

History of Tring Running Club

A Bird, a Bridge and a Zebra

"The badge of all our tribe" The Merchant of Venice

Every club wants a visual identity that will stand out from the crowd. In this regard, Tring Running Club has a fine tradition of being different.

The club's first emblem

One of the first actions after the club's formation was to invite thoughts on a Tring Jogging Club badge. The details are now lost in the mists of time but the first newsletter reported *"After a series of somewhat bizarre votes, we settled on the Kingfisher. Nevertheless, the Kingfisher is no stranger to Tring as those who visit the reservoirs will concur."*

In 1982 the front page of the newsletter was adorned with an elegant drawing of the kingfisher enclosed within a circle. Rumour has it that life member, Alan Williams, originated the kingfisher motif.



In the same newsletter, David Richardson contributed an article *"Jogging – Do it with a Bird"*. David was clearly an avid ornithologist as well as a runner and he loved bird spotting on the club's Sunday runs. He described it like this:
"Snow lying on the ground and we don't see a soul for miles. We pound along the canals and see the flash of kingfisher blue or, if we are very lucky, the cascading kaleidoscope of colours red, blue and green as the sun shines on a kingfisher that has just plunged into the water, the tiny droplets of water catching the sunlight. It is a breathtaking moment."

The kingfisher was used for the club badge, early sweatshirts and also featured on the letter heading for official club correspondence. The badges were made up in the club's adopted colours of Royal Blue, Sky Blue and White and members stitched them to their TJC hooped vests.

From 1981 to 1996, the kingfisher was impregnable. But as pressure grew in the mid-1990s for a name change for the club, so members began to question the relevance of the kingfisher logo. The birdy's days were numbered.....





TJC at 1983 London Marathon with Kingfisher adorned sweatshirts
 Back row: Len Cousens, Graham Brooks, Ken Laidler, Alan Williams, Terry Elliott, Don Bride, Barry Whitburn, Dave Manning. Front row: Dave Richardson, Brenda Barlow, Sue Monkman, Jenny Elliott

All change in the 1990s

The club published a newsletter regularly from the mid -1980s. In the period 1991 to 1998, club member and professional journalist, Steve Pearce, was the editor with a distinctive style. Steve introduced many innovations to the newsletter including member profiles, gossip heard at the bar and witty editorials often having a dig at the foibles of other club members.

Steve also rebranded the newsletter several times during his editorship. It went from "Tring Jogging Club Newsletter" to "Tring JC News" to "The Reluctant Jogger". The September 1996 issue carried the headline:

"CHAIRMAN HAS AN ATTACK OF THE KINGFISHER BLUES"

After the row about the club name (see chapter.....), then chair Bob Ford questioned what a kingfisher had to do with running (or jogging). He could *"understand a kingfisher in running shoes or a kingfisher attacking a runner (or jogger) on the canal bank. But just a kingfisher? No way."* Members were invited to come up with a better design.

The prospect of a change troubled some longstanding members. Two letters in the next newsletter campaigned to 'Save Our Kingfisher'. They challenged the need for change as it took away the club's history and that the kingfisher was a *"refreshingly different emblem totally in keeping with the beautiful area in which we run"*. A third letter, with a tongue firmly in its cheek, ventured adopting a heron

on the grounds that there were many around the reservoirs and it would also have a passing resemblance to Tony Hill standing on one leg!

In 1997, as the club changed its name from TJC to TRC (see chapter....), Steve Pearce changed the newsletter title to "The Tring Runner" and the following year he handed over the editorship to Mike Gaunt.

In true new broom fashion, Mike's first edition of February 1998 radically changed the title by dropping the definite article! Members now looked forward to their monthly edition of "Tring Runner".



But that wasn't the only change. With no fanfare, a subtle, new logo perched atop the page. Like the kingfisher it was contained within a circle but now it depicted the arching footbridge which carries the Ridgeway National Trail over the (then) recently built A41 bypass, complete with a stickman or stickwoman running over the bridge.

Kevin Harding recalls the origin of the new logo. *"We were throwing around ideas and it was when the A41 was being built. I suggested the view with the vision of drawing the bridge in the style of the Uffington White Horse to emphasise the Ridgeway. Bob Ford drew it up."*

And so, after 16 years, the king(fisher) is dead...long live the Gateway to Tring!

The 21st century

The bridge logo featured in the club's publicity for the Fun Run and the Ridgeway Run for the next 14 years. It was also added to the club banner but was never made into a badge for clothing or club vests. When the club vest was redesigned in 2011 (see below), the question arose "Should we change the club logo?" Committee member, Jane Porteous, was deputed to gather views and posted this request on the club's recently launched online forum (this was pre-Facebook):

"What does the image of the bridge over the A41 mean to you? Do you think it reflects the image of Tring Running Club? Indeed is everyone aware that this is what is representing us to the general public? For a long time this (some say iconic, some say standard engineering design) structure has been on our letter heads, club banner etc., but there are mutterings amongst the membership that perhaps it is time for a change. With the recent introduction of our brand new snazzy club vest, is this not the perfect chance to choose a new club logo, maybe something that would tie in with our new strip, and highlight our connections with our town...a zebra certainly springs to my mind!! What does anyone else think? Are you a passionate supporter of concrete creations? Do you prefer your zebras stuffed and safe in the museum? Over to you... "

There were many interesting responses. Jane summarized them like this:

"Some people think the bridge logo suggests a link between the glorious Chiltern

countryside and the town, to others it resembles something slightly less iconic: a set of fallopian tubes has been suggested!!!

We have heard alternative ideas for logos ranging from kingfishers and deer, to the Bridgewater Monument (did I hear murmurs of 'phallic symbols'?), the Summer House in Tring Park, zebras trotting over the bridge, the bridge surrounded by trees, even the use of the bridge into Tring Park with its spiral staircase (is there a Bridge Appreciation Society that I don't know of?) and of course some people saying that there is no need for change"

At the AGM in November 2011, the club discussed the logo and there was an overwhelming view that it should be brought up to date. Kim Reed's son, Sam, designed a new version:



The following year the committee resolved to open the design of the logo to competition and members were invited to submit their ideas. There were many excellent designs – see the appendix for all of them together with the designers' inspiration for each one.

After lengthy discussion amongst the committee, the winner was revealed at the April 2013 presentation evening. Sarah Jarvis' design drew inspiration from the rolling Chiltern Hills and a reference to a running track – it could also be seen as an homage to road running and the old logo by including a semblance of the A41 dual carriageway



Vest is Vest

When did the club first adopt an official vest? It appears that TJC had alighted upon a colour scheme by 1983. The letter heading for club correspondence from that period proclaimed the colours as 'Sky Blue / White'.

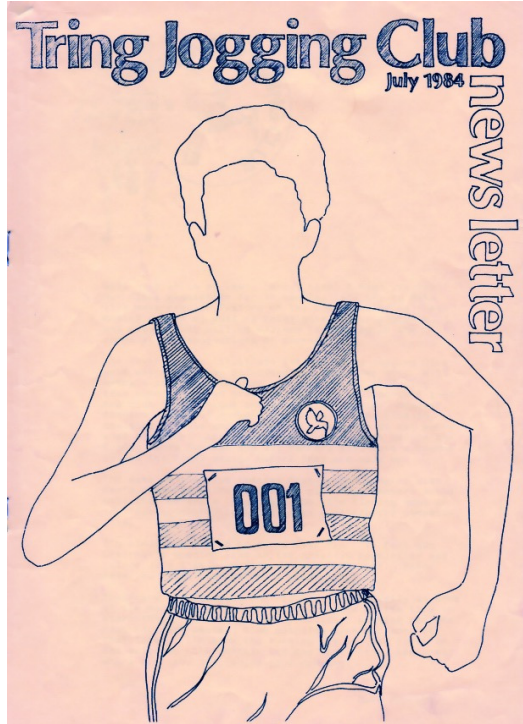
Jill Fowler



We don't have a date for this photo of Jill Fowler but she seems to be sporting a sky blue and white hooped vest.

From the records, there is evidence that the club had trouble with the quality of early vests so perhaps this was a short-lived early design with a self-stitched kingfisher badge.

The July 1984 newsletter was introduced by editor, Dave Perrett, with a cover illustrating the 'new Tring Jogging Club vest'.



Dave commented that with more members competing in races, it was felt important to have a 'unique and distinct strip'. Unfortunately, Dave also observed that :

"Fashion conscious members are having a hard time in choosing a style and colour – who said men do not worry what they wear!"

The picture seems to show a darker colour at the top of the vest and a lighter colour below interspersed with white hoops. The Kingfisher badge also shows up.

Interestingly, by mid-1984, the letter-heading had changed to describe the club colours as 'Royal Blue / Sky Blue/ White' so perhaps the fashionistas in the club had made their views clear.

However, we don't know exactly what was finally chosen. The picture records from the 1980s are sparse but we have this image of Clive Cohen sporting a vintage vest in a sky blue / royal blue / white combination.



Clive Cohen's vintage vest with knitted ventilation material!



Eventually, the club colours became enshrined in the constitution as Royal Blue and White (whither Sky Blue?)



This picture from 1998 shows the vest design that survived for many years. By now the men obviously didn't worry about what to wear. Fortunately the fashion for short shorts and tucked-in vests did not survive.



Bob Garland, Dave Shoesmith, Mike Gaunt, David Heron, Keith Downing, Tony Ruberry
Richard Collison, Kevin Harding, Steve Graham, Rob Brown, Rob Hill
Gareth Owens, Mike Mitchell, Clive Cohen 1998 Chiltern League meeting, Banbury

And this club photo from 2004 shows the blue and white hooped vests, and their owners, in all their splendour



Zebras spotted in Tring

With the club's experience over the years of changes to its meeting place, club name and logo, it couldn't be long before the question of vest design arose. In fact, it was in 2009 that the committee started to investigate a new look.

Maria Cook led the development of the new vests and, once more, design guru Michelle Hadland (Ridgeway and Fun Run designs) was called upon to turn ideas into reality with Sam Reed helping with the graphic design. The project came to fruition in 2011.



The committee wanted a design which would epitomise Tring, something that would make TRC stand out and something future-proof. The decision to select the zebra design was carefully thought through by the committee. It looked at many ideas, such as the A41 bridge and the kingfisher, both of which had been part of the club logo.

Zebras and Tring are closely linked. Lionel Walter Rothschild, who created the zoological museum, kept zebras in Tring Park (amongst other exotic birds and animals). He drove a carriage round Tring pulled by zebras and once drove them to Buckingham Palace. This is commemorated in the form of the zebra mosaic which lies in front of the church of St Peter and St Paul in the High Street.

2014 Club photo showing new vests and old banner with bridge logo
Photographer Michael Bull



History of Tring Running Club

Appendix - A Bird, a Bridge and a Zebra

From the May 2013 TRC newsletter

Thanks to everyone who sent in a design for the logo competition, we received 11 entries and they all showed a great deal of creativity and artistic flair! The committee decided to reward all who entered with a bottle of wine (chocolates for the 3 younger artists) for their hard work. Those who took part were:

Charlotte Cunningham
Kevin Fielding
Lucia Hill
Judi Hopcroft
Martin Hopcroft
Sarah Jarvis
Hannah Knight
Steve Long
Shirley White
Richard White
Clara Willet

Although there can only be one winner, the committee would like to put some of the other entries to use as well, so we may see some used for future Ridgway T-shirt designs. Here they are and the inspiration behind them!

1. Judi Hopcroft:

One of the best things about Tring Running Club is its diversity: road runners, off road runners, fell runners, start to runners, fun runners, ultra distance runners. But it is this very diversity that makes it hard to choose a club logo, as we all gain different benefits from being club members.

However, there is one thing that is common to us all – the club vest. The design of the vest is unique and often commented on when we are at races. I therefore wanted my logo design to include those iconic blue and white zebra stripes!



2. Martin Hopcroft

Attached is my cool club logo, which derives from the iconic design by Milton Glaser in 1977.



3. Richard White:

It follows on from my initial effort last year. I've ditched the bridge and tried to make TRC look like a runner, Basic linework is the first image which can be rendered in a number of ways. A bit like the olympic logo - looks crap initially but improves with colouring in.



4. Shirley White

Here is my attempt. It is based on the first Tring logo from 1981 when the club was formed and was shown in the newsletter attached.



Do we need a new club logo?

CHAIRMAN HAS ATTACK OF THE KINGFISHER BLUES

After the row about the club name comes a new one about the logo. Exactly what has a kingfisher got to do with a running (or jogging) club, Bob Ford wants to know.

The kingfisher logo was adopted when Tring JC was launched in 1981. Talk to any of the founder members, and you will get a slightly different version as to why. And despite the fact that kingfishers can be spotted on the reservoirs and canals of Tring, is it really relevant as a club logo?

No, said Bob, at the last committee meeting during a discussion about what to put on the new club sweatshirts. A kingfisher in running shoes he could understand, or even a kingfisher attacking a runner (or jogger) on the canal bank. But just a kingfisher? No way, said Bob.

So can anyone come up with a better design? Send in your back-of-the-envelope artwork and we'll publish them all next month, and see what other members think. Meanwhile, the order for the smart new club sweatshirts, complete with logo, has been put on hold.



5. Kevin Fielding

Reasoning behind the design as follows: 1. Most obvious feature of Tring as a town is the Natural History Museum 2. Shirts already have "Zebra" or "Tiger" stripes on them so this fits in 3. We tend to run up a lot of hills on rough terrain in group



B&W

6. Clara Willet

The Rothschild/Tring Museum zebra connection that has been used in the club vests. I thought this concept is a good one and one we should continue to use. I've taken the bridge design that has been used previously and combined it with the zebra idea to update it. The 'Tring Running Club' could be alternatively be incorporated into the external border, but I couldn't place it here



6. Andrew Hill (designed by his daughter Lucia)

"I think you should pick my logo because it looks funny and exactly what Tring runners do in the dark woods at night"

I think
you should
pick my
logo because
it looks funny
and exactly
^{what}
~~what~~ Tring
runner do
in the dark
woods at night



Tring running club sign draw by Lucia Hill



(Andrew included this computer drawn version with a head-torch on the zebra's forehead although it is not very clear).

7. Nick Knight (designed by his daughter Hannah aged 12)

Hello, I am Hannah Knight and my Dad is Nick Knight, who goes to Tring Running Club and forwarded me the email about designing the club's logo. I told my friend, and her and I designed separate logos that we think are really good. I've attached the two images of our logos and before each paragraph that we've written about them I've described which logo we're writing about. My friend is called Charlotte Cunningham and we are both 12 years old.

This is my design, the one where three men are stood in a line and "Tring Running Club" is written in capitals underneath. It took a lot of sketching before I came up with my design. I did have some key points that I wanted to include in my logo, and knew I was only going to include the colours blue, black and white. Of course I wanted it to be bold, eye catching, clear and simple but I also wanted it to make running, and the club, look cool. I started with rough ideas and came to three stick men stood in a line, showing the process of running. To make it look cool I just added shades, and added the name of the club at the bottom. I think this would make a good logo to represent Tring Running Club. I hope you like our logos as it took a long time to finally come to it!



(Hannah's friend Charlotte Cunningham also sent me a logo, I didn't have the heart to tell her it was only one design per member so we can't really consider it, but I am a softy really so have added it just in case!!)

This is my friend Charlotte's design, the other logo, the one with the running letters and the blue background.

I chose this design because I thought the bold lettering and colours were very eye catching. I thought of doing running people but that would take up too much time, so I decided to do running letters instead. I thought the colours I used are very eye catching but couldn't think what to do in black. So I wrote "Tring" in the T, "Running" in the R and "Club" in the C. The sun would represent happiness and how the club is fun.



8. Sarah Jarvis

"Why? Ideas based upon the rolling Chiltern Hills, presented in a stylised graphic clean form, with a suggestion of a running track running through the abstract hills, framing the Tring Running Club logo"



9. Steve Long

It's rather rough, the idea is there are no outlines to the letters, the shapes of the letters are supposed to be defined by the zebra pattern.

