

Meet the athlete – Q and A with Jane Hodgson



Jane Hodgson (nee Mooney) has been a member of Morpeth Harriers for some three decades. A member of a family with a real sporting pedigree – older brother John competed with distinction for both the club and the RAF, while younger brother Paul would captain Morpeth 1st XV – she has been a stalwart of teams at Junior, Senior and Masters levels with an exemplary record. Among her stand-out achievements are an extraordinary six victories at the Coastal Run, a win in her first (and only) marathon at Kielder as well as numerous 10k successes at such local races as the North Tyneside and the Cookson, and this year winning the NEMAA title, as well as anchoring women’s teams to successes for many years. Below are her responses to a q and a in the latest of our ‘Meet the athlete’ feature.

1/ You come from a family with a real sporting pedigree: how important was competition with your brothers and the encouragement of your parents in getting you started, and then later in your running career? Did running come naturally to you and when did you join the club?

My brothers and I were all naturally competitive, I was the middle child, and my older brother John joined the club first. We all did the Morpeth Fair Day run one summer and after that I decided I'd like to join the Harriers. I think I was about 8 or 9 years old. My dad used to take us to the training sessions at the clubhouse as he was a runner as well so it was definitely a family affair.

I did lots of other sports like netball and hockey at school and I was a member of the swimming club as well from an early age but running was always my favoured sport. I felt I had more of a natural ability in running, I enjoyed doing it and was more successful.

My dad was the chief supporter in those early days, you could hear his voice across the other side of any cross country course, although my Mum could give a good loud shout too, he was definitely known for his bellow!! My dad still continues today to support me at races more than 25 years later!

2/ What would you consider to be some of your most enjoyable and most successful performances in a blue and white vest, from any time in your career?

One of my most successful performances over the years has to be winning the 2011 Kielder marathon, the 2nd year it was run (the year the man took the bus !) It was my 1st and still only ever marathon, although I'd love to run it again one day!

Gaining a 3rd place in the 2018 Blaydon race, was also a highlight as I had run it many times previously as a younger runner but coming my highest place this time as a veteran and mother of 2 young children who would have been 4 & 2 at the time was quite an achievement!

My best at national level was probably a 28th at the National Cross Country in 2010, I managed to achieve a position in the 20's a number of times, but never quite breaking into the top 20!

years being 1st woman in 2019, 2018, 2017, and also 2012 and 2011.

I also enjoyed the more recent North eastern XC 2019 at Alnwick where I came 4th Senior Women and 25 years earlier at same venue I had placed 2nd in the Under15 girls, what I enjoyed most was the fact I was still competing with the some of the same people as all those years ago and still with my dad as chief supporter!

3/ Tell us about some of the most memorable individuals you have trained and run with in the club over the years, and also competed against.

There has been a great group of us who have competed against each other in local and national races for many years, as mentioned above, some are still competing now after more than 25 years! People like Sonia Samuels who was at the North eastern XC at Alnwick both in 2019 and 1994, and has now gone on to have great success at the marathon. There are a number of others like Tracy Millmore, Judith Nutt and Angela Mcgurk who I have enjoyed battling it out with over the years, and still to this day am competing against.

Laura Weightman is another who I enjoyed a few training sessions with over the years, when she was much younger I might add: I remember her remarking one day as we were leaving the clubhouse that I was 10 years older than her! This was when she was probably about 13 or 14 & just starting out on what has turned out to be a glittering career, I always enjoy running alongside Laura these days when she competes for the club, she always has some words of encouragement for me & is definitely an inspiration to the youngsters of our club.

I have enjoyed training alongside & competing against Emma Holt over the years, although this has sometimes however caused our supporters some confusion, with both of us receiving shouts for the other as we pass. I have been known to hear a 'well done Emma!' & then someone else then say, 'I think that's Jane!'

4/ And what are some of the worst things that have happened to you in connection with running, including injuries?

I have been very lucky over the years not to have had any real injuries to speak of, until Sept 2018 a few weeks after running one of my fastest 10K's ever at Middlesborough finishing 2nd. I got a knee injury which stopped me running for many months and has caused intermittent problems ever since it occurred. I am hoping that I can now manage this & continue to run for many more years.

5/ A lot of your success has been in cross country and off road. Do you prefer getting off the roads and the track, and has that always been the case? What are your favourite places to run and your best sessions?

I have always preferred off road running, with the Cross Countrys being my favourite races.

The annual North East Harrier league has always been the competition I look forward to most and I think it is great that it has grown into the successful event it is now, remembering back to the days where you would be lucky to have 20 runners in the senior women's race, rather than the 100's we have now.

My current favourite longer race route is the Northumberland Coastal Run, I love the variety of it, running over all of the different surfaces & the beautiful scenery along the coast.

I try to do as many sessions off road as I can, with the Common being one of my favourite places to go, and I do love a hill session, although these days probably not quite as much as I used to when it was easier!!

6/ What does a current training week look like, lockdown notwithstanding?

I normally do a mixture of running, cycling & swimming. This depends on the time of year too as most of my cycling is done in the Spring, Summer & Autumn, although I do use the turbo trainer during the Winter if the weather is really bad. An example week is shown below, however these days anything can change on a daily basis so I just fit in what I can!

Monday - group session or 5-6 miles run

Tues - rest

Wed – run 5-6 miles or cycle 16-18 miles

Thurs – Gym class (Pilates/HIIT) or 4-5 miles run

Fri – 30/40min swim

Sat – 6-8 mile run or rest

Sunday – 6-9 mile run or 16-18 cycle (depending on time available)

7/ A lot of people are superstitious or particular pre-race. Do you have any particular pre-race rituals?

The only pre-race rituals I have are making sure I have some kind of pasta the night before a race, then porridge for breakfast and a banana mid-morning.

8/ Looking at the future, do you see yourself going on competing now as a vet, and also as a triathlete?

Knee injuries permitting and fitting it around my children's clubs and interests, I would like to continue to compete as a vet in local XC's and road races. Possibly also some triathlons but the focus is primarily on running. I find swimming and cycling complement my running and take the strain off my joints while still helping with my fitness.

9/ Outside running what are your main interests and obsessions?

I have 2 young children, who are now 6 and 4, so outside of running I love spending time with them, going out as a family and exploring the local area.

I also love anything chocolate, and so am often found baking tasty treats in the kitchen with my two little helpers!

Our family has a caravan on the West Coast of Scotland so we make sure we get there as often as we can for holidays, we have an annual gathering there with my brother and his young family which is always great fun!

10/ Getting young female athletes involved in the sport, and keeping them involved – and also getting them to compete – is an issue not just for us as a club, but nationally. What’s your take on the issue and what advice would you have for younger runners?

I think the main thing I found that helped me was the great group of people I had around me from the club from a young age, there was a load of us who trained together, went to races together & it made it a great social thing. I remember it being a great day out going to a track league for example, you were just there having a laugh with your friends and doing a few races throughout the day with lots of people around to support around you!

I am still in touch with a lot of the group at the club I trained and raced with as a youngster, even though some are now living on the other side of the world.

My advice for younger runners would be to just try to enjoy each race, take each as a different experience, there is always another one! Try to take as many positives as you can from all of your races, and then learn from them and apply it to the next one.

Feeling part of the team is definitely important to getting people involved & keeping them there.

See Jane Hodgsons Photo Gallery.on next page.....



2020
BIRTLEY
RELAYS

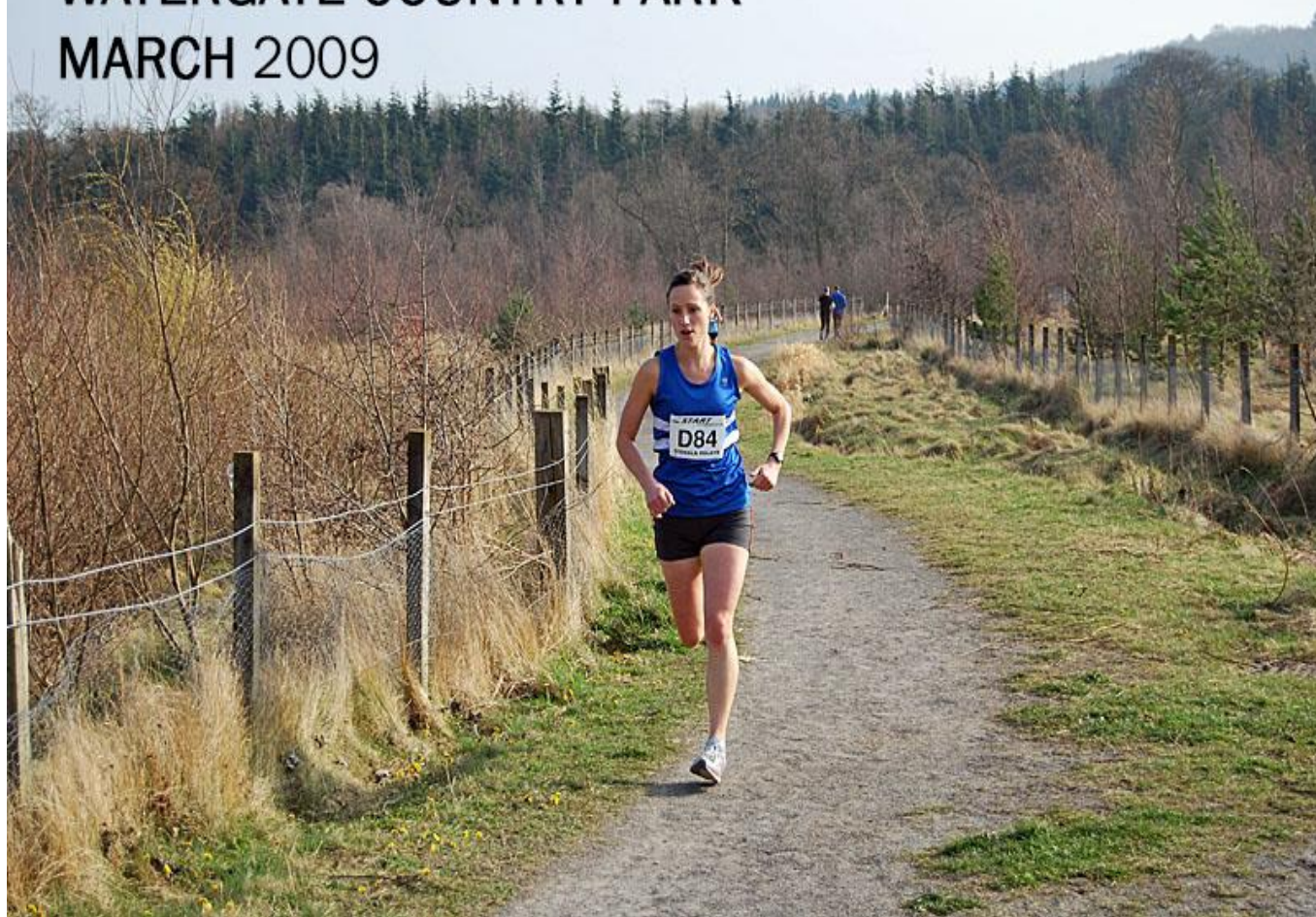


Winning
the
Morpeth 11k
2018



FEBRUARY 2010
SOUTH SHIELDS

**WATERGATE COUNTRY PARK
MARCH 2009**





**SUTTON PARK
APRIL 2005**