

FEETS

EDITORIAL

Some waffle from your youngest sub-editor (Garry).

Welcome to the second issue of the latest incarnation of Feets. (I was going to say "the latest Feets incarnation" but that could lead to all sorts of bad jokes about standing in milk, at least among those of you of a certain age!) Due to impending GCSEs, our editor-in-chief Alex is otherwise engaged so I have stepped into the breach to compile this edition of fascination, frivolity and fun.

Any of the editors (Alex, Dennis and me) would welcome feedback on Feets as well as any contributions you have.

CLUB NEWS

AGM.

The AGM will be on Monday 9th June at the Harbour, Axmouth. You will receive official notification from Liz in due course but should let her know if you have any matters you wish to raise.

Woodland Relays.

The first of 2008's Woodland Relays will be on Monday 19th May at Trinity Hill woods near Axminster. Please let Bernard or Eleanor know if you can make it and haven't already told them.

Quantocks Awayday.

There will be a club run followed by picnic in the Quantocks over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend if there's sufficient interest. Contact Garry for details.

Handicap.

Following suggestions from some members the handicap will now be scored on the **best ten** results from the year. So you can now miss a couple due to illness, holiday or just bad runs without affecting your score.

I've modded the handicap software to speed up data entry so there should be significantly less delay in announcing results on the night.

Some of you will remember that we had certificates a couple of times in the past which faded away to obscurity. I've re-implemented these which will be awarded on the night. You will receive a certificate every time you go under another minute, and the certificates change colour every minute or two, depending upon how old you are! Well, obviously they don't really - what I really mean is that sub-20 senior

runs and sub-10 junior will be awarded a red certificate, sub-21 & sub-22 seniors and sub-11 juniors get orange and so on. Sub-33 & slower seniors, and sub-17 & slower juniors get white certificates.

	<u>Senior</u>	<u>Junior</u>
Red	20	10
Orange	22	11
Pink	24	12
Green	26	13
Blue	28	14
Yellow	30	15
Vellum	32	16
White	33+	17+

Awards will be made relative to marks rather than all-time PBs so those of use who have little or no chance of achieving our speed of yesteryear can still aspire to a collection of coloured card for gazing at in our dotage!

Standings after April.

	<u>Junior</u>		<u>Senior</u>
70	Alex Hunt	72	Dave Mutter
69	Joe Rogers	62	Bernard Fry
59	Rosie Baker	59	Phil Bayliss
56	Jake Richards	50	Luke Reed
55	Alex Barry	49	Rebecca Crees
51	Emma Kiernen	48	Neil Vincent
51	Samuel White	46	Alison Gould
43	Ellis Bee	42	Alan Brown
40	Sammy Barry	39	Steve Reynolds
37	Tiffany Hurford	37	Andy Sayers
36	Hannah Rice	36	Sue Campbell
33	Hannah Bradley	33	Paul Johns
29	Lauren Richards	32	Graham Vere
27	Natalie Bishop	28	Susie Pitt
26	Emily Reeve	25	Julian Davis
21	Will Rosindell	24	Ian Walker
19	Adam Kana-ah	22	Ian Apps
18	Tom Rice	21	Liam Roberts
17	Romy Phillips	21	Roger Bramley
14	Joe Blackledge	20	Peter Hughes
12	Abby Richards	18	Michael Legg
8	Daniel Clapp	17	Mark Hilder
8	Jessie Davies	15	Chris Keefe
8	Zoe Sing	15	Dennis Elliott
6	Alfie Phillips	15	Garry Perratt
5	Daniel French	13	Steve White
2	Matt Ellis	12	Eleanor Wood
1	Nathan Apps	11	Dave Kelf
		9	Gary Phillips
5	Josh Rosendell	9	Paul Tolchard
5	Justin Holt	9	Zoe Widger
3	Richard Hale	7	Pat Edmunds
3	Robbie Holt	7	Sara Feldman
1	Amelia Trowbridge	6	Daniel Kiernan
1	Harry Moore	6	Liz Elliott

Website.

Rick Wood is to be congratulated for the superbly-comprehensive race diary which he has compiled for our website and, indeed, continues to update regularly. 'Tis a real tour de force.

Following a comment that the site is generally a bit cluttered (with which I agree to a certain extent) I would appreciate some suggestions as to how things could be improved. As a long-term user of the Net (nearly 18 years now!), not to mention being the site's designer, it's difficult for me to know how less Web-savvy users find it.

Club championship.

We held a club championship series once in the dim and distant past, which resulted in Dan Savage being the first ever recipient of the President's Shield, but it died a death (the championship, not the shield). Talking of Dan, he appears to be running again, having completed the Easter Bunny 10K in 36:06. But I digress ...

... continued up there ↗

The new East Devon Community Race Series, details of which I have finally put on our website, will be used as the AVR Club Championships for this year with awards being made at the Christmas dinner. Runners receive points based upon their time, age and gender with the best four scores from the six races counting towards the champs. Grading according to age and gender allows all runners to be considered together rather than in separate age categories, and has the additional benefit of showing just how good many older runners are.

The six races are all organised by village communities, albeit supported to a greater or lesser extent by AVR: Axmouth Challenge (Jan), Dalwood Three Hills Challenge (Feb), Umborne Ug (May), Talaton Trotter (Jun), Musbury Castle Challenge (Sep) and a new ten-mile off-roader, the Yarcombe Yomp (Nov). The full series results to date are on our website with the club champs standings as below ... look at the old boys go!

Pos	Name	Cat	Total	Axmouth	Dalwood	Umborne
1	Phil Bayliss	M55	437.9	137.8	145.0	155.1
2	Bernard Fry	M50	405.4	121.4	135.4	148.6
3	Richard Hale	M55	386.1	122.0	129.4	134.7
4	Andrew Sayers	M60	364.8	116.8	117.8	130.2
5	Sue Campbell	F	334.2	106.3	114.6	113.3
6	Dave Mutter	M55	328.2	102.0	111.4	114.8
7	Julian Davies	M	274.9	86.2	95.4	93.3
8	Eleanor Wood	F50	249.8	121.6	128.2	
9	Neil Vincent	M	240.0	111.9	128.1	
10	Luke Reed	M	233.5	114.7	118.8	
11	Ian Apps	M	226.0	112.9	113.1	
12	Paul Johns	M	216.0	102.1		113.9
13	Daniel Kiernan	M	213.9	101.2	112.7	
14	Steve Reynolds	M40	208.4	103.1		105.3
15	Graham Vere	M50	206.5	96.8	109.7	
16	Peter Hughes	M50	198.9	94.6	104.3	
17	Jonathan Day	M	191.4	99.6		91.8
18	Garry Perratt	M40	150.3			150.3
19	Harry Moore	M75	146.4	77.7		68.7
20	Justin Holt	M15	131.8			131.8
21	Robbie Holt	M15	131.4			131.4
22	Thomas Elliott	M	126.7		126.7	
23	Chris Keeffe	M17	126.4			126.4
24	Chris Irving	M55	126.3			126.3
25	Dominic Schneiders	M45	124.4		124.4	
26	Emma Kiernan	F15	120.8			120.8
27	Chris Keefe	M17	118.3		118.3	
28	Julia Phillips	F40	117.4	117.4		
29	Robert Hutching	M	115.5		115.5	
30	Gary Phillips	M40	112.9	112.9		
31	Colin Pike	M40	110.1			110.1
32	Geoff Woodward	M40	107.3	107.3		
33	Roger Bramley	M40	106.9	106.9		
34	Stephen White	M40	101.2	101.2		
35	Ian Walker	M	99.5	99.5		
36	Rebecca Creese	F	99.0			99.0
37	Joseph Rogers	M15	97.8			97.8
38	Liz Elliott	F55	94.9	94.9		
39	Sara Feldman	F40	92.4		92.4	
40	Debbie Barry	F40	85.2			85.2
41	Alison Gould	F40	84.8	84.8		

MY FAVOURITE RUNNING BIT IN A FILM

From “The Two Towers” (Mark Hilder).

My Favourite Running Bit in a Film has got to be half-way through Lord of the Rings, when the 3 characters Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, perform what is in effect an extreme-ultra. Hours before, the two hobbits Merry and Pippin, have been kidnapped by a band of orcs and the three heroes have to chase them across stony ridges, steep valleys and grassy plains to try to rescue the hobbits before they're delivered into the hands of the Dark Lord.

Now, Lord of the Rings may not have been your sort of film, but as a runner this is a serious multi-terrain course involving navigating in the dark and trying to keep pace with an elf.

Also, these aren't your common or garden standard orcs that wilt in the sunshine and have to go for a little lie down, but a new improved model developed by the evil wizard Saruman. Orcs may not be built for speed-work but they more than make up for that with incredible endurance.

For three days and three nights they chase the orcs, only stopping and resting briefly before running on again. In all they run over 24 leagues. I'm not sure how far a league is but it's got to be difficult in a pair of elven tights. [A league is three miles – ed.]

Spare a thought for the orcs too. Even though they're obviously evil, murderous and nasty, from a runner's point of view they have to cover huge distances wearing iron-clad boots and heavy body armour. No lycra and New Balance trainers for them. Respect!

On the whole, I think an orc would get a reasonable time over the Grizzly course. Although he may lose his iron-clad boots in one of the bogs, he could use his long, loping stride to great effect. Also, the orcs' general habit of thrusting, jostling and cursing may come in useful. Of course, he would have to be dissuaded from chopping the heads off his fellow competitors.

After their epic run, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli discover that the orcs have been killed by a band of horsemen. Luckily the two hobbits survive to fight another day. The 3 heroes decide to replenish their carbs with a slap-up meal of elven wafers. Do they sell those in the health food shop?

TRIVIA

Have you ever wondered why so many of the place names around here end in “hayne”? No, I didn't think so! However, I'm still going to tell you that they're derived from the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) word *hagen* meaning enclosure (whence also *hedge*, being the means of enclosure). Most of them are preceded with medieval personal names, indicating their date of enclosure. Incidentally, the suffix “ton” is derived from the Old English word *tūn* meaning farmstead.

RACE REPORT

The Bungay Black Dog Half Marathon (Dave K).

Little did I expect to go to Suffolk in April and run in the snow !

The Black Dog event is long established and local to where I hale from, but I had never run it and thought I should remedy that.

I had contemplated doing the full marathon but thankfully, in the event, decided to go for the half as it was a long time - about three years, since I had done a half and in any case I didn't feel strong enough to face a full marathon. I was also interested to see if I could still “race” a half whereas I know that I can only jog around the marathon distance.

Amazingly I was not the only AVRer there and on arrival it was perfectly clear that the elements were going to be a real part of the challenge - just above freezing, snow and a strong easterly wind. Ideal stuff for me I have to admit !.

The day after I wrote:

Yesterday my body and I ran together just like the old times - measured, assured, compact as good prose and fluid as a steady breeze, the old confidence oozing from a quiet centre deep within. After four miles I knew I was doing eight miles an hour but I didn't know whether I could sustain that pace. My finishing time was just inside 1-40, so I found out that I had remained steady throughout the run - but the last four miles were far harder than the first four. I never looked back and after the first few miles I wasn't overtaken.

I spoke meaningful thoughts to runners who were not able to understand them and shared meaningful silences with those who knew. I felt the whip of the cold wind, the driving snow both refreshed and beat my whole body with its severity. I was joyful and uplifted. I had “the best smile of the day” according to one spectator. Towards the end I longed for it to stop and I longed for it to last forever. It was pure, so pure. I gave thanks. The celebration with friends at the finish made it all worthwhile and I was soon whisked off for tea and cake with the relatives in Beccles.

A race to remember for all the right reasons - for a satisfying performance in unexpectedly challenging conditions and the renewal of my membership of the great family of runners. It was all so friendly I might almost have been in Devon!

TRAINING

Psychological racing tricks (Garry)

Following on from the last issue's piece on my physical rules of racing, this article covers various psychological tricks which help me when racing. As before, I offer these on the understanding that I am not a coach but hope they will help you.

It hurts them as much as it hurts you. That runner who's been with you for the whole race making it seem so easy while you're really struggling is very likely struggling as much as you are. They might even be hanging on for dear life, cursing you for looking so good! You have knowledge that they don't possess, knowing that you're suffering as much as each other. Knowledge is power - use it wisely.

I can do this. Remember the physical rule about running on tough terrain? Add the right mindset and it gets easier - "I can do this".

I am lucky to be doing this. Feeling tired? Consider that many (or even most) people couldn't do what you are doing. You're lucky and don't forget it!

It just isn't my day. Having a bad run? We all do ... even me ;-). It happens, however well we've prepared, so accept it. In such circumstances I consider whether I want to have mediocre runs all the time, or a mixture of good and bad. Give me the latter anytime.

Don't fear discomfort. This one's complicated, and dangerous if taken too far. (A friend of a friend pushed himself to temporary kidney failure in a 24-hour challenge by forcing himself to complete the course.) I tend to refer to it as "embrace the pain" but at the fundamental level it's as simple as one of the quotes on our website - "pain is inevitable, suffering is optional".

CONDITIONING

A Question of Balance (Evergreen Phil).

Without good balance we cannot be well co-ordinated. Steve Backley, three-times Olympic medal winner in the javelin, says that balance is the basis of all athletic activity. He recommends that first thing in the morning, as soon as we get out of bed, we should stand on one leg for 90 seconds. Then we should stand on the other leg for the same amount of time.

After a few days' practice, when you have stopped wobbling and can remain steady, you should try keeping your arms by your side. Again, after a few more days when you can stand firm, try raising one leg out in front of you [I suggest not the one that you're standing on! - ed.], then try shutting your eyes, and so on. Through this practice you should be able to develop a stronger sense of balance enabling us to run in a more controlled way, and so faster. Try it!

SOME QUICK QUESTIONS

Dennis asked them of Evergreen Phil who replied thus:

Why do you run? I used to know the answer to this one but I now run because its part of my life. My favourite time to run is first thing in the morning, while it is peaceful. I try to get out before the dog walkers unleash their hounds to howl, snarl and chase me to the cries of, Its all right he wont hurt you. I am never sure if the owners arent shouting to their dogs about me. The evening is also a good time to run, so is before lunch ... and lots of other times too. So I do cover between 30 to 40 miles a week – which brings me to nutrition.

Food - I am fairly careful about what I eat; it usually has to be ladled into a large bowl with enough for seconds. As I am also passionate about my allotment, I do eat plenty of vegetables. At a recent coaching conference, we were told to forget about eating just 4-5 portions of fruit and vegetables. Instead, they said, we should be eating 7-11 portions daily.

Training Tips - A warm-up of dynamic stretches and gentle movements of all the joints in the body is a good routine for me before running. Oh, and whatever you do, avoid running in the rain its wet, soggy and usually cold. [Wuss! - ed.]

Favourite Race - This has to be the Grizzly. I had a good idea of the fun and friendliness having marshalled for many years, but it was hugely enjoyable, and probably my greatest achievement, to run it last year with my two sons.

Toughest Race - The Charmouth Challenge is, I believe, the toughest race around. Within about 8 miles there are mountainous climbs up and down, including the peak of Golden Cap. As it is held in July, on what is usually a hot steamy and sunny afternoon, the challenge seems even tougher. Nevertheless, the views are superb and there is the school fete afterwards with plenty of yummy cakes to help overcome the exhaustion.

Ambition - Another lifetime would be needed to achieve this but I would love to compete in and complete an Ironman, like Steve White. The race encompasses three endurance events of a 2.4 mile (4K) swim, followed by a 112 mile (180K) bike ride, and ending with a 26.2 mile (42K) marathon run. I would then have the Ironman logo tattooed in full colour somewhere indiscreet. Anyway, my training has started - the stabilisers are off my bike and I'm letting down my arm bands ... do join me.

FREE TO A GOOD HOME

One pair each of black lycra shorts and black-with-a-bit-of-colour cycling shorts. Size as fits Garry who finds them rather constrictive!

FUN, FUN, FUN!

Caption competition.

The last competition attracted the huge response of three entries from which the sophisticated system that is your editors' dubious collective sense of humour selected Jonathan's submission as the winner:

I thought the Seaton police sergeant was supposed to seize and destroy banned substances, not eat them.

(Actually, he didn't exactly say that cos his spelling was a bit wobbly ;-)

For your next challenge, what witty caption can you suggest for the picture below of DaveK during the unGrizzly?

Funny Running?

Two men are walking through the woods when they encounter an old, mean grizzly bear. A grizzled grizzly grizzly, no less.

Said bear takes one look at them, emits a mighty roar and starts lumbering in their direction.

Upon seeing this, one man turns and is about to leg it when he notices that the other chap has sat down and is calmly putting on his trainers.

“What on earth are you doing?” asks the first man, “you can't outrun a bear!”

“I don't have to,” replies the second, “I only have to outrun you!”

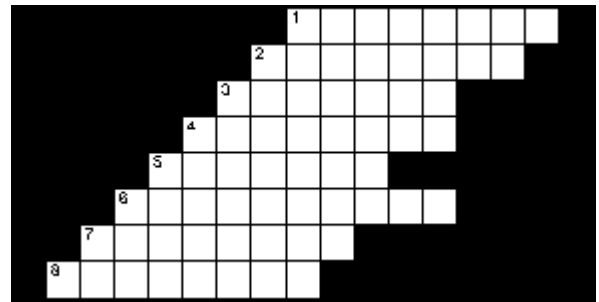
Where's that club?

Here's a little something to get your grey cells going. (Some of you may remember it from one of my newsletters of many moons ago.)

The clues are the first parts of club names and the answers are the last words of the names which should be inserted in the grid below across from the relevant number. For example, for "1. Axe Valley" you would insert "Runners" as 1 Across.

Once you have completed the grid, 1 Down will be the last part of a club for which you need to work out the first part (location). Except that there's a twist and 1 Down's letters will not be in the right order so you'll need to unscramble them.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Teignbridge | 5. Avon Valley |
| 2. Dorset | 6. South Molton |
| 3. Cheddar Valley | 7. Lytchett Manor |
| 4. Exmouth | 8. Dawlish |



HEALTH & NUTRITION

How to get enough iron and avoid anemia (Liz)

Iron deficiency is a common problem for many athletes. Studies have routinely found that athletes, especially female athletes, are often iron-deficient or anemic. Iron is essential for athletic performance. One of its major functions is to carry oxygen to and carbon dioxide away from all the cells in your body. The brain also relies on oxygen transport and without adequate iron you will find it hard to concentrate and feel tired and irritable. Iron is also needed to maintain a healthy immune system. If you don't have enough iron you may be prone to more frequent infections.

Athletes and Iron Deficiency

A combination of the following factors place athletes at risk of iron deficiency:

- 1 Inadequate supply of dietary iron. Athletes who avoid red meat have difficulty meeting the body's iron needs.
- 2 Increased demands for iron. Hard training stimulates an increase in red blood cell and blood vessel production, and increases the demand for iron. (Iron turnover is highest for endurance athletes training at high intensity).
- 3 High iron loss. Blood loss through injury, or menstruation. In endurance athletes, 'foot strike' damage to red blood cells in the feet due to running on hard surfaces with poor quality shoes leads to iron loss.
- 4 Finally, because iron is lost in sweat, heavy sweating leads to increased risk of deficiency.

Symptoms

The symptoms of iron deficiency include loss of endurance, chronic fatigue, high exercise heart rate, low power, frequent injury, recurring illness, and loss of interest in exercise and irritability. Other symptoms include poor appetite, and increased incidence and duration of colds and infections. Many of these symptoms are also common to over-training, so misdiagnosis is common. The only sure way to diagnose a deficiency is a blood test to determine iron status. If you experience any of the symptoms above, and you are in one of the higher risk categories, you should consider a visit to your GP for a blood test.

If that confirms iron deficiency you should increase in your dietary iron intake. If your deficiency is severe, you may need supplements. Never use iron supplements unless under the supervision of your doctor, as too much iron can cause irreversible damage and a higher risk of cancer and heart disease.

Good Sources of Iron

The recommended daily allowance for women and teenagers is 15 milligrams per day. Men should

consume 10 mg. Endurance athletes may need slightly more. You can get iron from both animal and plant foods, but the iron in animal sources has an absorption rate of about 15 percent, compared to about 5 percent for plants. So the more effective way to increase iron status is by eating animal products such as lean red meat, poultry or fish or liver. You can also increase the amount of iron in foods you eat by cooking with cast iron saucepans (especially if cooking acidic foods).

Iron absorption from any foods, whether plant or animal, is decreased if they are accompanied at meals by caffeine. Calcium and zinc also reduce the ability of the body to absorb iron. However adding fruit (citrus in particular) to meals enhances iron absorption as Vitamin C is known to increase iron uptake from the gut. The best sources of iron in the diet include lean red meat, iron-fortified breakfast cereals, nuts and legumes.

JUNIOR NEWS (DEBBIE)

There is light at the end of the tunnel - our waiting list "situation" maybe coming to end later this year. Firstly, Phil Bayliss is booked in to do his Level 2 Coaching Course in July which means he should be qualified by Sep/Oct, and Paul Johns has come forward "confessing" that he is also a Level 2 Coach. This will be fantastic and means that we could see a huge junior membership by the end of the year thanks to Phil and Paul.

The lovely light evenings have seen us replacing our winter Circuit Training Sessions with Track Sessions at Axminster. The April session was taken by Phil Bayliss and Chris Keeffe with several drills and races, which the juniors enjoyed, and finished with a heavy downpour! We have two more sessions booked in for June and July (there weren't enough Mondays in May).

During March and April there were various races which juniors took part in, the most gruelling being the Grizzly cub, where Robbie and Justin Holt did us proud coming in 3rd and 4th, and ex-junior Chris Keeffe was 5th, which was fantastic.

The final event of the Exeter 3K Winter Series saw several AVR Juniors taking category awards; Jake Richards 1st U13M, Emma Kiernan 1st U17F, Abby Richards 2nd U17F, Justin Holt 2nd U17M, Zoe Sing 2nd U13F, Dan Clapp 3rd U15M, Robbie Holt 3rd U17M, and Coach Julia Philips 3rd FV40, setting a wonderful example to the juniors.

Two juniors took part in the Exeter Harriers Great Open event at Exeter Arena. Alex Hunt did very well to finish 2nd in U15M 800m, 2nd in the U15M 400m and 3rd in the U15M 200m. Dan Clapp found himself in the U17 age group (due to the strange age qualifying rules) and did really well to come 2nd in the 3000m.

March's handicap was won by Joe Rogers and April's by Tiffany Moore.

UPCOMING RACES

This is a selection of local(ish) races over the next couple of months which tend to attract a number of AVRs for reasons other than that they're nearby, i.e. they're worth doing! More details in the race diary on our website.

1 st June	Crewkerne 9	Road race but along nice lanes.
7 th June	Talaton Trotter	6½m, much off-road, lovely course.
7 th June (eve)	Killerton Kanter	6m, nice fairly hilly course, pleasant venue with good cafe, nice t-shirts according to Eleanor!
17 th June	Forde Abbey	6m, mostly off-road, lovely course, double river crossing near the end!
5 th July	Charmouth Challenge	8m, very hilly but some great views.
6 th July	Race For Life, Killerton	5K, women only.
12 th July	Maiden Castle Loop	6½m, nice course nearly all off-road, good post-race facilities.

WONDERS OF THE WEB

MapMyRun (Dennis).

To those of you who want to know how far you have run, share a running route with others, build a running diary and pick up all sorts of tips from fellow runners then access www.mapmyrun.com.

To get going click on the home page left box and type in your home town and postcode. The map will magically find your destination which you can fine tune with the use of the mouse. It is then simply a case of following the course you have run on the map clicking at any turn or change of direction. The distance covered is displayed and is far more accurate than some 'watch type' GPS systems which can lose coverage and subsequently take short cuts.

If you want you can name a run and save it for others. Honiton RC has done this and there are a number of routes to follow. You can search the runs area of the site if you are in a new town or just visiting somewhere and you fancy a trot.

There are all sorts of other goodies which are self explanatory so give it a go and lets see if we can build up a series of AVR runs for fellow club members and visitors alike.

A few tips (Garry).

You might need to add UK to the starting location in order to avoid ending up in America! Also county for places like Seaton (there are at least four in the UK).

You can get more map on the screen by clicking on "view full screen" and hiding the left panel.

The default view is a map which is fine for streets but not so good for off-road since footpaths aren't marked. But the satellite or hybrid views work well for these.

I personally find the map auto-recentre to be a pain so turn it off. You can click and drag the map instead

A SHORT HISTORY OF MEDICINE

I have an earache ...

- 2000 BC Eat this root.
- 1000 AD That root is heathen; say this prayer.
- 1850 AD That prayer is superstition; drink this potion.
- 1940 AD That potion is snake oil; swallow this pill.
- 1985 AD That pill is ineffective; take this antibiotic.
- 2000 A.D. That antibiotic is artificial; eat this root.

WACKY RACES

The Oxenhope Straw Race (Garry).

East Devon has June's Midsummer Dream Pub Run - 18 miles, five pubs and a cream tea. A month later, the Pennines have the Oxenhope Straw Race - 2.5 miles, five pubs and a bale of straw. Yep, pairs of runners only have to run a couple of miles but five pints are more-or-less mandatory. Since competitors tend not to be of four-legged persuasion, they only have to carry the straw rather than eat it! (No clever comments about two runners actually having four legs, please!)

Last year's winning time was 18 minutes. How quickly can you run 2.5 miles, much of it uphill, half-carrying a bale of straw and with five down-downs to boot?!

Teams have raised in excess of 300K sponsorship over the years. Details are at www.strawrace.co.uk.

TAILPIECE

Your body will argue that there is no justifiable reason to continue. Your only recourse is to call on your spirit, which fortunately functions independently of logic.

Tim Noakes, 'The Lore of Running'.