



FEETS



Axe Valley Runners – the little running club with the big feet

The mad March 2005 issue:

- 1 Race results
- 3 Chris's coaching tips
- 4 Committee report
- 4 The Grizzly song!
- 5 Bit about fell-running
- 6 Upcoming races

This Lent, why not give up not-writing-for Feets?

... you've still got time to send your articles or suggestions for the April edition of Feets to tom.woodman@dcha.co.uk or (01392) 202614 or 8 Bovemoors Lane, Exeter, EX2 5BR.

Next newsletter is due out on 4 April

WHAT WE'VE ALL BEEN UP TO

Paul Holley's fitness level continues to rise unabated. He won the highly undulating **Sherborne Half Marathon** by four minutes in a superb 1-12-52, and it was done with a negative split (this is not too much leg stretching, but Paul ran the 2nd half of the race quicker than the first). Steve Reynolds also ran very well, he was 134th in 1-41-02. Jinks Jenkins broke the 2 hour barrier with his 1-56-03 finish, and Mark Reynolds completed in 2-01-49.

In the **Fulfords 5** mile road race hosted by Exmouth Harriers, Tom Woodman was 35th in 31-54. Dan Brown put in a sterling performance, he was 55th in 33-13. Geoff Rugg was highly chuffed with his 168th finish position in 40-23, this was his first race for AVR. Debbie Barry was the first AVR lady home, trotting to 168th spot in 42-29. An ebullient Pat Edmunds put in a sterling performance to finish 182nd in 44-58, she was chuffed to bits to find herself 2nd in the over 60 lady category. Due to his hernia, Harry Moore had a bit more of a torrid time, but carried on regardless to be 242nd in 1-02-09, and he was 3rd in the over 70's category.

There was once again a huge turn out of 41 runners for the **February 3.3-mile club handicap**. Dave Mutter worked long hours away at Bradford over the weekend, existing on a vindaloo diet. This tactic worked wonders, as much too his surprise Dave blew away the opposition to win in a new P.B. of 24-33. He was followed by Liam Roberts in 22-29, Alanda Vere was 3rd in 26-28 and Susie Pitt 4th, 27-55. Adrian Banner was 5th in January, and 5th again in February, taking 22-17 and breaking his P.B. by 14 seconds. A new scoring system had now been introduced, ensuring the first 20 runners home all receive bonus points (20 for 1st down to 1 for 20th).

"Jinx Jenkins, started like a steam train, but ran out of puff"

In the February round of the **Exeter Arena 3K winter series**. AVR results were as follows: Race E:- Adie Banner 1st 11.54; Joe Walker (J) 13.25; Christine Sweetapple (J) 13.25; Martin Jenkins 13.58; Sue Levene 14.48; Jamie -Lee Shaw (J) 15.19; Dawn Potter 15.20. Race D:- Steve Potter 12.20. Race C:- Phil Bayliss 1st 10.48; Liam Roberts 2nd 11.14. Race B:- Tom Hilder 11.09.

Race A:- Paul Holley 2nd 9.05; James Beard 10.12.

It was a cold and bright winters morning for the **Dalwood 3 hills challenge** at the end of February. There was less heavy mud than last autumn's event, but the cold Siberian blast did its best to slow runners down, not to mention the many river crossings splurging through what appeared to be sub-zero degrees of flowing liquid iciness. The three mammoth hills also ensured that you were absolutely bushed at the end, but here is where the Dalwood race comes into its own, with a superb range of home cooked goodies, and just the best bacon butties ever on offer, energy levels were soon replaced. Before the start Paul Holley, the previous winner, was a tad nonplussed to espy multiple Grizzly winner Neil Holmes (Erme Valley Harriers) in the line up, but this is the new Paul, and at the start he scorched off like a startled buck rabbit, then held on superbly to win by nearly 3 minutes in 1:05:01, with Neil, who lost sight of Paul for most of the race 2nd in 1:07:55. Malcolm McDonald, who was for once reprieved of his Sunday morning football duties, ran brilliantly to finish 7th of the 105 athletes in 1:16:38, and was closely followed by a very jubilant John Blackledge, 9th in 1:17:24. Whatever Jonathan Day had been drinking before the race, lots of others want a drop of it too, unless it was his new rocket propelled off road shoes that took him to 26th place in 1:22:50, 9 mins and 12 seconds faster than last year, adding another notch to his racing totem pole.

Julia Phillips ran well to be 29th in 1:23:59, and was 3rd lady finisher, but little did she know that Richard Hale had espied her from afar, and was despairingly trying to catch her, but in the end had to settle for 30th spot in 1:24:20. Eleanor Wood

was the first of two runners with the dreaded lergie, but put in a very gutsy performance to be 43rd in 1:28:05. Steve Reynolds headed a merry throng of AVR finishers, he had to battle hard in the final demonic descent down Danes Hill to hold off a fast finishing Colin Pike and was 47th in 1:30:07. Colin started slowly, then overtook Adrian Banner and Graham Vere at the 4 mile point, only to be overtaken by Graham on the flat fields, but his superior climbing saw Colin overtake Graham and then Chris Irving, and finally Geoff Woodward at the Danes Hill pinnacle, and despite busting a gut could not catch Steve, so he was 48th in 1:30:13, with Geoff Woodward 49th, 1:30:19 and Graham Vere 50th, 1:31:10. Chris Irving, complete with bloodied knee was 53rd in 1:31:34.

On the final ascent second lergie sufferer Adrian Banner thought he was well clear of his pursuers, then he looked around to see Dave Mutter trundling ever upwards and closer towards him. This was all the inspiration necessary, as Adrian was determined not to be beaten by the older runner, and he mustered up more energy from the depths of his resources to finish 65th in 1:33:16, with Dave 68th, 1:33:54, 8 minutes faster than last year. Dave Braunton started off with Dave Mutter, and was with him until 5 miles where he dropped back a bit, then at 7 miles was very surprised to be overtaken by Jinxy Jenkins, who had started like a steam train, but ran out of puff on the first hill. Dave however is a much better climber than Jinxy, and overhauled him on the final ascent to finish 78th in 1:39:28, with Jinxy 81st in 1:40:47. Mark Reynolds was highly chuffed with his 91st place in 1:44:22.

In the **associated fun run** Joe Walker ran brilliantly to finish 3rd

out of 41 in 09:20, as did Romy Phillips to be 15th in 10:45.

Harry Moore is unable to attempt multi terrain races until his operation is over, so elected to run the **Babcary 7.5 mile road race**. He successfully completed it in 98:05, winning the over 70 title to boot.

Richard Easton attempted the Exmouth Duathlon, a 600m swim and 5k run. He was 8th out of 100 competitors, which was superb, although he was still a little disappointed as his aim was to finish 5th.

There was also the penultimate race in the **Galmington 4.5K winter race series**. The race is run as a handicap, resulting in young Amy Baker finishing 3rd in a new P.B. of 22:58, followed by Paul Holley 4th, also in a new P.B. of 14:38, and Jinxy Jenkins 5th in 22:00, missing a P.B. by 1 second and a near miss with a car. Paul Holley remains favourite to win the overall series.

Dave Kelf had a go at the 12 mile **Hardy Hash House Harriers Winter Footpath Dream run**, and completed the course in 4 Guinness and 33 seconds.

For anyone not in the Grizzly (and those that are), don't forget that on the Saturday afternoon before the event there is the **Hole-Axe Challenge**. This is a 1.5 mile run from Seaton Hole to the river Axe, and is open to all-comers. There is no entry fee, just meet up with Dave Kelf at Seaton Square (near Byrne Jones) at 3.30 p.m. on the 12th March.

Dave Mutter ■

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.

Coaching tips for the endurance runner – the final part from Chris Levene

This month's tips are concerning pre-race and race day preparations:

Pre-race day

After hard training sessions ice packs or a cold bath will help to reduce any muscular inflammation.

Decide on what you are going to wear for the race several weeks before and try them out on a long run. Don't wear any new items for the race. A bad bit of stitching or a label can cause blisters and bleeding.

Make sure your shoes are comfortable. Blisters are the most common injuries in the marathon. A foot powder in your socks or shoes will help. Try using some in training.

The last thing you want on race day is an upset stomach. This could be caused by what you eat the night before. Try out a meal the night before a long run and if there are no problems stick to the same meal the night before the marathon.

Check the long-range weather forecast during the week before. Make sure you have clothing for all types of weather. April can be bitterly cold or very hot so make sure you have adequate protection. An old jumper and woolly hat that can be thrown away Sun protection cream for arms legs and especially the back of your neck.

Make a checklist of everything you may need well before you leave. How often at races have you been asked, "Have you got any Vaseline"

Try and relax the night before. Go to the cinema or watch a video to take your mind off the race for a few hours.

Lay all your kit out ready for the morning. Pin your number to your vest. It is a good idea to write a contact name and telephone number somewhere on your running number.

Remember to keep drinking water throughout the day

Race day

Eat your normal pre race breakfast. If you're staying overnight in a hotel don't be tempted to have something different.

Allow plenty of time to get to the start. There are always long queues for the toilets. Take some toilet paper with you in case there is none left.

Make sure you have used petroleum jelly to prevent chafing.

As you cross the line just smile and say to yourself "I've done it".

Make sure you keep warm. Wear an old sweatshirt, which you can throw away. Also wear a bin liner as this will help keep any cold wind out.

There is no need to warm up unless you plan to run fast from the start, there will be plenty of time to do this, as the start is very slow. Save all the energy for the actual run; then relax and soak up the atmosphere created by so many runners.

20-30mins before the start drink at least one glass of water for final hydration.

When the race has started

When the gun goes for the start it will be some time before you start to move so just relax yourself with

some deep breaths and say to yourself I am about to have my greatest run.

Try to get into your own rhythm as soon as possible but don't get tempted by other runners to run faster than you would have in training. A pace that is too fast early on can mean that you are "hitting the wall" earlier than you might have done. Instead pick up speed in the latter stages when you are confident of finishing.

Make use of the water stations (at least every other). If you want to use the sponges use them to dampen your face and head. Try not to soak your vest as this may become uncomfortable. Avoid sponging your legs as this could cause cramp later in the race especially if the temperature is cool.

Run the shortest distance you can. Running the inside of a corner will mean you run less steps and over the full race will save minutes on your final time

If during the race there is a strong headwind, run behind someone of a similar pace and who is larger than you to help break the air stream.

When you reach the last kilometre focus on the finish line, keeping your pace the same. A final sprint to the line could cause an injury.

As you cross the line just smile and say to yourself "I've done it".

Chris Levene ■

The darkest hours come just before the dawn. So if you're going to steal your neighbour's milk and newspaper, that's the time to do it.

Bits from the 1 February committee meeting

Present: Paul Morgan (Chairman), Pat Edmunds, Dave Kelf, Dave Mutter, Sue Levene, Pete Biggs.

Before the meeting started the committee heard from Sue Pengelly of Sri Lanka Tsunami appeal about how she was raising funds to assist victims of the Tsunami in Sri Lanka. The funds were distributed by Exodus travel through their agents in Sri Lanka to causes that the agents considered to be appropriate. After Mrs Pengelly had left the committee voted to donate £10k to the cause.

Mid-summer run- entry forms are now available

Membership – the club has 78 adult and 16 junior members

Seaton half-marathon - £200 donated to town millennium fund

Colyton 10k - main run: 303 entrants with 204 finishers. £2,700 given to Children in Need

Coaching courses - all coaching courses in hand for Liz Elliott, Dawn Potter and Sue Levene

Club kit - PM to pursue all-weather track-suit for club members. All committee members to help investigate possibilities and report back on 8 February.

Trophies for Grizzly - from trophies made we have a small trophy spare. Agreed to use this trophy for the first 'super vet' runner finishing.

Grizzly race secretary - Suzie Pitt has volunteered to take on the role of race secretary from Pete Biggs.

National Cross Country Championship - Liam, Tom and James have been selected for to run for Devon in the National Cross Country Championship in Nottingham. It was agreed to reimburse runners their costs

Chris Levene
Club places in London Marathon

Discussed whether any restrictions should be placed on people who have won the club place in previous years being given the chance to win again. Agreed that no restrictions should be made and that all who had entered and been unsuccessful should have the same chance to win the club places.

Seaton half marathon - SC outlined the proposed course. Concern was expressed at the fact that with the course direction through Colyford and Axmouth being the opposite to that previously run the lead car would be on the wrong side of the road.

Awards for school cross country - agreed to provide medals for Axminster primary school cross country as a one-off event.

Grizzly - an awful lot discussed... ■

It's the 2005 Grizzly song...! *By the Bard of Beer*

The Clean, Clean Grass of Home (*sung to the tune of the Green, Green Grass of Home*):

The old home town looks the same as I read up how to train

To run the **Grizzly** with my new clean pair of Saucony.

Down the road I look and there's the **Grizzly**,
flat trails of gold , no talk of mis'ry,
It's good to touch the clean, clean grass of home.

Yes, they'll all come to meet me, arms reaching,
smiling sweetly,
It's good to touch the clean, clean grass of home.

The high old cliffs are not standing and the weather's cool and dry.

And there's that sandy Branscombe beach that I used to play on.

Down Mare Lane I run to follow the **Grizzly**,
flat trails of gold , no talk of mis'ry,
It's good to touch the clean, clean grass of home.

The black mud fields are now empty and the streams are running dry

And there's a door on the Way that opens just to step through.

Through the Wall I fade to win the **Grizzly**,
flat trails of gold , no talk of mis'ry,
It's good to touch the clean, clean grass of home.

Yes, they'll all come to meet me, arms reaching,
smiling sweetly,
It's good to touch the clean, clean grass of home.

(spoken)

Then I awake and look around me, at four muddy fields that surround me

And yes, I realise that I was only dreaming.

For there's a **Grizzly** and there's a first aid marshall-
With broken heart we'll walk to Seaton
Again to touch the clean, clean grass of home.

Yet, they'll all come to meet me, arms reaching,
smiling sweetly,
As they lay me on - the clean, clean grass of home.

Richard Askwith on fell running *quoted from The Observer*

I swore I would never do this again. One always does; but never have I made such a vow with such fervour. After last year's race, I was still limping weeks later, still struggling to keep food down, still imagining splinters of bone in my bruised ankles. I even wrote it down, for the avoidance of doubt: 'I will never, ever, do that again.'

Yet here I am, 12 months older, scrambling up a slimy scree slope steeper than a London Underground escalator, icy mist clinging to my sweat-sodden vest, feverishly studying my compass as the last recognisable landmark sinks into the gloom behind - and trying to ignore the fact that, the harder I thrust myself upward, the faster the stones crumble and slide beneath me. The heap of sharp-edged rocks stretches upwards for thousands of feet, much of it smothered in storm cloud. Though my legs are already limp, I know that, compared with the bone-threatening descent to come, I'm still on the easy bit.

This is the annual ordeal known as the Ben Nevis race: one of the cruellest manifestations of the cruel and obscure sport known as fell running. The obscurity is readily explained: fell running - that is, running on mountains - is imprudent to the point of idiocy. The Ben Nevis race, for example, not only requires you to climb and descend - at speed - the 4,406ft peak of Britain's biggest mountain. It requires you to do so on rough, steep, largely trackless terrain that it's hard even to walk on safely.

Nor are the hazards merely underfoot. Conditions at the top of a mountain such as the Ben can turn Arctic in an instant and often do, inflicting life-threatening hypothermia and disorientation on

exhausted runners. Previous races have seen people made temporarily blind by the cold, or helicoptered off in dozens by the mountain rescue; in 1957, a runner got lost and died. I know of four other such deaths in fell races in the past 25 years alone. These events test not just athleticism but survival skills.

There are probably fewer than 5,000 people in Britain who participate to any degree in fell running. Perhaps 2,000 of these do so regularly and maybe 200 do so well enough to contend for championships and prizes. Most of us are just recreational runners, many (like me) long past our peak; but the elite merit comparison to the best track and road runners in the world. There is not, however, a full-time athlete among them. This is sport as it used to be, fitted in around day jobs.

Between us we fill the fields of more than 400 formal races a year, from 10-minute sprints to all-day epics of 50 miles or more, in Cumbria,, and Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Wales and Scotland. Many of us spend less time racing than we do running informally in the mountains.

There is great camaraderie in our little world and much ignorance about us among those outside it. Most Britons have never heard of our sport. Those who have generally find the idea baffling. How, they wonder, can rational people expose themselves to so much struggle and risk? Answer: because it's fun. Sprinting down steep, rough slopes is neither easy nor sensible. But when you get it right, the buzz is addictive. The ability to cover long distances on trackless hills at speed, irrespective of weather, confers on

you a great freedom. The degree of absorption required is intense: you must focus utterly on your environment, near and far, or face catastrophe. In so doing, you lose yourself; and, later, rediscover yourself refreshed.

Charges that fell running is 'mad' are as likely as not to emanate from people who consider it normal to run round in circles on a track, or to run every day on a treadmill in a gym, sustained only by rivalry, narcissism or focus on the conquest of pain. Fell running is relaxed - and sane - by comparison, because it looks outwards.

Yet I can't honestly pretend that there isn't any lunacy involved in fell running. Turning at the top of the Ben and flinging myself back down its wet slopes, I repeat to myself the sport's holiest mantra: 'Brakes off, brain off.' Coming down a rough mountainside can do you all sorts of damage if you try to stay in control. Go for it, and you have a fighting chance of getting down in one piece, with the added bonus of a respectable time.

Perhaps we are mad: masochistic obsessives who have lost sight of ordinary human priorities. Yet my fellow fell runners have always struck me as peculiarly sane and balanced, especially compared with the over-competitive elites of track and road.

This strikes me again when, after 2hr, 14min and 1sec, I finally shuffle across the Ben Nevis finishing line. I'm in 170th place (out of 364) and 44 minutes behind the winner: to call me an also-ran would be flattery. None the less, I'm stuffed. It's all I can do to veer out of the other runners' way before flinging myself to the ground, moaning.

But within minutes the pain is swept away by a surge of euphoria: it's over; I'm still in one piece; I've done it. All around me, similar waves of euphoria are breaking over a whole field full of pale, bloodied, bedraggled

runners. Never mind who's won: we have all beaten the mountain, and ourselves. ■

Richard Askwith is the author of Feet in the Clouds: a study of fell-running and obsession (Aurum

Press, £16.99), which was short-listed for the 2004 William Hill Sports Book award (and is very good)

Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read...

Some newsy bits

- congratulations to James Beard who won the Axe Valley Runners Award for Achievement in Cross Country Running at the Colyton Grammar School Speech Day back in December
- we are thinking about giving a new award at the December dinner to recognise the runner who enters the most events in the year – so start keeping a record of the races you are running!
- the next handicap will be on Monday 21st March as the first Monday clashes with the 3K series at Exeter and the next Monday is the one immediately after the Grizzly. The May handicap will be on the 11th then get back to the normal first-Mondays
- the AGM will on Monday 13th June. This has been booked for the Harbour Inn Axmouth in their skittle alley, and they assured us that there will be no work going on in the alley as it was last year.

Upcoming races

Date	Race	Where?	How far?	Notes
13 March	The Grizzly...	Here, there and everywhere	Yes	
20 March	March Hare	Plympton	10k	
27 March	Teignbridge 10	Kinsteignton	10 miles	
28 March	Bampton to Tiverton	Bampton. And Tiverton.	7 miles and a bit	Monday
28 March	Easter Bunny 10k	Yeovilton	10k	Monday
3 April	Five tors moorland run	Liskeard	11 miles	Off-road
3 April	Exe to Axe – individuals and relay	Exmouth & Axmouth, of course	20 miles	Off-road
3 April	Taunton marathon and half-marathon	Taunton	26 /13 miles	
10 April	Primrose Run	Klinsbridge	10 miles	
24 April	Arlington Court Canter	Barnstaple	10k	Off-road
1 May	Great West Run	Exeter	13.1 miles	
1 May	Saltash half-marathon	Saltash, nr Plymouth	13.1 miles	