

Ultrarunning World

ROAD, TRACK & TRAIL MULTIDAY & ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS
ISSUE 13





100 mi - Race

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at 6th October 2018

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Editorial

My thanks to all the contributors and staff who have helped produce issue 13. Each issue has its own character and for me this issue is about moving out of the long winter into the beautiful summer we have been experiencing this last month.

In the ultrarunning world and especially in the multiday world things are buzzing with the 1000 km Mil Kil in France finishing last week, the first 6 day race in Finland just coming to an end at the Kauhajoki Ultra Running Festival, the Self-Transcendence 3100 mile race is at the halfway mark, Vol State starts tomorrow... Trans-Sweden starts next week – it's all happening. Issue 14 will concentrate on multadays. There may be a Special Edition calendar issue in the not too distant future.

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Front cover: Front cover: Kristina Paltén by Kincses Ferenc, winner of the Women's 6 day race in Balatonfured, Hungary, May 2018 featured in Issue 14
Back cover: Arun Bhardwaj by Prabhakar Street

Issue 12 cover photo credit. The identity of the cover photographer was discovered after publication. Artist Owen Delaney took the selfie back in 2016 and more of his work can be found on his website <https://www.owendelaney.art/>

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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.

2018 IAU Trail World Championship

post race report



The International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU) and the International Trail Running Association (ITRA) are proud to provide results of the 2018 World Trail Championships, organized by the Penyalgosa Trails HG and the Real Federación Española de Atletismo and taking place in Spain in Castellón on Saturday, 12th of May.

Ragna Debats (Netherlands) and Luis Alberto Hernando (Spain) were unbeatable over this challenging 85 km course, finishing in 9 hours and 55 minutes and 8 hours and 38 minutes respectively.

It was outstanding event with fantastic organization and very high caliber athletes. There were 104 women

and 159 men that manage to complete the race. In addition we recorded 23 and 34 team results.

Results

Women individual results:

1. Ragna Debats (bib number 766), Netherlands: 09:55:00
2. Laia Canes (738), Spain: 10:11:11
3. Claire Mougél (675), France: 10:15:23
4. Gemma Arenas (753), Spain: 10:25:58
5. Maite Mayora (775), Spain: 10:28:20

Men individual results:

1. Luis Alberto Hernando (bib number 914), Spain: 08:38:35
2. Cristófer Clemente (879), Spain: 08:46:19
3. Thomas Evans (852), Great Britain: 08:49:35
4. Jonathan Albon (911), Great Britain:

08:53:41

5. Ludovic Pommeret (883), France: 08:58:12

Women's team results:

1. Spain
2. France
3. United States
4. Great Britain
5. Sweden

Men's team results:

1. Spain
2. Great Britain
3. France
4. United States
5. Germany

Ragna Debats, 2018 Trail World Champion, [Interview by Irunfar](#)

Luis Alberto Hernando, 2018 Trail World Champion, [Interview by Irunfar](#)

2018 IAU 24 Hours European Championship – post race report

The 22nd IAU European

Championships took place on the weekend of 26th/27th May 2018 in Timisoara, Romania. The race venue was “Ion Creanga” Children’s Park in the heart of Timisoara, the 2021 European City of Culture.

This race promised to be a very exciting event with one of the deepest fields ever seen in an IAU European Championships and it didn’t fail to deliver. In the men’s race among others we had the current European Champion (Albi 2016) Dan Lawson (GB) and in the Women’s race all eyes were on Patrycja Bereznowska (POL) the current World Champion (Belfast 2017).

In total we had 183 Athletes representing 30 Countries with the event being dominated by Poland. However, this wasn’t obvious until the latter stages and during the final few hours we had the privilege to witness some incredible racing.

Individual Gold

went to Poland in both the Women's and Men's race with Patrycja Bereznowska achieving a distance of 243.35Km and Andrzej Radzikowski with a distance of 265.41Km.

Patrycja was once again on the podium as she led her Team to Team Gold with a combined distance of 720.45Km along with team-mates Malgorzata Pazda-Porzoska and Monika Biegasiewicz. This was followed by Germany with 656.24Km and Great Britain with 645.06Km.

The Men's Team event was won by France with a combined distance of 754.62Km. This was followed by Great Britain with 735.15Km and Germany with 725.96Km.

Our thanks to Florin Florea the President of the Romanian Athletics Federation and Diana Amza the President of the Local Organizing Committee for hosting this event.

Women

1. Patrycja Bereznowska (POL) 243.35Km
2. Stine Rex (DEN) 241.92Km
3. Malgorzata Pazda-Pozorska (POL)

2240.69Km

Men

1. Andrzej Radzikowski (POL) 265.41Km
2. Stephane Ruel (FRA) 263.54Km
3. Aleksandr Sorokin (LTU) 260.99Km

Women's Team

1. Poland 720.45Km
2. Germany 656.24Km
3. Great Britain 645.06Km

Men's Team

1. France 754.62Km
2. Great Britain 735.15Km
3. Germany 725.96Km

Race website:

[Penyagolosa Trails HG 2017](#)

of the race in 1999, Soochow University has hosted this 24 hours race with passion and persistence. Every year the race has complemented local elite runners with international ones. However this time they will take another step forward and would like to invite all Asia and Oceania Member Federations to participate in the event. The unique atmosphere encourages the runners to exert themselves to the maximum to run further and LOC together with others

performances by any standard.

The World 24 Hour Championships in 2019 which will take place in Irdning in Austria on May 11th-12th and will include the WMA 24H World Championships as well. More details on the [IAU website](#).

2019 IAU 24 hours World Championship event date confirmation

IAU and LOC are very pleased to announce that the 2019 IAU 24 hours World Championship will take place on 11th-



IAU Asia & Oceania 24 Hour Championships

The 18th edition of the Soochow International 24 Hours race will be the host of the IAU Asia & Oceania 24 Hour Championships which will take place on December 1st 2018 at Soochow University. Since the first edition

supporting the event will do their best to maintain this.

In the past the race has seen two world best performances, 3 continental and more than 12 national best performances. The race records of 285 km for men and 255 km for women are outstanding

12th and will include the WMA 24H World Championships.

Most likely the race will start in the middle of the day and will have an open race as well (still to be confirmed). More details on the [IAU website](#).

■UW■

Ultrarunning World News

On the first anniversary of the Manchester Arena Bombing, May 22nd, Chorlton Runners Club member Nathan Rae created a large scale “We Love Manchester” living art piece. He ran a 67 mile long route making a #WeLoveManchester heart across the city, 8 miles high and 8 miles wide. He wrote “The attack was sickening but I found our city’s response to it inspiring and hopeful. I was just trying to capture a small part of that a year on”.

It took over 18 hours to run the 67 mile line to create the letters MCR and the heart. The route wove its way across Manchester, Trafford,

Salford, and Stockport stopping outside some of the A&E hospital departments where the wounded were treated a year ago, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Wythenshawe, and Salford Royal Hospital. He visited Old Trafford, Etihad Stadium, Manchester City Centre, The Trafford Centre, and had lunch at the Bowling Green Pub in Chorlton. He also stopped at Manchester Arena finally finishing around 1.30am.

Website: <https://www.nathanrae.co.uk>

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/nathanrae](https://twitter.com/nathanrae)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/nathanrae/

[thenathanrae/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnathanrae/)

Check out the videos from the run on [Nathan’s Youtube channel](#).

If you feel inspired please donate to the [North West Air Ambulance](#) using the [JustGiving](#) page.

Western States

The 45th annual Western States 100 race took place June 23 this year and more than 300 runners set out on the 100.2-mile route from Squaw Valley to Auburn on a course which features more than 18,000 feet of ascent and 23,000 feet of descent. Temperatures reached 106 degrees at the Rucky Chucky river crossing at mile 78.

Jim Walmsley a 28-year-old runner from Flagstaff, Ariz. making his third attempt at the race finished first in 14:30:04 breaking the previous record of 14:46:44 set in 2012 by Tim Olson. Frenchman François D’haene was second in 15:54:53 and third was Mark Hammond in 16:08:59.

In the women’s race, 22 year old Australian Lucy Bartholomew in her debut at the race led from the start until slowing at the 50-60 mile point where Courtney Dauwalter, also making her first appearance at Western States, assumed the lead pushed through to win the race in 17:27:00, becoming the second-fastest women’s time in Western States history. In second place was Kaytlyn Gerbin finishing in 18:40:19 and Lucy Bartholomew



hung on for third spot in 18:59:45
Comprehensive coverage by
Irunfar.com

Lake Saroma 100K Ultramarathon 2018

Nao Kazami set a new road 100 km world record on the same course that Takahiro Sunada ran when setting the road 100 km world record of 6:13:33 twenty years ago. Nao Kazami who has a marathon pb of 2:17:23, came from behind a breakaway duo to win the Lake Saroma 100 km Ultramarathon in a world record 6:09:14.

Race report by [Japan Running News](#)

New Double Ramsay Round record set by Nicky Spinks

The Ramsay Round is a long distance fell running challenge near Fort William, Scotland - one of three major mountain running challenges the others being the Bob Graham Round and the Paddy

Buckley Round. The route is a circuit of 58 miles, taking in 24 summits with a total climb of around 28,500 feet. Ben Nevis, Great Britain's highest peak, is included in the route along with 22 other Munros (Munros are mountains in Scotland over 3000 feet high). Originally, all 24 summits on the Ramsay Round were Munros, but Sgorr an Iubhair was declassified as a Munro in 1997. The route was devised by Charlie

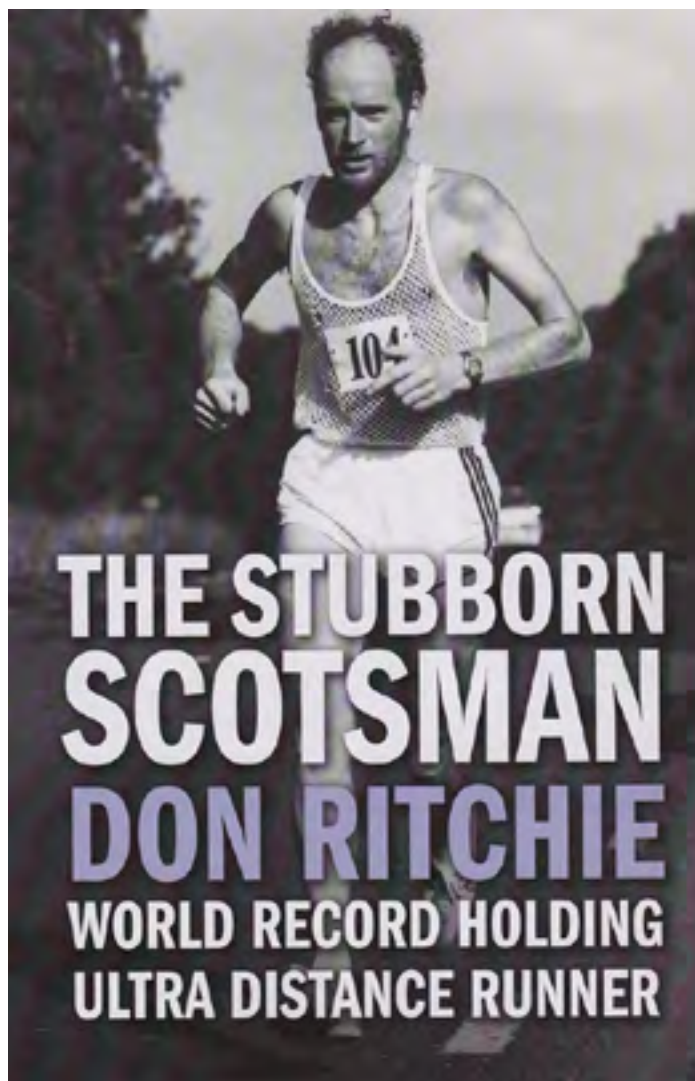


Photo by Jay Lee

Ramsay as an extension to an existing 24-hour walking route, and first completed by Ramsay on 9 July 1978. Charlie's completion created Scotland's Classic Mountain Marathon. The aim is for participants to complete the route, on foot, within 24 hours. Runners must start and finish at the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel, and may run the route in either a clockwise or anticlockwise direction.

Starting midnight on the 29th of June 2018, 51 year old Nicky Spinks became the first person to complete a double Ramsay Round in a time of 55:56:38. It is a more technical challenge than the

Bob Graham Round with some very remote mountain sections, making it more difficult to support a runner. Nicky struggled against heat, exhaustion, sleep deprivation and 57,000ft of gain relying on friends and crew to keep her fed and hydrated.

A West Yorkshire farmer she recovered from cancer that developed in 2006 and is raising money for the charity Odyssey - for more details see her [JustGiving](#) page. Earlier this year Nicky, who is a brand ambassador for INOV8, was awarded a British Empire Medal to recognise her achievements and contributions within the sport.

For more details on her record-setting run read the [INOV8 article](#).

Website: [Ramsay's Round](#)

Vegan ultrarunner Catra Corbett has set a Fastest Known Time (FKT) on the John Muir Trail in California, USA. The 310-mile course known as the Muir Ramble Route follows the trail John Muir used when he first walked from San Francisco to Yosemite in 1868.

The 53-year-old athlete had already set a previous record on the 212-mile course and finished the 310 mile MRR, closer to 323 miles due to diversions, on July 5th 2018 in seven days, nine hours, and 49 minutes.

Source: [Plantbasednews.org](#)

Catra already holds the FKT for the John Muir Trail yo-yo which she set in 2004 when she ran the 212 miles from Yosemite to the top of Mount Whitney and back in 12 days, 4 hours and 57 minutes.

Earlier this year in May, Catra published a book, [Reborn on the Run: My Journey from Addiction to Ultramarathons](#) (Skyhorse Publishing) which is available at [Amazon.com](#).

08/07/2018 Kilian Jornet takes an amazing hour off the Bob Graham Round 13:53 record set by Billy Bland in 1982 in an unofficial time of 12:52. Billy was at the finish to congratulate Kilian amidst a big crowd that had gathered at the Moot Hall start and finish point.

Don Ritchie, one of the greatest ultrarunners in the world passed away on June 16th at the age of 73. The Scottish record holder for many distances from 50km up to 200 km began running marathons in 1966 with his first ultra event, in 1970, the 36 mile Two Bridges race. In 1977 he set his first world record in a 50km race at Epsom finishing in 2:51:38. In 1978 at Crystal

Palace, Don set what remains the British 100km record in 6 hours, 10 minutes and 20 seconds. He won the London to Brighton in 1977-78 in record times. In 1977 Don set the world record for 100 miles on a track finishing in 11:30:51 at Crystal Palace a record that stood until 2002 when Oleg Kharitonov ran 100 miles in 11:28:03. In 1989 he ran from John O'Groats to Land's End – 844 miles – in 10 days, 15 hours and 25 minutes, raising money for Cancer Research. Over his lifetime he ran over 200,000 miles.

Don received an MBE award in 1995 and his autobiography, [The Stubborn Scotsman – Don Ritchie: World Record Holding Ultra Distance Runner](#), was published in 2016. He is survived by his wife Isobel, children Claire and Anna.

More details of Don's running career can be found on the [Scottish distance running history website](#).

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Photo Lee Procter/[www.inov-8.com](#)





SEP 30 – OCT 6 2018 **ADELAIDE 6 DAY**

The 6 Day makes a return to Australia!

Australia's only 6 Day event.

Held on a loop around a reservoir the event will feature electronic timing, full catering, showers, and sleeping quarters.

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UK Recent Races

23/03/2018

JOGLE Ultra

The longest point to point stage race in the British Isles, the John O'Groats to Land's End JOGLE Ultra and organised by Ultrarunning Ltd, started on March 23rd in the north of Scotland. 6 starters attempted to cover the 860 miles (1384km) to Cornwall over 17 days, an average of 50 miles (81km) a day. Fenchman Jean-louis Vidal was first to reach Lands End in 185 hours 4min setting a new record by 29 hours. Second finisher was Kenneth Chan (HKG) in 227hr 24min. There were four DNF's.

14/04/2018

40th Calderdale Hike

There were 175 entrants to this year's 40 mile Calderdale Hike which started at Sowerby Cricket Club and featured 6800 feet of ascent. First to cross the line this year was Rory Harris in 5.54 followed closely by Ken Sutor in 5:55. First lady was Karen Nash, 7th overall in 7:58. [Results](#)

14/04/2018

Wye Forest 50

The Wye Forest 50 is a triennial challenge. This walk is part of the South West Triple Challenge in conjunction with the Cornwall and Devon Wellington Boot and the Dorset Giant. The Challenge was won by David Wakeling in 12:03 and first lady, second overall was Lisa Joanne Walbridge in 12:36.

200 starters, 166 finishers. [Full results.](#)

15/04/2018

Pendine Sands Ultra

The Pendine Sands Ultra takes place in Carmarthen Bay on the south coast of Wales. Two 16 mile loops along the Pendine Sands beach to Broadwas and back towards the start along lanes with some off road running. The race was won by Sanna Duthie in 4:43 and first man was Lee Zerafa in 5:43. [Full results.](#)

21/04/2018

Fox Ultra

The Fox Ultra is a 60 km race around Guildford in Surrey starting at the Wilfrid Noyce Centre, Godalming. Also featuring a marathon, half and a relay, the course is mostly on the Fox Way and is 30% road/70% trail. The race was won by Charlie Butcher in 4:44:19 and women's winner was Maryann Devally in 5:59:09. 194 finishers in the 60k. [Full results](#)

22/04/2018

Connemara Ultra

The Connemara Ultramarathon is a 63.5 km road race in Galway, in the West of Ireland. The event first took place in 2004 and now features a marathon/half marathon and the ultra had 184 finishers. Ultra winner was Peter Abraham in 4:31:51 and first woman was Lucy O'Malley in 5:17:57. [Full results.](#)

22/04/2018

Longhorn Ultra

Set in private areas of Sherwood Forest and the grounds of Thoresby Park in north Nottinghamshire. Running over old military roads, cleared tracks through ancient woodland and grassed paths around the country estate on a 10 km loop. Event features events from 5k up to the 60k ultra including canicross options. Mens winner was Philip Nind in 5:10:29 and first lady was Bonita Robinson finishing in 5:55:47. 44 ultra finishers. [Results of all events can be downloaded from the Longhorn page.](#)

28/04/2018

Bad Cow Frolic

A 4.4 mile looped course over mixed terrain. This 12 hour event near Corfe Castle in Dorset was won by Stacey Connolly covering 14 laps in 12:07:44 with Richard Palmer finishing in 12:07:45. 250 starters. [Full results.](#)

28/04/2018

Butcombe Trail Ultra

The Butcombe Trail is a 50 mile mostly off road route around six pubs in the Mendip Hills, a designated area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). Profits from the event go to the [Mendip Hills Fund](#), a community fund set up to conserve and enhance the environment, communities and economy of the Mendip Hills. The race starts at The Cider Barn on the A371 between Cheddar

and Draycott (BS27 3YB), features over 1,500m ascent and has a 15.5 hour cut-off. Leigh Horrell was first man in 7:47:30 and first woman was Cat Mills in 9:42:20. [Full results](#) and [Race Directors report](#). 98 starters, 92 finishers.

28/04/2018

Fellsman

The Fellsman is a high level traverse covering more than 60 miles over very hard rugged moorland. The event climbs over 11,000 feet in its path from Ingleton to Threshfield in the Yorkshire Dales. Most of the route does not follow well defined footpaths. First woman was Jessica Richardson in 14:01 and first man was Neil Talbott winning in 11:16. [Results](#).

28/04/2018

13th Highland Fling Race

The Highland Fling is a 53 mile trail race which follows the West Highland Way, Scotland's oldest official long distance footpath from Milngavie to Tyndrum. Used by many as preparation for the June 92 mile West Highland Way race at midsummer this event sells out very quickly. Greig Kyle won the race in 7:06:58 and first woman was Rachel Normand in 8:22:23. [Full results](#)

28/04/2018

1st South Tyne Trail Ultra

Two distances 140/70 km start from Garrigill, the full distance 140km challenge follows the South Tyne Trail to the halfway point at Warden, where the 70

km race ends, then continues along the Tyne Valley to the finish at South Shields. In the 140 km event Jon Davies was first man in 15:59:01 and Kim Loney was first woman in 17:33:58. In the 70 km race Iain Twaddle took the top spot in 6:24:27 and first woman home was Helen Clayman in 9:39:04. [Full results](#).

05/05/2018

Malvern Hills Ultra

An array of distances available for this event (38, 31, 23 miles) which starts and finishes at Abberley Hall School in Worcestershire for the 92 and 46 mile options. The event is open to runners, walkers, teams of two or more and relay teams. Darren Varley, 27:42:47, was the only finisher of the 90 mile distance. In the 45 mile race Steve Minnikin was the mens champion finishing in 9:28:47 and Emily Lockley was first woman in 10:27:47, 6th overall. [Full results](#).

05/05/2018

7th Thames Path 100

The TP100 is a 100 mile continuous trail race along the Thames Path from London to Oxford. The marked course features 13 aid stations and a 28 hour cut-off. 314 runners started from Richmond Upon Thames at 10.00am in hot conditions and the attrition was high with only 58% of the starters making it to the finish line. First among those was Peter Windross in 15:49:25 and Therese Falk was the women's winner in 18:44:38. [Full results](#).

05/05/2018

The South Downs Way Devil's Challenge

The Devil's Challenge is a three-day, 97-mile ultra marathon along the South Downs Way, starting in Winchester in Hampshire. The route heads south east through the South Downs National Park finishing in Eastbourne in East Sussex. The race was won by Justin Montague in and 14:26:35 Melissa Montague was the leading woman in 15:46:44. Sally Ford, who has an article in this magazine, was second lady in 17:25:57. [Full results](#).

06/05/2018

St Illtyds Ultra

The second St Illtyds Ultra featured 100/50k events on a mixed terrain course. Laura Kearney was first lady in the 100k in 13:42 and Thom Stephens was top man in 13:08. [Full results](#).

13:08 09/05/2018

1st Pembrokeshire 180/100 mile Stage Race

The Pembrokeshire 100 mile race takes place on the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path starting at Dale just outside Milford Haven to St Dogmaels in Cardigan. The Pembrokeshire Stage Race takes the same route as the Pembrokeshire 100 but is split into 3 single stage sections with an overnight camp between each section. The Pembrokeshire 180 mile race is a 5 day stage race starting in Amroth and finishing in St Dogmaels.

■UW■

22nd Annual Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race

June 17-August 7, 2018

The world's longest certified footrace started on June 17th 2018 in Queens, New York with 10 international runners. The 10 runners including three women have to run an average of 59.60 miles a day to finish within the 52 day time limit. The 18 hour day finishes at midnight when the .584 mile course closes and the runners have a 6 hour break, resuming the following morning at 6 am. Throughout the day the runners circle the loop which finally amounts to 5649 laps. Runners are supplied with food and drink and a place to rest. Some runners have a crew to attend to their needs to reduce time spent not moving forward toward the 3,100 mile (4,989 km) goal.

Sahishnu Szczesiul produced these notes about the runners for the race program.



Vasu Duzhiy 52, St. Petersburg Russia

Vasu won the 2017 race in 46 days, 17 hours, his second victory. In 2015 he ran a personal best to finish in third place, reaching 3100 miles in 44 days+06:10:42. He ran almost three days faster than his previous best. He now has six finishes to his credit. He is ranked fifth all-time for 3100 miles. He is one of only five men to have averaged 70 or more miles per day in this event. He works as a foreman for a lumber company when not running long distances.



Smarana Puntigam, 47, Vienna Austria

In 2007 Smarana ran his fastest time in the 3100, reaching the goal in 48:04:13:54. He had seven straight finishes at 3100 miles, and returned to the race last year after a nine-year break. He is still 17th ranked for 3100 miles, and is the Austrian record-holder.



Ananda-Lahari Zuscin 43, Kosice Slovakia

Ananda-Lahari is a veteran of the sport with 18 multi-days and over 40 ultras completed. He is best known for completing the 3100 miler five times with a fastest finish of 49 days, 14 hours. He is ranked 24th for the 3100. In 2013 he finished second in the Ten Day for the men with 662 miles, a personal best. He has started the 3100 Mile Race thirteen times, and is looking for the perfect race.



William Sichel 64, Orkney, Scotland

William has been the consummate ultrarunner for nearly two decades, having run hundreds of ultras and many multi-days. He holds nearly 500 Scottish, UK, and age-group records. One of his finest efforts was his first 3100 mile finish, at age 60, in 2014, when he rebounded from a slow start to finish in 50 days+15:06:04, making him the oldest finisher in history, as well as the fastest UK finisher. He is 31st ranked all-time out of 41 finishers. He runs an import fabric business back home on the Orkney Islands.

Kaneenika Janakova 48, Bratislava, Slovakia

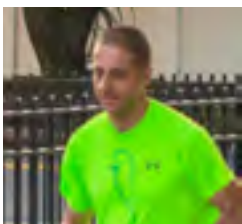
Last year Kaneenika finished the 3100 in 48 days+14:24:10, breaking the women's world best by nearly 17 hours. She now has two finishes of the longest race. She won the Sri Chinmoy Ten Day women's crown five times, including an overall victory and two course records. She holds women's all-time best marks for 3000km, 4000km, 5000km, as well as 2000 miles and 3000 miles. In over twenty years of running, Kaneenika has completed eighteen multi-days and 41 ultras. Her many personal bests include 443 miles for six days, 727 miles in 10 days, and 1000 miles in 15 days, 12 hours. All these marks are Slovakian national records.

Surasa Mairer 59, Vienna Austria

In 2015, Surasa stunned the ultra world, and even herself, as she says, winning the 2015 3100 Mile Race for the ladies in record fashion in 49 days +07:52:01-at age 56. A veteran ultra runner whose career spans over 22 years, Surasa has completed 22 multi-days. She is still the women's world record holder for 1000 km, 700 miles, and 1300 miles. She has two wins and three finishes in the 3100. She works as an executive secretary when not running long distances.

Yolanda Holder 60, Corona, CA. USA

Yolanda is the fastest female pedestrian in the world. She completed the 3100 Mile Race last year in 51days+17:00:13, becoming only the second American woman, and eighth all-time to complete the 3100 mile summit. She has finished 6 six-day races, with a best of 410 miles, another record in her stack of achievements. She finished second- lady, eighth overall in our 10 Day race in 2016 with 622 miles. In 2015 she set a Guinness record of 340 consecutive days of walking 26.2 miles. She feels that she can far transcend her 3100 Mile time this year.

Sopan Tsekov 37, Sofia, Bulgaria

A two-time finisher of the 3100 Mile race, Sopan has a best of 50 days+13:48:57. He has the distinction of being the youngest finisher of the 3100 Mile race, set in 2005, at age 24. Sopan holds many Bulgarian national records for his multi-day exploits, including 1000km and 700 mile times recorded when he was just 20 years of age, as well as the many splits beyond 2000km and 1300 miles all the way up to 3100 miles and 5000km. Sopan gives lectures on running the long races, and speaks about the inspiration that led him to running.

Kobi Oren 46, Tel Aviv, Israel

In 28 years of running, Kobi has excelled at multi-day events. He has won three 6-day races and two 10-day events. Victories include: at six days in Greece (768 km-477 miles), France (739 km-459 miles), Norway (771 km-479 miles), 10 days in South Africa (1113 km-692 miles) and the winner of the Sri Chinmoy 10-Day in 2016 with 755 miles.



Ushika Muckenheimer 50, Salzburg Austria

The winner of the 2002 Sri Chinmoy Ten Day Race with 631 miles, Ushika finished third in the Ten Day in 2015 with 625 miles, his best total in over a decade. He has been running for over 22 years with 40 ultras and 16 multi-days to his credit. He works in the musical instrument business.

Updates:

After enduring high heat and high humidity between days 13-20 the temperatures have dropped a little though Yolanda has been forced to withdraw out due to blister issues which she has been carrying for some 1200 miles. Vasu Duzhiy and Surasa Mairer lead the race with everyone still in with a chance of finishing.

Men		
Name	Day 23	Cushion
Vasu Duzhiy	1610.7	240
Kobi Oren	1578.3	208
Sopan Tsekov	1391.7	21
Ushika Muckenheimer	1379.6	9
Smarana Puntigam	1375.8	5
William Sichel	1341.2	-24
Ananda-Lahari Zuscin	1319.8	-51
Women		
Name	Day 23	
Surasa Mairer	1388.4	18
Kaneenika Janakova	1325.9	-45
Yolanda Holder	1210.6	Withdrawn

The Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence 3100 mile race is an invitational race. However anyone who has run a 6 or 10 day or who has demonstrated a capacity to be able to complete the distance race can apply for consideration. There is a field limit of 14.

- Follow the race on srichinmoyraces.org where there's a live cam.
- Results are posted after the end of each day local time.
- Utpal Marshall at Perfection-Journey produces a video every day throughout the race following the trials and tribulations of the runners as they extend themselves to their limits in perhaps the greatest annual running event the world has ever seen.
- A photographer visits the race everyday and his work can be viewed at srichinmoyultraphoto.com
- Send messages to the runners via email: scmtny@earthlink.net

It's Summer!

by Mick Farrar



It's summer!! The birds are screaming their little lungs out, the fields are full of wheat, deer leap around the countryside, bunnies are doing what bunnies do best (seriously, they are everywhere), crops are growing high and the trails are dry. Why would you not be out running along the ancient tracks and trails that criss-cross this beautiful Isle? Maybe there are not enough cars? It may be that the pollution levels are not high enough or even that there aren't enough pedestrians to dodge?

I know a few people who won't run off the road, not even the odd 5k, and the reason seems to be that they feel there is a greater risk of injury by running over uneven ground and by running off-road will slow them down. On road, they persistently aim to better their speed, or to achieve a new personal best, even to beat that person at the club that always manages to overtake them near the finish line. I guess I salute them for their perseverance. But there are also clubs, based in country towns, whose summer run routes

take in less off-road than a few laps of a football pitch and often as flat. Some runners take part in the winter cross-country league races from 5K to 10 miles, often lots of mud and water, these races do have a higher injury rate and are very different to the trail races and long ultra-races that require genuine stamina and a little more than a few gels to reach the end. For many I've asked it's all in the mind, a 5k race is simple to picture and train for, 10k is still very achievable for most runners but when you start focusing on distances such as 50k and 100k they find it harder to visualise, even when the race is broken down for them.

So here's the thing, for me at least, since running long distances on trails I am a lot stronger runner. My ankles are stronger, my legs are stronger and my core is stronger, hell even my mind is stronger. I've had no real injuries in over two years of almost constant ultra races, other than by my own stupidity, tripping on a tree root at 15 miles while running the Thames Path 100 and damaging my ribs. I still made

it to 77 miles before my body forced me to stop. Having the mental strength to push on, to switch the pain off, is as important as having the strength to run the race.

As for getting slower due to distance running? I've only got faster as my training runs and race distances have increased. In the last six months, during training runs alone, I have easily surpassed my 5K, 10K, half marathon and marathon personal best times, my marathon time by over 17 minutes. My race pace is slower, I adapt to each race depending on the terrain, elevation and distance, but overall I am training at average pace way faster than when I was only concentrating on road and speed. There is no easy way to train the mind other than to push yourself and keep pushing. Running with other endurance runners helps, running long distance solo helps, asking for advice on forums and Facebook groups helps, taking walk breaks helps, stopping to eat and drink also helps, you will learn to push through the barriers your mind places in front of you and you'll get stronger.

So use the summer. If you are reading this and are already a trail runner then speak to other runners, encourage them to leave behind the roads and the myths. If you are considering your first trail runs, find a friend and let go of the prejudices, you'll learn to run again, even stronger than you thought possible. Go on, don't disappoint the birds. ■UW■

ICONIC ULTRA FINISH LINES

Sarah Cameron



Race to the Stones - Avebury Photo courtesy Threshold Sports

Every ultra marathon is a unique journey into a realm of uncertainty. Each runner who stands on the start line will experience their own set of personal challenges and almost certainly undergo a certain amount of suffering. It's for this reason that finishing an ultra can be an emotional avalanche. The arrival to that finish line is inevitably met with relief and it marks the end of a significant journey that can sometimes have even been life-changing. Although finishing can

happen in a bit of a blur sometimes no runner ever forgets that feeling of crossing the line... and there are some finish lines that are even more unforgettable than others.

Take Race to the Stones, for example. The route passes the enchantingly-named Field of Dreams, Grim's Ditch, Dragon's Hill and Wayland's Smithy, following the oldest path in the UK, The Ridgeway. Along the route is evidence of human existence reaching back 5,000

years, including Roman river crossings, Bronze Age hill forts and neolithic burial chambers. It is apt that the race culminates amid the largest megalithic stone circle in the world. Avebury was constructed in the Third Millennium BC, during the New Stone Age and is thought to have been used for rituals and ceremonies. It is a place that still holds importance to pagans and it attracts many tourists as well as the few hundred ultra runners who each year in early July experience their own

personal Nirvana as they take their final few steps between the monoliths.

The 245km Spartathlon race follows the legendary route that Pheidippides is thought to have taken when he was sent to deliver a message from Athens to Sparta in 490BC. After battling the extreme Greek heat and mountainous terrain including an ascent of Mount Parthenion, runners tackle a 50-kilometre downhill segment that eventually leads them to the main street of Sparta. To culminate their journey they are invited to kiss the feet of the statue of Leonidas I, the Spartan king who died fighting the Persians at the Battle of Thermopylae. The city turns out in force to welcome the athletes as heroes. Every finisher of the race receives a laurel wreath and a goblet of water from the Evrotas River, much as Olympian champions would have been rewarded in Ancient times. The national anthem of the winner is

Spartathlon – King Leonidas I Source Wikipedia



also played. But unlike the unfortunate Pheidippides, none of the runners have to make their way back to Athens, unless they decide to impose on themselves the 'double Spartathlon' -but that's another story.

Another race that terminates with a kiss is The Hardrock Hundred Mile Endurance Run. Having run a fraction over 100 miles with around 10,000 metres of elevation gain and loss over technical terrain in the San Juan mountains of Colorado, in order to complete the event runners are required to kiss 'The Hardrock'. This monument is a large block of stone-mining debris with a picture of a

ram's head painted on its flank, symbolising how the race is a tribute to the grit and perseverance of the hardrock miners who lived and worked in the area.

Grit and perseverance are certainly two of the qualities needed to even enter the Barkley Marathons, let alone finish. No details of how or when to enter are advertised publicly but despite this the race fills up immediately on the day of registration. Applicants are required to pen an essay titled "Why I Should be Allowed to Run in the Barkley", pay a \$1.60 application fee, and complete other quirky requirements. Race director Lazarus Lake decides who is awarded

the 40 available places, including the recipient of bib number 1 who is the 'human sacrifice' or the runner who is least likely to finish one lap of the five-lap course. The race, which is approximately 100 miles

with 16,500m of vertical, requires almost complete autonomy from its competitors as they tackle the gnarly, unmarked course. It is perhaps no wonder that there have historically only been 15 runners who have reached this particular finish line, which is a yellow gate with sign on it saying in bold capitals 'Authorized vehicles only, do not block gate.'

However the vast majority of runners drop out or are timed out so never get to reach the gate. Instead, on making their way back to the start/end point, their failure is very publicly heralded by a bugler cranking out the tune 'Taps'.

Hardrock 100 - The Hardrock



Inner Journeys

Moot Hall is an attractive stone building with a square tower situated at the southern end of the main street in Keswick, Cumbria. It is perhaps best known for its unusual one-handed clock, and makes an unlikely finish line for an ultra. However, British fell runners and increasingly, ultra runners of other nationalities, recognise it as the start and finish of the legendary Bob Graham Round. Runners completing this tour of 42 Lakeland peaks are more likely to be met by a local with a flask of tea than a cheering crowd, but this only adds to the charm and authenticity of the experience.

The flagship race of the Eco-Trail Paris is the 80km event, a relatively flat run that traverses woods and plains in the Île de France region. The reward for completing the distance is the chance to cross the unique finish line high up above central Paris; after climbing 347 iron steps the runners finish 57 metres from the ground... on the first stage of the Eiffel Tower.

Staying within France, all the major endurance events that finish in Chamonix offer runners the reward of running down one of the world's most iconic finish chutes, with cheering crowds mobbing the colourful banner-lined barriers.



Climbing the Eiffel Tower – Photo courtesy Ecotrailparis



Moot Hall Billy Bland and Kilian Jornet Photo courtesy NAV4/Stuart Smith

Competitors in the Marathon de Mont Blanc and Ultra Trail de Mont Blanc festivals experience the buzz and support of thousands of trail-running fans from as far as two kilometres out. The races here are over-the-top and celebratory; this Alpine town knows how to pay homage to all aspects of mountain endeavour. The entire place throbs with energy during race week and Chamonix's beating heart is at the Place de l'Eglise where the start/finish line sits somewhat incongruously in front of the picturesque church.

Jagged peaks rise up in every direction, flanked by glaciers and pine forests. International flags and sponsors' logos line the way to the arch and there is tireless commentary crackling out from loud speakers, interspersed with inspirational music. For the male and female winners of the UTMB, Conquest of Paradise by Vangelis is played, a goose-bump inducing piece that anyone who has taken part or spectated in the festival will forever associate with extreme feats of human endurance.

Chamonix isn't the only European town that fully embraces its trail running history and provides an emotional final run in. It can be the people who make the finish special. At the Dolomites Trail Race thousands of spectators await the arrival of the runners, creating a cacophony of noise and colour. Although more of a mountain marathon than an ultra, it is said that the arrival at Zegama has some of the most enthusiastic crowds in the sport, with their cries of 'Venga, venga' and the party atmosphere which builds and builds during the day until the last runner is welcomed as loudly as the first.

Moving to another mountain range, stage five of the Everest Trail Race finishes in Tengbuche where the arch itself forms a veritable picture frame, capturing the rugged giants Everest, Lhotse and Annapurna within its borders.

Perhaps the diametric opposite of this would be those ultras that finish on a running track. Comrades culminates on either a racecourse or

in the Moses Mabhida Stadium, depending on which direction the race is being run. Perhaps the most thrilling aspect of this race is the strictly observed cut-off time of 12 hours. The last person to meet the target and the first person to fail, sometimes by only one second, become as famous in South Africa as the winner of the race. Fans of the sport will no doubt be aware that the Western States 100 also winds up with a lap of the track. The race organisers say themselves that this finish line is a powerful place to be, as spectators can observe a 'juxtaposition of human performance and exhaustion'. A 400-metre jog in may seem like a formality after racing for 100 miles, but even at that point the race isn't a *fait accompli*. In a dramatic turn of events, 2006 race leader Brian Morrison got to within 200 metres of the finish when he collapsed. Somewhat controversially, he was unable to reach the line unassisted so he was given a DNF and the race win went to Graham Cooper.

And then there are those races that don't

have a finish line at all. The 'Wings For Life' challenges end when the entrants are caught by a chasing car. The increasingly popular timed events are over not when participants reach a designated point as such, but when their allowed time runs out. In the UK, Centurion Running's James Elson along with his friend James Adams even conceived the 'world's most pointless race' which they named the 'Piece of String' because runners would not know how long it was going to be when they started.

It is fun to be able to enjoy a unique, unusual or particularly special finish line at the end of a long race but as every ultra runner knows, the reality of it is purely personal. It is the culmination of months or years or

immense dedication and a celebration of physical and mental strength. Whether the end of the journey is symbolised by a rock, a roaring crowd or just some bloke in a flat cap quietly watching, the achievement is the same.

As William James wrote, "Beyond the extreme of fear, fatigue and distress, we may find amounts of ease and power we never knew we owned; sources of strength never taxed at all because we never push through the obstruction."

Ultra marathon races have provided the environment for many people to push through their own obstructions and realise their goals, to complete the process of self-examination and self-discovery that lie at the heart of why so many of us choose to run so many miles. ■UW■



100km Del Passatore Italy's most talked about ultra

by Maria Bellini



Love it or hate it. Italy's 100km Del Passatore, is like the Marmite of Italian ultras.

Often referred to as: “La Cento” (*The Hundred*), this ultra often takes place in hot weather, and on occasion, ends up in hot water. Italy's ‘100km del Passatore’ is one of, if not *the most* - talked about road ultras in the country. It's an event which never fails to divide Italian runners. There are those that simply detest it, yet there are those that absolutely adore it, returning year after year to endure and participate in this jamboree of miles, scandal, suffering and endless sponges.

So what makes it so special? Many things, beginning with the route - a

hundred kilometres, from Florence to Italy's ceramics hub: Faenza. The route starts in Firenze's Piazza del Duomo, in the city which was once at the core of the Italian Renaissance. It progresses steadily up towards the hills, past stately villas with manicured gardens, then it rhythmically winds upwards through Fiesole, always climbing, gently but consistently, right up until the

halfway point at Passo della Colla di Casaglia at 913 metres - where runners leave Tuscany and enter the region of Emilia-Romagna. The race route then tumbles downwards along the road to Faenza, dipping through the small, proud hamlets of Marradi and Brisighella, and drawing to a close along the dozy outskirts of Faenza, only to finish in a rush of architectural verve in Faenza's main square, Piazza del Popolo.

The 2018 edition of Il Passatore

At this year's event, which also happened to be the 46th edition; on May 27th - Italian, Andrea Zambelli, was first to cross the finish line in 6h54'34" in front of nearly 3000 participants. Not only did he break *the Taxi driver from Rome* and Italian Ultrarunning icon - “King” Giorgio Calcaterra's - twelve year reign of



Aid station late seventies Il Passatore

12 consecutive wins, he also spent the best part the race battling it out with Germany's Benedikt Hoffmann – yo-yoing between first and second place, right up until the finish line. The first woman across the line in 7h53'37" was Croatian Nikolina Sustic unbeaten for four years.

What does "*Il Passatore*" mean? The race is named after Stefano Pelloni - known as: "*Il Passatore*" (which translates to The Ferryman). He was considered to be one of Italy's most barbaric and cruel highwaymen that roamed the eastern part of Italy's Emilia-Romagna region in the 19th Century. The alias of "*Il Passatore*" was bestowed upon him in association with his father, who used to work as a boatman on the nearby river Lamone. Merciless with his victims, Stefano Pelloni - "*Il Passatore*" disseminated terror and bloodshed across the Romagna countryside for a number of years.

Popular consensus and culture has however, over time, transformed and softened the legend of "*Il Passatore*" into more of a Robin Hood figure. It's said that he colluded with the poor and destitute, who helped blanket his ill doings in exchange for favours and the benefit of his spoils. This is understandable if we look at the geographical location – we're in a region of Italy – Emilia-Romagna, that has historically been characterised by class struggle and conflict. Often siding with the underdog it followed that many converged towards the ideals

of the bandit's 'generosity' with those of lesser fortune. So far so, that even Poet Giovanni Pascoli, in his poem "Romagna" referred to Stefano Pelloni - "*Il Passatore*" as "*il Passator Cortese*" – "*The Courteous Ferryman*".

Origins of the 100km del Passatore

Italy, 1960's – early 1970's author, historian and journalist Alteo Dolcini, from Forlimpopoli, Emilia-Romagna - set up a number of associations to promote a wide variety of local traditions and culture, amongst them, also an association involved in the promotion and safeguarding of the wines produced in the area: the "Ente Tutela Vini Romagnoli", of which the logo was – *and still is today*, a portrait of 'Il Passatore'. Dolcini could have been considered an early day marketing guru... as along with Francesco Calderoni from the "Factory Workers Ramblers Union" (yes *that did exist*), sports journalists Renato Cavina and Carlo Raggi, together developed the idea to put on a long distance run,



joining the wine producing areas of Sangiovese (in Romagna) and Chianti (in Tuscany).

But lets set the scene: Italy was ready for something like this. Something a little crazy and 'light-hearted' (so much so, that in later years journalist Franco Chiabegatti would refer to race as the 'Olympics of Madness'). The early seventies was a time of political and social unrest throughout the country. There were raging struggles between the extra-parliamentary left and neo-fascists. Terrorist group Brigade Rosse were beginning to carry out their first attacks. The feminist movement was in full swing, as was pressure for social



Race Report

Il Passatore late seventies



rights. The country was under strict austerity measures and car use was banned on Sundays and on certain weekdays. The Italians were making themselves heard, and were fighting for their beliefs.

In the grip of austerity, the Italians also had to find ways to diversify their leisure time. No more Sundays with the family bundled in the car to visit relatives. Now, cars remained firmly parked in the drive, as the Italians sought out other leisure pursuits. This was a time when many historic running and cycling clubs were created. So it came as no surprise that the 100km del Passatore was an instant

challenge. Fuelled by a resilient work ethos, and topped off with a sense of spiritedness and vigour, on 26th of May 1973, 1100 runners took to the roads in what was the first edition of “100 km del Passatore Firenze-Faenza”. It was won by Italians Romano Baccaro in 7h51’18” and Maria Pia Tellini in 12h37’15” and only 347 total would cross the finish line.

The following years saw the number of participants steadily rise and calls for foreign participation meant that the race became ‘international’. In 1979 and 1980, the 100km del

hit, in a time when serious distance running was a luxury reserved for a select few, yet the desire to make one’s stand was a collective mission.

Everyday heroes embraced the

receiving an invitation to attend the race, Ritchie travels from Elgin in Scotland all the way to Florence, where he arrives only to find his pre-booked hotel to be ‘full’ therefore he’s relegated to spending the night before the race in the railway station sleeping rough.

The following day, pre race, Don is interviewed by Italian press, who catch him drinking from a bottle of vodka. Ritchie, in the Scottish Distance Running History article explains: *“I found some shady steps and sat down and began sipping from my pre-race bottle. While packing for the trip at home, I found that I was short of a few drinks bottles so I took whatever was available, including an empty half-bottle labelled Smirnoff Vodka. This served as my pre-race container.”*

When asked by the journalist what he was drinking on such a warm afternoon, Ritchies goes on to write:

“Being in a rather flippant mood by now, I just pointed to the label on the half-bottle containing the colourless glucose polymer solution. He noted it down in his pad with a rather puzzled look on his face. Perhaps he thought it was a refinement of the carbohydrate loading diet.”

Ritchies continues to give an accurate, and often quite ‘thorny’ description of the event, in which he finds himself dealing with having to overtake numerous runners who’d somehow ‘brought forward’ the race start time. You can read the full

Vito Melito in the lead late seventies



Passatore was won by **Donald Ritchie**.

The Scottish Distance Running History website offers Ritchie’s highly entertaining review of his experience.

After

article here: www.scottishdistancerunninghistory.scot/don-ritchie/

So why is this the Marmite of Ultras?

The first dollop...

Race crews are not a frequent sight in Italy, so, in a race that actually permits them for part of the course, it's no wonder that many a runner enlists the help of friends or family, who willingly provide comfort and aid to a loved one en route. This results in an array of effects that either seem to irritate or endear other runners, bringing us into the Marmite zone.

There are those who melt at the sight of complacent families setting up camp by the roadside. Some in ancient motorhomes, laying out a selection of food – Italian banquet style. Sitting back, relaxing and drinking in the spectacle of sweaty runners. Calmly waiting for a loved one, yet still managing a shy nod at the oncoming, unknown runner. Yet there are those who virtually ignite at the sight of cars, motorhomes and bikes crawling slowly along the road. *All that traffic!* Some runners might exclaim, weaving around vehicles. *Poppycock!!* May chime in others. *It's all part of the parcel!* So can the Marmite of Ultras - boil down also in part, to what we ourselves actually see? Can we whittle it down to interpretation and point of view?

The second dollop...

Alongside the motorhomes, the cars, the bicycles... love them or

loathe them, the race has also been tinged with acts of misdemeanour - and if you listen closely, you can hear a barley audible undercurrent of whispers regarding the possibility of some runners

slipping in and out of cars en route, taking lifts to speed up time and cut down on effort. Anecdotes which, throughout past editions, have on occasion been proven to be truths! With dramatic show downs often carried out on social media, unmasking the course cutting culprits.

This however can somehow provoke a twofold reaction. The race can be scorned by many a runner, for this particular reason. Yet (again) throw in a twist of perspective and the 100km del Passatore can take the form of ethical aspiration. The honest runner shall complete the race through training, personal ability and the certainty of his or her own integrity!

Perhaps we can add a third aspect to the course cutting. Running the race also takes on a cloak and dagger appeal. The 100km del Passatore can bring out the Miss Marple and Inspector Clouseau in even the most race focused runner.

Personal experiences

I fall into the category of those that love it, warts and all. Having run the 100km del Passatore in 2011. Slowly and comfortably, I let



Post race rest late seventies

myself be entertained from start to finish by a cast of characters who in just the fragments of space and time that it took to overtake or be overtaken - managed to convey a lavish spectrum of both the endearing and irritating traits that seem to pertain to runners everywhere. It felt like I'd come home, to a family of eccentrics and madcaps. My own family.

Each year between 2000 and 3000 runners usually take part, challenging themselves to "La Cento", with the good and the bad. And the only way to decide, if like Marmite, you either hate it or love it, is to serve it up for breakfast and get your teeth into it. But watch out, if you *do like* it, you might find those 100km from Florence to Faenza slightly addictive, and end up like runners Walter Fagnani and Marco Gelli, who've both participated and finished the race - 40 times.

Race website: <https://www.100kmdelpassatore.it/>

All images are courtesy of 100km Del Passatore

■UW■

TRANS-KOREA 2016

PART ONE: GETTING TO THE START LINE

Author & Photos: Berit Jesson



Sun rise at the Han River in Seoul

The following is a quite lengthy and in some respects unusual race report. Unusual, because even though the race itself was a great challenge (spoiler alert: DNF), getting to the start line was actually one of the greatest challenges so far in my ultrarunning “career”. Despite the stress of having virtually no useful race information before the race, a stomach issue during most of the race, two falls and a DNF, it was actually one of my greatest running experiences. It makes

for quite a good story, I shared a few hours with Abichal Sherrington during the 6 day race in Hungary and relayed my story of the race to him. Ultraruns in Asia do not get very much attention outside of Asia (some of the reason for this should be obvious from this race report) and there are so many great races there.

Every year, the Korean Ultra Marathon Federation (KUMF) organises three non-stop Trans-Korea races. A West to East, North to

South, and a South to North, with distances of 308/312 km, 537 km, and 622 km respectively. If you complete all three runs within one year, you have made a grand slam (!!!). Language barriers make it kind of hard to search for “grand slammers” - guess I will have to ask around when I meet up with the other runners.

A little background history: I am a Korean adoptee but was raised in a Danish family and have lived in Denmark

since I was just under two years old and am (very) Danish. I grew up with no relation to Korea other than having a sister who was also adopted from Korea and hence according to people around us looked so much like me that it was very easy to see that we were sisters. Actually, we do not have one drop of blood in common and absolutely do NOT look alike (although she was always the pretty one, so I would not have minded if we did) but being Asian and growing up among

tall, Nordic people, we of course looked virtually indistinguishable ;-) I really did not have much interest in Korea or my birth family's background but in 2011, I was reunited with my Korean birth family during a visit to Korea (and yes, it is SOUTH Korea) but that is another story. Looking Korean while being Danish, a total stranger to Korean culture and traditions, only being able to communicate with two of my three siblings (my youngest sister speaks English) and my parents by means of Google Translate on my smartphone, I felt kind of alien and awkward whenever we visited Korea, so I felt the need to do something that is essentially ME when I was in Korea. And that of course means ultrarunning ;-)

Easier said than done. On my first three visits to Korea, I did not see any runners anywhere on the streets or in the national parks where we went hiking on our first visit. Third time around, I participated in one of the two annual marathons in Seoul with around 20,000 participants - but where they go between the races remained a mystery to me... And the

only new running friends I made during that marathon, were a group of Chinese runners! However, I had heard about the Trans-Korea races and although, I was slightly intimidated by the distances, I decided that the "baby distance" West to East was doable. I found the race info in the d-u-v- race calendar and optimistically clicked the race link, which leads to the KUMF home page - which is all in Korean. Luckily, they have an English section as well. Unfortunately, the English section had not been updated for several years - except for annual registration information for the Jeju Ultramarathon. But never mind. That is why we have Google Translate, right? And noticing a picture with a lot of Korean symbols (I was unable to read Hangeul, the Korean alphabet at the time) and the very promising words "308 km", I navigated to the race info page. And Google translated it. However, Google Translate and Korean is not exactly a match made in Heaven. Either that or it is a very strange race. Certainly the race description did not make much sense. I did manage

to glean that the first two aid stations would be located around 50 km and 100 km, and only two drop bags were allowed at 100 km and 200 km and that it was mandatory to carry a light on the back of your back pack. There was a route description in Korean and I could see at which distance, one had to do something but where and what one had to do was a big mystery and Google Translate really is NOT your friend when it comes to translating route directions. I did not want to involve my Korean family, especially not my perpetually worried Korean father who worries about that I travel alone, eat spicy food, run long distances, and even warns me to hold the hand-rail when walking down the stairs. So involving them in my running a 308 km race did not seem like a terribly bright idea. Besides, I was concerned that they would insist on paying my race fee, and finally, the questions I had for the race about the race setup were questions best answered by a runner. I emailed the organisers in English a few times sending a direct email to the listed email address and by



completing the online contact form to ask them if I could register for the race. As I received no answer, I had someone translate my email into Korean and tried again a few times more. Still no reply. When I told a friend who lives in Korea about this later on, his response was "Oh, but Koreans don't reply to emails. You have to call them". Great... But of course, calling someone who speaks only Korean was not really an option. So, on to plan B.

Around two years before my race, I had started to ask all my international ultrarunning friends if they had ever run one of the Trans-Korea runs or knew someone who had. After a while and after checking the results list from the previous year's race, I soon changed my

Race Report

investigative strategy to just ask if anybody knew any English-speaking Korean ultrarunners. The answer was always negative. One friend said he had met some Korean ultrarunners but did not stay in touch as they knew no English. I then started scrutinizing the results lists from previous Trans-Korea runs in order to find some foreigners who had completed the race and who were likely to speak English. Or German, or French, or Danish, or basically just any other language than Korean... No dice. I did find the name of a Hong Kong Chinese runner and tried to send him a message but he never replied. I then located a race report from an American who had run the race a couple of times. He did not appear to be on Facebook but I located a running forum where he was a member and tried to message him there. No luck. Then

there was a German runner who seemed to be living in Korea and who had completed the race a few times. Again, no luck in trying to message him. Finally, I checked the results lists again, and lo and behold; the American had listed his running club as Seoul Fly Runners. Checking up on that running club, it turned out to be a running club in Seoul for expats and English-speaking Koreans. I messaged the admin and asked if I could join their running club if I paid the members fee even if I did not live in Korea and would not show up for training except perhaps once every few years ;-)

I was allowed to join and promptly posted in their Facebook group if anybody was running the Trans-Korea and could help out with registration and information on the race. A (now) friend responded and offered to help me out with registration and also told

me that I should not run alone, that the traffic was dangerous and a female runner had been killed in the traffic during the race the previous year. Happily he agreed to assist me in signing up for the race. He registered me and I paid for the start fee of 400,000 won, which corresponds to approx. \$370. Shortly thereafter, I recognised my name, which was the only name I could read, in a long list, which I assumed was the participants list. At one point, I asked what the word listed besides my name meant - Google Translate refused to render a translation. The answer was "Not paid" and this was several months after I made the bank transfer! A friend then posted the question in Korean for me on the race's online forum and the answer was that there was an issue with documentation. I then asked the runner who had helped me register, if he could call the race organisers and find out what was going on. The answer was some story about them not being able to access my start fee as it was paid into an international account. Or something... Anyway, the issue was resolved somehow.

After several months effort, I seemed to be signed up for what would be my longest run ever then, I had the best piece of luck: Running one of my favourite races, the 100 mile Mauerweglauf, in Berlin, I met a Chinese-American runner who lives in Korea. He had a Korean ultrarunner friend who was an actual finisher of Trans-Korea, and best of all: He spoke English! He would not be running himself that year, as he was preparing for the UTMB. However, he would be happy to answer my questions. Furthermore, my new-found friend initiated contact with a Korean runner who after enquiring into my running credentials and warning me about running alone, and telling me about the runner who was killed in traffic, offered to accompany me on the unmarked route. I was not sure if he was running the entire race, or "only" the first 200 km - there was some communication issues. Ever the optimist, I decided that if he would run with me for the first 200 km, I could just "wing it", the remaining 112 km! Anyway, as the late Danish comedian,



Victor Borge put it: “A smile is the shortest distance between two people”, so I figured that armed with a smile and knowing the Korean word for water (mul), I would be able to manage just fine somehow ;-). A few days before the race, I met up with my running companion, and because we had communicated through Messenger, I was under the illusion that he knew English, which turned out not to be the case. However, I figured, my plan was just to hang on to his company as I could not find my way alone so if I just kept to his side, that would be fine, and then I would just have to miss out on deep conversations along the way. I still had no idea what to put in my drop bags and how to manage food and energy between the aid stations. It was not only my hardest race ever, it was also my least prepared race. There was no point in making any race strategy, as my only plan was hanging on to my fellow runner with whom I could hardly communicate! My Korean sister showed up to meet my running companion and through her, he asked me if I had registered for the shuttle bus from Seoul to start.

I had figured out that there was a free shuttle, however I had no idea that one had to sign up for it, as there was no communication from the race organisers, except on the online forum - in Korean. So, my new running friend, Mr. Chae, signed me up and we agreed to meet at the bus station on race day.

A few days before the race, I called the runner who had run the race before, and after the usual spiel about the dangers of the traffic and running alone and the story of the female runner who was killed in a car accident, I got some much-needed info on the race. I never did figure out if all the warnings about the dangers of running alone, applied to me as a female, a foreigner, an idiot, or just applied to all runners in general. I highly suspect the former. Anyway, three days before the race, I finally got some information on what to expect at the aid stations. I had also worried about the distance to the first two aid stations as I did not know how much water to carry for 50 km and how to manage that. I had “translated” some posts from the race’s online forum, which



Volunteers at the aid station. And yours...

indicated that you could buy water at convenience stores. As the race started at 9 pm, I was not sure if we would pass any open convenience stores along the route and if they would be open for business (note to self: Korean convenience stores are always open). So, three days before the event, my anxieties were finally replaced by the usual pre-race anticipation and I started to look forward to the start!

Trans-Korea 2016 West to East - Part two: The Race

On race day, I met up with Mr. Chae at the bus station, which was great as I would never have been able to locate the shuttle-bus on my own. I met a number of the other runners, and introductions were made: Lots of smiles,

hand shakes and photos. Of course, no English... After a 2 hour bus ride, we reached the start at Gangwha Island on the West coast. We received our bibs and handed in our drop bags, which were actually for the most parts, suitcases. I had bought some minimalist and rather pricey little red lights to attach to my back pack as I knew it was mandatory to carry light during the race and I of course did not want to carry anything heavy. However, with our bibs, we received a huge light to carry that was akin to a lightsaber! So much for minimalist equipment. I guess they did not want to take any chances after the accident and to ensure that we could be seen from afar. At that point, Mr. Chae asked me if I had booked the shuttle back to Seoul. Of course, I had not. And I

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have to admit, that I had figured, Mr. Chae would book the shuttle both ways. We asked one of the organisers who informed us that the bus was full. But as some runners would most likely DNF, they could probably find a place for me. I decided not to worry about that till after the race and anyway, I had a credit card, so I figured I would make it back to Seoul somehow...

There was a pre-race meal served in the restaurant at start. Forget about pasta party. We had rice, kimchi (spicy, fermented cabbage), some sort of fish that tasted like mackerel, seaweed soup, and the usual Korean range of fermented side dishes. Oh well, when in Rome... I just hoped that my stomach would recognise this (delicious) food as race fuel... I was the only foreigner in the race and as I also had my adoption history, soon every runner in the field knew who I was. I think I had my photo taken with every single runner and felt like quite the celebrity. We had pictures taken in front of the race poster, in front of the rock with the Trans-Korea inscription that has a twin at the finish line, in front of the start portal, etc. We also

had a picture taken of all the runners in front of the start portal - and then someone discovered that they had turned it the wrong way around so the portal read "Finish". We decided to leave it and I just hoped that we hadn't jinxed the race by taking a finish photo at start...

The start was at 9 pm and we had police escort for the first few miles. It is a road race and a lot of the race is along the shoulder of quite heavily trafficked highways. But at 9, the roads were quiet and the temperature was nice and cool. I stuck to Mr. Chae like glue although he ran a bit too fast for my preference, given that we had 312 km ahead of us. Around 19-20 km, a local running club had set up an extra aid station, and they had water and rice cakes and I refilled my water bottles. They somehow knew my story and I quickly learned that just saying "Denmark" with Korean pronunciation, apparently was sufficient to tell my entire story and also explain why I did not speak Korean. So, that became my magical word throughout the rest of the race, whenever I encountered other runners or supporters.

The field quickly spread out and we were moving along in what was for me an unusual quiet pace. I am widely known for chatting all the way. However, given that my Korean was limited to a few essential words such as hello, thank you, water, etc., I simply settled in and enjoyed the night. Due to the traffic, we ran on the pavement, which was unfortunately quite uneven. So around 30 - 40 km, I took quite a nasty fall. I quickly got back on my feet as I worried that my fellow runners would make too much of a fuss about it, and there was absolutely NO way I was quitting the race. Back on my feet, I continued - only to take another fall soon after and when I hit the ground, my leg started cramping. Mr. Chae helped ease my cramps and once again, I quickly got back up even though I had hurt my knee quite badly. I then decided to run on the road rather than the pavement while briefly considering all the warnings I had received about the traffic and the fatal accident.

At some point, Mr. Chae stopped and pointed to a sign by the road side - and we entered a Korean restaurant where

the room was already filled with other runners. There are two features of Korean restaurants that are not very ultrarunner-friendly: You have to take off your shoes, and you sit on the floor but I managed! We had rice and some kind of seaweed soup with something that smelled and looked a bit like tripe. I was not a fan. We then grabbed a quick nap on the restaurant floor before moving on.

Very soon I felt nauseous and had a re-encounter with my seaweed soup. Every time I tried to consume some of my energy drink, I was sick but in between that, I actually felt OK. We soon reached the first aid station at around 50 km and registered there. Food was served and I tried to eat a bit of broth and some plain rice and decided to skip the kimchi. Some of the race organisers gave me some kind of medicine for my stomach. I usually resent taking medication but I figured, I had better follow their advice as I did not want to run the risk that they would deem me unfit to continue the race. The medicine seemed to be a gingery powder and really did not sit well with my stomach

but I decided to hold it in until I was out of sight of the organisers before throwing up again ;-)
I was only able to sip pure water and around half a liter per hour. Otherwise, I was sick again. As long as I stuck to sipping water, I was fine and spirits were high - even though I knew that running 312 km on pure water was not really an option. But I figured - or rather hoped - my stomach would settle later on. We ran through the night and every time we passed a bench at a bus stop or a road work tent, we could see runners asleep or see their flashing "lightsabers" through the tent canvas. We also crashed in a tent left by road workers for a short power nap.

We ran along the Han river, which cuts through Seoul and I recognised part of the route as I had been running along the river in Seoul the previous week.

The sun rose over the river and all was well - apart from the occasional vomiting. At some point, Mr. Chae had a bit of a crisis and via Google Translate on our smartphones, he asked me to continue and I ran

for a while with another runner. Actually, my new running companion's pace was more even and suited me much better. I prefer to run at a slow, steady pace and take my breaks by alternating running and walking and then grab a short power nap once in a while. Occasionally, we would get water from a convenience store along the route. But also filled our water bottles from drinking fountains by the river, which was probably a mistake on my side. The water is safe to drink for the locals but my stomach was probably not adjusted to the local bacteria. Next time, I will bring water purifier tablets... But gradually, my stomach settled a little. At some point, we encountered a KUMF guy who had set up a mini aid station and offered us kimbap, water, and coke. I managed a few bites of kimbap (seaweed rolls with rice) and stuck the rest in my backpack for later.

Around 90 km, we encountered yet another unlisted aid station manned by a number of Korean "ajummas", Korean ladies who made a huge fuss of me. They laughed when they discovered that my kimbap had disintegrated

in my backpack and cleaned out the rice and they took off my shoes and put something on my feet that looked like gaiters but were made of some kind of tulle, which rendered them pretty useless as gaiters. They also imposed these on my running companion. I still have no idea what that was all about but politely kept them on till the next aid station where I dumped them. They also massaged my feet, and offered fruit and water and totally mothered me whilst happily chatting away in Korean. We then continued to the next aid station where we had our drop bags. I changed into dry running clothes and enjoyed a short rest in the sun and even managed to eat a bit of rice and kimchi. The volunteers were super-friendly so despite the language barrier, I was well taken care of. All of a sudden,

Mr. Chae reappeared and joined me again as we continued on. I would have expected to have 2-3 hrs to cut off at that point. However, as we had been making long breaks, we were almost right on cut off time, which was a bit stressful.

The sun was really strong and I was suffering a bit in the heat but also enjoyed some beautiful views. We made a stop at a restaurant and I pretended to eat some of my food but really just did the anorexia trick and pushed my food around on my plate, as I did not trust my stomach to hold down the food. We soldiered on and made the occasional photo stop and at some point, we separated again but the route was easy as we just followed highway 6, which was not a very busy road and I quite enjoyed running at my own pace for a while. When I reached the



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major aid station at 200 km, I again changed into dry clothes and left the aid station running alongside an elderly runner. He was waiting for me but I could feel another bout of vomit coming up so I tried to tell him to just continue without me. Finally, I gave up and called my friend and asked him to tell my fellow runner to just move on and I passed the phone to him. My friend then explained that my companion wanted to keep moving in order to try to gain some time before we hit the mountains. Nice strategy but I really had to vomit. I sent my fellow runner ahead and when he was out of sight, I emptied my stomach. But he noticed and turned around and stopped one of the race volunteers who was driving a car and soon the volunteer returned with more of that yucky powder stuff. I politely thanked my friend, dutifully swallowed some powder and told him, I would rest and when he had left, it all came back up again. I took a short rest on a bench and then continued alone in the heat. I soon hit the mountains. The sun was brutal and there was no shade anywhere. Road

signs would inform me that the incline was 7 %, 8 % or 10 %. Some of the volunteers pulled over in their car and gave me water and poured cold water over me to cool me down and let me know that I had another 4 km to the aid station.

Eventually, I reached the aid station and there was Mr. Chae. He informed me we were close to cut off and I told him to just continue alone as I certainly did not want to be the cause of his DNF but I also hoped to be able to finish myself as my legs felt fine. I then started the first descent and made good speed downhill and soon the sun set and the night was cool and nice. I kept moving occasionally encountering another runner, so I knew I was on the right track. I had brought a charger for my GPS watch but unfortunately, I had lost that somewhere along the route. My backup watch froze refusing to start up, I was running with no idea of how far I had run and how close to cut off I was. But at some point, a volunteer drove up to me and signaled that I had to get in the car. I tried to object as I was running at a good pace and felt fine but to

no avail. I got in the car and was taken to a check point where they tried to feed me - but my stomach still was having none of that. When I entered the room, the others applauded and one of the volunteers told me, I had made 250 km. Although, I was disappointed, I also felt okay about my accomplishment and in the end there were 67 finishers from around 130 starters.

I was driven to the hotel at the finish line and was assigned a room. I showered and went to sleep almost right away. Of course, we had to sleep on the floor, which can be a bit of a challenge after 250 km. After a good rest, I went to the sauna and then joined the others at the finish line. Mr. Chae came in as a finisher, which made me very happy. Finally, there was someone who spoke English and he translated for me. Mr. Chae then said that he had thought, I would quit after falling earlier on in the race. I vowed to be back in 2 years and finish the race, and everybody assured me that next time, I would finish now I knew how to run in Korea. One of the volunteers offered to support me from his car. I had a really nice

seafood dinner with Mr. Chae and was able to eat several bites of food before returning to Seoul on the shuttle bus.

Despite all the challenges, this had been one of my greatest running experiences ever and I am very grateful to Mr. Chae, the other runners, my running friends who helped me with race registration and advice, and of course all the volunteers for a wonderful experience.

My name appears on the start list once again. Beside my name is a word that Google Translate now offers to translate as "payment" and that I recognise as the "not paid" status even though I transferred the start fee several weeks ago ;-)

This time I will run alone, despite all the warnings so I can make my own pace and since last time, I have several stage runs under my belt, not least the 1,000 km Corsica Ultra and also a 6 day race with 602 km, so I feel confident that I am ready. Now, I just have to wait till September...

Trans-Korea West to East 2016

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Snowdrop 55-Hour 2017-2018

By Bob Hearn



Joe and Kelley moving well. Pic by Don Davis.

The usual disclaimer applies: I write these reports mostly for myself, to get down everything relevant I can remember, for future reference. Sometimes they are useful or entertaining to others as well; that's a bonus. This was the longest race I've ever run, and I learned a lot entering

a new regime, so the report is long. So, feel free to skim! No seriously. It maybe gets interesting on day two. My first Spartathlon report clocked in at a massive 5,000 words... this one is twice as long. Technically that would make it "novelette" length, though it's not fiction. I don't know why

anyone would want to read this. I just had to write it. **Background** I came into Snowdrop with my two previous major races, 24-hour Worlds and Desert Solstice 24-hour, being disappointing failures. I thought I'd had 24-hour figured out, but I was wrong. I do believe I have the mental game

working pretty well now – though every race is different – but there are endless complications your body can throw at you, especially as you get older. I stopped at Desert Solstice after only 93 miles, with a backwards lean that would not go away. The next day I was kicking myself for giving up so easily. What was

I thinking? I'd put in all the training and 15 hours of race-day effort, but I had not collected the payoff: the experience of completing the 24 hours to the best of my ability, to learn more. Those are hard-earned data points, and here I'd failed to claim them. What's more, the same thing had happened last year, and I had finally recovered and come back to win the men's race. Yet, it was really the right decision. I have to take a step back from 24-hour and figure out this lean. I'm working with a physiotherapist. Also, for quite a while I had wanted to try 48-hour, and this gave me the chance. I know that sounds crazy – 24 is too hard, why not

I'd thought I had an outside chance at Phil McCarthy's 48-hour overall American Record of 257 miles. On paper it looked easy. I knew that was deceptive. Still, it would be the only overall record I would have any shot at at all, and everything I have learned at 24-hour tells me my strengths as a runner should improve relative to my competition the longer the race. However, Olivier Leblond raised the bar, running 262 miles in November. That moved my chances from slim to pretty nearly nil. Yet, there was still the over-50 record of 230.41, and plenty of room in between those two numbers for intermediate goals.

Snowdrop 55-hour, in Houston. ATY is an Aravaipa race (as is Desert Solstice), excellently organized, and a huge New Year's party that dozens of my friends would be attending. But I have rarely seen big numbers from ATY (even counting Kelly Agnew's recently vacated wins), and I've heard stories of unrelenting, shoe-begriming dust and freezing conditions. I had seen big numbers at Snowdrop from Joe Fejes, Connie Gardner, and Jon Olsen. Snowdrop had filled 8 hours after opening, but Kevin Kline, the organizer, had let me know earlier that he'd love to have me there. So after waiting a week to gauge my recovery from my aborted effort – pretty good, I judged – I reached out, and Kevin not only gave me a spot, but comped my entry and hotel, and brought me in as an elite, joining Joe, Connie, and Adrian Stanciu. (Phil McCarthy had had to pull out earlier.) Wow! **Snowdrop 55** The first thing that must be said about Snowdrop is that it's much more than just a race. [The Snowdrop Foundation](#)

exists to fund pediatric cancer research and scholarships for pediatric cancer patients and survivors. The race (one of many the foundation sponsors) is a fundraiser, with most participants helping to raise thousands of dollars that will be put to vital use. The unusual length of 55 hours [honors Chelsey Campbell's record-setting surgery](#) at Texas Children's Cancer Center, that inspired the formation of the Snowdrop Foundation. So I felt a little guilty showing up at Snowdrop “just” to race. But I was welcomed with open arms. I flew in late Wednesday, giving me a couple of days before the Saturday morning start. Thursday afternoon I went out for an easy run, and when I got back to the hotel there was Adrian checking in. He reminded me of the mental training seminar that evening, that I'd totally forgotten. It started in an hour, but was a 40-minute drive away! I arranged to meet back in the lobby after a quick shower to ride with Adrian. As I got in the elevator I heard him tell his daughters “that's my nemesis!”. At the seminar I finally

MARKS	person	miles	km
#10 US	Don Choi	227.00	365.32
50+ road AR	Joe Fejes	230.41	370.82
50+ track AR	Roy Pirung	231.44	372.46
#6 US	Joe Fejes	235.16	378.45
Women's AR	Traci Falbo	242.35	390.02
#4 US	Roy Pirung	243.43	391.76
#3 US	John Geesler	248.55	400.00
#2 US	Phil McCarthy	257.34	414.15
50+ track WR (frozen)	Gilbert Mainix	259.24	417.21
AR	Olivier Leblond	262.18	421.94
50+ overall WR	Yiannis Kouras	269.11	433.10

The spectrum of 48-hour goals

try 48? – but I thought getting a different, larger, perspective on what happens to my body running for a very long time could be useful. Also, for quite a while

There were two options for 48-hour in the immediate future, three weeks out, over New Years: Across the Years (24, 48, 72, and 6-day), in Phoenix, and

Race Report

met Kevin Kline; he introduced us to the attendees. I even signed an autograph! I was gratified to have a lot of resonance and familiarity with most of what was said about mental training; I might have taken away a few new tidbits. After that was a pizza dinner organized by Snowdrop. I met Patty Godfrey (the race director), Brian Anderson (who wore many hats in the race), and several participants. No pizza for me, though – I had learned that I had to maintain my strict low-carb training diet up until race start, or pay the price when I had to slowly transition back to fat-burning mid-race. So I settled for a salad. Friday disappeared in a blur, as I made final preparations. I had hemmed and hawed over my pacing spreadsheet since long before I'd signed up for Snowdrop, but I had still not made my final decision. I thought the 50+ record of 230.41 was soft. In fact Joe Fejes had set that mark as a 48-hour split in a 6-day race! So it was almost soft by definition. But of course this was my first time out, and Joe is the master of US multi-day

running. So caution was warranted. On the other hand, how many chances would I get to put up a big number at 48-hour? This might be my best chance for a long time, and certainly I'd be at my youngest. If I had any chance at all at the overall record, shouldn't I take my shot? I tried to have my cake and eat it too. 186 laps, or 128.42 miles, on day one would mean 7:30 laps, after subtracting 45 minutes of time stopped for nap, portapotty, gear, medical, etc. That should be an easy effort, and would be easy to track. Then if I happened to feel great after 24 hours (ha!), I left myself a shot at 262: I'd have to speed up to 7:10 laps on day two, putting me at 262.371. Or, I could slow to 8:00 laps on day two and still run over John Geesler's 400 km (248.5 miles), which would put me at #3 all-time US, behind Olivier and Phil. That seemed legitimately feasible – on paper! Finally I could slow all the way to 9:15 laps on day two and still run over 232. Of course, if I wanted that record, I was going to have to also beat Joe, not just his existing mark. That might mean some tactical racing,

but not until at least halfway through day two. Yet, having to beat Joe did support not starting too slow, i.e. even pacing for 232, and potentially having to run much farther with a big negative split to catch him. So on balance I was happy with this plan. Note that running pace didn't enter my calculations anywhere above. I had penciled in estimated running paces, and walking times per lap, but the execution strategy would be to run as slowly as comfortable, and walk just enough to keep the laps the right duration.

The estimated nap time and stopped time were a real shot in the dark, however. How much sleep did I need? I planned for 15-minute naps every 10 hours. I'd asked Phil how to run 48 hours; he said "it's just like 24!". Well, maybe for him! From [his race report](#) it appears he spent a total of about half an hour for rest stops, with no sleep, in his record-setting run. I thought I would need more, but I didn't know how much more. Likewise the stopped time was a guess. I usually budget 5 minutes of stopped time for a 24-hour.

Here I gave myself a generous 15 minutes per day, expecting more issues to be dealt with. It turned out that both of these guesses were underestimates. I needed more sleep, and spent more time in medical, portapotties, etc., than I'd allowed. Live and learn. Friday afternoon I toured the race course, ran a couple of easy laps, and picked up my bib. Then I finalized my crew instructions back at the hotel. I didn't have Liz and Scott with me this time, as I had at Worlds and Desert Solstice. They had done plenty of crew duty lately already! Plus this was a last-minute race decision. Instead this was another perk of being an invited elite: we had our own crew tent, near the timing mat, with a dedicated crew team, and a side tent with heater and cot. Couldn't ask for more. Friday evening we had an elite panel session, featuring Joe, Adrian, me, and Doc Lovy. Doc Lovy has been the team doctor for the national teams at World Championships forever. He is 82. His knowledge and experience are invaluable. He and his hand-picked team would man the medical tent

Joe, Doc Lovy, me, and Adrian



for the duration of the race; we couldn't be in better hands. Connie Gardner was supposed to join us, but she'd had to withdraw at the last minute. I would certainly miss her presence out on the course (though she found a way to join me anyway...).

Kevin was an excellent MC for the session,

which was no surprise, as he is a popular Houston radio host on the 93Q Morning Zoo show (and no ultrarunning slouch himself, having completed the 175-mile UltraMilano-Sanremo). After flattering introductions, he engaged us all well, and we also took plenty of questions from the audience. Joe, Adrian,

and I all judged ourselves to be fairly evenly matched for the race, and I think we all learned a lot from each other, as I hope the audience did. It was great to hear Joe and Adrian's thoughtful responses. You don't (with rare exceptions) get to this level by talent alone. It takes the right mindset and attitude, and respect for the distance, and I think we all had it. And the stories and advice from Doc Lovy were priceless. There was one area of disagreement: frequency of racing. Joe and Adrian are big proponents of using races as training runs. I am too, but at training-run effort. Not Joe and Adrian. Witness Adrian's 18:01 Javelina Jundred six weeks before

winning Desert Solstice, or more obviously, his big PR effort at Desert Solstice to win (150+), and being here three weeks later for his first multiday?! That's just crazy to me. A 24-hour PR-level effort would take me months to recover from to be at full fitness. Granted Adrian is younger, but just by 4 years. And Joe had run three 24-hours since late October, plus a 16:24 100 three weeks before Snowdrop! I get that it seems to work for some people. But I don't see the logic. Final question for me: "Who's going to be first to 100 miles?" "Not me!" I was there for 48. Well 55, in the end, but the 48 split was the focus. I was certainly not going to race anyone out of the gate. I'm never first to 100 in a 24-hour, let alone 48. Well, I had missed the small fact that there's a \$500 prize for first to 100. Interesting. This was advantage Bob, insofar as it motivated Joe and Adrian, which in fact it did. There was also a \$500 prize for the overall winner. Finally we had a group dinner after the panel. Adrian wisely skipped this and went to bed early; Joe, his wife Kelley, and I were lamenting the late

Snowdrop founder Kevin Kline and some crazy runners



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(after 9) bedtime when we got back to the hotel. I slept poorly, though of course was sound asleep when my alarm went off at 4:45. **Day One – Day** I woke groggy, but got myself in gear quickly enough, and was in the lobby to ride to the start with Joe and Kelley at 6:00. Everything seemed hectic... it always seems like there should be plenty of time before race start, but there never is. The portapotties were a hike away from our crew tent. There was a timing

important thing for me was getting on the same page with my crew. But my crew contact, Nicole Berglund, was going to arrive later. So I hastily described my plans to the people in the crew tent, and showed them the printed instructions. A surprise participant was Scott Rabb, who said he was going for 200 miles. I hadn't seen his name on the entry list. I'd run with his wife Melanie many times at 24-hour. It would be good to see another familiar face

you're going too fast", as he edged ahead, and got a few laughs. Yet, he did pull ahead, and was out of sight before long.

The course is a certified 0.69045-mile loop, about 40% concrete, the rest dirt. The timing mat was near the middle of the concrete section. After a bit we turned left onto the dirt to circle a lake. This one turn was the only slight blemish in an otherwise nearly perfect, flat course; you had to accept a little

torn them at Run4Water last spring, as well as the anterior talo-fibular ligament, and been told by two doctors they would never heal without surgery. But they had not limited my training.) As I reached the concrete again later in the loop, I started walking, as I planned to walk the stretch by the crew tent every time, for ease of communication and access. First lap: 7:05. OK, too fast, walk more. I adjusted quickly, keeping my cumulative splits near 7:30, 15:00, 22:30, 30:00, 37:30, 45:00, 52:30, and on the hour. It was an easy pattern to keep in sync with. I timed the walks... and was shocked to see that I had to walk about 2:30 per lap to keep them the right length. I had figured half that, 1:15, in my spreadsheet, which meant a 10:08 running pace. But it appeared I couldn't run that slowly. Over the last few years of 24-hour focus I have dialed 9ish-minute miles into my brain and legs pretty well, it seems. I expected the walk breaks to shorten the farther we got into the race as I naturally slowed, but surprisingly that never happened. It was a side benefit



Pic by Don Davis

chip to be picked up. Warmup exercises to do. Lacing to be adjusted to perfection. The National Anthem to be observed. Group photos to be taken. The most

out there. We wound up running pretty close together for quite a while. As the sky lightened enough to see, we were off, at 7:00. Within 20 feet I called out "Adrian,

right downward camber, and a very slight hill, if you wanted to run the tangent. That would add up quickly for my poor right peroneal tendons if I wasn't careful. (I had



Pic by Deborah Scharpf Sexton

that my pattern had me walking the majority of the concrete, which would be harder on my feet to run on. Starting on the second lap, and every other lap, I did my fueling and hydration. I grabbed a 4-ounce bottle of Maurten, the new sports drink used for the Nike 2-hour marathon attempt. Previously I would fuel mostly with Coke or Dr. Pepper, but I think Maurten is better, because it has more glucose and less fructose, and also because of the special property it has of forming a hydrogel when it hits your stomach, which is supposed to make absorption easier. And it

had worked well for me at Javelina and Desert Solstice. Here I would be getting 16 oz. of fluid and 151 calories per hour (using the Maurten

160 mix), more calories than I'm accustomed to (typically 100-125), but made easier by the special mixture. I could supplement with water if it got warm. Maurten does have a lot of sodium, though, more than I would be losing to sweat on a cool day like this. I wish they made a lower-sodium blend. Speaking of Maurten, I had ordered more of it before the race, but when I realized it wouldn't get to my house in time, I frantically tried to change shipping to Houston, explaining the situation. It was too late, but Maurten sent two more packages on to Houston, gratis. Thank you!

The day unfolded quickly

as I settled into an easy rhythm. I actually thought the race might be over within the first hour, as Joe and Adrian had both already lapped me! I saw no reason to go out that fast, unless they were going for the \$500 prize for first to 100, or perhaps were going for a 24-hour team qualifier with the first-day split. Joe in particular pulled well ahead, and after a few hours I judged his pace to be on track for mid-150s at 24 hours. I had wondered if he might try this. It made some sense: conditions were good, cool and overcast, and the course was pretty fast. Why not try? It's rare to get really good conditions for a 24-hour. If it looked good, great, a



One of many times Adrian lapped me. Pic by Don Davis.

Race Report



My anchor

mid-150s qualifier would be gold (and would also eclipse my 50+ 24-hour record!). If not, there would be plenty of time to back off and still run a decent 48, and 55. It was very tempting to try this myself. But I held back, because I was here for 48. I had consciously decided to step back from 24-hour and take my best shot at 48. Had I wanted to try again soon at 24-hour I'd have run FASTtrack in Florida. So,

be consistent.

After a few hours, Kelley Fejes came up behind me – about to lap me. She had also run all those recent 24-hours along with Joe. She'd been looking forward to challenging Connie for the win; with Connie gone, she was the women's favorite. But she looked sheepish: "Joe told me no matter what, DO NOT PASS BOB HEARN." Hahaha! It was

a struggle for her not to for several laps, I think, especially on my walk breaks. She might have briefly pulled ahead, actually, when I dived into a portapotty, but eventually I crept back ahead and accumulated a lead.

I began to develop quite a familiarity with the course, and with the other runners. The most prominent aspect of the course is that it was lined with photos of children, most of them cancer victims, a few survivors. It was hard not to be motivated by thinking of what they and their families had gone through, so much in comparison to a little race pain. I got to know most of them by name and location. In particular I latched

onto Sean, wearing a Superman outfit, who happened to be right where I would switch from walking to running every lap. He became my anchor in more ways than one. I drew strength from him every lap. Along the long concrete straightaway were a very large number of crosses. I didn't learn until after the race that these represented the number of children who would die from cancer during 55 hours. That knowledge would have added a huge emotional impact to this stretch.

In terms of the other runners, Joe, Adrian, and I were treated like celebrities. Many of the runners were familiar with our previous races, had watched them live, and read our race



With Doc Lovy and John Surdyk



After a few hours, I could only read this sign as BAD PORG

reports. And they were all incredibly supportive. It was kind of surreal to be treated as such royalty. I tried to be supportive in return, learning as many names as I could, but no doubt I got some wrong; my apologies if I called you by the wrong name. (John Surdyk, I'm pretty sure I repeatedly called you Brian. Sorry!) A few I could not mess up. Becky Cunningham, from Oklahoma, has the same name as my sister. And I grew up in Tulsa. Her husband Mark was on the course and super supportive the entire time, and also posted photos with live updates during the race. Thank you! Becky went on to run over 163 miles, a PR. Robert Key ("grandpa"), like Becky, had run in every Snowdrop. He was also a solid and motivating presence. And it's hard to forget your own name. Sam Benjamin (representing the Wisconsin branch of the Snowdrop Foundation) had never gone over 100, so was taking a big step up. He looked smooth and strong the whole way, and was always encouraging – including pointing out later in the race when my

right arm was flapping uselessly. Sam ran 152 miles, an excellent multi-day debut. Deborah, Susan, Chisolm, and several others I knew from Facebook but had not met in person; it was great to put names to actual faces and cheer each other on. Adrian's wife Brenda was also a big supporter throughout, as were their daughters Kirstyn and Amy. I got a "Go Bob!" from them almost every lap. Time passed. After 4 hours I decided I was needing too many portapotty stops. Even 16 oz. per hour of fluid was more than I needed in these cool conditions. But with the Maurten, I couldn't drop that without also losing planned calories. So for hour 5 I ate a donut instead, and drank little water. And again at 8 hours. Later in the afternoon I switched to Coke for a while, as it was more calorie dense, and I could get enough calories with less fluid.

I should say a word about accounting. Time management and accounting are critical skills for fixed-time, short-loop courses, but they are underappreciated and

underused. They are very easy for me, and reap huge rewards. Which is kind of strange, because in the real world I am lousy at both skills. But in the simple, restricted world of a race, it's different. I allocated 45 minutes of stop time per day, including naps and potty stops, but I wanted to hit 7:30 laps while moving. So all I did is stop my Garmin whenever I stopped. That might sound sacrilegious – you can't stop your clock in a race, it keeps going! – but the Garmin is just a tool, to be used however is best. Doing it this way, I could keep the cumulative laps at very easy to figure times on my Garmin, and additionally I could compare time of day to

Garmin elapsed time to see exactly how much time I'd spent stopped. And I wouldn't be sprinting to catch up to planned splits after a potty stop. Now, this only works if you are planning to run even splits, or at least it's more complicated if you don't. Most runners will not try to run even for 24 hours, let alone 48, figuring that they will naturally slow, and will have to account for that by "building a cushion". I'm in the opposite philosophical camp, which says that starting easier means you have more left over when the going gets hard and you need it. If you run "by effort" or "by feel" that might work up to say a marathon. But much longer, and "very



Race Report



Scott and Joe. Pic by Don Davis.

easy” might still be way too fast to start. You only know this by thinking about it beforehand, and doing the math. If your easy starting pace would put you over the World Record for your event if you held it, you might want to rethink. Run a 24-hour by feel, let alone a 48-hour, and you are guaranteed to have an unpleasant day. As the day wore on, my right foot began to bother me. Actually it had bothered me almost from the start, with too much pressure on top of the foot. I had already stopped and relaxed twice. This was the same symptom as

at Run4Water, when I had begrudged the time to stop and relax, and wound up with all that damage in the right foot. But relaxing didn't help. So I was keeping a careful eye on it. Otherwise I had remained pretty comfortable so far. No leaning, yay! Right glutes a little sore but not bad. At 6 hours, and every 6 hours thereafter, I took my supplements: one Endurolyte, one Endurance Amino, and two HMB pills (supposed to help preserve muscle tissue). Did they help? I have no idea. But they probably couldn't

hurt. Endurolytes are low in sodium, but I was getting more than enough sodium from the Maurten, especially as I normally take little to none. Sometime in the afternoon I tried to grab a bottle of water at the crew tent, but there wasn't one ready. No problem, I said, I'll get it next lap. Well, about three-quarters of the way around I hear huffing and puffing and approaching footsteps. One of the kids in the crew tent, Marcus (who I would later learn was Sam Benjamin's son), had run behind me with a water bottle to try to catch me! “Do you still want this?” Thank you Marcus! “I was going to go back, but I think I'll just keep going.” 5 pm came, 10 hours, time for my first 15-minute nap. I'd thought I'd be ahead of the game here, going down for a nap so early, but lo and behold Joe and Adrian were already asleep in the tent! And they were still there after my nap. (Maybe that should have told me something about reasonable sleep time.) The only problem with the nap was that being so close to the timing mat, we were also close to the live entertainment. An

excellent mariachi band was playing. Wonderful, but hard to sleep through! Fortunately Nicole had managed to procure some earplugs for me (I think courtesy of Kelley Fejes). Not something I had thought to pack! Next time I will know. Earlier entertainment included Irish dancers, and a live rock band with all-around incredibly useful person Brain Anderson performing.

My legs had been great so far, but after the nap everything was super stiff and tight. Fortunately it didn't take long to loosen up again. By this point Joe had begun to fade. He told me later he'd thought it would take 16:00 for the 100-mile prize, and had gone through 50 miles at 8 hours, but paid for it after that. At 6 pm, 11 hours in, I was in 4th, behind Adrian (by 6 miles), Joe, and Scott Rabb. Gradually I caught up to and passed Scott and Joe.

There was pasta for dinner. I grabbed a plate, nibbled some, and left the rest at the crew tent to nibble more later. ■UW■





Runners against Rubbish

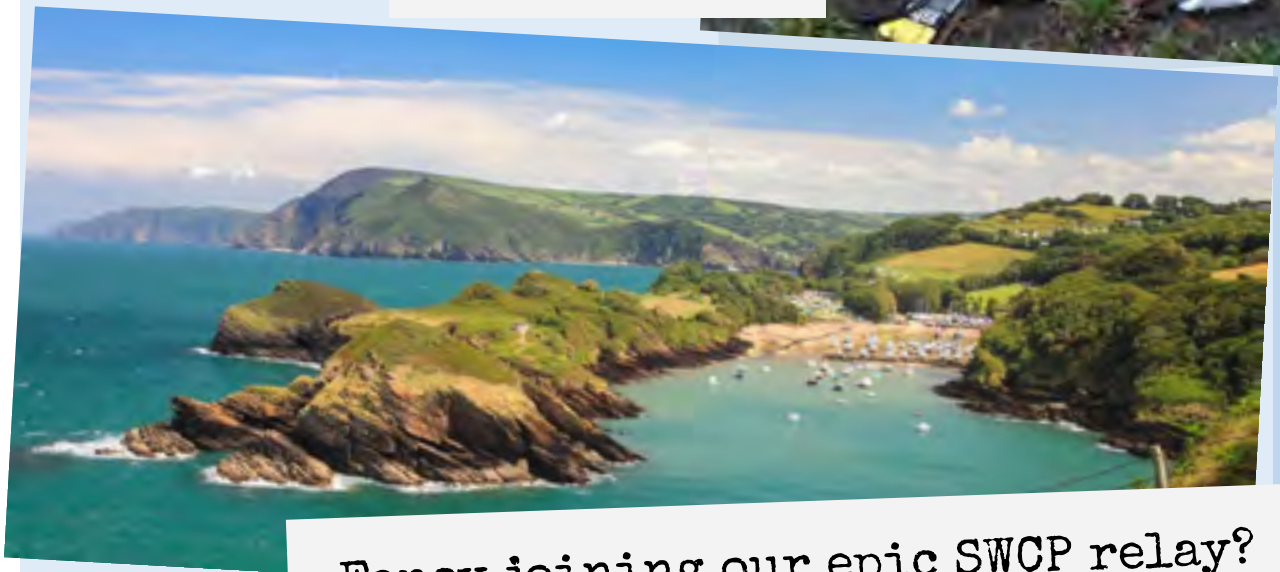
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PENNINE BARRIER ULTRA 50

Author: Emma Marks, Photos: Courtesy GBUltras



To help with navigation Wayne Drinkwater, UGB race director organized free reccy runs at weekends prior to race day for free... Fantastic!! I went to the Malham, 24 mile section led by Wayne. It was a great opportunity to cover a section of the 50 mile course and meet some of the other runners who had booked on. I was unable to make the 3 Peaks organized reccy but I went on my own the following weekend and found it easy to navigate following the Pennine Way markers. Although there was a GPX route for you to download I felt much more confident having already ran the route.

As soon as I saw the Facebook post for the Pennine Barrier 50 on the Ultra Great Britain page I booked in without hesitation... excited... I knew this was the race for me.

HILLS... Tick

TRAILS..... Tick

CHALLENGING.... Tick

I had just started running ultras, only having ran two previous events, The 3 Towers, 37 miles, Howler Series Events 8th October 2016 - joint first lady 7 hours 29 mins. Chester Ultra, 50 miles, UGB Ultras 25th March 2017 second lady 8 hours 43 mins

Taking into account previous race results and the 8507ft (2593m) elevation, I was training for a 10 hour finish.





RACE DAY

Having had a relatively crappy nights sleep as one does sleeping in a tent, full of race nerves and listening to water from the streams I jumped out of bed at 04:30 to put on my ready laid out race kit and make porridge and coffee for breakfast.

I headed down to the start line, The Buck Inn Pub. Race director Wayne gave the briefing, there was a nice buzz of excitement and nerves, the weather looked promising and the atmosphere felt relaxed!!

The final few moments before the 06:00 start I positioned myself at

PRE-RACE

I had booked two nights stay at the Riverside Campsite in Malham and I drove up there on the Friday afternoon. The campsite was quiet, had good basic amenities, fresh water, toilets, hot showers and was only £8 per night!!

I pitched my tent and quickly got talking to other runners around me. The campsite is only a stones throw from registration and the start-line so after a big bowl of Veggie pasta I organized my kit bag and went to registration along with other runners favoring a more relaxing race morning having gone through kit check the night before.

A night cap hot drink - and more food - in my friends camper van and it was early to bed ready for a big day ahead!



Race Report



the front, my aim was for a quick start and to get ahead at the start to avoid the bottle-neck going up the steep steps at Malham cove.

Many had the same idea and there were some very fast starters, the two brothers who came first and second overall along with Matt Rushbrook shot off at an incredibly fast pace and within a couple of miles were out of sighte.

I ran with a pack of 4 strong male runners pushing a competitive pace as we ran past the beautiful lake of Malham Tarn. A steep

assent followed up to Fountains Fell, my legs felt strong and we hit thick mist making it hard to see anything at the top, on the descent I was overtaken by 2 male runners who shot passed me, my reaction was firstly to speed up, but my head told me that I had 40 miles to go "Don't over-do it too soon".

Checkpoint 1 Silverdale – was a welcome sight , the volunteers helped to fill water bottles whilst myself and 2 other male runners filled our hands with nuts, crisps and flapjacks!! Within a few

moments we were back out again, now heading up Pen-y-Ghent. Once again as we ran further up towards the top of the 1st of the 3 Peaks the thick mist made for poor visibility, I relied on my watch to beep if I was going off course but following Wayne's red and white banner tape was everywhere my watch was a big help when I could barely see ahead. We hit the trig point and made the descent avoiding walkers that had suddenly appeared.

Checkpoint 2 – just before Ribbleshead Viaduct, as we came into checkpoint 2 volunteers asked us if we had seen runner Matt Rushbrook, who was ahead of us at the start. Unfortunately he got lost over Pen-y-Ghent which had cost him his lead position.

At this checkpoint they had salted new potatoes..... Amazing!!! Tasted so good and instant carbs, after a couple of these and a cold drink of coke I was ready to go!

The sun was out now and the heat starting to kick in, we had a long steady climb up to Whernside and hit the trig point.... 2 Peaks down and the steepest yet to go.

I caught up with athlete Rob Wilby on the descent, he had blown his quad running downhill, easy to do on the steep rocky ground.... (He slowed down a lot, but still finished the race although hobbling.)

I was now 24 miles into the race and, breaking away from the runners that had kept me company for the first half of the race as we started the steep, assent to Inglesbrough. It starts with a rather relentless hill, that then becomes a



steep climb, which then becomes climbing up on your hands and knees!! Wayne was waiting at the top ready to take photos, so even though my thighs were burning I still managed a smile for the camera and a joke with Wayne!

At this point the race took you about a mile and a half across the ridge to collect a ticket as proof you had ran it before doubling back and heading up to the top and trig point of Inglesbrough. Seeing 2nd and 3rd lady on my return gave me a kick up the bum. I was now 1st Lady and 4th overall, I picked up the pace as I descended Inglesbrough and into Checkpoint 3- Filled up bottles, grabbed handfulls of food to eat whilst moving.

Running into Horton-in-Ribblesdale I had lost sight of any runners behind me and seemed to have set myself a clear lead. The sun was beating down now with temperatures of apporx 30 degrees and no breeze. It was hot!! I kept myself hydrated in-between the checkpoints with water and electrolytes.

Running over the shoulder of Pen-Y-Ghent and to the last of the checkpoints (which was also the first Silverdale) I was greeted by 2 very enthusiastic volunteers who gave me loads of encouragement, when I started to feel myself flagging in the heat.

I'm on the final stretch back to Malham, 10 miles to go!! I got my second wind coming through Malham Tarn, I managed to get a better running pace going and the legs started to feel the life

coming back to them. I saw 3rd male, and caught up with him. He was walking and was struggling to keep running. It turned out that this was his first ultra and I didn't want his efforts to go to waste so I encouraged him to run with me and we chatted the few miles to Janets Foss waterfall to keep him motivated. The place was packed with walkers, all I could think of now was that finish line. I shouted "Excuse Me, Coming Through" as I stormed my way through the walkers. The third male encouraged me to run on ahead as he walked the last mile to the finish.

As I ran on to the finish I could see the huge Pennine Barrier UGB banner, Hearing the claps and cheers was incredible. I finished 3rd overall, 1st lady and 9:58 (sub 10 hour goal)! More than I ever expected.

I'm happy to say 3rd male arrived 2 minutes after me, 4th overall!

As the rest of the runners came

back, those who had been out in the heat longer were suffering but spirits remained high. Every runner felt equally elated to have finished such a challenging route and all runners were greeted with loud cheers. There was a real buzz and energy at the finish and respect to all that ran it.

Of all the 100 mile entrants only 3 men went back out to run the second loop and finish... Heros!!

After my amazing race experience at Pennine Barrier I received an unexpected message from race director Wayne inviting me to join the UGB Ultras team as one of its race ambassadors. I was honoured to be asked, they have been great at supporting me and every little detail goes into the organization of their races to ensure all runners are looked after, so I'm very proud to now be part of the team!

■UW■



Imber Ultra - view from the rear (or tales of a sweep runner)

Author & Photos: Mick Farrar



the miles and it was a course I have done both during the day and at night so there would be no surprises. Over the winter I had trained over the initial miles/hills and led a group of runners training for the ultra out beyond checkpoint one and back on a freezing morning.

Over the week before the race I had been ramping up the miles, as my training schedule was suggesting 70 accumulated miles. This meant a half marathon during the week and

then nine miles on the Saturday before the race on Sunday. Saturday evening I quickly gathered my kit and packed what I would need, mainly lots of food and warm clothing! The going could be slow and we may be out on the course for a few hours.

“I know it is wet and the sun is not sunny, but we can have lots of good fun that is funny” - Dr Seuss

The overnight rain had left the ground wet and the choice of (starting) shoes was a no-brainer,

I never thought you were a fool, But darling, look at you - U2

Race date: 11 March 2018

Avon Valley Runners

Location: Salisbury Plain

Weather/Conditions:

Mild with some light rain showers. Still some defiant snow.

After chatting with Ian Harryman about the idea of running sweep for the Imber Ultra, having run it last year in a less than ideal conditions, I decided to offer my help to others. I needed



Some of the AVR massive at registration



Spot the Aussie

anything with lots of grip! Arriving at the race car park (a nearby school) I was met by two stewards and sent to another car park as the caretaker had not turned up. I parked and had a quick hello hug with Paula Jones (2017 first female) and waited for the minibus to the start. Ian turned up shortly after and we bundled onto the shuttle bus to the leisure centre where the race starts.

While the racers were registering, Ian and I attended the marshals brief and were introduced to the CP marshals. At this point, I secreted a

pair of road shoes with my trusty crew member, Maria, that I would change at the beginning of the road section at Gore Cross. A good plan that could have been executed better.

As the 9am start loomed, the bag drop/hall became packed with (many nervous) runners and Richard Hudson gave the race brief, when asked if there were any first-time ultra runners many hands went up. Ian and I glanced at each other, it could be a long day.

Everyone filtered out onto the sports field to the

starting arch and in a few moments, the race began, a lap around the field to spread the runners out. As Ian was still sorting his pack we moved slowly through the start towards the photographer, posing and smiling, and looking ahead at the early “shufflers”. Out of the sports field and up the first hill we were close on the tail of a lady who, she explained, had run an ultra the day before and was in training for the MDS. We chatted as we moved onto the road and up the second hill, Ian sharing his knowledge of MDS and me playing the joker.

At the top of the first major climb, we saw a runner photographing the snow remnants. He explained he had flown over from Australia and had to go out and buy a long sleeve top and leggings for the race as, where he came from there was no need for them. At the top of the climb, we turned right onto the range road for a mile before turning left again and down towards Warminster Camp. We picked up Mark Ogden from Westbury Running Group and started to push him on towards the CPs within time.



Still runners in the distances at this point

Race Report

A touch bleak at times!



Up and over Battlesbury Hill and Middle Hill to CP 1 where the first casualties of the day were with the Marshals. Ultra races are hard, there is no dishonour in stopping. One runner was heading back to the start had decided that the navigation of the course would be too much and although we volunteered to take them round, it was not to be.

Onwards and up over Scratchbury Hill before picking up the range road near Heytesbury, Mark started to slow again as we ran over the tank tracks and drew closer to Chitterne. We arrived after the cut off time but they allowed Mark to

continue, shortly after starting this stage he decided that he would withdraw at CP3. We met a runner returning to CP2 who was feeling sick and retiring from the race, saying her friends were carrying on and pointed to a track that was not part of the route.

We passed Copehill Down German Village and before long we could see the roofs of the buildings at Westdown Camp, Tilshead. As we crossed behind the houses at Tilshead and dropped towards the road I headed off to speak to James Crawford, lead Marshal, to let him know that Mark would be dropping out.

James said there were several runners missing and I explained about the runners on the wrong track. Mark was extremely brave to get this far while recovering from injury and having a lot on his mind - both Ian and I send our thoughts and prayers to you.

Ian and Mark arrived shortly after me and after a short brief from James we set off to catch up with the new back-runner who was some 10 minutes in front. We set off running and caught up with her at Gore Cross, just before the climb to CP4.

Catherine Crofts, running her first ultra, had picked up a knee injury early in the race

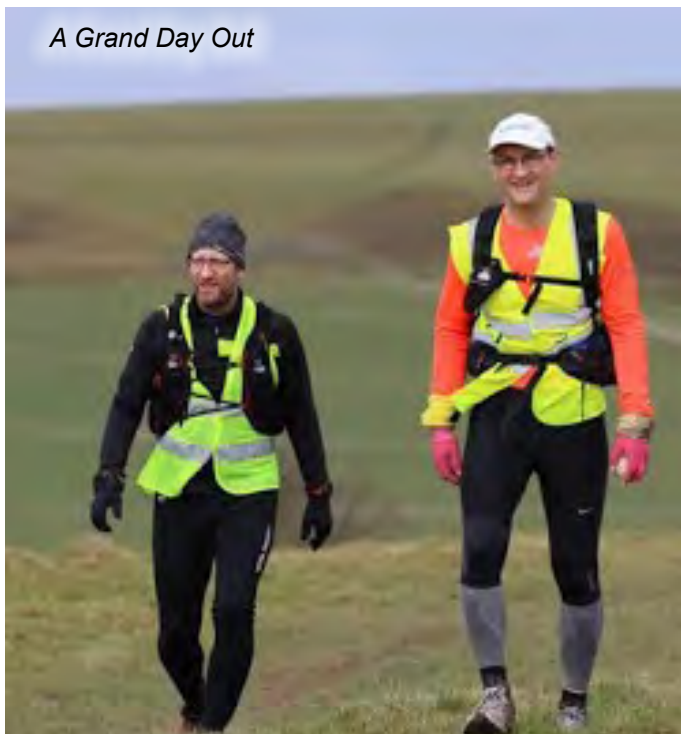
but was able to walk and at a good speed. We force marched up the hill to CP4, where I changed my shoes to road shoes (thank you Maria!), had a quick coffee and headed out again. Just another half marathon to go!! Her time was tight but at the pace we were marching, achievable. Catherine kept up a good speed, the route from CP4 is open and at times beautiful but undulating and a long stretch on the tarmac.

The rain that had been threatening finally turned up and we stopped quickly to extract and put on our waterproof tops. The Plain around Imber is high and you can see the rain clouds sweeping in low across the hills,



Catherine and Ian on the last few miles.

A Grand Day Out



giving you plenty of time to prepare before the rain arrives.

A patrol of soldiers and directing staff came out of the training area and along the range road. We chatted with the soldiers and wished them well as we passed through their

ranks. CP5 appeared on the horizon and we passed through quickly, only a bottle of Lucozade and a cup of water left, and set off on the final miles.

We passed Bratton Camp and the chalk pit, the range path flag pole

meaning the turnoff back to Westbury now visible. We turned off towards the final descent, the route was extremely muddy and I used my running poles for stability - even so, the road shoes had no traction and I almost slid down the hill. Ian was also in road shoes and was having a similar issue! Down to the Wellhead Drove and then along Wellhead Lane before finally entering Leighton Recreation Centre and they last few Marshals and Catherine's friends to cheer her in. She finished in 8:38:01, still smiling!!!

It had been a long day but I really enjoyed helping people. I had my first blisters in many months, caused by swapping to Hoka shoes which are well cushioned but with a narrow toe box. While

talking about desert racing I also learned that I was better looking than a camel (which is nice), something I may have engraved on my headstone.

Ian and I talked some real rubbish, mostly about food, but we put the world to right and ate our own weight in cakes. Ian will be my pacer at the Thames Path 100, I'm glad he is available as we both have the same insane streak that allows us to carry on through hurt and pain to focus on the goal. I've made my peace with Imber but I still have many miles to go.

Again? Yea, maybe after the TP100 I may volunteer again.

<https://runningoffthecraziness.blogspot.com/>

■UW■

Looking out over Westbury



Convergence 2018

By Helen Pike, Photos courtesy Paul Cannon



Descending Cavedale in the penultimate mile

Convergence by Beyond Marathon immediately grabbed my attention when it was announced last Autumn. The premise of the challenge is you have 24 hours to run to Hope in the Peak District from anywhere in the UK. Those who travel the furthest, rank highest. To add to the intrigue, you tell no one where you intend to start from. That way you are blind-betting against everyone else as to how far away you will start, and thus, how high

you will eventually rank. Arrive one minute late and you are cruelly disqualified.

The Crow (Race Director Richard) watches all of those Converging, using Race Drone event tracking. The sting in the tail though is that all distances are measured as the crow flies NOT your actual miles run! Making this equally a test of planning, logistics and navigation as endurance fitness. As the buzz I was getting from completing

“standard” marathon/ultra-races had been diminishing lately, this sounded like the perfect challenge. Rewards are given accordingly - travel from 30 miles away or fewer, a certificate only. 30 to 60 miles a Silver Convergence medal, 60 to 90 miles Gold and 90 plus miles the coveted Black Convergence medal.

So obviously the question had to be “How far could/should I go?” My first thoughts were to go for the 90+ and I got busy planning the most direct, and therefore road, route possible. I immediately realised a massive problem – I don’t enjoy road running and couldn’t think of anything worse than spending 24 hours alone on a busy highway. So, my route had to be predominantly off road. Tea, cookies and my Dad’s OS maps came out and I started planning afresh.

I picked out a route from Waseley Hills (South Birmingham) that followed the Monarch’s Way, cutting through urban Smethwick to join the Rushall Canal to Chasewater. From there I would head along the Heart of England Way, through Cannock Chase, to join the Staffordshire Way from Rugeley to Thorpe. Then a night-time jaunt up the Tissington Trail (disused railway) to join the Limestone Way to Hope. The route would total about 85 miles (66.7 as the crow flies) with 1917m ascent. It would only qualify for the Gold Award but the terrain would be trickier and I could always add to it



later. Mapping and navigation was not one of my strengths so I felt very pleased with myself and got my brother Alan to create a GPX file of the route.

Luckily, I had a week off work coming up and decided to recce the entire route by either running or cycling 14ish miles each day and stopping in youth hostels overnight. Having never holidayed alone before this was an adventure in itself. This proved to be invaluable to my Convergence race.

On each day's recce, I discovered numerous problems that had to be solved. Field after field of unrunnable buttercup meadows, sections of path with nettles up to my ears, moved stiles and ploughed fields. Over the week, I encountered so many herds of cows that either stood blocking the stile I needed to climb or chased me that I began to develop a phobia. On entering a field, the mere sight of a wet cowpat would have me, heart racing, shaking and starting to sweat.

Each evening I nipped, tucked or completely abandoned and re-planned sections until I had my final GPX route mapped

out. With race day a week away, I marked in the checkpoints where my partner Paul would meet me with a car boot full of supplies. To ensure safety as a solo female runner, these checkpoints were approximately every five-seven miles. As a precaution, I would carry strips of fabric that I could tie to a post in case we missed each other. That way Paul would know that I'd passed through safely and move on to the next meeting point rather than worryingly start searching for me. Through guesswork, recce data and rough predictions, I estimated my finish time to be 8.00am Sunday.

Race day arrived in glorious 20 degree sunshine. I felt excited and confident that I had controlled as many variables as possible to give me the best shot at completing the challenge. On top of Waseley Hills viewpoint at 12 noon, I switched my tracker on and was incredibly honoured to be joined by a group of local running ladies who gave me a grand send-off running the first mile with me.

After the first four mile off-road section (the Monarch's Way), I made my way through the hilly urban area of Smethwick, Birmingham. Unfortunate but necessary road miles to take me to the No. 5 national cycle path and the Rushall Canal. Now I could relax, 13 sweltering miles of canal, with 80's disco on my iPod for company. I greeted passing runners and cyclists thinking how bizarre it was that I was running to the Peak District. Timewise I was on track and Paul was expertly topping



Race Report



up my snacks and refilling my 500ml bottle hourly with Tailwind thus minimising the weight I was carrying.

After Chasewater, 3.5 road miles took me to the Castle Ring at Cannock Chase. At 5pm the woods provided a much welcome change of scenery and shade. Thoroughly enjoying myself I approached Rugeley where a small girl came flying down the hill and fell off her scooter right in front of me. Screaming loudly, (her not me) I checked she wasn't badly hurt (Just a few grazes) and walked her to her Nanny's house.

Leaving Rugeley at 6pm on a small section of canal, I plodded on joining the Staffordshire Way at Colton village. Meeting Paul at 7pm at Abbots Bromley I changed into trail shoes and started using caffeinated Tailwind to keep my energy levels topped up. During my route reces the Staffordshire had proven to be a most problematic path due to knee high meadows, nettles, midges and COWS! But as a seasoned trail

runner, I knew with a bit of grit and determination I could do this (I needed to "man-up" basically!).

I was delighted to discover that some of the grassy meadows had been baled and the cows were unusually docile. Reaching Uttoxter at 9pm, I grabbed my headtorch and put on full body cover for a particularly evil section of head-high nettled and brambled path. With my arms covering my face I felt invincible and powered on through. Not invincible enough though to brave the nine fields of cows I knew there would be between Ellastone and Thorpe! I therefore, at 11pm, decided to leave the Staffordshire Way, change into road shoes and Hi-Vis, and run 5.5 country lane miles to join the Tissington Trail at Ashbourne.

For safety on the lanes, Paul patiently drove alongside me to prevent me being mown down by unsuspecting late night vehicles. This was great as it was an opportunity for a proper chat through the car window rather than the three minute pit stops that

had been happening throughout the day. Paul told me tales of other Convergers he had spotted and helped throughout the day.

I had planned to run the 15 mile Tissington Trail through the night as it's hard-packed trail and impossible to get lost. Arriving at midnight, I was bang on time and feeling fantastic. After a delicious pot of cold baked beans, Paul ran the initial 100m tunnel with me for safety reasons, then I was off.

I'm always slightly nervous before running alone in the dark but I needn't have been. Apart from the occasional flapping of birds in trees all was calm and serene. I did ponder though on the possibility of a crazed axe-murderer tracking me on Racedrone and knowing exactly how fast I was moving up the Trail. This sparked a suggestion to Richard at the finish that runners be listed by first name initial and surname only to prevent solo females being identified and targeted.

After touching base with Paul at Alsop Carpark, I caught up with Lucinda and Matt who had planned to walk the trail through the night. I joined them and chatted for a while but I became too cold and decided to run on alone to warm up. When I stopped at Hartington, to put on extra clothes and grab an egg sandwich, Lucinda and Matt passed me but I soon caught them up again. It's worth noting that the public toilets at Tissington and Parsley Hay are open all night which were very welcome after 13 hours of bushes

and great for a warm up!

Reaching, the end of the trail in misty Hurdlow at 4.15am, I felt cold, damp and knew I needed to keep moving. Swapping back to trail shoes, I left my head torches, grabbed some food and joined the Limestone Way for the final 14 miles. Easy to navigate and beautiful scenery ahead of me, my spirits were high. Humming “Oh, what a beautiful morning...” watching the sunrise over Flagg was a delight to be cherished forever!

My right knee (the supposedly good one!) started to complain but only on rocky downhill. Uphill and flats were pain free and even grassy downs were fine. I was frustrated at having to walk the adrenalin boosting technical descents I'd been looking forward to. Reaching Miller's Dale at 5.45am (76 miles run) I was starting to feel a little tired so picked up some oranges, Cliff Shotblocks, my first “not-real-food” of the race and a cool patch for my knee. Still wearing my jacket meant that I was alternating between being too hot in the sun and just-right in the mist, so I opted for a vest and gloves to continue.



The steep rise out of Millers Dale, was challenging but fun. Approaching Peak Forest I met three runners sat by the side of the A623 - Simon, Simon and lady whose name (not Simon) I forget. Their visible flesh was completely covered in bramble scratches and nettles stings from the overgrown Staffordshire Way path leaving Uttoxeter. I immediately felt grateful I'd recce-d the route beforehand and covered myself up but terribly guilty not to have flagged it up on the Facebook page to warn people.

Leaving, Peak Forest at 7am, I now felt euphoric, my favourite four mile section, over Old Moor and down into ankle-breaking Cavedale, was ahead of me and I was on track for my predicted 8am finish. Paul met me halfway down Cavedale for photos then took my racepack so I could sprint (Ha Ha!) the final road mile from Castleton to Hope with just the tracker in my hand. Arriving full of smiles at 8.01am, I proudly crossed the finish line and was immediately greeted by Richard with my well-

earned Gold Medal Award and a shiny Female Solo distance Winner plate. Other podium awards went to James Beechley “Male Solo Winner” 95.7 crow miles (112 mile distance travelled) 1661m ascent, Ricky and James – “1st Pair Winners” at 61.2 crow miles (2140m ascent) and Riccardo Giussani won the “Hillary Tenzing Ascent Award” with an impressive 4804 m over 32 crow miles.

So how did this Ultra compare to others? Convergence for me has been an amazing journey of self-growth. I had been out of my comfort zone right from the route planning stage, through navigating lonesome recces and prepping race day logistics. Immensely proud of my achievement, I now have the confidence to take on other navigational challenges and feel the thrill of a newly purchased OS map! Would I do it again? – Definitely! I know I could travel further and if I was able to find an enjoyable off-road route I might be persuaded to take a shot at the Black next year...

■UW■

Running the Mind

Emma Hottinger

05:45, feeling exhausted, I've overslept. I had spent six hours on the delightful Arriva Wales train service the day before, and I felt a twitchy stream of adrenaline for adventure. The start was on the beach in Dale, South West Pembrokeshire, I couldn't have asked for a more glorious morning, life was smiling on me. "Does anybody have any questions? Okay, GO!" – Race Director (Joe Simmons) the Pembrokeshire 100 mile race.

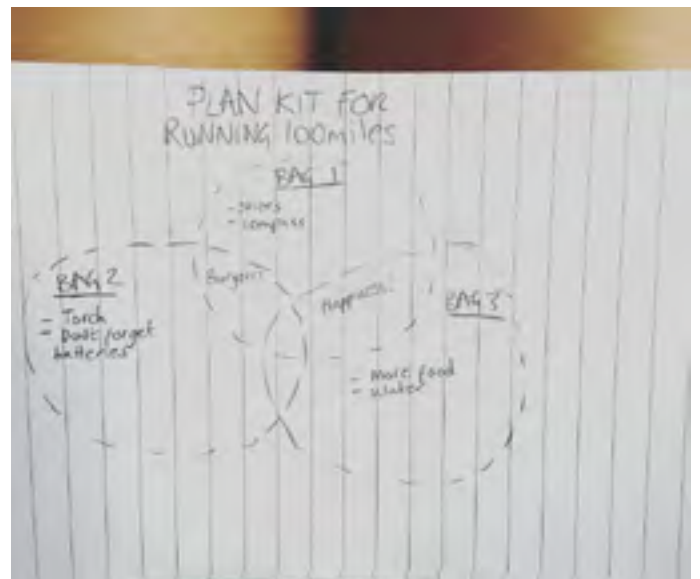


No one is ever ready for a 100 miler, it doesn't matter how much you physically train, or mentally prepare. I was ambivalent, weighing up which elements were vital in my planning, however I never really committed to a defined training plan.

During the first 12 miles a Welsh woman walking

on the same coastal path as my race, gave me some armchair expert advice "The first 50 miles are the hardest and the rest is in the mind".

About a month or two before the race I got "race fever". I have decided that this is a medical condition, I caught a viral infection along with a hit to my mental determination. I woke up in sweats thinking about joining the navy, and then even applied to the Royal marines in search of mental discipline, luckily I never signed anything. I allowed my reckless attitude to weigh out all possibilities, as I felt like I had to prepare for war. Race fever gave me tunnel vision of how to get psyched, as, let's face it, your body basically eats itself while running an ultra.



During the first 30 miles my mind was quiet and my feet felt comfortable (even though I had a black toe). Three weeks before I had completed the Pendine Sands ultra, this race had a seven mile beach section which was the site where early land speed world records were broken. Running on the sand was horrific and I was not breaking any speed records. I feel exposing myself to this extreme

environment helped me build up cardiovascular power endurance and psychological tolerance from boredom. I even ran without my glasses as going blind helped me with high intensity training.

16:00, to my horror at checkpoint 4 I was told that I hadn't made the checkpoint cut-off, what!?! The volunteers were short staffed and had to reach other checkpoints for faster participants. They shuffled me into a van to wait for the race organiser, for a decision about my continuation of the race. I felt completely deflated. This was my first 100 miler and the night before I thought I best check the race category on runultra.com, "Brutal". I started questioning my ability to complete the race only when other people doubted me. Another more experienced runner, Tim, who came in behind me refused to stop, he explained his pacing, reiterated that there were no checkpoint cut-offs and continued on the course. I had been getting mixed advice from the volunteers and was fuming. Suddenly another runner came through, Ray – the ultra legend – who runs ultras every other week. I then felt comfortable to continue following in their footsteps together they gave me the reassurance to carry on.

"Passionate people don't wear their passion on their sleeves; they have it in their hearts"

How Google Works - Erick Schmidt & Jonathan Rosenberg 2014

Don't you just hate it when people ask your minute miles? In the course of running competitively for two years, I have tested and redefined what environments make me feel humble. Fell running was a clear path for me to take because I am a rock climber and revel in nature. Road running didn't give me the same feeling of calmness. On a flat surface there is no fight against gravity and minute miles can be more precisely measured. I feel these kind of statistics become meaningless in the ultrarunning world because of the undulating mountains, and I am not built like a cheetah.

23:30, I reached the 50 mile point, the furthest that

I had ever run continuously. I sat down shivering, was given some soup and a coffee at which point I got out my "Venn diagram of success", and saw the second intersection said "Happiness?".

Night running, I bloody loved it. In my barely conscious state I lead a pack of five men trailing through the moonlight. I hadn't done any previous running at night, and I remember telling my housemate a week before how scared I was about running through Sefton Park in Liverpool. So I guess you could say I was feeling pretty out of practice. My assumptions about running at night time were, it was the time of day that made me nervous, but I've come to the conclusion it was more the positive or negative energies of people around me.



07:00, there was a noticeable tipping point in runners dropping out, between 50-65 miles. This coastal path faced a point called Stumble Head. I like to call it stumble or dead. I felt intoxicated, withered, and was trying to fight sleep deprivation. The sunrise felt like it was lasting forever in this moment of solitude.

75 miles, second drop bag at Fishguard in North Pembrokeshire, couldn't wait to put clean clothes on, I felt that the cleanliness lifted my mood and got to wear my Penny Lane Striders top.

The bag drops are the place that you can bring

Race Report

personal things to the race that make you feel good. The Venn diagram helped recharge my mental state, a fresh pair of pants had the same feeling as a new day. The intersections allowed me to identify what was important to bring, I failed because I didn't bring any fresh batteries.

"I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude"

Henry David Thoreau

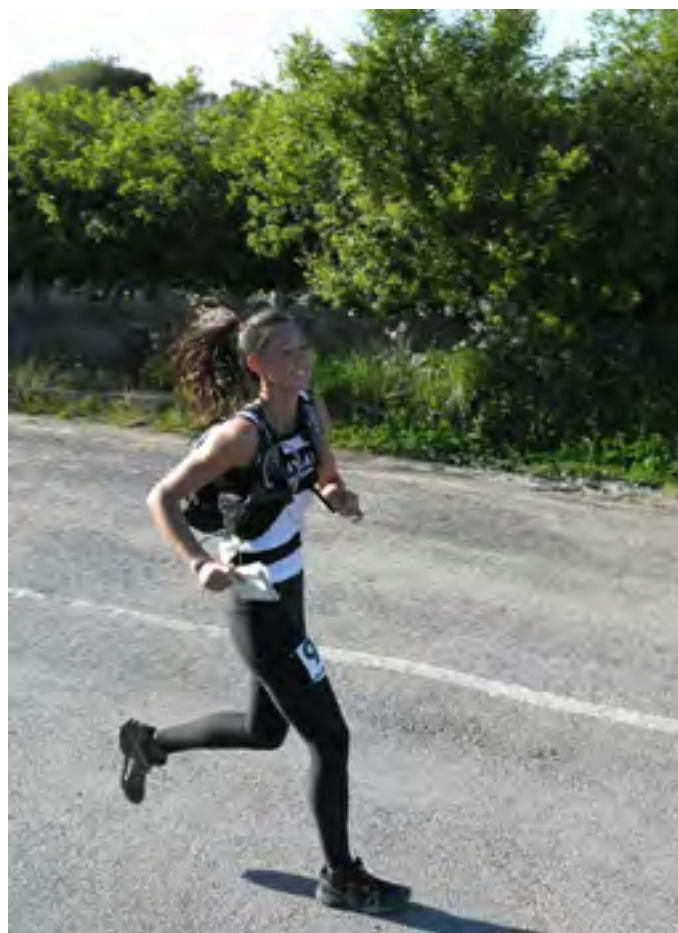
I knew my Dad and Sue would come support me on the second day but had no idea where they would be, since I was not contactable. During the race I had been disconnected from society (apart from running with a tracker). There was no compulsion to use the layer of technology, that I feel we succumb to in our daily lives, to not feel alone. By surprise at around mile 86 Sue's head popped over the cliff and these huge arms fanned out, I completely broke down. I heard Sue say "You know you can stop if you want", "Are you actually kidding!" I retorted. Sue grinned as I sprinted away from her.

At 89 miles, the sun beamed on my dry skin. I noticed my pace increased, as I started to sweat and grit my teeth, just to push my body up the last mountain cliff paths. It was the fastest running that I had done throughout the whole race, and I had no idea where the energy was coming from (I suspect the two hot dogs that I had at 5 am). The previous day I had been eating every 15-30mins regardless of if I was hungry. There is a hypothesis, called central governing theory which states, in long distance races an athlete increases their acceleration in the final stages with this idea of a finishing kick. During this mad burst of resourceful energy I had a few hallucinations. I saw an old farmer waiting at a gate encouraging

me onwards, but when I reached the gate there was no gate, only two gateposts and the farmer had dissipated. I realised that I must have been hallucinating as there wasn't a second observer to confirm my reality was real, at which point I sped up and dusted my thoughts off.

The quality of our belief in our selves is measured in these events. As a chemist who makes colour for a living, there was always going to be light at the end of my tunnel.

19:00, mile 99, happy and a bit of an anti-climax.



All Photos courtesy Fred Hottinger except Sue Hottinger (last image)

■UW■

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Chester Ultra 50

Author: Sally Ford, Photo: courtesy Epic Events



I ran the inaugural Chester Ultra 50 last year under blue skies and sat at the finish sunbathing in shorts and t-shirt. It was pretty obvious this year would be different the week before the race, when most places were under a blanket of snow. On the morning of the race, the 3am alarm call was accompanied by the sound of rain hammering on the roof and as we drove to the start there was a lot of flooding on the road. It was going to be muddy!!

After registration kit check and a briefing in Waverton village hall, we set off at 6am. The light was just starting to appear and my headtorch soon became redundant but within the first couple of miles we were ankle deep in mud and splashing and though large puddles. It had stopped raining though!

The first half of the course is fairly flat, country lanes and surfaced canals, and much of it runnable at a decent pace. There were some riverside sections which were hard going as you just

sunk into the mud and tried to avoid sliding into the river. Not only does the mud make it a slower race but the risk of blisters increases significantly whilst running in wet shoes. You couldn't avoid getting wet but I tried my best to skirt round the bigger puddles.

Up to the second checkpoint I was level pegging with another woman but as we skirted Chester racecourse I started picking up the pace on the tarmac canal path and pulled away from the rest of the pack. I'm not a fan of canal running but it was a welcome break from the boggy riverside. By now we were well spread out. Whilst being near the front of the field is the aim, it can make for a lonely race and there's the added pressure of making sure you go the right way. Fortunately this race was really well marked and I only looked at the gps route for reassurance a few times.

Checkpoint 3 was nearly halfway and in a village hall at Dunham Hill. The checkpoints were all well stocked and manned by a lovely bunch of volunteers offering to help fill bottles and giving words of encouragement. I grabbed a banana (which I can't stand when I'm not running, but is just right during a race like this) and kept on going. By now there were glimmers of sun and it was starting to warm up.

The second half was a little more lumpy. Some big hills came not long after the checkpoint - first Helsby Hill and then Fordsham Hill and Woodhouse Hill, and then up into and through Delamere Forest. The sun was shining by now and we were treated to some great views from the hill tops. Delamere is my favourite bit of this race. Lots of runnable trails that

weave through pretty woodland. Then came a string of muddy fields to get through, with lots of thick, clay like mud making traction difficult and lots of mud sticking to my shoes. I felt at times as if I was wearing lead boots. Running through it really tested my fitness but I think sheer stubbornness prevented me from walking. Ultra running is 50% fitness and 50% mental determination but the mud definitely tested both. I think I was at a bit of an advantage being near the front - I can only imagine what it was like after 200 pairs of feet had been through here!

After checkpoint 6 the route took us back onto a canal again for 5 miles or so to the finish back at Waverton which again was welcome after the muddy fields. I know many struggled later on with this section as the mud got churned up, and it rained heavily later on, but it wasn't too bad when I was there. The route is actually nearer 52 miles. Why do those extra miles feel like the longest?

As I crossed the finish line I was told I'd knocked 21 minutes off my own winning time from last year. Not sure how I managed that but I was more than happy to finish first lady and fifth overall in just over 8 hours.

Wayne and the team at GB ultras have created just what the north of England needed. A fantastic set of ultra races covering some of the northwest's finest trails. But more than that a wonderful community of runners and volunteers making this race perfect for experienced ultra runners, there's a great PB potential in the right conditions, and first time ultra runners looking for the next step up from a marathon. ■UW■



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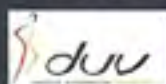
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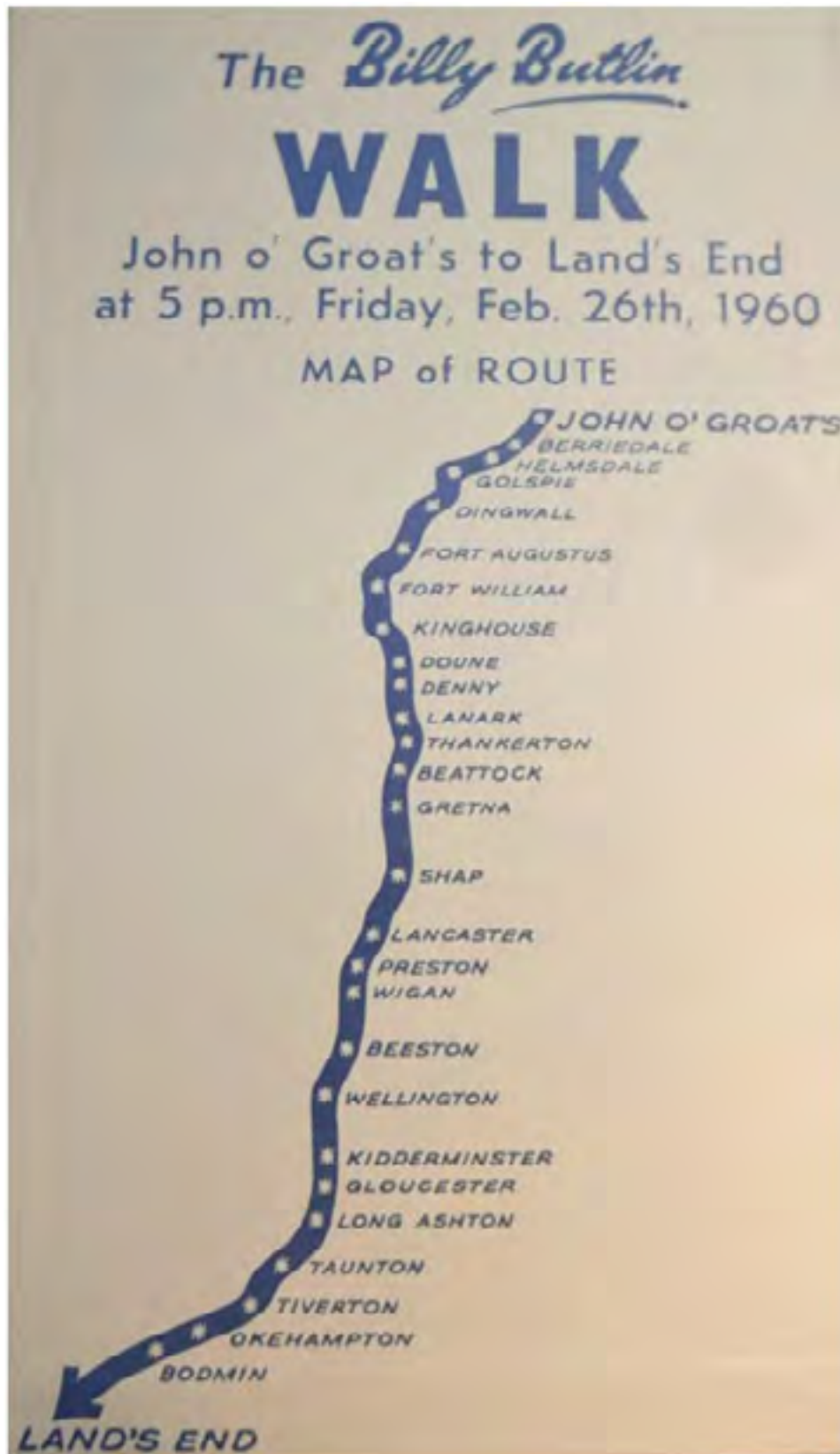
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STAN JEWELL'S - 1960 JOGLE

Part 2

Beaulieu to Somerset

Wednesday was a day and night full incident. A man in Beaulieu on the outskirts of town came up to me, "Hello son, going far today?", "Hopefully" I replied, "It's a hard road in front of you, the Struy is a tough mountain road with little shelter in good weather". My map - I had not referred to it for a long time, "Thank you sir, I will be aware" Daylight was fading. Cracking on, he was perfectly correct, the Struy was formidable, especially in darkness. The quietness was total. All alone I had a good night's work. On summit of Struy the lights of Beaulieu behind, Drumnadrochit in front on the North end of Loch Ness, were vivid in cold frosty night air. Still in good shape I headed towards Loch Ness, again in solitude. I wondered why so few participants were encountered on the route down the North shore of Loch Ness. The West side of the "B" road skirted the Loch all the way to Fort Augustus. Still happy and moving along but getting tired after a good but long day and night. Milton village had a





THE GREAT GLEN



timber bus shelter, my next rest. Inside I quickly nodded off to sleep. Six hours later back on the Lochside road. The early morning was bitter cold, frosty and ice on the road, making for treacherous travelling conditions. Before I had shaken stiffness off and struggling a bit, a tall figure came beside me, “OK number 7” spoken in an authoritative manner. “Good morning to you”, I replied. He conversed with me in his haughty accent. I was at unease with his superior manner. Keeping it together

with him was proving difficult. He provided me with his credentials, he was a Lord’s son. Regular updates on his progress were relayed daily in local/national newspapers. He enquired about my standing in life, telling him I was a miner in Northern coalfields. After a brief pause, he hit me with a rather rude challenge. Invermoriston Castle on the way to Fort Augustus, was a breakfast and rest stop, a full 12 miles away. “OK earthworm, I will have you a wager, the last one to Invermoriston buys breakfast”. Hurt by his

reference to miners, I foolishly accepted his bet. Still a little stiff from my extended sleep, I soon lagged behind his long ramrod stride. On and on further and further he got away. I was in trouble, I could hardly run, the icy roads preventing me. I said to myself “*that’s it, you have blown a hole in your budget.* Whatever was I thinking taking him on?” I continued to push on with no sign. A thaw allowed me to run. Coming to the first sign of the Castle, appearing on the side of road was the Lord’s

son down on the frosty grass verge. “*My word*”, I did not say, or enquire about anything, just took heart and ran on. The Invermoriston white signpost was reached. I waited patiently for his Lordship, no show.

I carried on, and to my surprise I was in big trouble. Aching and cold then sweating caused discomfort big style. First hotel was the Inchnadarroch before Fort Augustus. A grand hotel, normally I would have gone by and dismissed, its facilities being too expensive.



Circumstances were dire I was in need of shelter and rapid. Entering the hotel, breakfast was in full swing. Stares aplenty by guests and staff. A table was offered to me by waitress staff. I sat down at the table with starched white linen tablecloth, full silver service and with top class china. “Breakfast sir?”, “Yes please”. The room was beautiful, but I needed rest as well as food. Putting my hands on the table, I put my head down on my hands and crashed out. Twelve hours later I woke up in a bedroom of the hotel. First

reaction, I was soaked wet through. The covers, sheets were wet through, had I weed in the bed? No! It was something more serious. A man and a lady came into my room. I was most apologetic, “*How do you feel son?*” I got out of bed slowly. My legs were weak. “Sore” I replied. I informed them of my five-day history. The man told me it was mild hypothermia. Extremely bad considering the temperatures I had endured without any warm lengthy sleep. A maid came, cleaned the bed, putting fresh linen on, “*Now go back to sleep*

for a little while and let us know when you are ready”. The maid made me a hot toddy, with plenty of sugar in it. I drank and slept.

After two hours, I wandered downstairs, in a peculiar state of mind. “Sit down”, a maid said, “*would you like some hot tea*”, “Yes please”, “*and food*”, she said, “OK thanks, yes I would, I would like that very much”. I cleared my meal and drank my tea, now came the crunch. I had stayed around 16 hours, in a high-class hotel, although it was very necessary. Going to

reception my throat was dry. Asking for a drink of water, the man who saw me in the bedroom, looked me over, “*Sure you are up to leaving?*” “Yes sir”. At the desk I requested to pay the bill. Imagining an earth shattering moment, the receptionist said “*Would eight shillings be OK for you sir*”. “Indeed, it would”, I replied, thanking all the staff for their kindness.

Resuming the walk was strange. My body was sore, my legs were weak. Five days efforts saw me in the top 20 but wide open to the

worst elements Northern Scotland had endured. Encountering the second checkpoint at Laggan, another random post set up, my documents were scrutinised. Over 400 retired, 100 disqualified, I was down in the 60's after my enforced rest. Struggling on, another 17 miles covered, hungry, very tired and concerned. The sixth day was my worst by far but grateful I was still continuing. Through Fort William, with Ben Nevis obscured with winter cloud, I enjoyed some good company on the road. It seemed lower down the field people were more relaxed although many had back-up. On the topic of back-up, none of the promised aid stations had I seen at all.

The scenery was brilliant, seals in Loch Leven, buzzards on the overhead telephone lines, deer in the forests. Passing the Corran Ferry, I was feeling better, pressing on towards Onich and finally Kinlochleven village. Whilst resting on the road bridge, a lady asked me if I was staying anywhere that night, "No", I replied, "No arrangements?"



Come along". I followed her to what seemed to be council houses in a smaller style. Turned out they were houses to rent for the aluminium workers at the nearby plant. A large black bungalow range fire was most welcome, sitting beside it on a small wooden chair I soon dozed off for around four hours. Awakened by happy voices of young ladies preparing for the monthly dance in the village. "Want to come Laddie?", they invited me. I was tempted, reminding of days with friends at home at local dance halls. "Thank you very much for your invitation, I must carry on". "OK", they all said,

"we will walk away with you, the dance is on the roadside". Surrounded by young ladies, we chatter along the road. Noticing most of them wore scarves and gloves to their elbows, I enquired about the fashion. At the factory most employees suffer from boils. Scarves and gloves hide them from view, "It's something we have to suffer to get a regular pay day". With that, with music blazing out, they said goodbye and went to the dance.

Lonely on the road to Glen Coe, my mind thought about the boils on the attractive young girls, what a shame but miners risked hazards as well. I felt close

to the workforce of Kinlochleven. Coming into Glen Coe alone in the darkness was scary, after stories circulated about the place. We had now completed our first major detour. From Inverness-shire to Argyll and Bute, from East to West. Mist came, followed by the first heavy rainfall. Rannoch Moor in front of me, a desolate, isolated place stretching out to Bridge of Orchy. Only broken by Kingshouse Hotel, an ancient hostelry on the side of Rannoch Moor, frequented by tourists. Again, I experienced total solitude, vehicles on the road were nearly non-existent. I was moving better, and

Race Report

pushed on. Suddenly music was heard on the moor, coming from in front of me. I hurried towards it. Five Scottish men were belting out marching tunes of quality. *"Good evening to you, I appreciated your singing back there"*, *"OK Laddie, on the 1000 miles are you"*, *"Yes I am"*, *"Well we are going to Kingshouse for a do, walk with us till we get there"*. Inspiring to hear music on the wild Rannoch Moor. A rather pleasant few hours covered. *"Goodbye laddie"*, and they belted out *"Keep right on till the end of the road"*, as they walked down to the castle type hotel.

Once again alone, I pushed on, until a middle-aged lady appeared in front of me. *"Hello"*, I greeted her, *"Soon is daylight"*. No answer. Together we matched each other stride for stride. No conversation until the rain became heavy again. A load of bad language was spoken by her. Then nothing, there was total silence. Bridge of Orchy reached, she completely disappeared into a small croft. All types, all sorts, on this venture. Outside Orchy a group of people



milled around. Gus held a random checkpoint. Documents checked, and information passed on. Around 450 left in the race out of 1,300 starters. I was in 42nd position, with a big group just in front of me, from the Midlands/Birmingham area. A postbox nearby, so I posted cards for home. A man asked me of my correspondence. Told him of my purpose. *"Very nice, very nice"*, he repeated. Much more company now on the road to Tyndrum. A railway station splits towards Oban, on the High platform, on Lower platform to Fort William. Arriving at Tyndrum, food, drink and rest in local tea rooms, were very welcome. Despite the long slog over Rannoch Moor, well

over a week had gone by and apart from my bad spell at Fort Augustus, I remained in good shape. Sleep and hunger always taking priority. I had learned to get by on four to six hours sleep, when the opportunity arose to get it. One meal a day was sufficient, usually early morning, or late evening, when available. Now arriving in the Central Highlands, more choices were available to participants on the road. Downside was more traffic encountered.

In March 1960, cars were plentiful especially day trippers at the weekend. Crainlarich, Strathyre, Callander, all pretty villages with rivers, lochs, forests, mountains, and the

whisky distilleries, a mecca for Glasgow/Edinburgh tourists. Just before Strathyre on the roadside, beside the loch, a family on a picnic. Their transport was a wonderful Rolls Royce, with mahogany interior and plush white seating, complete with beautiful tent and awning. They invited me to share their drink and food. The children, all girls, required my autograph, which I duly signed. The man and lady of course questioned me on my journey. He was a doctor, she was a nurse. When I mentioned the bad incident, I had endured early on, after 5 days, both conversed together for a while, then the doctor said, *"Yes son, hypothermia, you were lucky indeed to recover*

so quickly. I am amazed you covered 17 miles the day after”, the lady then said, “Indeed son, you must not let that happen again, absolutely not”. Children were convinced I was the youngest on the road and photographs were taken, I could not disappoint them, not knowing that a younger RAF cadet was well behind me. Reaching Callander I met up with a Geordie from Ashington, Northumberland.

A fine young man in his late 20's, he too was well up until blisters and ankle problems hampered his progress. Heavy built around 13 stone with a jovial attitude to everything no matter what. He was great company, his manners were top notch as we travelled together for three days or so, down into the industrial towns of Airdrie and on to Lanark, easy to sleep places and plenty of choice to eat. All free mostly courtesy of bus shelters, farms and interested people paying our bills. Geordie would display enormous charm, when discovering his bill had been paid. A mannerism of great technique, but totally



off the cuff, not planned nor arranged. I enquired what his employment was. He was a riveter in shipbuilding, quite a surprise with manners and popularity he controlled in abundance. He confided in me, strict Methodist parents gave him values as a child, although he rebelled against them he never forgot their honesty and well-being to all matters.

Down into the Northern towns of Southern Scotland, Biggar, Kelso, Peebles. Geordie's problems returned with a vengeance. Swollen ankles and large blisters forced him to retire. I was so sad to lose such a good companion. I wished him well and carried on. Again,

solitude but in a very different environment. Villages were more readily convenient, although areas spoiled by increased traffic. I pressed onwards. A vehicle drew up beside me. Gus Britton, asked to see my documents. What a surprise. After stamping, he warned me of Beattock ahead. *“Tough hill, heavy traffic, many lorries, keep to the grass footpath if possible, you are now 37th place with 400 left on the road. We are still eliminating people for lifting, our monitoring skills have improved immensely since the start, see you later, bye”.*

Gratified by the knowledge of what lay ahead, I ran and jogged,

most of the way to make up time I would lose over Beattock. Slowly but surely traffic built up, lorries sounded their horns, cars pumped. I remained on the grass verge, treading warily. Progress was slow and tedious but I had to be patient and tolerate the circumstances. For ages it went on, I did not want to be in the dark which was not far off. I tried desperately to quicken my efforts. My legs and feet upset by walking on the unfamiliar terrain. A wider traffic footpath gave a chance to jog a little alongside the traffic. Soon thankfully it was over and I could relax from the uncomfortable hill and grass verge.

Lockerbie, Abington,

Race Report

Crawfordbooth, Ecclefechan, Kirkpatrick Fleming, before motorways the “A” road supplied a through route. Easy to navigate, back to a rhythm of run, jog, walk, eat, drink and sleep. I arrived at a Little Chef in Kirkpatrick Fleming. Around 10 End to Enders were sat down in the café, debating loudly about the distinct lack of aid stations available to them. The meeting became rather heated and the staff were concerned for other patrons. Going to the counter to order a light meal and tea, lady spotted my number 7. “*You are not with them I hope*” she enquired, “*Certainly not*”, I said. I could not be dragged into the debate. I sat down with my meal listening to their complaints. Other people, tourists, lorry drivers, were taking notice of them. Staff were visibly uncomfortable. I maintained composure until the mention of aid stations, frequented by most of them, were not adequate. I stood up pronouncing my number 7. “*Nearly, 500 miles covered and not one aid station have I visited. You seem to be more in touch with the*

rules than me, but please make your voices heard somewhere else, not in a public place for everyone to hear your valid, or invalid complaints”. Just as I finished the made-up speech, Gus Britton and his companion walked in right on cue. I said goodbye to them on my way out. The room was silent.

Out on the road heading for the border with England, through Gretna Green, mecca for elopers for weddings, I realised I had almost covered Scotland and reminisced about my time travelling to and down, it gave me great experiences, good and bad but all worthwhile. On I went “Haste Ye Back”, the large sign said and further on “Welcome to England”. Longtown first and the Metal Bridge Inn close to the river passing by. I continued to Carlisle city with its Castle and Cathedral. Many hotels all in a small area tempted me to stay as a bonus for covering Scotland, my finance could stand it, I had been shrewd. However, I declined. Instead I charged on through Northern Cumberland, not Cumbria, a level route overnight to

Penrith. Morning was wet with grey skies and poor visibility. I scoured the road for a shelter. A greasy spoon was ideal, packed with lorry drivers on the Scotland/England trunk runs. Requesting a fry-up and large tea I sat down near a warm Calor gas fire, situated near the outside door. Questions soon came thick and fast, “*Half-way son, will you make it?*”, or “*How far today?*”, or “*Where have you come from?*”. Doing my best to answer them, my tea and meal rescued me. Again, in no time my meal had gone washed down with a good brew. My appetite was “tip top”, no waste, or picking. I stayed for a while, rain was pelting down outside. A driver requested a seat at my table “*Certainly sir, go ahead*”, He stuffed his large portly frame into the seat, “*Bad weather son, bad forecast for week*”. Very comforting I thought but he was only stating the obvious. I started to write postcards home from South of Scotland Counties and Cumbria. How many I did not count, but quite a few. “*Keeping you busy, writing?*”, the driver said. “*A little time to catch up, being the rain is quite heavy*”. I glance

round the room, drivers were stood up queueing waiting for a table. I got up and motioned to one. He came over, said “*Thanks and good luck*”. Outside I buttoned up, securely fastened my laces and returned to the daily grind.

Pushing on, the rain swept roads covered me in road spray. Soon I was soaked. Horns hooted, cars pumped, I was alone again in harsh conditions. The Shap, Kendal and Lancaster I memorised from the map. A fairly tidy climb over Shap, followed by downhill to the market town of Kendal, on through Beeston and deer in the pasture fields to the City of Lancaster and the magnificent Skerton Bridge crossing the River Lune. Busy, busy was the city. I ploughed on through to a village outside Scorton to find a place to eat/drink and possibly dry my wet clothes. The small café was next door to a launderette. An elderly lady welcomed me in “*Look at the state of you, Oh! God, you are soaked to the skin*”. She let me borrow a large overcoat, which swamped me, “*Go in the spare room, lock the*



door, and give me your wet clothes". I returned dressed in the overcoat with a carrier bag of sodden clothing, "Jean will take them next door and dry them properly. I will fix you a meal and a warm drink." "I am very glad I called in here Madam". Joan said, "We will fix you ready to go, hope the weather gets better, awful lot of rain we have had". My meal and drink again were quickly devoured and followed by custard and apple pie. "Excellent Joan", I said. "Glad you enjoyed it son". Jean duly returned my dry warm clothes. Again, I used the

spare room to change. They felt so warm and comfortable, my newly dried clothes. Ah! But can't dwell, "How much" I asked, "Two shillings for the dryer" Joan said. "Many thanks Joan and Jean". I was away, still damp, but nothing like it was.

Garstang, Fulwood, Preston, Wigan on the horizon. Built up industrial areas with loads of history. The rain kept off and I was alone again, until I caught up with a Cockney Londoner. "Good day, better weather". He just

grunted "If you say so". He was a participant with a high number on his coat, which was wet through, along with all his clothing. He looked at least 50 years old, but an old 50 years old. His pace was laboured; his whole being did not look too good. Ah! Well not my fault. I carried on my way, left him labouring along, for how long I did not give much hope for. Preston city was choked with traffic and pretty hard to negotiate for a footsore pedestrian. Again, hoots and horns from motorists. I waved back occasionally to accept their noises.

On and on, industry after industry. Towards Wigan, buses, cars and lorries clogged up the main street. Then the main railway station and to the outskirts past rows and rows of Victorian terraces. I sat down on a wayside seat to release one of my trainers. My feet were sore and swollen. My bag had a remedy inside but before I could apply ointment, rain came down in a torrent. Quickly rubbing it in my foot I replaced the remedy in its bag, put my trainer back on and was off again looking for shelter. A motorist came up, "Get in son, out of the

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rain". I agreed, foot was very tender, and rain was quite heavy. "Where are you heading", he asked. "Warrington direction" I remarked. "Soon have you there" he remarked. "Oh! No", said I, "Oh no, let me out now, oh! no!, I cannot accept a lift at all". The driver was taken aback but said, "It's raining and you are having foot trouble". "Of no concern to you, open this door and I will be gone". Duly he let me out. I was more concerned if anyone saw me with my number 7 clearly on view. Getting out of the vehicle, thinking on my feet I wrote his car make and registration down just in case anything was reported. The rain had stopped, but I elected to carry on with a sore foot, intending to find the correct place to administer repairs to both feet at my leisure.

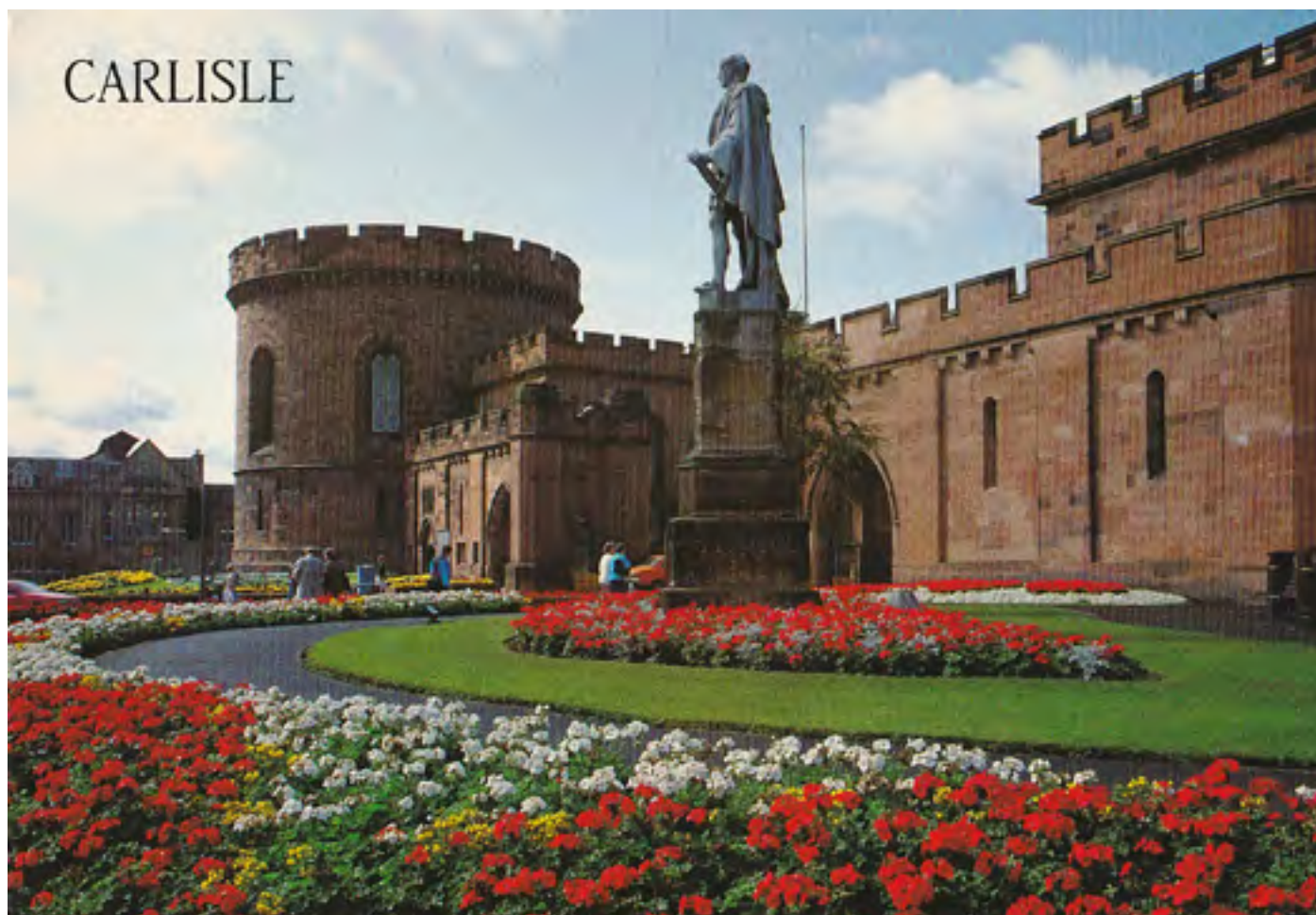
Short of Warrington, after quite a longer distance than I had planned, a Veterinary Surgery appeared. I enquired at the door "Could I come in and tend to my feet please", "Of course my man", a large red-faced man said, "Come in". Leading me to a room covered with photographs of animals.

I sat in a large comfy chair, opening my bag, "No need son, Lucy the nurse will sort you out, just relax". In her blue overall, Lucy, asked me what was troubling me. "Both feet nurse, giving me pain", "OK, let's have these trainers and socks off". Feet were indeed swollen, she massaged my lower ankles then feet, then applied warm water compress slowly rubbing ointment to my soles. The effect was soothing. Replacing the compress with hot ones felt good. Then applying ointment to toes and upper feet, finally removing compress and massaging both feet. She replaced socks and trainers, fastening laces securely, but not too tight, "Stand up", she said, "walk around the room, how do they feel", "Much better Lucy, thank you." "You are welcome number 7, excuse me, I have patients with four feet". I laughed, and waited for the large man to appear. Eventually he came "Still here son, everything OK?", "Yes sir, how much do I owe you", he laughed, "Did Lucy ask you for payment", "No sir", "Well neither do I." I skipped out of the surgery, waved to them and away on the road South.

Cheshire county was level, with trees, forests and lush pasture land. Northwich, Tarporley, Whitchurch next destinations. A soldier from Saltash Cornwall, joined forces with me. "Just had my cards checked" said Ernest. I panic, never saw the post at all, "Don't worry, probably get you further down the road. There is a purge on "lifters" at the moment, they think they are safe, but Gus is a wise bird and soon will have them", Ernest relayed that less than 300 were left on the road, somewhere on their uppers and do not expect more than 200 to finish. We were around the 70 placing. I lost heart a little, I was going down the order, but rain, foot attention and over staying my stays all added to loss of time. Ernest was easy to walk beside and general good company however he liked a drink or two at night, I soon found out. First night together, two pints of bitter he ordered in the first pub we came across, the landlord said "On the house". I told the amiable landlord could I have a warm orange juice instead. Ernest looked at me "My word son, looks like

we have some learning to do", the landlord winked at me and we sat down in a warm snug. Not long before he ordered again, "One pint of your good ale", "Not for me", I blurted out, "I am off now, good bye". Through Tarporley, onto Whitchurch, having minor foot problems once more, lower legs feeling heavy, swollen, I knew to neglect signs would be worse in days to come, but I was keen to keep going. A cottage hospital in the centre of Whitchurch seemed ideal to check my problem out.

Admitting to myself it was only a minor stop but it was the second time inside a week it had bothered me. An examination of both feet and lower legs was done. Doctor sat down with me "Well! Only a good rest will repair the damage", realising I would want to carry on, naturally, he prescribed anti-inflammatory tablets and strapping around the lower ankles. I agreed, but did not take the tablets. Strapping was applied and it felt as if the swelling had receded. "Take care son", said the Doctor, and I was away, heading for Shropshire



county. Hodnet, Wem, Wellington, tired, sore, hungry, my mental state was not good. Also, I was lower down than I had ever been; something had to be done to raise my spirits. I searched for a café. Having found a lovely small café, I went in and ordered the most I had eaten since leaving home. It felt good, I was warm, no hunger, no pain. What I needed now was rest. Moving on to Hodnet, a B&B advertised rooms. I went in took one look and retired to bed. It

was excellent. Eight hours of good sleep. My mind was clear, although my budget had taken a battering. Legs felt stronger, so away on the road, only to be able to walk and a little jog now and again but I was mobile. Through Wem, dark now, towards Wellington.

I was stopped at a random check point by Gus Britton's second in command. Showing my documents, I learned that less than 200 were still mobile, mostly down

to retirees. My position had dropped to 95, again my lowest placing since the start. Ah! Well I was still going, and able to continue. Gus Britton's friend looked at the listings "*Quite a few ahead around 30 minutes*", he informed me. Encouraged by this I attempted to jog/walk along to my next destination, Kidderminster, a large carpet manufacturing town. In the night the miles went by, but no End to Enders did I see. Through Kidderminster,

going into Worcester, nothing but solitude, not a soul. Mostly walking with occasional jog, but still unable to break into a run. The lower legs would not allow flexibility. Outside Worcester, food, drink and rest stop most gratefully provided by two smart suited businessmen on their travel duties. Requesting information on the 1000 miles walk. I obliged by giving a brief description of what I had experienced. "*Long way son, but you are heading*

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in the right direction, weather should be better, hopefully". Thanking them I resumed my journey nourished and rested.

Leaving Worcester behind, the long trek to Cheltenham in front of me, the day was fine. People waved, I grew stronger and began to run a mile or two then walk and jog. Until a pattern to which I used well early days came flooding back. Feeling good reaching Cheltenham, time for a quick brew and snack then onto Tewksbury via a lengthy detour. It was destroying. Traffic and footpaths were quite bad, roadworks, roadmen, machines, uneven roads of considerable distance. My whole body and mind ached from concentration on safety. Traffic was terrible, coming close up to me on disjointed made-up footpaths. Why on earth had they arranged this horrible section of route? It was a trial we did not need. Entering Tewksbury, a big surprise, I actually found my first and only aid station on the whole walk. Making the most of my luck, I requested what was on offer, a

three-course meal, soup, pizza and ice cream with a coffee, luxury indeed. Two volunteer ladies served me well. *"Not seen you before number 7"*, one of them said. *"No Mam and I have not seen any of your aid stations all the way down"*, I replied. She did not seem impressed by my reply, turning to her colleague to repeat what I just told her. *"Sorry if it offends you, but it is perfectly true"*.

The detour had upset my rhythm, my pattern of run/walk/jog had gone, walk was only just possible. Struggling on, I thought about the counties I had covered and how many there would be in front of me. Bristol seemed far, far away. But in small stages I persevered, passing Filton Airport and Bristol Zoo. Trudging along the busy city streets, alongside the docks, under the Avon Bridge, until the signs for Bridgewater appeared. Now in the West Country only Somerset, Devon and Cornwall stood in my way for completion. Outside Bridgewater I spotted a swimming baths. I enquired about an individual bath. *"OK*

son, we can do that", I sat down inside awaiting instruction *"OK son, this is your cubicle and your bath is next door and ready"*. Quickly I undressed and I jumped into the bath. Hot! It was hot but so invigorating I just lay there soaking, warm. Rubbing myself dry and dressing I felt good. On my way out *"Feel better son"*, *"Much"*, I replied. First wash in two weeks. Stepping outside I felt alert and ready. I tried a slow run, OK, a jog, OK, another run, fine. I was back on schedule. Happy, I made my way towards distant Taunton. The heavens opened mid-afternoon, rain, thunder, lightning, road awash. Soon I was drenched. Cars pulled up, *"Get in son out of the rain"*, meaning well no doubt, but I refused carrying on although tempted indeed. After a mile or so, my prayers were answered. An American style Motel had vacancies, inside I went. A young pleasant girl informed me of the cost of staying, adding she could not reduce the fee, although she herself would like to. It was expensive, very expensive. The rain battered down outside and I was wet, so wet.

"OK, Miss I will take a room". I was met by heat from switched on radiators. *"Thank you I will be fine now, give me four hours and I will be away"*. Clothes on the radiators all over the room to dry whilst resting in bed. I remember windows steaming up quickly from moisture drying wet clothes. Soon the four hours went by, a knock at the door, *"OK, if I come in"*, a girl's voice said, *"Yes, I am decent"*. She brought in a tray with tea, sandwiches, biscuits. *"Smashing thank you"*. *"Is it still raining"*, I enquired, *"Pouring it down"*, she said. Taking my time with my gorgeous meal, I felt my clothes, they were all dry. Ready for the off, awaiting rain to stop, I went to reception to cover the cost of bill. Her face was apologetic, *"So much sir"*, I felt a little distressed, I was now under £10 and had to get the train home, when finished. Outside the day had improved. I was on my way again.

Postcards courtesy of Andy at [Bygone Times](#) ■UW■



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Sharing my journey to Ultra-Running

Vixx Thompson



when I was playing team sports. Gradually I got bored of just doing my mini circuit and had noticed that some people would be on the treadmill for half an hour or more. I wondered how on earth they could stay on there for that long!

At some point, I decided that I would try running on the treadmill – and managed about 30 seconds. After I had walked a little bit, I was ready to try again. This persisted for a couple of months, by which time I had managed to run five minutes then 10 minutes consecutively. Suddenly

I've always been involved with sports and fitness, ever since school. I played many team sports and was always running around playing football or rounders and climbing trees when not at school.

Then I left education after finishing a degree in Sports Science and got a job. Although that job was quite a physical one, I didn't manage to do much in the way of fresh air and exercise for quite a while. I've often suffered with bouts of depression, and without realising I was suddenly in the middle of a visit from the Black Dog.

It was suggested by my dad that I go with him to the gym, to have something to do when I wasn't at work. I like cardiovascular stuff, so did mini-circuits using the rower, cross-trainer and exercise bike. I was only using the treadmill for some warm-up walking as I didn't really do much running except for sprints

I could manage 20, then 30 minutes. Over time, I was regularly managing about an hour. I was still on the treadmill but had read in magazines that if you wanted to replicate being outdoors, the best way was to have the treadmill on an incline of 1%, so I started to work through some of the programmes on the machine.

One day, I was on the treadmill, keeping a steady pace and every time I was getting ready to get off and do something else, someone would get onto the treadmill next to me and we would start chatting, so I would keep going. They would get off and be replaced by someone else. When I finally got off, I had done somewhere between 10 and 11 miles in just over two hours!

One of the Personal Trainers had noticed I'd been on a while, and suggested that I challenge myself and



run in a 10km race. I thought to myself, “I’ve just run 10 miles. I might as well go for a marathon!” (I didn’t know there were half-marathons back then...)

That was in 2002. Back then the only marathon I knew of was the London Marathon. You had to go to a sports shop and pick up a copy of Marathon News that had a copy of the entry form in it. It had to be filled out in black pen and accompanied by a cheque that would be cashed if you were lucky enough to get a place (although then, as now, you could bequeath your money to the London Marathon Charity if you wish).

I was informed a few months later that I was unsuccessful in my application for the 2003 event, but 12 months later (newly qualified as a Personal Trainer and Sports Massage Therapist) I got a different magazine through the door, giving me entry into the 2004 Flora London Marathon...

From there, I have done 27 marathons, which includes two 30 mile Ultras. I am working slowly back to full fitness after spending practically all of 2014 unable to run. It was discovered that my left kneecap had moved off-centre, and whilst the pain wasn’t excessive, it was enough to stop me running.

My line of work revolves around fitness, rehabilitation and nutrition - and I used every element that I was trained in to help myself get back to a point where I could run comfortably again. However, whilst I can do my own massage, it’s easier to have someone else to that, and so I roped in a friend who was also qualified, and he helped me to get the kneecap back to where it should be. I’d seen four other professionals who had all said it was most likely cartilage issues and yet I knew it wasn’t. Dave helped me get that sorted out, and then I moved onto completely rehabbing the knees. When I do rehab, I do the same exercises on both legs and muscle pairs to ensure that I am not over strengthening one at the expense of the other.

I also did a course with The Running School to learn their Dynamic Movement System and their Rehabbing for Long Term Injury course, which allowed me to mentally retrain my brain to help reduce the pain signals. After long term injury, the brain can often continue to send pain signals to the area, even though the injury has usually healed. This system has been designed to confuse the brain and allow these pain signals to stop – and it did help me significantly! It has been used in many Premier League and Championship football clubs, as well as helping people with MS and Parkinson’s Disease.

Everything I utilised on myself I now use with my clients. I have benefitted greatly from doing my own rehab, further developing my knowledge and using the qualifications and skills that I have learned along the way, so why not use those to help my clientele achieve their goals too? I am slowly getting back up to marathon distance again, and I have my eye on going to longer Ultra’s in the long term. I much prefer the trails to the roads and hills over flat surfaces. There are a number of Ultras that interest me, but I would like to build up to each one steadily – unlike my first marathon, which was my first ever race as an adult. Ultramarathons deserve respect and consideration, or you’ll possibly be found wanting at a critical time – and I don’t wish to put anyone else at risk due to a lack of preparation.

There are three official Ultra races that I would love to have a go at (and am working toward):

Glen Ogle 33

Jedburgh Three Peaks

West Highland Way.

There are many other longer distance races that I dream about, but my ideal ‘bucket list’ event would have to be a consideration of doing the Bob Graham Round, should I ever get a chance.

Until then, I shall continue to strengthen, train and prepare both myself and my clients so that we can all work towards our goals, whatever they may be!

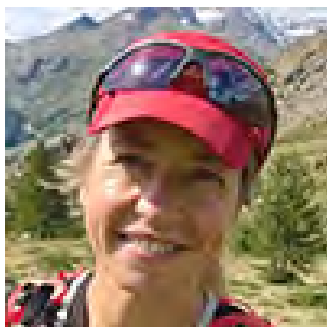
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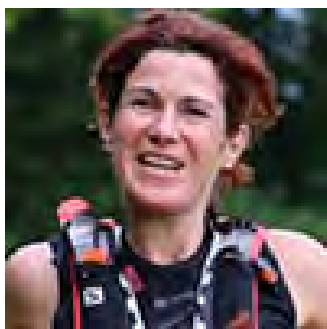
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Correspondents

CORRESPONDENTS



Maria Elisabetta Bellini is the founder of www.italyontrail.com a trail race calendar & magazine aimed at all who want to enjoy the trails in Italy. Originally from the UK, she lives and runs in Italy and has been working in sports promotion for over ten years.



Sarah Cameron is an ultra-running vegan who lives on a vineyard in the south of France with her husband, two children and far too many pets. She juggles family life with looking after said pets, making wine and indulging in her many hobbies, most of which involve either consuming things or attempting to burn them off. <http://cakewinerunning.blogspot.fr>

CONTRIBUTORS



Emma Marks is a sponsored athlete for GB Ultras and works for RunningBear, the running gear centre in Cheshire. Her first ultra was the Three Towers Ultra in 2016, an unmarked 35 mile race across Halcombe and Darwen moors by Howler Events finishing joint first and returning for the win in 2017. Emma is a coach at [Run Macclesfield](http://RunMacclesfield)



Mick Farrar is an ultra runner and blogger based in the southwest of UK. After 12 years in the forces and many more putting on weight he started running again in 2014 and finishing his first it's in 2016. I normally run around an ultra a month and actively encourage runners to push their boundaries.



Stan Jewell has been organising timed events since the late 1980's in the north of England continuing in recent years with the Foxton 24 hour in Preston, the [Chorley 6 hour at Astley Park](http://Chorley6houratAstleyPark) and most recently last month with the Liverpool Hope University 6 hour race as well as managing Junior and Senior cross-country events at Chorley Athletic and Triathlon Club.



Berit Jessen, 44. Ultrarunner by accident since 2012. Notorious for being a chatterbox during running, having no sense of direction whatsoever, and an annual charity run with a couple of thousand home-baked cakes. Ultimate goal is always to run with a positive mind and a smile. Loves food, combining ultrarunning and traveling, and has a split personality, all of whom are slightly crazy. Facebook running page (in Danish): <https://www.facebook.com/BeritsLobeskole/>



Sally Ford is a Pharmacist and Ultrarunner who won the Brathay Challenge 10in10 in 2012 and her time of 36:38:53 still stands. Sally came 1st in her age group at the Laugavegur Ultra in Iceland; won the Ultimate Trails 110km (for the 2nd year in a row); finished 2nd at the 185 mile King Offa's Dyke race in 2016. In May 2018 she won her age group and was second female at The South Downs Way Devil's Challenge.



Bob Hearn is an ultrarunner living in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has an academic background in computer science and AI, and has been a serial entrepreneur, most successfully with the Mac program ClarisWorks. Bob specializes in long road races, and holds five age-group American records, ranging from 200 km to 48-hour. Blog: <http://bobhearn.blogspot.com>



Emma Hottinger is a Chemist and Ultra runner who works with a Nanotechnology company, in the production of Cadmium Free Quantum Dots for technology. Emma is a qualified BMC climbing instructor and an active supporter of Greenpeace. She plans to attempt the Bob Graham Round this coming September.



Helen Pike is a Birmingham based runner who started Ultra running 5 years ago at the age of 40. With 1st lady wins including the Wychavon Way Ultra, UTPD, Convergence 2018, Apocalypse 50 and the Robin Hood 100, Helen enjoys escaping the city for weekends away running in the hills.





Arun Bardwaj at the Si Chinmoy
photo by Prabhakar Street