



ULTRARUNNING WORLD

M A G A Z I N E

ROAD, TRACK & TRAIL MULTIDAY & ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS

// ISSUE 31



6 Hours - 100 K - 24 Hours - Marathons

1000 Miles - 10 Days - 1000 K

6 Days - 48 Hours - 50 K - 100 Miles



ITALIAN



Ultra Marathon Festival

15 September - 2 October

2021



ITALIAN



Ultra Marathon Festival

We are happy to welcome new members to the team with Sarah Thi helping on the editorial side. Dan Walker has sent us several articles and we are grateful for his interesting and helpful insights drawn from the depths of his ultrarunning experience. Gareth Chadwick has been working on material for our next publication which will be a Special Edition on the Dartmoor Discovery. We are grateful to Emily Adams who has been reviewing books for us. As the covid situation abates Emily is focussing more on her work as a physiotherapist and on her own running, she is leaving us with a review of Lowri Morgan's latest book Beyond Limits.

Another member of our correspondent team, Leila Majewska, (now Thompson) has set up Tough Trails with her husband Mike and we are very happy to support them and their vision to bring new and challenging events to the Peak District and beyond. Their first event will be the INFERNO – Edale's Ring of Hell Ultra, Half Marathon & 10k

We have also crossed paths with Blended Trails, a running community specialising in pop up trail routes in the countryside based in Medstead, Hampshire. Founded by Ollie Steele-Perkins in the Spring of 2020, the community is growing from strength to strength and will be holding their first event, the Hattingley Half on July 24th 2021 and later this year they are planning on an ultra and we look forward to hearing about what goes down in Medstead.

Australia's top multiday runner, Annabel Hepworth, speaks to key race directors to see what's happening in the 6 day race world. Dan's article in this issue is about essential Ultra gear and getting to grips with what works for us is the pathway to success. Debs and Dawn draw ever closer to their 13 peaks challenge and consistency is the anchor in their preparation. Suswara Payne traditionally has been focussed on shorter distances and has occasionally dipped his toes into the world of ultras, he shares his insights through the frame of a meditative approach. Ed Scott has written a great piece about Alison Walker's adventure around London last year. Amy Costa went to the Grandmaster 100 in Arizona, where the qualification is that runners must be 50+ years old on race day! Great to hear from Gary Dudney. Gary took on one of the iconic American ultras, the Rocky Raccoon 100 in Texas. Rocky is known as the perfect trail running course for veteran and rookie runners wanting a good race. Antoinette Landragin is a Race Director at The Wild Oak Trail located in the George Washington National Forest near Mt. Solon, Virginia. The course is a 25+ mile loop with roughly 7,000 feet of vertical gain per loop, this is not your average trail race. The extremely accomplished Sharon Gayter writes about how the IAU's 6 Hour Solidarity Run looks like being an annual event now. Looking back to see how ultrarunning was shaped in its early days we go look at the Victorian pioneers courtesy of P. S. Marshall and Helen Hayes writes about the legendary South African, Bruce Fordyce in our Hall of Fame.

As always, many thanks to the photographers, race directors, webmasters and contributors for helping make this issue a testament to the amazing ultrarunning world.

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Tyler Green taking the win at the Black Canyon 100k and a Golden ticket to Western States in Mayer, AZ. Photo by [Howie Stern](#)

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- Francesca Canepa, women's winner at the BiUltra6.24 March 27/28th
Photo by Daniele Chiodi [@dani_984](#)

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Send inquiries, original and previously unpublished race reports/articles to the email address above. Last dates for article submissions: May 14th, June 14th, July 14th. Please include some accompanying photos (if you have any) with articles/race reports, a 40-50 word bio, and a headshot for the contributors page. More details for submissions on request. Thank you.

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News



Photo courtesy Pascuale Brandi

6 Days

By Annabel Hepworth

Last year's inaugural six-day race in subtropical South Carolina ended on a high note.

A veteran of the "triple crown of hiking" of US trails, Witt Wisenbram, had run more than 405 miles on his six-day debut. For the 100 mile event, Bob Hearn secured a new US road 50-54 age-group record for the distance.

It would be weeks before officials reported what was, at the time, believed to be the first US COVID-19 death.

Fast forward a year and there were no runners circling the lake in late winter on a 0.584 mile loop at Burton Wells Park.

South Carolina Ultra Running Festival organiser, Tim Waz, said they had been unable to get an event permit until certain restrictions expired; they neither wanted to risk opening up registration before the permit was in hand, nor give runners too little time to get ready for the race.

He is now looking to 2022 for the event, given COVID-19 vaccines are being rolled out in the US.

"We look forward to rebuilding what was taken away from so many in 2020 once it is safe for everyone," he said.

He is not alone.

Six-day races continue to be heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

After a slew of races were cancelled last year because of the global pandemic, the trend has continued into 2021.

Health concerns, logistics and cost have all driven this.

Sahishnu Szczesiul, one of the race directors of the Sri Chinmoy 6 and 10 day races and the Self-Transcendence 3100 mile race, says the desire to do long races could be impacted in the near future.

"The state of multi-day races, both in the USA and worldwide, is in a state of flux, as whole countries and regions have undergone hardships ... Personally, I think we all feel an increased empathy for our friends, family and fellow travellers on this journey of life. Just to go out for a run, unencumbered by restrictions, is a goal. To have many races to choose from is a hopeful account of the future."

The Sri Chinmoy 6 and 10 day races, due to be held in late April at Flushing Meadows Corona Park in the New York City borough of Queens, were cancelled given the health and logistical concerns. New York City was considered an early epicentre of the pandemic and at the time of writing.

For the iconic 3100 mile event, there is the "somewhat remote" possibility of the race being held in Jamaica, Queens, this year.

Last year, the race was held in Austria's Salzburg, but that venue is not available this year. A decision on whether the 3100 can happen in the US is expected to be made by May 1st.

The organisers of the EMU 6 day race in Hungary cancelled the May 2021 race, citing restrictions for the landlocked country and the whole of Europe.

"The repeated forced postponement of competition is, of course, a serious disappointment for us as well, but we draw strength from the trust and interest that is being shown in our direction from many, many countries around the world," said the statement by EMU organisers on their Facebook page.

At the time of writing, the EMU race organisers expect to provide a new date, potentially in the Northern Hemisphere autumn, shortly.

The organisers of the 6 Jours de France, which had been successfully held in 2020, have announced that the Privas based race for this month has been cancelled. The organisers attributed this to advice from sports and regional authorities of prohibitions on amateur competition until mid-year. On social media, organisers indicated that there was too much uncertainty to consider a date later in 2021. Runners have been advised they can seek a refund or have their entry rolled over to 2022.

For organisers, cancellations and postponements can prove a hard decision.

Last year, Adelaide 6 day race director, Ben Hockings, postponed the 2020 iteration of his event. At the time, there were various restrictions to crossing in and out of South Australia, nervousness among some runners about that, and the event relies strongly on interstate runners.

"With events that size you know your first priority in cancelling or postponing is you have to give as much notice to entrants as possible," he says.

"But of course COVID-19 turned everything into uncertainty. So RDs were best erring on the side of caution and making the call to postpone or cancel early. Better being pilloried for being too careful than making the call too late, leaving entrants out of pocket."

He plans for the Adelaide event to be held starting in late September this year.

Meanwhile, the starter's gun has fired at some races. Italy's Ultra Marathon Festival held in Policoro, which includes events of up to 1000 miles, was underway at the time of writing.

For other races, planning continues, amid the uncertainties of potential lockdowns, border closures and other restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19.

News

Ultrarunning has begun a return to hosting scheduled events but we're still not out of the woods yet. Survivorfest 24 hour, located in Sherwood Park, AB, which was to be the Canadian National Championship, will be a virtual event this year. Notchview Ultra in the US is moved to September (and minus its 72 hour option), as is Mind The Ducks 12 hour.

New additions are being added to the calendar though with the [Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team](#) in New York hosting a 24/12 hour for the first time in over 30 years. This will take place at Rockland Lake State Park on June 12, 2021.

[New Jersey Trail Series One Day](#) are adding a Two Day which will be Oct 7-9, 2021.

[The Anglo Celtic Plate 100k](#) Home International will take place on 21st August 2021 at Mondello Park, Naas in County Kildare. However England Athletics have confirmed they aren't sending a team.

Ultra-Trail Australia Returning To The Blue Mountains

Runners from across Australia and New Zealand are preparing to converge on the Blue Mountains later this month for Ultra-Trail Australia, following a two year hiatus with almost 7,000 runners taking part in four separate races between 13-16 May, with runners either tackling 11km, 22km, 50km or 100km distances. For more information visit [Ultra-Trail Australia](#)

New Records

Zach Bitter wins the USATF 100-Mile Road National Championship at Jackpot Ultra Running Festival with a course record time of 12:52. Second was Jacob Jackson in 14:12:52 and third man was Patrick Reagan in 14:51:54. A close finish in the women's 100-Mile Road National Championship at the Jackpot Ultra saw Stefanie Flippin takes the win also with a course record of 14:35. Camille Herron was second with a time of 14:42, followed by Micah Morgan finishing in 14:44.

Results at: <https://results.raceroster.com/.../results/tqwqfrewt3r4ckbv?>

In Oregon, Des Linden set a new US 50k record of 2:59:54 beating Aly Dixon's record by more than seven minutes becoming the first woman to break three hours.

Centurion Running held an invitation-only 100 mile track race at the Julie Rose Stadium in Ashford, Kent. Aleksandr Sorokin set new World records for 100 miles & 12 hours running 11.14.56 for the 100 miles and 170.309 km (105.82 m) for 12 hours. Sam Amend set a new British women's 100 mile record in 14:34:03 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw_lqapWmGU

Live results: <https://www.centurionrunning.com/live>

FKT's

Washington ultrarunner Joe "Stringbean" McConaughy breaks 800-mile Arizona Trail FKT in 13:03:30

<https://runningmagazine.ca/.../washington-ultrarunner.../>

April 30 James Stewart set a new FKT on the 116 mile Fife Coastal Path of 19:32 and also in Scotland Anna Rutherford sets a new FKT on the 214 mile Southern Upland Way after starting from Portpatrick on the West Coast of Scotland on April 29th. Anna reached Cockburnspath on the East Coast in 62:34:55.

Isobel Ross completed the 7 main peaks in Victoria, AUS supported, a 291km run in 2:19:22:12.



The Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) is a long-distance hiking trail in Lebanon. It extends from Andaket in north of Lebanon to Marjayoun in the south along a 470 km (290 mi) path. Starting April 25th, Ali Kedami and Nayla Cortas set a mixed-gender team record of 6d 12h 15m 0s.

Keep up to date with the FKT scene at <https://fastestknowntime.com/>

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Blended Trails – Popped up on the running scene

Appearing on the running scene in March 2020, Blended Trails is a running community specialising in pop up trail routes in the countryside. Founder Ollie Steele-Perkins is no stranger to trail running and competition, and has seen the community grow from strength to strength.

Ollie explains “I set up Blended Trails during the first lockdown in 2020 as a way of helping people discover public access trails in our local area and to encourage them to explore with confidence by marking them up using a segment maker on Strava. We offered various distances from 5k to 20k and added sign posts and waymarkers for 9 days at a time before removing them as a part of our ‘leave no trace’ ethos. The Pop Ups, as they are known, became popular not just with runners, but walkers and families looking to add interest to their daily exercise and they are now a regular feature of the Blended Trails activity, with on average one a month taking place.”

Many runners are anticipating the first official Blended Trails event which will be directed by Philip Scrase, the Chair of Alton Runners. The Hattingley Half will take place on July 24th 2021, a 13.1 mile undulating trail race starting and finishing on Medstead village green. The green will provide the perfect spot for an event village with registration, chip timing pods, wave start times, event assistance, toilets and local stalls including vegan friendly catering and a bar.

The route touches some of The Oxdrove Way, Bugmore Hill, Godsfield Copse, Wield Wood, Upper Wield and the Hattingley Valley Vineyards en route to the race village finish line.

All details for the Hattingley Half event and free Pop Ups can be found on the Blended Trails website where you can join the Community for free. www.blendedtrails.co.uk



National Championship DATES and LOCATIONS for 2021

M A Y	24 hour Self-Transcendence - MDA			22		
J U N E	24 hour Run Palic - SRB	05	Survivorfest 24 Hour - CAN	12		
J U L Y	Self- Transcendence 24h - UKR	17	24 & 48 h Self- Transcendence - CZE	24		
A U G	Anglo Celtic Plate 100k - IRL			22		
S E P	100KM Info on the IAU - IND (CC)	05	24 HRS BUTTER24 - AUS	24		
O C T	24HRS Info on the IAU - ROU (WC)	02	24 / 48 HRS 24-Stundenlauf Brugg - SUI	22	50 KM Info on the IAU - Chinese Taipei (WC)	31
N O V	Self-Transcendence 24 Hour - NZL			13		

Provisional Running Festival Circuit DATES For 2021

A P R	<div>2-5th</div> <i>6/12/24/48/72 hour</i>	
M A Y	<div>29</div> <i>6/12 hour</i>	
J U N E	<div>26</div> <i>6/12/24 hour</i>	
O C T	<div>9-25th</div> <i>6/12/24 hour 6/10/16 days/ 1000km/1000miles</i>	
N O V	<div>02</div> <i>6/12/24 hour</i>	
D E C	<div>17-23th</div> <i>6 days with shorter runs OR</i>	<div>27th - 6 January 2022</div> <i>6/10 days with shorter runs</i>

Recent Races

04.12.2020 Coast to Kosci Ultramarathon AUS 240km

The 240km Coast to Kosci Ultramarathon race is invitation only and is limited to 50 of the best ultra-marathon runners in Australia. The race starts on the beach at Eden, NSW and finishes 240km later at Charlotte Pass after the runners have summited Mount Kosciuszko, Australia's highest peak. This year the race was won by Morgan Lindqvist (SWE) in 26:35:49. First woman was Joanna Zakrzewski (GBR) in 28:18:53. 21 finishers. Results on the DUV. Website: <https://www.coast2kosci.com/>

04.12.2020 Blood Rock 100/50 Mile Endurance Race USA 100mi

Blood Rock 100 Mile Endurance Race takes place at Oak Mountain State Park, Pelham, AL on a 50 Mile loop. The 100 has between 26,000 and 27,000 ft of elevation gain. The 100 miler was won by Zack Jordan in 23:42:14 and first woman was Lee Conner finishing in 29:31:41. 27 finishers. The 50 miler was won by Zach Andrews in 8:38:02 and the first woman was Shannon Beale in 12:14:35. Results on [Ultrasignup.com](https://ultrasignup.com) Website:

05.12.2020 Surf Coast Century 100/50 km AUS 100/50km

The Surf Coast Century is a spectacular 100km ultra marathon race for solo runners and relay teams in the Surf Coast and Great Ocean Road region first held in 2012. Hosted by Rapid Ascent, the start and finish is in Anglesea (Great Ocean Road), Victoria. This year the race was won by Ross Hopkins in 08:38:29 and the first woman was Sarah Hedger in 10:13:22. 168 finishers. [Full results](#). Website: [Surf Coast Century](https://surfcoastcentury.com.au)

05.12.2020 Chuxiong - Mt. Zixi Trail 100/60k CHN 60km

This inaugural event was a mixed terrain trail race that took place on a 100km loop in Chuxiong in central Yunnan province, China. First home was Hong-Long Wu in 12:38:18 and first woman was Hui-Ping Zhang 15:06:43. 163 finishers. [Full results on ITRA](#). Website: yidianzixun.com

12.12.2020 Hellgate 100 km USA 100km

Organised by David Horton, Hellgate 100K first held in 2003, takes place in the Blue Ridge Mountains at the northern terminus of the Glenwood Horse Trail adjacent to Big Hellgate Creek in Central Virginia. Hellgate is a Western States qualifier. Michael Dubova came home in 10:16:00 for the win, 3 hours better than his finish in 2019. Among the women, first to cross the line was Leah Yingling in 12:07:27. [Results](#). Race website: [Extreme Ultrarunning.com](https://extremetrultra.com)

12.12.2020 Wilsons Promontory 100/80/60 km Trail Race AUS 100km

Wilsons Promontory National Park is the location of this event at Tidal River, Running Wild HQ in Victoria. The course is a variety of single track, rock, fire trails and beaches with approximately 10 km on a sealed road and it may be necessary to wade across several creeks. The Prom 100 is a self supported run. Top finishers were Thomas Dade in 11:00:30 and Stephanie Roland in 13:33:54. 13 finishers. [Full results](#). Race website: [Wilsons Prom 100](https://wilsonsprom100.com.au)

12.12.2020 Desert Solstice Track Invitational USA 24h/100m

Desert Solstice is an elite level event by invitation or qualification only and takes place at the Central High School Track Phoenix, AZ. Used as an opportunity to qualify for the national 24 Hour team. 86 National records and 14 World records have been set over the years at the event and is hosted by Aravaipa Running, one of the leading American Ultramarathon organisers. Nick Coury of Scottsdale, AZ, won the 24-hour race with 155.41 miles. Marisa Lizak was first woman with 142.64. Bob Hearn set American age group records at 100 Miles (M 55-59 Track) in

15:28:21, 200 Km (M 55-59 Track) in 20:50:09, 24 hours (M 55-59 Track) 221.810 Km. Jacob Jackson set a new record at 200 Km (M 40-44 Track) 18:00:12 and Olivier Leblond set new 12 hour (M 45-49 Track) in 152.112 and 100 M (M 45-49 Track) in 12:41:57. [Record list](#) is on the website, results on [Ultrasignup](https://ultrasignup.com).

19.12.2020 Ancient Oaks 100 Mile Run USA 100mi

Ancient Oaks is an Invitation-Only, No-Fee, Low-Aid race held in the Enchanted Forest Nature Sanctuary in Titusville, Florida the third weekend in December. Runners have 32 hours exactly to finish 29 loops of a 3.46-mile course for a total of 100.34 miles. In order to participate, you must receive an Invitation to Run, to get one of those, you need to email Mike Melton. The DUV lists records back to 1999 and this year's winners were Ronnie Hines in 21:12:33 and Lisa Devona (for the second year in a row) in 21:56:03. [Event info](#). [Full results](#).

31.12.2020 Into The New Year 24/12/6 Hour Run USA 24h

Held at John Prince Park, Lake Worth, FL and timed by Mike Melton himself this was surely the place to be for the New Year for an ultrarunner in Florida. However, a modest showing in all 6 events with 21 participants, allowed some new faces to appear at the top of the finishers lists. In the 12 hour Nathaniel Gehring came first with (58.36m) 93.916 km and Pamela Chapman-Markele was first woman with (36.06 m) 58.038 km. The 24 hour was won by Lisa Devona with 161.452 km (100.32 m) and first man was William Corley with 88.640 km (55.08 m). [Race info](#). [Full results](#).

31.12.2020 Hainesport Hundred & 24 Hour Endurance Run USA 24h

The race location was the Hainesport Township Municipal Park, NJ. The course is either a .9913 mile paved path that is completely flat or, if the weather is inclement, an alternate route which is 1.2034 miles.

The 24 hour winners were Michael Gagliardi 199.349 km and Erin Karara with 161.079 km. 27 finishers. Results on [Ultrasignup.com](https://ultrasignup.com) Website: [Hainesport 100/24 hour](https://hainesport100/24hour.com).

31.12.2020 The 7th 24 Hour Self-Transcendence Sri Chinmoy Smolensk (RUS)

An indoor 24 hour in Smolensk, organised by the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team in Russia saw Andrei Tikhonovich produce his best performance to date with 202.970 km for his third win. Multiday veteran 76 year old Svetlana (Pratishruti) Khisamutdinova ran 109.749 km for the win. 11 finishers. [Race results](#). Website: vk.com/smolrun

16.01.2021 Coldwater Rumble 100 Mile Race USA 100mi

The Coldwater Rumble is the fifth race in the Aravaipa Running Desert Runner Trail Series in Arizona. The venue is the Estrella Mountain Regional Park, Goodyear and the 100 mile event is a 20 mile loop the runners cover 5 times. This was the eighth edition of the event. The race was won by Cody Logan in 17:45:38 and the first woman was Supaporn Walton-Robertson in 23:34:01. 48 finishers. The 32 mile version saw Erich Owen first across the line in 08:49:05 and Maia Detmer was first woman in 09:19:38. [Full results](#). Race website: [Coldwater Rumble](https://coldwaterbumble.com)

16.01.2021 Long Haul 100 Mile Ultra-Marathons USA 100mi

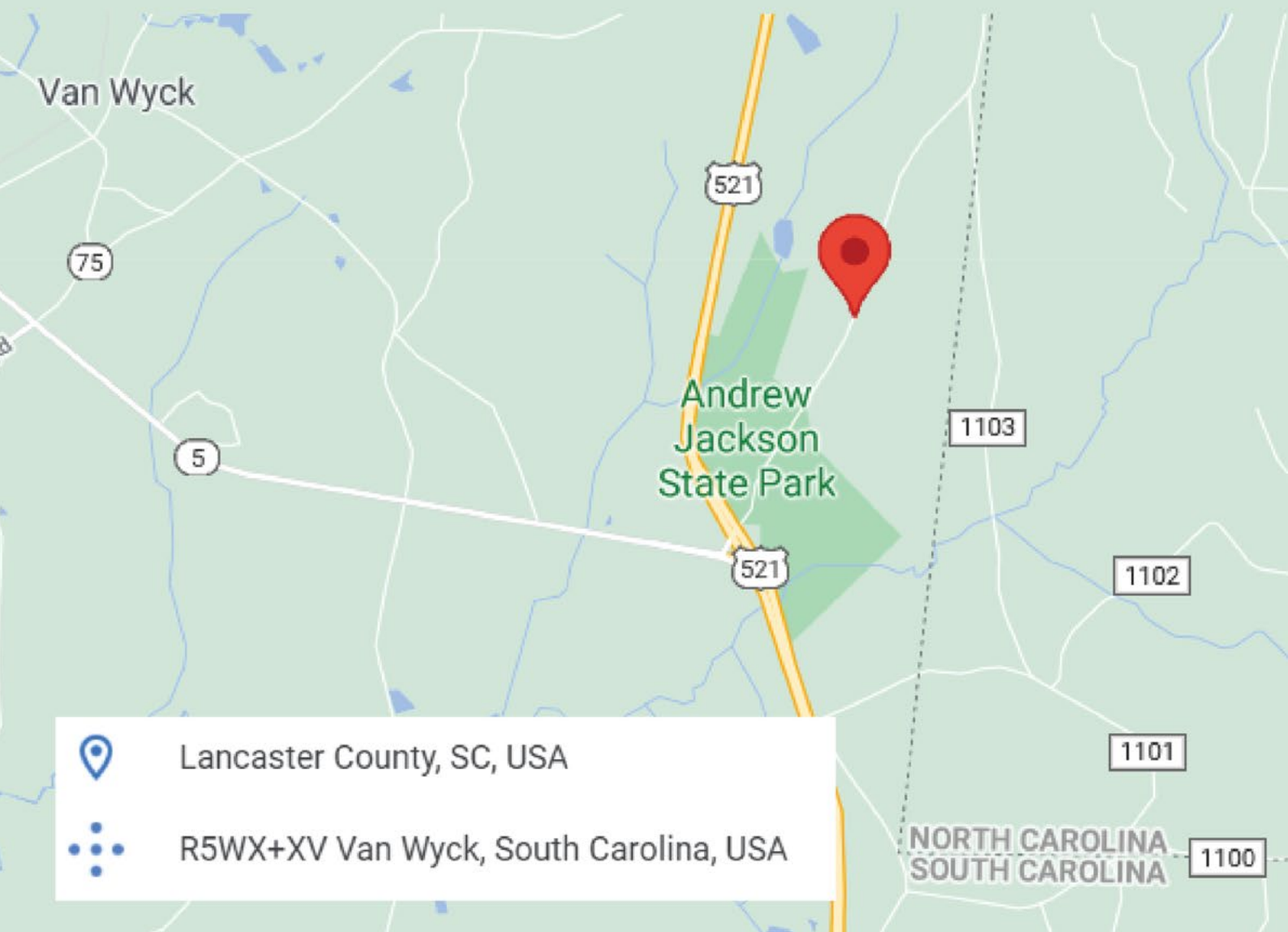
Taking place at the Cypress Creek Preserve in Wesley Chapel, FL, this race is a 2022 WSER Qualifier with a cut-off time of 30 hours and first took place in 2011. The course is 10 x 10-mile loops. This year's winner was Keith Lundquist in 14:23:30 and another win for Lisa Devona in 19:23:27. 96 finishers. Full results on [Ultrasignup](https://ultrasignup.com). Race [website](#).

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PODCAST

The Run Smarter Podcast

Q&A: increasing mileage safely/
black toes/running stability/water
running

The Mile 99

The Mile 99 Interview is the brain-child of Auburn, CA area ultra-runners as a way to keep the community in touch and share each other's knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tartan Running Shorts (TRS)

podcast is the premier podcast for running and athletics in Scotland! Presented weekly by friends and runners Tom Brian & Kyle Greig from the North East, the show aims

to bring better coverage to athletics and athletes in Scotland.

Active Souls Podcast

A podcast covering swimming, cycling, running and lots of other sporting activities. The pod is hosted by Josh Stawrowski and Paul Dennett.

The Pyllars Podcast with Dylan Bowman

Professional ultrarunner, Dylan Bowman, brings conversations covering ultrarunning, sports, business, and the outdoor industry.

Road Dog Podcast

Luis Escobar, trail running legend, race director, running mentor and photographer converses with athletes and public figures about all things extreme sports.

Run Into Life

Highlights inspiring stories of individuals who have navigated hardships and reclaimed their lives through endurance athletics.

Running As Art: Rickey Gates | Rich Roll Podcast

Talks about his Transamerica unsupported run across America, an upcoming book Cross Country and Rickey ran every single street in San Francisco, inspiring countless people to do the same in their own respective cities.

RunYogi Diaries

Features individuals who are on a personal fitness journey. Fitness is never an event, it includes transformation of mindset, lifestyle and physical ability.

Coaches on the Run

Coaches on the Run is designed to answer all your Trail and ultra running questions. From beginner to advanced, each week we take on new questions to help lead to running success.

Big Ass Runner

A podcast designed to entertain and encourage everyday trail runners and ultra trail runners all over the world who are out there getting it done!

The Endurance Podcast

Coaching advice, sports science chat, psychology and injury prevention for endurance athletes

PodiumRunner Endurance Podcast

Ian Sharman professional ultra runner and coach discusses training and racing topics with leading sports scientists and how to practically apply research findings for marathoners and ultra runners.

MOVIE

Transamerica with Rickey Gates running 3700 miles across America

American Ultra-Runner Rickey Gates sets off on foot across America after realising that the America he knew wasn't necessarily the America that was. Starting out on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean in SC, Gates journey takes him 5 months and nearly 3700 Miles to San Francisco, CA. What begins as a search for the true America, during a period of political turmoil, ultimately becomes a story of identity as Gates begins to find clarity and meaning in his own life.

Earth Talk: Journey with Lizzy Hawker

Live Earth Talk with the story of her journey along the Great Himalaya Trail. 35 days and 1000 miles on foot alone across the Nepal Himalaya.

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UK & IRL Events

15.05.2021	<u>Westcountry Hilly Ultra 50 M</u>	50mi	Minehead
15.05.2021	<u>Westcountry Flat Ultra 50 M</u>	50mi	Taunton
15.05.2021	<u>Devon Coast To Coast Ultra - Non Stop</u>	188km	Wembury
15.05.2021	<u>Monarchs Way Ultra</u>	615mi	Worcester
15.05.2021	<u>Kerry Ultra Marathon 50K</u>	50km	Tralee
22.05.2021	<u>Jurassic Coast Challenge</u>	100km	Poole
22.05.2021	<u>11th North Downs Way 50 Mile Race</u>	50mi	Farnham
22.05.2021	<u>Ultra X Spring Trail Series 100km</u>	100km	Haslemere
28.05.2021	<u>Hardmoors 160 (The Ring Of Steele)</u>	160m	Helmsley
28.05.2021	<u>Highland Way 180 Race</u>	180mi	Aviemore
29.05.2021	<u>26th Grand Union Canal Race 145 mile</u>	145mi	Birmingham
29.05.2021	<u>London 2 Brighton Challenge</u>	100km	Richmond
30.05.2021	<u>Angles Way Ultra 100k</u>	100km	Diss

04.06.2021	<u>Black Beacon 52</u>	52mi	Hay-on-Wye
05.06.2021	<u>Norfolk 100km</u>	100km	Castle Acre
12.06.2021	<u>Pennine Barrier Ultra 50</u>	50mi	Malham
12.06.2021	<u>Lake District Challenge</u>	100km	Kendal
19.06.2021	<u>36th West Highland Way Race</u>	153km	Milngavie
19.06.2021	<u>3rd Jurassic Coast 100 Km Ultra</u>	97.9km	Weymouth
19.06.2021	<u>10th The Wall Ultra Run 111 km</u>	111km	Carlisle Castle
19.06.2021	<u>Race to the King</u>	53.6mi	Slindon
19.06.2021	<u>Wayfarers 100k</u>	100km	Inkpen Common
19.06.2021	<u>Jurassic Extinction Ultra Trail 120mi</u>	120mi	Poole
19.06.2021	<u>4th Summer Spine</u>	268mi	Edale
23.06.2021	<u>7th Thames Ring 250 Miles</u>	250mi	Streatley-on-Thames
26.06.2021	<u>Race to the Castle</u>	100km	Kirkharle
26.06.2021	<u>Rutland Ultra</u>	73mi	Tugby
26.06.2021	<u>Cotswold Way Challenge</u>	100km	Bath

27.08.2021	<u>Gloucester 48/24h track race</u>	48h	Gloucester
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10.09.2021	<u>4th Ultra-Trail Snowdonia UTS100</u>	100km	Capel Curig
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INTERNATIONAL Events

03.05.2021	<u>15th Nagasaki Super Maranic 217/173/80/55km</u>	17/173/80/55k	Nagasaki City, JPN
07.05.2021	<u>3rd Hennur Bamboo Ultra</u>	220/161/100/80km	Mitganahalli, IND
10.05.2021	<u>5th 3 Days at the Fair 6 Days Race</u>	6d	Augusta, NJ
13.05.2021	<u>Fyn Ultra</u>	350km	Kerteminde, DEN
14.05.2021	<u>Down Under 135</u>	135mi	Bacchus Marsh, VIC, AUS
14.05.2021	<u>11 Bielersee XXL</u>	120/160/200km	Nidau, SUI
21.05.2021	<u>West Macs Sonder Monster</u>	231km, 65km	Alice Springs, NT, AUS
21.05.2021	<u>Ultra-Trail Malopolska - UTM240</u>	240/172/103/61	km Kasinka Mala, POL
29.05.2021	<u>Ultra Trail Vallées Lot Dordogne</u>	183km	Cahors, FRA

02.06.2021	<u>9. WiBoLT 320 km Nonstop-Ultralauf</u>	320km	Wiesbaden, GER
05.06.2021	<u>5ème Ultr'Ardèche</u>	222km	Alboussière, FRA
09.06.2021	<u>1st Irrational S.O.U.T.H. 200 Miler</u>	200mi	Murray Bridge, SA, AUS
11.06.2021	<u>4th 800 Heroes - Cross Taiwan Stage Race</u>	264km/2stages	Wuqi District, TPE
12.06.2021	<u>Sri Chinmoy 24/12 hour Races</u>	24/12 hours	New York, USA
18.06.2021	Brisbane Valley Rail Trail 200mi, 100mi & 50mi	200mi/100mi/50mi	Wulkuraka, AUS
18.06.2021	Ultra Trail Gaspesia 150 (UTG150)	150mi	Percé, QC, CAN
20.06.2021	3ème Mi Mil'KiL	500km	Lignac, FRA
25.06.2021	10. Olympian Race - Nemea-Olympia	180km	Nemea, GRE
8.06.2021	48 hs. Int. Uruguay Natural	48h, 24h, 12h, 6h	Montevideo, URU
18.06.2021	Six Days in the Dome - The Redux	6d, 48h, 24h	Milwaukee, WI, USA

03.07.2021	Merrill's Mile 48 Hour Run	48h	Dahlonga, GA (USA)
08.07.2021	Les 6 Jours du Grand Est - 48h	48h	Pont-à-Mousson (FRA)
16.07.2021	Self-Transcendence 48h-Lauf Vinnitsa	48h	Vinnitsa (UKR)
23.07.2021	Self-Transcendence Race 48h Kladno	48h	Kladno (CZE)



My Favourite Gear for Ultras

By Dan Walker

The list for your favourite gear has the potential to be huge, only you can specify what you class to be needed for the kit list and is practical in the way that it can be carried or kept with your support crew for the next time you see them. So far, I base my kit on two things; the first, affordability (will my wife allow me to buy it), and is it practical, in other words will it do the job I require for it. I'll say now that whilst the main components of my kit are mostly well-known brands, I have a special fondness for the Kalenji brand from Decathlon for clothing. I find their trail shorts fantastic with multiple pockets and very hard wearing, you can't go far wrong for under twenty quid.



Let's begin from the ground up as primarily that's the business end where what we put between the ground and our feet are trainers or running shoes. I used to be a big fan of the Salomon Speedcross shoe, but without going into too much detail, other than I cannot warrant paying nearly £100 for a pair of shoes which won't last 250/300 miles without falling apart, I bought a pair of inov-8 shoes, the TerraUltra 260 which I currently run in. These have been brilliant from comfort to grip; I find it hard to find fault with them. I completed the HM110 last year and three weeks later the HM60 with only one blister on both runs.

Moving up we all have different tastes in what we wear for the actual run, some may opt for an old race tee shirt, others may have the latest Gucci base layers and fabric designed to wick away moisture and guarantee to keep you warm. As I mentioned earlier, I'm a big fan of Kalenji clothing from Decathlon because they are well made and are relatively cheap. The trail shorts have six pockets along the waistband big enough for your phone, two water bottles and a few snacks. This, when on your long training runs, is a real benefit when you do not want to carry a hydration vest, but a few Mars bars and a couple of soft flasks.

The jacket I chose as my favourite is the inov-8 Stormshell, not the cheapest, but the best I've worn. It has the requirements for the kit list with its taped seams. It's lightweight and rolls down to cram into your pack when it's not required, which if you are running in the UK, not very often.

Next on the list, and probably after trainers and a watch, will be one of, if not the most expensive, bit of kit we buy, the hydration vest/running vest. This is where we carry endless supplies of Haribo and Babybel cheese, oh and all those other items the RD demands on the kit list that we don't consider important, like maps, compasses, whistles or emergency blankets that are not important until you're way off course and you can't read a map or use a compass. I favour the Ultimate Direction Mountain Vest, it has pockets on pockets, it's light, it's comfortable, it's everything I need and most of all, it won't break the bank, which as a normal working bloke is important.

Watches will be again something that you are either into or don't understand the need for one. Modern day sports watches or running watches hold a variety of functions, from the low end of the spectrum, the Garmin Forerunner 10 which shows time/pace/distance, to the more advanced ones, Suunto or Garmin which allow the downloading of routes/maps, show HR, plot, elevation, have barometers and altimeters, and in time will make you a brew and show you what's on on Netflix. I had a Garmin Fenix 3 bought for me otherwise I wouldn't be able to justify, at the time of about three years ago, the cost. I was using a Garmin 235 which I still believe to be one of the better watches on the market. I don't need to download or listen to music through my watch and at the time, didn't need an altimeter or barometer, and I'm not sure I do at the minute with my Fenix. The watch I have has a fantastic battery, the option to add GPX maps, and built in HR monitor, and is big enough to make my scrawny wrists look manly for a while. I know that there are more advanced watches out there now, but it works, it does what's required, and it's idiot proof.

Lastly I'll talk about two more bits of kit, my head torch and soft flasks. The head torch is the Alpkite Qark, and for £29.99 is a steal. It has a rechargeable unit and can take batteries which is great for longer or multi-day ultras. It has, as most torches do, a variety of functions, different settings etc. but what sold it for me was the brightness; it really does light up the trail well, and the battery on full power will give you a good 3/4 hours before it starts to fade. As I mentioned earlier, my last piece of kit I favour will be the soft flasks. Again, Kalenji, and fitted with separately purchased drinking straws as I'm a bit lazy when running and I end up neglecting my nutrition and hydration.

The above is what I deem to be the gear I would replace if I needed to. In my running I find it easier to have everything in the same place time and again rather than searching for things when cold, wet and on some bleak hillside. The kit has been tested to meet my requirements through cost and what's practical for the runs I do. My own running and kit has changed from when I ran my first ultra which consisted of a small bladder pack and bum bag, to what I have now, but as we learn more about our running we change what we consider to be necessary to help us.



DARK SKIES YORKSHIRE DALES NIGHT TRAIL RACE



DALES, HILLS, CHILLING THRILL OF THE DARK NIGHT
AND THE SKY LIT UP WITH BILLIONS OF STARS

DISTANCE: 30 KM

ELEVATION: 2770 FT

PLACE: SETTLE

DATE: 27TH NOVEMBER 2021 (TBC)

**Running Festival
Wychwood
10km - 1000mile
9th to 25th July 2021
16 Days in the Sun**



Countdown - 6 Weeks

By Debs & Dawn



13 Peaks Challenge is a great adventure which has been developed by Ryan Sandes, an incredible elite South African ultra-distance trail runner. It is completing and tagging 13 peaks in the Cape Town area in a specific order, check out www.13peaks.co.za for more information.

Debs and Dawn are two crazy, fun, energetic and adventure seeking trail runners who are going on an adventure. 13 Peaks is it!

As the year goes on and Covid restrictions have calmed down in South Africa to Level 1 (which is the lowest level, with continued mask wearing and social distancing), Debs and Dawn look to setting a date for the 13 Peaks Challenge.

13 PEAKS
CHALLENGE DATE
HAS BEEN SET!!
WELL, PLANNED!
DEBISQUAE.

A date has been decided.

We are planning on tackling our adventure the last week in May. Aiming for midweek and if the weather is good immediately, we go for it. Our main restriction at the moment is that a curfew is still in place where we are not allowed out between midnight and 4am. If this curfew continues to the time that we take on our challenge, we will definitely do it over 2 days, definitely. However, if not...we may attempt to complete the over 100

km, 6000m vert in under 24 hours... (Dawn may be secretly hoping for restrictions to stay in play! Haha)

Weekend together.

Dawn lives in sunny Durban while Debs is in Joburg so we are not able to regularly train together. Dawn drove up for a weekend of work and play and stayed with Debs. We took the opportunity for some much needed catch up bonding and of course some running. This time it was a little different as we ran on the road together (for the first time) instead of trails. But all training counts and we feel that road also gives good value to continued endurance and turning those legs in a different manner.

Planning ahead

There are a LOT of plans that need to be made. 13 Peaks is a very well-known challenge in South Africa and especially the Cape Town trailing community. This means that there are a large group of trail runners who know the route really well and are keen to help out, support, second and pace us.

As we have our dates in hand we are now looking forward to planning our route based on what others recommend. There may not be a chance to recce before we actually do our run, but we will then plan as best we can. The first plan is the pacers who know the route so that at every part on the route we won't have to think about where we are going. We will then decide on two or so pacers who need to commit to a portion of the

route and be reliable to show us the way. We will then set up a number of seconding teams. This allows us to carry only the essentials (emergency gear as we are on the mountains) needed while tagging the peaks, we will have lighter packs and we can get fresh food, gear and smiles in between. We will plan carefully which food to have available, spare shoes, socks and clothes too, especially depending on the weather conditions we may need to make a number of changes.

In terms of training...

Debs is training towards a great 60 km trail run in April and Dawn is competing in a two day Drakensberg adventure called X-Berg Challenge (www.xbergchallenge.com) in March. We will continue to build up mileage and strong legs used to hiking steep hills/ mountains, as well as long days out to get us ready for May's 13 Peaks Challenge. We are both very dedicated, consistent and determined runners, as well as adding in cross training with strength on a very regular basis. We both find that the core is so important to maintain strength as without it, all the run training is not nearly as effective and the endurance factor fades without the strength to carry on. So, that is us for now. Next update will show what else we have been organising, what gear we plan to take and food/ nutrition to have along the way.



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Gloucester invitational 24 hour track race



Gloucester invitational 48 hour track race



Gloucester Elite track race



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invitational 24 and 48 hour: 27th to 29th August 2021

&

elite 24 hour: 23rd to 24th October 2021



Three Things I Have Learned About Ultra-Running

By Suswara Payne



It was with a group of friends who had decided to run from London to Brighton. Our course was about 50 miles. The furthest I had ever run before that was a marathon. It felt like a big jump - almost double the distance. It was a step into the unknown. I had no idea if I would be able to do it or what I would experience.

I REMEMBER MY FIRST ULTRA-RUN.



I was fortunate that the group contained some experienced ultra-runners who had already covered this kind of distance (and much longer) many times. But the other half of the group were newbies, like me. Looking back on it, it was the perfect introduction. It was not a race, it was relaxed. There was no pressure to keep to a particular pace, we had lots of breaks (including a picnic!), it was a beautiful route through some charming villages, and most

importantly it was a lot of fun. Of course it did get more and more difficult, but we all pulled together and everyone finished.

I felt a real sense of achievement because I wasn't sure whether I would be able to complete it. Afterwards, travelling back in the car it suddenly hit me. This was a really long way, it was even taking a long time by car on the motorway. We ran that whole way. Wow! I had achieved

something that I thought was impossible.

This is the thrill of ultra-running. You can do so much more than you think you can. You can go beyond your limits. We all limit ourselves. We tell ourselves that we can do this and can't do that. We create boundaries for ourselves. But the reality is that we can do far more than we think. My meditation teacher, Sri Chinmoy, takes it one step further: *"We are all truly unlimited, if we only dare to try and have faith."* So, there are actually no boundaries to what we can do. Just consider that!

This process of going beyond your limits Sri Chinmoy called *"self-transcendence"*. He was, himself, the very embodiment of self-transcendence - endlessly creating. He drew millions of bird drawings, created over 100,000 poems, composed over 23,000 songs, gave 700 peace concerts around the world as well as excelling in weightlifting and many other diverse activities. Self-transcendence in the ultra-running world took the form of multi-day races which over time would increase in length from 6-day to 10-day, 700 miles to 1000 miles and 1300 miles. Eventually it would culminate in the 3100 mile race, the world's longest running race which is now held annually.

Self-transcendence is an inspiring goal but we all know in practice it can be very hard. Our muscles become stiff so it is difficult to move, we get blisters, injuries assail us, our energy levels can crash and

our stomach can find it difficult to digest everything we are taking in. However, I came to realise that although these were difficult experiences, they were not the hardest thing to overcome.

After running a marathon in one of my best times, I was talking to an ultra-running friend. He also ran the marathon but was inspired to run in a 47 mile race only 3 days later. To me this seemed crazy. It would normally take me a few weeks to really recover from a fast marathon and I would definitely leave it a few months before running another long race. The idea was unthinkable and so I didn't even consider it.

However, I met a few other people who also wanted to run this race and somehow I got caught up in the inspiration. That tiny mental shift from thinking something is impossible to entertaining it as a possibility allowed things to change... fast. The idea kept gnawing away at me until I felt that I should, in Sri Chinmoy's words, *"dare to try"* for the experience if nothing else.

The start of the race felt odd. Normally I would find this part very easy, I would just have to control myself not to run too fast but this time I was running slowly because I had no choice. I was still very stiff from the marathon. I was laughing because the idea of running 47 miles when I was already struggling in the first few miles felt crazy. But slowly things started to loosen up and I began moving quite well.

However, just after the half-

way point things started to get difficult. Very difficult. My energy really dipped. Instead of being one of the faster runners on the course I was now one of the slowest. Many people were passing me, even some old, non-runners. I had nothing left, I was finished. My thoughts compounded the problem: of course I couldn't do this; I was never any good at endurance events; what was I thinking? I should just quit the race and spend my time doing other things that I enjoyed more etc... When everything is hurting it is very easy to convince yourself to stop.

After a few miles in this sorry state I bumped into my friend Karteek (an experienced multi-day runner and English Channel swimmer) who was also running the race. I told him all my problems and that I really just wanted to give up. He encouraged me like anything to continue... but I was stuck in my space and didn't want to listen to him.

But then I realised that he was moving slower than me. I expect he had many more problems of his own that were probably worse than mine, but he was in a very cheerful, positive mood and had never countenanced the idea of pulling out. And this was the big difference between us. It was this difference that meant that he would finish the race while I would give up.

So - I decided to continue! It was difficult but the energy crash did eventually go. Maybe it only lasted for 45 minutes

or so but it felt like an eternity. However, it did go and I did finish. It was an important lesson. The difficult times will pass.

My main obstacle to finishing the race was not my physical suffering or the energy crash, it was my own thoughts. I had let my thoughts run wild and they had convinced me to stop.

Our thoughts are incredibly powerful. They can control and bind us. How many thoughts we have at every moment. Thoughts about the past, regrets and problems, thoughts about what could happen in the future, worries and anxieties. Most of these thoughts are unnecessary and can often affect us in a negative way.

If we can learn to still our minds and focus on the present moment then we can simplify our lives and we are able to concentrate on what is important. We can harness the power of positive thoughts. This is the art of meditation. Meditation can have a positive influence on our lives and on all our activities - including ultra-running.

A few days later I had my third lesson in ultra-running. An experienced multi-day and 3100-mile runner, Ushika, invited me to join him on a 7 mile run. However, after completing both races my body was depleted and was horrendously stiff. I was struggling to walk around, so I declined his invitation. However, he wasn't giving up on me that easily! So, I thought I would give it a try...

I have to say he was very patient with me. I was a series of complaints and problems but Ushika always had an answer.

My Achilles is hurting so much. "Well try doing this stretch." I have a sharp pain in my hamstrings. "OK, we will walk for a bit." I am feeling tired. "OK, let's stop for a few moments."

Like this, eventually we covered 7 miles and for periods I was jogging fairly comfortably, albeit slowly.

How is that possible? This really blew my mind. When I was running with Ushika I felt like there really were no limits to how far you could run. You just had to find solutions. Again, it was a difference in attitude. I was always focusing on my problems and finding reasons why I should stop, but Ushika was always finding solutions so we could continue. This is the *"faith"* part of Sri Chinmoy's aphorism. Ushika had such belief that he would complete the distance that problems were just temporary setbacks and not insurmountable obstacles.

So, these are three things that I have learnt about ultra-running: you can do much more than you think you can; don't let negative thoughts control you and force you stop; when you have a problem, don't give up but look for a solution - there will always be one, you just have to keep trying!

Or, as Sri Chinmoy says: *"we are all truly unlimited, if we only dare to try and have faith"*.

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THE BIG SMOKE

ALISON WALKER & HER 180 MILE RUN AROUND THE UK'S CAPITAL

By Ed Scott

*Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn*

T. S. Eliot

In 2020, in the wake of coronavirus-induced race cancellations, FKTs were dropping like flies on seemingly every British route within stumbling distance of a pub. Long or short, mountainous or Norfolk, records were broken, challenged, and broken again on each local line of dirt with so much as a dusty waymark to its name.

In July, all eyes turned to the Pennine Way as Bristol's toughest Tennessean John Kelly chipped 30-odd minutes off Mike Hartley's long-standing record, only for Damian Hall to show up less than two weeks later with a mohawk and a van full of cereal bars to take it back for the Brits.

A few months later, Kristian Morgan decided to give Hall a taste of his own medicine by targeting his record on the UK's longest National Trail, the relentlessly rugged South West Coast Path. 630 miles of salt, sand, and seagulls later, Morgan rocked up on Minehead beachfront with a three hour scalp to his name, having stumbled through the previous ten days on a diet of pasties, chips, and overpriced Mr Whippys.

Meanwhile, in the strange, bum bag obsessed world of ultra-distance road running, two iconic records fell in quick succession. With the help of their fiercely dedicated support crews, Carla Molinaro and Dan Lawson both employed the cunning tactic of being absolutely hard as f***ing nails, each running for more than 15 hours a day in order to obliterate their re-



I have experienced the joy of adventuring in suburbia.



Alison and crewmates Chris (left) and David roll through Hyde Park.

spective genders' records for the iconic Land's End to John o' Groats run.

Time and time again, thanks to these athletes and dozens more, our small island was momentarily the focus of the running world. Throughout what was, shall we say, a challenging year, the UK's richest landscapes were broadcast around the globe in all their bucolic brilliance, be they dark Northern hills, shimmering Atlantic cliffs, or just a bypass on the A30 outside Okehampton.

I must admit, though, that for all the windswept glory of the great outdoors, I remain entranced by adventures of a subtler flavour. Footpaths that slip between houses and open up onto featureless fields at the edge of town, a few blankly staring horses in one corner, backlit by the distant roar of traffic, this is the terrain I cut my running teeth on. Whilst it may not inspire awe like the fells, adventure in suburbia offers a different kind of wonder, one characterised not by extreme weather or heart stopping climbs, but by a kind of psychogeographical awareness, a sense of knowing the intricacies of one's surroundings, the hidden histories that lie beneath the surface of a place.

In September, I had the opportunity to help support a record setting attempt on one such urban adventure, when I joined the London based Malaysian ultrarunner and inov-8 athlete Alison Walker on her epic 'Smog Graham Round' FKT. Named, of course, in



Alison and Chris pass through Crystal Palace Park.

honour of Cumbria's finest plimsoll advocate, the Smog is a 180 mile route devised by Rick Pearson, an editor at Runner's World, which winds its way through all 32 London boroughs, climbing to the highest 'peak' of each of them in the process. Needless to say, these 'summits' range wildly in severity, from the barely noticeable 18m plateau of Tower Hamlets, to the towering Westerham Heights in Bromley, which tops out at 245m above sea level, eclipsing all but two of the city's skyscrapers.

London being the metropolis that it is, more than 50% of the Smog is on pavement or path, which perhaps goes some ways towards explaining why so few have ever attempted it. It's a testament to the hidden spots of greenery that pepper the city that this ratio is as high as it is, but nevertheless, the idea of 90+ miles of cold, hard tarmac is surely enough to make even Eliud Kipchoge weak at the knees.

In 2018, a group of relay runners took on the challenge, finishing in an impressive 22 hours and 14 minutes, albeit without returning to the starting point and thus not completing a round. Pearson himself tried to hike the route in five days a year later, wild camping (in bushes, presumably) all the way. "It was far, far hard-

er than anticipated," he wrote, after picking most of the leaves out of his hair. "Tragically, I had to admit defeat on day three."

Since then, nobody had completed a solo Smog, or even dared to start, until Walker came along. On the morning of September 14th, a snappy 54 hours and 33 minutes after she had set off, she returned to her starting point in Victoria Park and became its first ever finisher. Perhaps 'conqueror' is the more appropriate term.

When we next speak, on a Thursday evening six weeks later, Alison is still recovering. The previous weekend, she'd found herself inexplicably caked in sweat on a mild October morning, six hours into a 24 hour track race. She dropped. "I had a gut feeling that I wasn't ready," she tells me over the phone. "Normally in training I'm quite energetic, but for this round I was just tired all the time. I thought it would just go away, but it didn't."

It's hardly surprising, at 180 miles, the Smog was by far and away Walker's longest ever effort, eclipsing her previous distance PB



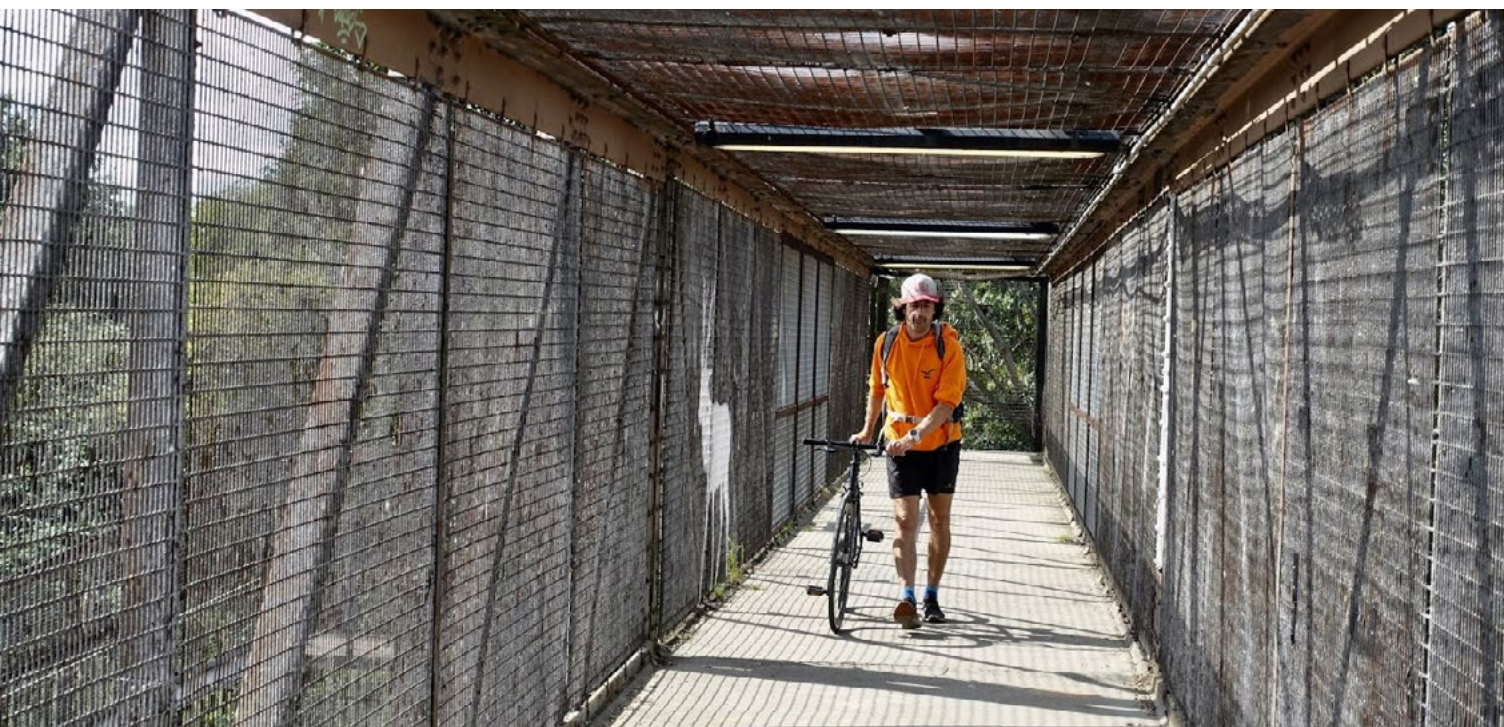
Crossing Westminster Bridge.

by a cool 60 miles. ("It did feel like a different beast," she admits.) Remarkably, she only ran her first ultra in 2019, but since then she has grabbed the sport by the horns. After nailing a 9:40 100k in January 2020, Alison was looking forward to a year of big adventures. As was the case for so many of us, her calendar was sideswiped by coronavirus.

What followed was a summer of FKTs. In May alone, she set three of them, all unsupported, and each outstripping the mileage of the last: first, she tackled the 19 mile Epping Forest Challenge Walk, followed a week later by the 28 mile Capital Challenge, and then the 37 mile Jubilee Greenway two weeks after that. Clearly not one to rest on her laurels, she then set off the following weekend to take the self-supported FKT on the 76 mile Capital Ring.

Then, at the international Quarantine Backyard Ultra in July, she covered 110 lonely miles around and around Victoria Park, an experience only marginally tainted by a small child cycling over her foot, like I said, "adventures of a subtler kind." Still, she stayed hungry. "I was thinking of doing a big one," she reflects, 110 miles clearly not meeting her criteria for 'big'. "I did consider doing the M25 [the 117-mile motorway encircling London], but I thought, 'How dull.'" Quite.

Later that month, Walker spotted Pearson's route on the FKT website, only a few days after supporting David Bone for a stretch of his mammoth FKT on the 150 mile London LOOP ("He's a bad influence on my life," was all she had to say on the matter). From then, there was no going back; what followed were two months of preparation in which she focused on getting as much 'time on feet' as possible.



Though her 100k PB suggests a great deal of raw talent, there is of course only so far that a strong, fit body will take you. The degree to which Alison's personality informs her success is clear even from the brief time I have known her. In many ways the archetypal ultrarunner, she is reserved, almost shy, even a little socially awkward. But she is marked by an unwavering streak of grit, determination, and stubbornness.

In recounting her experience of her two day trip into the Smog Graham pain cave, she describes with remarkable frankness details that would make even Bear Grylls squeal. ("I got a big blister at one point which popped mid-run. My friend, because he's partially blind, he's got a heightened sense of sound, and he heard it pop. He just looked at me, and I was like, 'You heard that didn't you?' and he was like, 'Yep!'") One has to assume that a significant degree of bravado is necessary to soldier through two full days of relentless forward motion, but nonetheless, there is an undeniable air of having simply 'gotten it done' in Alison's take on things.

That's not to say it was all plain sailing. In the final 30 miles, forced to wear her husband's shoes due to swelling, Alison slowed to a shuffle as a heatwave loomed in the UK; after two full days and nights of running, she suffered an understandable mini breakdown. "I'm not ashamed to say I lost it," she admits. "I massively lost it, because I knew what was coming. Having to go through Havering Country Park in the dark, it wasn't too technical or anything, but it's just dense forest, there are a few hills, and there's a golf course that you have to cross, stuff's just growing everywhere so you have to lift your whole leg to get across. And I was just like, you know what? I can't be bothered anymore."

It was at this point that the responsibility for getting Walker to the finish line fell to her team. Fortunately, she had planned for

just this. "I put my trusted friends at the end, people who've known me since before I started running, because I knew if I was going to respond to anyone, it'd be them. They were able to be quite honest." When it finally came into view, the finish line, an indistinct corner of suburbia along one edge of Victoria Park, was less a place of fist bumping and joyful celebration than it was the start of yet another journey, that of coming to terms with what she had just asked of herself.

All of which begs the question: why?

We've now come to the point of the article where I should really think about launching into some kind of erudite ramble on the meaning of all this hullabaloo. To be perfectly honest, I often feel as though long, introspective analyses of the motivations which underpin our need to run are, as the old joke has it, like dissecting a frog, 'nobody is that interested, and the frog dies.'

The truth is, I don't think running can be, or needs to be justified on a rational basis; it resonates on the level of experience, the same way art or music or poetry does. (Would you look at that? I'm rambling after all. Oh well, I've started now.) And I mean the same way, when you witness an athlete already out on the edge of possibility take that one extra step into the unknown, it's as shiver inducingly powerful as anything ever penned by Eliot, Cohen, or Gaga.

It's for this reason that a ramshackle figure like Laz Lake has come to embody so much that is truly great about the ultrarunning experience. With his penchant for aphorisms ("If you haven't bathed in a filling station in 10 degree weather with a sock, you haven't lived") he's hit upon a poetic resonance that links

athleticism with something akin to a proper way of being, stoicism in the face of tragedy, humility in the face of a challenge, humour in the face of disaster. In a word, sportsmanship.

When I bring up the 'Why?' question to Alison, I am somewhat relieved to hear that her take is more practical, at least in the context of the Smog. "Because of covid, I wasn't sure what was going to happen with racing," she tells me. "I'm quite a control freak. I want to know what's going to happen and what's not going to happen. And the Smog just starts from my house, why complicate things?"

It's almost as if it hadn't even occurred to her that she could just not run hundreds of miles. To me, this is not so much an indication that she has a screw loose (though she might) as it is a clear signal that she is doing what she should be doing, out there exploring her limits. "I wanted a challenge, and I wanted a challenge that scares me," she says. "And, to tell you the truth, I also knew deep down that I might not finish it."

Having dipped my toe in the ultra world on a few occasions now, I'm increasingly of the opinion that 'Why?' is simply the wrong question, the real question is 'Why not?' Of course, there are a million answers to this. Because it will hurt, sure. Because there'll be times when you want it to stop, yes. Because a blister will pop so loudly your companion will hear it - okay. But therein lies that truth which fuels the running fire, if you'll excuse the grandiosity (I've really gone all in on this rambling thing), what could be more true of life itself than that sometimes, no matter how hard you try, it sucks? Or, to quote Laz Lake once more: "It's

easy, until it's not."

Whenever it's not easy, it's up to you to decide the best way to proceed. Having been a small part of Alison's tremendous two day effort, I would hesitantly suggest that that way is forwards, relentlessly, at whatever pace you can manage.



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GRANDMASTER 100

By Amy Stratton Costa

I have been running ultras and 100 mile races for more than 25 years. The last 5-8 years I have been doing Badwater 135 every July, shooting for my 7th finish this summer, and Brazil 135, race director Mario Lacerda, in January plus running the entire Caminho da Fé with a friend, 300-500 miles with the race in the middle. I sprinkle in a few other races in between like, TDG in Italy the last three years, and MDS in 2018 I think... but since the Covid pandemic hit last year's races and Badwater was canceled 10 days out, I was lucky enough to be able to jump into the Last Annual Vol State, 314 miles across Tennessee with my boyfriend Chris Clemens, also an ultra runner, with only a few days' notice thanks to Lazarus Lake the RD.

One of the first races held last summer after the pandemic hit. I did complete Moab 240 miles in October 2020 which was an incredible race so beautiful and exceptionally run by race director Candice Burt. After that race I kicked back a bit and enjoyed the holidays, since I was not doing any international races and not going to Brazil in January like I have the past 5 years, a friend of mine, Linda Quirk was turning 68 the day of the Grandmaster 50/100 miler in Nevada asked if I wanted to do this race with her. The race was for anyone 50 years and older! I am 56 and feeling 76 some days, but I thought what a cool idea to be out there with a bunch of cronies from the old days. I told Pam Reed about the race when I saw her in December as she was looking for a good 100 for her 100th 100! LOL she would of course beat me as she always does, but I love seeing her out there, what

an incredibly strong runner and role model.

Linda and some of our Florida running friends all converged on Beaver Dam, Nevada, I think it is called Littleton Nevada the day before the race and packet pick up, an interesting place advertising for lawn mower races to be held soon. I did not really pay attention to the sign as I was only thinking of my race and getting rest for the morning. But I would soon learn all about lawn mower races!!

The start was cool temps and quick hugs to Pam, and Catra Corbett and Phil Nimmo, other familiar faces from our ultra community...off we went straight up a climb and into the desert. It was very rocky and hilly, but I loved every minute. Whenever I can get out of Florida and run in mountains or desert I am happy no matter what.

The aid stations were 3-5 miles apart which was exceptional due to the first day being quite hot for runners, it did not bother me as I am very used to the heat. The night was 28 degrees but I had all my gear I carried on my back so I was well prepared. It was two loops of the 50 mile course and aid stations were well stocked, and friendly people, it was just very enjoyable. This is the first time I have ever done one of the events of Dan Wilson and Beiyi Zheng, but they were very kind and helpful. Gordy Ainsleigh, a US ultra icon, was working at one of the aid stations.

It was fun to be out there with folks over 50. I always enjoy meeting folks in races, and we are usually of all ages and backgrounds, but this was kind of fun to see 50 plus year olds still having the spirit and drive of any 20 year old! It was a very rocky and technical course at times so it may not be for the beginner. But they have 50K, 50 mile and 100K options.





Rocky Raccoon 100K/100 Mile: Don't Pass the Puppy Guy

By Gary Dudney

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A GREAT DESTINATION RACE IN THE UNITED STATES THAT OFFERS ALL THE CLASSIC VIBES OF 100-MILE RACING IN AMERICA, LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THE ROCKY RACCOON 100K/100 MILE HELD EVERY YEAR IN FEBRUARY NEAR HOUSTON, TEXAS.



ROCKY RACCOON IS AN OLD, ESTABLISHED RACE DATING BACK TO ULTRARUNNING'S MISTY PAST...1993. ITS 20-MILE LOOP FORMAT OVER MOSTLY GENTLY ROLLING, PINE NEEDLE-COVERED SINGLE-TRACK TRAILS, THIS MAKES IT A FAST COURSE AND VERY ACCESSIBLE FOR FIRST TIME 100 MILERS AND BACK OF THE PACKERS.

There are even long sections of wooden planking and bridges built into the trail to usher you over swampy areas in the forest. And while most of North America is locked in winter's grip during February, Texas is one of the few places where you can expect moderate weather even mid-winter.



Ironically, as I write this report two weeks after the race, the Houston area is enduring historically cold weather that has frozen electricity-generating wind turbines in place causing rolling blackouts, but on race day we had fantastic weather. A lightweight shell was all you needed throughout the race except for a few hours in the early morning when you needed to beef up your outer garment a bit or add an extra layer.

A short drive northwest of Houston, the race venue, Huntsville State Park, sits in the midst of an area known as the East Texas Piney Woods in the Sam Houston National Forest, where magnificent longleaf, shortleaf, and loblolly pines rub needles with the broad leaves of bluejack oak, post oak, hickory, and other hardwoods. The trees are spaced an elegant distance apart in most places so green palmetto plants, holly and flowering dogwood create an attractive, varied understory.

Race headquarters is situated next to the park's main lodge on the tip of a peninsula that juts into Lake Raven. With each lap, runners pass by the Start/Finish and then run a long grassy segment right through the heart of the crew camping area where everybody not actively killing themselves trying to run 100 miles or 62 miles are lounging around on camp chairs next to camp stoves, ice chests, and piles of warm clothes and snacks. For the runners, who are getting more desperate with each loop, the tent city starts to look like Shangri-La.

The course was marked to perfection so the 20 miles was easy to navigate, but more importantly there are 500 runners out on the course split about evenly over the two distances, 100 miles and 100 kilometers, so you are seeing other runners all the time...no lonely slogging and having to guess which way to go at questionable junctions in the forest. The only real obstacle, aside from the sheer distance, between you and a big Texas finish are the numerous tree roots, which get more adept at grabbing your feet as the hours go by. During the race, I got tripped up maybe 10 or 15 times despite trying to keep my focus on the footing. I never actually fell all the way to the ground but the saving grace would have been a soft landing. Despite the name, Rocky Raccoon, there are virtually no rocks. Aid at this race is literally world renowned. There are aid stations about every five miles going around the loop, and each station provides the full array of food and hydration options. I was blown away by the quesadillas with cheese and BACON! Every station allows drop bags so you can space your personal supplies out any way you wish. And there were always plenty of volunteers to help the many runners.

Race Director Chris McWatters, who manages this gargantuan effort of putting on such a complicated event with a calm confidence that is a glory to behold, sets a quiet, friendly tone for the race. He greets every finisher with their award after directing the race all night and listens patiently to each one recount their race experiences.

My own race ended happily with a 100-mile belt buckle and a time that was just 29 seconds below 27 hours. I would have had

about two minutes to spare to break 27 hours, but just before the finish line, a runner had stopped to collect a puppy from his friend that he was going to carry over the finish line. I stopped and waited because I'll be damned if I was going to have a finish photo showing me jumping in front of a guy with a puppy.

Finally, back to Rocky Raccoon as a destination race. Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States and noted for its diversity and cultural scene. It's one of the few American cities with a professional symphony orchestra and resident professional companies in ballet, opera, and theatre. Along with fabulous restaurants and shopping, you'll find world-class museums of every kind. Huntsville is closely associated with Sam Houston, who was the key leader when Texas achieved its independence from Mexico and became its first president. On your way to the race, you'll be astonished by a huge white statue of Sam Houston along Highway 45 which rivals the nearby pines in height. The statue at 67 feet in height is touted as being taller than any other work commemorating an American hero in the world. A visitor's center devoted to Sam Houston's life is located nearby.



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The Wild Oak Trail

By Antoinette Landragin

The Wild Oak Trail, known locally as TWOT, is a breathtakingly challenging 28+ mile loop with 8,000 feet of elevation gain, traversing three prominent mountains in the George Washington National Forest. It is located on the East Coast of the United States in the state of Virginia, just west of Harrisonburg, on the outskirts of Bridgewater, a liberal arts college town.

The scenic Wild Oak National Recreation Trail was created by the Forest Service in 1979. In 1988, local runner, Dennis Herr, affectionately known as “The Animal”, dreamed up a 2 loop, 50 mile event to introduce runners to experience firsthand the “thrill of TWOT’s wildness”.

Herr, along with fellow Wild Oak veterans who also began perfecting their trail running skills in the 1980s, is one of the pioneers of ultrarunning. He sought out hard, isolated mountain trail running and coupled it with a thirst for challenging adventure. Those of this same pathfinding culture and era unearthed trails, blazed through everything runnable, and tagged peaks, unsupported, in the West, all without the comfort of advanced, or even what is considered today as basic, technologies. Herr sourced from his personal running passion and athletic prowess when contemplating the



idea of creating a difficult, yet stunning, no-frills mountain trail experience. From these daydreams, TWOT was born.

Ultrarunning veteran, Andy Peterson, was part of the beginning of TWOT and continues to embody the culture of the hard running so popularized in the 1980s. Today, decades later, Peterson still holds the run-hard philosophy close to heart, "We feared a DNF more than death, it seemed. We never thought about giving up loops and always ran hard for PRs, even in the snow."

Several notable runs followed on the original 25 mile loop. Courtney Campbell and Mike Morton powered through two loops in the superhuman time of 9:27. Herr recounts the most blistering 2 loop times ever held in 7:42, 7:44, and 7:47 by Dave Drach, Eric Clifton, and Tom Bugliosi, respectively. Sadly, Dave and Tom are no longer with us. In 2013, David Frazier set a record time for one loop of 4:14 and, more recently in 2020, Leah Yingling nipped at this time with the blazing performance of 4:56.

In 2018, under typically inhospitable TWOT winter conditions, John Kelly blazed through 4 loops, equating to 112+ miles and 32,000 feet of elevation, with a course record of 23:48. Guy Towler, Jr. holds the record of the most consecutive 4 loop finishes with three.

"WILD OAK IS WILD OAK. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, DON'T COME."

- DENNIS HERR, FOUNDER

To this day, Herr's modern Thoreauvian philosophies remain at the heart of TWOT, focusing on respect, respect for the trail, nature, oneself, and others, as well as respect for one's true capability.

These concepts form the current regulations for each runner. Participants are instructed to arrive without crew or pacers. No spectators are permitted at any time while runners are active on the course. Violations of these rules are grounds for automatic disqualification. It is made clear that TWOT is based on the pure, authentic belief that "we are born alone, we die alone, so run the Wild Oak Trail alone"

The current director faithfully upholds Herr's vision: "TWOT is stripped down to its core values: no crew, no spectators, no pacers, no aid. Runners are expected to complete all loops purely self-supported." As with all joining the ranks of the TWOT 4-loop, 100+ mile runners, finisher John Kelly shares the Herr-Landragin philosophy:

"TWOT is one of those events that captures the essence of what I love about ultrarunning: an incredible challenge focused on personal goals rather than hype and fanfare, a beautiful course, and the opportunity to share it all with a great group of people out there after the same thing. Of all the things I've done in ultrarunning that are much more widely known, my weekend at the 2018 TWOT 100 will always be one of my most cherished experiences and my sub 24 hour run there one of my proudest achievements."

The trail is isolating, lacks cell service, and often leaves runners to navigate the course alone at night. Participants are warned not to overestimate their fitness and, at the end of days of hard running, the 4-loop finishers list may often only register one name, if any at all. To add depth to the experience, the first of the bi-annual events is held during the coldest week of the year in February, with the second of the series held in October. The

greatest uncertainty for finishing is often the weather. The February 2021 edition was run while the course was buried in snow and ice as a blizzard froze much of the course. Due to inclement weather, TWOT was canceled in '94, '05, and '10.

The event website, www.thewildoaktrail-run.com, offers interested parties transparent entry instructions. By email, basic information is submitted for review. With limited spots available for runners, capping at 20 participants for the 100+, entrants are vetted before acceptance notifications are sent. No details are shared with the runners other than an email indicating who should attend:



1. If you are even the least bit worried or concerned about getting lost, don't come.

2. If you have questions, don't come.

3. If you need a crew, don't come.

4. If you need toilet paper, don't come.

5. If you expect to be pampered in any way shape or form, don't come.

6. If you're a whiner, don't come.

7. If you're a freeloader, don't come.

8. If you're seeking fame and/or fortune, don't come.

9. If you're thinking about writing a report about your experience at Wild Oak, don't come.

10. If you crave abuse, if you yearn for abuse, if you are addicted to abuse in any way shape or form (be it physical, mental, sexual, verbal, mathematical, artistic or whatever) BY ALL MEANS, BE MY GUEST. (This applies to abusers only. Abusers are not welcome. The only abuser allowed is the trail.)



hard, unforgiving and relentless Wild Oak Trail keeps runners coming back despite having dauntingly low finisher rates.

Beautiful and addictive, TWOT stays alive with the support of Guy Towler, Jr., Steve Higgins, and Blake Edmondson. At the finish, the previous year's first place finisher may often be found waiting to congratulate the incoming first place finisher, because at TWOT, it's not just a race, it's a culture within a subculture.

The average finishing time for runners ranges between the bracket of 28 to 38 hours and the cut off for 4 loops or 100+ miles is 48 hours. The currently undefeated course of 8 loops, 200+ miles, was created in 2019, and first offered in 2020. The cut off time is 98 hours and provides runners with a whopping 64,000 feet of elevation gain. As ultrarunning developed from a fringe to a for-profit sport, distance events adapted to the requests and needs of runners. Aid stations, goodie bags, and finisher's awards became commonplace in the scene. Contrary to these changes, TWOT resisted development and stayed grassroots, offering no guarantees of such luxuries. In years past, finishers looked forward to the award of the prized apple butter made by Mrs. Herr. Today, they are considered lucky if they receive a rock as their take-home prize.

This implemented minimalism is part of a series of changes brought to TWOT after Herr appointed Antoinette Landragin to race director. Herr and Landragin first bonded over the shared philosophy of outlier, solo athletic challenges. After the appointment, Herr stayed on as consultant and together the two worked to apply parts of this concept to TWOT, making an already challenging event even more so.

Despite TWOT being severely anticlimactic, runners are drawn to it year in and year out, with daring ultrarunning enthusiasts flying in from across the nation to participate while the rest of the world watches through the Twitter feed (www.twitter.com/twot100).

Landragin communicates to runners that TWOT "may be the least pretentious event and most difficult event you may ever run". The cold and



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2021 IAU 6 hour Virtual Global Solidarity Weekend

As Championships had been cancelled due to Covid, the IAU announced this 6 hour event in which nations select teams to take part in individual 6 hour runs under local regulations. A total of 368 runners were selected to take part worldwide, comprising 31 female and 33 male teams.

British Athletics are celebrating 30 years of supporting and sending ultra-marathon teams to events. They selected 9 male and 9 female athletes who have previously raced for GB at distances from 50km to 24 hours. No team kit would be issued so this was only for those athletes that had previously represented Great Britain.

As one of those athletes I chose to wear my first and oldest vest from 1994 when I first represented Great Britain. I had qualified on my debut in the National 100km event where I had taken the gold with 8 hours 42 minutes and achieved the selection time which was then 9 hours. In that first event, the European 100km, I was 6th female (first GB) with a new pb of 8 hours 28 (pictured with Hilary Walker and Sylvia Watson), the following year in the World 100km Championships I was to reduce this to 8 hours 12 minutes.



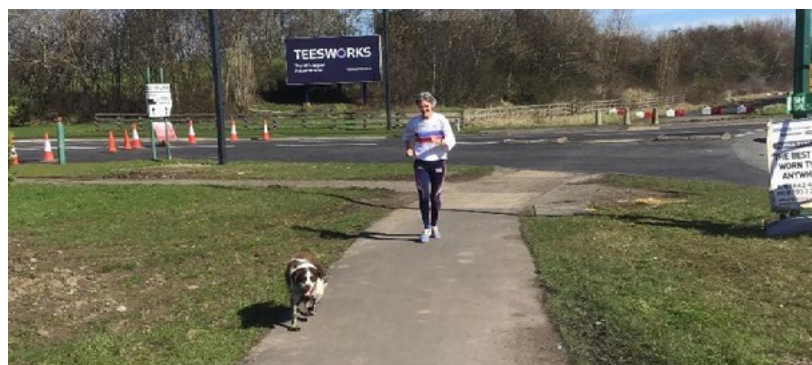
To finish 1994 I also made my debut in the National 24 hour event, again winning gold. I went on to represent GB at both 100km and 24 hour events, pictured in a 24 hour race wearing a Reebok kit, I chose this long sleeved top to wear at the weekend. My last clothing selection were my tights from Adidas, from my last selected 24 hour race.



The weekend was to have almost perfect weather and I had planned to run on the track if it was windy, or along the coast (Redcar half marathon route) if it was calm. The weather looked good and so we drove the short distance to Marske to park on the Stray. Husband Bill was to accompany me on the bike to support me with drinks.

The sun was shining as we set off just before 10am, but there was a strong breeze and it was still pretty cold for me. The fine weather brought along many walkers to the coast and so Bill took the van to Dormanstown on the Trunk Road, further inland on the half marathon route and would support me from there (Teesworks).

As I ran to that point it was no surprise to find Bill parked at the roundabout with a bacon butty van and was tucking into that as I ran by around 8 miles (pictured). Baxter, our dog, had already cadged a sausage from the van. I continued by running out and back along this route which was along cycle paths be-



tween Grangetown and Redcar. The breeze was quite strong, but at least it blew my hair out of my face! Bill joined me on the bike.

My plan was to run around 6 miles/10km an hour for the 6 hours. It was a solid steady run as expected. The result was 37.24 miles (60km) in 5 hours 59 minutes and 59 seconds.

It was then that Bill told me our van was struggling with the gears on the drive between Marske and Dormanstown. So after a quick kit change and hot drink with malt loaf it was fingers crossed for the short drive home. The van was going nowhere, no gears at all. Luckily Bill had the bike, but it was not a flat cycle home with Yearby Bank to climb to collect our car.



I relaxed with Baxter for company until Bill returned with our little car. A Peugeot 107 to tow a VW campervan! We towed the van to the garage at Marske and arrived home at 7pm. Beans on toast with a poached egg was my dinner. I don't think Robbie would be too impressed at my nutrition, two weetabix for breakfast, only water for the run, tea and malt loaf on finishing. I somehow think I expended more energy than I put in – works for me though! Can I now claim 27 years of representing Great Britain (1994-2021) at ultra-distance running?



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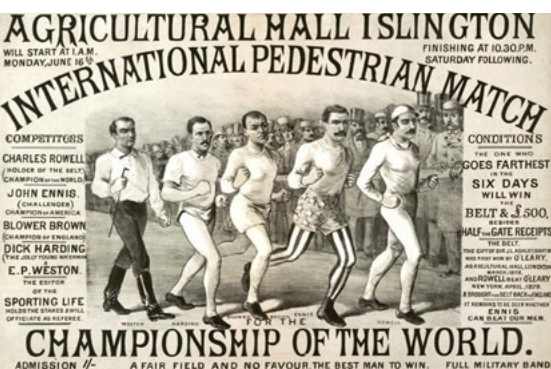


IAU Bronze Qualifying Event

Victorian Ultrarunners

If you were told by somebody that, in Victorian times, men competed against each other in gruelling races, with some covering over 100 miles a day for six straight days on indoor sawdust tracks, you would say, “I just don’t believe you!” or “You’ve got to be kidding?!”

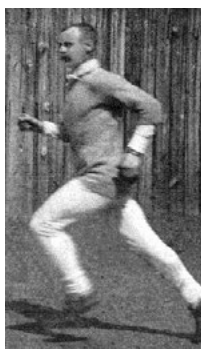
Getting just a few hours of rest per day in makeshift huts and literally ‘eating and drinking on the trot’, these pioneering ‘ultra-ultra’ long-distance athletes underwent tremendous hardships — all in the name of sport.



‘Pedestrianism’ (walking and running races) was a huge spectator sport back in the 1870s and ‘80s. Indeed, in 1879, when these races were at their most popular, the world was gripped with what was known as the ‘Pedestrian Mania’. Often referred to as ‘walking matches’ or ‘go-as-you-please races’, these events took place worldwide with the best of the “peds” (as the professional pedestrians who competed in them were affectionately known) being rewarded with potentially huge prize money, a share of the gate receipts and dazzling ornamental gold belts from ruthless promoters who made lucrative livings from the thousands of screaming spectators who flocked to watch them. Indeed, this hugely popular 19th Century sport was the ‘must see’ spectator event of its time and those who witnessed it were thrilled by the unbelievable sight before them.

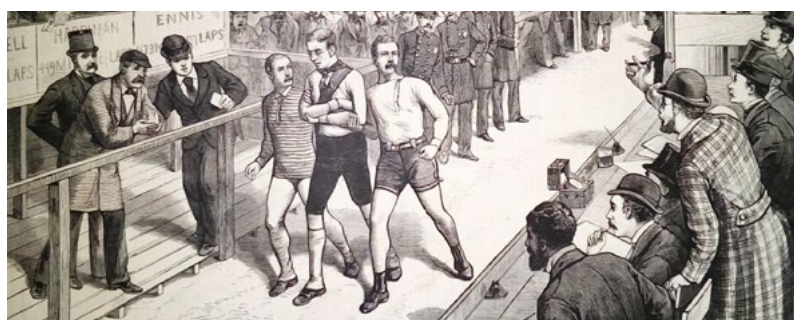


And guess what? Would you also believe that an Englishman called Charlie Rowell (right), aka ‘Cambridge Wonder’ (front right on image of the start of the 5th Astley Belt race, Madison Square Garden, New York) won just under \$38,000 in just two races in 1879? That’s equivalent to \$997,000 or £712,000 in today’s money! The same man covered an astonishing total of 150 miles in 22 hours and 30 minutes on the very first day of a six day go-as-you-please race in 1882 — a record not beaten for many years.



Talking of records... Did you realise that another Englishman called George Littlewood (right), aka the ‘Sheffield Flyer’ ran a six-day indoor record of 623¾ miles, again in New York, but this time in 1888? That world record distance was beaten 96 years later, but on an outdoor track which wasn’t 8 laps to the mile, which wasn’t in a tobacco laden atmosphere and which wasn’t against 40 or so other competitors. No, *he did it with the added benefit of modern footwear, a much more educated diet — and the rest! Also, and to show what an amazing all-round athlete Littlewood was, he STILL owns the world’s oldest athletics world record from, as long ago as 1882, for walking 531 miles in six days on a 13-lap to-the-mile sawdust track, in Sheffield, England. Beat that!

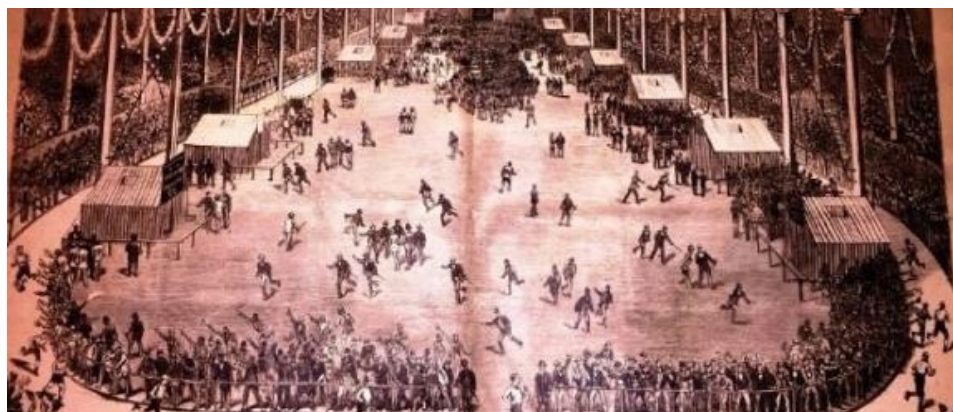
**Yiannis Kouros, a 28-year-old Greek runner didn’t think George Littlewood’s 1888 record was “humanly possible” when he set off in the New York “Six-Day Run” on the all-weather track at Downing Stadium, Randall’s Island, on Monday, July the 2nd 1984.*



3rd Astley Belt Race Gilmore’s Garden, New York, March, 1879 Rowell and Ennis help Harriman

Like modern day sports stars, these Victorian sporting superstars had tremendous pulling power and the punters just loved them! Cheering for the likes of 'Black Dan', 'Blower Brown', the 'Flying Collier', and the 'Wily Wobbler' (an American, who, in England, in 1876, attracted well over a quarter of a million people to watch him perform in a matter of weeks), the turnstiles couldn't click fast enough to get them all in.

For the basic admission price of say 25 cents, or a shilling, the spellbound could watch the races either within the confines of the track, or, for double that amount, a seat in the galleries. The events also pulled in the ladies. The attraction for them was not only the sight of the colourfully costumed competitors, but their muscular frames as well!



Race action—the 5th Astley Belt contest, Madison Square Garden, New York, 1879

Performing bands had a major influence on the performance of the athletes on the track, and the majority of the “peds” would respond positively to the musician’s efforts by sprinting around the track in response to popular ‘numbers’ of the time.

Bookmakers, more often than not, were present at the tracks where their presence could cause some problems for the promoters of the events. Big money was placed on the outcomes of races, and sometimes there were attempts to influence the result — with pepper, bricks and, yes, poison!


George Cartwright (right), aka as the ‘Walsall Flyer’ or the ‘Flying Collier’ — who was a superb long-distance runner, gets confronted by a disgruntled punter in a six-day event at the Bingley Hall, Birmingham, England.

King of the Peds, which concisely covers the history of this fascinating sport, provides a build up to the races, focuses on the personalities involved and provides pre-race and post-race interviews. From the start to the finish, the performances of the participating “peds” are covered in detail with comparisons being made to previous races.

Learn more about pedestrianism at: www.kingofthepeds.com

P.S. Marshall (is author of *King of the Peds*; “*Weston, Weston, Rah-Rah-Rah!*”; *Richard Manks and the Pedestrians*, and is co-author of *A Man in a Hurry*)





Lowri Morgan has packed a lot of epic adventures into her time on this planet. Her sense for adventure and desire to continually explore her upper limits has no doubt been shaped by her upbringing. Growing up, her parents were instrumental in ensuring that her childhood was an active one appreciating the natural environment and the outdoor activities on offer in Wales.

Lowri competed in cross country and track at school with some success, although she found herself to be (in her own words) a 'plodder' and focussed her attention on pursuing her dream of becoming a professional singer.

BEYOND LIMITS

THE STORY OF ULTRA RUNNER AND EXPLORER

LOWRI MORGAN

Beyond Limits

Lowri Morgan

Reviewed by Emily Adams

At university she took up rugby but unfortunately injury struck, a torn ACL and cartilage which could potentially define her future physical limits. What followed was a long, slow journey to recovery. She desperately wanted to return to playing rugby but despite her enthusiasm and diligence adhering to the rehab plan, her knee would just not allow it. One morning, laying on the sofa watching the London Marathon she was moved and inspired by the heroics of the runners on the TV, then came the idea that running a marathon would be her way off the sofa and to come back from injury.

Setting herself micro-goals, it wasn't long before Lowri was taking her first steps into marathon training. She returned to playing rugby and achieved a dream of representing her country. After graduation she was offered a place to run in the New York Marathon. With a somewhat less than ideal pre-race preparation, she relished the challenge and completed the race, well and truly buzzing from the experience.

A change of career saw Lowri become a children's television presenter, with her love of endurance and extreme sports an opportunity to document her adventures. Pushed by the fear of failing at any of these challenges in front of the camera, she trained harder than ever. Lowri opens up on the pressures faced in her mid-20's of appearing on screen and feeling she was overweight which led to an eating disorder.

Through her work in television, she was given the opportunity to commission a show on running the Jungle Marathon in Brazil, a self-sufficient, 150 mile race split over 6 stages. Then began 18 months of hard graft and training to ensure she was prepared for the challenges of the Jungle.

Heat, humidity, altitude, not to mention dangerous flora and fauna awaited Lowri in the jungle. In such an inhospitable environment, an endurance event of this kind requires a great deal of respect and careful race management to stand a chance of not succumbing to one of the many dangers. However, whilst hardly a stroll in the park, Lowri held her own and handled whatever the jungle threw at her, a testament to her meticulous preparations and character. She finished in the top 10 and was the 3rd fastest female overall.

Before long, she was seeking out another challenge, something which would be extreme enough to appeal to the television commissioners and secure the funding which would enable her to participate. Through a local running store, she was introduced to the 6633 Arctic Ultra in Northern Canada. A race starting in Yukon, crossing the Arctic Circle at latitude 66 degrees and 33 minutes North and ended 120 miles later at Fort MacPherson, then there was the 350 mile option which continued for another 230 miles ending on the frozen

coast of the Arctic Ocean.

Of course Lowri entered the full 350 mile race. For what would be her second outing into extreme adventure she was sure to have her work cut out, not just with the distance but also the brutal conditions. With the wind chill, temperatures would feel like -70C. Completely self-sufficient, competitors have to pull their kit and provisions behind them on a sled. The race is also continuous with the athletes choosing carefully when to stop to take rest and sleep.

12 lined up and started the 2011 6633 Arctic Ultra, with 6 in the full 350-mile race. Lowri found herself in the company of SAS soldiers, professional athletes and Royal Marines. The physical environment is one thing but add to that a race with such a small field there would be long periods of solitude and isolation where the only company was your sled and your own mind which will at times play tricks on you. Lowri once again demonstrates that she cannot just survive but thrive in extreme challenging environments, dealing with every hurdle put in her path.

Life was about to change for Lowri in 2014, finding out she was pregnant. During her pregnancy she kept healthy and although cautious during the early stages, she was running 35 mile training weeks right up to week 39! Giving birth to her son in 2015, her outlook on the world changed but motherhood and a busy schedule was not going to be an excuse to stop running, now with a greater purpose in life she runs for her son.

The return to running following pregnancy came as a bit of a shock. The road to come back was a slow and steady one. As an ambassador for the 2016 Welsh Year of Adventure, she embraced the opportunity and threw herself back into the world of ultra-running, entering numerous events including being part of the first all-female team to compete in the Three Peaks Yacht Race. She also sets an FKT (fastest known time) for the 333 - running three ultras, over Wales' three highest peaks in three days.

The book rather fittingly ends with the Dragon's Back Race in Wales and what could be the final throw of the dice for Lowri and her knees' ultra-running days. During her account of the race, I find myself wanting to read to the end to make sure that she finishes, even though having gotten to know her character throughout the book I have very little doubt that she'll do anything other than crush it. Just to finish is an outstanding achievement but she finishes in 4th place overall.

A lot is crammed into the 224 pages of this book. Lowri strikes a good balance between providing the relevant background information which provides context and then takes you along on a journey training and competing at various races and extreme adventures around the world. Reading this book will leave you feeling not only inspired but curious about what your own limits really are and whether you too can go beyond them.



HALL OF FAME

Bruce Fordyce

By Helen Hayes

Bruce Fordyce is a spry 66 year old world record holder in ultrarunning. An author, an educator, a media commentator and motivational speaker, Bruce encompasses the full spectrum of ultrarunning and disseminates it with the prime purpose of helping other people become the best ultra distance runner they can be.

Born in Hong Kong and moving to Johannesburg in South Africa when he was 13, Bruce didn't consider running until he was at university. He wasn't particularly fit or even close to running one kilometer. He often recalls how he first began and that beginning was very, very slow. Bruce embarked at night so no one could see him, the run was 10 minutes. To this day Bruce repeats the mantra, "Make it easy and then it's easy to go out and train." Eventually, the runs became incrementally longer, it took a while before Bruce entered the world famous and the oldest ultra race, the Comrades Marathon in South Africa. This is an 89 km stretch from Durban to Pietermaritzburg. On his first attempt he was placed 43rd out of 1,678 entries. His method was to build a solid foundation and consistently do the running under the threshold of doing "too much too soon."

Bruce went on to become the winner of an unprecedented 8 Comrades in consecutive years between 1981 and 1988. In 1990, he won it again. He has completed an impressive 30 Comrade Marathons to date. Within this event he holds the record for the "up" run (Durban to Pietermaritzburg) of 5:24:07 and for the "down" run (Pietermaritzburg to Durban) which stood for 21 years from 1986 until 2007.

His lifelong dedication to the Comrades is forensically recorded

in his notebooks. He began a written record of his runs before the ubiquitous technology was available. These observations about how he was feeling, who he was running with, his diet etc are an invaluable source of information he shares with others through his books and talks. His most recent advice for those of us running in a pandemic is once again, to start slowly, if we have been locked down for some time, we need to take it easy and slowly run, easing our bodies and minds back to longer distances. If safely possible, "Find a running companion, a shared discipline is a lot easier than individual discipline."

In addition to being a 9 time winner of the Comrades, Bruce won the London to Brighton 3 years in a row from 1981 to 1983.

Bruce is a former world record holder over 50 miles and again over 100 km.

Not only is Bruce held in high esteem in South Africa for his prowess over long distances, he is also credited with introducing the free entry, weekly ParkRun events for the benefit of all. In 2011, Bruce took the initiative and held the first ParkRun which has brought health and fitness to 60,000 members.

The Hall of Fame welcomes Bruce into its illustrious lineage for his outstanding achievements in races and his continuing dedication to the sport. For the sharing of his knowledge, born of years of experience, to help others achieve their goals and enjoy their life.

Books by Bruce Fordyce

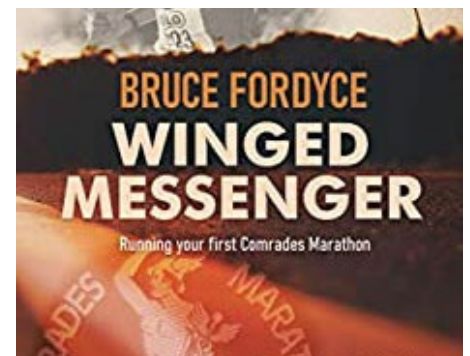
The Marathon Runner's Handbook

Fordyce Diaries: The UP and DOWN Run Compendium

Winged Messenger: Running your first Comrades Marathon

Website

BruceFordyce.com





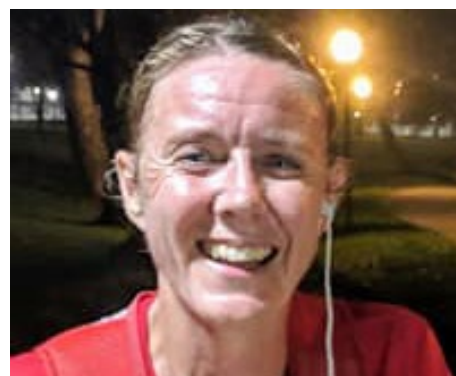
Amy Costa has been running ultras for many years including the MdS, Badwater, Moab 240 and Vol-State. She is also the co-author of the book *A Home for Ozzi* and UNF ECO Adventure assistant director.



Dan Walker Hi, I am Dan, since deciding to run a marathon for my 40th birthday I have since clocked up 24 ultras. The biggest being the HM110 and I am always learning from each one. Currently training to be a PT and owning a black lab I'm always on the move.

Strava: - Dan Walker

Instagram: -the_running_dan



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.



Helen Hayes lives in a small town on the East coast of Ireland. Surrounded by majestic mountains and the ever changing sea, there are ample opportunities for running, cycling and swimming. As a regular contributor to *Ultrarunning World*, Helen has an interest in writing and all things ultra. She can be found most days walking or running with her dogs on the beaches and hills.



Antoinette Landragin, a Franco-Australian native with Eastern European heritage, embraced running after moving to the United States. Here, she quickly transitioned from marathon to 50 miler to 100 miler to 200 miler. The Wild Oak Trail is her fondest running memory. She loved the event so much that after completing 4 loops on the course, she went back the following weekend for a refreshing 2 loops. Soon after, Landragin dropped from the organized running scene to pursue solo running challenges. Today, Antoinette enjoys witnessing great feats of athleticism shown by all TWOT participants.



Gary Dudney is a longtime columnist for *Ultrarunning* magazine in the USA. He's published two books on the subject of the mental side of running, *The Tao of Running* and *The Mindful Runner* as well as numerous articles in all the major running magazines. He's completed over 200 marathons and ultramarathons, including seventy 100-mile races. His home base is Monterey, California.

[Amazon Author Page](#)
[My Website for Runners](#)



Debs and Dawn are on an adventure. In 2021 they hope to complete the 13 Peaks Challenge in Cape Town...and finish it in under 24 hours.

Debs is from Johannesburg and Dawn is in Durban – they met via Zoom through their coach and clicked straightaway.

Follow their progress on their [Facebook page](#).



Doug Zinis Hiya, I'm a 40 year old ultrarunner based in Calderdale, West Yorkshire. I'm relatively new to the Ultra running scene and am looking forward to more adventures.

Achievements. 2018 winning pair in the Calderdale way Ultra with Iain Illstone. Bob Graham and Paddy Buckley rounds in 2019. Spine Challenger 1st place 2020



Emily Adams has been a runner for over a decade but has only recently ventured into ultra-running. Having crewed for her husband at various ultra-marathons she was inspired to give it a go herself completing her first 50km race in 2018. Her aim is to crack the Arc50 in 2021 and ultimately progress to completing a 100km race. Living in the flat lands of Essex, she is strangely attracted to mountains and hilly coastal trails.



Sharon Gayter is a member of North York Moors AC and in 1994 completed her first 100km and 24 hour race, winning gold in the National Championships at both events. Between 1994 and 2011, Sharon represented her country on 27 occasions. In 2011 she took part in the world's highest race, La Ultra-The High and later set the 7 day treadmill record. Sharon wrote a book, The Clock Keeps ticking. Visit her website:

<http://www.sharongayter.com/>



Ed Scott is a writer and trail runner based in London. He once ran fifty miles in one go, and since then he's hardly shut up about it. He can be found at @edscott. blog and on his website, <https://edscott.blog/>



Suswara Payne is a member of the Sri Chinmoy Marathon team. He has practiced meditation daily for almost 30 years and enjoys performing in concerts of spiritual music around the world. He has completed many marathons, finished the Sri Chinmoy 47-mile race 6 times, run from London to Brighton and recently completed his first 100km race. He is looking forward to running a 24 hour race in the future.

