

History of Tring Running Club

Chapter.....

A view of the club through newsletters of the 1990s

“As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” Proverbs

In the club's early years, communication with members was mainly via word of mouth, usually by way of announcements before setting off for a run. In this regard, the tradition continues today – the ringing of the bell in the bar summons the room and the chair, or other committee member, welcomes new members, recognises recent achievements and sends everyone on their way with a rousing call of “let's go for a run”.

It wasn't until the 1990s that a regular newsletter started. The editor for most of the nineties was Steve Pearce. Don't forget, this was long before anyone had a website. In the 21st century, the “Tring Runner” newsletter became a monthly fixture, first published in print form and then later distributed via email. An online members' forum was set up but was soon overtaken by a club Facebook page.

A list of newsletter editors is in an appendix. From 2010 to 2013, club member Dave Jones was the editor. Here, in 2019, Dave casts his eye over the Pearce newsletters of the 1990s.

“Looking over the 3 or 4 years of newsletters was a pleasant experience. It gave me a warm glow to see familiar names and learn of their youthful exuberance and stamina. Steve Pearce wrote with such an easy relaxing style that the articles honeyed the pages and the simple A5 booklet/newspaper layout gave it a semi-professional air. All the familiar things are there, from the London Marathon, Club championship, Breakfast run and constant calls for members to pay their subs.

With only 60-80 members, there was obviously a lot more familiarity and gentle teasing of most members of the club and a nostalgic me wonders if that warm family feeling is easy to recreate in these days of busy lives and 300 plus membership. The Newsletters are an excellent basis to appreciate the club's history and are an ideal “dip-in” reading experience.

Thanks must go to Steve Pearce and so many club members for the legacy they leave, a successful running club with its own characters and successes, many born from the enthusiasm and commitment of those youngsters running around Tring in the 90's.

“Bob leads home Tring Joggers”. That was the first headline that leapt out at me as I started reviewing the newsletters of the 90's. They contain a heady mix of Steve Pearce humour and amazing achievement.

What stood out most for me was the number of names I recognised and how many of those are still running today. We were Tring Jogging Club in those days and newsletters were printed out as mini booklets and distributed on club nights and posted to anyone

not attending. We will take a look at some of the themes, characters and more outlandish articles which reflect the club at that time.

The Tring JC Press coverage for 1992 reflects on many newspaper articles detailing the success of members including Mike Gaunt, Bob Garland, Kevin Harding, Tony Hill, John Boielle, Alison Harding and Geoff Dennis. It makes me feel like a grockle just moved in to a Cornwall village realising I have been in the club for a mere 10-15 years when we have such vintage runners in our midst.

Herald & Post January 30th 1992

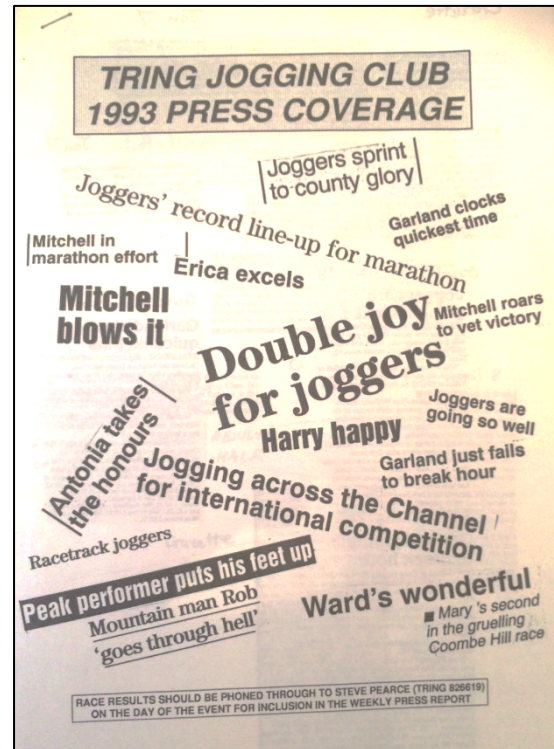
"Big Freeze. The annual subscription for Tring Jogging Club has been frozen at £8 for the seventh year running. Membership, at 75, is now at a record high"

I love the use of seventh year **running** and I can imagine that with just the relatively small number of members compared to the 2018 figure, there were more people in the bar on a Wednesday night.

Herald & Post April 16th 1992

"Marathon pain for Mitchell!! Brave Mike Mitchell made his 15th attempt to complete a marathon in under 3 hours – and missed out by 26 seconds"

A later newsletter tells me that in 1993 he made it with a London Marathon time of 2:55:09.



Steve Pearce was a professional writer. The newsletters reflect this and his wicked sense of humour. Starting in January 1993, Steve describes a club championship fight between Bob Garland (suffering from chicken-pox) and Mike Mitchell who broke his toe. "Bob was looking pretty anxious (as well as spotty)"

January 1994 "So it was Mike Mitchell in the end and didn't the boy deserve it after busting a gut to get to the Bicester 10k for one last race? For the benefit of the few people who don't know the story, Mike was level with Bob Garland at the top of the club road-running championship going into Christmas. Although Mike was spending the holiday in Wales, he made the 250 mile round trip to run the Bicester 10k on December 27, and was duly rewarded with a time quick enough to make him our top road runner of 1993. Mike had

less than 30 seconds to spare at the finish."

These newsletters contain the usual plea for new committee members around AGM time, many race reports, details of future races, a bar rota, Sports clinic by a resident doctor and Cross country league results. There's a spotlight on members giving their favourite and least favourite races and an odd'n'sods page.

Predictably, there was also a letters page where much of the banter appeared. Here's a selection that made me giggle.

"What a commotion in the Ladies Loo at Tesco's Leighton Buzzard, following Tony Smith's breakfast run. A startled customer raised the alarm, sending a couple of security heavies in to find a Tring JC member, clad only in bra and pants, with one foot in the sink, washing away the mud. Seems the shopper assumed some bag lady had popped in for a sluice down."

"Wendover Woods was a triumph for Cherry Fryer who announced beforehand that she was going to treat the race as a pleasant woodland stroll, with a bit of jogging on the downhill bits. She succeeded admirably, becoming our second runner to finish last in a race in 1993"

"So John Boielle has at last joined the over 60 vets ranks. Happy Birthday John. The same age as Joan Collins – funny how one has the body of a 30-year-old while the other looks more like a wrinkled prune."

"Will the paranoid male member who put insulation tape over the keyhole to the gents toilet please contact the club doctor with a view to arranging therapy."

"Keith Downing.... Still turns up for all the cross countries..... Keith was the only Tring JC member to turn up for the Chiltern League fixture at Burnham Beeches just before Christmas (you remember, the one that was cancelled a week before.)"

"A mole in the Boielle household reports that our friend John was a mite anxious recently. Seems that his building society book had gone missing. Couldn't find it anywhere. It did eventually turn up though – nestling between two slices of bread in his lunch box."

"Funny sights no. 63 the Maidenhead AC runner who lost both shoes simultaneously in the thick mud a couple of hundred yards from the finish of the Aldbury Cross Country. The Tring JC runner behind (who had been desperately trying to catch him for the previous three miles) managed to step on one, pushing it even further into the mire...."

The July 1994 newsletter gave the latest info for the club Road Running Championship and I think it's worth reprinting here for those who will enjoy recognising some of the names. There's also a Coombe Hill race position and club members' personal best times over 10km.

1994 Road Running Champs

	%
Mike Mitchell	80.39
Mike Perry	80.00
Clive Cohen	75.27
Mike Gaunt	72.44
Phil McHugh	71.59
Roy Bride	69.00
Tony Hill	68.83
Dave Shoesmith	67.48
Steve Pearce	66.33
Jenny Dunn	64.22
Geoff Dennis	62.90
Janet Hill	62.09
Anne Pashley	58.74
Antonia Blake	58.66
Mike Quincy	56.44
Tony Smith	55.58
Paul Stevenson	54.80

That was just the Road-Race championship of course, so it would be good to look at the results of the Coombe Hill Race around the same time.

Coombe Hill results

Kevin Harding 14th in 26:34
 Rob Brown 21st
 Clive Cohen 25th
 Bob Garland 38th
 Dave Shoesmith 66th
 Tony Ruberry 75th
 Bob Ford 82nd
 Mike Gaunt 86th
 Nick Jinks 88th
 Steve Pearce 97th
 Geoff Dennis 111th
 Antonia Blake 114th
 Gary Garner 117th
 Tony Mullen 118th
 Brian Nicholson 119th
 Janet Hill 127th
 Adrienne Garner 133rd
 Alison Wells 136th
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If you were wondering what Club Kit was available in 1994 and what the prices were, here it is:

Runner	Time	Event / Year
Rick Ansell	33.41	Toledo Poligono 89
Harry Blake	49.45	Abbotts Langley 93
Mike Blake	59.24	Bicester 92
John Boielle	42.03	Bicester 89
Mathew Boielle	55.00	Hemel 85
Roy Bride	49.37	Hardelet 94
Rob Brown	36.26	Bearbrook 93
Scott Carter	39.54	Bicester 92
Erica Clapp	45.13	Hyde Park 93
Kim Collison	49.18	Kings Langley 92
Richard Collison	38.08	Bearbrook 93
Phil Crookes	39.40	Nottingham 84
Jenny Dunn	46.55	Welwyn 87
Bob Ford	39.42	?
Jonathan Fox	47.04	Hardelet 94
Bob Garland	35.33	Tring 88
Mike Gaunt	40.27	Hardelet 93
Alison Harding	48.50	St Albans 92
Kevin Harding	38.19	Tring 93
Geoff Heppell	40.44	Bearbrook 91
Rob Hickling	37.35	Battersea 83
John Hicks	53.45	Bearbrook 93
Janet Hill	48.00	Bicester ?
Rob Hill	31.45	Watford 79
Tony Hill	42.17	Harrow 94
Richard Jervis	44.52	Tring 94
Alan King	51.27	Tring 94
George Luff	45.49	Berko 92
Deirdre Mackrill	48.18	Silverstone 93
Nicci Mason	50.20	Henley 91
Phil McHugh	38.54	Harrow 94
David Miller	44.25	Tring 94
Chris Milton	44.06	Tring 88
Mike Mitchell	35.49	Bearbrook 92
Jon Mulcahy	52.06	Tring 94
Tony Mullen	51.00	Hardelet 94
Ian Needleman	40.00	?
Brian Nicholson	43.00	Tring 87
Anne Pashley	47.37	St Albans 93
Steve Pearce	39.18	Harrow 93
Sue Pearce	47.07	Bicester 92
Mike Perry	35.01	Verlea Spring ?
Mike Quincey	52.20	Bearbrook 92
Vicki Quincey	46.53	?
Tony Ruberry	41.30	Hardelet 94
Steve Shirley	40.31	Dunstable 92
Dave Shoesmith	41.14	Tring 91
Tony Smith	38.23	Tring 88
Paul Stevenson	47.04	Tring 92
Alan Williams	42.11	Tring 82
		Croydon 88

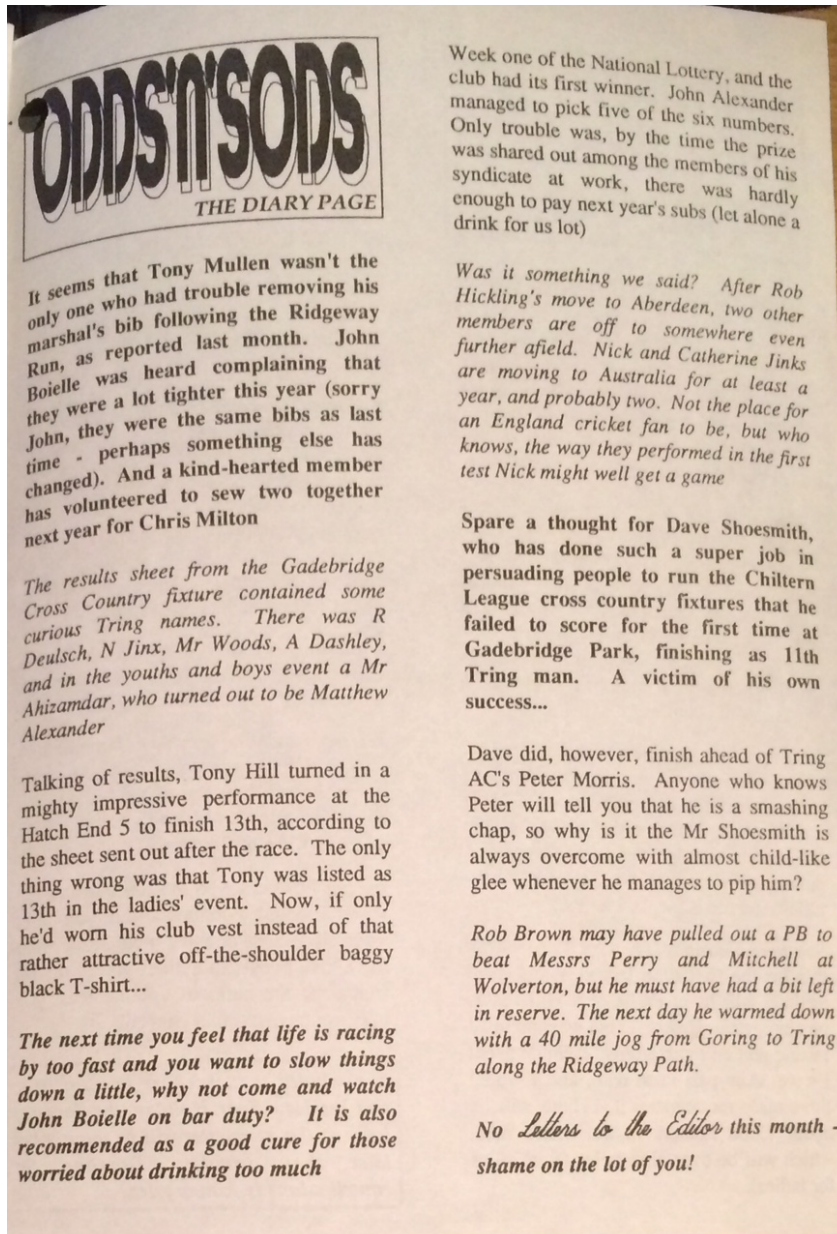
Club Kit

The following items of club kit are available from Janet Hill:

Ultrasport Men's Vests	£8
Ron Hill Men's Vests	£10
Ron Hill Women's Vests	£9
4 Runners Men's Shorts	£7
4 Runners Women's Shorts	£7
Ridgeway Run T-shirts	£5
Cloth Badges	£1.50
Tracksters	£15
Hooded Tops	£19.50
Viga Thermal l/s shirts	£10


Fastrax bibs for safe night-time running

And here is my favourite Odds'n'sods page for 1994. It gives you a great impression of the friendly, family feel of the club, the banter around at the time and Steve Pearce's lovely way of writing.



John Boielle features in many articles through the years, many times involving his encyclopaedic knowledge of local history and ... well, just about anything. I was very fortunate to have had a few years in the club when he was still active and the epitome of "a bit of a character". He would regale new members with details of the club until their ears bled, would organise many events, offer consistent advice and of course, letters to the newsletter. Here's an example of one of his letters and some of the many articles about him:

A Weighty Problem

 It is ridiculous that after medals have been given to runners they are seldom seen again. I suggest that medal-wearing should be compulsory, and also that the weights of medals should diminish according to finishing position. This would provide an effective way for everyone to start together and finish together - the prolific fast runner loaded with many very heavy medals and the slow runner who races occasionally bearing only a couple of light medals (or paper badges).

Yours sympathetically

John Boielle

Our hero John Boielle had his collar felt by the long arm of the law the other day. A police car pulled up alongside him and he was told in no uncertain terms that he and his two colleagues should run in single file along busy roads. Don't they understand the effect this could have on the non-stop flow of conversation?

John Boielle recently bought a new running watch for less than a fiver. He thought he'd found a bargain until half way round the Burnham Beeches 10km, when it suddenly started playing *The Yellow Rose of Texas*. Desperate punching of buttons failed to do anything, except eventually to change the tune to *When the Saints Go Marching In*. How comes it always seems to happen to John?

St John's Ambulance only had one casualty at the Chiltern League fixture at Luton. John Boielle ended up with the largest sticking plaster ever seen after cutting his hand while repairing the cistern in the men's toilet. Rumour has it that the plaster only ended up on his hand in the struggle to stop this gag-sized elastoplast getting to its rightful place

July 1995 brought up a funny piece in Odds'n'sods which names a couple of current (2019) members.

"A special mention to our newest member, Richard White. Not knowing any better, Richard followed Bob Ford for a "quick six or so" last week. Nearly two hours later, having run at least twice the promised distance, he stumbled back into the club and was too weak to refuse when asked if he was going to join the club."

Dave Jones

