

Ultrarunning World

Hardmoors 55
Special edition





The Hardmoors 55 is a 55 mile Ultramarathon running from Helmsley to Guisborough following the Hardmoors 110/Cleveland Way route through the North York Moors taking in Roseberry Topping before reaching the finish at the Market town of Guisborough.

The race contains over 2000 metres of ascent and has a time limit of 16 hours. Seven checkpoints along the route provide water and most provide at least basic food. The first race took place in 2010.

Thanks

We are very grateful to Jon and Shirley Steele in their help in putting this special edition of Ultrarunning World together.

We are also very grateful to event co-sponsors Chia Charge and to Chris in particular for their permission to use their photos.

David and Laura at Bradshaws Sunday Sport were extremely accommodating and self-giving and their gallery features some great shots not only of the runners but also of the beautiful environment that is the North Yorkshire Moors. If you can support their great work undertaken in tough conditions for everyone they will appreciate it.

Thanks to the authors of the articles for their kind permission to include their work and to Jude Dayne for her permission to use her images in Martin Hale's article.



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We are very pleased to share this issue with the community and to bring these reports and updates on international and British events. We are very grateful to all the people who have kindly contributed their experience, time and energy to make this edition a reality.

Hardmoors 55

by John Kynaston

Photo by SportSunday Event Photography

Saturday 17th March 2018

Sometime last year Katrina said that she would like to do one of the Hardmoors races. I suggested the Hardmoors 55 in March.

- Katrina: What will the weather be like?
- Me: I've done it four times and only once in bad weather so it will be fine.
- Katrina: Sounds good to me. Sign me up!

It worked out really good for me as well as I would use this as a preparation for the Northern Traverse in May. We would run it together so I could help Katrina with the navigation and she could set the pace which would help me for the longer run in May.

Since January we have steadily built up our training. During the week we did our own runs and then at the weekend we did a run together.

At the end of January we ran 30 miles as part of the whw training weekend and then in February four weeks before the Hardmoors 55 we ran 37 miles. We had planned 40 miles but had to cut it short due to the snow, which in hindsight was perfect preparation!

We were both able to leave work early so we set off about 2 o'clock from Paisley making sure we had all the necessary gear for a tough race in what was going to be tough weather. During the week Katrina been checking the weather app every day and the forecast just got worse and worse. I persuaded her that it wouldn't be as bad as they said and also a lot of the route is through forests and lower down so it would only be really bad on the tops.

We had a straightforward journey down and arrived at Guisborough around about 7 o'clock having called in to the Fox & Hounds to pick up our key for Saturday night. We were staying in our van at the Scout Hut for the Friday night.

We met up with Andy Cole in the Foxing Inn and enjoyed an evening together chatting about the race

tomorrow and our plans for the rest of the year. Andy has very kindly lent me two drop bags that I can use for the Northern Traverse.

At 8.30pm Andy headed off to his hotel and we walked back to our van to get ready for bed. We read for a while before trying to fall asleep. Neither of us slept particularly well and we were awake before the 5.15am alarm call.

The leaders of the scouts had very kindly had the hut open all night so we were able to go in and get ourselves ready for the race and get a cup of coffee/tea before heading for the bus.

I was still undecided whether to run in shorts or not but when I opened my bag I realised I left my shorts at home so running tights it would be. I wore a Helly Hansen base layer, my favourite long sleeved green top, skins, running tights and Drymax socks.

I was also planning to start wearing my Brooks Windproof top which meant when I put my OMM jacket on later I would have an extra layer.

At 10 to 6 we wandered over to the meeting point where we met a lots of the other runners waiting to board the bus to Helmsley. We got on the second bus





and we are right at the front so we had a great view. We arrived just before 7am and walked up the hill to the Helmsley Rugby club where the registration was. Fortunately we were very near the front so very quickly we were able to do our kit inspection, receive our numbers and be fitted with a tracker. The whole process was very efficient and didn't take too long. The hall was filling up so we found the space in the kitchen where we repacked our bags and got ready for the race.

I went outside for a while to do a little intro to my video diary and realised that it was starting to snow but it wasn't too bad and by the time we were called out for the race briefing it has stopped.

The race started at 9:10 after Jon's briefing. By the time we made it to out of the car park the race had started so we just followed the runners down the hill.

Helmsley to White Horse – 9.15 miles

I always like to have a plan so I had worked out

splits for a 13hrs 30mins finish. I thought we were capable of that if most things worked in our favour. Obviously once we factored in the potential weather then we would have to add some time on. Katrina was only interested in getting to the finish so I didn't share any of my splits with her!

What I did want to do though was to finish well. To do that means that you have to start very conservatively and make sure you don't push too hard too early. So right from the start the plan was to walk all the hills and run easily on the flats and downhills.

The first few miles passed quite quickly and it was good to be on the route again. The last time I ran on the Cleveland Way was when I was finishing the 160 race in May 2016. The whole section from Guisborough took me a long time so I was enjoying the fact that the various landmarks were passing quickly!

The weather early on was fine with little wind. The sun even tried to appear a few times. I did my first video diary update after 4.65 miles and the sun was shining.

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enough to refill our water bottles. We were both using Tailwind. We had drunk one bottle each in that first section and also had a hot cross bun (Katrina) and fruit bread (me).

White Horse to Osmotherley – 13.01 miles (overall 22.16 miles)

As we left the checkpoint I encouraged Katrina to

Once we climbed up through ‘death valley’ (named by another runner near us due to the amount of dead animals there are) we had our first snow flurry. It wasn’t too bad or last too long but a sign of things to come.

We ran/walked through Cold Kirby after 6 miles before turning left and making our way along a muddy path. After a mile or so we went past the Horse race track and then we were directed on a slight detour which turned out to be a lovely path through the trees.

We came out on the main road which we crossed and then made our way to the first check point at White Horse. One of the nice things about this out and back section is you get to see the runners who are ahead of you making their way back.

I tried to greet each one but not many answered back as they were definitely in race mode! It was good to see my friend Malcolm Green who I ran a lot with in 2016. He was moving well and he did return my greeting!

The steps down to the checkpoint were quite icy so we took our time as we didn’t really want to have a fall this early in the race.

As we approached the checkpoint we could hear a drum banging. I love the way people love to encourage ultra runners and this guy was certainly having lots of fun as he greeted us! Thanks to Doug Sharp for the following photos.

We arrived at the checkpoint in 1:53:11. My plan had 1:45 so we weren’t too far off. We stopped long



take it steady as there are a lot of steps to make it back up to the top. Katrina had asked whether I could give her an idea of what was coming next.

I explained that the next 4-5 miles were mainly runnable as we made our way around the embankment. Once we reached the top of the stairs and were looking down on the checkpoint in the car park we started a steady run to the road.

The snow stopped for a while and once again it was very pleasant as we made our way. There were a few runners still making their way out to the checkpoint. They looked in good spirits and we hoped they were enjoying the day as much as we were.

There was a little crowd at the road crossing so it was great to be encouraged as we made our way through the trees.

After a mile or so the snow started again with a vengeance. It was being driven across us by a very strong wind. We were right in the middle of it as we came to the SportSunday photographers so our photos give a good sense of the conditions!

The next couple of miles were hard going in the snow and wind. My jaw was so cold I could hardly open my mouth! I pulled my buff over my face to try and get some protection. But we kept moving and soon enough we reached the road at Sneck Yale Bank.

Kim was there as one of the marshals so it was good to see her. I grabbed a handful of peanuts as we set off up the hill.

It was so nice to be in the shelter of the trees and



away from the wind but it didn't last too long. As we went past the farm I stopped to get out my hat so I could use my buff around my face and still keep my head warm!

The snow was easing off now for a bit so it was easier to chat and make our way up the hill towards the next set of trees before the open ground. Just before we made it to the trees we saw Jayson running towards us with their dog. Now I'm not really an animal lover but if I did have a dog it would look like theirs!

Jayson turned round and ran with us for a bit saying that it is very cold up on the moors and if we wanted to put an extra layer on to do it now.

We were in a bit of a lull with the weather so decided to stay as we were. When we were through the gates and onto the open moor we were caught by three runners. One of them had a big beard (Phil?) who said that I was the reason he was running the race! He had watched my videos from previous years and wanted to be part of it. I hoped he still felt the same later in the day!!

I had been wondering whether Any Cole was ahead of us or behind. He had explained the previous evening that he planned to take the full 16hrs allotted as this wasn't his main race of the year and so expected us to be well ahead of him.

I wasn't in the least bit surprised when he caught us. I was about to do my next video update so got Andy on camera as well!

We ran together for a while before he said he was



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easing off a bit. I knew that this wouldn't be the last we saw of him and I was right!

The break in the snow blizzards lasted until we reached the sign post where you take a 90 degree left. As we made our way down to Osmotherley Square the snow started again. At least it was behind us now helping us on our way.

When we were within sight of the car park Katrina slipped her hurt her knee. Katrina has had a sore knee for a number of years and does really well to manage the pain on these long runs. We had brought poles so we got them out to give her a bit of help for the rest of the race.

When we arrived at the car park the snow was really thick. Ann Brown was there with her camera taking some great photos. She had some stunning photos of runners before and after us with amazing backgrounds.

Our photo in comparison shows how thick the snow was!!

The stone steps weren't too slippery but we were careful as we made our way down. Andy caught us again and we ran the last mile or so together into Osmotherley.

We arrived at this first indoor checkpoint in 4:53:04 against my plan of 5:00:00 so we had made some time up which was encouraging.



The checkpoint was fairly busy but we found a couple of seats. I quickly refilled our Tailwind and I ate my sweet potato while Katrina had her fruit pot. After 11mins we were on our way. We didn't want to spend too long inside.

Osmotherley to Clay Bank – 11.23 miles (overall 33.39 miles)

We left the checkpoint in sunshine but knew that once we started climbing the snow would be waiting for us!

I have gone wrong a couple of times on this section to the TV tower but I'm not sure why as it is so straight forward! I do think though that there a lot more signposts on the route.

I knew the Coast to Coast route joined the Cleveland Way along here and so it was going to be another chance to recce part of the route before the race in May.

I wasn't expecting to see a signpost where it did join. I should have taken a photo but I do know where it is. So the Northern Traverse route follows the trail all the way to Bloworth Crossing so I spent some of the time wondering what state I'll be in by this stage in May. I just hope it not still snowing!!





Once we climbed up and ran past the TV tower I chatted to a guy who was doing his first Hardmoors race. He was going well and his main aim was to finish. We chatted about what was to come and hopefully I was able to encourage him!

As we left the woods through the gate I had my first slip in the mud! Nothing serious but a sign of things to come. I lost count how many times I ended up on my back side!

We were running well whenever we could and it wasn't too long before we crossed the road and then ran through the woods to the open field and then over the stream and down the road to the next mini checkpoint at Scugdale.

We gave in our numbers but didn't stop. I knew there was a long climb along the old Roman road but I must admit I'd forgotten how long it was! The snow had started again and we made our way single file along the stone slabs.

Every time I run along here I'm amazed at how the Romans built their roads. All the stone slabs must have been carried to where they are.

We climbed and climbed and eventually reached the top and that was when the run really started! The stone steps were really icy with a coating of snow so it was really difficult to know where to step. I made a few errors and ended up on my backside more than once.

Katrina with her sore knee was even more cautious and rightly so but we eventually we made our way down. Andy went past us on this bit as he loves the more technical ground.

In fact quite a few people went past us on these downhill sections but we were just interested in getting down safely no matter how long it took us!!

Maybe because we were descending slowly I started to feel quite cold for the first time. We decided that we would need to start at Lord's Café to put on our waterproof tops and an extra pair of gloves.

I knew there were toilets at the café but they seemed to have locks on which is fair enough but we found a small room which is used for washing pots and pans so we sheltered in there for a few minutes.

It was great to get out of the wind and snow so we could put on all our extra gear. I also took the opportunity to refill our water bottle but to be honest from here on we didn't drink too much as it was just too cold!

My Suunto had 20% battery left so I also connected it to my portable battery pack and recharged it on the go. I like to have a record of the run so it was good to set this up while we were sheltered.

As we came out of the room there was a lull in the snow so we were able to climb the first of the three sisters in relatively good conditions. I was really encouraged that we were both moving really well and felt strong on the climb.

The descents were a different matter though and once again we lost some time and places as we gingerly made our way down. The snow and wind were back as well. Once again the stone slabs were very icy with a covering of snow which made it difficult to know where to step.

We made it down and then were able to have a little run before the next climb. They aren't too high so pretty soon we were over the top of the second one. Visibility was reduced quite a bit in the snow but the path is obvious so no problems.

Another slow decent was followed by another strong climb up the Wainstones. We caught a group ahead as we made our way through the stones in the snow and mist.

I said to Katrina we have a bit of a run along the top before the final descent to Clay Bank. Katrina has run this bit before when Jon & Shirley had a wedding

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run the day after their big day. Not surprisingly the weather was sooo much better then.

A few more people went past us on the descent. Every one of them were in good spirits and raising to the challenge of what the weather was throwing at us. I didn't hear a single moan or complaint.

There was a checkpoint at Clay Bank so we gave in our numbers. We didn't need anything so we went straight through and headed up the steps away after crossing the road. I did note just how much snow there was on the road.

Clay Bank to Kildale – 9.25 miles (overall 42.64 miles)

As we climbed up the steps I explained to Katrina that we had 3.30 miles to Bloworth Crossing and most of that will be climbing up but gradually rather than steep. Then we had 2.40 miles to the gate and a lot of that is runnable. Finally there is 3.50 miles down to Kildale and again we'll be able to run most of it.

It was almost 6pm by now and the light was fading. Visibility was very poor, the wind was blowing really hard and to cap it off it started to rain really heavily. We both had our hoods up and felt quite snug as we battled along.

I had bought some over mittens which were proving to be superb. My hands were nice and toasty. It was only the parts of my face that were exposed that felt really numb.

Once we climbed up and were on the wider path we were able to run a fair bit. I was leading the way and with the wind and rain and having my hood up I couldn't hear whether Katrina was behind me or not.

So I would run for 4 lots of 50 breaths and stop to look back to make sure Katrina was okay. Every time she almost banged into me as she was right there! We weren't able to chat at all and so we were both in our own little world getting the job done.

A couple of guys went past us still in their shorts! A bit further on they stopped as one of them was putting on his over trousers but the other one continued in shorts. Impressive!

We could see behind us that runners had their head

torches on but I like to get as far as I can before getting mine out. Plus it was in my bag and I didn't fancy the prospect of having to take off my gloves to get it out!!

We reached Bloworth Crossing in just under an hour. Katrina very wisely had put her head torch in her pocket at Lord's Café. As I walked along I took my ruck sack off and got out my torch. But I was struggling to get the clip back together.

Eventually I made it and ran to catch up Katrina who was running strongly. For the next couple of miles we ran really well and caught up with a number of runners including Harriet who was running with a couple of ladies.

Harriet was very positive and encouraging and so it was great to share that part of the run with them. We weren't chatting much but the five of us made our way to the gate and then started the descent to Kildale.

I assumed that when we started descending to Kildale the wind and snow would ease off but oh no it was actually worse! We caught up with more runners as we reached the car park.

Once we were on the paved road Katrina was away and she was the one setting the pace. I think the prospect of a cup of coffee at Kildale was spurring her on!

We talked a lot about once we reached Kildale then the tougher sections were behind us and we 'only' had 12 miles to go. That included Roseberry Topping and we were both apprehensive about that descent but we would face that once we got there.

Our initial plan had been to get in and out of Kildale fairly quickly but I said to Katrina that we will take a bit longer and make sure we get something hot to drink and eat as we hadn't eaten anything for a while.

We arrived at Kildale checkpoint in 11:09:01. The section from Clay Bank had taken us 2:21:55. My plan had 2:25 so that just shows how well we were going in those conditions. The overall plan had us at Kildale in 10:24 so we were only 45 mins behind that plan!

Kildale Checkpoint

Our good friends Andy & Sarah were in charge of this checkpoint so it was so good to see them. Andy found our drop bags and while Katrina had a seat to sort hers out I went off to get some tea and coffee.

I also saw some folk with soup so went to the kitchen where Sarah was hard at work making the soup. I ended up drinking 3-4 bowls. We also saw Andy Cole again! He was getting all his gear on ready for the final section.

There must have been well over 50 runners in the checkpoint. Some had decided to stop while others were getting ready to go. At one point a marshal asked for hands up for those who were stopping and wanted a lift back to Guisborough.

About 20 people put up their hands. I was so proud of Katrina that she didn't!! We were both feeling quite cold having stopped running but we knew we could get this done and once we were moving again we'd be okay.

We decided to put on our extra layer and waterproof trousers. As we kitted up we were chatting to various folk around. Some had decided to stop while others like us were getting ready to go.

Andy Cole left about 8.40pm looking determined to finish this off in style! I think it was around 8.50pm that we were ready to go. We had our extra layers on, our bags on our backs and we were just about to stand up and head off when Andy Norman asked for quiet ...

The race is being stopped he said. Andy explained that with over 200 runners still on the Moors and the emergency services stretched to the limit Jon & Shirley had taken the decision to stop the race and make sure everyone gets to somewhere safe as soon as possible.

I knew that they wouldn't have taken this decision lightly and we completely trusted them to make the right decision which they had.

Obviously we were disappointed as we were ready to go and knew that we were capable of getting to the finish but it is only a hobby and runners safety must be the priority.

Once the decision had been made I went and got some more soup and drinks! It was good to chat to various runners as we all had our stories to share.

A consequence of the decision though was now Jon and Shirley and their team had to get all the runners back to Guisborough! Those who were particularly cold were taken first. I did suggest to Katrina that she should look colder than she was!!

I think it was about 10pm that Shirley took Katrina & I and another couple of runners back to Guisborough. Even in a 4 wheel drive car it was quite difficult but Shirley was in control. The added bonus for us was that her car had heated seats so we were toasty!

On the way we discussed t-shirts and medals and Shirley rang Jon to discuss. They both agreed that they would give t-shirts and medals to everyone who had made it to Kildale.

We were so glad that we had booked a room in the Fox & Hounds which was only 5mins away. So it wasn't long before we were in our warm room and enjoying a lovely hot shower.

So it was quite an adventure. We love being part of the Hardmoors family and we will be back! Thanks to Jon & Shirley and all the amazing team of volunteers who helped make the race happen.

Finally congratulations to everyone who ran no matter how far you got. We certainly will not forget this race in a hurry!

Visit John's website at JohnKynaston.com





2018 Hardmoors 55 race winner Ross Cooling

cta
charge

2018 Hardmoors 55 Race Report

by James Campbell

SportSunday Event Photography



Since Hardmoors 30, I've changed my approach to training fairly radically in order to first recover from injury and then rehabilitate and strengthen myself while still preparing sufficiently for the 55 and the 110 milers that follow in quick succession.

In doing so, I've incorporated a lot of technique work on the treadmill, which built

up into speedwork culminating in me recording my best 10k time in over 6 years just a couple of weeks before the race.

I also got myself out for two key recce runs, one from Helmsley to White Horse and back with Dave Cook which we ran at the effort I wanted to maintain during the race and carrying all of the kit I intended to carry in the race. The temperatures

that day were sub zero and snowing.

The following week I did a similar out and back in icy conditions for the last section of the route, Guisborough to Kildale and back, starting at 9:30pm and finishing around 3am in order to do the final section on tired body and mind.

I then had a very long taper and planned my race around splits that

I thought would be achievable on the day (but also understanding that something would blow that plan out of the water somewhere) and was aiming to finish in 14 hours.

I planned to camp at Guisborough Sea Cadets before the race and the night after, so in aid of making sure everything went right on that front, I camped out in the snow during my taper

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Cut Off	Location	ETA	Split Pace	Ave Pace	Split Dist	Tot Dist	Split Time	Tot Time
11:30	White Horse	10:55	08:06	08:06	14.2	14.2	01:55	01:55
	High Paradise	12:21	08:58	08:27	9.6	23.8	01:25	03:21
15:00	Osmotherley	13:46	07:23	08:06	11.5	35.3	01:25	04:46
	Scugdale	14:51	08:47	08:13	7.4	42.7	01:00	05:51
	Lord Stones	15:51	12:15	08:38	4.9	47.6	01:00	06:51
	Clay Bank	17:11	14:17	09:14	5.6	53.2	01:20	08:11
	Bloworth	18:03	09:48	09:17	5.3	58.5	00:50	09:03
21:00	Kildale	19:33	09:17	09:17	9.7	68.2	01:30	10:33
	Captain Cooks	20:18	13:38	09:29	3.3	71.5	00:40	11:18
	Roseberry	21:03	11:32	09:35	3.9	75.4	00:45	12:03
00:30	Guisborough	22:58	10:27	09:42	11	86.4	01:55	13:58

period, however as race week approached, the weather forecast made the prospect of camping look increasingly scary. My mind was taken off the race for much of the final week due to the eventual decision to part with my car, which had served me well since 2011 both as a family car and a race camper, but was pretty much falling apart at a rate of knots and buy a new car. Sadly, as much as I love the new car, a Corsa is not as easy to camp in as a Zafira, but at least the process of sorting the car kept my mind away from the usual mental stresses of tapering.

I travelled to Guisborough on Friday afternoon, arriving about 5pm to breezy weather 3 degrees with snow already in the air. Being the first vehicle on site,

I headed into town for some food and returned to find another car had arrived containing Duncan Bruce. Shortly after, a gentleman from Guisborough Sea Cadets arrived and upon hearing our plans to camp in the field told us not to even consider it and sleep in the hall, an act of kindness that made sure that I not only got onto the start line without a difficult night of camping, but in hindsight, probably saved me from hypothermia on Saturday night.

After unpacking kit and getting myself set up near a radiator in the hall, I made a couple of adjustments to my kit choices in view of the howling gale that was driving snow against the window above my head and replaced my usual

compression shorts with fleece lined thermal compression shorts (which I'd intended to use for camping) and added my waterproof socks to the pile of clothes to go on in the morning.

After a couple of mugs of hot chocolate, which I drank as the hall filled up with a couple more campers, I then tried to get my head down to sleep. I think I woke up pretty much every hour on the hour and at 4:20am, gave up the ghost and made myself a coffee to go with my porridge. I had only eaten half of my porridge and a banana when my stomach started churning and feeling awful. I made a dash to the gents and only just got there on time. This was not a good start to the day, but following

my dash, I was able to hold food in, although I continued to feel queasy as I got dressed for the day ahead and stashed my kit in the Sea Cadets office we were kindly allowed to use to keep our kit in so we didn't have to pack and then unpack after the race.

After getting dressed, I walked down to the bus pick up point and wandered around in search of Mark Dalton as I'd agreed to help with the bus marshalling. I couldn't immediately see or hear Mark but spent some time chatting with a few familiar faces until he arrived. It wasn't long before the coaches arrived and everyone was swiftly boarded. I spent the first few minutes of the journey checking names off against the register, which took my mind off my increasingly

rebellious stomach for a short while then barricaded myself into a seat and sipped on Lucozade Sport all the way to Helmsley.

Upon arrival at Helmsley, I managed to pass through kit check and having my GPS tag fitted inside of 8 minutes, which was unbelievably slick, but also left me with almost two hours to kill so I found a side room with a few others, took off my warm jacket, hats and gloves and tried to chill out.

Helmsley to White Horse

Eventually it was time to go outside for the race brief and without too much ceremony the race was started under bright sunshine, but cold crisp air and a bit of a breeze, which as we turned west towards the Cleveland Way, became a nice tailwind. The first section leaving Helmsley is across two usually muddy fields, but today the ground was frozen solid and it was possible to keep a decent pace up to the gate that leads to the trail proper, as expected there was a bottleneck here before

we could pass through and get running again. In a short space of time, I found myself running alongside a series of familiar faces, Paul Burgum, Dennis Potton, Tom Stewart and Angela Moore through Ingdale Howl and out onto the road through Rievaulx where a number of people were shedding the warm layers they'd put on before the start of the race due to the bright sun and becoming warm through exertion.

Having run this section in similar weather, I knew this warmth was only temporary (and partially false due to the wind being behind us) so took off my top buff and wrapped it around my poles with the two I intended to use later when it got really cold and unzipped my jacket a little. We soon hit the bottom of the first climb of the day, which starts as a rocky, muddy incline that leads onto a steadily climbing farm track towards Cold Kirby. As soon as we were out of the treeline, the wind made things feel a lot colder and snow began to fall, a lot of people then had to stop to put layers back on, while I simply zipped back

up and added buffs as required. I passed John and Katrina Kynaston and said hi then cracked on further up the road until I reached what I affectionately call Dead Body Farm for no other reason than on a night recce of this section in 2015 Aaron Gourlay, Dave Cook, Dee Boudierba and I had climbed out from Cold Kirby to find two men manhandling a cylindrical shaped black bag out of a van here.

Once past the farm we dropped down into a gully that was ankle deep in water and for the first time I became glad of my choice to use the waterproof socks, on the way up into Cold Kirby the trail was slippery enough for a few people to take falls but I managed to get up and at the top decided to have a Chia Charge bar as the Wine Gums and salted nuts I'd been eating so far weren't easing my iffy stomach.

Once through Cold Kirby the trail cut left and for the first time runner experienced the strengthening wind as a crosswind biting into the left side of our faces and driving icy snow at us. Thankfully the path soon

turned right and we had a tailwind again.

Before long, we were approaching the horse racing stables at Hambleton where Wayne Armstrong was marshalling to divert us through Hambleton Plantation, a section of the route designed to keep runners safely away from the Cleveland Way path on the verge of the A170 near Sutton bank. Although less well travelled and a little overgrown, covered in snow, with heavy snow falling it reminded me of movies and documentaries set in places like the Ardennes Forest in winter. As I climbed out of the plantation, a team of marshalls saw us safely across the road and I took the opportunity of tree cover to answer a call of nature before picking up the pace for the steady downhill path that runs along the side of the glider station towards the White Horse at the same time, doubling up the buffs on the left hand side of my face to protect my bare skin from the wind driven snow. The route diverted right on this path down a rocky, scabbly and

usually muddy steep path down the side of the escarpment and round to the back of the White Horse car park. On my recce run, this descent was frozen and it was possible to descend quickly, so I had it in my mind to push hard on this bit, however I was no more than two steps onto the descent when a pair of runners in front started slipping on ice and I decided caution was the order of the day.

As I reached the bottom of the slope, I was overtaken by Chris Lyons, who I ran and chatted with for the final stretch into White Horse, as we approached the car park, I thought I could hear drumming and assumed somebody had the car stereo turned up to 11. Upon cresting the final rise, we were met by a man in Druidic costume beating a drum for all he was worth and it brought a smile to my face as I hit the checkpoint bang on my target time of 1h:55m.

White Horse to High Paradise

At the checkpoint, I got my water bottle topped up as planned and

headed up the steep steps that run by the side of the Kilburn White Horse with encouragement from Race Director Jon Steele ringing in my ears. I was now in a group that contained 1,000 mile club member Harriet Shields who kindly helped me get my headtorch out of my pack during my torrid day at Hardmoors 30. As we hit the top of the steps, I pulled a Snickers bar out of my pack to find that it had frozen solid and let it slowly defrost in my mouth while I fast walked/jogged back uphill towards the road and re-arranged my buffs to cover the right side of my face to provide protection against the prevailing wind.

Once across the road, I stayed close to the group containing Harriet through the first km of undulating and snow covered paths, content with my pace but not wanting to push much harder due to the continued unsettled state of my stomach. The group thinned out as the path turned into single track and gradually rose to the ridge line, once on the ridgeline, we were shotblasted with

snow blown across the fields on the stiff breeze from the east. The view on this section is spectacular, on a clear day you can see right across to the Pennines, however my view of the world was now reduced to a small gap between my gap and my buffs. There were a couple of sections of the path which usually dipped and rose, but it was clear that walkers and runners had avoided these for a couple of weeks due to the pockets of snow that had drifted and remained in them since the 'Beast from the East' storm a couple of weeks ago.

I was now trundling along back and forth overtaking a couple running together but unable to really chat with them due to the strength of the wind carrying words away and not really wanting to lift my face to expose flesh to the bitter cold. I estimated that the windchill was already a couple of degrees below zero, but my clothing was keeping me comfortable and only exposed skin felt cold.

I passed through the Sneck Yate checkpoint on the three hour mark

without stopping and was enjoying the cover provided by the trees in Paradise Wood, up to the point where I hit the Paradise Road, where the wind was catching the lying snow on the ground and in the trees and blowing it into me at great strength. I fast walked up the hill to High Paradise Farm and hit the Hambleton Road junction at 3h:17m, a good 3 and a bit minutes ahead of my target.

High Paradise to Osmotherley

I rewarded myself for being ahead of time with a short walk break and had just started running again when I spotted a familiar dog headed towards me and realised that Jayson Cavill was out running on the course with his dog Indie. I shouted a quick hello that I hoped wasn't lost in the wind and cracked on, popping a couple of Wine Gums into my mouth in the hope that pushing food down my neck regularly would deal with the stomach issues. As I got toward the end of Boltby Woods, I fell in with Andy Nesbit and Emma Giles who were running



Photo courtesy Ann Brown

together and aiming for 14 hours too. I saw it as a good omen to be running with Andy on Hardmoors 55 on this particular section of the Cleveland Way, as it was on Black Hambleton we joined up and ran all the way to the finish together in the 2015 edition of the race. We went through phases of fast walks and running as the terrain and weather allowed, passing through a series of squall snow showers and enduring some turns into the strengthening wind. We hit the section where the terrain began to rise towards Black

Hambleton around the 4 hour mark and I squeezed a protein gel down my neck which seemed to be more palatable to my stomach than the Wine Gums and Snickers. At this point I decided to stick to Chia Charge and protein gels on the hour for food rather than the more sugary treats I was trying to eat every 15/20 minutes. We had now hit a section with a wind in our backs and although uphill, we were running to make use of the tailwind.

As we reached the top

of Black Hambleton, a really heavy squally came down and reduced visibility to almost zero and I was glad to be starting to lose altitude as there seemed to be a definite worsening of conditions above a certain height. As the snow abated slightly, I pushed hard down the hill, picking up a nice fast pace of 5m:30s/km to 6m:00s/km and reached Square Corner at 4h:25m with my head down and missed Ann Brown taking this amazing shot of me.

As we descended down

the hill towards Oakdale reservoirs, the snow on the ground became patchy and less frequent and it was possible to move quickly along the flagstones. Once over the Burnthouse Bank road I found myself running with Harriet Shields again on the greasy, slippery and muddy descent towards Cod Beck, however Harriet pulled away from me with ease on the steep steps after the beck on the way into Osmotherley, where runners were being greeted enthusiastically by marshalls and

spectators. Once inside the checkpoint, I picked up my drop bag, binned the Wine Gums and nuts from my pocket and debated leaving the new bag of Wine Gums on the table for someone else, but decided to take them just in case. I downed my can of Red Bull and re-stocked my pack with Chia Charge bars from my drop bag but left my bottle of Luczade Sport on the table, opting instead to top my bottle up with checkpoint cola to see if that had a more positive effect on my stomach. I spotted Dave Cook who was marshalling and said hi before heading back out up the road bang on the 5 hour mark, about 10 minutes behind plan, but not too worried by this.

Osmotherley to Scugdale

I had originally planned to get my poles out in the Osmotherley checkpoint, but decided on the hoof that my legs felt pretty decent and that I could run at a decent pace on the downhill section between the TV transmitter and Scarth Nick if I didn't have the poles in my hands being

blown around by the wind. To that end, I kept them stowed in my pack and fast walked up the muddy climb towards the TV transmitting station. Once up on the top and in the shelter of the drystone wall that runs by the path, I got a steady jog on until I hit the top of the descent then I started running at a steady pace down the side of Scarth Wood Moor, as I did so, I bumped into Marc Short and we ran together across Scarth Nick chatting as we went. The wind had seemed to calm and the sun was shining as we ran together through the woods heading towards Scugdale, dropping through the field before the Scugdale Road, we pulled apart again and after the beck I got my poles out ready for the climbing that lay before us in the next section. As we arrived at the Scugdale checkpoint (6h:10m) I realised I'd run my fastest Hardmoors marathon (I passed 42.2km at 5h:54m) but even better I spotted that the checkpoint had both cola and dandelion and burdock where I'd been expecting only water. While the marshalls

topped up my water and cola bottles, I managed to gulp down a cup of D&B and noted that my stomach was feeling OK now. Once the bottles were topped up, Marc and I moved off to start the really big climbs of the day.

Scugdale to Lordstones

As we climbed up through Live Moor Plantation Marc and I chatted about various things and caught up on bits and pieces from each other's lives, since the last time we met a couple of years ago but once on the top, conversation became impossible in the face of a block headwind that must have been blowing 30-40mph. Again, the peak of the cap came down and the buffs went up as we pushed hard against the wind for little return. Marc pulled away while I plugged on behind just trying to maintain a steady pace, using the poles to keep myself steady in the buffeting wind but my work rate had increased a lot for very little return and as we climbed higher, the wind seemed to get stronger, with some odd swirling effects as the

wind deflected of various escarpments and cliff faces. Once back above 350m, the snow returned and driven into the small gap between my cap and buff, it was stinging. As I passed the weather station by the old glider runway, I noted the wind gauge was turning at a ridiculous speed and I wondered how the weather station stayed anchored into the ground in the weather that hits up here.

Soon I had passed the trig point and was descending towards Raisdale road with another runner. I remember saying to him 'At least the flagstones are dry and free from ice', which of course was a total curse as about 30 seconds later we rounded a bend and hit a patch of ice that sent me flying down a couple of steps. I turned to pick myself up and retrieve my poles, (which I had instinctively thrown away from my body as I fell) then had another comical slip on the same patch. Having got up and dusted myself off, we were able to warn a couple of following runners of the ice before moving on more cautiously. I eventually

crossed the Raisdale Road on 7h:10m tracking around 20 minutes behind my goal time, but knowing that I was certain to lose a lot more time in the next few hours.

Lordstones to Clay Bank

The next section of the route contains the most climbing per km than any other part of the route and even on the best of days, is hard, slow going. Today, in snow, high wind and with icy surfaces, it was going to be a big tester. Running through Lordstones Country Park I rejoined Marc and we made our way up the side of Cringle Moor together, Marc being faster and lighter pulled away from me again, but once on the top we found ourselves running together into the savage wind and snow. At some point we were caught by John and Katrina Kynaston and a loose group formed just before the descent which, on the flagstones, was ridiculously icy and almost impossible to descend without slipping. We took the decision to use the grass

and heather at the side of the path, which had a covering of snow and offered more traction and a softer landing in a fall and made our way down into the lee of Cold Moor and out of the worst of the wind. We jogged between the hills, making use of the reduced wind until we reached the base of the next climb, which for me is the hardest of the climbs on this stretch.

I looked up and noticed the clouds scudding over the ridgeline ahead at great speed and realised that the weather was now far worse than the forecasts I'd seen in the days before the race. Again, Marc gapped me as we climbed the hill, but the group came back together at the top and on the descent, which was far more icy and treacherous than the Cringle Moors descent (all snow that was hitting the flagstones was now freezing on contact and I noticed it was doing the same to my leggings and jacket). At this point, we had merged with the group that contained Harriet Shields and we all descended very slowly and carefully. About halfway down, I decided to take a sip of my water

and was frustrated to find that the water had frozen in the nozzle of my bottle and I couldn't get any water out. I tried the coke and thankfully, that was still flowing, albeit with ice crystals in.

As we reached the bottom of the hill, we were again in a weird calm spot sheltered by The Wainstones/White Hill and due to the slow pace, the group had gained a few more runners. I looked up towards the ancient rocks as I was climbing, hoping to get a sight of the Eagle Owl that has been seen nesting here, but even the owl had enough sense to hunker down and ride this storm out.

Going through the rocks on the Wainstones, I encouraged everyone to maintain three points of contact with the rocks to reduce the risk of slipping, which made things slower, but at least I was hopefully going to avoid a repeat of the arsebruise I picked up here while spectating last year's 55. At the top of the Wainstones, a runner whose name I didn't catch helped me up out of the rocks and did the same for a few others in the group. We got

moving again and along the plateau at the top of White Hill, I noted a real change in the feel of the temperature. I checked my watch and saw that it read 3 degrees. Given that it was on my wrist and usually read a few degrees above the real temperature due to my body heat, I judged the air temperature to be several degrees below zero and the wind chill much more than that. All this considered, I still was not cold anywhere apart from my nose. I pulled my buff up over my nose and noticed the front of the buff had frozen solid so I spun it back to front and the unfrozen part that had been on my neck was now at the front. As we descended off the side of White Hill, several runners, including myself resorted to sitting down and bumping down steps to avoid slipping on the ice. About halfway down, it was possible to run with caution and Marc and I did so, eventually reaching the checkpoint at 8h:46m. My original checkpoint plan was to spend a couple of minutes getting my bottles filled up and my headtorch out ready for the next section.

I handed the marshalls my bottles and noticed they struggled to open the water bottle as the top couple of inches of water was entirely frozen in the bottle. The coke was in better state, but still had chunks of ice in. While the marshalls sorted my bottles, I asked Marc to help get my headtorch and a spare pair of gloves out for me, as I expected it to get colder after dark. I stripped off my outer gloves and put the new gloves in between my skin layer and put the outer layer back on over them. Marc was also putting extra gloves on, but was really struggling with them. While we were at the checkpoint, a heavy snowfall blew over and dumped about an inch of snow on the road in the 10 mins or so we were there. I stuffed another Chia Charge bar down my neck and checked all my buffs to make sure the absolute minimum skin was exposed and we eventually moved off.

Clay Bank to Bloworth Crossing

We were only about 400m out of the checkpoint when my

fingertips started going numb and I realised that using my poles was leaving my hands exposed to the bitter winds. I needed Marc to help me stow them, such was the speed at which my fingers became useless.

Once my poles were stowed, I grabbed a handwarmer from my back pocket and activated it and also used the plastic bags I'd carried my spare gloves and headtorch in and used them to cover my hands to create a bivvy bag effect and alternated that hand warmer between hands as we marched further up the hill toward the highest point of the moors (Round Hill 454m), it slowly got dark and much, much colder. The wind was now howling and even running did not feel much more than walking. Conversation between Marc and I was reduced to:

'Fancy trying to run?'

'Yeah, let's go'

'I'm knackered, let's walk'

'How far do you reckon Bloworth is?'

'I dunno, I can normally see it, but this snow

man...'

'Fancy trying to run?'

This continued for a few kms and when we turned our headtorches on, visibility didn't improve much and all we really got was the same view as the cockpit of the Millenium Falcon as it enters hyperspace. Despite all this, I wasn't feeling bad or weak. I'd done very little running since Scugdale and the legs felt willing, I was just hoping that at Bloworth, turning side on to the wind would allow some running. The plastic bags and handwarmer had done their jobs and my fingers had feeling again and were warm through. We hit the slight downhill into the dip that crosses a beck about 400m from Bloworth and the combination of the downhill and the positive landmark in relation to Bloworth got me running, for all of 10m before I hit some ice and ended up on my backside just short of the beck. I was busy scrabbling around making sure I didn't lose my handwarmer and Marc came up behind to see if I was OK and went flying himself. Satisfied we were both OK, we got

up giggling and cracked on to Bloworth, turning the corner at 9h:57m.

Bloworth Crossing to Kildale

Once round the corner at Bloworth, the wind was at our back and side and we got through more prolonged stretches of running, although I did at one stage try to point something out to Marc and realised that I could not straighten my arm because the right sleeve of my jacket had frozen solid. Taking water was pointless as the bottle had frozen and I was only getting coke out by holding the nozzle between my lips to de-ice it before sucking the slushy coke through. I was feeling strong and each walk break was done at a decent pace, each time we ran, we overtook groups of runners. At some point we passed Andy and Emma, I only really noticed due to Andy's distinctive reflective jacket and Marc and I turned our attention to cut off times. We knew cut off was 12 hours and that we'd been moving a lot slower than usual. I estimated that we were about 7km from Kildale

and I made the time at 10h:15m so we would likely land comfortably ahead of cutoff. Marc told me he'd just talked himself out of quitting at Kildale and wanted to have a decent stop there to have a pork pie and phone his wife. I told him that ideally I wanted to move through the checkpoint quickly, but I'd wait for him and take the chance to have a hot drink.

We pushed on with the increasingly shorter walk breaks and increasingly longer, faster and more downhill running stints and it seemed like no time at all before we hit the unusually welcome tarmac at the top of Battersby Bank. At this point, another heavy squall blew in and at some point I'd fast walked away from the group we were in and before I'd realised it, I'd done at least two stints of running and walking on my own. I looked over my shoulder and there were headtorches about 300m behind me so I made the assumption that Marc would catch me if I took it easy. At the start of the descent into Kildale, I started to run again but halfway down, my bladder

(which I had been holding since Clay Bank, not wanting to expose myself to the wind) forced me to attend to the matter or have an accident. I stopped by the roadside and created some worryingly yellow snow and as I sorted myself out, Andy and Emma passed, but no sign of Marc. Still thinking he was just behind me, I pushed on.

On the final stretch down toward Kildale, I noticed two sets of blue flashing lights heading slowly up the road towards Kildale from the direction of Easby. A fire engine passed by as I hit the main road and I commented to the runner beside me that I was glad it wasn't an ambulance as I was worried that an ambulance would be for a runner. As I arrived at the checkpoint, I noticed the fire engine stopping further on in the village, but an ambulance car was outside the checkpoint. This was not unexpected since we knew the race did have ambulance cover. What I did not expect were the scenes in the checkpoint. I checked in with Andy Norman who was marshalling and

immediately bumped into Paul Burgum, whose first question was 'Are you going back out?' My answer was 'Of course I am. I'm feeling great, why wouldn't I?' and Paul told me to look around the room and at the huge pile of GPS trackers on the table handed in by retirees. The room was full of people in foil blankets taking on warm drinks, some shivering, many having discarded kit and clearly not intending to continue. I got a bit of a negative vibe from this and decided I wanted to be out of the checkpoint quickly. I quickly got my dropbag, ditched the untouched Wine Gums, downs my Red Bull, loaded back up on Chia Charge and put my dropbag fig rolls into my pocket before battling off the frozen top of my coke bottle and topping it up. I moved to get a coffee, but there was none in the coffee flask on the table so I left it be. I looked up and saw a frozen looking Angela Moore being looked after in a side room and was a little shocked, Angela is a tough cookie with a lot of seriously hard race completions under her belt.

There was a group of runners preparing to leave, including Tom Stewart who invited me to run with them, I agreed, and said I'd wait by the door for them, I wanted to keep moving so as not to cool down. On the way to the door, I saw Marc arrive and I told him I needed to move on fast to avoid cooling off, we wished each other well and I moved to the door. The other group seemed to take forever to get organised so I shouted to Tom that I was going to move on and that they'd probably catch me on the climb and at that I headed out of the door. As I did so, I saw a Mountain Rescue Team member heading into the Village Hall, which should have triggered alarm bells (and perhaps did subconsciously).

Kildale to Finish

I jogged out of the checkpoint and down the road, noting that the clock time was now 8:32pm, I saw the fire engine further down in the village, I thought it was dealing with an RTA, but I was more focused on the firefighters, I had a vague feeling that they would try and stop me running off into

the night. I ran hard down the road towards the railway bridge and got out of sight of the village. I decided to have a fig roll, sip of coke and some paracetamol. I also took a salt tablet, which I'd been taking about every 90 minutes during the day to keep my electrolytes in check. I made up my mind to run to the bottom of the hill, then keep setting myself targets all the way to the race finish.

As I approached the start of the climb, I noticed a sole runner ahead, I caught him quickly and on the snow covered road, I thought he was taking a wrong turn (he wasn't) and led him on a detour through the driveway of a farm house by the road. Once back on the road, I noticed another group about 400m ahead and decided to bridge across to them with a fast walk/jog up the hill. I decided this would be my mental game to get me through to the finish. I'd found during the Lyke Wake Challenge in 2016, that playing mental game gave me a bit of extra motivation to keep moving quickly in the later stages of a race. The premise

being that unless I had a mechanical injury, I was fairly capable of moving at a decent pace and that the only blockers are those from the brain telling me that I'm tired or my legs hurt. This game was simple, bridge to the group in front, overtake them, bridge to the next group and continue this until the finish. As I turned left into Pale End Plantation, the group in front was only 100m ahead. I jogged on and caught Paul Burgum among the back markers with another runner (Andy Cole?). I had a really positive conversation with Paul and I wished him well before running off chasing half of the group who'd broken away. I pushed hard following them up towards Captain Cook's Monument, just before the final steep bit I was only 50m or so behind, so I walked and stuck my hand into my pocket and realised that my fig rolls had gone. Even that didn't bother me, I just hoped somebody behind me would find them and make use of them.

I pushed on harder and as I hit the top of Easby Moor I used the howling tailwind I picked up

once out of the treeline to get closer and noticed that all took the short angle cutting inside of the Monument. I never do this, not because it's wrong or anything, it's just I have some sort of superstition about always going around the Monument, the same as I have about NEVER skipping the out and back to Roseberry Topping (after an infamous run of bad luck on a night when Brenda Wilkin, Dave Cook, Dee Boudierba and I did exactly that). Rounding the Monument, there was a ferocious roar of wind through the railings on the Monument and the wind was clearly still as strong as it was earlier.

Now round the Monument, I bounded down the descent towards Gribdale Gate. The group in front had split into a pair and two single runners. I overhauled the single runners quickly and went after the pair. Close to the bottom, the pair were stopped by a man walking up the hill. As I got closer, he asked if I'd heard. 'Heard what?' I asked and he told me that Roseberry Topping was closed and to just

turn right at the gate and head to the finish.

I wasn't sure if this was a wind up and wasn't sure what to make of it. I pushed harder and overtook the pair just before Gribdale Gate and pushed hard up the steps onto the path towards Roseberry, opening up a gap quickly. I noticed a pair of headtorches about a km ahead and decided that they were the next target to bridge to and that I'd see what they did at Roseberry and follow suit. I pushed hard along the path and took about 20-25 minutes to get to Roseberry Gate. The pair of headtorches were nowhere to be seen, but if they'd done Roseberry, by rights, they should be coming back down or be on the way back to the gate. They weren't so I pushed on over towards Hutton Moor Gate. There were no targets in front, so I decided to give myself a new target of creating an unassailable gap on the headtorches behind me.

As I arrived at Hutton Moor Gate, I noticed a pair of headtorches way off course over towards the Hanging Stone, I flashed my torch at them a few times in the hope of bringing them back

on course, then forged on towards the Black Nab path. Halfway along the path, I met a male runner heading back along the course, presumably to meet someone and as he passed, I looked over my shoulder to see the pair of wayward headtorches back on course and about 500m behind me. I clattered along the slushy path towards Highcliff, walking only where the surface or grade forced me to, again having to shield my eyes from the snow before eventually turning off the path and into the treeline before Highcliff Nab. I climbed the steps up the Nab following the tape laid the night before by Lorna Simpkin and the reflective stickers Jon Steele had used to provide direction and made the top at 13h:02m.

I looked down and saw two headtorches emerging from the treeline below Highcliff and took off like a scalded cat into Guisborough Woods, but found it hard to see due to the Millennium Falcon effect of headtorch and snow. After about a minute, I realised that the ambient light from Guisborough and the

lying snow meant, that I could get better visibility by turning my headtorch off (a couple of years ago the woods were so dense that this wouldn't have worked), so I decided to do this and gained an immediate increase in pace. I was pushing hard through the woods, finding it hard to gauge what progress I was making against the lights behind me due to the twisting nature of the trails. Occasionally, I could see a group of 4 or 5 torches, other times just a pair, so I forced the pace as hard as possible. About halfway through the woods, the trail forks left and right. Both routes come out at the same place, but one, the official Cleveland Way, takes a pointless down and up. I was hoping and praying that the tape would stay on the fire road, but Lorna had been taking instructions to the letter and the more cruel route was taped. I endured this section then pushed hard through the darkness on the steep downhill that followed. The trick to running without a headtorch in the dark, is to not look directly at what you want to look at. The parts of the eye that interpret colours are toward the

centre of the eye, the parts that interpret black and white towards the edge. These are the bits that are used in the dark and therefore, if you look slightly above, below or to the side of your target, you see it clearer. Your peripheral vision is your friend and the longer you run in the dark, the more your night vision adapts.

Because of this, I now avoided looking behind me or towards the town or roads to try and preserve my growing night vision and was only focused on the trail ahead and not missing the sharp right turn up into the bush and onto the next fire road up. I found it easily and crossed over to the next trail before cruising all the way downhill to the concrete farm road which leads toward the final stretch.

On the concrete road, I was back out of the wind, so I put my headtorch back on and chanced a look back along the trail. I could see several groups in the woods, but not the pair I thought were behind me. I bashed my way down the hill to the disused railway line.

I now knew I was only 2km from the finish so I walked for 60 seconds, then run for 60 seconds. I did this twice then upped the intervals to 120 seconds. At some point I saw the lights of the farm on Belmangate and just kept running, over the railway bridge, down the steps, down Belmangate and into the Sea Cadets Hall stopping the clock at 14h:03m.

As my tracker was taken off me and my time taken, the sudden stop from running hard, the heat in the hall and probably a bit of emotion all hit me at once and I had a bit of a wobble. A paramedic came over and I insisted I was OK. The next few minutes were a bit confusing because Harriet Shields and the group I'd last seen her in at Kildale were all there helping me to a chair and someone said 'Well done for escaping Kildale'. Marc appeared and explained that after I'd left, all runners had been held at Kildale, the details of that I will go into shortly. I sat and had a hot drink and just sitting in that group of people in that hall gave me a great feeling of contentment, friendship

and satisfaction. One of the race finishes, I will remember for the rest of my life.

After awhile, I got showered and changed and sat and had a beer with Paul Burgum, who finished shortly after me, Mark Dalton and Duncan Bruce while we waited for the hall to empty so that Duncan and I could sort our sleeping arrangements out. In that time, I observed the interactions between the race team and Mountain Rescue that allowed me to piece events together, further information became available over the next few days and tonight I had a further chat with race director Jon Steele to clarify exactly what happened.

Press Coverage

Most people reading this will have seen the negative press coverage of the race. In my opinion, almost all of those reports were exaggerated and were very selective with the facts.

What actually happened was that all runners got off the moors by themselves, but at the

Kildale checkpoint, after stopping, a number of people cooled down rapidly and suffered minor hypothermia symptoms. Between 8pm and 9pm there had been significant snowfall onto already icy roads in the Kildale area and many were only reliably passable using 4x4 vehicles. Mountain Rescue were in the area to assist a driver whose vehicle had been stuck in the snow and being aware of the race, they stopped by the checkpoint to check up on things.

A joint decision was taken at around 8:30pm to stop all runners at Kildale due to the risks imposed by the weather conditions.

Race Control suddenly had a situation where they needed to transport anyone who'd stopped to the race finish 5 miles away in Guisborough. This would normally be done by the volunteer marshalls and race control support vehicles (I've actually used this support twice myself and it works well), however due to the state of the roads, the support of Mountain Rescue was needed to help transport people to the finish safely

and provide additional minor medical assistance to some runners.

All runners in this race had GPS trackers and Race Control knew to within 10 metres where we all were so were able to quickly close the race down in a controlled manner.

By the time I'd run from Kildale to Guisborough (2h:40m according to the tracker), all runners who'd been stopped had been transported to the end, which to me is an awesome logistical feat.

At no point did I feel that my safety or that of others had been compromised and nobody needed any hospital treatment.

I slept at Guisborough Sea Cadets following the race and the Race Director, Jon Steele sat in the same room and personally made numerous telephone calls up to around 1:30am to satisfy himself that not only were all runners OK when they left Guisborough, but that all had got home or to their accommodation for the night and were fine.

To top all that, Cleveland Mountain Rescue

praised runners for their equipment and preparedness and the race organisers for their contingency planning. To me, the Mountain Rescue praise, speaks volumes.

Performance Summary

My race did not go exactly to plan, however, I'd have been very, very surprised if it did in those conditions, I did however improve my 50 mile Personal Best by just over 6 minutes to 13h:15m:42s. More pleasing was being able to overcome stomach trouble that dogged me for over 30km, something which would have stopped my race a couple of years ago and that all of the recce work I did to test kit in foul weather paid off. That means the awful 6 hour slog in knee deep snow over Bloworth in December, the icy night runs over Highcliff x2, Roseberry x2 and Captain Cooks x2 in Feb and all of the other grim, awful training runs were worth every second because I learned a lot about mental toughness and self management.

I also give credit to the

speedwork and speed endurance sessions on the treadmill. Whilst I have been a huge detractor of the treadmill in the past, the consistency it has offered has clearly improved my overall ability to move at a faster pace for longer.

Kit Choices

For those who are interested, the kit worn on the day was :

Thermal Skullcap

Cycling Cap

Base Layer

Thermal Cycling Vest

Windproof Fleece Lined Cycling Jacket

Fleece Lined

Compression Shorts

More Mile Lycra

Leggings

Compression Socks

Calf Guards

Waterproof Socks

Gaiters

Adidas Kanadia TR8.1 Shoes

Buff used as gaiter between base layer and neck

Buff used as gaiter between jacket and neck

Buff wrapped around face

Buff wrapped over cap and head

Skin Layer Gloves:
Wilkinsons Full Finger Cycling Gloves

Outer Layer Gloves:
Karrimor Running Gloves

Mid Layer Gloves added at Clay Bank were Karrimor Running Gloves too

All other kit, including compulsory items were carried but not used.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

I owe a continuous debt of thanks to my wife Natalie and our family for their continued forbearance with the long hours of training and weekends away.

I'd like to thank Guisborough Sea Cadets, without whose hospitality in allowing me to sleep indoors, I probably wouldn't have started the race, I certainly wouldn't have finished and if I'd stayed outside on Saturday night, I'd have probably been in a bad way by Sunday morning.

As always, Jon, Shirley and their huge family of helpers have put on a great race and dealt

with adversity on the day with so much strength and organisation and afterwards with grace. I keep saying that this race series is special, it's special beyond words. The friendships made and the experiences had at these events are beyond value. The way the Hardmoors family has pulled together this week should be a message to all involved about how highly regarded and valued Hardmoors is by a lot of people.

Thanks also to Cleveland Mountain Rescue and Yorkshire Ambulance for their help in ensuring that the race ended as safely as possible.

Thanks to everyone I ran with or spoke to out on the course, you guys

helped make this event what it is. In particular, Marc Short, one of the nicest guys you will ever meet, thank you for your company and I'm certain that you saved my race by helping sort myself out when my fingers went numb. I'm gutted that you were stopped while I managed to continue, you had the finish in you and I wish we could have finished together. Also thanks to everyone, even though my memory is hazy, who helped me at the finish when I went all wobbly.

I look forward to seeing you all at Hardmoors 110!

Checkout James Campbell's website: Jamescampbell78.wordpress.com



2018 Hardmoors 55

One Runner's View



Andy Cole.

I sat down to write my normal race report on last Saturday's HM55 but it occurred to me that I've probably done enough of those already, so instead I'll try to explain how I feel about this year's race and the events that developed during and after it. As always, my views, I don't expect everyone to agree.

My history with Hardmoors and the HM55

I first met Jon Steele, or rather he stopped to check if I was OK, when I was throwing up in a field in Switzerland during the 2009 UTMB race; he went on to finish, I didn't. I've known Shirley even longer, since we made our way fairly painfully over Rannoch Moor during what was for both of us our first West Highland Way race back in 2007. From the start I was interested in the Hardmoors 110 but somehow it always came too close to other things I wanted to do, so it was great for me when Jon decided that its first spinoff the Hardmoors 55 would be run in March 2010. I signed up straight away and was one of the 57 hopefuls setting out from Helmsley on a dull March

day. My first experience of the North York Moors was the cold, the rain, the biting wind, the near zero visibility for much of the way and the enormous feeling of satisfaction on finally getting to (I think) the Rugby club in Guisborough just short of 12 hours later. I've been hooked on this event ever since, and although I've missed three due to illness or injury I've always come back whenever I can. I've still never got around to the 110 but I've done the 60 and for me it just doesn't compare; the 55 is by far the best part of the Cleveland Way. Last Saturday was my sixth trip along the course.

My 2018 race in brief

I'm a more mature and steadier pedestrian nowadays than back in 2010 (some would say geriatric and extremely slow I dare say); furthermore I wanted a good day out rather than to prove anything, to finish in a state where recovery wouldn't take more than a day or two. I confessed to John and Katrina Kynaston in the pub the night before that I was happy to take the full time allowance if required, but would start conservatively and aim for around 15

hours. From previous experience I split this into 5 to Osmotherley, 6 to Kildale and 4 to the finish, to give me some mental yardsticks to work to.

It all went pretty well to plan. I got to Os in about 4 hours 45 mins and rewarded myself with a 15 minute stop for tea and sandwiches. The meat of the effort comes from here to Kildale; a few miles of undulation then a long steady climb up to the top of the Moors' northern escarpment, followed by some short sharp climbs over the "Three Sisters" to Clay Bank, then a long jeep track with gentle ups and downs out to the remote Bloworth Crossing and back to Kildale. I'll talk about the weather later but the only thing that really slowed progress was having to take the rocky descents cautiously as they were slippery from snow and ice build-up. In the 2013 event we knew there was going to be more snow about so I'd taken Yaktrax. I hadn't bothered this time; they would have been useful but it was no real disaster, just a bit more care required. I had a couple of slips but nothing painful - my heaviest fall was while jogging down the fairly steep snow-covered tarmac road about a mile out of Kildale. I hit Kildale around 6 hours after leaving Os, that is at just about 8pm.

I was in good time and no hurry so I made the most of the facilities in the hall. Three or four cups of tea, two of soup, ginger biscuits and various other goodies; I then put on my spare warm layer and waterproof trousers as I expected colder temperatures and slower progress over the final section, and I was good to go. The hall was full of runners; some were looking cold and as if they were unlikely to continue, but the majority seemed to be making preparations for the final push, including the Kynastons who had come in sometime during my half hour R and R session. I left at around 8.30 pm, and going out of the door met two other runners just setting out; it seemed easy enough to agree to carry on together as we were all concerned with just getting it done now rather than chasing any particular times. The other two were Paul Burgum and Paul Hudson, who were great company as we made our way over to the finish. We had been told at Kildale that the short but steep out and back to Roseberry Topping was now to be omitted, so there

was no technical ground to impede progress, and even though we walked the whole way we were home just before midnight. Allowing for the later than 9am start, my finishing time was 14:38:01.

And that would have been that. Except when chatting to Shirley just after the finish she said only a couple more finishers were expected after us. The explanation, which came as a bit of a surprise, was that the race had been stopped not long after we had set out, with no more runners being permitted onto the course beyond Kildale. During the time that we had been completing our last leg, everyone at Kildale had been evacuated back to Guisborough and the majority had now gone home. My immediate reaction was that I had been really lucky to leave Kildale in time to miss this stoppage. Beyond that I was tired enough to concentrate mainly on the 10 minute walk back to my car and the short drive over snow covered roads back to my hotel in Middlesborough.

What actually happened after we left Kildale

I have pieced this together from various text messages and Facebook posts from people I trust on day after the race. If it is not entirely right this is unintentional and I'm sure those with better knowledge will put me right.

A bit earlier in the evening Cleveland Mountain Rescue had gone to assist a vehicle stuck in a ditch near Kildale. Several inches of snow had built up on roads around the area and the CMR 4x4 vehicles were very helpful in the conditions. While they were there they looked into the Kildale checkpoint to see how things were going with the race; Jon's preparations always include keeping CMR apprised of all his race plans. This will have been sometime between 8.30 (when I left Kildale) and 9pm (which was the cutoff time for Kildale in any case). At that point they suggested to Jon that in the now deteriorating conditions, evacuating any runner who got into trouble on the last section of the course would not be easy, and that a safe option would be to not let any more runners leave Kildale. Jon concurred and the race was stopped.

Again making use of their 4x4's, CMR were then extremely helpful in ensuring that all the runners stopped at Kildale were transported quickly and safely back to the finish in Guisborough, where they could resume with their own plans for getting away from the finish of the event.

So no runners were rescued from the course at any point, all made their way safely down to checkpoints, either on their own or escorted by fellow runners, under their own steam. The race organisation and runners had cleared the course competently to places of safety, and anyone not then at the finish was given a lift back to there. Some runners reached checkpoints hypothermic to some degree; they were warmed up on the spot and no-one was hospitalised.

Media Reaction

I'm mentioning this for any readers outside the circle involved in the race on the day, and anyone who may stumble on this post at some time in the future. Media reports soon started to circulate claiming any number from 30 to 100 runners brought down from the moors by mountain rescue teams. This generated all the normal on-line uninformed comment and criticism, whether the race should have started and so on. Jon received his share of hate mail. The national media were involved by Monday when a piece on the Radio 2 Jeremy Vine show covered the race. Thankfully, the opening comment was by a member of CMR who calmly related what had actually happened, praised the Hardmoors organisation, and said that CMR were quite happy that the race had been started, and equally happy when it was stopped at an appropriate time. This rather took the wind out of the sails of the "someone got it wrong" experts but they had a go anyway. I also heard a piece on BBC Teeside where both a CMR member and Paul Burgum (who I covered the last section with) did a good job in telling it like it was. It may not be quite dead yet but the media will move on to something else soon.

General thoughts about the weather

Ever since it's first running Jon has stressed in the run-up to the HM55 that it's a race likely to be run

under winter conditions. Runners need to have some idea of what that means and prepare accordingly. It seems to me that the weather forecast for the 2018 event, which had been consistent for at least a couple of days ahead of the race, was very accurate. The expectation was for near zero temperatures, a 40-50 miles per hour easterly wind and frequent snow and hail showers which the BBC said would feel "blizzard-like when you are in them". That's exactly what we got. We knew what was coming. Common sense would also tell you that conditions were likely to feel worse as the temperature dropped when darkness fell.

As one of the last finishers into Guisborough just before midnight, I was one of the runners out on the course longest on Saturday so feel that I'm in as good a position as anyone to comment on the weather.

First let's be clear. Whatever terminology you hear or see in the media, and ignoring the odd bit of hype you get from ultra runners and their mates, Saturday's conditions were challenging, but certainly not "extreme" or "brutal". Many Spine or TdH competitors would regard them as a normal day at the office. Anyone who came into a checkpoint colder than was good for them had not experienced extreme weather; they had learned the valuable lesson that for them, in those conditions, they did not have enough clothes on. It is impossible to be prescriptive about this, I've heard or read about runners who went through the whole of the race with a base layer and a shell and were comfortable, and others who had multiple layers and were cold. It depends on how fast you go, how much heat you generate, how much fat you carry and many other factors, but the main point of learning that runners should take from this is that a mandatory equipment list can only ever be a suggestion of what might keep you alive; there are no guarantees because we are all different. You need to find out what works for you.

A lot of the vernacular surrounding ultra-running focuses on overcoming difficulties - finding your limits, pushing through the pain and so on. The only thing I would disagree with on Paul B's radio interview would be the description of ultra running as «an extreme sport». I'm a sixty-nine

year old pensioner with dodgy knees; people like me don't do extreme sports. To keep themselves safe runners really have to get away from this sort of mindset. What we do is a hobby, accessible to almost anyone who wants to put a bit of time and effort into learning the game. It takes us to beautiful places, we meet like-minded people and derive great satisfaction at times. All we need is to do a diligent amount of training and learning, set ourselves a sensible game plan for each race that takes account of our current fitness, skills and knowledge, and then execute the plan, no drama, no heroics. The amount that you have in reserve is what keeps you out of trouble.

Comparison with other poor weather 55's

The 2010 race was run in miserable cold conditions. No spectacular snow or gales but the continual near-zero wet cold that the British climate is good at providing, easy to misjudge from the relative warmth of a lower level starting venue. Under these conditions runners are always wet as well as cold and there's nothing like wet clothes for stepping up the heat transfer from your core to the outside world. There were several cases of hypothermia, runners were warmed up in blankets and sleeping bags at the indoor checkpoints, the finishers finished and I think everyone involved agreed it had been a great event.

In 2013 the temperatures were slightly lower than last Saturday and much of the country was covered in snow before the start. The easterly wind was similar. We never saw the sun. However, the race overall was probably slightly easier because that year it was run from East to West giving a tail wind for a lot of the distance, and safer because the final section headed to lower, more sheltered ground as the temperature dropped. Some sections were definitely more trying than we found last Saturday however. The leg from Kildale out to Bloworth was directly into the gale and the track filled with deep powder snow. The path from Sneck Yate to the road before the White Horse was completely obliterated into a snow slope for most of the way and runners at my end of the field had it all in the dark. The loop to the White Horse was cut from the course but most regulars still took

much longer than their normal times.

But the big difference between these years and 2018 is that there were far fewer runners on the course - 57 starters in 2010, 135 in 2013, 342 in 2018 - far fewer to deal with if a percentage got into trouble or circumstances changed rapidly. I'm not saying that this was good or bad, just that it's a fact.

So on Saturday evening, with (I'm estimating here) around 50 runners in Kildale potentially setting out over the last exposed section in dropping temperatures, and evidence that others had already found the preceding section too cold for their kit, it's clear that CMR and Jon made the only sensible call and that was to halt the race. I would suggest that the numbers in both these groups influenced the decision.

In Conclusion

I'll be back for more Hardmoors 55's, so long as I still have the legs and lungs to do them. It's a special event for me. I would understand completely if Jon decided to move it back a month or so to get warmer conditions; no-one needs the aggro he's had to put up with over the last day or two. But from my perspective, I hope not. Part of the beauty of these moors is their wildness, and it would be sad to lose that. Other races are available along these trails in summer, if that's your thing. Lots of runners have already said that they had a great time on Saturday so clearly got their decisions right; others will have gained invaluable lessons from their outing and their tales will swell the knowledge pool. I hope, maybe in vain, for times when there will be no need for a "mandatory kit list" for these events, that we will all have learned enough to understand what's required. A day or two before the 2013 Hardmoors 55, when much of the country was snowbound and events were being cancelled all over, the message from Jon to competitors was clear "...we won't cancel the race but you all know what the weather is going to be like. Pack some warm stuff and give it a good thrash." All you need to know, I think.

Visit Andy Cole's blog AJC-Running Late.blogspot.co.uk

Hardmoors 55 2018 - Ouch!

James Conway



Hardmoors 55 now has a special notoriety among ultra-runners. The 2018 edition was brutal thanks to mother nature sending it's vicious pet "the beast from the east 2" to take part. 350 runners started and more than half never finished.

The race started off as a normal trail run. The only difference being I knew I had 55 miles to "survive" - hopefully at a pace faster than walking.

I hadn't run more than 32 miles in training thanks to the abysmal weather we had been having, but I did run that flat out at about 5:45 mins/km so I was pretty confident I could maintain 6:45-7:45 mins/km for a good while, even over bad terrain. Having studied the course and knowing that the most challenging and/or "un-runnable" bits (Bloworth

Crossing, "3 sisters", Wainstones, Roseberry Topping) were in the second half and knowing the weather was going to take a turn for the worse after lunch my plan was to cover as much ground as possible early on. Get to Osmotherley within 4 hours 30 mins and I would be happy.

I also had my nutrition/fuel planned out. It was relatively simple every 45 mins I would take in a gel, a swig of water and one of either a babybel or a peperami. There is method to my choice of babybel and peperami. Babybels actually contain more calories than the energy gels I was using. The difference being that most of the calories in a babybel are from lactose and fat, which means the energy boost from them, would be delayed compared to the energy gel - just not for too long. Peperamis are full of salt. Salt keeps my nerves firing. I also had drop bags at Osmotherley (25 miles) and Kildale (42 miles) that had refills and treats (coke and monster munch)

The first part of the race pretty much went to plan. My pace was on track, as was my nutrition plan.

Crossing the Moors between Snek Yate Bank and Osmotherley is when the weather turned for the worse. I had about 6 miles to cover to Osmotherley where I could reset. I just had to get my head down. There was not a hedge, wall or hill for miles to shelter us from the elements. Sub-zero harsh winds blasting hail and snow into my face was literally painful. I wrapped up in every buff and hat I had but I had to keep my eyes open and elements even battered my eyeballs - I ran those 6 miles blind.

Lesson 1 - you need glasses/goggles for an ultra in the winter.

I made it to Osmotherley and to my bag of treats. I give myself a moment to review the first part of the race; I had made it to Osmotherley within the time I

had set myself - around 4 hours for the first 22 miles. However, my target time of 11 hours was edited. The weather I had just witnessed was like nothing I have ever seen. Just finishing this thing was going to be hard. My new goal was to just finish.

I immediately put the first part of the race out of my mind. I told myself it was a training run that was preparation for the main event - the last 30 miles, in THAT weather. I finished my monster munch, chucked a bottle of coke in my pack and off I trotted to “start the race” and get to my next bag of treats at Kildale - before dark. That would be 20 miles in just over 5 hours.

The next 10 miles would almost break me. The three hills that had to be climbed and descended were very tough. Imagine several hundred slippery steps going up towards a summit that disappeared into the clouds followed by some harsh exposed running being blasted by hail and wind. When the weather did ease, you could see Roseberry Topping in the distance - an almost impossible distance away. Following this was a hundred more extremely slippery steps to descend. Imagine this three times...

I eventually made it to Clay Bank checkpoint where I was asked to make sure I had my head torch handy because darkness was descending. I asked how far we were away from Kildale. The answer was 9 miles. I needed to crack on. I had less than 2 hours to get to Kildale and my next bag of monster munch.

The next 9 miles were absolutely soul destroying. 9 miles of pure flat wilderness that was Bloworth Crossing. I was whipped by sub-zero winds, hail and snow. I was sick to the stomach of gels, cheese and peperamis but I knew the last thing I could afford now was to “bonk”. I forced myself to keep eating and chewing on my frozen water tube.

In my head, I have two voices. I have an overly confident loud and obnoxious voice that I call “Lazy James”. The other “Proper James” is much more conservative and is the voice that persuades me to do these kinds of things. Of the two “Lazy James” is by far the most difficult voice to silence. Allowing the



other “Proper James” to prevail is when I feel most satisfaction in life. This I understand fully, however, it does not make “Lazy James” any easier to deal with.

At this point in the race “Lazy James” was winning: “What the hell are you hurting yourself for?” “How cold are you?”

“Oh no your fingers are numb! You’ll die alone up here!”

“These other people are proper ultra-runners, you shouldn’t be doing this”.

Lazy James focuses on the distance that has to be run, comparing it with stupid things that are not at all comparable.

“9 miles!? That is like 3 times longer than the longest swim you have ever done!”

Luckily, I am good at recognizing “Lazy James” and I do know that he is ALWAYS wrong. The other “Proper James” just needed a pep talk. Then I started to hear him

Hardmoors 55

“Mrs C and the kids are watching you on the tracker and will be willing you on”

“Do this and the kids will have a dad who is an Ultra-runner AND an ironman”

“Imagine how proud you’ll make Mrs C and the kids!”

“You run 9 miles all the time! It is easy at this pace”

“Monster munch!”

That was all I needed and Kildale rolled towards me just as the sun set over Captain Cooks Monument.

Kildale checkpoint was a quick one. “Proper James” was still in control and I wanted to get going before “Lazy James” woke back up. A quick bag of monster munch a swig of coke, strapped on my head torch and I was off. It was around 18:30 and I had just 13 miles to go. Barring an injury, I was going to do it!

Leaving the Kildale checkpoint there was a sign that said, “If you think that was bad, wait till you see what’s to come”. I laughed. I should not have.



I had completely lost the ability to grasp the concept of time at this point and just had to trust that as long as I was not walking backwards that I would get there in time. The next few miles were through the woods around Captain Cooks Monument. The head torch was almost useless. It was just lighting up the snow that was being blasted into my eyes by the wind. Think of the view out of the cockpit of the millennium falcon when it jumped into hyperspace.

I made it to Roseberry Topping and was told it was closed due to the weather and that I should head “That way”. I turned and I could see the lights of Guisborough in the general direction the marshal was pointing. This was a boost and I was secretly pleased I did not have to do Roseberry. I have been up there before and it is punishing after 5 miles never mind 45.

I headed towards Guisborough Woods glad that I would be descending to Guisborough and the finish line any time soon.

Hang on...

Why am I running PAST Guisborough??!

Guisborough disappeared behind and to the left of me. I felt like someone had stabbed me in the heart. I kept going and the sign ahead said “-->”, further away from Guisborough. Ouch.

I was broken now. Every step was an effort. I was unable to run downhill. My knees and ankles were on fire. Then I felt my phone buzzing. I knew this would be people talking about how I was doing. Messages from Mrs C, Messages from friends at work, people from Coalfields. I put my head down and pushed forward. I got to a level section and could see I was heading into Guisborough. I pushed on.

I hit a main road with a marshal standing clapping at me. This was it, I was finished. A couple of hundred more meters. Then in the distance, a group of people clapping and cheering. The finish line. The finish line was indoors. I ran in and reached a desk.

“Number?”

“...102...”

“12:23, Well Done James!!”

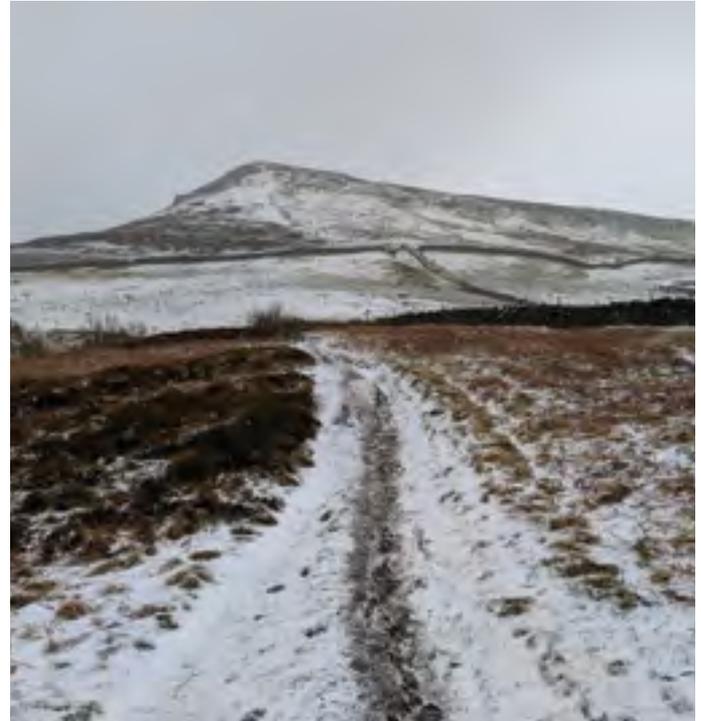
“Would you like a coffee and a sausage sandwich?”

“...yes...”

Then it sunk in. I had just completed my first ultra-marathon! 55 miles in 12:23 or 8:20 min/km. Considering the conditions I was very very happy. “Proper James” was also very happy. “Lazy James” even tipped his cap in appreciation.

It was only at this point I realised that they had decided not to let people continue from Kildale because of the conditions. I was lucky enough to make it out of Kildale in time.

I would just like to add that this event was beautifully organised. The ultra-running and Hardmoors community are awesome. Hardmoors got a lot of stick in the press for letting the race go ahead with



headlines professing, “100s of people were rescued from the hills with hypothermia by mountain rescue”. Actually, what happened was that MRT were attending a stuck vehicle in the Kildale area and popped into the Kildale checkpoint to check on the progress of the race. They told the organisers that it might be difficult extracting people from Guisborough Woods in these conditions so the Hardmoors organizers made the decision to stop allowing people to progress from Kildale. Any runners that were hypothermic were treated in Kildale hall with a warm blanket and a hot cup of coffee. MRT then helped the Hardmoors organisers transport the 100 or so people unable to progress past Kildale to the finish line at Guisborough. This was my first adventure into the world of ultra-running and it was awesome. I cannot wait to do it again.

See more from James Conway at: Jaywaycon.weebly.com

[Sarah's Thank You JustGiving page](#)

Website: [Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team](#)

Facebook: [Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team](#)

SARAH TAYLOR BLOWN AWAY AT HARDMOORS 55

After the race Sarah Taylor felt inspired to offer something to the Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team as a way of thanking them for their support over the years.

UW I was impressed by the amount you managed to raise for the rescue team. What happened to give you the idea?

Sarah I took part in the Hardmoors 55 for the third time. I doubted I would be able to complete it but when I got to the finish and had time to reflect I was just so grateful that if something had happened, the Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team were there. It got me thinking about making a donation and I couldn't find a donate button on their page so I thought the only way to do it would be to set up a Justgiving page.

Once I'd set it up I had to decide on a total to raise so thought if I share the page on Facebook with others on the Hardmoors page, maybe they might like to donate as well. The rest, as they say, is history.

UW So you ran the race?

Sarah Yes, I finished in 13:13

UW Its amazing what people can do when they come together. I saw on your fb page how surprised you were when it reached £500

Sarah I am blown away by the total!! Brilliant but I never thought it would go so far.

UW You definitely hit the right spot at the right moment, that's an amazing response from everyone and I'm sure it's not just runners.

Sarah Lots of friends and family have donated because they were also comforted by them being there.

UW Is the rescue team on call at all the Hardmoors ultras?

Sarah I do know that in the 10 years that Hardmoors has been running, this is the only time they have helped us





out which is all credit to Jon and Shirley and their army of helpers.

UW Were you concerned about the conditions during the race? Did you think it was getting too cold or hazardous to continue?

Sarah I did shout at the wind and snow/hail as I was crossing Bloworth crossing because it was just coming from every angle possible. On the approach to Kildale I was talking to myself about the next section I really wasn't looking forward to climbing Roseberry Topping, the wind was horrendous and I'm only small so I was worried I would be blown off.

When I got to the checkpoint I heard that we didn't have to go up Roseberry and that was my decision made. I wasn't in pain so I knew I could get to the finish.

Sarah's Justgiving page reads:

"Following yesterday's Epic Adventure I'm sure there are

lots of people who would like to say thank you for the support of this amazing group of people. Thankfully I was one of the lucky ones who didn't need help (this time) but I still wanted to show my appreciation and thought some of you might like to also. Well done to everyone who toed the start line, no matter what the outcome!!!"

Currently the Justgiving page has raised well over £3,000.

Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Your details are safe with JustGiving - they'll never sell them on or send unwanted emails. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to the charity. So it's the most efficient way to donate - saving time and cutting costs for the charity.

Links

[Sarah's Thank You JustGiving page](#)

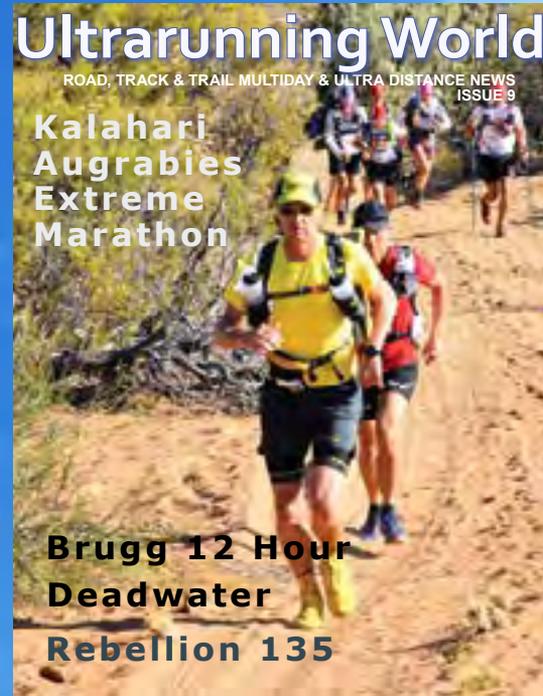
Website: [Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team](#)

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HARDMOORS 55 2018

A GRAND DAY OUT



The day dawned bright and clear and warm. Not the day of the 55, a totally different day, perhaps in a distant land or possibly just a different time of year. The day of the 55 dawned (or at least would do a bit later on) with a breeze and a somewhat chilly feeling in the air. A few flecks of snow on the windscreen of my van that I'd kipped in since arriving late the evening before.

I had to get down to the coach pickup before 0555 (or Jon's instructions said

it would go without me). That meant I had to drag myself out of my sleeping bag and get myself sorted out. Start off with a coffee. Jetboil? Check. Mug? Check. Coffee jar? Check. Water? Check. Cafetiere? Crap - forgot it. The only thing that would act as a filter in the van is a baby wipe and that would make it taste vile. So no coffee just yet then.

Dressed, drained, taped up, envelope of camp fees labelled, bag packed and down to the car park down the road.

Quite a few people milling around looking a mix of tired, excited, cold, impatient (the coaches were a little late), apprehensive or a combination of all the above. In my case actually none of these. I tend not to get excited by stuff or worried by stuff or whatever until I'm actually there ready to do it. No sense worrying about things ahead and getting excited doesn't really help much either. Quite a long drive round to the start at Helmsley and then we're into the actual getting ready

stage.

There was already a queue out of the sports centre for registration and kit checks etc so I went to the coffee truck first. Coffee seemed to be the more urgent requirement at this point and then into the queue with the odd flake of snow falling and a slight chill in the air. The coffee was good for keeping me warm though.

In the hall was a clearly laid out mass of organised chaos which actually seemed to flow

far more logically and smoothly than any would have guessed at first glance. Kit checked at the first tables (and a smily face drawn on my hand). Collect my number at the second table having proved I was actually me. James handed me a nice shiny orange suppository and scanned me into the system and then it was taped quickly and efficiently onto my race vest out of the way and out of mind.

I managed to find a small square of floor in a side room to get my pack properly sorted out for the day (no point packing it before kit check as it all has to come out for that anyway). Final decision on which jacket - looks OK at the moment so I went with the lighter weight one.

My kit for the day was slightly over the kit list requirements and contained:

- 1 thin fleece Mountain Hardware beanie which I've had getting on for 20 years and is getting a little thinner now.
- 2 buffs which both came as freebies from past events.

- Buffalo mitts dating back many years and a thin pair of running gloves I found in the back of the van. Also a pair of SealSkin waterproof gloves.
- A pair of Lowe Alpine Powerstretch tights. I'd decided on the thicker ones rather than the lighter weight Rab option on the basis that I'd rather my leg muscles stayed warm even if I wasn't moving fast. The shorts didn't make the cut this day.

- 1 merino top being worn at the start and a second in a dry bag just in case.
- 1 Primal hoodie. I got this on the cheap as fashion wear (way closer to fashion than most of my wardrobe) but I'd run in the snow before with it and it seemed OK.

- 1 pair Injinji socks under my mid calf length SealSkin waterproof socks plus a spare pair of Injinji in case my feet sweated. I'd tested this combo at the Welcome and I'm now a convert to these waterproof socks.

- Inov8 XTalons were to provide me the grip I expected to need for

the day although I've found over the years that grip comes better from how you place your foot than from what shoes you have.

- My waterproof trousers were some winter walking Quechua ones. Heavier than the PacAMac ones I could have brought but I figured if I needed anything like that then I'd need decent wind protection and not just something to satisfy a kit check.

- The jacket choice was my UD Ultra jacket which although very lightweight seems pretty good. It was a gamble not to take the heavier Cab Event one I've had for a couple of decades but I'd been a little sweaty in that one for the Welcome so figured the extra merino top would be enough inside the survival bag if it came to that.

- Sol survival Bivi plus a foil blanket.
- Petal Nao headtorch fully charged with a little red light tagged to the back and 2 spare batteries for it. That should be more than enough light for 2 nights on the hills.

- ID - can't imagine anyone wanting to pretend to be me but better that Jon is sure. Some cash and my bank card in case a taxi proves to be the better option (actually this was planned for the coffee van).

- Powerbank and charging cables for both my phone and Garmin.
- A basic first aid kit of plasters in case of blisters and some pre-cut strips of kinesio tape.

- My pair of drink bottles were pre made up with SiS electrolyte tabs and 4 spare tabs for refills later.

- My Gerber multitool was also in there as well - better to have a knife and not need it than need a knife and not have one (there's another movie misquote in there somewhere as well).

- Three BattleOats bars and a couple of muesli bars raided from the larder as emergency spares. That's 4.5 bars more than I used at the Welcome.

- The printed sheets of the map and directions

were tucked into a map case and I had a compass in an easy to reach pocket. That was a lot of sheets to make up the set - and I still haven't looked at them.

- Even going over the top belt and braces with some of the kit choices it all sat very comfortably in my AK vest and I barely even noticed it on.

As space was at a premium I moved off, further emptied myself and grabbed another coffee to loiter with.

Eventually everyone was about sorted and Jon gave his highly motivational briefing. I remember there being some spare gloves, lots of prodding for people to come out in the cold and other general banter and then we were taken to the start and off for about 0910 or thereabouts.

We trotted off down the road and soon onto the tracks and trails. Not far up the first slope Craig pulled up alongside me. We'd held pace a fair bit at Osmotherly a few months ago so fell into step here too. We chatted about the plans for the day which seemed to



tally pretty closely. Keep it steady with anything looking like an uphill gradient getting walked and a slow trot on the flats and downs. Craig had put a lot of thought into his timings and had a detailed plan. Me, not even looked at the map or read any more of the instructions beyond how to get to the start and not be stopped from getting to the start line. It was about 55 miles to do and that's about all I needed (or wanted) to know. A few people had mentioned an owl to keep an eye out for which would be interesting but otherwise I like to have a nice surprise and find what

I find when I get there. Its not an adventure if you already know what's about to happen.

Soon we fell into step with a lady who turned out to be a vegan (odd how that's always the first thing you find out about a vegan - only joking). She mentioned about eating low carb and we chatted about that and how we had a similar approach planned for the day regarding speed etc as well. She was notably more experienced when it came to endurance events having done some big road events but this trail type was new to her. For me its pretty much the opposite, I've played

in the mountain ranges a lot over the years in all sorts of conditions but usually with big packs, climbing gear and at a walking pace with less mileage. This sort of distance is new to me. Until 2 weeks ago I'd only walked up to about 30km or so. Then I raised the game to do the Punk Panther Welcome (also in fun conditions) and then raised the game again for the 55.

My poles were annoying me by dropping out of the little elastic loops they were held in place by so I unfolded them and started to use them sooner than I'd intended. I usually don't bother

with cheat sticks unless I have a big pack on but I'd brought them along because I thought they might help. Getting some load off my legs seemed like a sensible option so I made a start to see how it went. BTW - I've never referred to them as 'cheat sticks' myself before but it seems a term many in the sport like to use. I've always regarded them as a sensible tool to use. Its not like they give you a little motor to power yourself along with.

In one of the early goes of the weather raising its hand to say 'don't forget about me' I must have moved on ahead a bit and lost Craig and (I figured out later) Kate so I went on largely alone to Osmotherley. I'm not prone to hallucinations but I'm sure I saw Roy Wood trying to remember how to play one of those incessant Christmas compilation songs but the image soon passed when I headed up some steps back towards the gliding club armed with a couple of Jaffa Cakes (I'd decided it felt a bit like breakfast time now) and half a dozen Jelly Babies (most of which I found in the pocket of my vest the next day and had to wash

out as they'd defrosted into a sticky mess).

Heading along the edge the weather really decided to kick up a fuss and a few of us suddenly found ourselves in a remake of Captain Oates little adventure. The path vanished, the wind howled, we had to pick our way over a bunch of snow drifts. I even had to put up the hood on my jumper and very nearly considered gloves and jacket. But I didn't really want to faff with those things so carried on and then it all cleared up as quickly as it had kicked in.

I was still going well,

walking most of the ups and running most of the flats and downs. Navigation was pretty simple with only a couple of minor question marks over which track to take but having other runners out there meant there was never a need to get the map out. Eventually I recognised the place where the Osmotherly marathon route cut in from the right and I cruised it in for a most welcome cup of hot chocolate followed by a coffee. While I drank I also had a sausage roll, a piece of ginger cake and a cookie. All very nice and probably more than I needed but they did look good so I had them.

While I was finishing my coffee Craig came in so I loitered a little while he broke into his well taped drop bag and had a break.

When we'd got in to the hall the sun had been out and the day was warm and bright. I'd joked to someone that it would be snowing again when we came out. It was. Note to self - stop joking about the weather like that. At the checkpoint coming off the moors during the Welcome I'd seen Jon and Shirley fresh off their hollydaze and Jon was shivering well. They'd popped out to help Ryk with marshalling the checkpoint and I



remember asking if he'd planned in more of the same for the 55. Well, as we saw later on he'd gone the extra mile in planning and put on some properly spectacular weather patterns.

So, at the top of the hill from Osmotherley I decided it would be prudent to pause for a moment and actually put on my jacket and mitts. I was a little chilly from having stopped and it didn't look like it was going to ease away soon. From then on I don't think the sun made another appearance. There were times when the winds dropped and the snow paused but for the most part there was at least some breeze and a little whiteness in the air.

The pace carried on as planned still. Walking the hills, Craig would mostly call the starts of our trots shortly after the brow of the hills and as my walking pace is on the brisk side I kept us moving at a decent enough pace when we were walking.

Occasionally others would fall in step and we'd chat for a bit but

then they'd either move off ahead of us or we'd move on ahead of them. Some of these were leapfrogged repeatedly throughout the rest of the day and evening.

Between Craig's planning of times and my Garmin watch we kept tabs on how we were doing against the cutoffs. We worked out periodically that we were well on target to remain inside the times and we should be OK. As we ticked past the 42km point I realised I'd just put in my PB marathon distance by about half an hour which was pleasing. I've never done a standalone marathon so far so don't have anything direct to compare to but it was an encouraging little piece of trivia at the time.

We paused for a few minutes to chat with Michelle at the half way checkpoint at Scugdale. She commented on my beard ice that I was developing. It was building when in the icy blasts and then defrosting in the lulls but I'd got a couple of cool photos as we went. I was surprised to hear that Mark wasn't much more than a half hour ahead of us but it turned

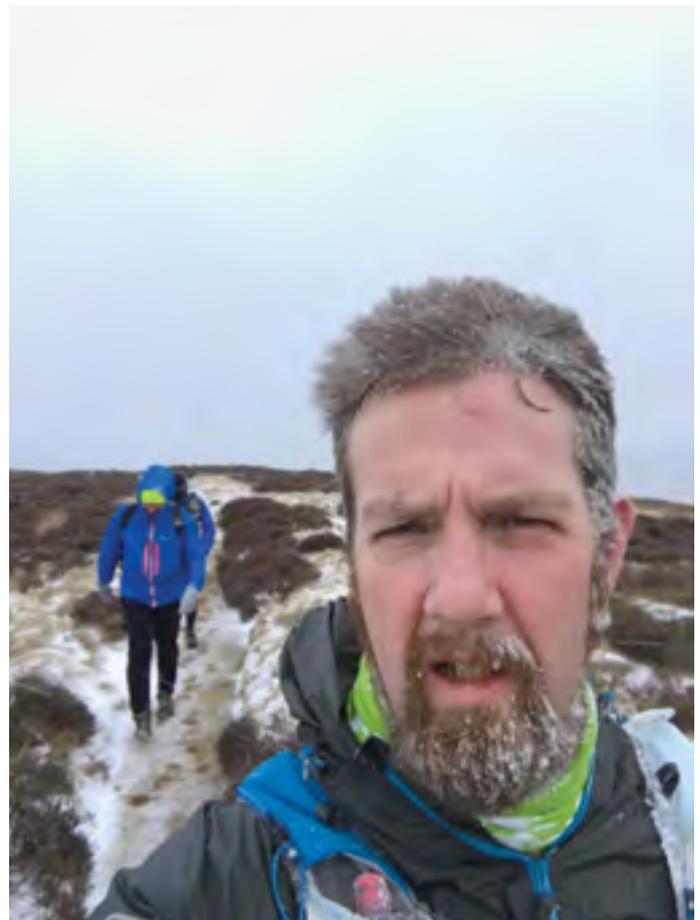
out he was nursing a sore knee and would sensibly pull out at Clay Bank. I stuffed in a couple of Jaffa Cakes and had some D&B and we moved on again.

The next section was a bit on the tough side. I was definitely going slower than previously. My walking pace wasn't dropping off much but I less keen to break into a run. The sugar Michelle had served up kicked in though and the hills started to feel better.

Running was rare though as the ups were definitely ups and the downs were

pretty slippery. We both went over a few times on the way and not far from the Clay Bank checkpoint I slid quite hard. I could see before I put my foot on a rock that it wasn't going to stick but I'd committed the step by then and slid a good 4-5 feet. Luckily I held it with my poles which had become an extension of my arms again but I banged my right knee and put strain on my left one bracing the movement.

We still had Wainstones to cross before finishing the section and my left



knee felt sore doing it. Not painful so much as just letting me know that it had worked maybe harder than it wanted at that point. As we headed up onto Wainstones the path vanished and we picked our way through the rocks. Pam was just ahead of us and moving well and Craig thought maybe we'd missed the route as she'd vanished. When we topped out it was simply that she'd shot off faster than we expected and was a little way ahead. I realised later that we'd not seen any signs of the famous killer attack owl. I guess we must have knocked on his door rather than rang the bell.

We followed, broke into a trot for a bit and moved past as we were on the decent to Clay Bank. Pam dropped behind a little and as it turned out she pulled out at the check point. I admit I was somewhat surprised but she'd taken the sensible option of stopping there as she was cold and the next bit would see the darkness falling and the temperature plummeting. I think there were quite a few pulling out at this point with the exposed nature

of Bloworth Crossing in front and the weather closing in.

A marshal gave me a really good description for the route over the top to the next checkpoint Kildale so my map still didn't need to come out to play. Time was a little bit pressured now as we'd lost a bit of forward momentum over the steeper ground behind us now. We did a mental check on the times and distances thanks to Craig's planning and worked out we'd still be good if we kept moving well like we had done. It was a steady uphill section which didn't seem to take long and the 2 crunchy Jaffa Cakes and the cola slushy I just had perked me back up again so I started to get back to my usual pace. Craig was also going well up the hill even though he did mention he was slowing down somewhere along that stretch.

As we got to the top of the moors again I got a text from Rachel (my wife) to remind me I hadn't checked in with an update for a while so I paused for a few moments to send back that we were doing good.

Craig moved ahead so I ran to catch up but now with somewhat numbed finger tips from having to take my gloves off to operate the phone.

The wind picked up some more as we moved ahead and although the route was easy to follow and mostly grippy there were plenty of places where the ice under the newly deposited snow made it slippery and we both slipped a little now and then. Craig put his torch on but I left mine for now. I could still see pretty well so didn't feel the need just yet. As we progressed the wind noise and the need for the hood to be up made it harder to talk and I moved ahead a bit. I had a rhythm with the poles (walking was a rate of poles in time with feet and running was 2 steps per pole with the lead foot alternating now and then) and this opened a small gap but I looked back every couple of minutes to see Craig was keeping pace and his head torch was still close enough.

A stream crossing after a while caught me out slightly. There was an icy slope down just a couple

of feet to the stream and even being careful with my foot placement I went down hard. I waited for Craig to warn him of the total lack of grip and he did exactly the same thing. Neither of us were hurt so a short step over the stream and we were moving on again.

My Garmin started to warn me that it was out of power so I paused to get it on charge and get my head torch on now that it was properly dark. Unfortunately my 920XT doesn't allow for charging while tracking but I'd found a 'trick' recently which allowed it. You have to hold the power button in while clicking it into the charge cradle and then cancel the power down request that comes up. It's a little fiddly and my numb fingers fumbled it so the tracking cancelled anyway which was annoying. Craig wanted to move on and some others had joined us while I fussed so I gave up on it and we moved on. I had to rely on just the time on my phone now for progress checking. I figured I could sort the Garmin out at Kildale where my fingers might actually work properly.

There were now six of us together and we decided to stay as a larger group with the howling gales and spindrift attacking us quite solidly. Safety in numbers and all that. Three others came up and overtook us with a slight sense of urgency to get into Kildale before the cut off. They were running even with the random slipperiness of the surface but not massively faster than my walking pace. I found myself at the front of our bigger group and settled into my rhythm again.

As the wind was coming in from the right here and the trail was wide and easy to follow and I had the poles which were being pushed around a bit but were keeping me stable I got quickly back to my normal walking pace (somewhere between 9:00 and 9:20 per km). This had me moving ahead of the group but I'd keep looking back to make sure they were still following me and I kept the other three in my sights. I was a bit concerned over the time for the cutoff and really wanted to be allowed to continue so I kept moving fairly quickly ahead. I didn't run but

we'd already worked out that maintaining a good walking pace would suffice so I was confident that walking and avoiding a heavy slip was the right choice.

I slid my buff up a bit to protect the bit of neck not covered by my beard and did the zip of my jacket up to the top to keep the hood anchored in place. The wind was doing its best to rip it back off again and it was getting annoying keep grabbing it and pulling it forwards again. The hood, when in place properly, did a great job of protecting my right eye. My headwork poked out the front and lit the way nicely although it did flicker a bit as the snow and ice flashed in front of the sensor. It has this feature where it'll shut down slightly to avoid blinding you with reflected light if there's something close to you but this feature was being triggered repeatedly. Not a major hassle but enough to make me think about actually reading the manual and figuring out how to turn this off in certain conditions. My left eye wasn't so lucky with the protection. The wind did keep hitting it hard



with little crystals of ice. Sometimes it was quite painful and I started to be a little concerned that it might be damaging the surface or maybe even freezing it a bit. When I blinked it did seem that there was a roughened surface to it so I tried to turn my head away from the wind a bit. Next time I'll have some goggles or clear bike glasses with me. More amusing to me was that my beard was getting proper ultra. The rime ice building up on it had connected with the rime ice on my buff and the two were

fusing together. My right eyebrow also felt like it was fusing in from above - there was certainly a feeling of external connection down that side of my face. Not a concern but interesting to observe. I also had a crisp feeling in my nostrils. This would be the ice forming along the length of my nose hair. A true sign of it being on the cold side and I don't normally get this unless it's firmly below -10 which I'd guess the wind was helping to achieve. Not really the time for taking pictures now but

I'd bet it was a gnarly look I was sporting.

My fingers were a taking a beating from the wind. Because I was using the poles my fingers were taking the icy blast full on. My right hand was totally fine (the wind was hitting the back of my hand and my fingers were effectively sheltered) but the ones on the left were the first part to be hit that side. I realised my index finger was numb. All of it. It had that weird lumpy feeling where it still works and you can just feel it moving but its like its actually a bit bigger than it should be and you can't feel anything touch it. The other fingers had numb tips but were otherwise OK. Thoughts of Maurice Herzog came to my mind and an odd sense of not wanting to lose bits came over me so I concentrated on getting some life back in there. Pretty much the whole way along the track I kept constant movement in that one lumpy finger. It straightened and curled around the pole handle repeatedly the whole way. It was as relentless as my steps, as the click of my pole tips, as the wind hurling its insults at any bare skin.

But then, suddenly, the hot aches came along and moments later I had all the feeling back. This was just as I got to the gate.

The other thing I did as I walked along that track was to get myself fed. I wasn't at all hungry and I wasn't feeling any lack of energy but I was conscious of the minutes ticking away and the cutoff time (which was in the rules as being a cut off from leaving the checkpoint). I didn't think I'd have the time to waste in getting a coffee and having anything to eat in the hall so I made the decision that I'd simply walk in, put my name on the list and turn straight back out again, ideally with Craig and anyone else from the group who was still aiming to carry on with me - I wasn't overly keen to be out totally alone but that wouldn't stop me from doing it anyway. I've had plenty of times in the wilds where things have been less than perfect so being in the dark and with visibility down to virtually nothing isn't a major concern. I've sat shoulder to shoulder with my brother on the side of Ben Nevis is similar

conditions (we turned back as we could really see each other at that distance); I've navigated a group of teenagers off Carnedd Llewellyn in the dark with fog so thick we couldn't see our own hands on outstretched arms; I've followed a bearing for over a kilometre across the rocky sides of Snowdon and walked straight in through the entrance to a 2m wide sheep fold. Tonight wasn't going to be the time when it went wrong for me. In the Ultra Mindset Travis Macy talks about focus on the what or the why and making sure you pick the right one at the right time. Tonight was a time for the what. You leave the why for when things are technically easy but you're struggling with motivation or energy.

I stepped onto the tarmac and waited a few moments for the others' torches to come into view over the slight rise just behind. They were only a short distance behind so I only paused for maybe half a minute. It was at a corner so I checked the footprints to confirm I needed to move on straight ahead. Footprints are not a great

way to navigate but it seemed reasonable at the time and on the road was a location of minimal consequences so I wasn't worried from a safety angle.

As I dropped down the snow deposits gradually got deeper. I figured this was simply because the tops were being well scoured in the wind and this is where it was all being dumped but the total volume wasn't high and didn't slow me down. Looking at the time I figured I'd still scrape the cutoff (relying on Jon's briefing that if we started out in the morning a few minutes late then we'd get those few minutes added on to the cutoffs).

I was feeling great again now and totally ready for the final push to the end. Another runner was on the road down and we chatted about what was coming up as we approached civilisation. He knew the route so confirmed to me where the checkpoint was and also that my estimation of the remaining part was about right. He described some of the route and that also matched what I'd guessed and it would be partly

familiar ground as it was the reverse of part of the Rosebury Topping half I'd done a couple of years ago. I was totally warm, moving well, the aches in my knees had gone, I actually didn't feel any I'll effects from the efforts of the day so far so I pushed on to the village with the finish mentally ticked off. This one was in the bag.

I'd seen some blue flashing lights from higher up and again as we came down the last stretch of the road and of course there's always speculation over what might have happened. The concern was added to getting in to the checkpoint as I was met by a scene containing ambulances and the guy in charge of the safety team.

He did confirm that nobody was hurt which was my first concern but also explained that this was now the end of the race. Everyone was being held here and not being allowed to continue. It seemed in the worsening conditions there were a number of people showing the initial stages of hypothermia and rather than get into a potential situation of

having to go and hunt for people they had simply stopped the race. I let him know that there were another 5 people just behind us in a group but he was already aware of everyone's locations (I realised afterwards it was due to the trackers which I'd completely forgotten about) and there were a total of 12 people on their way in.

Once I knew everyone was being looked after my very next thought was to consider trying to reassure him that I was warm and feeling great and that as the rest of the route was at least partially sheltered and I wasn't in the least bit concerned about becoming a statistic would I still be allowed to crack on with the last little bit. Luckily, my brain kicked in before my mouth did and I simply agreed with him that it was better to be sensible and not to give any potential extra work to the safety team. I made sure that the others arriving went in ahead of me (a couple of them were a bit shivery) and we went inside to sign our names on the sheet. I hadn't paid any attention to the time but it turned out that on viewing the



results (which I ended up doing a couple of days later) I'd had a little over 4 minutes to spare on the cutoff so might have even be able to grab a coffee to take with me out the door.

I checked the state of my beard and went back outside to get a photo of it. I'd been developing some rime ice over the tops and it was getting to be quite impressive. A proper 'ultra beard' so I wanted to record that for later. Then I tried to get the ice off and realised it would leave me with a bare chin if I tried any more so left it. About an

hour later it had thawed enough to get the rest of the ice out.

The hall was on the busy side and the volunteer team were doing a grand job of looking after a lot of somewhat chilly people. Many of them had foil blankets on and were shivering away but nobody looked to be in any real danger in any way. I got out of the way and packed my poles away and tidied my other kit up. If that was the end of my day then I wouldn't need the hat and gloves or jacket any more so it could all be stowed. I tried sending an update home but the signal was lousy so I set

it to try a few times and stashed my phone in my pocket to get on and send when it could.

Then I figured it was time to grab a coffee. There were flasks out and snacks to grab. I filled my cup on something that looked like coffee but I have no idea what it actually was. But it was warm and wet and I ended up having several refills. There was some cake and other things with sugar in them and a barrel of peanuts so I did some eating as well and chatting to the others. I wasn't actually hungry but when there's food in easy reach and not much else to do it's an easy habit to drop into.

Soup and other things were offered but as I was feeling totally fine I just pointed to others who looked like they'd benefit from it. I'd have offered to help but I could see that everything was totally under control so I just kept out of the way. I'd checked to make sure everyone was accounted for. Apparently there were still people out on the course who'd got out before the cancellation so I mentioned I was good to go and play if there was any need to doing a

search but all was under control and nobody was in any sort of danger so we just hung around waiting.

The biggest problem seemed to be that there were limited vehicles capable of driving on the worsening roads and a lot of racers in the hall to take to the finish in Guisborough. Even this was under control so I waited until the last car load so anyone cold was taken on their way first. 4 of us were given a lift around by James (the tracker guy) and this proved to be an exciting little end to the day. A slight slope down had an ambulance van in the ditch which hadn't been there on James' last trip, a car seemed stuck trying to come up the hill and the road didn't inspire confidence from a traction perspective. James drove down very slowly and his car just slid over to the verge. He tried to reverse and it slid a little further so we jumped out and just pushed against the side to keep it out of the ditch. We ended up walking alongside for a bit as the slight road angel wanted to dump the car in the ditch still but then things improved

and James drove us onwards with just a slight slip on the roundabout into Guisborough just after some eejit in an Audi shot past us.

The finish hall was pretty full. We did manage to get bacon butties and some coffee which was welcome. They gave us t-shirts and medals as we'd been at the checkpoint ready to carry on when it was cancelled which was nice. I half feel like I earned this one. I didn't complete the event but I have total confidence that I would have if allowed to continue.

My main reason for entering the 55 was to serve as a test piece for the distance. I've entered the Brutal Double for September and needed something that would give me a sense of being able to stay on my feet for a double marathon distance. Having done a few Hardmoors events in the past it made sense that this be the one I used. Obviously I'll have a swim and a ride to do beforehand so there are a few gaping holes in my logic but so long as I don't spill the beans to myself it'll all be fine. I'm also now seriously

wondering if the Grand Slam might be a good idea. Maybe a serious look at the diary for next year is in order. And speaking of good ideas there is an empty space in November for the 80. Hmm.

And as for the press reports relating to the events at the end of the day, these excerpts and adaptations from Guns 'N' Roses' Get In The Ring (written in response to some problems they had with the press) seem somewhat apt:

'And that goes for all you punks in the press

*That want to start s**t by printin' lies instead of the things we said'*

'Yeah this story is dedicated to

All the Hardmoors Ultra Running fans

Who stuck with us through all the Fun and Games

And to all those opposed...

Hmm...well'

Follow Martin Hale at: Martinhalecoaching.com

HARDMOORS RACE SERIES

26.2 SERIES

The Hardmoors 26.2 is a Trail Marathon Series set in the beautiful North York Moors and the Cleveland Hills. Competitors have the option of entering either the full Trail Marathon (26.2mi) The Trail Half-Marathon (13.2mi) or the Trail 10k (6.2mi). There are 7 Trail Marathons/Half-Marathons/10k's in the Race Series throughout the year.

The series includes SALT BURN, WAINSTONES, WHITE HORSE, ROSEDALE, OSMOTHERLEY, GOATHLAND and last but not least ROSEBERRY TOPPING

The Hardmoors 15 is a 15 miles-ish loop, including Robin Hoods Bay and Ravenscar.

ULTRA SERIES

The Ultra series includes the 30, 55, 60, 80, 110, 160 and the 200

The Hardmoors 30 is a 30 miles-ish loop around Whitby, including Robin Hoods Bay, Ravenscar, and Cloughton on New Years Day

The Hardmoors 55 is a 55 mile Ultramarathon running from Guisborough to Helmsley. The 55 mile race will take competitors through the North York Moors and the Cleveland Hills in quite The race contains over 2000 metres of ascent and has a time limit of 16 hours.

The Hardmoors 55 holds 4 new points to UTMB qualification.

The Hardmoors 60 is a 60 miles race on the coast from Guisborough to Filey. The route of the 60 mile race follows the second half of the Hardmoors 110, along the beautiful Cleveland Coast, through Saltburn, Runswick Bay, Staithes, Whitby, Robin Hoods Bay, Ravenscar, Scarborough and into the finish location, the seaside resort of Filey. Competitors have 18 hours to complete the course.

The Hardmoors 60 holds 4 new points to UTMB qualification.

The Hardmoors 80 is a 80 miles race following the total length of the Wolds Way national trail from Hessle to Filey passing through chalk landscapes with dry valleys and stunning wildlife alongside market Towns and ancient villages such as Brantingham, Londesborough, Thixendale and the deserted medieval village of Wharram Percy, before arriving at the seaside resort of Filey.

The 2018 Hardwolds 80 holds 5 new points to UTMB qualification.

The Hardmoors 110 Ultramarathon follows the dramatic Cleveland Way National Trail encircling the North York Moors and the Cleveland Heritage coastline.

Commencing in the North Yorkshire Market town of Helmsley competitors have a time

limit of 36 hours to complete the 110 mile single stage trail race, passing through the North York Moors and the beautiful Cleveland Hills before following the stunning Cleveland Heritage coastline visiting Saltburn, Runswick Bay, Staithes, Dracula's Whitby, The old smuggling town of Robin Hoods Bay, Ravenscar and the seaside resort of Scarborough before finishing in Filey.

In 2018 the Hardmoors 110 will be ran Filey to Helmsley

The Hardmoors 110 holds 6 new points to UTMB qualification.

The Hardmoors 160 'The Ring Of Steele' Ultramarathon will start at Scarborough and head West across the moors on the Tabular Hills Route to Helmsley to pick up the start of the Hardmoors 110 route and follow the full 112 miles of the route to the race finish at Filey. The Hardmoors 160 as the name suggests will be a 160 mile single stage Ultra with over 7000 metres of ascent. Competitors have 48 hours to complete the race.

In 2018 the **Hardmoors 160** will be ran Sutton Bank-Helmsley-Scarborough to Helmsley

The Hardmoors 160 holds 6 new points to UTMB qualification.

Visit the Hardmoors website at: www.hardmoors110.org.uk

Hardmoors 55

Hardmoors 55 2018 Results									
Place	No	Time	Name	Surname	D.O.B	Cat		Nat	First in Group
1	105	8:44:25	Ross	Cooling	1992-04-17	M		GBR	1st M
2	76	8:51:09	Paul	Brunger	1985-09-21	M	Derwent Valley Running	GBR	2nd M
3	55	9:31:15	Steven	Beattie	1986-01-03	M		GBR	3rd M
4	58	9:38:29	Chris	Bird	1979-05-11	M	Durham Fell Runners	GBR	
5	219	9:38:29	Stephen	Kirk	1979-12-28	M	City of York AC	GBR	
6	145	9:47:33	Anthony	Gerundini	1969-01-12	MV40	EnduroMan/LincolnTri	GBR	
7	359	9:55:30	Michael	Todd	1974-07-30	MV40	Pickering Running Club	GBR	
8	376	10:06:45	Peter	Watson	1985-11-17	M	Erewash Valley RC	GBR	
9	186	10:07:25	Sven	Hoekstra	1990-01-02	M		GBR	
10	258	10:11:59	Thomas	Naisby	1990-07-24	M	Hyde Park Harriers	GBR	
11	36	10:14:06	Sara	Al-Kadhimi	1983-01-02	F		GBR	1st F
12	212	10:23:43	Philip	Jones	1976-11-29	MV40	Shropshire Shufflers	GBR	
13	372	10:26:50	Christine	Waller	1986-09-04	F		GBR	2nd F
14	132	10:32:59	Jason	Ellis	1971-12-07	MV40		GBR	
15	156	10:33:30	Ian	Gorin	1977-08-13	MV40		GBR	
16	261	10:37:34	Paul	Nelson	1967-05-04	MV50	Wetherby Runners AC	GBR	1st MV 50
17	4	10:40:35	Shelli	Gordon	1977-12-03	FV40		GBR	3rd F
18	185	10:43:13	Paul	Hodgson	1977-07-21	MV40	Durham Fell Runners	GBR	
19	366	10:46:09	Mick	Tupman	1972-01-31	MV40	Activ8	GBR	
20	338	10:52:34	Tim	Straughan	1965-05-17	MV50	Valley Striders AC	GBR	
21	318	10:52:35	Nick	Simmons	1976-01-23	MV40	North York Moors AC	GBR	
22	321	10:52:55	Pete	Sissons	1977-10-12	MV40	Sunderland Strollers	GBR	
23	282	10:53:29	Edoardo	Piano	1980-04-09	M	Nidd Valley Road	GBR	
24	229	10:53:39	Tom	Lininsh	1985-08-20	M		GBR	
25	298	10:56:38	Ian	Robertson	1974-07-05	MV40	Selby Striders	GBR	
26	236	11:00:50	Liga	Magdalenoka-Keen	1977-08-15	FV40	Chapel Allerton Runners	LAT	
27	331	11:00:51	Ronnie	Staton	1980-12-19	M	Vegan Runners UK	GBR	
28	97	11:05:31	Stephen	Coase	1984-07-02	M		GBR	
29	197	11:06:26	Peter	Hunt	1979-03-09	M		GBR	
30	217	11:08:40	Luke	Kennedy	1989-05-01	M	Sunderland Strollers	GBR	
31	277	11:14:49	Lucas	Payne	1968-10-11	MV40	Barlick Fell Runners	GBR	
32	245	11:14:55	Hannah	McMahon	1983-08-06	F		GBR	
33	302	11:17:54	Keith	Robson	1974-04-25	MV40	teamURINE	IRL	
34	78	11:18:37	Shaun	Burgess	1979-09-21	M		GBR	
35	267	11:18:50	Ian	Oldham	1973-04-24	MV40	Swaledale Runners	GBR	
36	244	11:18:51	James	McGinn	1972-05-22	MV40		GBR	
37	381	11:21:17	Andy	Wilkin	1971-03-31	MV40		GBR	
38	121	11:21:30	Garth	DeRoux	1975-10-15	MV40	Horsforth Harriers	GBR	
39	383	11:28:15	Max	Wilkinson	1986-05-12	M	Durham Fell Runners	GBR	
40	42	11:31:56	Dan	Anderson	1989-01-04	Shire	Sunderland Strollers	GBR	1st Shire
41	250	11:32:28	Heather	Mochrie	1982-11-14	F		GBR	
42	62	11:37:35	John	Boothman	1962-08-07	MV50	Barlick Fell Runners	GBR	
43	112	11:39:40	David	Cropper	1974-12-15	MV40		GBR	
44	300	11:39:40	Stephen	Robinson	1979-12-22	M		GBR	
45	172	11:40:30	Nigel	Harrison	1969-11-28	MV40	Ipswich Jaffa RC	GBR	
46	74	11:43:25	Mick	Browne	1958-01-11	MV60	Unnattached	GBR	1st MV 60
47	114	11:47:17	Bill	Crowther	1964-01-16	MV50		GBR	
48	154	11:52:04	Joaquin	Gonzalez	1989-02-22	M		ESP	
49	354	11:53:51	Steven	Thompson	1960-12-05	MV50		GBR	
50	328	11:54:04	Robin	Smith	1982-09-08	M		GBR	
51	347	11:54:19	Anthony	Taylor	1981-10-19	Shire		GBR	

52	270	11:54:51	Jennifer	O'Neill	1975-02-03	FV40	FRA		GBR	
53	12	12:00:10	Mark	Dalton	1968-06-22	MV40			GBR	
54	166	12:01:24	Mike	Hall	1968-08-01	MV40	Bridlington Road		GBR	
55	299	12:01:40	Joe	Robinson	1989-04-19	M			GBR	
56	159	12:02:55	Malcolm	Green	1960-08-25	MV50	Winchester & District AC		GBR	
57	214	12:11:36	Simon	Kealoha	1977-09-07	MV40			GBR	
58	110	12:12:48	Gareth	Crabb	1972-10-02	MV40	Lincsquad		GBR	
59	82	12:13:17	Kent	Butcher	1974-11-01	MV40	Huncote Harriers		GBR	
60	364	12:13:42	Jonathan	Tremain	1977-03-30	MV40			GBR	
61	210	12:16:50	Will	Jones	1973-10-24	MV40			GBR	
62	326	12:16:58	Robert	Smith	1973-01-03	MV40			GBR	
63	118	12:17:03	Gregory	Davies	1974-08-20	MV40			GBR	
64	123	12:17:58	Andrew	Dick	1972-02-27	MV40			GBR	
65	317	12:18:20	Steve	Silver	1967-11-22	MV50	Ripon Runners		GBR	
66	256	12:20:05	Naomi	Moss	1972-02-22	FV40	Grange Farm & Dunmow		GBR	
67	157	12:20:44	Aaron	Gourley	1978-05-19	M	Elvet Striders		GBR	
68	93	12:21:04	Euan	Clark	1974-05-08	MV40	Trail Running Association		GBR	
69	86	12:21:50	Matt	Capsey	1975-06-09	MV40	Darlington H & AC		GBR	
70	348	12:23:12	John	Telfer	1961-07-26	MV50	Northumberland Fell		GBR	
71	102	12:23:29	James	Conway	1980-01-03	Shire	Coalfields Tri		GBR	
72	344	12:23:40	Steve	Tait	1964-11-17	MV50	Gainsborough & Morton		GBR	
73	69	12:24:26	Russell	Brooks	1967-01-24	MV50	Team Vintage		GBR	
74	232	12:24:40	Ally	Love	1980-01-06	F			GBR	
75	332	12:25:25	Lorrel	Staton	1982-08-04	F			GBR	
76	38	12:26:15	Craig	Allen	1976-07-04	MV40	Matlock Athletic club		GBR	
77	388	12:26:42	Peter	Wilmot	1968-04-21	MV40	Matlock Athletic Club		GBR	
78	339	12:26:45	Nick	Stubbs	1975-05-04	MV40			GBR	
79	100	12:26:45	Billy	Conlin	1967-11-16	MV50	Bedale & Aiskew		GBR	
80	175	12:27:03	Andrew	Hastie	1964-08-26	MV50			GBR	
81	234	12:28:50	Alastair	MacColl	1964-12-26	MV50			GBR	
82	151	12:30:56	Riccardo	Giussani	1978-09-17	M	Glossopdale Harriers		GBR	
83	259	12:31:36	Rachael	Nathan	1986-04-27	F			GBR	
84	194	12:31:38	Adam	Howard	1982-07-14	M	Trawden Athletic Club		GBR	
85	393	12:31:55	Neil	Wood	1974-12-05	MV40	Doncaster Athletic Club		GBR	
86	103	12:31:59	Paul	Cook	1978-09-28	M			GBR	
87	107	12:35:16	Alex	Copley	1982-02-03	M	Cambridge & Coleridge		GBR	
88	202	12:35:17	Stephen	Jackson	1964-03-06	MV50			GBR	
89	144	12:35:30	Edward	Garner	1995-04-04	M			GBR	
90	373	12:39:15	Lisa	Wallis	1980-02-07	F			GBR	
91	240	12:41:45	Rodger	Martin	1969-08-26	MV40	Orchard Eagles Running		GBR	
92	386	12:43:24	Richard	Willis	1970-04-21	MV40	Harrogate Harriers & AC		GBR	
93	313	12:43:37	Mick	Shakespeare	1966-05-05	MV50	Harrogate Harriers & AC		GBR	
94	143	12:43:44	Kevin	Gallagher	1974-06-21	MV40			GBR	
95	49	12:43:58	Stephen	Barlow	1965-08-04	MV50			GBR	
96	14	12:44:00	Karl	Shields	1970-09-09	MV40			GBR	
97	319	12:48:30	Matthew	Simpson	1980-08-02	M			GBR	
98	167	12:48:37	Tim	Hammond	1972-10-31	MV40	Yorkshire Wolds Runners		GBR	
99	80	12:48:37	Paul	Burridge	1966-04-08	MV50			GBR	
100	182	12:50:23	Stephen	Headley	1963-04-09	MV50			GBR	
101	268	12:51:00	Adam	Oliver	1976-07-26	MV40			GBR	
102	177	12:54:50	Marcus	Hawthorn	1963-06-16	MV50			GBR	
103	341	12:55:45	Nicole	Sutton	1975-05-13	FV40	Ripon Runners		GBR	
104	162	12:55:59	Jane	Grundy	1982-10-14	F	Ripon Runners		GBR	
105	101	12:56:10	Helena	Conlin	1966-10-18	FV50	Ripon Runners		GBR	1st FV 50
106	109	12:58:25	Mick	Cottam	1963-04-28	MV50			GBR	
107	99	12:58:56	Mattia	Colzada	1979-10-05	M	The reason I run		ITA	

Hardmoors 55



Team

Place	Number	Time	Name	Surname	Team
1	225	9:43:30	Emma	Lavelle-Wood	Fellandalers
			Mike	Roberts	
			Tanya	Sheps	
			Phil	Steel	



108	35	13:00:34	Daniel	Aldus	1980-04-29	M	City of Hull AC	GBR	
109	322	13:04:20	Douglas	Slater	1970-01-06	MV40		GBR	
110	158	13:05:10	Nick	Grahame	1974-01-16	MV40		GBR	
111	334	13:06:35	Andrew	Stephenson	1964-11-30	MV50	Alnwick Harriers	GBR	
112	286	13:06:45	William	Powis	1979-09-01	M	North Shields	GBR	
113	188	13:06:59	Bev	Holmes	1969-03-22	FV40	Todmorden Harriers	GBR	
114	137	13:06:59	Paul	Feeley	1966-02-13	MV50	Derwent Valley Trail	GBR	
115	343	13:06:59	Mike	Symons	1968-07-05	MV40		GBR	
116	198	13:06:59	Ian	Hutchinson	1978-07-19	M	Building-	GBR	
117	274	13:09:31	Tim	Parker	1976-10-01	MV40	Esk Valley Fell Club	GBR	
118	306	13:11:20	Phil	Rutter	1965-09-14	MV50	Quakers Running Club	GBR	
119	255	13:12:15	Louise	Mort	1977-05-30	FV40	Team Vintage	GBR	
120	370	13:12:53	David	Wall	1963-04-25	MV50		GBR	
121	346	13:12:59	Sarah	Taylor	1978-01-28	FV40		GBR	
122	204	13:13:14	Alan	Jackson	1954-01-03	MV60	Howgill Harriers	GBR	
123	170	13:13:17	Nigel	Hargreaves	1965-03-22	MV50		GBR	
124	278	13:13:38	Ben	Peacock	1981-01-05	M		GBR	
125	23	13:14:07	Richard	Whitaker	1977-08-01	MV40	100 Marathon Club	GBR	
126	65	13:14:19	Tony	Bowe	1963-09-04	MV50	Northbrook Athletic Club	GBR	
127	60	13:14:51	Stuart	Black	1965-09-17	MV50	Bedale & Aiskew	GBR	
128	73	13:18:39	Martyn	Brown	1978-09-16	M		GBR	
129	266	13:21:06	Colm	O'Cofaigh	1969-11-16	MV40	Ripon Runners	GBR	
130	203	13:23:07	Chris	Jackson	1970-07-25	MV40		GBR	
131	220	13:23:33	Hadrian	Knight	1971-10-20	MV40	Rothwell & District	GBR	
132	357	13:23:33	Terry	Tillotson	1973-05-24	MV40	Rothwell & District	GBR	
133	342	13:28:23	Matthew	Swan	1983-08-03	M		GBR	
134	228	13:31:33	Heidi	Lewis	1978-07-14	F		GBR	
135	289	13:36:04	Pat	Quill	1966-12-14	MV50		IRL	
136	213	13:36:44	Noel	Jones	1970-03-03	MV40		GBR	
137	161	13:46:04	Paul	Gribbon	1980-11-05	M		GBR	
138	247	13:49:13	Mark	Milner	1972-04-07	MV40		GBR	
139	37	13:54:29	Peter	Allanach	1965-12-31	MV50	Wetherby Runners AC	GBR	
140	384	13:56:48	Helen	Williams	1975-04-12	FV40	Cambridge & Coleridge	GBR	
141	88	13:56:50	Maura	Chacksfield	1969-06-12	FV40		GBR	
142	308	13:56:50	Antony	Sadler	1971-03-20	MV40		GBR	
143	85	14:02:51	James	Campbell	1978-08-18	M		GBR	
144	290	14:09:46	Rebecca	Quinn	1987-10-02	F		GBR	
145	187	14:11:14	Simon	Hogg	1975-12-17	MV40		GBR	
146	345	14:11:35	Yoshikazu	Tanaka	1979-10-15	M	Team Paris Marathon	GBR	
147	146	14:11:47	Stephen	Gibson	1981-10-15	M	Derwent Valley Trail	GBR	
148	333	14:11:54	Jamie	Steel	1971-12-23	MV40	Derwent Valley Trail	GBR	
149	116	14:11:54	Brian	Cutmore	1974-02-14	MV40	Derwent Valley Trail	GBR	
150	90	14:11:54	Susan	Chambers	1966-09-03	FV50		GBR	
151	390	14:18:05	Neil	Wilson	1973-02-18	MV40		GBR	
152	66	14:18:10	Stephen	Braddock	1970-10-21	MV40	Hornsea Harriers	GBR	
153	253	14:18:15	Andrew	Moorhouse	1970-04-17	MV40		GBR	
154	314	14:23:15	Alexander	Shaw	1983-06-24	M	Hartlepool Burn Road	GBR	
155	67	14:23:15	Stephen	Braithwaite	1972-01-30	MV40	Kendal Amateur Athletic	GBR	
156	335	14:23:29	Tom	Stewart	1977-12-29	MV40		GBR	
157	64	14:24:06	Gregg	Boughey	1978-11-15	M		GBR	
158	195	14:37:50	Paul	Hudson	1972-05-13	MV40		GBR	
159	98	14:37:50	Andy	Cole	1948-08-06	MV60		GBR	
160	226	14:38:30	Richard	Lawton	1965-05-09	MV50		GBR	
161	79	14:38:30	Paul	Burgum	1979-07-02	Shire	TEAM BCT	GBR	
162	191	14:45:04	Darren	Hopkinson	1977-12-16	MV40	Team Sweat	GBR	



Ronnie Staton by SportSunday Event Photography