



Bridlington Road Runners Special Issue May 2019

www.BridlingtonRR.co.uk
Info@BridlingtonRR.co.uk
Bridlington Road Runners Facebook Group

The Life & Times of Bridlington Road Runners

1983 - 2019

On the 23rd October 1983 over 1,600 runners entered the first Bridlington Half Marathon. At the time Bridlington did not have a running club and several local athletes belonged to East Hull Harriers which was probably the nearest club to the town. However, after this first Half Marathon, the seeds of an idea to form a road running club in Bridlington were sown and John Potter literally went around knocking on people's doors to see if they wanted to join. The result was that on Tuesday 29th November 1983 the very first club meeting was held in the Seabirds Pub.

Early Years

One of the first things that the members had to decide when the club was formed was what to call it? Remarkably, serious consideration was given to "Bridlington Barnacles" and "Bridlington Breezers" before the name Bridlington Road Runners was settled on. A gold vest with "Bridlington" emblazoned across the chest was chosen for the club colours and Bruce Allison was almost certainly the first member of the club to wear these colours in a competitive race.

Open Races

In 1984 the Bridlington 10K was run for the first time, in aid of that year's Olympic Appeal. I believe that both the 10K and the Half Marathon were originally organised by the football club with assistance from Bridlington Road Runners. But, in the summer of 1987 Bridlington Road Runners organised its very own road race, being the first Bridlington 10 Mile.

Subsequently, Bridlington Road Runners took over the full organisation of both the Half Marathon and the 10K races. This meant that the club was then organising three major road races and it was decided to promote them as the Seaside Series.

In due course, with the increase in road traffic and changes in U.K.A. rules regarding routes which included railway level-crossings, the 10 Mile and 10K races were discontinued. The Half Marathon race, which originally went around the town, has since been moved to a more rural route, although it still starts and finishes on the seafront.

Relays

In the early years Relays became very popular. The longest one undertaken by club members was to run from Bridlington to the twin town of Bad Salzungen in Germany in 1988. This was undertaken by a team of about 24 runners who ran from Bridlington to Felixstowe and then, after a ferry crossing, from Zeebrugge to Germany.

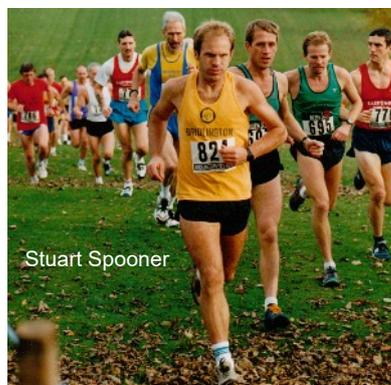
Other Relays were also completed along the Wolds Way, Cleveland Way and Centenary Way. Some of these were as club events and others were as races against other clubs.

Closer to home, club members completed several 100 Mile Relays on Bridlington seafront as charity events.

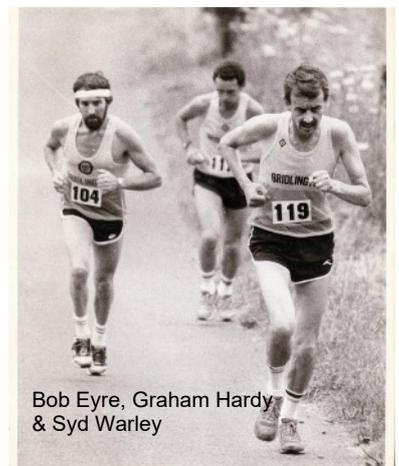
A couple of years ago Julie Madden and Jane Welbourn organised a very successful Wolds Way Relay as a social run for all abilities.

Club Races

The club organises several races for its own members. These are the Anniversary 3 Mile, 3 Hills Race (to be replaced this year by the Carnaby Canter), and Constable & Christmas



Stuart Spooner



Bob Eyre, Graham Hardy & Syd Warley

Handicaps. Additionally, there is sometimes the Downhill Mile at Kilham.

The Constable Handicap and the Christmas Handicap are what is known as staggered start handicaps and give everyone a chance of winning. While writing this I looked at the list of winners and it is quite noticeable that it includes members from the whole ability range. This even includes me (Christmas 1998, Constables 2002).

By contrast the speed merchants have dominated the straight races of the Anniversary 3 Mile and Three Hills Race. Up until 1998 Stuart Spooner won both races on a regular basis. Then some young whippersnappers took over – namely Jason Fielding, Lee, Shaun & Robert Pickering and a young guy called Phill Taylor.



From 2000 onwards Phill Taylor has won the Three Hills race every year apart from 2002 when Darren Williams was the winner. In the Anniversary Three Mile since 2000 the winners have come from the ranks of the Pickering brothers, Phill, Scott Hargreaves, Nick Hellewell, John Potter, Darren Sharpe and Eddie Knapp.

What about the women I can hear you say? Throughout the club's history Janet Potter has been a regular winner of both races interspersed with wins by Judy Allison. Other winners in the past have been Pat Bielby, Annette Baxter, Denise Baker and Maureen Jackson. In more recent times winners have come from the ranks of Amy Connolly, Angelika Corner, Katy Cawthorn, Emma Brown, Karon Colley, Cathy Wood, Sarah Wood, Becky Clifton and Mollie Holehouse.



Judy Allison

For several years we also held an event called the Coulson Relay and, although this has not been held recently, the format was re-introduced as a one-off event at Kilham in 2013 as part of the 30th anniversary celebrations.

The club also used to have a grass running track marked out on land that was rented from the council behind Bridlington School. Members put in a lot of work levelling and seeding the ground and marking out the 6-lane track. John Potter usually had the onerous task of cutting the grass. During work setting up the Track the club also provided fencing material for the local community (in joke). Each year the club held Track Championships but unfortunately in due course the field had to be abandoned because of continuing vandalism etc.

Most of these races started in the early years of the club's existence. This year we are adding a new event called the Eddie Knapp Challenge which is four races held over consecutive evenings.

EYXC League

At one time Cross Country running in East Yorkshire was limited. For several years BRR held an open Cross-Country meeting in the grounds of Sewerby Park and surrounding fields but in 1994 our then Chairman, Tony Phillips, suggested a Cross Country League in East Yorkshire and circulated other clubs within the county. The result was the formation of the East Yorkshire Cross Country League which holds 6 races during the winter months and currently includes 10 teams. Presently, the courses for these races are at Bishop Wilton, Drewton Woods near South Cave, Sledmere, Langdale End, Welton and Sewerby. In the past courses have also been at such places as North Dalton, Thixendale and Bishop Burton Agricultural College. At Bishop Burton the course went over the route used by horses for eventing and included several of the horse jumps!

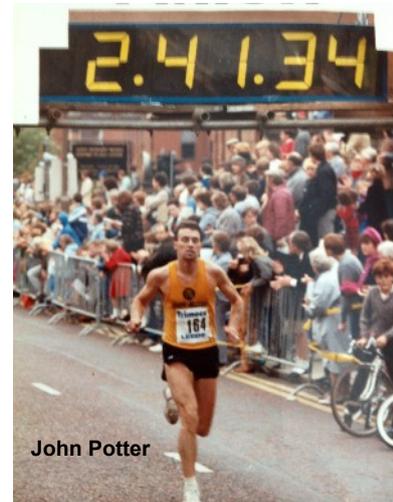
Runners Past & Present

Bridlington Road Runners has never been an elitist club. We have always welcomed and encouraged runners of all abilities. However, over the years we have had in our ranks some very talented runners.

Our first Club President was Mike Hurd who ran many international marathons with highlights being his 2:13:17 at the Chicago Marathon as an M35 in 1982 and 2:17:53 at the Jersey City Marathon in 1987 as an M40.

Other great runners over the years have been Stuart Spooner, Eddie Knapp, John Potter, Andy Nalton and Phill Taylor. Judy Allison has appeared on the elite start line at the London Marathon and won many races. Other women who have seen success over the years have been Denise Baker, Janet Potter, June Milner, Annette Baxter, Pat Bielby and Emma Brown.

Of all the running distances I think that the Marathon undoubtedly sorts the 'men from the boys' and the magic barrier is to finish in under 3 hours. Remarkably, the club has had over 30 people who have attained this time. After Mike Hurd the leading runners are – John Jackson 2:31:41, Phill Taylor 2:32:40, Andy Nalton 2:36:50 and John Potter 2:41:35. Phill Taylor did run 2:28:07 at Manchester but, rather annoyingly for him, it was later decided that the course was ever so slightly short!! I cannot list everyone's marathon time, but I have included a fuller list on page 4



John Potter



Kevin Deighton & Shaun Pickering

Incidentally, while I was compiling the list I noticed that in 2012 Phill Taylor ran THREE sub-3 hour Marathons.

Some of these runners from "All our Yesterdays" are still running for the club and regularly win age category prizes. Pat Bielby and Linda Hall come under this heading.

Leading runners from modern times are of course Phill Taylor, Danny Brunton, Scott Hargreaves, Josh Taylor, Nick Jordan, Andy Baker and Simon Ellerker. We also have very good female runners with Mollie Holehouse, Katy Cawthorn, Louise Taylor, Emma Artley and April-Marie Exley often being highly placed. There are several more new recruits who I have high hopes for in the future. In addition, Becky Clifton has taken on the Ironman Triathlon, Cathy Woods and Karyn Hoggard have run in all sorts of long-distance events. Pearl Bayford and Mike Hall have put in some incredible performances in the



Hardmoors Series. And another runner who runs and runs and never knows when to stop is Tony Hughes who makes the description long-distance specialist his own.

Juniors

Bridlington Road Runners has had some fantastic junior runners and nearly all the representative honours have come from this section of the club. The club's first Schools International vest was won by Mistrelle Airstone back in 1987 when she competed in Ireland. Around the same time Julie O'Neill and Beren Airstone competed in the Inter Counties and, in the English Schools Championships, the club was represented by Julie O'Neill, Mistrelle Airstone, Beren Airstone, Sharon Norman, and Tara Holdsworth.

In the early 90s we had talented boy runners such as Darren Williams, Steven O'Neill, Rod Whittell, Jonathan Williams, Andy Baker and John Nolan and several of these also went on to become good senior runners.

Later in the 90s the club was very proud when three brothers, namely Robert, Shaun & Lee Pickering had almost non-stop success in county, national and international competition. This included Robert and Shaun winning their age-group races at the Northern Cross-Country Championships, Robert coming 2nd in the National Cross-Country Championships at under 15 Boy and under 17 Boy level, Lee coming 3rd in the Northern Cross-Country Championships and both Robert and Shaun being picked to run for England. In addition, in 1998 Shaun Pickering was top Under 13 Boy in the British Rankings and this was followed in 2000 when Robert Pickering was ranked top Under 13 Boy in UK at 3000m.



Then in 2005 Kevin Deighton burst onto the scene winning the Under 17 Northern Cross-Country Championships. In 2007 he was again the Northern winner, this time in the Junior Man age group. In the same year he won both the Senior Men's and Junior Men's Humberside Cross Country Championship both by easy margins on the same day before realising that the rules prevented him from entering two different age group races! Kevin went on to represent England at the European Championships before injury brought his running career to a premature end.

Club Stalwart

One club member who was indispensable for many years was Harry Benson. In his younger days he was a very good athlete and in later years he became an outstanding race official, having an almost unequalled fund of knowledge about athletics. Harry was time-keeper and referee at nearly all our club races, East Yorkshire League races and Half Marathon, 10K and 10 Mile races. On top of that he was called on nearly every weekend of the year to officiate at races throughout the area. Now he is in his eighties he is taking life more quietly.

Deaths

With the club being in existence for 35 years it is inevitable that there will have been sad days as well as the happier times. In 1992 Mike Constable sadly passed away. Mike worked tirelessly on behalf of the club and organised the Bridlington 10 Mile race. Eddie Knapp battled illness for several years before succumbing in 2009 and, even during his illness, he continued to coach junior runners. Also, sadly no longer with us are Rod Whitfield, Frank McGrath, Alan Coulson, Barry Clifton, John Norton, John Cramp, Alan Killick and Ken Knight.

The Future

Club membership has always ebbed and flowed. In recent years the wonderful Parkrun phenomenon has been the source of many new members. The 5K distance gives people new to running an introduction to the sport and in due course many want to take on longer distance races. What is really encouraging is the increase in women runners at all levels of the ability range.

All the Best

Andy Godfrey



Pat Bieby & Janet Potter



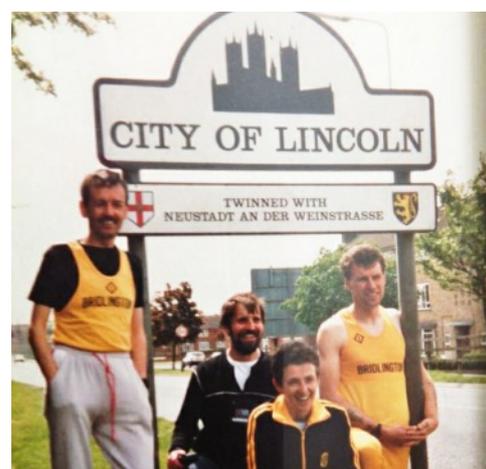
Mike Constable



Bridlington Road Runners All-Time Marathon List

I have compiled these times from an old list dated 2006 and manually added in times since that date using both my own results and Power of 10. There will probably be errors and omissions - but I don't think it is far out. I have used a cut-off point of 3 hours 16 minutes. Every marathon is an achievement - but there are literally hundreds beyond this time.

Mike Hurd	2:17:53	Jersey City	1987	** Mike ran a faster time prior to joining BRR
John Jackson	2:31:41	London	1989	
Phil Taylor	2:32:40	Chester	2012	
Andy Nalton	2:36:35	London	2002	
John Potter	2:41:35	Leeds	1985	
John Sharp	2:47:38	Selby	1985	
Eddie Knapp	2:47:49	London	1992	
Peter Gulc	2:50:11	London	2013	
Geoff Dowson	2:51:23	London	1992	
Darren Rudd	2:51:30	London	1989	
Ken Gilson	2:51:47	London	1994	
Stuart Spooner	2:51:55	Berlin	1998	
John Hart	2:52:13	Blackpool	2003	
Steve Cook	2:53:00	London	1986	
Darren Williams	2:53:05	London	2003	
Syd Warley	2:53:11	London	1989	
Dave Robins	2:53:29	Selby	1985	
Dennis O'Neill	2:54:11	Humber Br	1992	
Kevin Hudson	2:54:26	London	1991	
John Cramp	2:54:32	London	1991	
JUDY ALLISON	2:54:38	London	1985	
Robert Gunning	2:54:42	London	1994	
Peter Garland	2:54:46	London	1989	
Bruce Allison	2:54:58	Selby	1984	
Graham Hardy	2:55:00	London	1987	
Stewart Emms	2:55:05	Selby	1985	
David Tennyson	2:56:00	Stevenage	1987	
Nick Hellewell	2:57:27	Chester	2012	
Rod Whitfield	2:57:35	Selby	1986	
Geoff Wilson	2:58:10	Selby	1984	
Paul Stewart	2:58:13	Leeds	1994	
Colin Parcell	2:58:30	London	1989	
CATHY WOOD	3:01:34	Chester	2014	
Bob Eyre	3:03:00	London	1986	
Ray Robinson	3:03:21	London	1994	
Guy Bennardino	3:03:44	London	1994	
Steve Arnold	3:03:59	Berlin	1998	
Nick Jordan	3:04:42	Manchester	2016	
Robert Pratt	3:05:19	Stockholm	1989	
Josh Taylor	3:07:31	Yorkshire	2018	
Martin Smith	3:09:41	London	2013	
EMMA BROWN	3:10:15	London	2014	
Bram Hooper	3:10:43	Selby	1984	
Andrew Carver	3:11:00	London	1992	
Paul Hanson	3:11:15	London	2002	
Peter Williams	3:13:01	London	1997	
Tom MacDonald	3:13:57	London	2006	
Roddy Rhodes	3:14:25	London	1989	
JANET POTTER	3:16:10	Scarboro'	1985	
John Nolan	3:16:40	Hull	2015	
Andy Baker	3:16:53	Manchester	2018	



Syd Warley, Bob Eyre, Judy Allison & John Potter



John Jackson



Peter Gulc



Andy Nalton



Emma Brown & Cathy Wood



Not sure that this is my best side!!



Shaun Pickering



Wendy Foster, Pauline Clifton, June Connolly, Janet Potter and Judy Allison



Wendy Foster



Dave Foster