# (1)trarunning WVorld 

## ROAD, TRACK \& TRAIL MULTIDAY \& ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS ISSUE 17

# 135675 CIIE UITRA MARATHONS 16. MAY 2015 

The summer version of the popular winter Rebellion. The route is along half( (for the 75 mile race) and the full length of Glyndwr's Way National Trail. It takes you through some of the most beautiful and remote parts of Mid Wales and is one of the most picturesque and challenging in the UK

## Editorial



Issue 17 brings us into February already, January has flown by and the most impressive performance in an ultra for some time propelled Jasmin Paris into a household name as she stunned the community with an amazing 12 hour win over record holder Eoin Keith. With Camille Herron's new women's World 24 Hour record at Desert Solstice and Courtney Dewaulter's epic duel at Big's Backyard Ultra with Johan Steene to name but a few, it's clear that serious progress in women's ultrarunning is being made and we look forward to the World Championships in Albi later in the year.

This week has seen a bunch of longer multidays being planned for this year with a new previously announced 10 Day at 3 Days At The Fair, a 20 Day at the Wychwood Running Festival in South Africa and Costas Baxevanis has promised a new event with 1000 km up to 5000 km races in Athens starting in October and with the 6 Days In The Dome returning this summer, it's an exciting time for multidays.

We are very grateful to all the contributors involved in this issue with some great stories from some very talented and sincere ultrarunners from a diverse range of events. The next issues continue to share these adventures and legends-in-the-making of our time. Thank you.

It's possible to advertise in the magazine and events are starting to take advantage of this for the forthcoming year. If you would like to promote your event or service, checkout the pricelist in the media kit to support the magazine and connect with our ever increasing subscriber base at great prices. Get in touch.

Finally, some people have asked for a printed version and we need to know what the demand is. We will be sending out a questionnaire soon to engage with your opinions and feedback.

Best wishes, Abichal \& the team.

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Front cover: Jasmin Paris, Eugeni Roselló Solé and Eoin Keith at the Montane Spine 2019 Photo by Mick Kenyon at Racingsnakes. com
Back cover: Sharon Law Photo by Debbie MartinConsani

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Send original and previously unpublished articles to the above email address. Last dates for submissions March $3^{\text {rd }}$, April $7^{\text {th }}$, May $5^{\text {th }}$ and June $2^{\text {nd }}$. Please include a 40-50 word bio and some accompanying photos and a headshot for the contributors page. Thank you.
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Flushing Meadows Corona Park New York

## No Deal on 100k Championships



## 

There will be no 100 km European Championships in 2019 as the IAU did not receive any official bids after 18 months of searching, they have closed the bidding window. General Secretary Hilary Walker has posted a table of bidding opportunities for future European and World championships on the website and notes that, "Our European athletes are fortunate that we will be having 3 World Championships in Europe this year. The Trail World Championships in Portugal starts the season in June, followed by 50 km World Championships in Romania at the beginning of September and finally the 24 Hour World Championships in France in October."
The 2020 European 24 Hour Championships will take place in Verona (ITA) on the $19^{\text {th }} / 20^{\text {th }}$ September. Race website: www.lupatotissima.it. The 2021 IAU 24 Hour World Championships will take place in Timisoara in Romania. The Romanian Athletics Federation (RAF), the Local Organization Committee (LOC) represented by Super Sports Club and the International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU), are proud to organize this event which
 ro.


The 2019 Trail World Championships take place in Miranda do Corvo in the district of Coimbra and though the event is 4 months away preparations are gathering momentum. Details can be found on the race website: Trilhos.abutres.net.

The British team for the event, which at 44 km is definitely one of the shorter ultras, made national headlines when it was announced that the recent Spine winner Jasmine Paris had been selected for the June $9^{\text {th }}$ competition. The full team of women: Katie Kaars Sijpesteijn (Keswick), Jo Meek (Winchester), Charlotte Morgan (Carnethy), Holly Page (Calder Valley), Jasmin Paris (Carnethy) and Georgia Tindley (Hunters Bog Trotters) with the men's team comprising of Jon Albon, Seb Batchelor, Carl Bell (Keswick), Andrew Davies, Steve Vernon (Stockport), Ricky Lightfoot (Ellenborough) and Andy Symonds (Trail Vaucluse).

British Team manager Adrian Stott quoted in the Guardian said, "The strength in depth of mountain and trail running in the UK just now is apparent in the strong men's and women's teams selected. The British team has traditionally competed well and come home with team medals from these championships. We are sure our team will again be a match to challenge the leading nations like Spain, Italy France and the USA. The fact it is a relatively short, but technical 44km course for this year's ultra-trail championship, has been reflected in the selection with a mix of experienced ultra-runners and long distance fell runners, well suited to doing well in June."


2019 TRAL WORLD CHMPPIONSHPS was comanductenciamin:

Adrian Stott, manager of Edinburgh's Run \& Become store, is also the RD of the Self Transcendence $100 \mathrm{k} / 50 \mathrm{k}$ Ultra Races which features the British 100km Championships, Scottish 100k/50k Road Championships and an open 100k race incorporating the annual Anglo Celtic Plate home countries event taking place in Inch Park, Perth on March $24^{\text {th }} 2019$.

## Awards

The American Ultra Runners of the Year for 2018 as voted by Ultrarunning magazine were Courtney Dewaulter and Jim Walmsley. More details on the website
Australian Ultra Runners of the Year
The Australian Female Ultra Runner of the Year was Tia

## News

Jones and the Male Ultra Runner of the Year was Brendan Davies.
Annabel Hepworth, featured in this issue, won the Helen Stanger Award for the best ultra running achievement by a female under the age of 60 . The Bryan Smith Award best ultra achievement by a male under the age of 60 was won by Mick Thwaites. All the details on the AURA website

## Breaking News

Rosie Swale Pope MBE is intending to Run Round the World, again. The 71 year old who left Wales on her 57th birthday, on the $2^{\text {nd }}$ of October 2003 and returned home on the $25^{\text {th }}$ of August 2008, 19,000 miles later, lives in a cart called 'Ice Chick' which she pulls behind her. She is currently in Germany. Checkout Rosie's website, Rosie Swale Pope for more details as they are announced.


## Athens International

 Ultramarathon Festival has announced plans for a new event in mid-October 2019. The $1^{\text {st }}$ Multidays Festival, Athens, Hellinikon - 5000 km ( 60 days) with 1,000 ( 12 days), 2000 ( 25 days),

Howhiota Dtetra Ruer 3000 ( 35 days), and $4,000 \mathrm{~km}$ ( 50
days) options. Stay tuned to the Dayrunners.gr website for further details.

More from the IAU - The first $\mathbf{6 h}$ Nordic Challenge will be held in Kokkola on May 18 $8^{\text {th }} 2019$. This is a new IAU inspired race where ultrarunners from the Nordic countries can compete for the IAU Nordic Challenge trophy. The event will form part of the Kokkola Ultra Run which takes place on the West Coast of Finland in the town of Kokkola. There's also an open 6 hour race, 24/12 hour options and a 100 km . The course is 864.1 meters long, flat with one meter ascension consisting of half gravel, half tarmac.

More details on the race website: www.kokkolaultrarun.fi
Eric Wright, the host of the Running Festival Wychwood multiday races in South Africa has announced dates for this years three festivals with a 72/48/24/12 starting April $19^{\text {th }}$. June $16^{\text {th }}$ sees a 6 day/72/24 and 12 hour options and starting on December $11^{\text {th }}$, a 20 day, 1000 mile $/ 1000 \mathrm{~km}, 10$ day/6 day/72/48/24/12 and 6 hour. Checkout the details on the event website at www.wrightracetiming.co.za


> A 20 Day Non-Stop Ultramarathon The longest footrace in the Southern Hemisphere Start 12:00pm 11th December 2019 Finish 12:00pm 1st January 2020 480 hours of continuous challenge Wychwood, Germiston, Gauteng, South Africa

## Events Around The World

## Africa

01.12.2018 Boa Vista

Ultramarathon (CPV) $\quad 150 / 75 \mathrm{~km}$
The only event in this section from the African region was the Boa Vista Ultra Trail which takes place on the island of Boa Vista in the Cape Verde archipelago. There are three options: the 150-kilometre Ultra which takes runners around the periphery of the island, the 70-kilometre Salt Marathon and the 42-kilometre Eco Marathon. The Ultra was won by Orlando Silva Tavares (CPV) in 21:57:32 and first woman was Alice Modignani Fasoli (ITA) in 29:07:32. Results

## Asia

30.11.2018 The Ancient Khmer Path (CAM)
The Ancient Khmer Path is a 6 day stage race that starts 180 km north of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in a Buddhist temple and finishes directly in front of the famous Angkor Wat temple. The race first took place in 2012 and this year there were 29 starters. The event was won by Xavi Marina (ESP) in 18:30:33 and first woman was Isabelle Sauve (CAN)
second overall in 21:13:46. Full results.

### 15.12.2018 The North Face 100

 Hong Kong (HKG)This event has 100/50 km options and starts at Tai Mei Tuk in Hong Kong. Runners face $6,300+\mathrm{m}$ of elevation gain on the 100km course, and 3,075 m on the 50 km course, which includes Hong Kong's highest peak, Tai Mo Shan. With 466 finishers this is a very popular race, one of the eight-race TNF 100 events. First home was Purna Bahadur Tamang (NEP) in 11:59:57 and the first woman was An Han (CHI) in 15:27:09. Full results.

### 24.12.2018 To The Tops of Hong Kong 100 (HKG)

The inaugural running of To The Tops of Hong Kong 100 took place in Mui Wo, a rural town on the eastern coast of Lantau Island in Hong Kong. The race, which featured $7,727 \mathrm{~m}$ of total elevation, was won by Chun-Man Lau and Kwong Hoi Tik in 18:49:57. The women's race was also shared between Jcy Ho and Olivia Luk in 21:00:02. 18 finishers. Full results.
30.11.2018 HK168-168 Km Ultra-Endurance Race (HKG)
The HK168 trail ultra takes place

starting and finishing at Tai Mei Tuk. It covers some of the most beautiful scenery in Hong Kong - remote villages, ancient forests, nature trails, reservoirs and steep hills. The race has 3 other major categories - 84/55/20 km with the longest course of 168 km having over $11,000 \mathrm{~m}$ elevation and a time limit of 46 hours. The first man home in the 168 km event was Wai Lun Wong in 31:24:22 with 25 seconds separating the top three men. The first woman was Lai-Ting Li, $5^{\text {th }}$ overall in 33:53:18. 92 finishers. Full results.
16.12.2018 Okinawa 100km Ultramarathon (JPN)
Okinawa is a Japanese prefecture comprising more than 150 islands in the East China Sea between Taiwan and 400 miles south of the Japanese mainland. Okinawa is also an island and the $3^{\text {rd }}$ edition of the 100 km took place at Yonakohama Park, an event that also featured a 50k and a marathon. There were 358 finishers, first was Fuyuharu Nakahashi

|  |  | 1 | Ivan Penalba Lopez | ESP | 258.890 | 1 | Japan |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | 2 | Yoshihiko Ishikawa | JPN | 253.420 | 2 | Australia | 675.354 |
|  | 3 | Nobuyuki Takahashi | JPN | 252.301 | 3 | India | 645.936 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 1 | Yuri Matsumoto | JPN | 219.112 | 1 | Japan | 620.818 |
|  | 2 | Tia Jones | AUS | 218.177 | 2 | Australia | 599.654 |
|  | 3 | Aiko Kanematsu | JPN | 212.700 | 3 | New Zealand | 563.443 |

## Recent Races

finishing in 7:45:55. The first woman was Itsuka Azumi, third overall who finished in 7:55:52. 100 km Results on D.U.V.
29.12.2018 Malatra Endurance Run 24/12 hour (MYS)
The 2nd Malatra Endurance Run 24h took place in Putrajaya, a city south of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A road race set in a beautiful and expansive park in the heart of the city on a 3 km loop. Runners needed to cover at least a marathon to be considered finishers. 43 runners made the grade and first was Kian-Voon Chong with 145.6 km. The first woman was Faherina Mohd Esa with 117.6 km. 24 hour results on D.U.V.
01.12.2018 IAU 24h Asia and Oceania Championships (TPE)

Japan dominated the 2018 IAU 24 hour Asia \& Oceania Championships which took place at the 18th Soochow/ Taipei 24h Ultramarathon at Soochow University. Yuri Matsumoto (219.112 km ) and Yoshihiko Ishikawa (253.420 km ) took home gold medals in the individual competition leading men and women to double gold medals in the team competition. The open event was won by Ivan Penalba Lopez (ESP) with 258.89 km . Results on D.U.V.
09.12.2018 Gold Coast 50 Road Race (AUS) The $22^{\text {nd }}$ Gold Coast 50 Road Race is a 50 km run alongside one of the world's most attractive beaches, from Kurrawa, Broadbeach in Queensland to Duranbah and back. The GC50 Run Festival also features shorter events and
relay options. This year the race was won by Rob Clark in 3:17:35 and the first woman was Jane Fardell in 3:50:59. 248 finishers. Full results on the D.U.V.

## Europe

15.12.2018 The Bello Gallico Trail 100/50m (BEL) One of the events hosted by Legends Trails, this event was first held in 2016. The Bello Gallico Trail 100 mile race route goes through the Meerdaal Forest and close to the Dyle river in Flemish Brabant. The 160 km race consists of 2 loops of the 80 km race, one loop is done counter clockwise and the second one clockwise. The race was won by Ivo Steyaert (BEL) in 17:06:00 and first woman was Catherine Tosi (FRA) in 21:27:00. 101 finishers. Full results.




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## Race Reports

## Adelaide 6 Day Race 2018

Annabel Hepworth



Darren Linney thought he was "totally done" as he ran in the pre-dawn final hours of the Adelaide 6 Day race.
His knees "were aching so much", his Achilles "swollen like a balloon" and he was having blister problems.
But then day broke "and I had an amazing sense of energy". Linney, 43, dashed back to his tent, lathered on some heat rub and changed into his faster running shoes.
"I was off and I just ran". The last hour I had the music pumping hard, the crowds were gathering and the 800 km mark was in sight."
Such were the last few hours of the Adelaide 6 Day, where 19 of us ran and walked on the 144 hour event over a 1425.5 metre concrete loop in September.

Linney finished with 801 km on debut, giving him the 5thhighest male who ran in a six-day race in 2018.
Me, I got to 742.8 km , which has been the longest distance by a female in a six-day run so far this year - a PB on my 656.2 km from the 3 Days at the Fair six day race in New

Jersey in May. Watching Linney's fleet-footed stride, I too just ran in those last couple of hours, whereas normally the race would have taken its toll and I would be slowly shuffling.


Photo: Ben Hockings Ultra Runners SA

# Race Reports 

But more on that later.
The event was the brainchild of Ben Hocking of Ultra Runners SA. Even for ultra-runners, the idea of a 144 hour event seems far out, but for some of the organisers and participants, the event was somewhat routine. Hocking has attributed the enthusiasm of Sarah Barnett to the application process for the event getting underway. Barnett has completed the Self Transcendence 3,100 mile race in New York, as well as 15 six-day races, 8 eight-day races and nine 10-day races. She lives in Adelaide, where she is often seen running as she doesn't drive a car.
It was only the second 6-day race held in Australia since Colac in 2005. Colac was considered a world-class event, particularly as the legendary Yiannis Kouros set a new world record of 1036 km in 2005. Before this year's race, the most recent 6-day on Australian soil was a 2014 event held in the Adelaide Parklands on a 1.13 km asphalt surface; that race had 13 competitors. Enthusiasm for the 6-day race has enjoyed a resurgence in Australia, many ultra-runners

had closely followed Mick Thwaites reaching 837.6 km at Balatonfured in Hungary this year.

## Day 1

The scenic course is by Adelaide's oldest reservoir, Thorndon Park, which has an iconic water tower in it. Accommodation is in tents, a mobile shower service arrives every couple of days and there is a roster of volunteers on hand to give us hot meals to complement the usual carbohydrate-heavy fare. The track is flanked by green grass and a waterfall, with the slight up-and-down nature soon becoming apparent. Surprisingly, I'm not suffering the usual jittery restlessness and noisy mind that I expect at the start of a multi-day. It's not long before some of the race supporters are doing Mexican waves to keep us entertained. That evening, the local 7 network broadcasts the weather segment from the race. "One wonders what torture they are escaping from in their daily lives that makes this seem a good idea," the weatherman deadpans. "But they speak of its strange meditative allure."
Linney has gone through 100 km by about the 11 hour mark, while I have passed around 90 km . By the end of the 24 hour mark, I've had some sleep and get to 14 , while


Linney is at 182.4 km . Seasoned six-day veteran David Billett is in third, ahead of Kiwi Perry Newman.

## Day 2

Doug Kewley withdraws, although most of the field is in good spirits and moving well. Facebook messages of support are being written up on a whiteboard near the food tent. Runners are starting to use the services of Rebecca Rushton, a West Australian podiatrist with 25 years experience who has worked multi-days including the 2014 six-day in Adelaide and the 250km Big Red Run in the Simpson Desert. She later reports that the most common problems she is treating are pinch blisters of the small toes and heel edge blisters.
I've settled in and am moving consistently. Locals are asking us about the race and a small store that flanks the course allows us to buy coffee during the day. That afternoon, it's time to pose for a picture by the red duct tape stuck to the path and marked 200km. By the 48 hour mark, Linney has passed 300 km , while I'm at 268.

## Day 3

It's a hot grind, with myself and David Billett both passing


## Race Reports

through 300 km on a day where the mercury tops 28 C . That evening, a strong storm rolls in and we are lashed with rain, thunder and lightning. Runners take shelter under a concrete marquee. It's too wet to go back to my tent for warm clothing. I lie down on the concrete with my legs elevated, while I wait for the storm to pass.

While I've had a tendency to sleep some six and even more hours a night on past six-day races, partly because of a very strong circadian rhythm, I'd made a conscious decision to sleep much less in this race. I'd done some night-time running before this event because I wanted to shift my own long-held view that I could only enjoy running during the pre-dawn and daylight hours. This was starting to pay dividends in terms of putting me towards a PB.
By the 72 hour mark, I'm just shy of of 375 km , while Linney is about a marathon ahead. Newman comments to me that I'm having a blinder of a race.

## Day 4

I'm at what I consider the hump in the race. The 10 metre elevation on the course - the hill - is starting to feel slower, until the turnarounds where it becomes a fast downhill for me. The 72 hour runners have joined the course, bringing with them fresh legs and fresh energy. The weather has cooled down considerably. My body has held up fine, although I can feel some blistering under the ball of my right foot. I've been appreciating the blister tips that our prescient podiatrist has been posting on a whiteboard — which include this: "The most likely spot you'll get a blister is where you've had one before". I've been putting a few layers of strong sport tape over the ball of my foot since early in the race as this has proven effective in the past and the strategy keeps the problem from progressing. Beyond that, I've felt long periods of sheer joy in this race.
By the 96 hour mark, Linney has gone well past the 500 km mark, while it's in sight for me.

## Day 5

The roster of enthusiastic volunteers are keeping everyone's spirits high. They have been cutting up food, serving hot meals, plugging in our gadgets for charging and it seems most runners have a story to tell about being pecked at by some ducks on the course, protecting their young.
Friendships have also formed. Perry Newman, a month before his run along the length of New Zealand to raise funds for autism, and Stephan Kent have been a popular fixture on the course.

Sarah Barnett is on track for yet another strong performance, in her third six-day race of the year.
John Timms continues to move solidly and on track to set a new 75 to 79 -year old age group 500 km national record. "Being the oldest runner at 76 made me work harder and simply test the possibilities," he later posts on Facebook.

I have just gone through 600 km by the 120 hour mark and confident that I should be able to get beyond 700 km , but I have no target beyond that.

## Day 6

It strikes me that while I had a very general race plan of fairly even splits, which I'd need to adjust if weather or other problems required it, I hadn't anticipated starting the final day feeling so strong. While some six day runners have a strategy of running like the clappers for the first 48 hours then hanging on with declining daily totals, I tend to be much more conservative in the early stages and this race had been no different. What was different in this race is I had less of the lower leg inflammation, swollen feet and bone-weary fatigue that I usually suffer towards the end of a multi-day. I'd slept well when I did go down during the circadian dead zone in the early hours of the morning and felt fresh for the final day.
I continue to move solidly throughout that last day, grateful that there had been no real lows during the race. That evening, David Christy posts on the Running Against Time Facebook page that I "may put Adelaide on the map". "Those of you who follow 6 day events closely know that Hungary's EMU, aka Balaton, has a lock on the top 4 spots for women in 2018. Over there in South Australia, Hepworth is bent on busting that quartet up and making the brand new Adelaide 6 Day a household name in the process".
I decide to still get some sleep in those final hours as I've done enough long events to know that stumbling around like a zombie and getting ever-slower is a false economy for me.

After returning to the track in the pre-dawn hours, I continue circling the track.
I pass the 721 km mark with more than two hours still left on the clock. I had planned on just slowly circling for the remainder but then David Billett pointed out the Australian six-day ladder to me. I was well aware that Dipali Cunningham had a stratospheric 825.6 km , but wasn't across the precise details of the second and third all-time female national rankings - the 738.9 and 738 km that dated back to 1990 and 1988 respectively. Ordinarily I would be lumbering around at that point in the race but after checking the ladder and realising how much energy was running through me, I decided to also just go for it to see if I could exceed the performances in the 738's. I was inspired by how smoothly Linney was still running at that point and also recalled Sweden's Johnny Hallneby flying by me in that final hour of 3 Days at the Fair. When the race finished, the energy just drained from me. While everyone else chatted, I had to lie down on the grass near the food tent for a while, as the exhaustion finally washed over me.

The second edition of the race has been announced for 2019, starting September 29. Adelaide 6 day results.

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## Race Reports

# Italian Ultra Marathon Festival, Policoro, Italy, September 2018 

Garfield Jones

Photos courtesy Pascuali Brandi


Icame to the UMF as a journeyman ultra runner with modest PB's, though I did have 70 ultras and 29 marathons behind me. I mainly use budget kit and avoid technology (I rarely wear an ordinary watch, and don't possess anything more complex), as a health professional, and for more than 50 years an active sportsman, I feel I have a reasonable understanding of physiology, nutrition, and of my own body.
Unusually for me I approached the 48 hour race with a definite target. I have completed several 100 mile and 24 hour races, and since my 24 hour PB at Basel in 2012 ( 172 km ) I've run those events with the aim of enjoying myself and finishing, rather than chasing the PB. At Bislet in 2015 I made 247 km on my 48 hour debut, I felt that were it not for some calf muscle issues in the last 6 hours I could have done more. At my second 48 hour race, Athens 2018, I reached 255 km . The high was being on the track with the amazing Patrycja Bereznowska who broke the women's'
world record with 401 km ; while the low was that I knew that I could have done more, my motivation just left me in the last few hours. Several people have suggested that a 6 day race is the event for me so I decided to enter one, only after having another try at 48 hours.

From my first look at the UMF website everything was positive. I had heard great things of the event from past participants, Pasquale Brandi, the race director, replied to every email by return, which was really encouraging. 2018 had been fine so far, no significant injuries, and Athens was a triumph, I felt positive arriving at Bari. Two shuttle coaches a day run down the coast from the airport, mine reaching Policoro 02.00. In spite of being in the middle of running the festival Pasquale was at the bus stop to meet me.
The holiday village was lively- the 100 mile, 100 km and 6 hour races were yet to start, the 6 day race was in full swing and other runners were engaged in 1 or 2 daily marathons a day over 6
days. There was plenty of food on the buffet table, I had some, then went to bed. I was sharing a two room cabin with Mátyás Szarvas and his wife Gyöngyvér, who arrived later by car from Hungary with their own food and some sort of field kitchen. I didn't bring food, but I did bring the kit to brew real coffee, which matters to me. Our cabin was right on the course, a few runners' cabins were up to 20 meters away, the track went right past the buffet area and several toilets, so bonus kilometres are kept to a minimum. I spent a restful day, had a quick dip in the sea, and met a large and curious turtle in the shallows. After a second night in the village I lined up at the start line at 15.00 with 24 other 48 hour runners, feeling good. The weather forecast had mentioned temperatures in the early to mid 30's (late September!). This is usually OK with me, but whereas I dread wind in a race, the mention of cooling breezes coming off the sea sounded like a good idea.
Friday, at the start of the 48 hour race, it was very hot.
Starting from the race HQ , at the gates of the holiday village, you twist between the cabins on tarmac and compressed gravel, pass the swimming pool and buffet area on cement, before taking a concrete path down to the sea. Most of this is quite shaded. Then you loop back up a slight incline through the woods on a concrete block path that snakes between the trees, up to the road, and go straight south to the gates again. There is a wide traffic free section, the roadside trees are so far back that their shade finishes mid morning, starting again late afternoon. The promised sea breeze didn't happen on night one and the asphalt had soaked up enough

## Race Reports

heat to keep frying us until well after midnight.

Food and drinks were varied and abundant, there was a coffee machine at our disposal, and it was all going really well. Mátyás was battling on in spite of a long standing injury. Some of the 6 day and 2 marathon a day people were really heroic. I don't carry a music machine, but the parties around the pool provided some unexpected soul classics blaring over the PA, which made me smile, though I got some funny looks when I started to sing along. I pay little attention to time unless I think I'm riding the cutoff. I did note at 15.00 though that my 24 hour split was 147 km , which is sometimes the best I can do in a 24 hour race, so passing my 48 hour PB was a possibility.

Day 2 was cloudy and cooler, the sea breezes showed up to make the second night really pleasant. Sleep deprivation is part of my lifestyle and doesn't bother me much (I started working shifts at 16 and I normally work nights). In Athens I'd taken six 10 minute sleeps, I was hoping to get away with less than that in Italy. I took my first 10 minutes on the cabin verandah some time after the second midnight, and shortly before dawn I was expecting the first sight of sunrise to lift my spirits and launch me into a glorious final 9 hours. However, 36 hours in I started feeling tired. I am accustomed to visual illusions secondary to fatigue (seeing a monkey driving an ice cream van) but the woodland stretch started getting dangerous. The block pattern on the concrete path appeared to be moving sideways when I looked down, when I ran looking up I started falling off it and hitting the trees, though they seemed to be moving towards me and whacking me. I thought that my caffeine levels were probably high enough, so I opted for my second 10 minute sleep. I always drop off immediately, and get up the second I hear the alarm. I felt fine and managed a few more laps before the trees started attacking me again. I

Sonia and I crossing the mat


Woodland stretch
took another 10 minute sleep, but my eyesight still wasn't working properly and I was terrified of stiffening up if I took a longer rest. I laid down for the $4^{\text {th }}$ time, but this time I woke feeling really down, with no motivation to run into any more trees, I decided that the PB wasn't relevant any more.

Mátyás stopped at the cabin, in obvious pain but still moving, I told him that I'd had it, there was no way I could make my target. He gave me a stern talking to, told me that the target was well within me, and that I'd better get on my way. Perhaps he didn't know what my target was, or what I needed to reach it, but his words had immediate effect and off I went.

Obviously a good crew is worth a lot of kilometres, sometimes you can be lucky with your roommates and other people on the course, I certainly have Mátyás to thank for my final result.

At 09.00 I decided to risk looking at the leaderboard. The good news was that if I kept up this pace I would beat my PB. The bad news was that there wasn't a cloud in the sky, I decided to speed up a bit, get as many kilometres as I could before noon, then hang on for the last 3 hot hours.

It worked. 255 km came up, I kept going, when I crossed the timing mat for the last time I had done 260.708 km , I was first in age and fourth man. I would normally have stumbled off

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to try for a few more meters (possibly 500?) but being a holiday camp they were not using a loud klaxon, and I didn't trust myself to stop exactly on time. Most of the other runners had stopped at the mat, and the party was already starting there a few minutes before 15.00 .

The presentation was held an hour or so later, the welcoming atmosphere of the festival continued. The runners had come from all over Europe also Argentina, India, Japan and Peru. All of our national flags were on the bunting around the food areas, including the Welsh flag and as I received my medal a few bars of the Welsh National Anthem were played, which reduced me to tears.

17 of us completed the 48 hours, Roldano Marzorati ( 292.846 km ) and Sonia Lutterotti (278.601) had the best distances (Sonia was $3^{\text {rd }}$ overall), while 29 people completed the 6 day race,

led by Didier Sessegolo ( 740.300 km ) and Maria de Aquino (663.308).

The following day the incredible Pasquale was shuttling us all back to the bus station. Certainly a wonderful
event, in a lovely setting. If I return to Policoro it will be for the 6 day race (I admit I felt like a lightweight for only doing 48 hours). In 6 days I'll certainly allow myself more than 40 minutes of sleep.



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## Race Reports

# Trans-Korea West to East 2018 - Take Two 

Text \& Photos Berit Jessen



In 2016, I DNF at the Trans-Korea West to East 308 km . The race is actually 311.7 km but for historic reasons (I think), they maintain the race name with the 308 km distance. The West to East is one of three Trans-Korea races organised by KUMF, the Korean Ultramarathon Federation and in order to complete a grand slam, all three Trans-Korea races of 308 km , 537 km , and 622 km respectively are required.

Immediately after my DNF, I declared to the runners and volunteers in the goal area that I would return two years later and finish the race. Well, now it was two years later so it was time to make good on that promise. This time
around, I had a much better idea of what I was in for compared to the first time, I even planned to have a race strategy. My race strategy for the 2016 edition was simply: Tag along with Jungen Chae, a very accomplished Korean ultrarunner who had offered to guide me on the unmarked course since I was unable to read the Korean route description. Not losing sight of my running companion was my number one goal, and I had no pacing strategy whatsoever. Turns out, it was very hard to run 311 km at someone else's pace, so this time, I was determined to run on my own and I figured I had the first 250 km tracked on my watch from the 2016 race (betting that they had not
changed the route) then I would just have to wing it for the last 60 km . I know.. Not much of a strategy but still way better that the 2016 one.

This time the race registration was completed in a single day with the assistance of a Korean running friend. The first time, it took me several months to figure out the race details, which were all in Korean. I ended up joining a running club in Seoul for expats and English speaking Koreans in order to get in touch with somebody who could assist me in completing the Korean registration form. That is how I met Heesang Yoo. He was kind enough to help me out again so everything went
smoothly and a few days later, my name appeared on the start list as non-paid but with a bank transfer of the start fee underway, I was confident that I was accepted into the race. This time, I knew that all communication from the race organisation would go through their onlineforum on the all-Korean race website, I kept an eye out there and eventually spotted two words, I could recognize: My name. I clicked on the post and Google translated it, and it turned out it was a request to send proof of insurance to the race organisation, which I promptly did along with the receipt for the bank transfer and asked for confirmation of receipt of my paperwork. I waited and waited but no word. I made a post in English on the online forum in order to ask for a status. No word. Several weeks later, I made another post in English. Still no word, although I noticed that the posts in Korean were replied to... I tried to email my information again but this time the email address bounced. After several attempts to email - using various different sender addresses, I was close to despair. Then lo and behold, there was another name on the start list that I could read (Jong Min Lee). Although his name sounded decidedly Korean, this runner's club name was listed as Forrest Runners.

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A Facebook search for this runner turned up nothing but I posted on his running club's page and asked if anybody knew this person and had his contact information. Soon, I was contacted by a Sean Lee who told me that it was one of their running coaches but he was not on Facebook. Turns out that this running club was based in California with mostly Korean-American members. Sean offered to assist me from California, he directed one of his friends in Seoul (Professor Kang) to visit the KUMF office in order to clear things up. I was asked to re-send my paperwork by text to a Korean phone number, which I did - and asked for confirmation of receipt but of course, no word... Sean managed to get confirmation by receipt of my paperwork for me and soon my status on the start list was changed to "paid". Easy-peasy ;-) Or something... phew, my participation in this race, was becoming a truly international effort.

I had approximately one and a half weeks in Korea before the race for acclimatisation and race preparation - also known as family time. My boyfriend and I spent a lot of time with my Korean and for the most part non-English-speaking family, which entails consuming massive amounts of food. We also spent a couple of days hiking at Songnisan National Park. I only managed to sneak in two short runs during that time. With less than adequate
training in the last couple of months before the race, I felt mentally prepared but physically in a shape that left ample room for improvement. Oh well, it was "only" 311 km .

I spent quite some time and energy figuring out the last race details. I knew about the drop bags from 2016 - in my case, my "drop bag" was a huge Samsonite suitcase on wheels. You are allowed to access your drop bags at the checkpoints at 100 km and at 209 km . Aid stations are at 50 km , 100 km , and then roughly every 30-35 kilometers. In between aid stations, we were allowed to buy food and water in convenience stores or visit restaurants but we are not allowed to receive any other support outside the aid stations. I was unsure if we would be given a lightstick to carry at night. It was mandatory to carry a light on your backpack but as we were given one last time, I had not brought any. I had both Professor Kang/Sean enquire as well as another Korean running friend and the answer came back negative. I had to arrange for something quickly and ended up buying some bicycle lights to attach to my backpack.
I was still hoping to obtain an official GPX file, after several enquiries and after dispatching Professor Kang once again to visit the KUMF office, we learned that the file was distributed through an app - however that app was accessible only to Koreans, so neither Sean nor I had access, we finally had Professor Kang ask the
race organization to email me the gpx file. To be on the safe side, the file was loaded into all three of my GPX watches ;-)

The start was on Ganghwa island on the West Coast. I made the transfer to Ganghwa by bus on Wednesday, the day before the race and arrived late in the afternoon. After a short rest, I went looking for some of the restaurants within walking distance which were marked on Google Maps. I recognised the start area from last time but the restaurant there was closed - as was every other single place marked on the map. So I ended up buying some cup noodles and Oreos in the very small shop next to start and that made up my dinner. Later, my landlady and her husband showed up to show me the heating system - I was sleeping on the floor, Korean style, as there were no beds, but the floor was heated. When I asked them, where I could get lunch the next day, they offered to take me to lunch. They also offered me food for dinner but I assured them that I was okay and showed them my cup noodles ;-) Shortly afterwards, there was a knock on my door, my landlady showed up with some sweet potatoes, squash, and a beer. The next day, my landlady showed me her gallery (she is a painter) and took me to lunch in a restaurant 10 minutes drive away and even insisted on paying my lunch. You have to love Korean hospitality.
When I arrived at the start
area hauling my Samsonite suitcase along, I was greeted with a "Denmarkgu" at the table where they handed out bibs. They found my start kit immediately, a volunteer showed up and handed me a light-stick and some spare batteries. I actually never found out if they were provided to me by the race committee or friends of my Korean running friend. It was a lot heavier than my bicycle lights, I decided to carry the lightstick for safety reasons. I handed in my drop bag and went for dinner at the restaurant, which was now open. At dinner, I met a lot of runners I recognized from last time. I also met Mr. Lee who accompanied a Japanese runner, Mieko. Upon meeting her, I quickly downgraded my goal of becoming the best foreign runner in the field to being among the three best foreigners - if you count Jong Min Lee as a foreigner as well ;-) I also met Jong Min Lee who was an instant running friend. He is a very accomplished ultra runner and a supernice person.

The race briefing was of course in Korean so I was trying to look politely interested while my thoughts were wandering. A few English speaking runners gave me some good info on the tunnel crossings - the course had some changes, we only had to run through one tunnel -the two others would not be entered. This was a pleasant surprise because I dreaded running through the tunnels due to the

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close passing cars, driving really fast, there is only a small strip available to pass through the tunnel on foot and the surface is often very uneven.

Very soon, everybody was headed for the start portal and after an official race photo was taken, we were all off. We had police escort on the first part of the route and soon I was the very last runner in the field... I was chatting a bit with a few other runners who spoke a some English. Many runners remembered me from two years ago - I was the only foreigner in the race that year, and I think my story as a Korean adoptee also helped ensure that people remembered me. My fellow runner asked how many pairs of shoes, I had brought this time, when I answered three pairs - a fresh pair available at each of the two drop bag aid stations, she replied good, because last time I only brought one pair. I guess they really noticed everything about how I ran the last time. Most of my fellow runners knew only very little English and my Korean is extremely limited, many of my conversations were restricted to a simple "hite" (cheers) or ran along the lines of explaining that I was from Denmark and that last time I stopped at Taejisan (one of the mountains) I was sick much of the time because I am not used to Korean food during running. I also told them my name but as it is difficult for Koreans to remember Danish names, I gave them my Korean name

(which is never used except by my Korean family). Likewise, I have a very hard time remembering Korean names, so even though I cheated by reading my fellow runners names off their bibs (written in the Korean alphabet, hangul), I still had a difficult time remembering their names. I gave some of the runners, I met frequently or talked to, my own nicknames. I was very happy to see "the ADHD kid" again. He came in second in 2017 and has won the two long versions of TransKorea ( 537 km and 622 $\mathrm{km})$. This year, he was running with his girlfriend whom he introduced me to. Actually, I think I was the only female runner who ran solo. Most female runners were running with a male companion and many of the runners I met along the way worried about my running alone
offering to run with me, which I politely declined. There were only 12 out of 171 females on the start list. I meant "ADHD kid" as a compliment as I remembered him as a great runner literally bouncing with an infectious energy. I also encountered "the three musketeers" who ran the entire race together and seemed to be long-time friends. We were constantly leapfrogging so I met them many times as they ran faster than me but they had more restaurant stops.

Soon, I found my own pace and a nice rhythm. We had a police escort almost all the way across Ganghwa Island, the police also directed the traffic at road crossings, I yelled a Gamsa Hamnida (thank you) when we passed them, which just about exhausted a third of my Korean vocabulary ;-). At around 18-19 km, there was an improvised aid
station provided by a local running club. I think it is there every year - at least it was there in 2016 and I was told about it beforehand. Everybody knew about it and all runners stopped there, I refilled my water bottles but declined all offers of food. I continued, very focused on not tripping on the pavement, very soon, we passed the restaurant, I recognized at around 40 km where runners stopped for food. I was definitely not going to eat, I just carried on and soon reached the 50 km aid station. I had my time registered, refilled my water bottles and drank some water, resting while I put my GPX watch in the charger and connected it to a power bank in my backpack. I was wearing two watches just to be safe but was navigating on one of them in order to save the battery. I carried on

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and soon reached the Han River, which we were to follow for the next 50 km to the second aid station.

Running along the Han
River was great and something I had been looking forward to as you run on a bicycle path and do not have to worry about traffic. There are also many benches, where you can rest and bountiful convenience stores, no worries about running out of water and there are public toilets everywhere. One of the great things about travelling in Korea, is that clean toilets are ubiquitous and free to use. I kept running and leapfrogging with other runners, the night was cool and quiet. Around 60 km , I took my first 10 minute power nap on a bench. I stopped at a convenience store for water and bought some kimbap (Korean seaweed rolls with rice) but when I opened it, I couldn't eat more than just one bite. I offered my food to the other runners taking a break at the tables behind the store but all declined. I chatted with two other runners who were having a beer and they also remembered me from last time and one of them had dropped out. We agreed, this time, we would all make it to Gyeongpodae Beach (goal). We had to communicate in very simple words and sign language. One of the runners still managed to point out that last time, I was sick during the race. Great to be remembered as the runner who vomits all the time. At some point, we encountered the rolling
checkpoint. It was set up at various undisclosed places where all runners had to pass and failing to do so would result in disqualification. The chairman of the KUMF headed the checkpoint and she offered a cup of something to drink. I happily accepted and started to drink, only to discover that it was a very, very sweet rice drink but I managed to finish my cup and quickly moved on. KUMF now has a female chairman, she was the female winner of this race for 6 years straight. Tough lady.

The sun rose and daylight brought new energy. The Han River bicycle path ended at a distance of around 100 km and that is where we had the first aid station with access to our drop bags. This aid station was different from the one in my last participation as they had changed the course slightly. Two tents were set up to be used as changing rooms. I changed all of my sweat drenched running clothes, refilled my water bottles and sat down to eat. I had some rice and some soup but I politely declined the kimchi and other spicy food. Mr. Chae arrived at the aid station while I was eating and there was a volunteer who spoke English. He told me that Mr. Chae would have liked to accompany me on the rest of the course but he was going to pull out of the race. Through the translator, I agreed with Mr. Chae to meet up with him in Seoul after the
race, he wished me luck, I continued and crossed the Han River. 30 km later, we crossed the Han River again and started to run along highway 6 , which we were to follow for the next $120-150 \mathrm{~km}$. The highway was quite busy and we ran in the direction of the traffic. I was glad that I started the highway stretch in daylight, so I could get used to the traffic. When I ran the race last time, the other runners had showed me how to cross the exits in the safest way, which entails actually crossing the carriageway twice and it adds a few extra meters. I played it safe as the traffic was quite heavy and fast, Korean drivers are not particularly careful drivers... I was thinking of the runner who was killed in a traffic incident at one of the previous races, I was not taking any chances.
In my mind, I had planned to reach the second cut-off point with a few hours to spare. It was at 209 km and the second and last time, we had access to our drop bags. I had miscalculated/ prepared badly because as I remembered it, the mountains started after that aid station. Actually, the steepest incline that I remembered well from last time but mistakenly had remembered as Taegisan the second summit - was just before the aid station. The inclines were very steep and most of the runners were walking. Some of the race officials drove by in a car and cheered all the runners. When they saw me, they said "Hurry up!".
They were right. We
were pressed for time, I started to run, I picked up the pace on the uphill and raced a little on the downhill stretches. It felt like I was flying since I overtook about 30 runners on those few kilometres. I considered the wisdom in "racing" with more than a 100 km to go but I was simply having too much fun to slow down. I figured that after the second cutoff, there would be time enough on the last third of the route to take a rest of 2-3 hours sleep if I crashed, which would probably be enough to recover, that was my plan B. Until then, I had taken only a few 10 minute power naps, I did not feel tired.

I ran into the aid station where they applauded all the arriving runners. I had some hot rice soup and went to change my clothes. The ADHD kid was sitting on the ground doing a Korean barbecue with his friends and they offered me some BBQ pork, which of course, I declined. I changed my clothes in the very cold bathroom and switched my sweat soaked backpack to a fresh one that I had prepared with everything I needed for the last stretch. I decided to drop some weight and made some (bad) choices. I decided to drop my emergency one-time raincoat as I calculated that the drizzle we had experienced on the way was it for the rain and the rest of the run would be dry. I also decided to run with just a windproof jacket rather than a rainproof one as it was more breathable.

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I also donned some dry toe socks in cotton instead of the woollen ones that I always use when there is a risk of getting my feet wet. You can probably guess where this is going... I filled my water bottles and left the aid station as the rain started. I saw one of the other runners leaving the aid station with an umbrella! I considered going back to get some more rainproof gear but as we were close to cutoff and it was reasonably warm, I carried on after a short break to put on my jacket. After a brief downhill, there was a flat stretch through a town, even though the course was flat and decidedly runnable, I simply could not bring myself to run. I guess, reaching the second aid station before cut-off
was such a big goal and I was reasonably sure that if I could reach that point, I would finish, I lost focus a bit. I looked for a place to take a break. You know you are one of the last runners, when every single bench and bus stop is already occupied by another runner ;-) At last, I found a free bench and took another quick power nap. I figured that would probably make me the last runner in the field as I had left the aid station just before cut-off time. As I carried on, runners kept coming up from behind. I guess I was not the only one needing a break at this point. Soon, the RD passed in his car and he stopped and offered me and all the other runners hot jjinpang (rice buns with a filling of sweet red bean). Given
that the race committee had emphasized that they would strictly enforce the "no support outside the aid stations" policy, it was quite funny that most offers of extra food and drink came from race officials and volunteers. I accepted but only managed a few bites before I had to tuck the rest away. I ran the next stretch in a light rain, which actually I did not mind. I reached the top of the second summit, Taejisan, where a bittersweet surprise awaited me. I was greeted by Jong Min Lee and although, I was happy to see him, the reason he was there to greet me was because he had dropped out due to an injury. I had some drinks and a few bites of rice and then I started the descent where I was pulled out of the race the first time. My legs felt fine and I was making a good pace downhill.

The rain got heavier and at some point, I entered a small town with some other runners and one of them went into a store and signalled for me to follow him. Turns out he was purchasing a disposable one-time raincoat and I bought one as well, which also helped keep me warm. As darkness fell, we reached one of the bigger aid stations where Mr. Lee was volunteering. I asked about Mieko and he assured me she was fine and he asked, "Food or rest?" Actually, I would have preferred to eat first but as I was already in the room where runners were sleeping, I opted for rest first and decided to have a long nap, I set my
alarm for 50 minutes sleep. Mr. Lee lent me a sleeping bag and although I warned him that my clothes were wet and very smelly, he insisted I take the sleeping bag which probably saved my sleep as it kept me warm. Before I went to sleep, I pulled off my socks which were soaked and the soles of my feet were wrinkled from all the moisture. I hoped my long rest would be enough to fix that. When I woke up, I had to pull on my wet socks again and sorely missed my woollen socks. A guardian angel had attached a piece of reflective tape to my backpack while I was asleep :-) I went to get some food and sat down at table across from another runner after asking if the seat was free. Shortly afterwards, his female running partner joined us, and as there was no food set up for her, she started crying although we all rushed to get her some food, I named her Crybaby in my mind. She was so exhausted that she took the lid from her rice bowl and poured water on it to drink. I quickly got her a proper cup and tried to cheer her up but I decided to move on before I was affected by her resigned mood.
After a while, the soles of my feet were so sore, I could only walk. I tried a 10 min stop at a bus stop, pulled off my socks while I rested and I hoped that would do the trick. It didn't. I kept walking. I remembered I had a lot of kinesio tape in my backpack so I returned to the bus stop, pulled off my socks and put tape

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underneath both of my feet before pulling my wet socks back on again. That worked and soon I was running again. There were some inclines and suddenly, I noticed the Olympic symbol on the road. We entered PyeongChang where the winter Olympics were recently held.

When I reached the foot of the last mountain, I decided to take another rest on a bench at a covered bus stop before starting the ascent. As I lay down, another runner stopped and we shared the bench, we continued together up the mountain afterwards. His English was not so good, so we kept our conversation simple but we had a nice comfortable run together and agreed to continue together to the finish line even though I tried to persuade him to continue alone as he was probably faster than me. As we reached the summit, he stopped and pulled a can of beer out of his backpack. I guess he had been saving that for this moment. Of course, he offered to share, unlike most of the Korean runners, I cannot drink beer while racing. We started the last and very long descent. My new-found running friend and I were very much in agreement on how to run the descents. As there was hardly any traffic and you could see the headlights from the cars in due time in the dark, we raced down and ran the optimal line through all the turns downhill although we made a stop to put on our jackets, as the rain was getting
heavier. I simply loved cruising downhill through the night with my new friend, although I knew I should be careful and save something for the last stretch after the downhill, it just felt wonderful to be running downhill. It felt like I could keep going forever and I wished for it never to end. In those moments, I was truly happy and it was the highpoint of the race for me. We had to take some walking breaks downhill as my running companion had some pain in his calves or knees and at some point, he told me to carry on alone as he had to slow down. I continued on my own and after a while, I too had to take a few walking breaks. While running downhill, I encountered the rolling checkpoint again. They had a few mats on the ground where a couple of runners were sleeping. The chairman was there again and she offered me some hot coffee, which I gratefully accepted and sat down for a short rest to drink my coffee but very soon, Mrs. Chairman ushered me on even though she let the other runners sleep ;-) I guess, she really wanted me to finish.

I continued and I thought that after the descent, we were almost there, quick calculations showed that we had 12 km to go and some of my fellow runners confirmed this. I knew that even if walked the rest, I would finish. I ran/walked and hoped to make it in under 62 hours. Cut-off was 64 hours. With just around 2 km to finish, Mr. Jo and
his running companion caught up with me and I tagged along towards the finish. They made a brief stop at a water fountain where Mr. Jo's companion refreshed himself for the finish photo. We crossed the finish line together. We were given a flower bouquet and a wreath of flowers for our finisher photos. There were lots of congratulations and smiles exchanged and many photos taken. Luckily, the Koreans are very pragmatic: They used the same flowers and wreaths for all the runners and the award ceremony. My finish time was 61 hours and 46 minutes, which earned me a 40th place among the 85 finishers. The finish rate was around $50 \%$.

I was given food and sauna vouchers and was walked to a nearby restaurant to eat a proper meal with Mr. Jo and some other runners and officials. I thought it appropriate to have "hangover soup" and this time, I had plenty of kimchi and spice side dishes to accompany my meal but still no beer. I went to a hotel nearby to use the sauna and shower. My clothes were so stinky, that the ajumma running the sauna would not allow me to put my clothes in the locker. She gave me a plastic bag where I could deposit my clothes, which was left outside the sauna. On my way out of the sauna, I saw Crybaby and her running companion and was very happy to learn that they had finished.
The award ceremony was nice and short. The
first three runners were called to the stage. Only the male runners. I think it was because many of the runners had already left and only the ADHD kid's girlfriend was left of the three female podium runners - she came in 2nd female. I was called to the stage to speak a few words, since most of the runners did not know English, I kept it very short and simple, I waved my little Danish flag that I had brought for the event. Then we said a lot of goodbyes and boarded the bus for Seoul, I got almost one and a half hours sleep. Total luxury! Then more goodbyes and the subway back to my hotel.

This was one of my biggest running achievements and experiences so far. Would I recommend this race? Not really. Unless, you are Korean or speak Korean, or at the very least have Korean speaking friends who can help you out with the practical stuff. A large proportion of the route is along a busy highway and you breathe in smog on the way. The volunteers and runners are great and I had to stop myself from saying, I would be back. I limited myself to saying I would be back to do another ultra in Korea but left it open regarding which one. Given how tough the race is, the hard cut-off times and all the running along the highway, I am wondering why I am considering if I should attempt a grand slam after all...

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# Dawn to Dusk 100 Mile Race 

Tegan Edwards<br>Photos by Tristan and Wayne Edwards



So what makes a person decide to run 100 miles? Well I am not really sure. I guess we are constantly looking to push our limits and see how far we can go. I have always wanted to attempt a 100 miler but it was something to do later on in my running career. You know when things just fall into place and you just have to give it a go. Being from South Africa we have a race called the "Comrades Marathon" and it is the be all and end all of the races in South Africa. It is a 90 km ultra marathon. This year I did my 3rd one and it was a disaster and didn't go at all according to plan. With the wounds still fresh in my mind I wanted to redeem myself and also thought if I could run 100 miles surely that would give me the confidence boost I needed. I wasn't all that serious until a friend of mine entered and my brother egged me on. I found out that only one woman had ever completed the race and I decided to pull the trigger and enter.
Thankfully I hadn't picked up any injuries over my last ultra and I was in good condition. I knew nothing about 100 milers but I was happy this one was a circuit race and close to my home. I wouldn't need an experienced seconding team and it wouldn't take much organisation from me. I read up as much as I could about 100 milers. It sounded like I was in for quite the experience but it was probably going to be the hardest day of my life. In all honesty it did not sound like fun. I have found myself wondering why would anyone pay to do this to themselves? If you want to be able to back out of something don't put it on social media like I did. I couldn't back out although I did take comfort in knowing it was a 1 km loop and if it was awful I could always stop and put it down to a good training run.

Deep down inside though all I wanted to do was finish so I could be one of those very few people that are able to say I finished a 100 miler. I also knew that if I finished I would be the second lady to do so.

Even after all the reading I did I went in with no real game plan. I had never done anything like it so I knew I would just have to learn as I went along. Luckily I am the type of person that runs on instinct (I don't even have a running watch although I do want to get one). I just went in hoping to finish. For this particular race we had 26 hours.
I was fortunate enough to have my dad and brother at the forefront of my seconding team. I also had a lot of help from other running friends. The race started at 4 pm on Friday afternoon. We got there early to set up camp. It is so nice because everyone sets up camp around the track with a very festive atmosphere. The race is run at a school on the sports fields which means grass.
There were only 14 people running the 100 miler and I was the only female. There were a few novices like me and some very experienced runners. There are different events that take place at the same time as the 100 miler. There was a team relay event for the 100 miler that started at the same time as the individual race.

So the time had come to start running. I decided to start at a very easy pace and just take it one step at a time. The event was timed with a chip and every time you went over the timing mat your name and the number of laps you had completed would pop up. My chip didn't work and that stressed me out a little because when you have 161 laps to run you don't want to have to do any extra. Thankfully my brother sorted it out for me while I continued to run and they logged all my laps. It was hard in the beginning not to get sucked into going too fast because the relay teams generally are going for very quick times.
The first 10 kms went by pretty quickly. There was a great vibe and music was playing. There was a stunning sunset, I could see clouds building and there was lightning. Surely it wasn't going to rain! It hadn't rained in months and it was still a while until the rains were supposed to start. I don't run in the rain unless I really have to. In my opinion running is hard enough as it is, I really don't want to be wet, cold and miserable on top of that. Well it wasn't my lucky day. The rain came and we had the most beautiful lightning storm. I'm sure it wasn't the best idea to be out in the open however it was beautiful and it kept me entertained. I decided I wasn't going to let the rain get to me. It was only going to add to my epic adventure. It didn't rain for too long and I dried off pretty quickly.

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I played a lot of games in my mind and rewarded myself with food, drinks, walk breaks and bathroom breaks for a certain amount of laps. I drank every 2-3 laps. I had an assortment of drinks and snacks on offer, water, Pepsi Max, ice tea and sugar-free Monster. Always just a sip in each glass. As for snacks, I had chips, biltong, sweets and fudge. I don't normally eat in races but I knew this would be different and I would have to eat. I decided that I would eat dinner at 7:30 because that is a normal time for me to eat. I changed my mind and decided that I had to run 40 km first because then I would deserve my dinner. I never stopped moving even when I was eating. I grabbed my pasta and walked half a lap while I had a few bites of food. I didn't have too much just enough to give me the energy to keep going.

I needed the bathroom and I took a bit of a fall because I didn't pick up my feet but I was ok. Unfortunately the music got switched off later in the evening and people started going to bed so the track started getting quiet but there were always members of the relay teams cheering me on. It started to get really cold although I didn't feel it. I was surprised because I'm the person who runs marathons in long sleeves in the summer. I put a long sleeved top on just to prevent myself from getting cold.

My brother was the last person from my team still awake but it was freezing and very late so he went inside the tent for about 2 hours. These were definitely the longest hours of the whole race.

I was fortunate enough to lap one of the very experienced 100 miler runners and he gave me some good advice. He told me this was where I was going to have to dig deep. It was the graveyard shift and it's the easiest time to quit. There weren't a lot of people around, it was cold, dark, no atmosphere and we had been running for hours already. He told me to keep going and just wait for the sunrise. Everything gets better when the sun comes up. So I dug deep and kept putting one foot in front of the other.

My brother came out to check on me and boy was I happy to see him. Luckily he came out when he did because the timing screens went on the blink. It took them about 30 minutes to get it back up and running. We made sure to keep track of the laps and it was all fine when they got it back up and running. It was at least something to keep the mind busy and help the time go by.

Watching the laps tick over on the board was soul destroying. Sometimes you could have sworn that you had run more laps (never less) even though I checked the board every single lap. You would be amazed at how hard it becomes to concentrate and remember things. As it got to the early hours of the morning I couldn't read the board anymore. My vision was blurry but the time keeper was nice enough to shout out my lap number every time I went past.


I needed the bathroom again which I guess was a good sign that I was keeping hydrated. My problem when I go to the bathroom is that I either clean the bathroom before I use it or I squat. I know I am way too much of a princess. I decided I would squat. Legs of steel hahaha. I was looking down and I got a bit dizzy, my vision went white and I hit my head on the bathroom door. Well that woke me up. I was fine and just got some sugar in me. I know sugar doesn't work for everyone but sugar and salt are my best friends.

Like I said I kept playing mind games and honestly I think that is what got me through. Every time I hit a milestone like 40 kms down I would aim for the next one. I broke the race into sections to keep the distance more manageable. When I got to 48 km I had done a short ultra and so on. I utilized this strategy quite well. I had a lot of the team runners run with me and they tried to encourage me which was so nice. I really do love the running community. I had to tell them that I really appreciated their encouragement


## Race Reports

but if they were going to run with me they would have to give me the inside lane. They were more than welcome to talk as much as they liked but I didn't have the energy to talk back. No one took offence to this and they just offered the support I so badly needed.

I couldn't wait to hit 100 laps as this would be the furthest I had ever run and at high altitude in the rain in the middle of the night shortly after Comrades. It would be my biggest running achievement. My reward for this was; I would let myself walk an entire lap and get some pasta as well as fudge. I love food so it's always a good incentive for me. Well I didn't walk the lap, I guess I just really didn't want to walk unless I really had to. I didn't know if this would hurt me in the long run.

The next part of the race was going to start at 6am so at about 4:30am people started arriving. I knew it wasn't long until the sun came up and I would be through the toughest part of the race. I have always hated the middle part of races. To me it's the hardest part to get through. The other bit of advice I was given was to run hard just before dawn because at 6am the track would become congested and it would be difficult to run until all the runners spread out again. At 6am the literal "Dawn to Dusk" race would start. This is a 12 hour race where you complete a minimum of 80 laps or as many laps as you can in 12 hours. You can either do this solo, in teams of 2 or teams of 4 . The good news was my dad who I have been running a lot with would be doing 40 laps spread out over the day so he could run with me. This was something to look forward to and I knew some other runners who would be running too.

I ran till 6am and tried to get in as many laps as possible. I didn't stop at 6am instead I enjoyed watching the sunrise. Shortly after it was breakfast time which my brother made so salty I nearly couldn't eat it. Apparently I was looking a bit white. I also knew that I was in second place overall. I was well behind the leader but my competitive side wanted to make sure that I was not overtaken by anyone else.

The track was very full now but it was nice to be surrounded by people and feeding off the new energy. The next thing I had to look forward to was my grandfather coming to cheer me on. My grandfather was a runner and he has always been very supportive in everything I do. He got there when I had about 40 km to go. He wanted to run a lap with me but unfortunately no seconds are allowed on the course. At this stage I was starting to get a really uncomfortable pain in my right hip, I took a painkiller and that seemed to help. I took 3 painkillers over those last 40 kms . Anything at this point to get me through.

The 100 miler runners were supposed to have preference when it came to the inside lane but not everyone was accommodating. I came up to a walker and shouted out, "Inside lane!" The guy didn't move, I thought maybe he hadn't heard me so I shouted out again. I was tired at this
point, every extra step that I could save was worth it. This guy wasn't having any of it and rudely turned around and said to me, "I have just as much right to be here as you do!" Which wasn't really true because the 100 milers were supposed to get preference. I think I was so tired physically and emotionally that I burst into tears. I couldn't stop crying for about 2 laps even though I knew I was being pathetic and I was even laughing at myself but the tears kept coming.

I could see the light at the end of the tunnel but all I wanted to do was walk. Just a short walk. I knew I would finish even if I walked for the rest of the way. I was still coming second but apparently the guy behind me was a really strong finisher and a very experienced 100 miler runner. I kept running to try and keep my lead. It turned out that he was far behind me, he had kept me moving so I'm not complaining. My team were cheering me on and kept me going. I don't think I could have continued running without them.

I was almost there and I was going to set the ladies course record so that kept my spirits high. The last 6kms my dad finally ran with me. He ran next to me and kept to my pace. I thought he might make me go faster but he just let me do my thing.

When you are on your final lap you get a red flag so that everyone knows who you are and that you are on your last lap. As I got that flag I smiled and sprinted the final lap. I don't know where the speed and energy came from as it was my fastest lap.
I crossed the finish line in 20:16:48:05
I was so happy to have finished but to have come 2nd overall was amazing. I still can't believe that I was able to run 100 miles. If you had asked me if I would ever run a marathon a few years ago I would have laughed and now here I am with 161 kms under my belt. It is my greatest achievement. I don't think anyone can ever describe the feeling. It is something you have to experience. It will definitely go down as one of the greatest moments in my life.


## Race Reports

And the after-effects? As soon as I stopped moving is when everything just seized up. I lay down and I couldn't bend my legs. My brother had to physically bend my legs for me. I relaxed my muscles by getting a tennis ball into the spasms and with stretching. That really helped. I finished at midday but prize giving was only taking place at 18:30. I didn't mind at all. It was nice to soak in the atmosphere and revel in the glory. It was a beautiful day so I lay in the sunshine and supported all the runners as they came past my camp. My dad still had a few laps to complete, it was nice to support him as well as all the other runners that had either been running with me or supporting me for the past day.

Prize giving was great and the finishers got a jacket which is like the holy grail. I think if I could wear it everyday I would.

The car trip home wasn't too fun, at least I didn't have to drive. It was good to get home and have a nice hot bath and a meal. Everyone had said that I wouldn't be able to sleep but I slept so well. The only problem was getting up to go to the bathroom and getting down to the toilet. I really think I got away relatively unscathed. I had two blisters, an allergic reaction to the grass, stiffness and the worst was probably the swelling.


So will I do another one? At first I wasn't too sure. After a good night's sleep I found myself looking for what I could do next. I am not certain when I will do another one or where my running is going. What I do know is that I will look back on this experience positively and recommend it to anyone who is on the fence about doing one!

## 2019

## $19^{\text {th }} 100 \mathrm{~km}$ del Sahara 3 STAGES 8-13 OCTOBER www.100kmdelsahara.com

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## Race Reports

## The 2018 Devil Dog 100 Miler; Still a Secret Beast in the East.



The real turning point of the race for me came around Mile 21. I was lying face down in the mud, with the left side of my face still in that mud when it started to rain....

I first met Devil Dog 100's Race Director, Toni Aurilio, and many of the members of Team Gaylord, at the Massanutten Mountain Trail 100 (MMT) in 2011 and 2012. Bob Gaylord (Retired United States Army Brigadier General) and Team Gaylord, as they're widely known in eastern ultrarunning circles, were doing their typically outstanding job of crewing multiple runners at MMT both years. I've enjoyed the privilege of calling these people friends since then. When I saw that Toni had created Devil Dog in 2016 it became a goal of mine to run this race as soon as I could because I knew that they would do an outstanding job producing it. I also had the chance to interview Toni about Devil Dog for quite a long time after the race and this is reflected here as well.

Devil Dog just completed its third annual race at both the 100 mile and 100 K distances. Toni's goal was to create a race that she felt would fall somewhere between the

> Race Director Toni Aurilio giving her 2018 Devil Dog pre-race briefing.


Photos \& Text (unless otherwise indicated) Tim Hardy
Massanutten Mountain Trail 100 and all its massive climbs, descents, and technical trail difficulties, and the Umstead 100 with its five loops on mostly flat, firebreak roads. Devil Dog was born. After running the 2018 Devil Dog 100 and researching it against other racers, I can safely attest that the Devil $\operatorname{Dog} 100$ is a secret beast of an ultra in the east.
The Devil Dog 100 has an average finisher's rate of $45 \%$ over its three-year history. That is significantly lower than three of Virginia's longest running 100 mile races. Massanutten's historical finisher rate is $66 \%$, the Grindstone 100 averages $70 \%$ average, and the Old Dominion 100's racer's guide shows a $53 \%$ finisher rate. Personally, I came into Devil Dog weekend having completed 100 mile races in October and November, a challenging 100 K in September and the Vol State 500 K in July. I was very confident that I was as ready as I could be for "D.DOG." The course itself, the time of year and the weather combined into a beast of a race. My ability to finish it was in doubt for almost the entire event.
My Top Five Reasons to Run the Devil Dog 100.
100 Mile ultra-marathoners must be able to figure out and solve problems and challenges and keep moving forward to the finish line. Devil Dog 100 is as full of pre-race, mid-race and post-race challenges as almost any race I've run. So if you're the type of ultra-runner that loves race planning details down to even the minutest of aspects, then employing that plan throughout the race, the DD100 is the perfect race for you.

The wooden foot bridge over South Quantico Creek that racers cross every time they leave and return to Camp Remi. Photos by author.


The course is beautiful. It consists of five total loops around scenic Prince William Forest Park in Triangle, VA very close to Quantico, VA. The first loop is twenty-three miles long and the remaining four laps are just over nineteen

## Race Reports

miles long. While loops and laps can be a mentally tough format, racers become extremely familiar with the course and where they're at on it.


The Devil Dog 100 elevation profile.
From www.devildogultras.com
Trails, trails and more trails. Any ultra-runner that claims to prefer trails as their race format should run Devil Dog. The course is eighty to eighty-five percent single-track, trail with the remaining fifteen percent being firebreak road where you can really make up some time and distance. The course itself is very flat and runable in spots but there's also a lot of highly technical spots, and tons of short, up and down climbing and descending.


## The Devil Dog 100 elevation profile.

From www.devildogultras.com
The three Aid Stations are as well-stocked as any race I've had the privilege to run, and manned by highly motivated volunteers. There were engaging volunteers every time I trotted into any station, offering everything from hot soup, including vegan, to coffee, sandwiches and typical aid station fare. You could have a drop bag in all three aid stations if you had pre-planned to do so. There were also three unmanned water drops at strategic points between each aid station.


There is a solid military influence on the race. The Race Director's family are career United States Marine Corps, reflected in the Devil Dog title. There was a solid activeduty, Marine Corps presence in the race due to the proximity to Quantico, VA, the race includes first place awards for active and retired military. This is also a great destination race located just south of Washington DC in northeastern Virginia.
The largest single logistical challenge that the race team and the racers face is the available parking in Prince William Forest Park (PWFP), or the lack of it. There is very little room for parking at the combined race headquarters, Start/ Finish Line, known as Camp Remi in the race and Happyland Camp 5 in the Prince William Forest Park. RD Aurilio does a wonderful job of working around that and providing alternative solutions for racers, crew, and staff alike, including bunkhouse slots on the campgrounds, and multiple buses organized to shuttle racers from a facility six miles away as early as 4 AM on race morning.


The race started promptly at 6AM after a highly motivational, live-trumpet rendition of the National Anthem. I started the race standing next to a Chris Mintz, who I'd met at the Last Annual Vol State 500 K in July where Chris spent the entire week as the solo crew for racer Rhonda-Marie Parke. "D.DOG" was Chris' first attempt at the 100 mile distance. As we chatted standing amongst our now 200 closest friends and fellow racers, at that moment I wondered if Chris was going to find solo-crewing for those 315 miles at Vol State or running 100 miles harder... And then we were off and moving. It was still as completely dark as night can be, so every racer had his or her own headlamp, or handheld lights, or both.
Keith Knipling won the race again, in 22:05:15. Keith also won the race in 2017 and came in second in 2016. Zach White came in second in 26:26:07 and Patrick Early was third in 26:52:28. Krista Offield won the female division in 27:41:18, and was fourth overall as well. Rheeanna Walters was the second female, coming in at 29:50:52, followed by Jackie Fritsch at 30:11:16.

## Race Reports



I believe that any time you finish an ultramarathon, that is a victory in and of itself and that's one of the reasons I love this sport. I did not have a great race at the Devil Dog 100, due solely and completely to my own poor race planning and logistics. I ended up traveling late the day prior and only managed to get two hours of sleep the night before the race. Couple that with the fact that I always sleep poorly the week leading up to a 100 mile race, this negatively impacted on my race throughout most of the Saturday and well into Sunday.

The course crosses a wooden, single-file footbridge a quarter of a mile from the start and then immediately hits narrow single-track trail that pretty much makes up the course all the way to the first Aid Station known as Camp Gunny. Even after daylight phased in there were still racers much further up front walking runable downhill sections of the course, but not giving up any room for people to pass them either. Nor were people making any effort to get around slower racers in front of them. The first two hours of the race were a packed, single-track conga line.


The first loop did have a lot of high moments as well. Toni's teenage kids were helping with the race as was her husband James. The kids had Toni's canines, both Vizslas, at the turn
onto the extra four and a half mile section that is covered only during the first lap of the race. Being friends with Toni online, I'd been looking forward to meeting Toofy and Gunner for some time. Both of the aid stations out on the course were excellent. All three aid stations, Camp Remi, Camp Gunny at Mile 6 each loop and Camp Toofy at the Mile 13 point of each loop, were as well run and stocked as any aid stations I've ever seen in any event. They were manned by friends I had not seen in quite some time, Larry Huffman, Sara Davidson, Scott Haller and a bunch of other people too.


I struggled physically and mentally to get with it for most of the first lap. I even had negative thoughts about maybe calling it a race once I got to the 100 K distance even though I knew it would be a DNF.

I was suddenly face down in the mud at Mile 21. That was the fifth hard fall and I was only three quarters of the way through the first lap. My left knee was still bleeding from Fall $\# 2$ around Mile 7 , and this was my third fall in as many miles. Lying there, before I even moved, it started raining, and that's when I decided there was no way I was not going to finish this race.

That predicted three hours of rain turned into eighteen to twenty straight hours of rain. The second lap really gives racers solid familiarity with the course. The route flows in a clockwise direction around Prince William Forest Park, and while the sections along South Fork Creek are relatively flat, each full loop included 2000 feet of cumulative elevation gain. The first five to almost six miles of the course out to Gunny Aid Station were all looping switchbacks and up and downhill single-track right to the aid station parking lot.
The second section of the course, the seven and a half miles from Aid Station Gunny to Toofy, are the most widely diverse of the course. Leaving Gunny, racers are treated to just about three and a half miles of wide, up and down, firebreak road surface and this is the best place on the course to gain or make up time. Racers left the firebreak after a last long downhill and traveled along the

## Race Reports

northwestern side of a creek for just over a mile before crossing another bridge and cruising a winding, mostly uphill route to Camp Toofy. Toofy Aid Station is better known as the Turkey Run Ridge Campground. Racers left Toofy by an alternate exit and rejoined the inbound course section after about half a mile, and eventually crossed the creek over the same bridge. The remaining four miles of the course stayed very close to South Fork Quantico Creek and included quite of bit of technical up and down terrain. The last half mile of the course seemed to continue to go on and on and on finishing each lap. There were also three unmanned water points on the course approximately midway between each of the aid stations.


I had a solid second lap and completed that just before dark, convinced that the race director was a genius for making the first lap the long, twenty-three mile loop and the remaining four shorter at nineteen miles each. I changed out of my completely soaked gear, shorts, hooded sweatshirt, lightweight poncho, for all dry gear, full long sweats, jacket, dry gloves and headgear to battle the ongoing rain and temperatures down in the low thirties. My headlamp was back on leaving Remi for lap 3 as well. One of the more challenging aspects of Devil Dog 100 is that racers travel in the dark for fifty percent of the race.

By the time I left Camp Toofy again around 11 PM the steady rain and fog made the weather seem very closequarters and personal. By the time I crossed back over the South Fork for the last four miles of Lap Three, I was
struggling to stay coherent, that never improved for most of the rest of the night, where I was moving at what can only be best described as typical Walmart Speed. I was fortunate that I ended up traveling the last four miles of the third lap with four 100 K racers where I could just stayed focused on them. When we finally hit Camp Remi my four new friends all celebrated completing their 100 K race and I moved through the aid station back out on the course for the fourth lap.

More of the technical trail terrain 2 along the South Fork.


I was way too mortal for most of the entire fourth loop. The lack of sleep really hit me hard no matter what I tried to combat that. I kept falling asleep on my feet, making the section beyond Gunny Aid Station and that remaining three miles to Toofy Aid Station drag for an extended period. My favorite reawakening was on the hill a mile below Toofy where I came to, facing the sign that pointed out the hard left turn towards Toofy. I was standing there facing the sign, with no idea of how long I'd been there, nor a memory of approaching it either.

I desperately wanted a ten minute nap when I got to Toofy aid station. I knew that's what I needed more than anything else to salvage my race but that did not happen because the folks at Toofy kicked me out as I was in serious danger of missing the cut-off to complete the fourth lap. I knew I was in trouble. I was at Mile 74, it was still pitch dark, I was still droning and I was in serious jeopardy of not making it back to Camp Remi before the cut-off to complete fourth lap. I did the only thing I could at that point to finally wake myself up. When I cleared the parking lot and hit the long downhill trail section headed back towards the South Fork, I just started running downhill as hard as I could, for as long as I could. It was still drizzling and I figured I'd either end up landing hard on my face again or jumpstart myself into some pre-dawn running form.

And the jumpstart worked. By the time the Sun started coming up after I was back on the far side of South Fork Creek, I was running pretty well and that only improved as the Sun started to come up. After about eighteen hours since it started, the rain finally stopped. From that point

## Race Reports

on for the rest of the race, if I was not climbing, I ran the downhills and flat sections very hard the rest of the way back Camp Remi to close out Lap 4.


By the time I completely changed again, back into shorts and lightweight long sleeves and departed Remi for Camp Gunny I had seventy-five minutes to cover that nearly sixmile stretch to make the next cut-off there. I was the last runner of the fifty-one total racers to leave Camp Remi on the fifth loop, in dead last place. There had been some significant discussion around the scorer table as I finished the fourth lap that I probably could not make it to Gunny before that cut-off. I was right on the edge of "too late" all the way to Gunny but ended up passing 4 other runners traveling together a minute from that aid station. I ended up making it to Gunny in 73 minutes from leaving Camp Remi with two minutes to spare.

From the trail high above the creek.


## Devil Dog 100 plunder.



Lap 5 was my best, fastest loop of the race, the last twenty-six miles were my best overall too, and thoroughly enjoyable at that point. There's just something special about running down an ultramarathon finish line. I had music going, when I was not climbing, I ran as hard as I could on the downhills and flats, and kept chasing every runner that I saw out in front of me.

I ended up cruising into Camp Toofy at Mile 93 for the last time thirty minutes under the cut off there. I stayed steadily on pace for the last seven miles of the race. While it was still only about 40 degrees, the Sun was out and after spending most of the night traveling by myself in dead last place, as it turned out, I was seeing more and more fellow runners on the course. I enjoyed the trail running companionship and beautiful sunlit Prince William Park scenery all the way back to the finish line. I ended up finishing in just over 1,856 minutes on the race course, $36^{\text {th }}$ out of 51 finishers and 107 total starters. My total time was $30: 56: 28$, The Devil Dog was a truly challenging and wonderful trail racing experience and I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Devil Dog Buckle and Me Picture.



July 6th 2019
Start: 9am
100 mile course
2247 m of elevation.
30 hour time limit.
$75 \%$ trail/25\% road
Website: www. $1066 . r$ un

## Race Reports

## Dunoon Ultra - 6 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ October 2018

Photos and Text by Stuart Macfarlane

## A saunter around Wee Eck

## The Race

The Dunoon Ultra Marathon is a very friendly race which is perfect for ultra novices as well as seasoned trail runners. It is a hilly trail race of about 33 miles ( 54 k ) with an elevation gain of 1.47 k . The route is well signposted so there is no navigation necessary though there are a few points where it's possible to take the wrong path at a junction and end up in the garden of a farmhouse!


Runners are transported by coach from Dunoon Pier at around 7am for an 8am race start at Benmore Botanical Garden. Teas, coffees and cookies are available free of charge at the Botanical Garden's café.

As the runners stand poised with fingers twitching over watches, a piper plays - when he suddenly stops very loud cannons fire starting the race with a bang.
From the Botanical Garden you run along a path for 1.5 k then climb up a twisty gorge track through magical


Canons at the ready

Pucks Glen with its waterfalls and little bridges, then along the wide forestry trail that climbs high above Loch Eck.

There are fantastic views to the north and south of the loch, particularly as you reach the highest section of the run 600 m above sea level. The route descends through Glenbranter Forest and south on the west side of Loch Eck. From there it's back to Dunoon through the forest trails and natural woodland of Bishop's Glen. The last 1.5 k stretches north alongside the beach giving beautiful views of the hills above the River Clyde. The race finishes with a short run along the iconic Victorian Dunoon Pier. After finishing there is free hot soup, teas and coffee available.

## My Expectations

I have run Dunoon Ultra each year since it started in 2016. My time in 2017 was 5 hours 57 minutes but I

was at peak fitness that year (due to a new training plan I had developed) and had broken all my PBs from 5k to Ultra. This year, due to a health issue, I was lacking any decent training and was well off my peak fitness. (though, as I had completed 3 marathons and 5 ultras since March that excuse is reaching its Use-By-Date).
Before the start I decided that I would not push too hard and allow myself time to take a few photos for this report and enjoy the fabulous views. I gave myself a rough target of around 6 hours 30 minutes.

## Preparation

Many people get the early morning ferry to Dunoon but I prefer to get there on the Friday and stay at a hotel near the pier. That way, instead of having a 5am start, I can drag myself out of bed at 6:30am and walk the short distance to the coach pick-up point.

[^0]There are three checkpoints where drop bags can be collected. I am not good at eating when running so each of my drop bags contained just two 250 ml bottles of water, two bits of fudge and two liquorice toffees.

Registration is open at the pier on the Friday evening as well as Saturday morning - I registered around 5 pm , had a bite to eat then spent a gentle evening in the hotel.

## My Race

I set out at a fairly modest pace. The first 1.5 k is flat and let me ease into the race gently. The climb up the gorge path is steep and single file - resulting in slow progress with a mix of walking and running.

There was a layer of freezing mist hanging over Loch Eck with cold air stretching out to the surrounding hills. It was a strange phenomenon - feeling very cold as you went up through the layer, getting warm again and then getting chilled as you ran back down through the cold layer.
As most of the route is either uphill or downhill it is quite difficult to keep to a target time. On the uphills I often found myself chatting away to other runners and not going as fast as I should have been. As the race progressed I gradually realised that my target was slipping away.
On the flat section along the edge of Loch Eck I listened to music for 30 minutes or so. I usually find that music, in short spells, can give me a
 boost and help me pick up pace. As I reached the final hills at 45k I knew that 6 hours 30 minutes was beyond my grasp. With a bit of effort on the last stretch I reached the

| Year | My Timse | Position | Total Finishers | Total DNF | Fastest Runner | Fastest Lady | Last Runner |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 2016 | $06: 16: 11$ | 45 | 118 | 2 | $04: 13: 38$ | $05: 03: 23$ | $09.00 \cdot 00$ |
| 2017 | $05: 57: 13$ | 33 | 145 | 3 | $03: 54: 53$ | $04: 36: 19$ | 09.09 .24 |
| 2018 | $06: 57: 22$ | 87 | 139 | 4 | $04: 13: 44$ | $05: 02.49$ | $08.56: 28$ |



The amazing trophy - a wee piece of Dunoon history


Taking a quick stop for a photo
finish line at the end of Dunoon Pier in 6 hours 57 minutes - glad that at least I had managed to keep my time under 7 hours.

## Summary

This was my $95^{\text {th }}$ Marathon/ Ultramarathon and only the second time in a race that I had intentionally gone at a slower pace than I was capable of doing. Afterwards I began to regret doing so and questioning whether I actually could have gone faster. I shall have to return in 2019 to find out!

This is an extremely well organised and friendly race on a very scenic route. Running along the promenade being cheered and encouraged by locals and finishing on the
pier makes it very special and unique. The plaque that all finishers get is quite amazing, it is made from reclaimed wood from the old Victorian Pier and, cut into the front, it has an image of a giant redwood tree that stands at the race start.

More information can be found at www.dunoonpresents.co.uk/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ groups/509182309285359/


Freezing mist over Loch Eck (Wee Eck)

## Race Reports

## Centurion Autumn 100

Debbie Coolman

The Centurion Autumn 100, for those who don't know, this is a 100 mile race made up of 4 legs, out and back, with legs of 25 miles. 2 legs are along the Thames Path and 2 along the Ridgeway. Saturday morning saw me at the start. A mixture of excitement and apprehension for the adventure ahead. Dressed for running on a typical mid October day having studied the changeable weather forecast all week, well how hot can it be in the Autumn... very actually, about 23 degrees! For someone experiencing their own personal summers I can do without any extra heat. We were off. As I stepped from the path on to the grass of the river bank all the energy just drained from me. My legs were like lead. If it was at 80 miles I could understand it but with 99.5 miles to go my first thought was... this is going to be a long day. My second thought was I going to be lucky to get to the first checkpoint. Quickly followed by thinking just push on and see what you can do with this.

At the turnaround CP2 there were just 2 runners behind me, one of which was the sweeper! I took a deep breath and pushed on. Race Plan A and B were now discarded and I decided to just keep ahead of the CP closures, plan my CP stops, no faffing, push on and see how I go.
Halfway and I still had 30 minutes to spare. I pushed on to Leg 3. It was dark and raining but a huge challenge to see what I could do. Just push on. At the next CP I had made up another 15 minutes.

Being an out and back race I got the opportunity to see the faster runners...well all the runners as they were heading back to Goring, the central point. Normally most of the elite runners I see only at the start. It gave me the opportunity to offer encouragement and also as the race went on I could see that every runner,
no matter how good they were had their own struggles.
I pushed on. Now the last leg. 25 miles out to Reading and back to Goring. I have to say that the volunteers at every CP were brilliant. So supportive, helpful and encouraging. At the final turnaround at Reading I made it with 3 minutes to go before it closed. The volunteers could have tried to discourage me from continuing but they didn't. They checked I was alright, I had a piece of cheese and they sent me on my way with a huge cheer. 12.5 miles to go, 3.5 hours left ... I pushed on.

I arrived at the last CP , tired, soaked. Just 4 miles left to go. A volunteer met me. I knew my race was over. I was not going to finish those last 4 miles in 50 minutes. I graciously accepted it had beaten me.

I arrived by minibus at the finish in Goring. Not quite how I intended. The disappointment was soon overtaken by the buzz of excitement from all the finishers. Not least Sheila who had not only completed the A100 but successfully achieved the Grand Slam. Amazing just amazing!
For me I am now reflecting on the experience. What can I do differently next time? I can take a lot of positives from the weekend, however, I am hugely disappointed. It was brilliant to see Sheila, Meera, Dario, Christian and Russell there at the end to give me a hug and make sure I was ok. Thank you guys you don't know how appreciated that was.

Centurion Autumn 100... unfinished business... I won't be beaten... I will be back!



## WHEN

## Octoher 5th, 2019 10am - 4pm

## WHERE

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## Race Reports

## Hardwolds 80

James Campbell

On Saturday $24^{\text {th }}$ November 2018, I took part in and completed the inaugural Hardwolds 80 Ultramarathon. A race of 80 miles starting in Hessle and finishing in Filey, travelling mostly along the Wolds Way National Trail. It was the furthest I've ever run.

## Preparation

I was coming into the race off the back of a very poor performance having DNF'd Hardmoors 60 in September at 62 km with a variety of heat related cramp and vomiting issues. Following that setback, I'd spoken at length to a PT Emy Jones and re-assessed how I fuelled, hydrated and actually ran my ultra distance races. The details of which are here.

In the four weeks leading up to the race, I'd had two weeks of peaking at $65-70 \mathrm{~km}$ followed by two taper weeks. In both of my peak weeks, I'd completed long runs of 36 km and 32 km in full race kit, at race effort and in the final of the peak weeks, I'd gone back out in the afternoon of my long run day to run 16 km on tired legs $/$ mind.

There was absolutely no doubt in my mind that I was physically capable of completing the distance, it was just a matter of pacing it right. To that end, I intended to run to my heart rate, aiming to keep my average lap ( 1 km ) heart rate at $<=140 \mathrm{BPM}$ and if that meant using the full 24 hour time limit, so be it.

My main concern was how I would cope mentally, my last outing above 100 km was my failed attempt at Hardmoors 110 when I'd had a pretty spectacular mental implosion and ended up with a DNF at 110km rather than a finish at 110 miles. I spent some time thinking about this and resolved to spend the week leading up to the race, eliminating anything that might cause me undue stress from my day to day life and race preparation. I tried to resolve this with "actions on" for scenarios that might occur on the day that could derail my mood.
The day before the race, my wife and I travelled to Filey and upon checking in to our B\&B, I got my kit quickly into the room and went to bed for a couple of hours kip. After that, I spent some time pulling my kit and drop bags together and placed it all in the wardrobe by the door to minimise any disturbance on my way out of the room.
We went for tea and when we got back, I taped my feet. This was something I usually did on the morning of the race, but I have found it quite stressful on the morning, especially if doing it in a semi dark room and trying to be quiet. It was also really good to have my wife available to help me. After taping my feet, I put some socks on to hold the tape in place and we both went to bed at 9 pm .

## Part 1

In the morning, I woke about 10 minutes before my 4 am alarm, got up, quickly had breakfast and got dressed. The weather in the preceding days had been rainy and wet, so I opted for wearing waterproof socks over my running socks as my feet had got pretty wet during my summer recces with morning dew on the grass to soak them.

It was a 5 minute walk to the bus pick up point and having got there, I spent some time chatting with Adrian Martin before the buses arrived. I then located Dave Cook and Dee Bouderba who I sat with and the journey to Hull passed fairly quickly.

Upon arrival, it was still dark which made for an interesting walk down to the Hessle foreshore from the car park, but the sight that greeted us was stunning, the Humber Bridge at dawn.


Humber Bridge at Dawn - Photo by Ian Gorin
Signing on for the race didn't take long and with some time to kill before the race brief, I chatted with Tom Stewart about the day ahead. The weather seemed hard to judge, there was a cold breeze blowing off the river, but the ambient temperature felt warm. I decided to start in the warm kit and strip layers off if needed.
With the race brief completed, we all lined up to start under the Humber Bridge. My aim was to run to my heart rate, which would be slow, I positioned myself fairly far back so as not to get in the way of faster runners. Without any real fanfare at all, we were off on our epic journey.


Ready to go! Jane Raper, Tom Stewart and myself at the start - Photo by Ann Brown

## Hessle - Welton (9km)

This first section of the race headed off on a firm riverside track for a few hundred metres to a gate, where Race Director Jon Steele had warned we would be bottlenecked. Instead of queuing for the gate I chose to go through a gap in the fence along with a few others and jumping down to the pebbled beach on the foreshore. There was about 500 m of shale surface before we were back on hard packed trail. As I'd suspected, as soon as I was moving, I was beginning to feel too warm, so I opened my jacket, took off my hat and buff. I noticed plenty of others were ditching their warm clothes too.

I ran for short sections with Matthew Swan, Andy Nesbit and Emma Giles before dropping back as my Suunto told me my heart rate was tipping over the 140BPM speed limit I'd set myself. I used the walk break to squeeze bangers and mash flavoured baby food into my mouth before jogging on and catching up with Andy and Emma.
We jogged together through North Ferriby before I again dropped off in obedience to my heart rate strategy.
I reached the road crossing at the A63 on the 40 minute mark and was quite pleased with the average pace of around $7: 15 / \mathrm{km}$. I knew that I would now slow as I headed off road and into the woods towards Melton, I walked the hill. As I did so, I overtook Andy and Emma and was caught by Sean Higgins who I chatted with for a while. I began running at the top of the hill, coinciding with my Suunto stopping it's beeping telling me that my heart rate was again back to an acceptable level. As I descended through the scout campsite, I was pleased to note that my legs felt good and seemed hungry to get some running done, but they'd have to wait because I reached the road crossing at Melton, which signalled the start of another climb.

I chatted and ran with a female runner up the hill and through the woods, stopping to walk several times when

Suunto started chirping at me to slow down again. As we reached the tarmac road that drops into Welton, the other runner pulled away from me. As it was downhill all the way, I chose to ignore the beeping from my wrist and ran all the way into the village before walking as we turned the corner at $1 \mathrm{~h}: 03 \mathrm{~m}$, heading towards Welton Dale.

## Welton - Brantingham ( 6.85 km )

As we left the village of Welton, we were amused by a cat that decided to flop in the road and roll about, seemingly unaware that it was in the midst of a group of runners. It then hopped up, skipped to a driveway to continue it's rolling. At this point I'd caught up with Emily Beaumont and Michelle Boshier and could see Dave and Dee about 50 m ahead. We pressed on through the wet grass of Welton Dale. I was pleased to note that the path was fenced off from the rest of the dale, as this section had been populated by cows in the summer. Sure enough, at the end of the dale, as we entered the wood, the cows were all laid in the field adjacent to the path.
As we passed through the gate, we were caught again by Sean Higgins. I again obeyed the incessant beeping of the Suunto, the group slightly pulled away from me as I walked up the hill through the woods.

I walked along behind Emily and Michelle until the ground flattened out and we emerged from the woods, the path turned right here and ran parallel to the road, however the muddy path that continued uphill, was considerably trickier than the road. I got a jog on as we turned left across a field and made ground towards Dave and Dee in front of me trotting along very comfortably, I was feeling warm despite the overcast skies.
At around $1 \mathrm{~h}: 40 \mathrm{~m}$, I'd finished my first packet of baby food and first bottle of fluids. I'd started the day with 500 ml sugar free Vimto cordial with 2 High5 tablets and 500 ml of plain water. I put two fresh High5 tablets into the empty bottle before tipping my plain water into it. I do this to avoid contaminating my plain water bottle, just in case I ever need it to wash an injury or cut.
Shortly after this, I passed the OpenTracking team, who appeared to be lying in wait for someone whose tracker wasn't behaving. Not long after that I descended toward Brantingham, supplementing my baby food diet with a chocolate orange Chia Charge bar (which by the way, are the best flavour so far). I arrived at the Brantingham CP at $2 \mathrm{~h}: 05 \mathrm{~m}$, topped up my empty plain water bottle and grabbed a handful of peanuts before moving on.

## Brantingham - South Cave (3km)

I spotted Dave and Dee just ahead of me and tried to close ground on them running along the nice road section that

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led away from Brantingham. I was about 20m behind when we turned left off the road onto the steep wooded climb towards Ellerker North Wold.

As expected, as soon as I was on the climb, Suunto was beeping at me again, so I fast walked up the hill and found Dave and Dee standing at the top having a chat. I ran with them for a short while as the path dipped up and down before finally tilting back up for a long, steep climb which I knew from my summer reconnaissance was the last climb before South Cave.

My Suunto was now annoying me with the beeping, so I covered it up with my jacket and enjoyed the peace that was only disturbed by my heavy breathing as I climbed the hill. Once back on the flat at the top, my breathing and heart rate settled back down. I passed through Mount Airey Farm back onto a long tarmac descent into South Cave, which I ran at a nice steady pace, observing where the runners ahead went as they passed over the road. I hadn't managed to recce South Cave to Goodmanham in the summer, so it was a bit of a step into the unknown, but I'd tried my best to memorise the route description and pored over the maps in the week before the race. I had a feeling that the climb out of South Cave was a long drag and what I could see as I descended toward the village backed that up, so I readied my poles as I arrived into South Cave at $2 \mathrm{~h}: 32 \mathrm{~m}$.

## South Cave - Goodmanham (17.8km)

I was now almost 19 km into the race and feeling good, however the sun had come out and I was starting to feel warm as I climbed, using the poles, I was clearly moving faster than the runners in front of me as I could see the gap closing. The only real annoyance to me was that my heart rate was now pretty much constantly above the limit I'd set myself. I was looking forward to getting past the 24 km mark when my watch was programmed to stop beeping heart rate alerts at me.

I was feeling pretty pleased with my judgement of this climb, what appeared on the ground, was exactly what I'd expected based on the map and description. As I reached the top, I felt really strong and ran quickly down the hill, through the next fold in the land and toward the wooded section, closing the gap on the runner in front some more.
As I turned the corner through a gate into the woods, I felt the first twinge of a blister on my left little toe. I ignored it, as I often get a hotspot on this toe and I'd already written off the possibility of a blister there as a result of wearing waterproof socks.
I slowed to a walk to have another Chia Charge bar and was overtaken by a runner (Sean Higgins I think). While I was eating, I became aware of the booms of gunshots from the nearby woods. Once I'd finished eating, I got another run on and I had gone a couple of hundred metres when I heard
the sound of an air horn up to my right.
All of a sudden, I realised I was surrounded by gentlemen with guns, dogs and beaters carrying game birds that had been shot. I bet they didn't expect to have a couple of hundred runners marching through the middle of their shoot. I climbed up the hill out of the woods with the runner I'd been closing down since South Cave and jogged along the edge of the fields that the path took us along. Away to our right, I could see a road and a beacon, which I remembered from the route description. I was expecting the path to take us across the field, but typically of this route, it stayed along the edge, adding a few hundred metres to the distance we had to cover.

As I crossed over the road and turned right by the beacon, I passed through the 24 km mark and into blessed silence from the Suunto. To celebrate, I started running intervals of 800 m run and a 200 m walk. The time passed well, it also got me moving at around $6 \mathrm{~m}: 45 \mathrm{~s} / \mathrm{km}$ for a couple of kms with the added psychological benefit of bringing me into contact with bigger groups of runners. Up to this point I had started to feel a little paranoid that I was moving really slowly and I was almost at the back of the race. Placing in the race was, for me, irrelevant, however I was concerned that if I was moving too slowly I'd be in danger of missing cut offs which we'd been informed at the race brief would be strictly enforced.


The path was now taking me through a deep valley, which turned left and opened out slightly. About 400 m in front of me, I could see Sean Higgins and another runner about the same distance ahead of him. From my memory of the map, I knew this valley ended at a road so I resolved to try and catch both before the road. To do this, I ran intervals of 600 m running and 400 m walking. Within four minutes, I'd caught and passed Sean and was making decent ground on the runner ahead, who I'd nicknamed "Red Shirt" based on his clothing choice.

As we moved through the valley, I spotted a familiar face up ahead, it was Laura Bradshaw of SportSunday photography, so I shouted a greeting and tried not to look too knackered as she snapped away. Shortly after I spotted David Bradshaw and again tried to look composed as I passed him by with a good luck greeting ringing in my ears.


As I approached the road, I closed the distance on "Red Shirt" and he assumed the familiar shape of Ryk Downes. I caught Ryk as we passed some walkers heading out from their cars. One of the lady walkers appeared to be paying close attention to the top of my legs, when I realised she was trying to read the event details on my race number. We explained what we were up to and the walkers wished us luck, with Ryk and I moving on having a few words before I got back into my run/walk intervals.

After a short road section, the path turned left and yet again, upwards on a grass path. I spotted another runner ahead and saw that she was wearing a single pink calf guard, so named her "Pink Calf Guard". I checked my watch and saw that I'd just passed 28 km , so only another 100 km to go! I knew the Arras Wold CP was at 32 km , to keep myself motivated, I decided to try and close the gap and catch pink leg by the CP. At this point she was so far ahead that she was almost out of sight but slowly the distance was coming down.

I passed a trig point on my right with wind turbines in the field to my left and remembered from my map studies this was almost exactly 2 km from the CP. I finished my supply of High5/water and decided to fill that up directly at the CP.

The path now joined a road, which I knew ran all the way to the CP. As well as "Pink Calf Guard", who was now only 50 m or so ahead, I could see several other runners either solo or in small groups strung out all the way up the road to where I could see a line of parked cars, which I assumed was the CP.

I arrived into the CP at $4 \mathrm{~h}: 26 \mathrm{~m}$, passing "Pink Calf Guard" as she stopped at her crew car and spotted Scott Beaumont (who was crewing his wife Emily). I had a few words while I stocked up on CP food and my empty bottle was filled with flat Coke by the sage John Vernon. I jogged away from the CP and arrived at the marshalled road crossing before I realised I'd broken with my plan to avoid sugary drinks for as long as possible. I briefly thought about tipping the Coke out and going back to get my bottle topped up with water but thought better of it.

I jogged down the road toward Arras Farm and saw a lane bearing left, followed by a path left in front of the farm buildings and an option to go between the farm buildings. From memory, I knew the path took an arc left at Arras Farm, but I couldn't remember if it was before or after the buildings, confusion which was further compounded by a sign warning farm visitors not to pass into the yard. Both the left turns before the buildings felt wrong and with no runners in sight to give confidence to the route, I stopped and took the safe option of checking the route on my Suunto. This told me that the path went between the farm buildings and turned left behind them. Grateful that I'd avoided a navigation error, I turned the navigation off on my Suunto to save the battery, then I headed through the farm buildings and out into a muddy field.

Running along the edge of the field, I had a view of the next 1.5 km or so and could see that there were many runners ahead. Coupled with the fact I knew I'd passed a large group at the CP , my mind felt at ease as I was now somewhere in the middle of the race and running at a reasonable pace relative to the cut-offs. I did some mental maths and worked out that I'd completed 33 km in $4 \mathrm{~h}: 33 \mathrm{~m}$ and was about 17 km from the first cut-off which had a time limit of 9 hours, so barring disaster, I'd be through it with plenty to spare. I estimated based on current progress I'd probably arrive at Millington around the 7 and a half hour mark, which I would be very happy with.

The field I was running through had power lines parallel to the path, so I set myself up doing run/walk intervals at a rate of 1 pylon per interval and was soon running alongside the back marker of a group I'd seen ahead. We were descending through a very slippy field and I decided to back off a little whereas he pushed on ahead toward the road.

As I reached the road, I spotted him taking the left turn along the Hudson Way, which leads to Market Weighton instead of continuing along the Wolds Way. This was

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something I had been keeping an eye out for myself as the route description warns that the signposting here is ambiguous. I tried a quick shout to get his attention, but he continued running. I had remembered that he was wearing headphones, so I thought that was it.

I was joined by "Pink Calf Guard" who (at the finish line) I realised was Lauryn Bentham, whose progress in completing as many marathons/ultras as possible between April 2018-2019 for MacMillan Cancer Support I have been following online, link here.

Lauryn gave an almighty shout of "YOU'RE GOING THE WRONG WAY!!!" and still had no response, so we jogged on together. Suddenly we heard the runner approaching behind us, he thanked Lauryn before jogging off up the hill while we slowed to a walk and chatted (Lauryn was trying to work out where she recognised me from).

As the road tilted uphill, I slowed to a walk and Lauryn pulled away from me. I had a quick check of my watch and judged myself to be around 800 m from Goodmanham at exactly 5 hours, which I was pretty pleased with as it had only taken me $1 \mathrm{~h}: 50 \mathrm{~m}$ to run Goodmanham to Millington in the summer. To celebrate, I had another chocolate orange Chia Charge and jogged into Goodmanham at 5h:05m.

## Goodmanham - Nunburnholme (8km)

Although I was pleased to be back on familiar ground, having recce'd the Goodmanham to Millington section in the summer, I did notice on the downhill leaving the village, that the hotspot on my left little toe had very definitely become a blister. Even so, I bounced energetically all the way down the hill, under the old railway bridge and took a bit of a breather to walk back up through the woods toward the fields that I knew were fairly runnable.
I took a drink of Coke from my bottle, it tasted foul, I'd ditch it at the next opportunity. As I climbed up into the fields, I could see Lauryn ahead and just beyond her, another group of runners. I started jogging and after a few minutes, felt hot. I took a sip from the Coke and decided enough was enough and tipped it out. I then decanted my plain water into the bottle and reached for my tube of High5 tabs. Once opened, what came out, was dust. I tipped the dust from the palm of my hand into the bottle and looked into the tube. The bouncing about in the tube had eroded the tablets, one was wedged sideways. I managed to get what remained of two tablets out and into
my bottle. I packed the tube away, put the lid on my bottle and jogged onwards around the edge of the field.

As I approached the picnic area at Towthorpe, I passed Lauryn, who had met up with her crew. I pushed on over the busy road jogging alongside the field in pursuit of one of the back markers from the group I'd seen ahead.

I followed the straggler onto the road which curves gently downhill for 200 m or so before you turn left to a pleasant downhill run across a field into the Londesborough Estate. In the middle of the Estate, there is a small bridge across a beck flanked by a pond and that's where I caught him, it turned out to be Jonathan Jamison, at the very same time Lauryn caught me.

Once over the bridge which marked the 40 km point of the run, Lauryn and Jonathan pushed on ahead up the hill faster than I could manage. Up ahead, I spotted a cow in their path and observed it being very nervous as they passed, I gave it a very wide berth and jogged the next bit of downhill before walking up into Londesborough village. Walking through the village I noted that the weather was in the nature of a pleasant early autumn evening rather than a late November afternoon. I took another large pull on my water bottle before jogging on.

On the way out of Londesborough, I spotted Scott
Beaumont parked up waiting for Emily and said "hi". He asked if I had everything I needed? With tipping the Coke out of my bottle in mind, I asked if he could spare some water. A small act that went a long way to ensuring that I could remain on top of my drinking. Thanking Scott, I left the village and made good use of the long tarmac stretch to Partridge Hall farm with sustained stints of running while it felt good to do so, even if my left foot was starting to feel the blister each time the road headed downhill.

After running through Partridge Hall farm, I was pleased to note that the field, which had contained belligerent cows during my summer recce, now contained sheep. I could see another runner halfway across the field and I pressed hard through the first really muddy section of the day (I almost lost a shoe) overtaking the runner, who turned out to be Hezel Magwili before slithering through the gate at the other end of the field. Once through the gate, I jogged on, genuinely enjoying the rough ground and squelchy mud.
Soon, I reached the top of the descent into Nunburnholme. I used the descent to get a proper run on to stretch my legs, arriving into the village at $6 \mathrm{~h}: 18 \mathrm{~m}$.

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## Race Reports

## Dusk til Dawn

## Alex Mason



Iam in a dark place. The 550 lumens from my head torch cut through the clear night sky and bounce back off the frozen ground.

The heed from Richard, the race organiser is locked in my mind, "Once you're on Rushup Edge, just keep going, it will be bitterly cold with a wind chill of -5 C .

The best advice is to just get over there as quick as you can."

I stumble and trip forward like a drunkard as the wind cuts through my three layers to my cold wet skin. Only five miles to go and this is the final test, the end of game baddie.

I am in a dark place. I am in 'Dusk til Dawn'.

Dusk til Dawn is a race in the Peak District of either half, full or ultra marathon (50 mile) options. You start at dusk and try to finish the race before dawn. Depending on your finish time you are awarded either Black (before 3am or top 10), Gold (finish 3am to 5am, next 25), Silver (5am to sunrise, next 2) and then Bronze (after sunrise and remaining competitors).

This year we had an extra hour of daylight, 'Eddie's Hour' in honour of Richard's father who sadly passed away this year.

The course is back loaded with the elevation, there are a significant amount of fast easy sections in the first half to burn through the miles.
This is my fourth time of
doing DtD, being $3^{\text {rd }}, 7^{\text {th }}$ and $2^{\text {nd }}$. I'd recently won the 'Gritstone Grind', one of Beyond Marathon's other events. The expectations were high for me to win this one, however my training normally consists of 5 mile runs with hardly anything of distance.

I caught up with fellow Spartan Jon Hawker who was doing the full marathon at registration. Whilst Richard was briefing us on the race ahead I was scoping out the other runners. I used to worry about what other people were wearing and carrying, have I got too much/too little, why am I carrying so little kit....? Now I'm a lot more experienced and confident in my abilities I just 'window shop' their kit.
There was a small field of runners this year and we all followed the same route to start with, the half and full peeling off at different places. There was nothing on the numbers to indicate who was doing what distance so I could be running along with a half runner and going off too fast.

The hooter went and we

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## were off!

I settled into a steady pace as we ran along the road to Castleton, there was a lady running with just a vest on her top half, she's either proper hardcore or nuts I thought.
As we turned out of Castleton towards the first climb I had worked my way up through the field and was leading the way. I wasn't really putting much effort in, just running steady. I fell in with another runner, Billy Craig and we got chatting, he was doing the half, hed done the ultra before and won it the first year I ran it.
We contoured up to Back Tor and I dropped into walking mode - still just under 50 miles to go, no point blowing up just yet.
I was caught and passed
by a handful of runners as I enjoyed a few seconds recovering taking some piccies of the beautiful setting sun, the field already stretched out:

I just ran at my own pace and soon caught the leading runners as we headed back into Castleton. Here was the $1^{\text {st }}$ checkpoint (CP), I stopped and filled up on pop, sweets and whatever else I could get in.
The next climb is up through Cave Dale, the lead runners had dashed off and I hoped that they were either half or full marathon runners.

Towards the top of Cave Dale I took a wrong turn, heading off what I thought was the Limestone way
turning, I quickly self corrected and jumped through the undergrowth to get back on track. At the end of Cave Dale I was with two other runners, James and Mark who I tried to run with but my legs just drifted away and they dropped off behind.

On the top I couldn't see any other runners so they must have legged it or were half marathon runners. The light was fading now and I was in a game of headtorch chicken.

This section of the Limestone Way is slightly downhill and very easy to run on, being either wide farm tracks or roads. Time to open up the legs and get some distance in whilst the going is good.
Working hard on the first two climbs made me sweat and I was feeling cold now, despite having a base, T-shirt and jacket on. I couldn't pull my hood up as I had my cap on. I'd brought a hat which I decided I would swap out at the next CP at Miller's Dale.

I could just about make


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out a runner ahead and as I gained I could see they had put their head torch on, I was still holding out as I was on an easy road section. It didn't make sense to not turn it on as I would be getting fresh batteries for it in a few miles anyway so with that thought I turned my head torch on.
I caught the lead runner, Mark and we descended into the $2^{\text {nd }} \mathrm{CP}$ at Miller's Dale where we must have been running too fast as the CP was just being setup. More pop, sweets, flapjack and anything else I could
scoff. Hat change and gloves on and then Mark and I headed out together up the tough but short climb out of Miller's Dale towards Priestcliffe.

We fell in together and helped each other across the fields towards Priestcliffe and onto a road section. Mark was dropping off the pace a bit and I kept adjusting my pace for Mark to stay with me. After a while I looked round and he was nowhere to be seen so I carried on eating up the easy miles.

Near the next CP at Earl Sterndale where the drop bags are you have to cross some fields which have always caused me a nightmare before as there is no path and you cannot see the exit point of the field. I'd entered the route into my GPS watch and was following it closely. At the other side of the field there was barbed wire and a wall where the path should be, oh well, I'm not messing about looking for the stile so over the wall and barbed wire. The next few fields were okay and I got to the CP.

I had an energy drink, scoffed my face and took the spare battery before heading out.
I was now feeling pretty cold and wanted to turn round and get back to the CP for a DNF. I couldn't, though I was leading, I wasn't strong enough to DNF so I kept on.

Another short steep climb took me to the top of the rutted path alongside the quarries. On the top I was exposed to the biting wind which cut through me, my Innov- 8 race shell jacket wasn't enough, I needed to get warmer and put my OMM jacket on. This was in my pack which would mean a 1 minute stop to swap out. I was mentally visualising the route ahead to think where there is some shelter to stop, the trees after the Raceway. I'll stop there, a little reward.

I ground out the road alongside Buxton Raceway, hood up, gloves on. Not a happy place. I descended and just before my planned
stop. I came between a cut through and instantly made the decision to stop here and swap jackets. A minute of pain and discomfort and then my OMM was on. I felt so much better, like I'd just slipped into a nice warm bed. My spirits instantly lifted and I felt back with it. With my improved state I cracked on to the next CP at Derbyshire Bridge.
This was at about halfway, I think I got there in about 4 hr 20, not bad for 28 miles of running.

More food, pop and a grab then I was off out up to Shining Tor. This is the highest point of the route and again totally exposed. I was cold again but running well. I had my base, T-Shirt, jacket, gloves, hat on, hood up and now a multitube (buff) but I was still cold. I guess just wearing shorts on my bottom half didn't help. I did have a long sleeve base layer still in my bag for absolute emergencies.

I ran well off Shining Tor towards Windgather Rocks through Taxal and struggled with run/walk over Eccles Pike into Chinley where my headtorch started to flash to warn me it was on low. Good timing as I was now in Chinley where the streetlights helped me swap over my battery.
Into the penultimate $C P$ there is an out and back section. I wanted to clear this without meeting any other runners, doing so would mean I had at least 1 K distance but mainly a psychological advantage.
More run/walk up over Chinley and Mount Famine.

## Race Reports



There is a valley here and looking back I couldn't see any head torches, this must
mean I had probably 20-30 minutes advantage over the next runner. It's never a
given as it's easy to mistake a head torch for an outside light or car.

I was still really cold, snot was flying everywhere, I had maybe 8 miles to go and just had to push on to the finish, I couldn't quit now.

More food and pop at the last CP at Rushup Edge before the final push up and over Rushup Edge and Mam Tor. Looking back I couldn't see any head torches.

I'd ran up Rushup Edge many times before, it's not too steep to force a walk but has a lot of loose and uneven rocks under foot that disrupts your stride pattern and makes for a difficult run.
I was in a dark place.
Just five miles to go. I want to die, this is probably one of the worst experiences of my life.
The wind was just brutal, blowing me around, making me stumble and trip, freezing me to the core. I had to get off this ridge. I had to keep running.

I was in a dark place.
Soon enough the ridge levelled and I was heading down again. A climb up and over Mam Tor, down to Hollins Cross and the descent from hell back down to the road. I could clearly see back up to Mam Tor and still no head torches.

I kept up the pace on the road and back to the finish at Hope.
I was ruined, that has got to have been one of the hardest races I'd ever done, just brutal. I think it was only hard because I pushed hard, I could have trundled/ walked round and it would have been a lot easier, but what's the point in that? Results:
https://beyondmarathon. com/dusk-til-dawn/ results-2018/
Thank You to Richard and the marshalls for helping and supporting out on the route, it is greatly appreciated.

## Race Reports

# The Ridgeway Challenge 86 Miles UK Trail Running Championships August 2018 

Debbie Bidmead



This was my first 'real' Ultra distance event having completed numerous trail marathons and 100 km events. It was time to take the next step towards eventually entering a 100 mile Ultra next year.
I took the August Bank Holiday weekend (travelling from Devon) as an opportunity to stay with my Aunt and Uncle knowing that my Uncle would drive the two and a half hour journey from Marlborough to take me to the start at Ivinghoe Beacon near Tring in Hertfordshire.

My Aunt and Uncle are alien to any form of running and believe that I am only going to cause myself irreversible physical damage if I persist with this form of torturous recreation, it has happened already in their eyes!
On driving to Ivinghoe Beacon my Uncle was still trying to insist I find a $B \& B$ stop halfway as I explained that the R86 is merely a fun run compared to the epic Ultra events that are written about in this very magazine. I also explained to my Uncle that it's a 'flat one' and a good debut event to
start my Ultra ambitions.
I was starting with the 'fun runners' at 10.00 am with the championship athletes starting at noon. It was time for my Uncle to leave me and as he did he gave me the encouraging words I needed to fill me with determination to complete, "You must be nuts!"
The Ridgeway is one of the oldest thoroughfares recorded and so I was looking forward to a very magical and spiritual journey.
Ivinghoe Beacon alone gifted me with sensational views with the best weather conditions for this event.
It soon became clear as I progressed along the Ridgeway that it was going to be a spectacular route through rolling countryside and woodlands rich in seasonal colours and scents. The local running clubs along the way supported some feed stations which were plentiful and vegan friendly. The Ridgeway for a time wended its way alongside the majestic River Thames and it was a joy to see the local bird life gathering along the banks amongst the humans sitting on their boats on a hazy summers day sipping wine. I was offered a tipple myself as I trotted by to the comments of, "that looks like hard work". I explained what I was doing, and yep the response was the usual, "You must be mad!"
On arriving at Goring the halfway point I was greeted with a delicious hot meal with every special diet catered for and here our night time kit bags were waiting to change ready for the night.
Onward I pressed feeling fit and strong under the most beautiful full moon. This was my first ever experience of running through the night.

The peacefulness and the night time wildlife sounds, especially the owls filled me with excitement and the wish that the night would never end. I saw distant head torches and eventually I arrived at the 70 mile checkpoint where there was a warming fire beacon with everything you could ever need.

I was on the homeward run to Avebury the finish. I started running into dawn break, how magical was this experience, to see the sun rise and hear birdsong erupt. At 8.30am I arrived in Avebury to the cheers and support from strangers, helpers, my Uncle and my Aunty.
As I walked crookedly and somewhat broken (in a good ecstatic way I hasten to add) into the race headquarters I was greeted with my superb medal and a much needed cup of tea. I lowered myself onto a chair with the assistance of my Aunt, knowing I was not going to get up easily after a period of time, beware the chair!
It was then my Aunt looked at me and asked me why, Debbie dear? WHY?
I explained that for me it was time spent alone whilst in a superbly organised event exploring the stunning scenery that I would

otherwise not have the opportunity to do. For me there is no pressure for personal best times and it's all about my inner soul and mind strength, my self-belief and confidence to complete such a challenge. I have met some of the most interesting, like minded folk who share my passion for the freedom of running. The support from the organisers and passing spectators is always quite overwhelming no matter what time of the day or night.
The Ridgeway was everything I wanted the experience to be. I had respectfully completed a magical and
for me a spiritual journey, at one with Mother Nature and fellow athletes.
No Uncle and Aunty I am not mad it's the rest of the world who are mad as they clearly do not run or even want to understand the reason why people would participate in Ultra events. They will never experience the camaraderie and the great human spirits that organise, help and support these events. Thank you the TRA for my first time experience at a 'real' Ultra. Everything including the weather was just perfect. I will be back. I have been bitten by the 'bug'!


## Race Reports

## Slower Than A Snail On A Turtles Back

Photos and Text Leila Majewska


Y3PU: Start

It's January 2019 already, I've just finished High Fells of Hedgehope HM after few months of stagnating and not doing a thing.

Let's go back to October and how it all started.

After a few weeks battling chest infections, finally the time came for my next ultra adventure - Yorkshire 3 Peaks Ultra organised by Ranger Ultras.

I got up in the early morning organised my kit ready for an adventure. By my side my most faithful fan - our nearly 4 year old daughter Maya - and my rock Mike. Even though I
hadn't done any training for over a month I felt capable of doing it. How wrong I was...

We arrived at the village hall, picked up my tracker with my race number and the race began.

The terrain was difficult and grassy and, as I quickly found out - wet, wet, wet!

Being at the very end (which is usually where I start all races as it takes me a good 4-6 miles to warm up), I had beautiful views and with very generous cutoffs, lots of time to enjoy the day.

I didn't expect that a few minutes later the wind
would blow and clouds covered the sky with greyish colours. Trying not to lose the spirit of a fighter I power walked with poles up the first little hill to reach what I thought was the Pennine Way (my navigating skills still aren't perfect $\%$ ) which was supposed to lead me to the first of 3 Yorkshire Peaks. Finally reaching a rocky flattish path I started to run with my poles. My watch buzzed and I looked down to to check the distance - how silly of me to stop looking at the route. My pole became caught in fence wires and made me bounce back. I pulled sharply to release
poles from the wires and lost my ground. I fell in a puddle and knocked my head on the rocks. Not sure how long it lasted. I got up, soaking wet and carried on walking but felt really dizzy and had trouble holding my balance. The front runners from the other race passed me and then I knew I was very late and perhaps I had lost a bit time lying on the ground. It started to get really cold, wind blowing on my wet clothes caused me to shiver and I started to feel even more dizzy. I heard the noise of some cars in the distance and tried to step aside to let the cars pass but they stopped. After a minute of


## Race Reports



Y3PU: After being rescued by 4 x 4 expedition
chat they decided to take me to the nearest CP as I was suspected of suffering concussion - which in fact was later confirmed. I sat in the car with two blankets over me, shivering and shaking.

Dizzy and nauseous I realised that was the end of my ultra race - 5 miles in. I felt crushed - my first ever DNF. I felt that I had disappointed myself and my beloved - regarding this I was wrong.

A $4 \times 4$ expedition car took me to the nearest CP where the marshals took care of me. I received warm water with squash and several jackets to keep me warm. Not sure how long it took me to do 5.3 miles as I only remembered the stopwatch once I was warm in the car. The watch
showed 5.3 miles, 1337 ft elevation and 2 h 5 min . It made a memorable photo that day as a warning to be more careful with poles next time. Once I reached the village hall I called Mike to turn back with Maya as I had retired. I sat in the hall holding a bowl in case I vomited, hot tea was provided, I was very well cared for by Stu Westfield (Race Director of Ranger Ultras). Let me say - the race was a very well organised and in this specific situation I received immediate help and advice.

Twenty minutes later Mike arrived with Maya, he helped me to get changed into dry clothes and took me home. I've seen a doctor who confirmed mild concussion with hypothermia and advised
rest. At home Mike did a tremendous job of taking care of me and I can't remember when I had such a restful day.

With just two weeks to the Wooler Marathon organised by Trail Outlaws I didn't really have time to rest and was eager to go out and train, but... my body decided it was a great time to get ill again. Two days later it was bronchitis and I ended up with another set of antibiotics sitting at home doing nothing towards getting fit. The more I stayed home on top of losing muscle power I also put on weight. Unbelievable, 17 lbs over 4 months. To be fair my weight was always all over the place and I can go down 15lbs in a month and up, but this doesn't change the fact that it makes running even harder.

It's the $10^{\text {th }}$ November, Mike and I spend a lovely day marshalling Goathland Marathon series organised by Hardmoors and then set off for Wooler. After a lovely night camping in the back of the car it was time to get up and go to register.

The $11^{\text {th }}$ November welcomed us with a chilly, wettish morning. Mike and I went to collect our race numbers and get ready for the race. Mike was very stubborn and insisted on running with me to make sure I finished. I knew deep inside that I would be late for the CP2 cut-off and would end up timed out so after 3 miles of jogging together. He finally listened to my requests and went on to chase up the rest of the runners. I stayed at the back trying to push as much as I could, still on antibiotics, it was hard, really hard. I reached CP1 with 15 min to spare and without stopping I started the climb up Cheviot. I knew I wouldn't finish the race, I knew I would be timed out. I felt an incredibly desperate need to go up Cheviot and prove to myself that even though I wouldn't make it in time I would still push myself to my maximum and treat it as a great training. I knew Mike was sure I would pull out at the first CP, so I wanted to surprise him. It was not due to lack of faith in me, it would be a reasonable thing to do, not as reasonable as not racing


[^1]
## Race Reports


at all. I guess he expected I would just give in since it was obvious I wouldn't make it on time.

I didn't give up and went up Cheviot!

It was tough, very tough. I was sliding in mud like knife in melted butter (should have put on my Salomon Speedcross instead of Scott's Kinabalu). I couldn't catch my breath and going up I was slower than snail on turtle's back going in the opposite direction. I felt a bit of pain in my arches and my left knee but my main problem was breathlessness and lack of energy. After several hours I managed to climb up Cheviot and reach CP2, where there was Mountain Rescue and marshalls with
a fellow runner who had pulled out. I said that I was aware I was late and I was timed out and it was a finish for me. I thought it would make it easier for marshalls who perhaps expected I would try to argue my way onwards - in all fairness I perhaps would have if it were not for the fact that the Race Directors are my friends and it wouldn't be fair. I had reached CP2 around 40 min late, I was ready to go down to the car and back to the YHA hostel. How surprised I was that we had nearly 4 miles of walking down to reach the car. At this point I regretted I hadn't carried on. At least I had a proper training run, I had done 3,624ft over 11.7 in 4 h 32 min and then another 3.8 miles down to

the car. I guess I can only be happy with how far I'd gone and that I gave all I had in me. So here it was my 2nd DNF in a row. Mike comforted me with the fact that I was ill for so long and most people wouldn't even go to the start line in my condition. I still had some regret and wondered, could I have pushed a bit more and finished? I guess that is a question we all ask ourselves after races.

Taken back by car to the YHA, I quickly changed into dry clothes. I also got all the stuff from the car
at the calendar as I had two races coming up in December - $15^{\text {th }}$ Forest of Bowland marathon and on the $16^{\text {th }}$ Winter Trails in Cheviots. By the beginning of December issues with my tooth had progressed to such a level that I was sure I was not able to run marathon. I messaged Stu Repon (Race Director of Howler Events) to put me in for marshalling instead of racing. It was a wise decision to not run though not necessarily wise to marshall. A storm came and the weather

for Mike, to have them ready for when he finished. Tim (Trail Outlaws Race Director) found a job to keep me busy. Very ironic of him to put me at the finish line marking times of runners finishing the race after I didn't finish, but it did cheer me up.

Once I was home, I signed up for the double Wooler Marathon challenge in 2019 - half marathon and marathon as the Cheviots and I had unfinished business.

A week later I got rid of the bronchitis and was nervously looking
was horrendous. It was very cold and the rain was freezing on my clothes. The runners passing through our CP were soaking wet and covered in ice. Mike and I gave some runners our gloves so they could carry on but shortly after Mountain Rescue requested the race be stopped. Having already 5 runners retiring at our CP we had to stop all the others from carrying on. Mike took hypothermic runners in his car and drove them to the finish hall. I stayed with one marshal, Máriusz, at the CP. Twenty minutes later we had 8 hypothermic runners at the

## Race Reports



CP and no facilities to keep them warm. One lady was really freezing and having symptoms of shock from the cold, I gave her my hat and jacket. The runners had their foil blankets and we tried to stay in a group like penguins to keep her warm and ourselves. Mountain Rescue arrived and gave us bivi bags to get the runners warm. I was so busy taking care of runners that I didn't notice I had gone cold myself. It was only when I was asked to go into a bivi bag as I looked hypothermic, I realised I had hands covered with frozen ice. Once all the
runners were taken to the hall I was also evacuated with Máriusz and found Mike at the finish. When we got home we still hoped we would be able to go to the Winters Trail Race the next day, but the following morning we decided it's safer to stay home.

Of course I became ill again and required some more antibiotics for my chest infection. My immunity had gone down to the level of a newborn. I felt I was getting fatter and more unfit day by day. Every time I tried to go for a jog my bodies reaction was to protest,


I just had to wait until I got better. Sadly, someone had a voodoo dolly with my name on it, because my teeth issues were far from being resolved. Following a bad course of root canal treatment and several sets of antibiotics and painkillers, I had an emergency extraction in Sunderland Royal Hospital just before New Year's Eve. A piece of my jaw bone was broken and stuck in my jaw. I had some more issues with two upper teeth which I won't bore you with, I spent weeks on codeine, tramadol, ketoprofenum and ibuprofen plus antibiotics with no improvement. After several days with no sleep and no food on the $8^{\text {th }}$ of January I went abroad to Poland to a dentist I trusted. He fixed my two upper teeth and seeing the state of the broken bone said I should take the dentist who did this to a lawyer, as he had not seen such a traumatic, messed up extraction in all his career. I returned on the $11^{\text {th }}$ January, still in pain and on very strong antibiotics as I had an infection in my bones. The doctor suspected malnutrition due to the antibiotics flushing all the good bacteria, vitamins and minerals from my body. I don't remember feeling more ill than these last couple of months. If I hadn't had Mike and Maya to take care of me I would probably have gone crazy and ended up in hospital.

On the $13^{\text {th }}$ of January in this "peak form" I travelled with Mike to run High Fells of Hedgehope Half

Marathon. It was supposed to be 2600 ft over 13 miles because just before we set off Barry Kemp (Race Director of High Fell Events) announced an extra 3 miles (in fact it was just bit over 2 miles). We set off in horrendous weather conditions with winds expected to be up to 40 mph . I was at the end as usual and after the first mile I really felt I wanted to go back but I pushed through hoping I would make it. On the way up to Hedgehope I had seen lots of my friends running down already, including Mike. They were all very cheerful and the warm hugs gave me a kick of energy, which sadly was quickly swept away by the 70 mph wind. I was climbing up very slowly, regretting I didn't take my poles with me. Gasping for air, sweating from the antibiotics and getting cold from the icy wind. On the way up Hedgehope I had also seen some runners saying they would pull out as the wind was too much, others said they had gone up Hedgehope and skipped the added 2 miles plus the loop. Once I reached the top I tried to do the additional loop, but 200 m with the wind blowing in my mouth, I felt such pain after the extraction, I turned back. I told the sweepers (who were great companions and support all the way up I must say!), that I've signed up for going up and down Hedgehope and that I will do it.

I started to go down. I expected that going down would be easier than going up but with the wind

## Race Reports


blowing at my back it made me feel scared of falling. I ended up walking down slower than going up. At least I knew I would finish. Two hours later (yep, took me almost 2 h to go down 6.5 miles) I reached the river crossing. I expected to it be shallow, as I had seen a photo of it from the previous day and I rushed in and... ended up in water up to my waist! Cold water brrrr!! Then another crossing and two more, the last climb over a tiny wooden gate - horrible photo pose and FINISHED! 13.2 miles, 4557 ft , 6 h 8 min . I can't express how satisfied I was and pleased with myself. I finally broke the bad luck streak and I did what I came to do. I had not done the additional 2 mile loop but I had done exactly what I signed up for, I am damn proud of myself. A lot of good runners pulled out because the wind took the best of
them. I am fully aware it's not my body strength that took me through it, but my stubbornness. I wanted to give up, but I wanted to finish more.

Muscle pain, stomach cramps from hunger and at same time nausea with just the thought of eating, thirst and cold, 70 mph wind, to then finish getting wet in freezing cold water - I survived it all. I got my medal and mug with the most thoughtful care from Mike who had all my dry clothes ready and helped me to get changed.

Would I do it again? Yes and no. I enjoyed it but it won't be an yearly event for me, I enjoy trail races where there is a constant change of terrain and ups and downs. I am proud I've done my first Fell race and I've finished.

It's the 15th January, I am still on antibiotics and painkillers for a bone infection but I am slowly recovering. I dropped to half from the full Saltburn marathon, it seemed like a wise decision. I am slowly trying to prepare for HM50 in mid March. I am a very long way from being in shape for it. In total, over December I've gained another 5lbs which is the heaviest weight I've been in over a year. Not sure how it happened, due to toothaches I couldn't eat much but lack of movement plus steroid antibiotics seem to be main reason.

I have a long way to go before my next races. I have to get back on the treadmill to do some power
walking until I can run and watch what I eat to rebuild vitamins and minerals in my body. I also need to learn to eat and drink on the go, you perhaps noticed I never mention anything about food in my stories, that's because I don't eat when I run and I drink very, very little. I know it's wrong and it slows me down, I need to find a way to change it. Perhaps an alarm on my watch to buzz every hour for a snack
I know hard work awaits me, I know I may endup retiring HM50 and HM1 10 but I will give it the best I can and see what will happen. My grandad always used to tell me that we fall down to arise like the phoenix from the ashes. What matters most is that I have a willingness to fight and I have Mike - the
love of my life who always supports me and somehow knows when to push and when to stop me; and our little girl who regardless if I finish or not, always greets me with a huge hug and kiss!

So finishing last or not finishing at all, I am a real winner because I have a life full of love and joy.

Running is my passion and I can't imagine living without it, but lately I've noticed that it's not racing that matters the most. What matters is absorbing the views while running... taking a moment to see the beauty of the Fells...sharing a passion with beloved ones and believing in yourself.

Even the slowest turtle can make it up a hill with 70 mph headwind if she really believes in herself.



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## Books

## 'Running My Way' by Tamsin Imber



Grab a cuppa, maybe some cake, and enjoy an inspiring read. The book 'Running My Way' is a celebration of taking life by the horns. It documents...

- What happens when Tamsin, a busy working mum of two, immerses herself in the joy of running and discovers running 'her way'. From the curiously meditative experience of running hard on a track, to the adventures of running 30 miles across the North York Moors in the snow sustained by frozen Jaffa Cakes.
- The passion and friendliness of the running community, united by the simple act and immense liberation of putting one foot in front of the other (lots of times).
- The joy of running with wild abandon through the bogs, moors and woods of the countryside.
- Why the challenge of competitive running is truly addictive. Why you shouldn't beat yourself up if you don't get a Personal Best or have a hard run.
Why CFS/ME (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) is a serious and life restricting illness.


## Here is an extract from this book by kind permission from Pitch Publishing.

The Hardmoors Roseberry Topping Marathon (30 miles, hilly). The depths of winter. December, 2015.
It was dark when GH (gorgeous husband) drove us along the
white icy roads of our estate. The kids were quiet but alert due to the unusualness of us all being awake at this time. It was mid December and this was the first snow of the year. We continued down a desolate A19, driving towards a dark orange glow, silhouetting the black outline of the North York Moors. The kids were bored now, there was no snow on the dual carriageway to look at, I put on our 'Christmas Hits' $C D$ and they soon sang along. The radio had said earlier it was exactly $0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. They dropped me off and drove on to seek warmer inside places in Whitby. It was 7.30 am and still very dark. I made my way to the sea cadets hut. Inside the hut was a contrast to the quiet dark streets outside. The electric lights gave low yellow light and it was warm. The hut was full of bodies moving about in the small space. I did the same. I didn't feel great this morning as I had a sore throat which had been with me for the past few days, it felt like the beginnings of a cold. I had considered not arriving but would have felt sad to miss it. I recalled someone saying it's $O K$ to run if it is above the neck. I hoped it would be OK.
Following a briefing we all piled out of the hut and on to the road, ready to start. The light was dim now. I was wearing all my thickest running gear plus a hat and jacket. With a 'three, two, one. Go!' we were off! Running uphill along a minor road towards the moors escarpment. Then right on to a muddy footpath across fields, still below the escarpment. It was good to be running. We ran through Guisborough Woods, with a

## TAMSIN IMBER

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## Books

view of Guisborough as we were a little higher up. Lights were on in a few houses and shone out into the dark giving evidence of life awakening. I also felt like I was only just waking up. Then there was the fantastic mud runway up to Highcliff Nab. The mud was deep, it was two steps forwards and one step back. Still, it warmed me up and I was soon removing my jacket. Once at the top the views were spectacular. It made the early start and deciding to turn up despite not feeling a 100 percent, all worthwhile. The moors rolled in a big expanse to the south covered in a fresh layer of white snow. The sun was rising casting a long golden light and shadows. Wisps of floaty mist hung in low dells. To the north and below us were the flat plains, with the big conurbation of Middlesbrough, a flat horizon. A few trees here and there on the moors had dark silhouettes against the red and yellow light.

The route went West, and shortly the funny cone of a snow capped Roseberry Topping was ahead. It was an amazing sight. We completed the cheeky challenge of Roseberry Topping twice. This was sociable and we gave encouragement to each other as faster runners doubled back and met slower runners. Then further west towards the next peak along the escarpment, Captain Cook's monument. I ran to the next rise and there was a photographer perched at the top. It was a lovely view behind me and I am pleased to have the photo as a memory of this day.

I could see one guy ahead and no one behind. I was running along a wide track with puddles. The puddles were the width of the track and were like small ponds. Thick sheets of translucent broken ice floated on the surface. The water was deep, up to my calves in places. It was very uneven under foot. I was feeling reassured as everything seemed to be going OK despite the sore throat... when... splash, I fell flat on my side! The whole right side of me, including half of my face and glasses were submerged in icy cold water, my right hip went bang against a rock. I was fine though, I had been merrily trotting along one minute, then the next minute I was nearly afloat. I dragged myself upright. My hands were numb. Now I was really cold. I carried on running. The path went downhill into the dip where a road crosses the moors before the hill to the monument and the air was even colder in that dip. No sun reached there at all. The only blessing was that there was no wind. Even so I was worried as any heat I generated from running was now being used to dry my clothes rather than keep me warm. I was not generating that much heat. I was pleased about the uphill to the monument. I stopped and put my jacket and everything I was carrying back on. After a section through woodlands there was a prolonged road over an exposed part of the moors. I got out a jaffa cake and found it was frozen. I crunched it up and feeling revived I continued running uphill. An endless white snowy track across wild expanses of bleak white moor. The white moor blended seamlessly into a white sky. We seemed to be running south west for a long, long way and I wondered when I would sight Cornwall!


My sore throat started to hurt a bit and I admit I didn't feel the best. The latter part of the run included lots of grassy, tussocky moorland. The grass was wet and slippery. I fell over three times, getting further hip bashings in the process. I may have said bad words. The final five miles were pure slog, ending with a traverse of Guisborough moor. Now I could see no one ahead and no one behind. It was about 2.30 pm and the light was starting to dim. I needed to head for Guisborough woods which I could see in the far distance. There was a slight wind blowing and I was near to getting out my foil blanket and running with it tied round me. I totally understood in that moment how hypothermia can happen in the wilds in conditions like this. You only need to stop. If you sprained your ankle you would have to, and then people would not reach you immediately either. I kept my thoughts positive and carried on.
Finally I reached the edge of the woods. I ran down the muddy zigzag path downhill to Guisborough. A couple appeared suddenly behind me. It was heartening to see them. The lady was crying. I totally empathised. This was tough. We shared the joy of sighting the town below. Further through the woods, then back on that minor road to the sea cadets hut. We stumbled down the road and into the hut just as darkness fell. I was not in a good state. GH and kids were already there as I had taken a lot longer than predicted. A whole seven hours. He got me home and after taking off outer layers I walked straight into a long hot shower, kit and trainers on whilst eating chocolate coins. It was sooo nice not to have to rely on my body heat. Whoever invented central heating you are my hero. Although it had been my hardest marathon so far, it had been exciting and a privilege to have seen the beauty of the Moors in the ice and snow. I felt a big sense of achievement.

If you wish to read more, Tamsin's book is available to order from Waterstones and Amazon websites. It is available from these websites and in bookshops from $17^{\text {th }}$ December 2018.
www.pitchpublishing.co.uk/shop/running-my-way

# Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence 100 K \& 50K inc. The Anglo Celtic Plate 

Open $100 \mathrm{~km} / 50 \mathrm{k}$ ultra distance road races. The longer distance incorporates both the British and Scottish 100 km road championship for 2019. The 50 km race incorporates the Scottish 50 km championship for 2019.

The 100k race also incorporates the annual Anglo Celtic Plate home countries event.


- Sunday 24th March 2019 7:00am
- North Inch Park, Bell's Sports Centre, Hay Street, Perth, PH1 5HS
- Traffic-free loop course at the north inch park on the banks of the River Tay, Perth
- Measured by IAAF measurer at 2.381 km
- Event held under licence from Scottish Athletics and held under UK Athletics and International Association of Ultrarunners rules
- IAU bronze label.
- Chip timing
- 100 k race has a 12 -hour cut-off
- 50 k race has an 8 -hour cut-off
- Refreshment station every lap, support crews welcome to help individual runners
- $£ 2$ discount to Scottish Athletics and Road Runners Club members
- Full medical \& physio support
- Momento to all finishers
- Category prizes

Sign-up online at: Self Transcendence $100 \mathrm{Km} \& 50 \mathrm{Km}$ Races inc ANGLO CELTIC PLATE

## Podcast Corner

## Podcast Corner

## Podcast Corner brings to light some of the interesting work being done by ultrarunners and enthusiasts through podcasts.



In last month's issue we mentioned Jamil Coury's weekly Mountain Outpost which won an award from Ultrarunning magazine and this month we start this new column with off with Davy Crockett's Ultrarunning History.

Fuelled by a desire to ascertain the truth about the story that Gordy Ainsleigh created the sport of ultrarunning with his Western States run in 1974, Davy started digging into history books and memory banks to realise that ultrarunning has a history going back hundreds of years. Having had an online newsletter since the early days of the internet he collected his posts into a book, Swift Endurance Legends - The Fastest 100-Mile Ultrarunners During the 1970's, 80's and 90's. This 183-page online book features a 23 page summary of 100-mile ultra history from 1970-2000 and detailed running biographies of the fastest 100 -milers of that era.


Ultrarunning History.com was started in 2017 and features articles as well as podcasts covering the period from 1920 to the year 2000 in America, it is available on itunes and you can subscribe to the podcast here.


Coincidentally, Caroline Mckay ran Western States in 2013 and wrote about it for Ultrarunning World. Since then Caroline has run many ultras and written for other publications
including Trail Running magazine in 2018. Last year Caroline began a new project, Of Mountains and Minds, where she talks with a wide range of people "who have been through a life-changing endurance event, transition or challenge". The first series featured 10 interviews including Damian Hall and inspired a second series that began with fell and mountain running specialist, Angela Mudge followed by a chat with Jasmine Paris (a name on everyone's lips right now) and concluded with Tim Dempsey.

Series three will be available early February 2019. Listen to series one \& two on iTunes, Soundcloud, TuneIn and Stitcher.

The most recent British Ultra Running Podcast hosted by James Elson and Dan Lawson, episode 18, features Camille Herron as their first international guest after her world record setting performance at Desert Solstice in Phoenix, AZ earlier in December - well worth a listen. Episode 17 featured Cat Simpson after her $5^{\text {th }}$ place finish at Spartathlon in September.


Back in the USA, the Ultrarunner Podcast, hosted by Eric Schranz focuses on the national and international Mountain/Ultra/Trail running scene and interviews a wide range of athletes, product reviews, and MUT reports. The latest podcast (January 15th), Buzz Burrell - Understanding FKTs, discusses the rise of the Fastest Known Time phenomena in the wake of the growing popularity of the sport. (A quick shout out to Fastest Known Time of the Year Award). Recent casts include Jimi Oostrum on Trail Running in Nepal, and Bob Hearn and the Science of Pacing - available on itunes, Stitcher, Google Play and others via the website Ultrarunnerpodcast.com.

## Contributors



Alex Mason, 42 year old, been running for about 9 years, married two kids. Just love pushing myself and seeing what can be achieved. Will do any race from parkrun up to $100+$ milers so long as it's mainly on trails.


Leila Majewska only started running in 2018 running her first ultra 5 months after her first mile. She has run Durham Dales and Rosedale Ultra and will soon be launching her own blog.


Stuart MacFarlane took up running at the age of 52 and is now 65 . His running adventures include: a Runstreak of over 6 years, running from the Scottish Borders to the northern tip of Shetland and completing 26 marathon distances in 26 days. He has completed 96 races at Marathon or Ultramarathon distances. Stuart has had many humour and inspirational books published including "A Marathon of Running Jokes".


Annabel Hepworth is formerly a journalist at The Australian, AFR and is a writer for the Business Council of Australia. Married with a daughter, Annabel is a prolific runner with three six day races last year including a performance in Adelaide that made her the world's number one 6 day runner for 2018.


Debbie Coolman writes "I started running about 10 years ago. I enjoy trail running, especially ultradistances and completed my first 100 mile race in 2017. Working in an office all week it's great to get outdoors on the trails. I love the adventure and challenges ultramarathon running brings".


Tegan Edwards A former tennis professional and current tennis coach. She loves all things fitness and has a youtube fitness channel and vlog. She is always looking for a challenge and that is why ultra running has become a passion. Checkout Tegan's Youtube Channel


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/


Tim Hardy is an ultrarunner living in Marietta, New York with his wife, their three dogs, one cat, and four horses and they lure their three grandchildren and daughter over as often as possible. Tim served in the US Army for twenty years and has completed a combined seventy ultramarathons and marathons, including the Arrowhead 135 and Badwater 135 in the same calendar year, and the Last Annual VolState 500K in July 2018. Tim is the race director for the Green Lakes Endurance Races 100 K and 50 K trail races.
www.gleruns.org



[^0]:    136

[^1]:    Wooler: Start with Mike Thompson

