

Celebrating 25 Years of the Dundee Roadrunners

Revised draft 18 June 2009 – *Some checking and tidying up for website Jan 2015*

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- Everyone's stories
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Remembering Old Friends

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Acknowledgements

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have contributed their memories and thoughts in their own personal stories, on which this book is based, as well as those who have provided photos. Eric Fair, Dave Roy and Karl Oparka provided a mass of material from the early years of the Club, which enabled us to build a picture of how Dundee Roadrunners emerged and became established as one of Scotland's foremost running clubs. We hope you enjoy the book!

The use of people's stories inevitably means that we have not been able to cover everyone's involvement in the Club in a balanced way, and there will be a few gaps at an individual level. There are many personal achievements and contributions that we haven't been able to include. There may even be a few errors, although several members have read through and commented on the drafts. We apologise for both the errors and the omissions. However, we hope that the book gives a good overview of the history of Dundee Roadrunners and the important part that it has played in the lives of many people in and around the city of Dundee.

August 2009

1 Introduction

For twenty-five years, members of Dundee Road Runners have been pounding the streets around Dundee. This book has been put together to celebrate the many achievements of the Club, to recognise the successes of individual runners, and to record some of the memorable events from the past quarter-century.

The Club today has a healthy number of members who get together on a regular basis for training, as well as racing and socialising. As with all clubs the Committee plays an essential part and Dundee Road Runners is no exception, and this book testifies to the hard work of committee members over the years. The training venue is just one of the aspects of the Club that has changed with time, but the commitment from the members is as strong as ever.

What started off as a small group of workers from Valentines of Dundee training informally for the first Dundee Marathon in 1983 soon became a recognised running club with members competing not only all over Scotland but in many parts of the world.

Joining the Roadrunners has made a big impact on the lives of many members. Over 30 of them, past and present, have set down their personal memories to help piece together this record of the Club. These individual contributions are included as appendices and they make for fascinating and often amusing reading. The present Committee and the authors of this book are grateful to everyone who has provided their input.

This then is the story of the people and events which have made Dundee Road Runners into the unique and special club it is today.

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2 Early days

Cast your mind back to 1983. Phil Collins was No 1 with “You Can’t Hurry Love” before Michael Jackson came along with “Billie Jean”, then David Bowie with “Let’s Dance” and Eurythmics with “Sweet Dreams”. Those were the days.

On a more serious note, Margaret Thatcher gained a decisive election victory in June, a year after the Falklands War and Ronald Reagan was US President. It was the end of Bjorn Borg’s tennis career and the long-running M*A*S*H series on TV, but there was still a Valentine’s Greetings Card factory next to the Kingsway in Dundee.

It was the era of the running boom. The first London Marathon had been held in 1981 and other cities followed its lead including Glasgow in 1982. Marathon running suddenly changed from an elite sport to a mass movement. All around Britain, groups of people

started to organise training sessions. One of these was in Dundee, at the Valentine's factory. Dave Roy was the instigator, persuading some of his fellow workers to take some lunchtime exercise, with their sights set on the first Dundee Marathon in 1983. And so the Valentine's Harriers Club was born.

How many members of that original group ran in the 1983 Dundee Marathon we do not know. However, there were 1,343 competitors who started the race on 24 April and 1,258 who completed it, the winner coming home in 2 hrs 17 mins. We know this because the race was the subject of ground-breaking research ("rearsch"?) into "Rectal Temperature after Marathon Running" which concluded that if you slow down towards the end of a marathon on a chilly day you could catch hypothermia¹.

One woman who was inspired by the 1983 race was Sue Pople (Roger). Whilst waiting for a bus back home from near the Levi factory she had a chance encounter with groups of runners competing in the race, four miles from the finish. She was inspired to start training at home in her plimsolls before she joined a group of novice veterans for marathon training in Caird Park.

During these first few weeks of running I met Dave Roy who already ran with a fast small group of runners from Valentines Card factory. They invited me to run with them and later Margaret Robertson (my companion on the track) joined, and our mileage and speed increased rapidly.

The group from Valentines was growing in size and they started to look for a venue where they could get a shower. Lochee Swimming & Leisure Centre ("Lochee Baths") was the ideal place. Davie Morris had just been promoted to Duty Officer there in the summer of 1983 when he was approached:

My mates Eric Fair and Davie Roy who worked in the Valentine's card factory and ran for Valentine's Harriers came in to see me and asked if they could use the pool and shower facilities after they went out for a run.

They came in a few times a week and also the weekend and in the beginning there was usually about six of them. More and more started to join them and I am sure it was about October 1983 when they decided to change the name to Dundee Roadrunners.

At the beginning Davie Roy was president and Eric Fair was treasurer. We had many fund raising nights in the canteen of Valentines and also many dances throughout the year.

In fact the club retained the name Valentines Harriers until early 1984, when it applied for affiliation to the Scottish Amateur Athletics Federation and was advised that as Valentines was a business name this would restrict who could be a member of the club. So that was the birth of Dundee Roadrunners.

Dave Roy and Eric Fair were out and about training and at races, busily recruiting other members to the new club. Dave Robertson – who was to follow Eric Fair as club treasurer and become the 10-miler results co-ordinator – was one of those enticed into the Club by Dave Roy. He remembers:

¹ R J Maughan, J B Leiper, and J Thompson. Rectal temperature after marathon running. Br J Sports Med. 1985 December; 19(4): 192–195.

...that fateful day, 2 September 1984, when I was puffing round the Edinburgh Marathon only to encounter Dave Roy. From memory Dave was accompanied by a harem, but with his usual boundless enthusiasm he managed to get over that Dundee Road Runners was starting up and would I like to join? It was an encounter that changed my life. Certainly for the next ten years.

The notification to Valentines staff of the plan to set up the running club

VALENTINES
SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

V.S.S.C.
DUNDEE
ROGUE RUNNERS

WITH THE DUNDEE MARATHON ENTRY FORMS COMIING OUT THIS WEEK, WE ARE GOING TO START A RUNNING CLUB, POSSIBLY ON TUESDAY NIGHTS. THE BASIC IDEA OF THE CLUB WILL BE TO GET RUNNERS OF ALL GRADES UP TO A RUNNING STANDARD TO COMPLETE A MARATHON.

THE AIMS OF THE CLUB ARE TO ACHIEVE:-

- A) WEEKLY BUILD UP TO 10 MILE TRAINING RUN
- B) TRAINING SCHEDULES
- C) TRAIN WITH RUNNERS OF OWN STANDARD
- D) CLUB COLOURS
- E) MEMBERSHIP OF THE A.A.A.
- F) ENTRY TO LOCAL RUNS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT DAVID ROY, IN BREAK TIMES ONLY.

PERSONNEL
DEPT

6th September, 1983.

Another early recruit was Ricky Davidson. Ricky had already had an unsuccessful attempt at a first marathon, in Glasgow, and had his sights set on one in Wolverhampton which was celebrating its millennium in 1985. He heard from a friend, who worked at Valentines, that there was a group of lads from there who would be running the race and they could meet up. It wasn't until the train back to Dundee that Ricky encountered them:

I thought I recognised a face from Dundee but I did not think this could possibly be the group I was meant to meet as they were staggering about the train with crates of beer at their feet. Little did I know then that this was the start of my 25-year journey with the Valentines-DRR Running Club.

Charlie Anderson was already a member by then, and one of his old friends was Ged Hanlon, who had been inspired to take up marathon running by his brother Richard and had just completed the 1984 Dundee event when:

...I met long time friend Charlie Anderson. He had also started running and encouraged me to join a new club in Dundee, Dundee Roadrunners, and soon both Gill and I were members.

Enter one Dave Roy! Dave was club secretary, and a real buzzer. He was at the heart of almost everything going on at the club. Organising buses, arranging teams, encouraging newcomers, you name it, he did it. His natural enthusiasm infected us all and drove us to push ourselves and each other to do the best for our club.

Bob Wood and Alan Kay were another two who separately met Charlie when they were out running and he encouraged them to come along to the Dundee Roadrunners. The Dundee Marathon prompted others to join in order to get some serious training. Soon it was a thriving club with a large and growing membership, reaching 180 in 1985 and as many as 250 adult members when Dave Roy gave an interview to the Sporting Post in October 1986. Club members were hiring buses and travelling around the country to different races, turning in many good performances. Dundee Roadrunners were well and truly established.

The “other” club in Dundee

There's not much mention in people's stories of the other club for runners in Dundee, the Hawkhill Harriers (“the Hawks”). However, they were around long before the Roadrunners were set up, catering for the full range of track and field athletics as well as longer distance running. Like several other athletics clubs in the running boom during the early 1980s they found themselves being outflanked by the new kids on the block.

Interviewed by The Sporting Post on 4 October 1986, Dave Roy explained why they decided to set up a separate club:

There were about half a dozen of us who worked for Valentine's on the Kingsway, and we just enjoyed going for runs in that area. We made an approach to the Hawkhill Harriers with a view to becoming members, but then decided we would form our own club. That's no criticism of the “Hawks”. It's just that what we wanted was not a racing club but a running club....it has grown from there, with previously unattached joggers coming along to join us at Lochee Leisure Centre. No-one is under any pressure to compete if he or she doesn't want to.

It wasn't just the Roadrunners – the YMCA Running Club in Dundee started up around the same time, but then numbers fell away after a few years and the remaining members began to move across to the Hawks.

Right from the start, there was a friendly rivalry between the Roadrunners and the Hawks, as Karl Oparka recalls. He had previously been a member of Crook Athletic Club in NE England and when he moved to Dundee he found his new work colleague, Stuart Swanston, was already a member of the Roadrunners, so he went along for a training session:

By then it had been set up at Lochee Baths and the club already had its characteristic blue and white vest. I remember debates about the vest being too close to the Hawks' vest and some said it would never catch on, but it's still the same. There's always been a healthy rivalry with the Hawks; they were the original club in the area and had been there forever. They also had some extremely good runners. I remember when John McNally passed the cups from the old Thistle Harriers Club on to the Dundee Roadrunners, and recall a particular

club presentation that was challenged by some members of the Hawks, claiming they were the rightful heirs to the Thistle Harriers trophies!

The rivalry re-emerged when Karl, Harry Kay and Charlie Anderson were bringing on the junior squad in a variety of disciplines and in order for the youngsters to compete they needed to be members of an athletics club. Instead of joining the Hawks, they opted for Tayside Athletics Club, based at Arbroath. Later, however, as the numbers of juniors fell away, the remainder joined the Hawks who were very successful at the time and competing in Division 1 of the British league.

Other runners have switched between the Hawks and the Roadrunners from time to time, including Ged and Gill Hanlon, Morag Taggart and (with a long gap in between) Dave Rodley. The friendly connections between the two clubs is confirmed by the number of Hawks who used to book a seat on the Roadrunners' bus to the Inverness Half Marathon, and the regular presence of a bunch of Hawks at the Christmas dance. Several of them were originally members of the YMCA club before transferring to the Hawks.

Inevitably the rivalry emerges at races. Alan McLeod remembers how a number of club members who were good runners turned 40 about the same time, so they entered a men's vets team in the Alloa to Bishopbriggs 8-stage relays in 1991, where some of the best runners from Scotland turned out.

I particularly remember being passed like I was standing still by Jim Dingwall of Falkirk Victoria who was one of the best runners around in these days. Anyway Dundee Roadrunners with the likes of Stewart Swanson, Dave Morgan and Frank Grier came 12th out of 40 teams beating Dundee Hawkhill who finished in 20th place. The next year with Bob Wood also running and the route changed from Alloa to Twechar we came 11th but after 40 miles of running we were disappointed to be passed by the Hawks with about 200 yards to go.

Despite the rivalry, the two clubs had a shared interest in encouraging people to take up running, and for a number of years whilst the Dundee Marathon was on the race calendar they jointly organised a series of races for people to build up gradually to longer distances.

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3 A Tale of Two Venues

In the early days the club used to meet at Lochee Leisure Centre on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings for long training runs, at first meeting in the foyer but before long moving into the gym as the numbers rose.

Davie Morris, a club member, recalls his time as Duty Manager at the baths in 1983:

Some nights you could not get moving for bodies, and when the club really got going we started to run out of lockers for the swimmers. One night I remember counting 93 ten pences and that wasn't unusual.

The structure of training nights has remained much the same as in the early days. Tuesdays were dedicated to various distances, usually 10, 8 and 6 miles, including the infamous "3 Hills" route in the winter months. Apparently it was Peter Hume, the club coach in the early days, who devised this route which is well remembered by many older Club members.

The routes would be explained to the members gathered in the leisure centre, but it wasn't always easy for new members to follow the details. Karl Oparka had moved up from Durham, and his lasting recollection of the Club is:

coming along on a Tuesday night with Stuart Swanston. Harry Kay was Chairman at the time, and Charlie Anderson used to stand on a chair and shout out the routes for the evening. I hadn't a clue where the different roads were, and I couldn't follow his accent when I first arrived: "Up the Cleppie, doon the Blackie, through Campie, roon by Cairdie." I was confused by the way he said "Clatto" (pronounced without the 't's) and had to ask Stuart where on earth this was. In the end, I just used to follow the rest!

Lochee was well-placed for summer runs into the countryside and on a sunny evening the beautiful scenery helped to make training less of an ordeal. Most routes would be planned so that the short, medium and long alternatives came together on the way back to Lochee. As Wilma Davidson says,

I can still recall running down Coupar Angus Road in a group on our way back to the baths and hearing footsteps rapidly catching us up, this would be the fast 10 milers, they never passed without giving us some words of encouragement, at least that's what we thought they were, but as they flew past us at a terrifying pace, perhaps we misheard!

After Tuesday night training runs a number of club members would venture to McGonnigal's pub on Perth Road (and Sandy's Bar in Lochee early on). This continued for a long time and it was a great chance to meet up with other members and hear their experiences of races and training. It was also a great way to relax and socialise after a hard training run.

After a few years Alec Boyle, an ex member of DRR and licensee of the Ancrum Arms in Lochee, invited members to drink in his pub and provided trays of sandwiches every Tuesday night as an incentive. This became a regular post-training venue for many years with more and more members from the club and sometimes friends and partners joining them. Discussions and arguments about how a race was won and lost were not uncommon as members huddled round the paraffin heater on the cold winter nights.

When it was someone's birthday, on the nearest Tuesday, after a drink in a pub in town, everyone would descend on The Pizza Place, until it closed down, and then Pizza Hut or Pizza Express. It was not uncommon for between ten and fifteen people to be there and it always proved to be a good night. This tradition lapsed some years ago, but it could be something for current members to revive.

Bob Wood sums it up by saying the Tuesday training after a race was always special as everyone who had achieved a result or P.B. was recognised and mentioned in despatches. This contributed to making this a friendly and informal club of which all members should be proud.

As for Thursday nights, you either love them or you hate them, there is no in-between. In winter hill reps were standard, with Perth Road to Blackness Avenue being the favourite route for a few years. The summer route went to Lochee Park for a warm up, with reps up and down the hill and then onto Balgay Hill for a circuit, along the dirt path and up the wooden steps to the Observatory. This was a favourite route of Alan McLeod who recollects:

The best bit was that after the efforts we always waited for everyone to catch up and in between the efforts we had a laugh at how much we were enjoying the pain.

Ah the good old days, Alan!

The long Sunday runs were popular when training for a marathon. Bottles of water were placed along routes the day before thus ensuring the runners were adequately watered.

Lochee Leisure Centre extended its gym area and unfortunately DRR was moved out to the foyer which was not exactly ideal as the sheer numbers caused a commotion every Tuesday night. Dave Roy remembers one night over 100 runners were present. New members still continued to join and the club went from strength to strength.

For several weeks when the baths were being refurbished the club was decanted to Polysport, a fitness club in Lochee, and as it was a relatively small building we had to meet outside for our pre training talk. As this was in the winter it wasn't an ideal situation and everyone was glad when they could return to the familiar surroundings of "the baths".

However, as the club expanded it became clear that it was outgrowing Lochee Baths and finding a new venue was high on the agenda at the AGM for a couple of years. After much debate Fitness First, a relatively new fitness club in Dundee, was chosen. On 27 February 2001 Dundee Road Runners ran their last run from Lochee Leisure Centre which had been their base for almost twenty years, thus ending their association with Lochee.

Once at Fitness First, new routes had to be found and due to the location there were fewer heading into the country, particularly for the shorter distances. A few club members stopped running with the club around the time of the move as for some the routes were not so varied. The club also gained new members who were already frequenting the fitness club. Some of the old routes were incorporated into runs from Fitness First, even the ever-popular three hills! Dundee Road Runners were now becoming as familiar in the Hilltown area as they once were in Lochee.

Fitness First makes a better location for parking but various changes have been necessary to try and accommodate members for the pre-run get-together without getting in the way of regular users of Fitness First. The current location in the foyer seems to work well at present. The post-run get-together has also had its ups and downs, with members gathering in the club lounge for the initial period before numbers declined. Perhaps it was a bit too comfy for runners, and pints are better than the small bottles of lager they were selling! The Snug across the road is used for special events including the AGM, whilst a few "old timers" gather in the bar most Tuesday evenings for a blether about the old days.

To mark the 25th Anniversary, following the Spring Handicap race at Camperdown in April 2009, many members made a sentimental return visit to the Ancrum Arms where the prizes were presented.

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4 Timeline showing key events in the history of the Club

24 April 1983	1 st Dundee Marathon
September 1983	Formation of Valentines Harriers running club
January 1984	Club changes its name to Dundee Roadrunners
1984	180 members – moved to Lochee Baths
31 March 1985	43 Club members travel to Wolverhampton Millennium Marathon
August 1985	Thistle Harriers Trophies handed over to Roadrunners
November 10 1985	1 st Templeton 10-mile race
May 1986	Junior section starts
1986	Start of friendship with Wurzburg Club
1987	1 st DRR visit to Wurzburg
1987	John McInally 7-mile race started
March 1988	Club handicap race started
Nov 1988	Feature in “Today’s Runner”
March 1991	Club male veteran team competes for first time in 8-man Alloa to Bishopbriggs race
Nov 1991	10 mile race moves to Dundee University for changing and prizes
Nov 1992	Hartley Cup held at Camperdown Park
Oct 1993	Several Club members travelled to Wurzburg to compete in the Frankfurt Marathon
1994	10 th Anniversary celebrations, visit by Wurzburg group, relay around Fife, Angus & Perth
16-18 Feb 1996	Weekend at Melrose – former member Colin Christison warden of youth hostel there – including Carnethy Hill Race
14 March 1997	Open Evening held at Bonar Hall
19 April 1997	Green Circular relay run, one of the events to raise funds for the Special Olympics team going to Portsmouth
27 June 1997	White Tops hill race launched successfully
20 March 1998	Open evening Bonar Hall

April 1998	Exchange visit to Wurzburg
15 Nov 1998	Hartley Cup hosted by DRR at Forthill
1999	“Caledonian Challenge” 10-mile road race series introduced
Feb 2000	AGM moved from November after financial year changed to end December
26-29 May 2000	Millennium Run from Oban to Dundee – about 19 participated
June 2000	Visit by Wurzburgers, competed in Alyth 10k on 17 June
13 Aug 2000	Millennium Fun Run in Lochee Park
27 Feb 2001	Final run from Lochee Baths
March 2001	Move to Fitness First
13 March 01	Meeting with SAF Chef Exec David Joy re Affiliation Fees
14 July 01	Green Circular cycle trip round Dundee
6 July 2001	White Tops race didn't happen because of foot & mouth disease
2001	Club website set up by Dave Stewart
1 June 2002	Sidlaw Skyline run across the hills to Perth (30.5 miles)
2004	20 th Anniversary celebrations
6 June 2004	20 th Anniversary 92-mile relay starting & finishing at Discovery Point
April 2005	Group visits Wurzburg to compete in Half Marathon and 16 km walk
November 2005	Club hosts Hartley Cup at Monikie in new format and wins both men's and ladies' events
May 2008	Launch of new Club website
2009	25 th Anniversary celebrations

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5 Members

A club is all about its members, bringing them together to share something they all enjoy so that everyone can get more out of it. Dundee Road Runners is made up of people from all walks of life, ages and abilities. This is what has made the club so unique and successful. Over the years there have been many characters in the club who have contributed not only to the success of the club but also in terms of their individual personalities.

This is clear from the personal stories which past and present members have contributed. They give an insight into the psychology of runners, what drives them to improve and the benefits they get from training and socialising with other club members.

“I can do that”

Looking through the stories it's clear that quite a few people decided to have a go at running having seen friends, relatives or colleagues taking part. Ged Hanlon saw his brother Richard finish the first Dundee Marathon in 1983:

I'd gone to cheer him on and whilst watching the finishers I thought “I could do that!”

Although Cath Henderson didn't join the Roadrunners until 1989, she first had a go a few years earlier:

In 1984 I watched my not-so-slim and not-so-fit work colleague run the Dundee marathon. I decided that I could do that! So I started running, completed the 1985 Marathon and gave up!

Wilma Davidson was also inspired by watching the 1984 Dundee Marathon to train up for it the following year and then found she “was hooked”. She's now run over 100 half marathons and 19 full marathons, as well as her favourite race, the 36-mile Two Bridges.

Irene Gibson had another source of inspiration – her father, Suttie Smith, who was a Scottish Cross-Country champion and an Olympic runner – although Irene didn't take it up until running became popular when she was 44, and she bumped into Dave Roy at the Arbroath Half Marathon in 1984.

Val Fyall, on the other hand, joined the Roadrunners with a friend in 1984 to train up for the 1985 Dundee Marathon and raise sponsorship for the local Down's Syndrome Association. They didn't realise how much training was involved, but despite struggling to complete the 1985 event in a snowstorm Val too had “caught the bug” and went on to achieve some great times.

Dave Robertson was also thinking about money when he took up running:

At the time I was playing squash but, due to its popularity, was only getting one or two games a week. Being a Fifer I did a calculation. I already had the kit, and I wouldn't break any more racquets, so jogging was for me. Also I could fit in the training when it suited.

Some people just had a go and found they loved it, including Ken Peters:

1986...my wife and I decided to take part in the Auchtermuchty Festival road race. I mean what could be so difficult about a run through gorgeous countryside on a warm day, with friendly locals cheering us on? Well, surprise surprise, no running shoes, no training and what turned out to be a run through Fife's version of the Himalayas soon provided the answer. But you know something? Despite everything, and to my own surprise, I loved every step. I was hooked. From then on, I was going to call myself a runner, even if very few others would ever share that opinion.

Another with a mental disposition to running is Dave Rodley. He had enjoyed track sessions with the Hawks as a youngster before getting diverted into other youthful activities. Much later, in 2004, he decided it was time to take it up again:

Next day I put on the shiny trainers and tried a jog round Dudhope Park (after dark, needless to say). Despite really struggling to make one full circuit a switch came on in my brain and I remembered how much I had enjoyed running as a youth. After that night I went jogging about 3 times a week.....(and in early 2006) finally plucked up courage and trotted over to Fitness First for a Thursday night session with the Roadrunners.

This running bug is clearly a powerful thing, but Lorraine Dunbar had perhaps the best reason for joining the Roadrunners, in 1995:

The reason I started running was down to my boyfriend (now my husband). It was either Brian took up my hobby, which was cross-stitching, or I took up running. Somehow I couldn't see Brian sitting sewing!

It takes all sorts

One enduring aspect of the Roadrunners which members have remarked on is its informality and openness to anyone and everyone who is prepared to have a go at road running, aiming to work up to at least 6 miles on a training night.

As Bob Wood remembers:

Having heard how some clubs could be elitist I was a bit wary on my first training night, but my worries were soon dispelled as all newcomers were made to feel part of the club and also all achievements and progress were shared by all the members.....The Tuesday training after a race was always special as everyone who had achieved a result or P.B. was recognised and mentioned in dispatches. This contributed to making this a friendly and informal club of which all members should be proud.

Ken Peters made similar observations:

The thing about the Roadrunners is that it has never been elitist, which you might have guessed since they welcomed me into the fold. Throughout the years, countless others have been similarly encouraged....They've all set targets, attained targets, missed targets and had a ball along the way.

Ten years later, Dave Stewart was surprised to find a similar welcome:

I can still remember the trepidation of the first Tuesday evening, arriving in the stifling foyer of Lochee Baths not knowing what to expect, but thinking it would be muffled laughter followed by an hour or so of eyeballs-out red line anaerobic humiliation and an early bath. Wrong. I found what most of our new recruits do, and a great bunch of people comprising runners of all ages, speeds, shapes and sizes.

In fact, Dave's story is full of appreciation for this non-elitist ethic and the contribution of "the club runner":

The person who shows up regularly, networks, supports, congratulates, commiserates, participates... it's Joe/Jean Runner that has made DRR the success it is today, maybe not

too many trophies on the shelf but plenty finishers medals from over the years and a hell of a lot of t-shirts in the drawer....We're all good runners, some faster than others, but we're all running the same road and we are all trying as hard as we can.

Erwan Ansquer, the current Road Captain, feels the openness of the Club to runners of all abilities is what makes it so special:

Everybody is there, running at their own pace and level. Nobody should feel excluded or lower down due to their ability. I keep trying to encourage people to come and join the fun, no matter their level, but some tell me they think they would be laughed at. For all the years I have been at the club, I have never seen anyone being ridiculed because of their ability or anything else. It just wouldn't be right.

Malcolm Forbes joined quite recently, in 2006, "attracted by the web site and the Club's reputation for welcoming newcomers, regardless of their abilities." He had been running for fitness for many years "and immediately realised what a mistake I had made in not joining earlier."

Right from the early days there was also a good mix of men and women – Bob Wood again:

The club grew quickly in the early years and gained a lot of respect from the running fraternity in Scotland as we soon started to show our colours, especially the ladies section which only encouraged the men to try a bit harder and they soon also figured in prize lists.

Linda Caston was tempted to switch from Fife AC because of the opportunity to join a women's team, and Wilma Davidson appreciated the support and encouragement of fellow members:

I immediately liked their team spirit, encouraging everyone, being one of the slower runners it was great to have them supporting me at the end of the run.

Val Fyall similarly found that "the club was always friendly and encouraging and I gained many friends through the club". Lorraine Dunbar likewise.

Several members go so far as to describe the Club as a kind of family. Sue Roger (Pople) says:

During the first ten years this club was unique and we bonded together like an enormous family....Friendships have been sealed forever through the club.

Linda Caston confirms this:

Dundee Roadrunners was for me like a large family – not full of strangers being polite to one another, or competitive braggers wanting to impress with their latest times but just like a family there have been arguments, fallings out and disagreements, but when the chips are down everyone was hugely supportive whether it was about running, or personal matters.

Maybe it's the shared experience of running which provides these close bonds between members, as current Chair Morag Taggart suggests:

In the 10 years I have run with Dundee Road Runners I have gained good friends in a new city, been supported through hard training sessions and even harder races, gotten a bit older and slower but always had lots of fun. I think the motivation to run has to come from the individual, but the company and support of club mates who understand and share the hard

work and weird stubbornness to run in all weathers, at all times of the day, in varying stages of health, hangover or fitness definitely makes it all much more enjoyable.

Keep on Running

The chants that Roadrunners have got from the kids on South Road or the Clepie haven't changed much over the years, and there are a few survivors from the earliest days of the Club who are still out running those streets today.

Ricky Davidson springs to mind as he continues to achieve success in many races, just as he did when the Club started. Barbara Brown is another who has kept going as an active Club member for 25 years, thriving on all sorts of events from triathlons to marathons, not to mention swimming in the River Tay! She has run about 25 marathons, starting with the wintry Dundee Marathon in 1985:

My first Marathon was Dundee 1985 about 9 months after I joined the Club. It was in May and I finished just as the snow started. I took 3 hours 40 minutes and I felt sorry for the other runners who were out in the snow possibly for at least 2 to 3 hours. The next year there was a heat wave so the runners were in danger of sunstroke whereas the year before they were in danger of suffering from frostbite. The joys of the Great British climate!

Barbara's story includes memories of characters over the years, including Sam Connelly who is still running but not for the Roadrunners, and Ged and Charlie who are still coaching but no longer running. Others who can be spotted in the early photos who are still running with the Club include Gill Hanlon, Alison Strachan, Jim Blake, Ken Peters and Harry Kay.

Who's obsessive?

You have to show determination and commitment to go out running for a few miles at a time on a regular basis. For some it remains a pastime, whilst for others it becomes more like a way of life. It takes over.

The simplest runner's obsession is keeping a running log, something which is indeed recommended in order to keep a track of progress and achievements.

Alan McLeod remembers joining the Roadrunners on 6 May 1986.

The reason I am so specific about the date of joining the Roadrunners is that this coincided with the start of my running diaries which I've kept going now for over 22 years. An accountant or what!

Another runner who joined on the same day was Ken Peters, who became a close friend. He also remembered that eventful day:

The story begins way back in 1986, that's 29,237 miles ago (yes, like most distance runners I am seriously addicted to the running diary which catalogues every race and every training mile of my spectacularly average running career).

Brian Murray's contribution seems to be based on a careful examination of his running diary, detailing his best race times and listing some of the 26 marathons he had completed, from Blackpool to Berlin. However, he found the West Highland Way Race in 2002 the most rewarding. It took him 30hrs 44mins, which surely requires a degree of obsessiveness.

However, someone who has taken this to extremes is Alan Kay:

I have kept a diary right from the start and if I manage to run the 10 mile race this year it will be 22 out of 24 races. My first 10 mile race in 1985 cost £3.50, I took 71 minutes and was 187th out of 443 starters. It's always had a good turnout. Up to now I've run about 42,000 miles and done more races than I care to mention but my main race for the last few years has been the West Highland Way Race which I have completed 13 times and I'm entered for next year. I'll be 67 by then, I'm not fast but I get there.

This may give the impression that only men keep running diaries, but perhaps it's just that women runners don't boast about the size of their diaries.

To judge by the detailed listing of her achievements, Margaret Robertson must have kept a good record of each race:

That first marathon in Dundee I completed in 3 hours and 47 minutes. In 1987 I came second to club mate Jane Carroll in 3 hours and 9 minutes. My last marathon in Dublin I completed in 3 hours and 4 minutes at the age of 47.

And then there are other types of running obsession, like Andy Llanwarne's vain attempts to get his marathon time back below 3 hours, before he finally achieved it as part of a Roadrunners relay team in the inaugural DRAM race in 2008.

Perhaps though the prize for the ultimate all-round obsessive should go to one of the other members of that prize-winning relay team, Dave Stewart.

I joined the Roadrunners so long ago I can't exactly remember, but a quick check on the t-shirt collection seems to suggest it was 1996.....If life is really what running is about (and it is), then our club is a focus for this. Absolutely all life is there, the highs, the lows, the disappointments, triumphs, tragedies and trophies....The discipline and stamina that we all need to participate in our sport insinuates itself into all the other parts of our lives.

Says it all really!

Picture this!

Many of the stories include priceless memories of other runners, examples as follows.

Davie Morris has two stories about Eric Fair, one from the time when he couldn't be found to receive his prize as 1st Veteran at the Arbroath Half Marathon:

All of a sudden an announcement was made over the tannoy asking for Mr Eric Fair to come and collect his prize followed by "we believe you are in the beer tent". The roar that went up must have been heard in Dundee as most of the Roadrunners were in the tent with him.

At the Glenrothes Half Marathon in 1984 Eric had another good performance but was complaining of a sore foot afterwards. They were all changed and ready to go, but Eric discovered he had lost his car keys and had everyone looking everywhere for them.

Just then Mr Fair came out of the toilets grinning saying "I've just found my car keys, they were in my left shoe" which had been on his foot, no wonder his foot was sore. Everybody saw the funny side and headed to Ladybank for liquid refreshments.

Kathleen Greene tells of camping with Neil Grieve on the long cycle back from the Great Wilderness Challenge and being set upon by midges: “the next morning I looked like elephant woman having been bitten from head to toe” before she continues with memories of other races and fellow members:

- Peter Saul and his dead fly warm up regime! Does anyone else remember this?
- The Aberdeen 10 mile race with Muriel and Peter Hume, remember the roundabout Peter?
- Sandra Westgate flashing her sexy undies at the boys after the Glen Clova Half Marathon.

Speaking of underwear, Linda Caston has a little story to tell:

Unknown to me (till someone told me years later) I caused a bit of a stir on my first night, by stripping down to my underwear in the communal area, to get changed. You can take the girl out of Essex, but not Essex out of the girl!

Getting encouragement on a hill seemed to be a common experience in the early days. Wilma Davidson was one who commented on this:

We used to run the hills from Perth Road to Blackness Road regularly in the winter and these were always the killers but somehow in a group it did not seem too bad. I can still see Frank Clark shouting at us half way up the hill, you did not dare not to run as fast as you could.

Bob Wood took up hill training, and grew to enjoy it:

I could see the benefits you could gain – it could have been more beneficial if Ged Hanlon didn't try to strike up a conversation halfway up a hill!

Ged wasn't the only coach who talked on a hill – Erwan Ansquer mentions one of his first memories from the club “was an outing with Charlie, who told me his trick to help when running uphill – count with the fingers on your hands.”

Alan Kay remembers a run with Dave Roy:

One Tuesday night run I was late and so was Andy Kelly. Dave Roy turned up and told us he knew the route the runners had taken and we three could follow them, WRONG! We ended up miles away running down the Coupar Angus road as it was getting dark, by the time we got back they were thinking about sending out a search party, I was knackered. We never ran with him again!

Another of Alan's unforgettable experiences is from when he took the slower group one Tuesday night:

I used to try to encourage them and one time I was with one of our newer members and I had used the Bloody Hell words when I was informed she was a nun. She didn't look or dress like a nun, but she was. I said sorry but she told me to keep talking the way I always had as she would be offended if I didn't.

Irene Gibson described several well-known characters:

Some of the noted characters were Sam Connelly, famous for his jokes on the run getting everyone in stitches whilst struggling for breath. Then there was the hard task master Charlie Anderson who put us through our paces with his quality training and not forgetting Frank Clark who thought that a warm-up was circling his big toes (without removing his trainers).

Ged Hanlon remembers a recent member whose work took him elsewhere:

Our club are now going global after some Afghan pinched Tony McPartland's club vest. Tony, a serving soldier in the Army, was stationed here...and he ran with us for a number of years. Once his tour of duty had finished he first served in Bosnia then on to Afghanistan. It's amusing to know that there's some Afghan going around, pleased as Punch, wearing the colours of Dundee Roadrunners.

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6 Committee

Any successful club needs people at the centre who are prepared to give some of their time, enthusiasm, ideas and organisational skills to ensure that the club continues to meet the expectations of members whilst staying afloat financially. And it's not just about having a cosy chat once a month; someone has to make sure that "things get done".

As Gerard Savage, a current member of the committee says:

The longer you are at the club, the more you appreciate the amount of work that goes into organising the club events and just keeping the club ticking over. From the big club events like the Templeton Road Race to the fun events like Twin Peaks, to planning the routes and training that we do each week, it's easy just to turn up and run without realising the planning that has gone into place to make it happen.

Dundee Roadrunners has been fortunate in having such people to call on right from the early days, although occasionally a bit of arm-twisting may still be required at an AGM!

As Dave Stewart, a former Chair, explains:

The Roadrunners has always centred around a core of committed members who have been prepared to give their time and energy to keeping the jolly ship DRR on course. Often these are the club officers and coaches, sometimes the ordinary members. The individuals have changed over the years, or been recycled, but what the best of them have always had in common has been one thing for which there is no substitute and which they communicate to everyone else in the club: enthusiasm.

Many members have taken their turn as Committee members and office bearers, including Linda Caston (formerly McGill):

I was, for a time, club secretary. To me it's important for people to take turns in taking on club responsibilities. The more people who get involved the less there is for each to do. I sometimes wonder if those who have been members for many years but never get involved in the running of the club, really get as much out of it.

Linda pays tribute to some of those who have really supported the club over the years:

thanks to the dedication, time and commitment given by Gill Hanlon for her administrative and organising skills, to Jim Moran for many years of organising routes in the days before computers and GPS, and to the club coaches, notably Ged and Charlie. And finally to Gus, no longer with us, but with many of us in so many other ways.

Gill has had two long stints as Club Secretary, the first of these back around 1987 when Karl Oparka was chairman. Karl recalls:

Dave Roy was the instigator and very active early on, but seemed to move off the scene quite quickly. Eric Fair was one of the founders. He was Treasurer for many years and when I became Chairman (after Harry) we used to rotate the meetings around the houses of the committee members, usually accompanied by tea, sandwiches and a blether.

Cath Henderson became involved in the 1990s and recalls:

I worked my way up from Committee Member to Club Secretary during Ron McGill's reign as Chairman. He inspired events such as Round Tayside, Skyline Challenge, Wurzburg connections, 10-mile series and the wonderful Oban to Dundee jaunt!

As Chairman, Ron was keen to encourage members to set targets for themselves whilst he did the same for the Club. At the AGM in November 1997 he reported on progress against these after his initial 2-year stint (he then continued for a further year). The objectives were:

- a) Improve public profile of the club
- b) Personal achievements
- c) Club achievements
- d) Provide appropriate training
- e) Improve financial position
- f) Reduce/eliminate loss-making events
- g) Increase membership
- h) Lower average age of membership
- i) Widen Club activities
- j) Help & encourage other members

He was able to report good progress in raising the profile through events and fund-raising; Kenneth McLeod's two gold medals at the Special Olympics; club teams entering 7 varied events; new training routes introduced by Gus; no loss-making events; and a lowering in the average age of members. However there was a shortage of different Club activities and a need to try harder to support fellow members.

The Club Chairman has the opportunity to set out ideas for how the Club can develop in new directions, but he or she is also dependent on the support of the other office bearers and committee members. Dave Rodley is now one of those.

In 2008 I ended up on the Committee and am now gaining an insight into all the stuff that goes on behind the scenes, particularly the efforts of Gill (Club Secretary) and Kathy (Treasurer) who put in lots of unheralded work to keep things running efficiently and ensure our races go smoothly. The launch of the new club website (thanks to Gerard Savage) has made quite an impact, and seems to be attracting new runners to the club.

This 25th Anniversary Book is in many ways a testament to the contribution with all the office bearers and committee members have made throughout the lifetime of the Club – without those efforts, there wouldn't be a Dundee Roadrunners Club today (see the table of officer-bearers).

DUNDEE ROADRUNNERS OFFICE-BEARERS

	Chair	Sec	Treasurer
1984	John Monroe	Dave Roy	Eric Fair
Nov 1984-85	John Monroe	Dave Roy	Eric Fair
Nov 1985 – 86	Harry Kay	Dave Roy	Eric Fair
Nov 1986-87	Harry Kay	Dave Roy	Eric Fair
Nov 1987 - 1988	Karl Oparka	Gill Hanlon	Eric Fair
Nov 1988 – 89	Karl Oparka	Gill Hanlon	Eric Fair
Nov 1989 - 90	Val Fyall	Gill Hanlon	Eric Fair
Nov 1990 - 91	Val Fyall	Gill Hanlon	Eric Fair
Nov 1991 - 92	Alan McLeod	Gill Hanlon	Eric Fair
Nov 1992 – 93	Alan McLeod	Linda McGill	Dave Robertson
Nov 1993 – 94	Alan McLeod	Linda McGill	Dave Robertson
Nov 1994 - 95	Alan McLeod	Sandra Westgate	Dave Robertson
Nov 1995 – 96	Ron McGill	Sandra Westgate	Dave Robertson
Nov 1996 – 97	Ron McGill	Sandra Westgate	Dave Robertson
Nov 1997 – 98	Ron McGill	Sandra Westgate	Dave Robertson
Nov 1998 – Feb 2000	Margaret Anderson	Cath Henderson (Thompson)	Gus Hunter
Feb 2000 – 2001	Margaret Anderson	Cath Henderson (Thompson)	Gus Hunter
Feb 2001 –2002	Margaret Anderson	Cath Henderson (Thompson)	Brian Dunbar
Feb 2002 – 2003	Dave Stewart	Dougie Kempton	Brian Dunbar
Feb 2003 – 2004	Dave Stewart	Simon Brown	Simon Brown
Feb 2004 – 2005	Brian Dunbar	Simon Brown	Jack Faulds
Feb 2005 – 2006	Brian Dunbar	Gill Hanlon	Kathy Berthon

Feb 2006 – 2007	Harry Kay	Gill Hanlon	Kathy Berthon
Feb 2007 – 2008	Harry Kay	Gill Hanlon	Kathy Berthon
Feb 2008 – 2009	Morag Taggart	Gill Hanlon	Kathy Berthon
Feb 2009 - 2010	Morag Taggart	Gill Hanlon	Kathy Berthon

ANY OTHER BUSINESS?

The Dundee Roadrunners' AGM hasn't cropped up in anyone's list of memorable events, suggesting that whilst it has played its part in the development of the Club it hasn't provided any real fireworks. Checking into this further, a couple of long-time members recall that there were some heated discussions in the early days although the subject of disagreement is now long forgotten!

Traditionally the formal part of the business is handled relatively quickly, with reports from the Chairman and Treasurer and the election of Committee Members. The main focus for discussion is "Any Other Business", when members have the opportunity to comment on some of the events of the previous year and make suggestions for new activities in the year ahead.

There's usually a bit of a debate about membership fees, with most members favouring a policy of keeping the fees low whilst the Club has a reasonably healthy bank balance, in order to encourage people to join. The membership fee includes a subvention by the Scottish Athletics Federation, and this has generated criticism from members particularly in 2001 when it resulted in a meeting being called with the Chief Executive of the SAF for members to air their grievances.

Another frequent topic is the question of how best to use Club funds raised from events and sponsorship. These have been used in the past to subsidise buses to events, cover the cost of team entries into national championships, and subsidising club kit.

The structure of the Club Championships has been debated, as has the problem of recovering trophies from race winners.

The venue for the AGM has varied every few years. Currently the Snug (the lounge bar across the road from Fitness First) is used, and it can certainly be pretty "snug" in there if the attendance is good. Previously it has been held in the Olympia Centre and the Kemback Centre, whilst in the early days it was held at Valentines and the Park Hotel in Lochee.

The Road Captain isn't automatically a member of the Committee, but it's a key role for the club members. As well as Jim Moran and Erwan Ansquer (mentioned above) these have included Charlie Anderson, Frank Clark, Brian Dunbar, Gus Hunter, Iain Strachan, Alan Lawson and the current Chair, Morag Taggart. Charlie Anderson and Ged Hanlon are the

long-serving Club Coaches (still just as much appreciated by members), whilst Harry Kay, Karl Oparka and Peter Hume were also coaching in the early days.

As some of the above quotations indicate, others have been called on to make contributions because of their special interests, skills, or physical efforts when help is needed for an event. As well as Gerard's work on the website (and Dave Stewart before him), there's Jacqui McCulloch's organisation of club kit, and Mark Gourlay's supplies of Mars Bars from Tesco's. In fact, Mark must hold the record for staying power on the committee having joined it in November 1996. Others have served on subcommittees to plan special events. Alan McLeod has recently stepped down from auditing the Club's accounts after carrying out this task as long as most members can remember. Back in the early days, Dave Mulligan put in a lot of work as social convenor and the support of staff at Lochee Leisure Centre (Dave Morris, Bert, Jo and Sheila on reception) was highly valued. Jim Blake has been a stalwart of the club since the eighties, and served as Vice Chairman for a while, whilst the Blakes' home provided a meeting venue on many occasions when Jane was a member of the committee.

As well as his contribution as Treasurer, Dave Robertson seemed to be a permanent fixture as 10-mile Road Race supremo, results co-ordinator and club poster designer, but finally decided to call it a day. Then there are those who help as marshals (sometimes in miserable weather) during the Road Race, and those who work in the kitchen afterwards. Dave Martin was Club Photographer for many years, helping to remind some of the older members how fit and youthful they once looked! Frank Grier organised buses for events, and John Quinn at *The Dundee Runner* was a great friend of the Club for many years, giving sound advice as he dispensed running shoes and helping to publicise club events. Alec Boyle at the Ancrum Arms as well, for his hospitality with plates of sandwiches and his sponsorship of the Ladies Race held for a number of years from Lochee Park. And the other race sponsors, from Valentines and Miller Hendry to Quaker Oats, providing invaluable support for the 10 mile race and other events. The list could go on and on - so apologies to anyone if your important contribution has been overlooked.

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7 Training & benefits of the club

Now we're getting into the serious business, what the Roadrunners is all about – the training for events and (in the next section) the events themselves.

The earlier section on Club Members indicated some of the benefits which members have gained from being involved in the Roadrunners, including friendship, support and encouragement. These factors are really important in helping people to realise their potential as runners, and that's what the Club has been dedicated to achieving since it was set up to help members prepare for the Dundee Marathon.

The basic structure of the training was described in the section on Venues: group training on Tuesday nights with three groups going 6, 8 and 10 miles; speedwork and hill sessions with

the coaches on Thursday nights; and sometimes longer runs being organised more informally at weekends.

New members benefit from the advice and support they get from experienced runners, whilst everyone benefits from the encouragement they get from running in a group. Perhaps the competitive spirit has been dampened somewhat over the past couple of decades. There are fewer fast runners now, so guys such as Neil Murray and Brian Smith may end up heading off ahead of the pack on their own. In the early days, as Alan McLeod recalls:

The great thing about the club was getting the benefit of running with better runners. I remember quite often heading out on the longer Tuesday runs along Ancrum Road and trying to stay as long as possible with a faster group. Over time I could do this for longer and my race times improved fairly quickly. However over the piece I enjoyed the hill work better. In the winter we did hills off the Perth Road from Hyndford to Glamis Road but in the summer my favourite was hill work at Balgay.

Bob Wood could also see the benefits:

As the club caters for all levels of ability you soon find yourself running in a group, which is an incentive to try and improve if you want to, as you can gradually move up the groups. I'm sure most runners who trained with a group improved on their times in races. I know I would not have improved as much if I had to train by myself, so my thanks to all my training partners.

One of those training partners was Karl Oparka:

It was all very sociable on club nights, people used to chat beforehand and everyone was interested in everyone else's race times from the previous weekend. Everyone wanted to compete then. There was a fast pack and a medium group and I'd try for all the life of me to hang onto the fast group. There was a very good group of runners and Bob Wood was probably the best; he was over 40 and competing very well as a vet. The team was successful in races too, with Bob, Ged Hanlon, Ricky Davidson, and Stuart Swanston all counting in team races. This was the main benefit to me, being pulled along by the fast runners. The training sessions had a good competitive edge to them and a lot of people found their times improving. There were quite a few good women runners then as well, Muriel Muir especially, and Margaret Robertson, Gill Hanlon and Sue Roger.

Both Sue Roger and Lorraine Dunbar say that they were not competitive by nature, but were encouraged by others to improve. Funnily enough, Lorraine has been inspired by Sue:

There have been quite a number of characters in the Club during my time, but the person who stands out for me has to be Sue Pople. For a runner to be of senior years she has the agility of a girl less than half her age. Running with her over the Sidlaws earlier this year she ran like a fawn, and when it came to closed gates she was up and over in the blink of an eye. She absolutely bursts with energy and is a great inspiration for any running club member old or new.

Many other members will have had similar thoughts, seeing established runners performing well time after time, seemingly effortlessly, although that can also dishearten you sometimes when they glide past you!

Margaret Robertson was one of those who already had a competitive instinct just waiting to be unleashed:

Through running I discovered a hitherto unrecognised and untapped fiercely competitive streak in my nature....I always found marathons the biggest and best challenge but years of road running takes its toll and like many others I now do far more of my training off road.

But back in the 1980s and 1990s it was inspiring taking part in Roadrunner training nights when over 50 runners of all abilities left Lochee Baths streaming down the High Street or along Ancrum Road on runs including the monthly 3 hills 10-mile run which interspersed hard effort with fun and banter. There was always someone to run with and someone to catch. The women soon developed a particularly strong team which lasted over a period of at least 10 years and won races at different distances all over Scotland. The men in the club were always highly supportive which was in no small way responsible for the success of the ladies' team. Women were never treated as second class citizens in the Roadrunners which I realised was not always the case in other running clubs.

Gill Hanlon also commented on the support which the men provided for the women, and the importance of training as a group:

The concept of group training was very strong back then and this gelled the club and helped people fulfil their running potential. For this reason, DRR were foremost at any event and our teams were feared at events both local and further afield scooping many prizes in all categories with many members running personal best times as they continued to improve.... The men in the club were always keen to "pull us women along" at training and we reaped the benefits of this encouragement.

One of those who was helped to achieve her potential was Muriel Muir, one of the Roadrunners' top female runners in the 1980s. She had started running to keep fit and competed in the 1984 Blairgowrie Half Marathon and 1985 Dundee Marathon, but she realised that she should have been able to get better times if she had trained properly. So she joined the Roadrunners, and gained the benefits as she explained to the Sporting Post on August 2 1986:

Was there a coach with the club who helped you a lot?

No, the club is really informal but everyone helps each other...I haven't felt the lack of a special coach. The main thing is that we can train together, are kept informed of events we may be interested in entering, and have a very good committee to take care of things like arrangements for transport to races.

Morag Taggart was also encouraged by the crowd of fellow-runners at the start of each training run:

My first club nights with the Road Runners were from Lochee Swimming Pool, and I remember the buzz of all the runners squashed into the quite small space of the reception area before heading off for our training. They were a friendly crowd and the thought of catching up on the latest running gossip and tales from races got me up to Lochee for a run regardless of the dark nights and/or horrible weather.

Sharing in adversity is well-known as a means of building relationships and those hard winter training runs in miserable weather continue to work their magic with the runners heading out from Fitness First. Gerard Savage experienced it as well:

There is a masochistic streak in most runners that seem to enjoy those cold, wet winter runs during December! Particularly when you are running with someone else who is getting as wet and cold as you. Nothing like complaining about the weather and/or route to a team of

runners when you have finished. This is one of the best things about the club: it's the friends you make in the club.

Gerard also highlighted the difference between the Tuesday night and Thursday night sessions. He tagged along first with a friend, Mike MacNamara, on a Thursday evening.

Mike had a series of bad knee injuries and eventually had to stop running, but I had the bug by then and became a regular each Thursday for the next few months. The club was really welcoming – I have never been particularly fast but didn't feel out of my depth and you never get anything but encouragement on those Thursday sessions. It was great to run with a group as well, you always pushed a little bit more with people around you. I still think that the Thursday night sessions are the best way to start with the club because you are always around other members for the whole night.

Thursdays are where the coaches make their mark and the experience of Charlie and Ged is much appreciated by the members. Dave Rodley was impressed right from the start on his first Thursday session:

As it turned out it was one of Charlie's most fiendish creations that night, a long intervals session on Kinghorne Road. I went home very knackered but I had LOVED it and couldn't wait to do another session again the next week. What's more the other runners seemed a pretty friendly bunch too. Over the first few months I gradually got to know some of the regulars, and to appreciate the wisdom, motivation and selfless efforts of Charlie and Ged to keep us all going.

Malcolm Forbes, another recent recruit, felt similarly:

I was particularly attracted to the Thursday night training programme, as it is difficult for an individual to do this as effectively alone. I have noticed an improvement in running times and think I have progressed, in particular, from the Thursday sessions. The Club benefits greatly from the dedication of the coaches, Ged and Charlie, who turn up in all weathers and provide a varied and imaginative training programme.

Back in the early days, Bob Wood says, his mentor was Peter Hume, "who guided me in the basics of training and planning". He goes on:

I was struck by how many people were interested in everyone's progress, not just the so called better runners, people like Jim Edward, who sadly is not with us anymore, he did an awful lot to encourage younger and inexperienced runners and gave me advice on lifestyle topics and the road captains deserve a special mention for making the routes interesting and diverse, which kept the members on their toes.

Bob in turn helped others along, not just by providing a fast-moving target to try and keep up with. Wilma Davidson says he always enquired how her running was getting on and always gave encouragement. Val Fyall recognises the coaching he gave her on the track at Caird Park, helping her to achieve her personal bests. She also thanked Gordon Hill for a very important lesson when he told her off after her laces came undone in the Glenrothes Half Marathon in 1987. She still managed to finish second lady, but ever since, she has triple-knotted her laces!

Ged Hanlon also refers to the people who influenced him in his training. These included Bob Wood and Ricky Davidson with whom he had fast training sessions; Karl Oparka who introduced cross country to the club; Alan Matheson (a Hawkhill Harrier); Liz McColgan who

pushed him to train on the track; and Liz's coach John Anderson who influenced Ged to start coaching. Ged's reference to Alan stands out:

The next influence came from a dirty Hawkhill Harrier, Alan Matheson. Alan was a work colleague and suggested we train during our lunch break on Mon. Wed. and Fri. And so fartlek, stepping stones, acceleration and reducing recovery all became part of a nice relaxing lunch. Alan trained exceptionally hard especially if there were any dogs around. Although there was on occasion a huge hound of some kind stopped him in his tracks by pinning him to a tree. Ours were tears of laughter, his were real.

So this is where Ged picked up some of his training techniques from for the Thursday sessions!

Some Roadrunners have gone further afield to get special training, including Alan McLeod, Neil Duthie and Margaret Robertson who went out to a summer training camp in Switzerland in 1993 and appeared on the front cover of the company's brochure the following year.

Soup runs

The other feature of the training week was the Sunday runs. At the start most members were focused on training for marathons and Sunday mornings were the best time to fit in long runs up to 20 miles and more. With less emphasis these days on marathons there is less need for those gruelling sessions but some members have continued to get together more informally in smaller groups for weekend training. From the mid-1990s these took on more of a structure once again with the advent of winter soup runs – one of the members would host a Sunday morning run with a variety of distances and then serve up a choice of soup afterwards. At their height, half a dozen of these would be held during the close season, spread from December through to March. It meant those who were training up for the London or Lochaber marathons could do some long runs with company, whilst others could build up strength for the Inverness Half Marathon. And some could jog around for a few miles and then enjoy the soup and the crack! Morag Taggart liked the idea:

"Soup Runs" were an idea I had not come across at any of the other clubs I had run with, but I thought the combination of company on long Sunday runs, then homemade soup (and sometimes wine) afterwards was brilliant!

In truth, it was Dave and Margaret Robertson who really started it with their New Year run and social gathering. Andy Llanwarne had done this sort of thing at his first running club up in Banff, and for ten years held a pre-Christmas soup run with some home-made pizza and homebrew (much appreciated by Daniel). Other regular hosts included Ron and Alison, Ian and Freda, and Ricky and Wilma (with the unforgettably delicious broccoli and stilton soup). Sometimes participants could get more training than they bargained for, as Andy recalls:

A few years ago Ricky took advantage of the occasion to get some help from everyone to move the garden shed. It was quite an undertaking but provided one of many little memories from 15 years with the Club. Another was Brian Dunbar taking a wrong turning somewhere on a soup run and getting back much later than expected. But I think we've all done that at some time.

Soup runs seem to have had their day, although a few attempts have been made to revive them. There was a spate of serious Sunday morning training sessions when Alan Lawson

was Road Captain, and for the past few years there have been one or two weekend practice hillruns for the Devil's Burdens race at the end of January.

Junior section

A couple of years after Dundee Roadrunners was set up the number of members had reached 180, and it was decided to introduce a junior section to encourage the next generation of runners. The Courier reported on the response on June 5 1986:

Mr David Roy, secretary of Dundee Roadrunners said there had been a good response from youngsters when the junior section first started two weeks ago, and it is hoped that the club will attract even more young runners.

Some 25 children aged from 10 to 16 years attended last night's meeting.

"The junior section will concentrate mainly on cross-country running, and about halfway through the season they will get to do some athletics", he said.

At that time Tom Greig was quoted as the coach, but the accompanying photo shows Charlie Anderson and Dave Roy flanking 22 smiling kids.

Karl Oparka joined the club around that time and became one of those involved in coaching the youngsters, as he remembers:

By the time I arrived in Dundee, Harry and Charlie had already started a junior section on Wednesday nights, training at Caird Park. To begin with they'd go for a jog. I went there around the time that my son Jonathan started running cross country. The junior section really took off – it grew until there were about 30 kids there. We decided we needed to give it more structure, so Harry, Charlie and I attended coaching courses and soon they were sprinting, hurdling and jumping as well. A lot of kids were getting through to Grangemouth for open-graded competitions and some were doing really well, wanting to compete further. We realised we didn't have an avenue for them unless DRR became registered as a distinct athletics club, so they mostly ran as second claim for Tayside Athletics Club, which was based at Arbroath. There was maybe a bone of contention with the Hawks here also as many of the local youngsters we were coaching went on to compete for Tayside. My sons went on to compete internationally in athletics, Jonathan competing for GB in the sprints and Richard for Scotland in throws events. Eventually, my own running became less important (and more time consuming), and all my efforts were shifted into coaching my two sons.

The surge of interest from youngsters had died away by then. Those that were left joined the Hawks to get the competition. The Hawks were very successful at that time and were competing in Division 1 of the British league. Stephen Peters who was one of the original juniors who is still running with the Roadrunners now. I also used to coach Kenneth McLeod for several years and have enjoyed seeing his maintained interest in running.

Among the photographs in the archive are a number of excellent shots of the coaches in action with the juniors, which were taken for one of the Roadrunners' promotional evenings.

Ouch!

Only a few of the stories mention injuries, but these have affected most runners at one time or another, especially those “more senior” members.

These can be short-term annoyances or longer-term problems that can even bring a running career to a premature end. Dave Robertson recalled how he was improving his times for half marathons and the 10k before disaster struck and he pulled a ham-string, “and, to be honest, never really got back into the rhythm again.” Grant Gourlay was one of those who was turning in some great performances over a couple of seasons and then was stricken by a persistent knee injury that brought a premature end to his achievements.

The unsung heroes for those trying to come back from injury are the physios and sports masseurs who get to work on a damaged muscle or tendon, seeming to batter it about even more, but helping somehow to speed its recovery.

Ged Hanlon needed treatment right from the start:

The biggest help to get me on the road, literally, was Eric Ferguson. Eric was physiotherapist at Dens Park and also for the national football team and he helped me deal with an old knee injury I'd picked up playing football. We had to work for a number of months building up the muscles around the joint to give it the stability to endure the distances I hoped to run. I almost gave up this long and painful process at times but Eric was sure that I'd be OK as long as I stuck to the plan.

Over the years Eric would help many other runners get back on their feet again, and he's still doing so despite having retired at least once! Other well-kent pairs of hands are possessed by Jo McColgan (sister-in-law of Liz), relative newcomer Lee Spendiff, and of course the Roadrunners' very own Irene Gibson.

Davie Morris tells a story about when John McNally came a cropper:

John used to run the Ben Nevis hill race in his younger days. John said you raced up to the top on the same route but on the descent you could go any way you wished. John always got to the top first but the same person always beat him on the way down. He decided the next time he would follow him to the top then follow him down and he knew he could beat him in a sprint finish. The race started, John followed him, he also followed him down and by this time the mist had come down quite badly. His rival raced on and disappeared down a 20 feet drop, not to be outdone John followed and both ended up next to one another in Fort William hospital with various broken bones. This did not put John off and he was still running well into his 70s.

Gill Hanlon had a horrific injury much more recently, breaking her ankle on a training run for the Devil's Burdens, but amazingly she managed to get back to full fitness within the year. Dave Stewart too is racing again after a lengthy lay-off with a mysterious knee injury. And Harry Kay had to have his knees fixed but then got back to regular running. So, when disaster strikes and you twist an ankle or get a calf strain, take inspiration from those who have recovered from worse. And keep doing those stretches before and after a run!

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8 Events

For most runners all the effort that goes into training reaps its rewards in their performances at races. Whilst the initial focus of the Roadrunners was mostly on marathons and half marathons, members soon found other distances and types of event to try. They also decided to set one up for themselves.

The Templeton 10

Dundee Roadrunners organises various events and first and foremost is the annual 10 Mile Road Race. This event was first staged in November 1985 as a result of money from Wolverhampton Council which was reimbursement to DRR for accommodation when the club visited Wolverhampton to take part in the Marathon. As Charlie Anderson recalls the members donated this money back to the club to give funds for its own events.

Due to the donation from Wolverhampton the committee decided to try and organise a local roadrace which was shorter than a half or full marathon and the Ten Mile Roadrace was born. The original route took runners onto the main Newtyle road before turning off for Auchterhouse, but due to police concerns, this changed and subsequently runners ran to Auchterhouse via the Dronley road. There have been a few minor alterations to the route over the years but basically the route remains in the Templeton / Auchterhouse area.

Most recently the route has finished near Clatto Reservoir after a final climb through the woods, just in case anyone has any energy left after the long ascent of Templeton Road.

The first year 443 runners took part and it has always proved to be a popular event with the numbers usually around 300-400. There were 454 finishers in 1986, including 75 men and 23 women from Dundee Roadrunners. It is now part of other running clubs' racing calendars, often incorporated into their club championships. Although it is a testing route for all abilities ("a hill run on the roads") many competitors return year after year. The entry fee in 1985 was £3.50 and it has been kept at an affordable level since then.

According to Alan McLeod the record for the race was by Ian Campbell of the Hawks in 1990 in a time of 50.00. However, the record could have been under 50 minutes as Peter McColgan was leading Ian Campbell and P McCavana (all of the Hawks) but their time was so fast and he got to the final turn so quickly that the marshal was not in the correct place and Peter went past the turn before the marshal got into position and directed Ian Campbell and P McCavana to the correct finish. Peter McColgan ended up third.

Ron McGill recalls another mixup over directions:

I'm reminded of one particular year when Jenny Wood Allen led the 10-mile Road Race round about Wattie's. Although Jenny was given a head start that year no-one from the Club accompanied her round the route. Consequently she went wrong, took a short cut, and gave the true race leader a real surprise!

The race takes a full year to organise and is the main item on the Committee's monthly meetings, with sponsors to contact as top priority, buses to organise, publicity to be prepared etc. Tee shirts were always a popular giveaway at the end of the race (often featuring a Ged Hanlon design) and it was one of the first races to give out a long sleeved tee shirt ideal for

winter running. Another year a whisky glass marked a special anniversary, and a china mug, a shoe bag and a hat have also been presented.

These handouts have been helped by the generosity of sponsors, who over the years have included Valentines, Astral Sports, Miller Hendry, Dundee Runner, Saucony, Tay Shirt Company, City of Discovery Campaign, Martin Alan, Quaker, Dand Carnegie and others.

Valentines canteen was the first venue for registration and post race soup, sandwiches and cakes. Catering for this event has always been taken on by committee members, often supported by relatives. Cath Henderson has fond memories of the hysteria of the sandwich makers when making the million pieces for the race and blowing up her cooker when trying to make massive pots of soup!

Around 1991 the race registration and catering moved from Valentines to Dundee University Sports Centre in Hawkhill. This involved an energetic warm-up session the evening before to cover the entire floor of the gym hall with protective mats. Then the venue moved to Ward Road Gym in the city centre in 2006 when the University gym was being overhauled. There will be a further change in 2009, with changing and presentations at the Ranger Centre at Clatto. In 2008 there were 320 entered and 302 finishers. Sometimes as many as 100 runners have turned up to enter on the day, thus causing the person(s) compiling the results a bit of a headache to enter all runners onto the system before the start of the race, but this has always been achieved and the results posted at the prize-giving not long after the race.

Other Club Events

The annual calendar has included a number of other races organised by the Roadrunners, some of them open and some restricted to Club members. Currently the other open race is the White Tops Hill Race at Auchterhouse, first held in June 1997. It has attracted an enthusiastic entry each year, although in 2001 it had to be cancelled due to foot and mouth disease.

A Ladies 3 or 6 mile race from Lochee Park was also organised by the club for a number of years until it was cancelled in 1998 due to a clash with a 10k race nearby. It was sponsored by Dundee Runner, the running shop in Lochee which was owned by the late John Quinn, a great friend of Dundee Roadrunners.

Another shorter event at Lochee was also held for a time each August – the Ancrum Arms race sponsored by Alec Boyle who owned the pub of that name, much frequented by the Roadrunners when they ran from Lochee Baths.

The Club races held each year include the Spring and Autumn Handicaps following a route of about 4.5 miles through and around Camperdown Park to mark the start and end of the summer running season. These date back to 1988 and for many years the handicaps were set by Stewart Swanston, then Alison Strachan took over and the task is currently performed by Ged. There is always some dispute (in a friendly way) about why someone has been given a tougher handicap than he or she expects – or why a rival has an easier one.

The John McNally 7-mile race was instituted by one of the founders of the club who donated the trophies and used to come along to the race each year to present them. Held in May, it too used to start from the main drive in Camperdown Park before heading out to Dronley

Bridge and the tough climb back up to Birkhill, but due to concerns with crossing the Coupar Angus Road it now starts and finishes at Clatto.

The other regular event for members is the Club Hill Race on Auchterhouse Hill which was introduced way back in the early years, over a similar route to the White Tops. Club members usually take these races just as seriously as any open event, with lung-busting, thigh-burning efforts to reach the top of the hill. Norman Watson and Linda Caston live close by and, when they've been in, they've invited runners in to recover from their exertions with a fine spread of food and drink. Linda recalls:

On one occasion Jim Blake locked his keys in a borrowed car he had with him, and was here for hours till someone could come and break into his car. On another, when we thought everyone had left we found two pairs of running shoes in the porch and found two guys animatedly chatting away in the kitchen - neither of us knew who they were.

Special events have been held to mark anniversaries or raise funds, including a Green Circular relay and other activities in 1997 which produced £1000 for the team going to the Special Olympics at Portsmouth. The 10th and 20th anniversaries of the Club in 1994 and 2004 were both marked by relay runs around Tayside and Fife and for the Millennium there was a cross-Scotland run from Oban to Dundee.

New events introduced recently include a Twin Peaks race over the Law and Balgay Hill, and a race to round up Santa's Reindeer just before Christmas! This builds on the success of previous Christmas runs across the Tay Bridge to Newport and back, with some brave runners wearing Santa costumes and jingling bells.

Events elsewhere

The most popular trip for many is Inverness Half Marathon. This is the first race of the season and it is eagerly awaited through the long dark days of the winter. It was in March 1985 that the first busload of runners from the club travelled north for what was to become an annual event for over twenty years. In the early days the club was very successful at Inverness, particularly the ladies section, winning individual and team prizes.

The trip up the A9 was a social as well as a competitive event. Two buses regularly left Lochee with DRR and members of other clubs such as Hawkhill Harriers and Arbroath Footers. On one occasion three 40-seater buses were required, such was the popularity of this event. The intention was for one bus to return earlier with those who didn't want too long in the pub, but as Ricky Davidson remembers "no matter how well we had it all worked out by the time the last bus left there must have been fifty plus inebriated people on board." For a few years a hotel in Inverness put on a ceilidh after the race and of course DRR members would troop there to strut their stuff.

Friends and family would come along for the day and Gus organised a sweepstake on what Dave Stewart's race time would be! The atmosphere on the journey there was fantastic and friendships were made on these trips that are still strong today. Daniel Fields has fond memories of these trips, and Sheila Carter is another who remembers the trips to Inverness and the successes of DRR members:

(The race) was followed by a ceilidh and prize giving. There was always a number of DRRs among the prize winners. This was enjoyed by all even though we were extremely stiff by the time we returned to Dundee. I don't think anyone watching us would have guessed we were from a running club as we stepped gingerly off the bus.

Evelyn Fairweather even remembers one return journey when the bus driver was spotted nodding off on the motorway back to Dundee!

As the last of the buses did not leave until 7 o'clock for the return journey it was off to one of the many pubs for a meal and few drinks. It was a very different group returning home. Gus Hunter, who is fondly remembered by so many of us, was a regular at Inverness and one year organised a game of charades, not an easy feat on a bus, but received with great enthusiasm and a lot of hilarity. Andy Llanwarne has happy memories of one particular trip with Gus when they had both put in a big effort (he can't remember who won on that occasion) and afterwards Gus went for a couple of extra pints rather than wasting good drinking time eating pizza. He came on board with a fish supper, demolished it and fell asleep for the rest of the journey.

A week after the first bus trip to Inverness in March 1985 the Roadrunners were off again, this time to Wolverhampton for the city's millennium marathon. There were 43 runners including some from Michelin and YMCA clubs, together with family members and friends. Over the years, buses were provided for Club Championship races, weekends away and for trips as far away as Blackpool and Germany. A bus was always available for The Black Rock, a popular Friday evening run along the beach at Kinghorn in Fife. One year after the usual night spent in the local pub a row erupted on the bus. This almost stopped the annual trip to Kinghorn but the Committee voted to continue with it. This happened over ten years ago and the two revellers who started the row can be seen on a Tuesday night in the Snug Bar best of mates! Another story concerns the late Errol Galloway, who at the time was bus convenor and bus driver. He left his wife behind after a run and didn't realise for most of the journey before turning back red faced to find a not-too-happy wife waiting for him!

Ricky Davidson remembers the trip to the Black Isle races with an overnight stay in Inverness:

After the races we descended on this Pizza Place where they were doing a promotion of eat as much as you can for a fiver. I have never seen such hard working waitresses, who could not keep up with the demands for more food. I think their profits took a hammering that Saturday. On the way home our bus was stopped by police as there had been a robbery in a jewellery shop in Inverness and they wanted to search the bus. As the door of the bus opened a bag of trophies fell out at the policeman's feet and we had to explain these had been won the previous day. After a bit of checking up he let us carry on our way. Bus trips were never boring.

The trip to the Blackpool Marathon of 1988 seems to have been burnt into the memories of several members who took part – almost literally, as it was one of the hottest days on record with many people being treated for the heat. Harry Kay, Bob Wood and Bruce Anderson were among those who suffered. The hotel was memorable for being so “grotty” and there was mention of the Nolan Sisters as well.

The club was very fortunate, not only to have bus drivers in the club but also in that club members were often willing to drive mini buses themselves, and without them many trips

would not have been possible. There was Brian Dunbar driving to Inverness, albeit reversing into a wall at the hotel where the club were staying and Jim Moran taking a group to The Two Breweries. Ricky Davidson recalls another memorable incident:

Then there was the trip to Loch Rannoch Marathon when we left it to Frank Grier to book the bus as he was a bus driver for the Council. We caused quite a bit of hilarity when we pulled up at the race in our Desperate Dan minibus covered in pictures of the comic character.

Dave Robertson remembers:

It was great fun, with lots of camaraderie. I kept a diary of the runs. Almost every weekend would find groups from DRR running all over Scotland. But it was also relatively serious and we trained hard, particularly on a Sunday morning.

All this travelling around the country to races has produced some notable successes, as described in the next section. Over the 25 years a number of methods have been used to work out the Ladies' and Men's Club Champions, and numbers of entries increased according to which races were on the list counting towards the championship. Awards were also presented for fastest times over specific distances.

Having trained up for marathon distances, some Roadrunners couldn't stop there and set their sights on ultra events (longer than a marathon). The Lairig Ghru just counts, measured at 28 miles from Braemar to Aviemore with a few boulders along the way. The Two Bridges was a favourite of several members – longer again at 36 miles, but without having to cross a mountain. Some still wanted to run further and entered the West Highland Way, notably Alan Kay who has completed this race 13 times! It's 95 miles from Milngavie to Fort William and is held in midsummer so that competitors can start at 1 am, aiming to finish by 12 noon the following day, 35 hours later. Sounds easy – 3 miles an hour would do it. You try it!

Ricky Davidson is another enthusiast for ultra events and in 2008 completed over 100 miles in the 24-hour race round Perth's North Inch just a week after running the Moray Marathon.

At the other end of the scale, the Club has regularly competed in the Hartley Cup, set up by Eddie Hartley from Kinross Roadrunners for the roadrunning clubs in Perth, Dundee, Forfar, Arbroath, Anstruther and Kinross to race each other at the end of the season. To begin with it involved mixed (male/female) teams of 12, each member running a mile in a relay. Latterly the format has changed with fewer runners but each person running twice. The clubs take turns to host the event so it has been held on school playing fields at Anstruther and Forfar, in the picturesque grounds of Scone Palace and Kinross House, at Camperdown and Crombie Country Parks and on the playing fields at Forthill in Dundee.

Some runners prefer distances around the 10k mark, which doesn't require as much training as marathons and aren't as hard on the legs, but can still provide a good test of fitness. The 10k races at Perth and Forfar have always been popular, as have the Fife Series midweek events which are over 5-mile routes. To encourage participation in these over recent years the Roadrunners introduced a trophy for the best combined performances in the Fife Series. There are several other quirky races in various corners of Fife such as the Black Rock 5 (held in May over the sands when the tide is out) and the Ceres 8 which, as Andy Llanwarne says, is a good distance if you don't mind running continually uphill for 4 miles.

Other popular races over the years include the Glasgow Half Marathon in the summer and the Glen Clova Half Marathon in November, usually the week after the Templeton 10. They could hardly be more different in terms of the weather, the scenery, and the numbers involved. The Glen Clova race has often turned into a social event as well, with some people staying overnight and going for a hillwalk the next day to clear their heads! Wilma and Ricky Davidson (who were married there!), and Charlie and Margaret Anderson, are among those with particular attachments to the area.

Some members have fond memories of other races. Morag mentions the Fife Series – “it is worth trying these races if only to admire the kamikaze downhill running skills of some competitors!” – and the Moray Marathon at Elgin – not surprisingly given that she’s had a number of excellent results there.

I think I have become a bit of a fixture at the Elgin Marathon, first running it over 20 years ago, then returning after a 10 year break from marathons. It is a really well organised race with beautiful scenery, run in combination with a half marathon and 10k event and being able to visit the loo 10 minutes before the start with no queue is a feature only runners would appreciate.

Lorraine Dunbar talks about her first race, the Smokies 10 miler for ladies at Arbroath, where she started chatting to another runner only to get a response in French! Sheila Carter includes the Forfar 15 mile race, which was popular with members as the next step towards a full marathon, and the hill races at Newtonmore and the Lomonds. Bob Wood’s favourite distance is the marathon:

...as I thought it was the ultimate test of my training. My favourite race has to be the Potteries. The spectators were terrific all the way round and it was the hilliest course I have run. My best place finish was 4th place in 2:33. My worst experience in a race was in the Blackpool Marathon. The club took a bus to this race and quite a few members suffered in the heat and suffered from dehydration. A case of prepare properly or suffer the consequences.

Linda Caston has a number of favourites: the Aberfeldy Half, in a scenic area where she spent a lot of time sailing; Glen Clova, again for the scenery, the post race atmosphere and fun; and the Crieff 10k, over an interesting and varied route.

However, my all time favourite, and the race I’ve done most often is the Ceres 8m race at the end of August. Somehow for me, it marks the end of the summer evening running season, and often the weather is fine, and there is that distinctive slightly autumnal smell in the air – plus of course it has a great downhill finish!

Participation in the ultra races generally requires a backup team who often go unheralded. Wilma’s favourite race was the Two Bridges:

I completed this in 5.40 and have to thank Ron McGill and Sue Pople for backing me which I could not have done without them, also to see Sandra Westgate jump up and down with tears of joy when she finished in just over 6 hours is something I will always remember.

New Horizons

One of the great things about running and being part of a club is that it encourages people to visit places which they might otherwise never have dreamed of visiting. Since the early Club visits to Wolverhampton, Wurzburg, Blackpool and London, members of the Roadrunners have travelled far and wide to find new running experiences. The Dublin and New York marathons have been popular events for several members. Brian Murray, who tragically died in an avalanche early in 2009, had completed 26 marathons:

including - Berlin, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Blackpool, Edinburgh, Black Isle, Connemara, Belfast, Lochaber, Moray and Offshore on a running machine on Xmas Day 1995.

Steve Archibald is working his way through the marathons in different Eastern European countries, whilst Andy Llanwarne ventured beyond the Arctic Circle to run in the Midnight Sun Marathon at Tromsø.

Lots of runners have also moved on to a variety of off-road events as listed in the "Roughing it" box.

This encouragement to take part in events in different places is something that many members mention in their stories, including Wilma Davidson:

I have travelled all over Scotland, run up mountains, around lochs, over bridges, been to the Isles of Skye, Mull and Lewis, seen villages and towns I would never have thought of going to, and have run in many parts of the world – New York, Dublin, London, Wurzburg in Germany (although this was a 16k walk) and the Verdon Gorge in France (a bit of a disaster that one!).

And it's not just people's geographical horizons that have been extended. Sue Pople says that:

The Dundee Roadrunners opened up a new era to my life, I was fortunate to be able to run all the different disciplines and enjoyed running over hills, cross country, on the track and roads.

Gerard Savage is also grateful for the racing opportunities over the past couple of years:

Running with the club has meant I've done racing events I would never have considered before – races I'd previously considered only for "proper" runners. I've run in the Cateran Trail & Devil's Burdens (team events, so great fun – when they're finished), and done some of the Fife AC Series.

Margaret Anderson's Chairman's report to the AGM in February 2000 illustrates how the Club as a whole was broadening its horizons.

As a club we are becoming more adventurous and variable in our choice of events, and while we are a Roadrunning Club, more and more members are trying something different, hence the success of events such as Speyside Way, Lairig Ghru, Two Breweries, to name a few of the off-road events becoming more popular with the membership. The least said about the

West Highland Way the better, but suffice it to say snorkel and flippers would have made things easier for some of us, and it is to Alan Kay's credit that he finished it with dry socks!

However, just as runners in their prime can take on more varied and challenging events, the process can work in the opposite direction. These days many runners are able to keep going into their 50s, 60s and beyond, although (apart perhaps from Alan Kay) they usually have to modify their ambitions. Wilma Davidson used to prefer ultras and didn't really enjoy the shorter distances such as 10ks, "but they have become more appealing in the later years!" Alan McLeod explains how he has kept going by shifting most of his training to Dawson Park or Crombie Reservoir on a Sunday:

...and this has allowed me to continue running into my 60s with fewer injury problems than some of my contemporaries in the early days of the Roadrunners who had to give up when the pounding of the roads caught up with them. I still race regularly but 10k now seems like a long race to me....and for the last 8 or 9 years I have enjoyed being first over 50 or 60 as well as meeting a whole load of new runners that I wouldn't have otherwise met if I hadn't taken part in these races....Although in my 60s I don't feel out of place as more and more people are continuing to run into what used to be considered old age and believe me the competition in my age group is fierce with many a sprint for the line.

Roughing it

Or – when is a Roadrunner not a Roadrunner?

The answer is, when he or she is running on some other type of surface, such as a muddy field or a hill track.

Karl Oparka is given the credit by Ged Hanlon for persuading his fellow Roadrunners to do some cross-country races, way back in the early days of the Club. These became a regular feature of the racing calendar and teams from the Roadrunners turned in some good performances. One of those who enjoyed the cross country races was Evelyn Fairweather,

though not when we ran through mucky ploughed fields in Fife and also at Balwearie where quite a few members tended to lose a shoe in the deep wet muddy course.

More recently however, interest in taking part in these races seems to have waned. Maybe this is simply because there are so many alternative ways now to get muddy whilst running. One of these is the Devil's Burdens, a crazy relay race over the Lomond Hills in Fife held at the end of January, often with snow, sleet and high winds to add to the steep slopes and boggy ground. It's become a very popular event with two or three DRR teams taking part each year (see Bryan Henderson's story of the 2002 race).

Another event that captured the imagination in the 1990s was the Hebridean Challenge, a much longer relay from one end of the Outer Hebrides to the other over 4 days, where teams combined running across hills and peatbogs with cycling and canoeing.

Ron McGill ran in the first Dundee Marathon in 1983, and one other road marathon, and didn't enjoy either of them. He is a great enthusiast for off-road running:

Twenty five years and 28,000 miles later having taken part in most road and off-road events

in Scotland has proved that road marathons are only a small part of the experience and memories that running in all its forms can offer.

Ron has dreamt up some challenges of his own for Club members, including the Coast to Coast run/cycle in 2000, the Anniversary Relays and the Sidlaws Skyline run in 2002. Ron felt that the Club should be proud of these events:

Their success in my opinion comes from the level of participation, and that they inspired members of all abilities to step out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves.

In the Sidlaws Skyline, people ran either as members of relay teams or individuals, over the 30 miles of hills from the Kirriemuir Road to the Isle of Skye Hotel in Perth. It was a glorious day and a memorable event, although one unfortunate participant will remember it for feeling pretty sick at the end!

Other club members have proved their abilities in hill races over the years, such as Muriel Muir, Caroline Stewart and Gus Hunter and – as Wilma Davidson’s story of the Two Breweries and Half Ben Races shows – Wilma and Alison Strachan. Some have tackled the 28-mile race through the rocky Lairig Ghru, others have completed the long Speyside Way (see Dougie Kempton’s story) and the even longer West Highland Way races, and a few have taken on the Great Wilderness Challenge (covered by Kathleen Greene and Neil Grieve). DRR teams have also taken part in the hill run/cycle Corrieyairack Challenge from Fort Augustus to Kincaig and the CATERAN Trail event near Blairgowrie. The Monikie Duathlon winter series is another run/cycle event closer to home which some members take part in every year and the Forfar all-terrain Half Marathon is also conveniently close for those who enjoy muddy, hilly races!

With many of these adventures taking place in recent years, it’s good to have the stories from Brian Dunbar, and Kathleen Greene & Neil Grieve, with their colourful memories of the Man v Horse event in Llanwrtyd Wells. Teams of Roadrunners made their way there in 1990 and 1991. Brian recalls:

One of the most unusual races I ever did was the Man v Horse v Mountain Bike race in Wales in 1991. The history of the race began during a conversation in a pub about whether a man could race and beat a horse over a long distance. The upshot of this was that they decided to organise a race to find out and so the 22 mile race was born and after a couple of events mountain bikers were invited to compete as well....

Kath and Neil described the race like this:

Following the opening ceremony conducted by Screaming Lord Sutch, an intrepid DRR team set off, through muddy forests, river crossings risking life and limb alongside mountain bikers and snorting, thundering horses. Shouts of “Bike on your right”, “Horse on your left” saw us slithering off the muddy track while trying to stay upright. Must hang in there despite being covered in mud from head to toe, still have a river to cross and a 4000m hill to climb, oh what fun! Not surprisingly the horse won the day but the team were only too happy to complete the race still upright and retired once again to the pub to celebrate our great achievement (and Peter Wilson’s big 40).

This is perhaps an extreme example, but all these races show how for many years Dundee Roadrunners have been, as Ron would say, stepping out of their comfort zone and challenging themselves in new types of event.

The Social Side

Plenty has already been said about the strong social ties in the Dundee Roadrunners and the sense that it became like a large family. Right from the start there was a strong social side to the Club, as Davie Morris explains:

We had many fund raising nights in the canteen of Valentines and also many dances throughout the years. I can remember dances in the Coldside library hall and also Valentines canteen in the early days of the club. I can also remember a barbecue in the Belmont Arms after the first hill race on the Sidlaws.

In addition there were the open evenings to promote the Club, several of which were held until around 1996. As described earlier, races turned into social events as well, such as the bus trips to the Inverness Half Marathon and many others. Ideally the celebrating should be left until after the race, but this didn't always happen, such as the evening before the first Glasgow Marathon when Davie Morris and Bert McGovern decided to do it in style and stay at the Skean Dhu hotel. They were in luck, as Davie recalls:

We were invited to a pasta party in the hotel where believe it or not all lager was free of charge. The night started well and we got our photo taken with Jimmy Savile who was staying at the hotel and running the next day. During the party we noticed we were the only ones using the bar facilities, anyway to cut a long story short we got refused any more drink at 3 a.m.

We made it to the start line and after four miles I ran off course and was sick over a wall (you'll have to read Davie's story for the full details)...Being true Dundee Roadrunners we went on and finished the race before nightfall.

The Christmas Dance was – and still is – the annual event where members and their families let their hair down and have a fine time. The music and the venues have varied, and the turnout dipped for a few years, but has picked up again recently with the latest ceilidhs. Usually presentations are made to the Club Champions during the evening and there's a raffle with the proceeds going to charity.

The social side of races is something which Cath Henderson remembers best:

I never was, nor will be much of a runner but Dundee Roadrunners became very important to me, mainly for the social scene! Happy memories of:- the Inverness Half Marathon and the bus trip there and back (never mind the actual run!). The non-stop chatting, laughing, singing, slagging off, the raffle, the bets on what our race times would be – the pub – then the silent journey home but for the munching of chips and pizza...the nausea, the sleeping....The trip to Kinghorn for the "Auld Hoose Blackrock 5" – dressing up as bathing belles and water babies...the fancy dress Christmas runs...

The cycle outing in the summer was another popular social event. One of these was described by Evelyn Fairweather:

We all met by the Tay Road Bridge then cycled westwards past the airport, Invergowrie, Kingoodie, etc. to Errol, which finished with a long steep hill (great on the return journey though). We had reserved lunch in the local pub and we were fortunate that it was a lovely day.

Special social events were held to mark the 10th and 20th anniversaries and to welcome the visitors from Wurzburg. Then there were the soup runs and the visits to Pizza Hut to celebrate someone's birthday after a Tuesday training session. Many barbecues have also been held, sometimes with an informal race beforehand. Crombie and Monikie have both been used as venues, where the midges have usually joined in with the runners and their families.

Ricky Davidson remembers an unfortunate incident at one event:

We had a fund raising BBQ at Templeton Woods one year and it was well supported even though it was a cold night. As the alcohol flowed we realised that we were running out of wood for the bonfire so we started to burn all the boxes, paper etc that was lying around, only to find that somebody had thrown the box full of ticket money on the fire. Never a dull moment.

Over recent years barbecues and other Club events have been enlivened by the sounds of Ged, Douglas and Grant with their enormous repertoire of music, ancient and modern. There have even been performances by Harry on the bagpipes. It just shows the variety of talents which some Roadrunners possess.

The German Connection

The friendship between Dundee Roadrunners and Laufgemeinschaft Wurzburg in Germany goes back to 1986 and continues through to the present. Charlie Anderson explains how it started:

In 1986 Dundee City Council asked if anyone could accommodate runners from the twin city of Wurzburg during the Dundee Marathon and a few Club members offered to accommodate these runners. This was the start of a friendship between the two clubs from Dundee and Wurzburg. In 1987 we made a successful visit to Wurzburg as part of the 25th Twinning celebrations between the two cities. There have been regular visits from club members to Wurzburg over the years and their members have visited us also during this time, competing in marathons, 10ks, half marathons and ultra-distance throughout Scotland. Our last visit was to celebrate their twenty-fifth anniversary in 2006.

Harry Kay has been particularly active, with Charlie, in promoting the links between the two clubs, and his story of that first Wurzburg visit in 1987 is included in the appendix. A double decker coachliner went there packed with club members, family and friends, whilst other members went by rail and air. They were treated to a wonderful time in the city by their hosts, took part in a 13.5 km race alongside the River Main, and then enjoyed a party with free food and endless beer:

We have all the pictures to prove the tale, it may be some of us would prefer they were kept out of sight. The German for hangover is Ein Kater and believe me there were many Katers the next morning as we assembled for a civic reception in Wurzburg's Town Hall.

This was just the start of several days of sightseeing and hospitality. Irene Gibson was one of those who took part:

I have fond memories of the holiday I went with the club to Wurzburg, Dundee's twinning city where we competed in a race and received warm hospitality and friendship from the Germans during our stay.

Further visits have taken place over the years, including a group from Wurzburg who took part in the DRR 10th anniversary celebrations, and another group who came in the summer of 2000 and competed in the Alyth 10k. The Germans helped to celebrate the club's 20th anniversary in 2004, competing in the Templeton 10 and attending fireworks in Baxter Park followed by a lively ceilidh. DRR members were quick to follow this up, as Wilma recalls:

We went to Wurzburg the following year in April 2005 for 4 days to run the half marathon and I walked the 16kilometre race. There was Ian, Kathy, Harry, Charlie, Ricky and myself. They met us at the airport which was about 2 hours' drive away, had a special club dinner for us where Harry played the bagpipes. They took us out to many many churches and castles and visited as many places as possible. They were most hospitable and could not do enough for us. On our last night they took us for another banquet and insisted on paying for everything. A great time was had by all.

Harry expects the friendship to continue:

I have no doubt the Dundee Roadrunners will return to Wurzburg in the future and I know all who have gone in the past have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. There is always a very warm welcome for those who travel over to Germany and being accommodated in the homes of the Wurzburgers guarantees the visitor and insight into German life and culture.

Several of the stories mention close friendships which people built up through training, races and social events and of course there have been a number of particularly close relationships established – Wilma and Ricky Davidson, Jim and Jane Blake, Brian and Lorraine Dunbar, Cath and Bryan Henderson, and Dave Stewart and Ursula Ryder. Along with all the fascinating characters, amusing incidents and impressive achievements recorded in people's stories, surely there are the makings of a good TV series here!

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9 Achievements

Every member of the Dundee Roadrunners will be able to look back on their own achievements – not everyone wins races, but most achieve at least some of their personal goals as reflected in the stories. At the start, the majority of members were intent on completing the Dundee Marathon, but Dave Roy indicated in his interview with the Sporting Post in October 1986 that they usually gave up marathons after achieving the first one.

From those early days, a number of club members and teams achieved good results in races, starting with the ladies on the first big trip to Inverness in March 1985. Toni Respinger, Harriet Johnston, Sue Roger, Margaret Anderson, Liz Kay, Jean Blythe and Elaine Wilson took the ladies' team trophy and Sue Roger picked up prizes as third lady and second lady veteran.

Over the next decade these and other ladies continued to turn in excellent results. Sue Roger, Margaret Robertson and Irene Gibson went on to compete as veteran Scottish cross country internationalists. Irene reflects on her performances:

The club gave me motivation and improved my running immensely and I went on to run numerous marathons, half marathons and 10ks and was proud to run for Scottish Vets International Cross Country Championships Over 50s category.

Margaret competed in every veteran age group from 35 years onwards.

My most successful of the cross country events was when I came 3rd overall and first in the over 45 age group at the Scottish Vets Cross Country championships at St Andrews in January 1993. I was only beaten that day by Sandra Branney and Jeanette Stevenson, two of Scotland's best ever women veteran runners. But it was also a successful day for the club with Sue Roger first over 50 and Alison Strachan second over 40. The ladies team was third overall behind Fife and City of Glasgow.

Jane Carroll's story is a great account of her tussle with Margaret towards the end of the 1990 Dundee Marathon before she eventually triumphed as 1st lady. She explains the build-up over the long race – the importance of economy in the early stages, settling into a comfortable pace “with a pack of like-minded runners as we cruised along like bombers in formation: we were on a mission.” Slowly she picked off the people in front, one by one. “Runners who were eager to cover ground quickly in the early stages of the race were now paying the price.” At 16 miles she realised she was the leading lady and then she had the most emotional moment as her family called out to her on Lochee High Street. Then Margaret caught her less than a mile from the finish. “I knew if I could get to Nethergate I would sprint to the Finish or die trying, and she did indeed finish with a sprint.

Some of the other notable successes included Ricky Davidson becoming the Scottish 50k Champion in 1993 and the Men's team taking the Scottish Marathon Championships at Lochaber. Some years later, in 2001, a group of Roadrunners finished close together at the Moray Marathon – Ricky Davidson was 16th in 3:06:09; Andy Llanwarne 17th in 3:06:16; Grant Gourlay 20th in 3:08:28; and Dave Stewart 23rd in 3:09:40. Morag Taggart was a little further back, 5th woman in 3:30:27.

Muriel Muir turned in some great performances including winning the Black Isle Marathon in November 1986 in 3:10:28, an hour faster than her only previous marathon. Joining the Roadrunners to improve her times had paid off! Toni Respinger was second and won the ladies veterans trophy. Dundee Roadrunners ladies were also 1st, 2nd and 5th in the half-marathon on the same day.

At the Dundee Half Marathon in October 1988, there were again some impressive times from the women, taking 4 of the top 5 places: Muriel Muir won in 1:20, Margaret Robertson was 2nd in 1:25, Val Fyall 4th in 1:27 and Gill Hanlon 5th in 1:28. Meanwhile, Ged Hanlon was turning in a time of 1:10 in the men's race with Bob Wood not far behind in 1:12, although Charlie Haskett of Hawkhill Harriers won the race in 1:07 and the Hawks won the team prize. Ged says he beat that half marathon time in a 15-mile race, probably one of his best races. “After going through the half marathon barrier in 68min, never to be achieved in a half itself, I finished a very creditable 14th.”

Other members list their achievements, including Val Fyall with her personal best of 1:21 at half marathon, “run in my home city of Dundee in 1990” and “completing the Moray People’s marathon in 1989 in a personal best of three hours twelve minutes and fifty two seconds.” Kathleen Greene was proud of her win in the Selkirk Half Marathon but didn’t quite beat 70 minutes for the Club 10 mile race, whilst for Evelyn Fairweather:

my highlight was winning a trophy for Most Improved Runner the year after I joined. It was made by Dave Mulligan and was a glass triangle set on a lovely wooden base. I still have it to this day.

Sam Connelly sums up his impressive record briefly, like this:

I joined the club in 1984 at the young age of 50. I have run 13 times the two Bridges, 3 twenty four hour races, 3 50ks, the London to Brighton, the 53 miles South Downs, 80 miles world championship - I was 3rd in my age group – and 36 marathons. It’s what I call 57 marathons.

There have been many other great achievements, not least Kenneth McLeod’s performances after his father Alan started to take him to the Roadrunners. Training with the club and participating in races paid off as he lost weight and his times improved.

He also started to be involved with the Special Olympics organisation and he represented Tayside at the UK Championships in Portsmouth in 1997. However this was only the start and he represented Scotland in the European Championships in Athens in 1998 and eventually as part of the GB Team in North Carolina in 1999. In the latter event he ran the half marathon and won a gold medal in his category....running has brought great benefits (to him) and allowed him to compete with others who don’t have his disabilities. Long may it continue.

Another member who competed in the Special Olympics is Daniel Fields, a familiar face who has been coming along to the Club since 1996 when he was 19 – one of relatively few youngsters to maintain his involvement. He won a Bronze Medal in the 5000m at the UK Special Olympics in Cardiff in 2001, in a time of 18.45. Apart from his running achievements, he also holds the record for the longest time spent in the showers at Lochee Baths.

It was reported at the 1996 AGM that another club member, Willie Mair, had achieved the momentous feat of completing his 100th marathon, becoming only the second Scot to do so. Although he was not training regularly with the Club at the time, he still turned up to meet old friends at the Christmas Dance.

Morag Taggart hasn’t quite reached that total yet but she’s working on it. She first won the Moray Marathon back in 1985 (running for Pitreavie), whilst in 2008 she came in as 2nd lady. Jane Blake was the leading lady in many events towards the end of the ‘90s, before family commitments took over. Miriam Rennet and Mary Vannet are two other ladies who have performed well over the last decade, with Gill Hanlon continuing to turn in good performances. Amongst the men, Neil Murray has racked up several victories in recent years, whilst Dave Stewart is getting back to his best and Brian Smith continues to improve.

The achievements of the Roadrunners rubbed off on other members, who could be proud of their club. Linda Caston enjoyed going to Inverness at the start of the season: "I usually had a good run, and was proud to be part of a club which brought home most of the trophies."

Many other personal achievements could be included here, and it's worth reading through each of the individual stories. The detailed race descriptions demonstrate that completing a race is an achievement in itself. It should not be forgotten that there have been lots of other members over the years and this section of the book only scratches the surface.

The Club has also had close connections with the two runners from Dundee who attracted most headlines in the 1980s and 1990s – Liz McColgan and Jenny Wood Allen. Liz (Lynch as she was then) showed her class by finishing the second Templeton 10 in 1986 in the remarkable time of 53.59, well ahead of all the other ladies and 5th overall. Coming in as 3rd lady was a certain Pitreavie runner, Morag Taggart!

Jenny, an honorary member of the Roadrunners, has also run the Templeton 10 on several occasions. As the runners at Valentines were getting together to form a club in 1983, Jenny was breaking the world record for women over 70 with a time of 4 hours 21 minutes in the Aberdeen Marathon. She ran many more marathons and other races, raising thousands of pounds for charity. Jenny set up the Running Sisters in Dundee, and they and the Roadrunners have supported each other on many races over the years. She was awarded the MBE in the New Year Honours for 2004, for her services to Charity and Distance Running.

Achievements are not only about successes in races, and the final words are left to two long-standing members of the Club.

Ron McGill:

"Do I have any running achievements? If I have encouraged members to explore their full potential as athletes and opened their eyes to the beauty of running in the hills then my short term as Chairman was worthwhile."

Ricky Davidson:

My best time of all was not achieved in a race, but after a race. It was after those cold wet and windy races at Clova when we used to sit in the climbers bar, huddled around the log fire, talking about what we should have, could have done in the race and then off to the Ceilidh later on. That was my BEST TIME in the club.

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10 The Future?

Dundee Roadrunners continues to change with the times, and the future looks promising.

The Club had a website several years ago, thanks to Dave Stewart, where results and photos from recent races could be shared. Recently Gerard Savage has taken over and set

up a new site with comprehensive information on the club and the opportunity for members to share stories and comments. Weekly e-mails go out to members with details of Tuesday training and other news, taking over from the club newsletters which used to appear intermittently.

There's a regular influx of new members whilst others move away and the young enthusiasts get older, resulting in a good mix of ages, both men and women. Newcomers are encouraged to come along on the first Tuesday of every month when there will be someone to run with them. During the summer months these runs start from Clatto Country Park. The Committee continues to look for new ideas to keep the Club fresh and rewarding for all its members, both in terms of training and social activities.

Gill Hanlon, the current Club Secretary, has seen how the Club has come through the changes over the years:

The club membership remains healthy to this day. We now attract lots of students who use running to supplement their fitness for other sports and others who are keen to improve their running for triathlon events. Lots of people now realise the benefits of running as part of a keep-fit regime and the club is able to accommodate all types of running requirements.

This flexibility, and the friendliness and encouragement shown by members for each other whatever their ability, have been the strengths of Dundee Roadrunners from the start.

The Committee members have discussed their "aspirations for the future" of the Club, setting them out as follows:

- to encourage running in Dundee via hosting local race events and to be a club open to any runner of any ability to join
- to provide an environment that allows our members to maximise their potential through training and running as a group, in an encouraging and friendly environment
- to enable and encourage members to discover the satisfaction in participating in race events, both as an individual, and as a team
- beyond running, the club should provide a 'home' where members can socialise and build friendships

This last comment recognises the limited amount of social exchange that now takes place at the Club, possibly due in part to the environment. Unlike "the old days", people come along, run and go home, with little chat about races and achievements. The Committee is considering how to stimulate more socialising on Club nights, including the possibility of a change of venue which might provide more of a "home" for the Club.

Although Club nights are different now, there is still a healthy social side to the Club, reflected in various events and gatherings after races. New members continue to get advice and encouragement from the old hands, and there are many strong friendships within the Club. Ron McGill sums it up:

Dundee Roadrunners is a unique club, it is not just a collection of runners, but a family of genuinely good people who go out of their way to help others share in the benefits of running. Thank you DRR for making my life a much richer experience.

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MORE MEMORIES ON THE WEBSITE

This book is largely based on the stories submitted by present and past members, which are due to be placed on the website (in no particular order):

Alan Kay
Alan McLeod
Andy Llanwarne
Barbara Brown
Bob Wood
Brian Dunbar
Brian Murray
Cath Henderson
Charlie Anderson
Daniel Fields
Dave Rodley
Dave Stewart
David Morris
David Robertson
Erwan Ansquer
Evelyn Fairweather
Ged Hanlon
Gerard Savage
Gill Hanlon
Irene Gibson
Karl Oparka
Kathleen Greene & Neil Grieve
Ken Peters
Linda Caston
Lorraine Dunbar
Malcolm Forbes
Margaret Robertson
Morag Taggart
Richard Davidson

Ron McGill
Sam Connelly
Sheila Carter
Sue Roger (Pople)
Val Fyall
Wilma Davidson
25 Years On (Margaret Anderson)
May Day (Jane Carroll)
The Devil's Burdens (Bryan Henderson)
Wurzburg Visit (Harry Kay)
Speyside Way (Dougie Kempton)
Two Breweries and Half Ben Nevis Race (Wilma Davidson)
Jenny Wood Allen – from Evelyn Fairweather
Other material will be posted on the website, and lots more photos from the past 25 years!

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REMEMBERING OLD FRIENDS

Several stories include fond memories of former Club members who didn't make it to see the 25th Anniversary of the Club. They all played their part in helping the Club to get to where it is today.

Errol Galloway, full of enthusiasm

Stan Milne, a notable long-distance runner

Gus Hunter, a wonderful character and a fine running companion

Roberta Ross, one of the Club's members in its founding year

John Quinn of the Dundee Runner, one of the Club's biggest supporters

Brian Murray, a committed runner, hillwalker and fundraiser

Elaine Rowlands (Wilson), Brian Littlejohn and Jim Edward are others who have sadly passed away.

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