

# 'Meet the athlete'



**Q & A with Gavin Bayne**

## **Meet the athlete – Q and A with Gavin Bayne**

***Gavin Bayne is now one of the longest serving members of Morpeth Harriers, and remains one of the most competitive. Indeed, 2019 was a hugely successful year for him, with an age group victory in the North of England 1500m and months later a similar first place at the Brampton 10, placing him 3<sup>rd</sup> in the national rankings for his category. Locally, there were NEMAA wins at 5k trail, 5 mile, 10k (road) and 10 mile. He also qualified to represent England Masters at the Helsby half, with a time of 1 hour 26 minutes.***

***Now approaching 65 - and moving up another vet category - he remains as focussed and purposeful in his running as ever, training often with Chris Waugh's group and enjoying seeing the club's youngsters come through to whom he is able to pass on the benefits of his experience.***

***Below, we get the lowdown on his time in Morpeth Harriers.***

***1/ Tell us how you came to be a runner, and when and how did you join the club?***

I guess I have always been a runner, even in schooldays I enjoyed running xc but I would never win but would always finish in the top 5. The teacher was very devious: as soon as you finished xc you went into the training shed to play 5 aside and that carrot worked for me every time.

I always ran 3 miles on a Wednesday night between football training on a Tuesday and Thursday mainly because I enjoyed it but also it improved my stamina for playing. I played football for Gateshead and though I really enjoyed playing I realised I loved football but not the footballers so I decided to stop and look for another sport. I decided to run the first GNR and finished in 1hr 43 mins and I beat a few friends who were Morpeth Harriers, and they suggested I should give running a go. I did and joined Graham Reeves' group and the rest is -as you say – history, 38 years further down the road. The genes were always there

as my mother was a girls champion for all Newcastle schools for running and swimming 1929/30.

***2/ What would you consider to be your best performances in a blue and white vest, from any time in your career?***

Jim Alder always used to tell me you will have 5 - 7 what he called purple races but to maintain a consistently high level of performance was the goal. The 2 most memorable races were (and I still can't split between them) when for the second time I won the Cragside 1/2 - because the first time I won the the lads in the club kept pulling my leg about winning as no one else turned up,, but the following year on the starting line the whole royal family of our club was there and I was lucky enough to have one of Jim's purple runs and win again. The other was when I won my first BMA silver medal, 55 age-cat, 5000k, 18.25m, in Birmingham. When I arrived for the declaration before the race one of the favourites David xxxxx said hello to me and then told me I was probably looking at 4th/5th finish as the race was between him and another athlete and the rest of the field would be running for 3rd place! Even though I didn't win I have never been more determined to prove someone wrong. The race got under way, and I had so much adrenaline running through my veins as I chased down David xxxxxx and eased past him on lap 11 to win second place. It wasn't a particularly fast time as I had run 17.35m for 5000k earlier in the season but what a feeling when I went past him and he finished outside the places.

I knew I was in good shape for last years Brampton 10 but didn't think I would run a 62min which was the fastest 64 year old and 3rd fastest over 60 age cat for 2019.

2010 was another good year where I had the fastest British 55 age cat 1 mile time and the 7th fastest 5000k.

My best race was unfortunately before Power of 10 and results being sent within minutes of finishing. The Eyemouth 1/2 on an undulating course in the middle of the summer was always one I looked forward to and in the last race they staged I ran 1hr 11min 10 secs, PB. I always remember actually bonking within the last mile and slipped from 3rd to 5th but I was still delighted with my time. Another of Jim's purple runs.

### ***3/ Tell us about some of the most memorable characters you have trained and run with, and also competed against.***

I have always held Jim Alder in the highest possible regard as an athlete and a friend. Jim was truly inspirational when I moved up into his group and he told me he would improve me from a good club runner to borderline elite which after a lot of hard work we achieved. I used to look forward to our long Sunday morning 2hr plus runs and "the world according to Jim", his stories were so funny and he had an opinion on any subject. He is and always will be the heart beat of the club.

As far as characters are concerned Mark Brown takes some beating with his infectious enthusiasm and humour and he always gives a lift to wherever he is. During one New Year's Day's 11k race, as I was in full racing mode flying down past the turn off to the Common, I saw Mark marshalling and typical of him he started running along beside me with an improvised microphone in his hand and was commentating on the race and asked how I was feeling, good humoured typical Mark. For those who don't know, Mark was an unbelievable talent but unfortunately picked up so many injuries that at times stopped him developing to greater successes but he is turning into a really good coach and the club are really lucky to have him. One of the good lads.

When I first started to compete the North East was awash with international athletes and I would line up against the likes of Olympic and World champions, Mick McLeod, Brendan Foster, Charlie Spedding, Ieuan Ellis not that I would see them for very long but I once nearly held off a young Steve Cram in the Harrier league - although we did run from different packs. The Tynemouth 10 was a very fast (possibly short) race and I ran my first sub 55min and went to the presentation thinking that I was a proper runner only to find the winner Mike McLeod had run 47mins and about 5 others had run under 50 mins! Back to the drawing board.

There are a few runners that really stand out who I competed against - one was Jimmy Bell of Elswick Harriers and his shuffling feet. Most races would follow a familiar pattern, I would fly off at the start of a race and Jimmy would be steady away but generally towards the end I would hear the shuffle of his feet and think here we go again. I would really have to be at my best to beat him which didn't happen very often. Rob Hall was always a great competitor and although I probably had the quicker legs in shorter distance races he was

much stronger than me, and the longer the race he could keep up a relentless pace. Rob is thought of really highly not only for his achievements as a runner but for being an absolute gentleman and he attends most local events giving everyone his support.

A fierce competitor and warrior is Geoff Robinson. Again Geoff was not blessed with quick twitch muscles but when he got up to speed nothing would stop him. One monumental battle we had was 1995 Morpeth to Newcastle. There wasn't a yard between us for 14.2 miles until Geoff just got to the line 1 second in front of me finishing with 1hr 18mins 4secs. We both ran the marathon in the 1990 Masters World Champs Gateshead and Geoff ran his normal race, steady away, and caught and went past me at 24 miles! I finished 2hrs 41mins and Geoff 2hrs 40. It wasn't until later I found out that as he was passing fellow athletes who were spectating on the course and he was asking them how far in front is Gavin and he timed it to perfection! We had some great battles and every year it culminated in the Saltwell 10k and Chowdene Bank that went on forever and whoever got to the top first would always win our personal race.

#### ***4/ And what's the worst thing that's ever happened to you in connection with running, including injuries?***

I have suffered most running injuries but I have always suffered from hamstring type problems that can be put down to playing so much football for 20 years. The stand out injury I have suffered was when I stumbled twice in the Blyth 10k 2015 and the severe jarring split the artery at the top of my neck which caused a stroke, and although I made a full recovery it was scary. The other major injury I had was when I had to have surgery to release a nerve that was stuck behind two discs that had popped out. The consultant couldn't be sure but he thought a contributing factor was the excessive 500 sit ups and press ups (sets of 100) I did every evening after my run!

#### ***5/ What are your best and what are your favourite sessions?***

My favourite session on the track is 3 x 4 x 400s. On road - The Steads roughly 9 miles, 8 x 3 mins. My favourite run of the week is Sunday 1 1/2 hrs - 2hrs on my own, it's great thinking time and we are so lucky to be able to get out into the most beautiful countryside in England, in my opinion.

## ***6/ What does a current training week look like?***

I have always been a big mileage man and I still maintain a big turnover. This is an average week:

Sunday - 13 - 16 miles.

All weekdays start with 2 miles up the Wannie line followed by stretching/ pilates for 20-25mins.

Monday pm 7 miles track/road session.

Tuesday pm 8/9 miles easy.

Wed pm 8/9 miles hard.

Thurs pm 7miles track/road session.

Fri pm 8/9 miles.

Saturday am 4/5 miles easy.

Average between 65-70 miles/week

## ***7/ Any particular pre-race rituals?***

Unfortunately I do have rituals and OCD and the closer to race day the more I have to straighten things around the house and that includes shoe laces! The only real ritual I have is if I am competing in a distance race, the evening before I will have a huge plate of spaghetti with 8 fish fingers and a tin of Heinz tomato soup poured over the top. Not exactly fine dining but it works for me.

## ***8/ What ambitions do you still have for the future?***

I have been lucky enough to have won individual silver and bronze and 1 gold team British Masters medals, but this year is all about individual gold. All my plans this year have been geared towards competing for the BMA 10 mile - 1/2 Marathon- Marathon Championships and my training has been going so well, but unfortunately Covid 19 (bastard!) has put everything on hold but I am ticking over waiting to go.

I also qualified to run for England in March but again my race was cancelled, but I still qualify to run in the re-arranged race 2021 so I will get to wear the vest then.

### ***9/ Interests and obsessions outside the world of athletics?***

I am very much a family man and I love nothing more than being in their company. I enjoy our family holidays especially Florida and Disney and we should have been flying out to the US May 6th but that has been postponed until next year, but we will have an additional Mouseketeer as we are expecting an addition to our family in July. I really look forward to our annual ski holiday and awesome best describes the feeling at 3000m in the Alps on a sunny day. We have a caravan in North Berwick and we all head up to that beautiful part of the world as much as possible, there are lots of different running options and pubs and that keeps me happy.

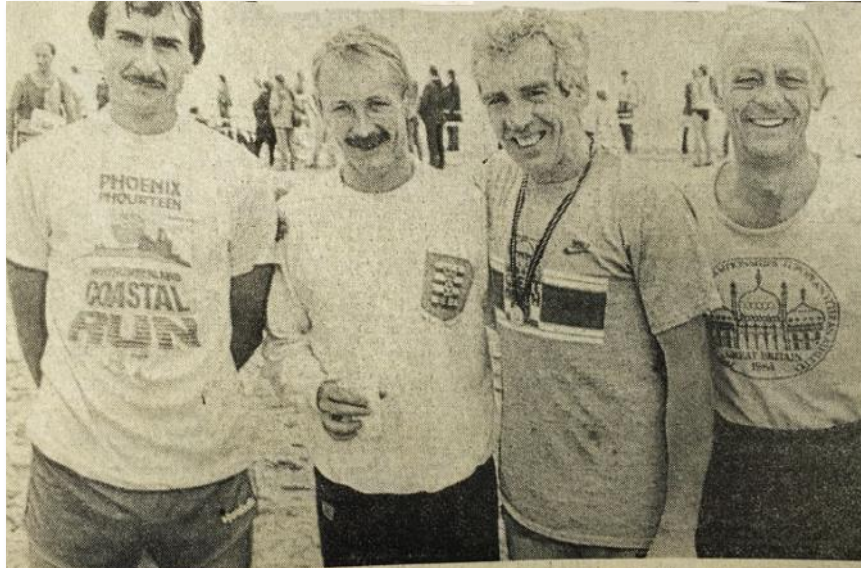
### ***10) And finally, what advice would you have for younger runners?***

Set achievable goals. Don't beat yourself up when things don't go to plan, there's always another run. Be the best you can. Think of all the people who would love to run and can't!

***Thanks Gavin, that's been a great read.***

***Have a look on next page at Gavin`s photo gallery.....***

# GAVIN BAYNE'S PHOTO GALLERY



OUR Morpeth Harriers who competed in Sunday's Coastal Run from Beadnell to Alnmouth — left to right, Gavin Bayne, Len Millership, Jim Alder and Tony Bray.





# GAVIN BAYNE'S PHOTO GALLERY

