles/contact lenses, and several specialist services for the residents of Thornbury and surrounding areas,' said Michael. Our website will be online shortly after opening: johnsonandfurze.co.uk

Jacqueline Wadsworth and Michael Johnson

Is it worth the extra Fiver?

So when you complete your membership form for TRC, what do you think when you get to the bit about EA affiliation? Do you know what it is? What good it could do you?

More and more races are being held under EA (England Athletics) rules. More and more entry forms are asking for your EA membership number when you apply for reduced-cost entry. The Club is affiliated, but that's not always enough.

This year we hoped to enter teams into the Midland Road Relay championships, but it was a requirement that all runners had individual EA membership – not enough of those interested in running were members.

Whilst it might appear that runners are being held to ransom if they are unable to compete without paying an extra £5, the plus side is that with only a few races you will get your money back, and also, up until now, all EA members get a £5 voucher for Sweatshop, so you are (sort of!) getting your money back. Your decision.