



South West Road Runners Newsletter February 2014

From the chairman's ghost!

Has anyone seen Dave Pressley? Asked to write a piece "from the chairman" and warned that it was in serious danger of being ghost written, our normally not so shy and retiring chair has disappeared!



I'm sure he was at the Fulford Five last Sunday (and indeed his name was on the finisher's list), although on this picture he definitely looks two years younger! He may be spotted at the AGM this Friday 7th February, 7:30pm at the Isca Centre, Exeter Arena. This is your opportunity to thank the retiring chairman, mark the end of an era and to have a say regarding how your club is run! In addition to the meeting there is a free buffet, a licenced bar and a discount kit sale.

Why I belong to SWRR

If you're reading this and not a member or if you wonder why you should renew your membership then read on. Geoff Smith explains the potential benefits.

I took up running in my late 40's following my wife, Donna completing and enjoying a Race for Life 5k. I continued running and racing, even completing my first marathon. However I resisted joining a club, particularly after I did go out four times with a local club and ended up injured. Why did I need a club anyhow? If I was in a group I would have to run too fast, too slow, too far or too short. However my times were plateauing and South West Road Runners was recommended to me. I arrived one evening in May 2013. I need not have worried, there were several different groups running all different times, distances and paces. I was encouraged, felt welcomed and, having enjoyed that run so much, paid my full membership the next week.

Meanwhile Donna was struggling to run four miles and hating it. I suggested that she come along with me to club night; although initially reluctant, within 3 weeks she had joined and started to improve again.

Going back to my question, "Why did I need a club?" Well, since I joined, not only do I go nearly every Wednesday, but there have been regular runs on a weekend – a Sunday run and now the marathon group on a Saturday. My half marathon PB was shattered by over 3 minutes at the Great North run this year with my first sub 1 hour 45. My elation at this was huge! My 10k time has had over a minute taken off and this morning, in the Fulfords 5, a race that I had ran in for the last 5 years, I took nearly 2 minutes off of my previous best time. Donna's improvement has been greater than mine, she took 7 minutes off of her PB at the Great West Run this year and, whilst she might tell me otherwise when she aches, does actually enjoy it. She has even joined the Marathon training group and will be doing her first Marathon this year. Just to think that only 8 months ago, she was hating doing even a short run.

So, if ever you had any doubts about joining a club, just do it. If anyone ever wants to have a chat with me to sell them the benefits, I am more than happy to do so.

Getting InStep

InStep Devon is the new running network for the Exeter Area, East and Mid Devon.

We're working with local clubs and groups to improve opportunities for new and established runners.

Tony Gale looks at why InStep was set up, and what it hopes to achieve in its first year.



I get a lot out of running. I bet you do, too. I firmly believe that a world full of runners would be a better place.

Various discussions in the last couple of years encouraged a couple of us in SWRR to think about what we could do to develop the sport locally.

Society keeps changing, and sport changes with it. Compared with a few years ago, there are more women running, and more oldies running. Until recently, there were very few running groups for "recreational" runners. And the percentage of the population suffering from chronic conditions like obesity was lower than it is now.

So what do we need? More support and more groups to accommodate the range of runners already active

in the sport. More opportunities for inactive people to take up running.

That's how InStep Devon was born. We wanted to work with established local running clubs and groups to develop what's already available; and to encourage new groups to set up, especially in places where there's no provision at the moment.

Our simple mission statement:

If you're new to running, we'll help you to get started. If you're already a runner, we'll help you to get more out of the sport.

Now we've set up a network covering the Exeter area, Mid and East Devon. Eight running clubs signed up right away – Axe Valley Runners, CREDITON Running Network, Dawlish Coasters, Exeter Harriers, Exmouth Harriers, Honiton Running Club, SWRR and Tiverton Harriers. We also had interest and support from lots of local Run England groups, and various "partner" organisations involved in the sport.

In the first few months we successfully bid for funding from England Athletics; and we were appointed by Active Devon as their delivery partner for the Beginner Runner Initiative across the InStep area.

This set us off with a big programme of work, including:-

- Coach and Leader training (courses, bursaries)
- Coach and Leader support (equipment, skills sharing and mentoring)
- Inter-club Championship
- Networking – wherever, whatever
- Raising the profile of the sport
- Beginner Runner Initiative
- Shared marathon training group

We realise that one of the biggest challenges for us is publicity – how to make everyone aware of what we’re doing. There’s never enough coverage of our support in the press. Clubs like SWRR try hard to keep their runners informed about what’s going on, but we know that lots of messages never register with the bulk of the membership.

So we’ve got an InStep website www.instepdevon.org.uk and a Facebook page (called “Instep Devon”)...and we keep pumping out leaflets and press reports. Look out for our banners at races. Look out for our t-shirts and car stickers. Get involved in that Championship.

We might not change the world, but we have high hopes of making a difference in this corner of Devon. Just remember:-

If you’re new to running, we’ll help you to get started. If you’re already a runner, we’ll help you to get more out of the sport.

**Tony Gale
Chair, InStep Devon**



We can run for miles and miles and miles and miles ...
says Dave Moulder



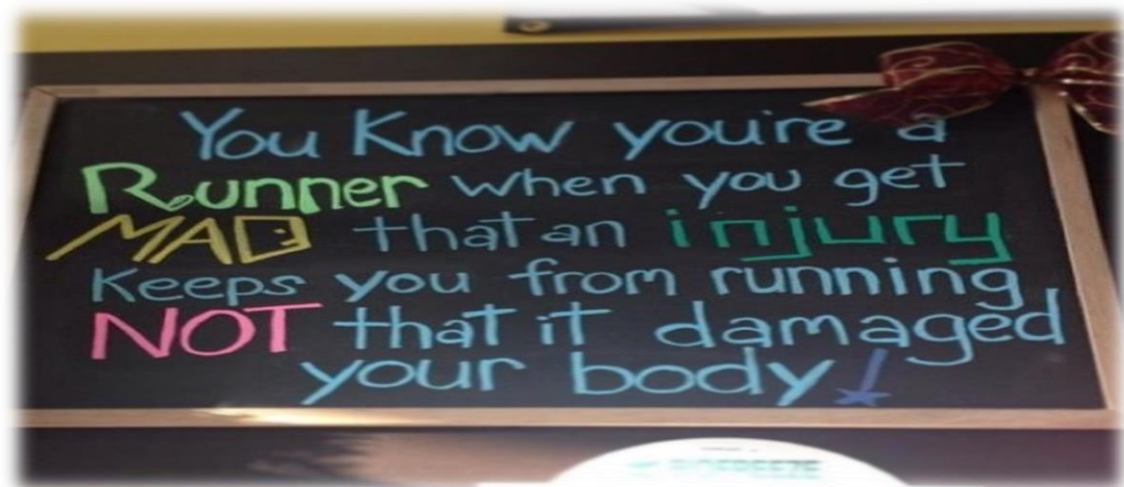
It all started back in 2006 when a small group of marathon hopefuls – Jenny Burton, Pip Hayes, Julie Hedges, Catherine Powrie (now Hilton), Pat Kennedy, Mark Robinson, Rachel Short, Pete Williams & Ayse Vahiboglu = got together with me and started doing our long Sunday runs together. It was handy that we all ran at much the same pace, but this was largely

because we didn't invite anyone quicker or slower to join us!

Each year the group has continued in some form, then in 2013 I got a bit more ambitious by running a page on our web site and an email group to give runners advance notice of where we were going each week. Growing numbers made it worth meeting in the Harriers' Pavilion for our long runs.

This year we've been funded by InStep Devon who pay for the hire of the Pavilion. We've opened up to the InStep Network and we have runners joining us from Exmouth Harriers, Honiton RC, Axe Valley Runners and run England Groups – although the majority are still from SWRR. Although my weekly email list has 63 runners on it, typical attendance is 14-20, mostly regulars.

We are now very inclusive, marathon ambitions range from "just survive it" to 2 hours 40. We run in small groups to cater for all paces. Even if you aren't planning a marathon, you're welcome to join us for a long run any Saturday up to the end of March – see our club web site for details.



InStep Devon Championship 2014

What is it and how does it work?



This is a brand new inter-club championship, organised, supported and run by InStep, running from January 2014 to November 2014. There are 10 races on offer over the course of year and any runner wishing to complete it must finish at least 5 out of those 10 races.

Who is eligible to enter?

Any first claim member of one of the 8 InStep member clubs which includes SWRR is eligible to take part in the championship, provided that they also hold a valid competition licence.

How do I enter?

By running in one of the 10 designated races but only if you enter under your club name using your competition licence number. Your name will automatically be picked up from the race results following each event and your details added to the championship spreadsheet.

How do I score points?

Championship points are awarded at each race based on your overall finish position and are awarded separately based on your category finish position. The first male over

the line will receive 100 points, the second 99, third 98 etc. Points are awarded to all finishers, regardless or not of whether they are eligible to count in the championship. So, for example, you may finish as the 2nd eligible counter for the championship, but finish 8th overall in the race; in which case, you would be awarded 93 points. The same goes for female finishers. These points count towards your totals for the overall championship positions; the most an athlete can score over the 5 races would therefore be 500 points.

What if I finish outside of the top 100? Can I not take part?

If you place outside of the top 100 male or top 100 female finishers overall, you will not be awarded any points for that particular race. This does not mean that you will always finish outside of the top 100, however, as some of the races in the series will have a greater number of entrants than others, so you could enter another championship race and find that you do finish comfortably inside the top 100 and gain valuable championship points.

What are the races?

There are 10 races in total and athletes must complete 5 of these in order to complete the championship (if more than 5 are completed, your highest scoring 5 will be counted). There is one race offered by each of the InStep member clubs and 2 "neutral" races. A runner cannot score points in their own club's race, to avoid conflicts of interest with marshalling, supporting your club etc. The 2014 InStep Championship races are:

First Chance 10k – SWRR – 10k, road – 5th January

Axmouth Challenge – Axe Valley Runners – 10m only counts, multi-terrain (approx. 2/3rds road) – 19th Jan

Fulford Five – Exmouth Harriers – 5m, road – 2nd February

Bampton to Tiverton 7 – Tiverton Harriers – 7m, road – 21st April (Monday)

Crediton Crunch – CRN – 10k, multi-terrain – May **date TBC**

Run Exe Summer 5k series (1 named event) – IBR – 5k, road – June **date TBC**

Haldon Forest Flyer – Dawlish Coasters – 5m, multi-terrain – August **date TBC**

Cotleigh Canter 10k – Honiton RC – 10k, road – 21st September

Exeter Open Meet 3000m – Exeter Harriers – 3000m track – September **date TBC**

Great West Run Half-marathon – Go2 Events – 13.1m – October **date TBC**

TBC (to be confirmed) events may be substituted.

What's in it for me?

InStep identified that Devon is currently lacking a major race series to provide some sporting competition between clubs and local athletes. The InStep Championship has been designed to incorporate the tastes of a broad spectrum of runner, but we also hope that it will encourage you to give some new events a try and, in so doing, maybe discover a love and a talent for a different type of race to the ones you would normally target. A championship race series is also a great way of gauging your progress and measuring yourself against your category rivals, whether you finish in the top 10% or the bottom 10% of finishers. We hope that the satisfaction of accruing

points and trying to climb your way up the championship ladder will be a good incentive to give this race series a try. However, for those who prefer a more tangible reward, there will be prizes for the top 3 males and females overall and for the first male and female in each of the four 10 year age categories. Additionally, every runner who completes at least 5 races will be entered into a draw for spot prizes.

How are the prizes awarded?

The male and female runners with the highest overall points score at the end of the championship year (December) will be crowned as the InStep Devon Champions 2014. In the event of a tie on points, WAVA age-graded percentages will be used to determine the winner. Any runner of any age can place in the top 3 but no runner can win more than one prize, so if an M40 runner places top 3 overall, the MV40 prize will go to the 2nd highest scoring runner in that category. Your age category on your first championship race will determine your category for the whole series, even if you go up a category half way through the year.

How will I know how I am doing?

Look at the Instep website page after each race.

It's free to enter once you've paid your race entry so what have you got to lose? Who will be the male and female InStep Champions 2014? But you've got to be in it to win it, so get training and get racing!

Don't forget SWRR has a championship too – look on website for details – some of the races are even in both championships!

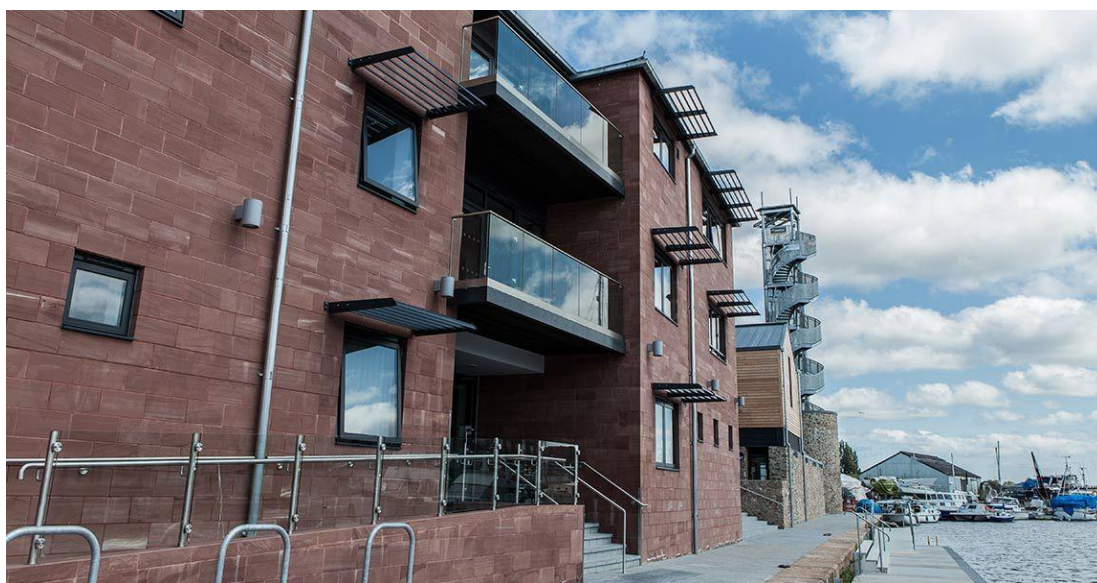
"The important thing in life is not victory but combat; it is not to have vanquished but to have fought well."

Pierre de Coubertin

Coming Soon: Monday Club Nights!

As a club we are very unusual in having just the one club night each week, but that is about to change!

From Monday 10 February we will have an additional club night, based at the wonderful new Haven Banks Outdoor Education Centre.



Monday club nights will start a little earlier, meeting at 6:15 to be running by 6:30 and the location opens up new areas to enjoy such as Ide, Exminster and Nadderwater – not to mention being located at the head of the Riverside Valley Park.

Many of you will be familiar with Haven Banks from January's 1st Chance 10K. We'll be meeting in the foyer of the main building and will have access to changing, showers and lockers.

Hope to see you on Monday 10th!

Dave Moulder.

"If one can stick to the training throughout the many long years, then will power is no longer a problem. It's raining? That doesn't matter. I am tired? That's besides the point. It's simply that I just have to." - Emil Zatopek

First Chance 10K “running it” part 1

What’s so difficult about a 10k?

I don’t mean running it. I mean “running it” - running it in the sense of managing it.

Our First Chance 10k has been going for years. We have a well-established route, a willing and experienced band of helpers, an excellent new Race HQ and a treasure trove of past experience. The course is flat, surfaces are good. It’s almost traffic-free.



When the first choice Race Director had to withdraw, back in October, I was prevailed upon to step in and take over the role. “Shouldn’t be too demanding,” I was told. “You’ve got people already assigned to cover the main roles. All you’ll need to do is co-ordinate.”

I didn’t actually believe it would be quite that straightforward, but when your Club needs you...

Indeed it wasn’t that straightforward, but as the date approached, the race sold out and Facebook was alive with messages from runners looking forward to the big day. At times like that, you realise that we’re doing something really worthwhile for the running community.

But –remember the weather in late December / early January? Floods of biblical proportions. Not just once, but again and again.

Those who know the course will be aware that it is close to a river. A tidal river. The morning before the race, just after high tide, it was knee-deep in places. A quick perusal of the nautical almanac confirmed that high tide on race day would be about an hour before kick-off. Might be a problem.

The team gelled as never before. We decided that our priority was to hold the race, but safely. How to achieve that? First, defer the start time so that there was a better chance of any high tide floods receding. Second, have a “Plan B” route ready to use if the original route is not viable. That all sounds simple and easy, in retrospect – but that’s because great ideas do.

- ❖ Race Day, 08:15am. I meet Race Referee Patrick at the point of greatest flood risk. What were we worrying about? We had to go looking for puddles. OK, it’s not high tide, yet, but it certainly looks promising.
- ❖ Race Day, 09:15am. Call from Alek, setting out the course. “The tide is rising. The river has breached its banks.”
- ❖ Race Day, 09:30am. Call from Alek, “Could you send help? The van is stranded in floodwater.”

The team goes into Crisis Management mode. I agree with Patrick that he will go off to monitor water levels, and that we will make a go / no go decision by 10:30.

Chief Marshal John has already alerted his marshals of the "Plan B" possibility. Dave and Richard, looking after the Start / Finish and the Results, liaise with the chip timing people about relocating the start if necessary. I wander round trying to look and sound reassuring.

- ❖ Race Day, 10:30am. Call from Patrick. Water levels are falling, but still dangerous. Could we hold on for a while? We agree to make a final decision at 10:45am.
- ❖ Race Day, 10:45am. Call from Patrick. Still lots of water on the course. The only way to be sure of holding a safe event is to use the Plan B route.

It's great when a plan comes together. Marshals, route markers, chip timing, start line - all that stuff - all sorted, exactly as planned. A rolling briefing session made sure that all the runners were informed of the changes. The overwhelming feedback was, "Brilliant! We were worried that you might have to cancel - it's great that we've still got a race."

- ❖ Race Day, 11:30am. Off they go. Smiling in the face of adversity. What a relief.

The new course worked well. Lots of very positive feedback, lots of good press for SWRR.

Someone once said how much pleasure there is in "emotion recalled in tranquillity". I know what he meant.

Incidentally, we did a pretty good job of offering an "Alternative 10k". The official measurer volunteered to re-measure the course. It was 9.581k. Not bad, eh?

Tony Gale

Update on Karen Cook – Information from Rob Millward



2013 10,000m track championship - Karen ran a time of 40:09.0.

This comfortably bettered the time she set last year in becoming the fastest W 55-59 on the planet at the distance (40:44.05). Sadly, because she ran in the B race and this was not electronically timed in hundredths of a second, the 2013 time was ineligible for submission to World Masters Athletics and so could not be ratified. However, it was acceptable for Run Britain rankings and put her 1st W55-9 in 2013 for that distance.

Not only that, Karen was placed 2nd in W55-9 for 5,000m Run Britain rankings in 2013 with a time of 19:58:53 run on 16 June at Exeter Arena. She was also placed 3rd W55-9 for 3,000m Run Britain rankings in 2013 with a time of 11:33:47.

On the road, in the UK age group rankings in 2013, Karen was placed 4th for 5k, 8th for 10k and 8th for half marathon.

First Chance 10k – “running it” part 2

Sunday 5th January dawned and I was up early if not bright as I'd been working at Devon Doctors until 11pm the evening before. I hadn't checked the website for late information so just before it was time to leave home for the short walk down to the Quay, I had a look. Good news for me as an hour later start would give me more time to wake up!

I was wearing my new trainers which I'd only worn once before. Lots of people were saying the course would be muddy, but I hadn't brought any older trainers with me. Further good news for me at 10.45 as Tony Gale was announcing a route change, so my new trainers wouldn't get muddy after all. I thought I'd missed the announcement, but Tony made sure that was impossible. Never mind hair, I'm not sure how he had a voice left at the end of that as he made the same announcement continuously for well over thirty minutes.

I was pretty sure the new route would be a bit under distance but it didn't matter to me as I'm too old now to get a 10K PB – sorry for the people who were hopeful though. Concerns over the width of the paths for two-way traffic were unfounded

as everybody kept to the left when it mattered. The “new route” worked really well. There was lots of support and clear directions from friendly marshals.

I decided to support the officials by staying for the presentations – even if it meant being late home for dinner after my daughter had been slaving over a hot cooker and husband out taking church services all morning while I'd been having a good time. To my surprise, my name was announced as fastest FV50 so I ended up winning a prize. When the results came out, I saw how close it had been in my category – the 2nd was the lady I'd overtaken in the closing metres and she was two seconds behind and the 3rd was only twenty seconds behind me. Anyway I went home with a useful towel, a bottle of wine and a voucher for Ironbridge Runner. Apparently the bottle of wine was a good choice (!) and a peace offering for being late for Sunday dinner. Fortunately I still had enough energy left to help with taking down the Christmas decorations that afternoon too.

Many thanks to Tony and all the organising and marshalling team.

Kathryn Hough

Were you there? – A look into the past 25th anniversary run



Mike Feighan's Family Holiday

Last summer (August 2013) we went to New England in the north east part of the USA. The photo shows me with my sons outside the running shop in Boylston Street, Boston. Close by there was an explosion during the Boston Marathon, killing 3 people and injuring an estimated 264 others. The running community in Boston organized a robust reaction and created 'Boston Strong'. During my runs by the Charles River in the sultry August heat I would see hundreds of runners with 'Boston strong' T-shirts on.



I entered The Black Bear Half Marathon ahead of time in the UK. It was in the ski mountain resort of Waterville Valley, Near Franconia Notch. It was rather hilly and low-key, I turned up with my club vest on and placed 3rd in 82.11. I was at one point leading but some youngsters got the better of me!

In the mid 1980s and nearly 15 minutes faster I lived for two years in Rhode Island. I used to see John Treacy out running and Geoff Smith in some of the local races back then. They were quite useful, also the tiny Steve Jones. It was strange returning, although some real nice

places to run out in New England I do prefer my hilly Devon Lanes! Albeit very wet at the mo...

If you go running on your holiday then please send an article and some pictures to Kathryn (kathrynshore@btinternet.com) ready for the next issue.

STOP PRESS – Articles wanted

Thanks to all the contributors – Geoff, Tony, Dave, Mike and Dave Pressley's ghost. Without you, we wouldn't have this newsletter. However please can some more people send articles and photos – this can be about anything running related – as long as it's legal, decent and honest! Some potential ideas – favourite routes, unusual or amazing races, book reviews, equipment reviews. One member has even suggested that what would be really useful is a list of toilets around Exeter – pubs, shops, sports centres etc. that are happy to let runners use the facilities. Please e mail any potential articles to kathrynshore@btinternet.com.