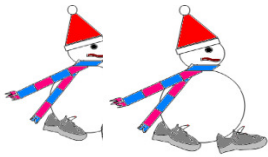




Prattle & Run

Christmas 2010

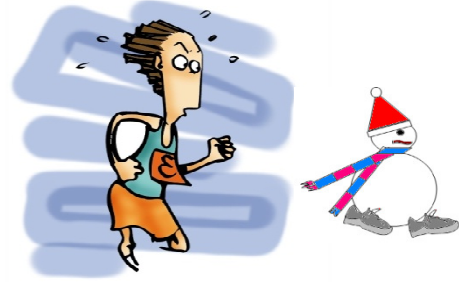


100 miles - 5 days. Work it out for yourself. (See page 7)

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CAPTAIN'S COLUMN



THIS TIME last year Thornbury Running club decided to up its game and start competing more as a club, rather than simply watching its members compete. We drew up a list of target races, and set out aims for different events. Not everything worked, but by and large we've had a successful year, as you can see below. The only target race which didn't work was the National Road Relays last autumn, when there wasn't enough support to send a men's or women's team.

- **March, Gwent League Cross Country – women promoted to Division 1**
- April, *Mob Match vs Chepstow Harriers* - TRC beaten by just one place (49 turned out)
- **June, Cotswold Way Relay – women finished 4th, one place higher than previous year**
- July, *Avon Clubs Summer Mob Match* – TRC compete for first time (and beat Hogweeds!)
- **August, National Triathlon Club Relays – 4th MV team**
- September, *Clevedon Road Races* – 1st MV team
- **November, Avon Clubs XC Mob Match – TRC finish 2nd**

These results have shown that we can get out good teams throughout the year, for a wide range of events - cross country, off-road, road and triathlon. This isn't a bad achievement considering most members understandably give priority to their own race plans. It's been interesting to see the different ways that men and women have responded. A lot of men have talked about how much they enjoy competing as team and are ambitious for the club to do well. The women haven't been as vocal, but underlying their performances this year has been a strong team spirit.

So what next? More of the same in 2011!

TRC might not be top of the pile yet, but it's only by competing as a club that we'll start improving as one. What we need now are two people to take charge of things. In the past, the Club Captain has been responsible for the club's performance in competition (as well as being responsible for numerous other things!) but next year, the committee has decided to devolve that responsibility to a Men's Team Captain and Women's Team Captain. Their job will be to decide which will be our target races, then to rally support for some really good teams. If you've enjoyed being part of a club team this year, do give it some thought. You may be just right for the job.

Have a very happy Christmas.

Jacqueline Wadsworth

A Ride too Far?

The day out that didn't go quite to plan

It's 6 30 Sunday morning the car is complete with bikes, so Maddie and I set off to Bovey Tracey for the "Dartmoor Devil" the event is described on the web accordingly:

**If you have not been initiated let us enlighten you. The Dartmoor Devil is no ordinary bicycle ride. For the fourteenth year a hoard of cyclists will ride 60+ miles across the dizzy heights of Dartmoor, riding through the mists, along lanes strewn with the debris of recent storms, battling the wind on the exposed road to Princetown, and the final climb up Widcombe Hill....
(Log out now if you dare - or read on!)**

You will find around another 200 people like yourself have been lured to the start of this gruelling event, their only comfort being a bowl of Soup and a crust of bread in a sheltered pub along the route.

Two minutes into the journey there was a loud bang and much to my surprise my back tyre had exploded, still not to worry I would be able to replace the tube at the start. Down the motorway and we are then diverted off and obliged to follow a scenic route around the industrial estates at Weston Super Mare.

Arriving a Bovey Tracey it had stopped raining, the tube was replaced but I then experienced problems changing gears (Bob Tyrell where are you when you are needed)? Fortunately a mechanically minded rider was on hand to help.

The start was from a pub then immediately up a steep hill taking us through Bovey Tracey then down a hill, BANG half way down the hill ¾ mile from the start and yes it's another blown tyre. At this stage I am beginning to have major doubts about carrying on and this is confirmed when I put the 2nd tube in only to find it will not retain the air. So decision made, we turned back (in my case walk up the hill) and retire to the nearest coffee shop.

During coffee Maddie suggested we drive up to the first check point (22k on) just to see what the route was like. By this time the rain has returned and the road was like a river in parts. We turned up a narrow lane with a warning that "this is not for large vehicles" (they should have said any vehicle), It consisted of steep hills, up and down, lots of mud on the roads, together with leaves made it like a skid pan. In addition the road was flooded in parts. Were we glad we did not start and that we listened to whoever it was saying "this is not a good idea".

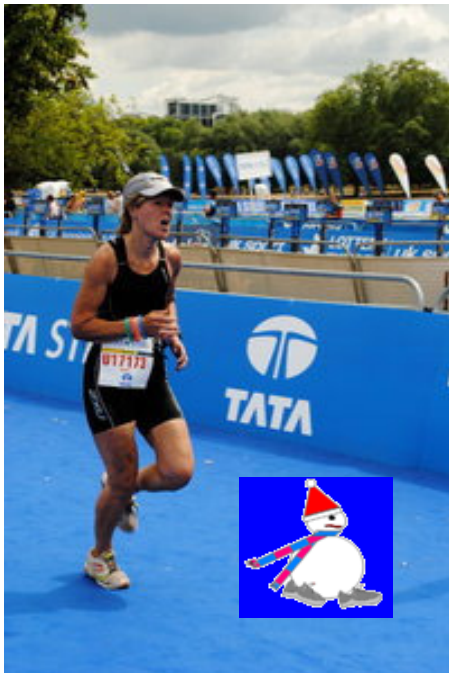
However to be fair it would be a great ride, but not in October and after 2 days of continuous rain. So Maddie and I are suggesting we go down there in Spring/Summer as a group, (including Bob Tyrell who can be the travelling mechanic) as without doubt it would be a great bike ride. I shall be canvassing in the New Year for names.

As a matter of interest on closer examination of the tyre I found there was a split in the side wall. So it was on to Wiggle for 2 new Continental 4 seasons, no more punctures for me (for now).

Richard Illingworth

Today Sandra Webber, this is your...20 Questions!

1. *Where were you born?* Birmingham
2. *What is your favourite race?* Burnham Tri – where it all really started in 2004
3. *What is your favourite film?* What Women Want?
4. *What sporting moment are you most proud of, (PB etc)?* It has to be completing Ironman UK 2006 where I stood on the start line not really knowing if I had the ability to complete this massive event
5. *What is your favourite book?* Lance Armstrong – “it’s not about the bike”
6. *How many years have you been running?* On and off for 20 years – I started by training for the Hewlett



Packard (HP) 5 mile challenge when I worked there. Me and a mate from accounts started running/walking around the site and then ventured onto the roads to train for the race. Didn't seriously take it up till I joined Thornbury RC!

7. *What is your occupation?* Management Trainer
8. *How many miles a week on average do you run?* Varies considerably from 5 – 20 depending on race schedule
9. *What is the first piece of music you ever bought?* Cliff Richard LP – scary but true!
10. *What is your favourite piece of running kit?* - My Newtons
11. *Secret crush?* – don't have one apart from Robbie Williams who most females I know like.
12. *Do you have any pre/post race rituals/habits?* Eat breakfast well

in advance, sort kit out night before and get to venue well in advance of start time.

- 13 *Which is your favourite, winter or summer?* - I love summer
14. *Who is your sporting hero?* A triathlete called Michelle Dillon who had to work really hard on her swim! Has suffered from back problems but got to compete at Olympic level and is now coaching. She always looks glamorous as well while racing – a challenge in our sport!!!
15. *How do you get through 'the wall'?* – Mental tricks
16. *Tell us about an embarrassing moment?* - went on girl guide camp and got caught in adventure scouts tent – they were just about to call the police out to search for us when we had to own up we were in there! That was the end of my girl guide days, I was too embarrassed to go back after the camp as I was a patrol leader!!!

17. *What is your current running goal?* - To try and build up to Stroud half marathon – I haven't managed to do a half marathon since I got injured at Bath Half in 2007 and then had to take the whole season off running.

18. *When you were a child what did you want to be when you 'grew up'?* - A travel guide abroad

19. *Do you have any secret ambitions?* To keep fit and healthy for as long as possible!

20. *Why did you start running?* - To lose weight and do the HP 5 mile challenge race

*Anyone who has been paying attention will realise that Sandra wrote this a little while back, and since then has not only successfully completed the Stroud Half-marathon but has also done so with a PB.
Well done!*

And today Garry Slater this is your...20 Questions!

1. *Where were you born?* Glasgow.

2. *What is your favourite race?* Any bike race where I'm there for bunch sprint.

3. *What is your favourite film?* Searching for the wrong eyed Jesus.

4. *What sporting moment are you most proud of, (PB etc)?*
Finishing IMUK 2006. I was more proud of the TRC team who finished alongside me.

5. *What is your favourite book?* The Grass Arena, John Healy.

6. *How many years have you been running?* 6 years (this time around).

7. *What is your occupation?* Civil Engineer.

8. *How many miles a week on average do you run?* 30.

9. *What is the first piece of music you ever bought?* Mull of Kintyre, Wings.

10. *What is your favourite piece of running kit?* Mayfly Racers

11. *Secret crush?* Blanka Vlasic.

12. *Do you have any pre/post race rituals/habits?* Never warm up, and never warm down.

13. *Which is your favourite, winter or summer?* Winter. The summer pollen is a killer.

14. *Who is your sporting hero?* Don't do the hero thing, but anyone who finishes the TDF comes close in my book.

15. *How do you get through 'the wall'?* Never run far enough to hit it.



the

16. *Tell us about an embarrassing moment?* Not being able to count to 4 in a 1500m race, and going for the sprint finish at the end of lap 3, to be met with the bell. Got passed by the whole field on the final lap and finished last. The embarrassment lived with me for a long time.

17. *What is your current running goal?* Sub 18 and sub 38.

18. *When you were a child what did you want to be when you 'grew up'?* Footballer, obviously.

19. *Do you have any secret ambitions?* To live in a different continent.

20. *Why did you start running?* Mid-life crisis.....

*Tired, tight muscles? After all you keep asking of them, it's hardly surprising.
Give them – and yourself! – a treat at the hands of an expert!*

Get those muscles moving!

I am a qualified Therapeutic Massage Therapist and I am re-launching my massage business which I will be running from a Practice Room at home.

Therapeutic massage enhances muscle function and promotes relaxation. This is perfect for your pre and post race warm up/warm down or when you are starting to crank up the miles for marathon training and want to avoid strain on overworked muscles. Massage can speed up the recovery process, helping to disperse the build up of lactic acid in your muscles.

If you want to book an appointment or ask me any questions please contact me selinadavies@hotmail.co.uk or phone 07983703810 or see me at club on Thursday.

I am not offering any sports/remedial therapies and have assured our physiotherapist Ray Sunnucks that if anyone comes to me with an injury I will be referring them straight to him. We are not in competition as our treatment performs totally different functions.

Selina Davies

Team work – an appeal from the Chair.

Over the past few weeks there have been a number of requests for help:

- Marshalling the Riverbank Rollick
- Taking charge of the club kit
- Liaising with the Gazette
- Considering being a Team Captain

And now I can add a couple more:

- Putting your name forward for the committee
- Being prepared to look after a team tent

In the past couple of years Thornbury Running Club has moved forward. Jacqueline's Captain's Column gives just a few examples, but we have runners and triathletes that, especially as a team, can get the Club name up there with some of the best in the region. At the same time the Club aims to provide for the average runner and racer.

To keep us there – or even push us further forward – we need to make sure that all we do is done professionally and efficiently. The races we organize have a good name, but for a few weeks each year a small number of people have to live, work and sleep the Rollick, the OPS10 or the Carnival 10k to make sure that happens. We have to wear Club colours in certain races, so these need to be available. We want to let potential members know what we're doing, so publicity is vital, and having our name and race reports in the local newspaper is one – free! – way to do this. Being able to have our own sign-written tent at races, especially cross country, and team triathlon events will give us a bit of warmth and shelter, somewhere to keep our bags and kit and also let others know who we are. But unless someone (or more than one person) is prepared to house it, bring it to races, and take it away again afterwards there is no point in buying one.

There are going to be changes and vacancies on the committee this year, new faces with new ideas will be very welcome. Soon a list will be circulating – is your name going to be on it?

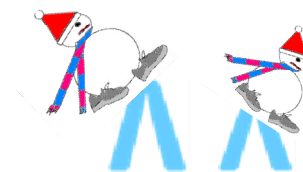
We currently have 163 members: the Rollick needs 56 helpers, some of whom will be family and friends of members – where are all the others? Runners have enough interest to join the Club, but apparently many members expect it to run for their benefit with no effort on their part.

Look around on Club night: people fall into one of three categories: those that are currently working to keep the club running, those that have been vital in the past and have really done their share (and some of them are *still* doing it!), and those that aren't doing much – yet. Where do you fit in?

Of course, those in the third category are probably not even reading this ...

Judy Mills

HIMALAYAN
100 mile stage race ▶▶ India



While some of us were dragging ourselves up the hills of the Five Valleys, Jo Plumbley was doing some of them twice. She said she needed as much hill-running practice as possible. Here's why:

I am usually successful in the apportionment of blame for my more irrational impulses and on this occasion partial culpability is awarded to my friend Diane for whom the Himalayan 100 has been a lifetime ambition and who happened to mention on the phone that 2010 was the year she intended to head to the mountains of Darjeeling to undertake the 5 day challenge. Instantly inspired by the opportunity to return to the

Himalayas and in keeping with a justified reputation for attempting ill considered physical challenges I immediately invited myself along. Excited by a fascination with the mountain ranges and the opportunity to visit a unique part of India I admit at this stage that I completely failed to consider any potential difficulties in 5 days of (nearly) marathon distance running up severe gradients, difficult terrain and at altitudes above 3000m.

Pete Mainstone did his best to guide me through Wotton woods and gesticulating in the general direction of additional hills I was welcome to attempt. However, when I arrived in the small village of Mirik in the Himalayan foothills at the end of October after 40 hours of increasingly nauseating travel to meet 63 other competitors, each eagerly debating the merits of this year's Marathon de Sable versus the Amazonian Jungle equivalent I began to feel woefully inadequate for what lay ahead.



Luckily I had very little time to succumb to the abject panic resulting from my personal preparation or relative lack thereof. The next day we set off by bus at 4.30am and despite the desperately antisocial hours there was an inspiring and generous crowd waiting to see us off with a traditional good luck ceremony. This first run was due to take us through a net altitude gain of 6000 feet taking us to 12,000 feet over 24 mountain miles to the small remote outpost of Sandakphu.

I confess now that initial enthusiasm got the better of me and from the first hill I predictably ignored every resolution I had made to remember that I had another 4 tough days ahead. Reaching the first checkpoint after 3 miles (and still not quite at the top of the first hill) I was staggered to see that only a handful of people had signed in before me. Obviously I read this as a sign of my own running supremacy rather than the slightly more accurate reflection of an inability to pace myself over 5 days of intensive running. With confidence I raced on to the next checkpoint in a small village where classes of immaculately dressed school children lined the dirt tracks chanting a motivational chorus and handing out potatoes and bananas as we passed.

The scenery and views became increasingly impressive and although a couple of the hills reduced me to stifled shuffling I continued to feel strong. After about 4.5 hours I burst through the finish tape set up for every runner as just the second lady home. After a half hearted splash in a bucket of tepid water and a few more potatoes washed down with hot soup I began to feel pretty great. We then waited at the finish as the rest of the competitors completed their first day, which for some was well after dark, with several suffering the effects of the increased altitude and dropping temperatures.

Overnight temperatures were as low as minus 10 and in a stone hut I was grateful for every layer I had. We woke the next day, early enough to watch the sun rise over Everest and filled up once again on those much needed carbohydrates. We ran at 6am on an out and back trail, ten miles to the turn around, and I had already begun to feel the aches and pains justly deserved for my lack of pacing on day one. Witnessing the panorama that repeatedly opened out in front of us, however, was both incredible and motivational and despite true concern at the ability of my thighs to complete day two let alone the remainder, I arrived back still well placed just behind the lead lady and settled down to an afternoon of emergency stretches and

minor panic attacks about the slightly daunting prospect of a high altitude mountain marathon the following day.



At 5am the next morning I stood in total trepidation on the start line of the Everest Challenge Marathon course complete with compression socks, tubi-grips, and copious quantities of ibuprofen in assorted formulas to assist me through 26 miles of aggressive mountains with all but the last few keeping us well over 12,000 feet. From the outset I tried to settle into a slightly slower pace and to concentrate on the ever more stunning scenery that we encountered. The first ten miles followed the same route as the previous day, then there was a further out and back section across a stunning ridge with views so amazing that even the most dedicated racers were reaching for their cameras. The final 10k of the race was a steep descent down a logging track to the hillside village of Rimbik. This section of the course took well over two hours of solid running and led to a fairly unanimous conclusion supported by several GPS systems that the marathon was much closer to 32 miles rather than the more traditional and desirable 26. The final couple of miles back uphill were really tough going and reaching the Rimbik lodge in the warmth of the midday sun, we relished a few hours collapsed on the grass with bottles of coke and

imported Mars Bars before ravenously tucking into a fantastic spread of local dishes.

The delight of the post marathon stage was a lie in with the next day's race scheduled to start at a hugely indulgent 9am. Unfortunately for me that really was the highlight of the day as three days of competitive running 20 miles or more and good marathon finish took their toll. Whilst others appreciated the comparative ease of a low altitude, half marathon, on road, I established my status as a physical wreck, shuffling painfully through every kilometre and vomiting unceremoniously into roadside foliage as I went. I was extremely relieved to finally collapse over the finish line and welcomed a few hours rest before joining everyone round the campfire for a cultural evening of Indian dancing and poetry followed by some arguably less cultural contributions from the international fleet of exhausted athletes.

The final day was once again on road; about 17 miles back to our start point. By this stage my goal was survival and suffice to say this was achieved in marginally less pain than the previous day. My elation at breaking the tape after 100 miles was due not only to the realisation of achievement but more acutely the appreciation that the following day was to be entirely free even the vaguest hint of any more running.

Although I had lost quite a bit of time over the last 2 days on the road I was still third female overall and that evening I was awarded a very impressive trophy supplemented with further silverware as second female in the Everest Challenge marathon. Out of the 63 competitors (30 women) I came in seventh place and felt pretty proud of my performance. From start to finish the race was superbly organised, we ate and slept well, bags were carried for us to checkpoints and endpoints and local assistants set of in the middle of each night to ensure that we had aid stations every couple of miles. The Himalayan 100 was a genuinely tough event but the stunning mountain backdrop and the friendships that developed during our adventure remain infinitely more memorable than the exhaustion and the agony of any of the miles. I would strongly recommend the whole experience to any runner blessed with a week to spare, a spirit of adventure, a pack of painkillers and a dubious capability of rational thought.



And Finally ...

A very happy Christmas and New Year to all members, families and friends of Thornbury Running Club.

Time to fill your diaries with races for 2011!

Articles for the next edition of Prattle & Run to me at judy.mills@live.co.uk by Thursday 3rd February, please.

