



ROAD, TRACK & TRAIL MULTIDAY
& ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS

// Issue 34

ULTRARUNNING WORLD

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Welcome to the December issue and we open this issue with one of the most experienced multiday runners still active today on the UK running scene. Sharon Gaytor's take on one of the longest races British multadays is illuminating and detailed and there's surely more to come from Sharon as she continues to test herself against time, distance and the vicissitudes of life.

Another returning author is Adam Rykala who hit the trails in his beloved Black Mountains after surviving lockdown intact.

We have the second part of Harmony Waite's epic 200 mile Irrational S.O.U.T.H. report, again full of detail. If you want to run this race, read part 1 and Nick O'Neils report in issue 33 to get the whole story – as much as can be shared with words.

Catherine (Cat) Roberts made it to Albion Runnings Mendip Marauder which finally happened and anyone wanting to explore the West Mendip Way then again, this is the event for you.

The one common theme that runners realise when they get into running ultras is that what once seemed impossible is now doable. In an interview with experienced Australian ultra and stage race runner Cath Wallis who reveals some of the timeless wisdom that keeps remodelling runners into ultrarunners.

We close this issue with Sarah Smith's awesome article on crewing. Sarah crews for Olivier LeBlond who holds the American 48 hour record amongst others and has 40 wins listed on the DUV. Sarah has seen it all and there is solid advice here that will help anyone become a more efficient and effective handler.

Many thanks again to all our contributors and staff who continue to make the magazine a treasure trove of experience and inspiration. Our next issue will be out in the New Year so we offer everyone the season's greetings. Best wishes Abichal & the Team.

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Jen Coleman on her way to victory at the Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour in Battersea 2021. Photo by [Surabhamat Galimov](#)

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Markus Mueller looking at first place at the 2021 [Perpetual Motion 24 hour](#). Photo by [John Kent Leighton](#).

Ultrarunning World
December 2021

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Send inquiries, original and previously unpublished race reports/articles to the email address above. Last dates for article submissions: January 14th and February 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

The IAU have announced that the 2022 IAU 24H Americas Championships were awarded to São Paulo in Brazil. The Championships will take place on September 3rd – 4th, 2022 and they will be organized by the Local Organizing Committee (YESCOM) and the Brazilian Athletics Federation (CBAT).



The list of successful applicants to host the AURA Australian Championships in 2022 has been announced. This includes the introduction of a 100 Mile Australian Championship for the first time. More details on each race can be found on the AURA Facebook page.

The Australian Championships this year are as follows:

- Short Trail – Two Bays Trail Run (56km), 16th January
- 48 hour – Sri Chinmoy 48 Hour Track Festival, 25th March
- 24hr – Southern Sydney 24 Hour Ultra, 3rd June
- 100 Mile – The Glasshouse 100, 10th September
- Long Trail – Heysen 105 (115km), 22nd October
- 50km – Fisiocrem GC50 Run Festival, 4th December
- 100km – TBC

Don Choi, a long-time postman from San Francisco, has been inducted into the American Ultrarunning Hall of Fame as its 20th member. Don is recognized as being “the father of the modern multi-day race.” He made a significant historic contribution to the sport of ultrarunning by bringing back the multi-day races after an absence of 75 years. He organized the first modern six-day race in 1980 at Woodside, California. Checkout the page on Davy Crockett’s Ultrarunning History site.

6 Days in the Dome has been taken over by Bill Schultz (the RD for Dawn to Dusk to Dawn Track Ultras) and Timing maestro Mike Melton are the new co-Race Directors and have added another 24 hour race to the event. Registration on Ultrasignup will open this Friday, December 10, at 12 AM and race dates are June 17-25, 2022.

Kilian Jornet (FRA) has announced he is leaving Salomon, his sponsor since 2003 at the end of 2021 and said he will reveal the next stage of his journey soon. His post on his facebook page said “I remember it like it was yesterday: in the summer of 2003, a friend of a friend gave me a few pairs of trail running shoes. This guy was Salomon’s marketing director in Spain. From that moment on, Salomon became not only a sponsor, but a life partner and the Salomon team—from marketing to product developers—became part of my family. Together we dreamed big, from winning trail and skimo races to climbing high mountains. I was able to make dreams come true that I didn’t even believe possible, and it was in large part thanks to this team. I cannot express the gratitude I have towards Salomon for having accompanied me for more than half of my life.” Checkout Kilian’s website, www.kilianjornet.cat

November 28th Stine Rex (DEN) has broken Kristina Paltén’s (SWE) 48 Hour world treadmill record of 322 kilometers in Aalborg Zoo raising the bar to 341.86 kilometers.



In 2015 Rainer Predl (AUT) attempted his first treadmill world record, 7 days on a treadmill, which he successfully completed with 852km. 4 years later, 2019 he started the 14 day treadmill world record but with an inflammation that developed into a sepsis, Rainer abandoned the attempt after 400km. In 2021 a new project was undertaken – a 30 day World Treadmill Record which finished with 2340,146km on December 2nd. A full report will appear soon on his website Rainerpredl.com



RECENT MULTIDAYS

(2 4 h o u r s a n d b e y o n d)

Sri Chinmoy 24 Hour London took place at a new venue, Millenium Stadium, Battersea Park in Central London in September. Back after a year's absence, the quality field saw 25 runners go over 100 miles with Jen Coleman taking the women's top place and the best British Women's performance of the year at that time with 227.715 km (141.495 miles), second overall only surpassed by Peter Abraham (Peter's report will be in issue 35) who finished with 231.023 km (143.551 miles). Full results on the [Sri Chinmoy Races website](#).

October 16th saw the Belfast 24-Hour International Road Race begin in Victoria Park. The event also incorporated the AAI Irish National and Age-Group Championships. Of the 99 finishers, Edward McGroarty took the win with 256.570 km and Aoife Karen Mundow was first woman 211.760 km. [Full results on the DUV](#)

Severn Valley Events hosted two 24 hour races as well as a 48 hour this year at the Blackbridge Jubilee Track, Gloucester August 28th. The Gloucester Invitational 24 hour saw Nathan Craig Montague win with 226.963 km and Stephanie Wilson was first woman with 176.472 km. In the 48 hour Michelle White, with 318.200 km, won the race outright with first man Rodrigo Freeman Lopez covering 315.800 km. The Gloucester Elite 24 hour race started October 23rd and Norbert Mihalki (HUN) was first man with 252.849 km and the women's race was won by Joanna Murphy (GBR) with 230.831 km. [Results for both events can be found here](#).



The Deutschlandlauf 2021 was a 21 leg 1292km stage race from Flensburg to Lörrach and the event started August 22nd. Winners were Michael Kiene in 135:12:00 and the only woman to finish was Madeleine Hamburger in 179:02:00 6th overall. 8 finishers. [Results on the DUV](#).

One of the most famous of all ultramarathons, the Spartathlon which takes place in September is a 246-kilometre (153 mi) race held annually in Greece since 1983, between Athens and Sparta, the modern town on the site of ancient Sparta. The race is based on the legendary run of Pheidippides, who ran from Athens to Sparta before the Battle of Marathon in a day and a half to seek aid against the Persians and was founded in 1983. Today the race has a 36 hour cut-off time. Fotios Zisimopoulos (GRE) was the race winner in 21:57:36 and first woman was Diana Dzaviza (LAT) in 25:24:25. 187 starters.

The 10th edition of the EMU 6 Day World Trophy took place September 2nd at Balatonfüred, in Hungary on the shore of Lake Balaton. 59 Runners from 16 countries made it to the start line of the race including Camille Herron (USA). Great conditions at the start saw Galit Birenboim-Navon (ISR), Silke Gielen (GER) and Marianne Nenu (ROU) setting the pace as Camille Herron dropped due to an injury. As the race wore on... Marianne established a lead that she was to hold until the end finishing with 728.917 km while Krisztina Drabik (HUN) took the third spot.

In the men's race Gabor Rakonczay (HUN), Ádám Kovács (HUN) and Michael Bohm (GER) were among the early leaders at the end of the first day but by the end of day 2 Gabor had hammered out a lead of almost 30k and by the end of the third day had a substantial lead over Michael Bohm while Roldano Marzoratti (ITA) and Ádám Kovács were battling for third place which Roldano eventually won. Gabor Rakonczay took the win with 801.778 km. [Full results on Korido.hu](#).



This year's Dragon's Back Race which starts at Conwy Castle has evolved into a 6 day stage race with the finish now at Cardiff Castle. The 380km (236 mile) route has 17,400m (57,087 feet) of elevation gain meaning that in parts this is a very challenging mountain race. This year's winners were Simon Roberts in 45:42:11 and Katie Mills seventh overall in 61:12:54. 25 finishers. Full results on the [Dragons Back Race website](#).



The Inspirational Runner Podcast | Episode #150 Gareth King Club Runner to 100km Record Holder, check it out!

Everything Endurance Episode 77 - 1001 Running Tips with Robbie Britton

Fred Richardson recently started a podcast for trail and ultra running in South Africa. Check it out at www.mindfulrunner.co.za/blog/podcast

Becoming Ultra: My First Ultra: 24 Jen Eingle

The Ultra Running Guys - Episode



35: Joel Cervantes – Tackling The MOAB 240

British Ultrarunning Podcast - Episode 39: Dan And James' upcoming events

Ultrarunning History Episode 94: The Six-Day Race Part 3: P.T. Barnum – Ultrarunning Promoter (1874)

The Sharpened Runner - A podcast that is designed by ultra runners for Christian runners. [Divine Appointments](#)

Ultrarunning magazine podcast - Tessa Chesser

Legends of Running Endurance



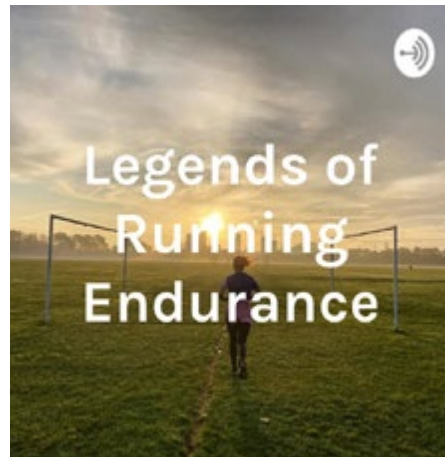
Episode 13 - Canal King - Alex Whearity

Run to the Hills Episode 66 - The Myth The Legend - Eddie Sutton

Bad Boy Running Ep 328 - Sophie Power - [Breastfeeding at UTMB](#) and [Why Mums Need Fitness Goals Are Family Fitness Goals](#)

The Way of the Runner - With Adharanand Finn Episode 18: [Interview with Camille Herron](#)

A Women's Running Podcast by Run Panthera S2 EP5: [Fiona Quinn, Couch To Ultramarathon](#)



INAUGURAL YEAR (Full Film) | A story about the first ever Cocodona 250

"Begin Again", a full-length film in which Dylan Bowman discusses his recent experience at the 2021 Diagonale des Fous.

Highland Ultra: Brutal 3 day mountain ultramarathon in wild Scotland.

Leadville 100 Ultramarathon | [More Than The Miles](#) One of the iconic American 100 milers.



PODCAST CORNER



The Run Smarter Podcast - [Understanding sweat science, hydration & cramping with Andy Blow](#)

Videos

Mindset SECRETS From The World's Best Ultrarunner: Courtney Dauwalter | [Rich Roll Podcast](#)

[Lon Las Cymru Ultra Running Documentary](#) with Gordon Hughes

Altra Running presents: [Relentless](#), with elite athlete Amanda Basham as she finds the balance between motherhood and racing ultras.



Summer Spine

June 2021
By Sharon Gayter

The Summer Spine Race is 268 miles long and runs along the spine of Britain from Edale (near Manchester) to Kirk Yetholm (near Kelso, Scotland). This event was postponed from 2020 due to Covid and measures were put in place for competitor and volunteer safety.

My goal for this race was to try and understand sleep deprivation a little more. When sleep deprived, what does it take to go again: a 20 minute nap, 90 minute sleep cycle or more?

I had a plan not to sleep the first night and then take 90 minutes per night to see how things panned out, with additional sleep as required, by monitoring my pace as per level of "sleep drunkenness", but all good plans...

The start for me was 4pm on Saturday 19 June 2021. There were around 120 competitors signed up for the full event. There was also a shorter 46 mile event, the Spine Sprint, to the first checkpoint (CP) and a 108 mile event, the Spine Challenger, to the second CP. These competitors set off earlier in the day. I had several items of new kit from Northern Runner that would be put through a good trial at this event too.

After the kit check (22 compulsory items were on the list, all of which I would consider essential and not excessive) a tracker was fitted, which is a small electronic device where progress can be followed both for spectators and for the Spine safety team (for those dot watchers you will know what this is), we were on our way. I dressed in a Ronhill long-sleeved shirt and long tights as I ran to Kinder Scout and then Black Hill was bound to see the temperature drop as



darkness hit. It was mild on the first climb up Jacob's Ladder and Kinder Downfall, but this was a trickle of water compared with knee-deep wading as hailstones fell when I was last here a month ago.

On the slabs then to Snake Pass, as just like a month ago I took a tumble on the slabs from not picking my feet up, resulting in the first bruised hip, knee and hand of the day. Over to Crowden and the route had much improved from my last trek as the sun began to fade. My sleeves were pulled down now as height was gained towards Black Hill when bang! Another hard fall and this time my left hip landed heavily on a rock. I took a breather before continuing

and decided to slow down to ensure no more falls on this section of uneven rocks.

After Black Hill it was back to the slabs again and I gained confidence to start running again. After Wessenden Head the route widened on a good track and I made satisfactory progress to the reservoirs and Standedge, although it was by torch light. The wind was picking up and I added my Ronhill Shakedry Gore-Tex jacket to my attire. There were also a few spots of rain in the air. A food van was waiting near the M62 crossing with a special deal for the runners of a hot drink, burger and bottle of water for £5. It was pretty cold and the rain was becoming heavier so I decided to take the snack and put on my waterproof trousers, Ronhill beanie and gloves; I was starting to shiver by the time I set off again.

The rain was now coming sideways as I headed by Whitehouse and towards Stoodley Pike. I was warm inside but I was buffeted by the wind, and the rain was stinging my face, making my progress difficult. As the weather was poor, by 4am it was still too gloomy to switch the head torch off as I reached Stoodley Pike. I eventually made the journey down towards Hebden. I had reced the entire route a month ago, but the CP at Hebden Bridge had been changed after this so I did not know the route to the CP, which was approximately 2 miles off the Pennine Way. Just at the critical point of turning towards the CP so my GPS watch ran out of power. I had been relying on this for navigation. I stopped and was about to get out my map when a runner appeared from behind and asked if I knew the way! He didn't know the way either but had a working GPS watch so we ran to the CP together.

The CP was at a hostel up a steep hill. The finish of the Spine Sprint race was at the front of the building and we got directed to the rear of the building, but were not initially allowed in. The Covid procedure of having your temperature taken and a volunteer checking runners in was slow. There were three runners that arrived just ahead of us and they had joined an existing queue to go in. It was now 5am and standing and waiting in the cold and rain soon reduced my body temperature. We waited around 15 minutes to be checked in. The volunteer at check-in was also doing the checking out so they had to wait while runners left which added to the waiting time.

My intention had been to have some food, a hot drink, restock my food pockets and be on my way in 30 minutes. The delay meant I needed to get warmed up quickly as my body temperature had dropped and I was shivering again. I was escorted into a socially distanced seat and my drop bag was brought to me. My hat and gloves were dripping and my long-sleeved top damp. I put a dry top on, which was my Ronhill merino wool top, and a thermal jacket and climbed into my sleeping bag to warm up. I provided my cup for some tea, and a meal of pasta and mince was brought to me. I also found a socket to recharge my GPS watch. I lay down for a little longer, trying to warm up as I decided it was best to leave warm. I was not sleepy-fired, but did rest for a good 20 minutes in my sleeping bag.

I packed up and collected my GPS watch which was still not fully charged. I took a portable charger with me this time as this was a longer section to the next point (over 60 miles). The rain had stopped now but it was still pretty gloomy and I felt a little lethargic. I had put on the same wet shoes (Altra Lone Peak 5) but with dry socks. I glanced at the time to see it was gone 7:30am. After returning to the canal and rejoining the Pennine Way nearly 2 miles away, some short steep climbs and drops followed that soon got

the heart rate up again and it was a lovely route across to Walshaw Reservoirs and then Withens. Ponden Reservoir was soon behind me and there was a steep climb again to the moors.

Just before Cowling, a tri-club had set up a mini camp to provide runners with drinks and a bacon bun. I duly obliged and felt much better for it as a few more climbs were next before the gentle descent to Thornton-in-Craven and a much flatter route to Gargrave. It was early evening around 5-6pm by the time I reached Gargrave and I made use of the Co-op where I bought a meal deal of a sandwich, Coke and fruit bowl with an ice-cream to start with as it was quite warm now. I walked along eating my supplies and sat down for a few minutes to drink the Coke.

The route via Airton was quiet and I was soon upon Malham and was pleased to reach here after most of the crowds had gone. The climb up Malham Cove was made worse by the midges that had descended in force. I climbed over the limestone blocks and there was even more climbing to Malham Tarn before reaching CP1.5, where hot and cold water was provided. I had more tea and a Pot Noodle with midges before wrapping up again for the next set of big hills.

Fountains Fell was next as the head torch came out again, and it was 1:30am as I made the final climb onto Pen-Y-Ghent. It was pretty hairy on the last section and I was pleased there was another runner close behind me that I had caught as I really didn't like this rock-climbing section. The long descent was hard on the quads and I was feeling very sleepy by the time I was nearly at Horton. I knew I would not make the second CP in darkness to sleep and thought it best to have a nap. Out came the down jacket and bivvy bag, and a bench on the route served its purpose. I can't claim I was particularly warm but I was woken by an animal (sheep or cow) coughing on the other side of the stone wall. It was 3:40am now and the dawn was breaking. I felt pretty drained of energy and walked much of the next section towards Hawes. The good news was that as I was a little later than planned the shops would be open, and at just gone 9am I was straight into the bakery for a stack of filled rolls and a sausage roll. I ate the sausage roll while strolling the next two miles to Hardraw and CP2 at 108 miles.

What a difference to the first CP. The crew was waiting for me and cheering me in as they had been watching the tracker. My drop bag was out in a massive marquee and food and a cup of tea was soon provided. Out the back was a line of portaloos and lots of small tents for runners to sleep in. Food was vegetable chilli but I did not want to sleep now. The crew was constantly milling around tending to our every need. I checked my feet and put on clean socks, not a blister to be seen. Within an hour I was restocked and ready to go, just a little rub on my upper back on which a medic kindly stuck some tape.

Up and over Great Shunner Fell as the weather deteriorated again. I could see the mist and rain in the distance and was soon in it with full waterproofs on again. At the top I rested for 10 minutes and ate a chicken salad roll from the bakery, excellent. Off down the hill to Thwaite now and I was feeling full of running when bang! Again I hit the ground hard, but this time I fell on the poles which I had not been using and was pretty sure I cracked a rib. I sat for a while regaining my composure. Not even halfway and another pain to contend with. I walked on towards Thwaite and the climb out was painful to breathe. The rocky ground slowed progress further towards Keld and once reached I stopped for a break, as the rain had eased, and stripped



off my waterproof trousers.

The slow pace had dropped my heart rate and I was feeling very drowsy. I laid back for 10 minutes to rest my eyes and then it was back to the trail. A gradual climb to Tan Hill Inn and I was looking forward to another hot drink and food here as I had heard great tales of this place. It was not to be though, as Covid scuppered plans of food as you had to book ahead for this and even a cup of tea took a while as a power failure hit shortly after my arrival, but I did eventually get a pot of tea and ate another of my rolls from the bakery instead.

Sleightholme Moor was spongy and not the knee-deep bogs that I encountered a month ago. Just approaching the farm I recognised a familiar figure, Ian Thompson, husband of Tanni Grey-Thompson, had come out to cheer me on. We had a short chat and I was then on my way. Under the A66 and a phone call came through; the voice was very familiar but as I was getting tired it took me a while to figure out who I was talking to as I could not read the caller - it was a small £20 phone that I use for events only. It was Mark Simpson (who was to pick me up at the end) tracking my progress and it was great to chat, but he chose the only place where the noise of traffic could be heard. No sooner had I stopped talking to Mark when my husband Bill rang. He was to ring daily at 8pm which is the norm for us as he works away during the week. I was struggling with tiredness again but was determined to make it to CP3 just after Middleton-in-Teesdale so that I could be warm when I slept. I knew I was going to need at least three hours that night; it was the third night and just 20 minutes' sleep on a bench had been achieved up until then.

The light faded again and the temperature dropped significantly so I wrapped up with my down jacket, hat and gloves. I knew I was becoming very "sleep drunk" and staggering around somewhat, but it was one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward. I struggled on occasion to find the path in the darkness, but was never far off route. When I looked ahead I could see what looked like a dinosaur eating a house. Really? I was mesmerised by this. I knew full well there are no dinosaurs so what was creating this image? There was a bright moon out and it felt like there was a head torch looking over my shoulder such was its power. Closer and closer to the image ahead and finally I could see the outline of two trees taking the shape of the jaws of a dinosaur next to the house.

Ahead of me the path seemed to continuously take on different shapes and my brain was creating images of rocks and undergrowth. It was a strange evening. I could see the lights of Middleton-in-Teesdale ahead, but my pace was so slow it took an age to get there. The road was reached and there were now three miles along the river bank that I am very familiar with. But there again, in the middle of the road, what is that? Is that a person with three legs or a person with sticks? It moved. Something with three legs was definitely in the middle of the road and there are people here. It must be gone midnight. Okay, so now it makes sense, there is indeed a tripod in the middle of the road and it is the cameramen out for some shots. I am not hallucinating!

Along the river and this was agonisingly slow. The stiles seemed bigger than ever and I really struggled climbing over them, and the undergrowth alongside the river had grown so much since I was last here a couple of weeks ago. I tripped and stumbled along until a hurdle came into view. I reached out to touch it, it was a branch and the leaves looked like the stripes on top of a hurdle. I did chuckle to myself. The poles were now saving me from many a

tumble, but worse was to come. I could hear the river and knew CP3 could not be too far away when I tripped again, put the pole forward to balance myself and it went straight through the undergrowth into thin air and over I followed. Fully expecting a dunk in the river I braced myself for the fall. I somersaulted over and landed on the softest bed of weeds ever. It was luxurious, so soft and comfy and I could easily just fall asleep right there, and probably would have done if I knew I could keep warm. Not a single bramble or stinging nettle, the best fall ever! I scrambled back to the path and it was less than 10 minutes from the CP.

Someone had come out to meet me and take me into the CP. We were following red flags to avoid the wild flowers and it seemed like such a long way in my slow state. A large plate of chicken korma and naan bread was on offer but I couldn't quite finish it all. The medic looked at my feet, not that I wanted him too, and okay, there was now a single blister that he dealt with, but I would have been more than happy to burst it myself. It was then I realised I really could not lay on my back, my rib was too painful even though it was towards the side that I had damaged myself. The medic recommended taking paracetamol as it was important to try not breathe too shallow as this could lead to a chest infection, so I did as told.

You are allowed six hours at this CP and knew I wanted a good three hours' sleep and so I was taken to a tent for sleep. The tents were spacious and all brand new! I had arrived somewhere around 1:15am and I had used at least an hour arriving and eating food as my movement was so slow. I was shivering at the tent and heard it was around five degrees but it dropped to just above freezing. I crawled into my sleeping bag. I had no idea of the time as both my watch and phone were in the building for re-charging, but guessed it may be around 2:30am. I lay on my front and within what felt like a shivering two minutes I was sweating. The sun had heated up the tent and I was boiling. How much time had passed? It was daylight. I had slept instantly. It was great to feel the sun and for the first time I put on my Ronhill Infinity shorts and t-shirt and started packing away my sleeping bag.

I then heard a voice calling me, 'Are you awake Sharon?' 'Yes, just packing.' 'We forgot to wake you and you are due out in 10 minutes!' 'What?' Panic! 'Don't disqualify me?' 'No, don't worry' was the response, 'do you want some breakfast?' 'Really? Am I allowed to have some as I did have dinner last night?' 'Is scrambled egg on toast okay?' 'Perfect!' 'And a few beans too?' 'Why not!'

I continued to pack while breakfast was brought to me and ensured my pack had all the kit required and some warm kit as I knew I would be going over Great Dun Fell and Cross Fell at a good elevation later in the day. I managed half the breakfast, I could not eat much, and by the time I got to check out it was a little over my time allowance. Kit check done and I was on my way close to 8am. I must have had a good four and a half hours' sleep rather than the planned three hours, but it was good to see how my body responded to this.

The sun was shining and it was absolutely glorious wandering by Low Force then High Force, and luckily as it was early morning there were few crowds around. I loved this section, I made good progress and felt completely recovered after yesterday's sleep-deprivation mode. You can kind of recall what was happening but it's a bit like a daydream where it feels a bit vague and unreal that it actually happened. I clambered up Cauldron Snout and it was fantastic to see the waterfall again. The cameraman appeared complete-

ly covered up; it was midge weather again and they had annoyed me at camp when I was packing, but when you get moving you are unaware they are about. I frequently dunked my buff in the streams to wash my face and hands, and the coolness on my neck felt good.

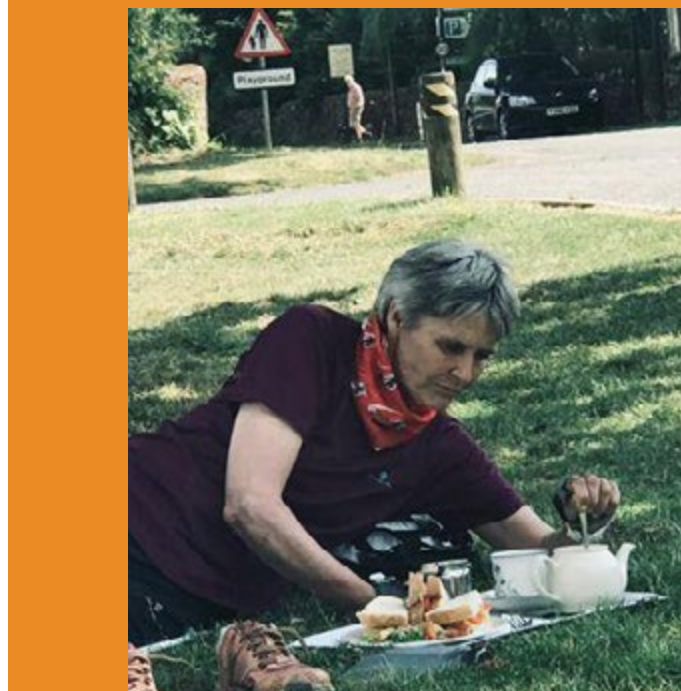
I was soon to reach High Cup Nick, my favourite part of the Pennine Way. I can never tire of seeing this over the horizon and enjoyed a little run down into Dufton. The good news about being behind schedule was that the Post Box Pantry was open and I could not resist having a pot of tea and a sandwich, resting in the shade as it was a warm day. Fully refuelled for the six mile uphill trek to Great Dun Fell, I set off on my way. It was now 2:30pm and I kept a steady rhythm going as my rib was giving me grief if I breathed too deeply, and the temperature was steadily cooling on reaching the top.

On by Cross Fell, my merino wool top was now on under my t-shirt, then descending by Greg's Hut. This bothy was not manned so I popped my head in and then continued on the six mile downhill stretch to Garrigill. It must have been 8pm as on the way down, Bill rang for a daily update and found me in much better spirits than the previous evening. After Garrigill the route follows the river, and the midges were certainly biting when I slowed to cross the numerous stiles on this section. The light was fading as I reached the youth hostel at Alston and a volunteer came out to greet me and lead me into the garage area for check-in.

Lasagne and tea arrived and I still could not quite finish this off. I planned to sleep for 90 minutes and was given a



bunk, but I was worried I would not wake up or be woken up after the previous night's experience. I lay down tired, but could not sleep, I could hear doors shutting and people talking and could not relax. I tossed and turned for a bit and eventually got up and realised it had been 80 minutes. I was asked if I wanted breakfast, I couldn't face anything other than a cup of tea and progressed to restock my bag again. I got my back patched up again as it was feeling tender again and the medic did a good job with the tape. I wasn't sure how cold it would be, but it was 2:30am and I anticipated a slow march so dressed with full body cover, hat and gloves.



It didn't take long for the overtrousers, warm jacket, hat and gloves to be removed. It was quite slow progress in the dark towards Slaggyford, at which point I took a definite nosedive as tiredness swept over me. It was around 6am now and time for a 20 minute nap I thought and a nice bench appeared on the green. I put my buff over my face due to the midges, jacket on and gloves on, again due to the midges, and felt as though I slept for 20 minutes and was packed and away within 30 minutes. Progress still felt slow as the rain came in and I had stopped and started numerous times to dress and undress since Alston. After crossing the A689 I passed through Greenrigg Farm. As I climbed the stile I thought I was seeing things again. There, on the

Race Reports

top of the steps, placed right under my nose was a Tunnocks Caramel wafer, similar to the big one I had seen on the recce. Who had placed it there? My assumption was the farm occupants, but what a nice gesture, it did put a smile on my face and I instantly ate it.

Hadrian's Wall was reached and what I thought was a café was a kiosk with confectionery and machine drinks, but the latte was good and worth a stop. The short climbs up and down the wall were absolutely draining and I was crawling along this section very slowly. There were a good few dot watchers on this section that came out to say hello and wish me well. I stopped for one of Hawes' bakery rolls, but could only manage two to three bites at a time as my appetite had completely gone. Bellingham was my focus and I just needed to keep moving. A coffee van was parked at Steel Rigg car park. I drank a cup of tea and a can of Coke and packed away a sausage roll, Kit Kat and a flapjack bar for later, still unable to eat. The rain started again after what had been a warm section, but I felt much better again now and progressed well until I slipped on a downhill section gaining a few more bruises and a grazed wrist for my effort this time. It was a relief to leave Hadrian's Wall for an easier section through the woods and moorland.

The easier route was enjoyable now as the evening panned out to be lovely weather. As I approached Horneystead Farm, there was a sign welcoming "Spinners". The lovely lady, Helen, came out to greet me and invited me in for a drink and snack, well how could I refuse? A coffee and snack later and I reluctantly left this little bit of paradise, soft chairs and total comfort, but I had an event to finish. Half an hour later the phone rang again, it must be 8pm for an evening catch up with Bill. I was not too far from CP5 at Bellingham now. I was in third place in the ladies race with second place Eloise around two to three hours ahead. Eloise had gone into CP3 and already left with no sleep. Well it was still daylight, but I planned a 90 minute sleep here as it would be my last chance for a warm rest.

I was greeted again at the roadside by John who chatted to me and guided me to the campsite. Sausage and chick-pea casserole with pasta was on the menu now along with mouthfuls of midges that were out in force. I went to the tent to shut myself in to try and eat without too many midges eating me. The food went down well and after a quick use of the facilities and a wash I found another two blisters. That made three in total, not bad for over 220 miles of the rough stuff. I bedded down at 10:30pm. John assured me he would wake me at midnight as my phone and watch were taken away for charging.

Right on cue at midnight, John very kindly and gently woke me up. By the time I packed and did my kit check it was around 12:30am when I set off. It was back to long tights and long-sleeved top at this time in the morning. Through Bellingham and up the other side and out on the moor. I was zig-zagging all over unable to find the path, or it was so vague it was hard to see and the mist was sending me a little dizzy flickering in front of my head torch. I was feeling lucky that my GPS watch was guiding me so well when it vibrated and switched off. It had run out of charge! Oops! It had been taken off to be charged but obviously it hadn't been properly clicked in position so I fumbled around finding my portable charger and it was back on route again. I checked my phone and realised this too was pretty short on charge.

I frequently left the path on this section and ended up in some deep bogs, not far from the route, but the mist and darkness were making navigation difficult. I thought about

the winter Spinners that would have far more darkness hours and how this must add so much more difficulty to that event. I crossed the two minor roads as expected and knew I was heading towards Brownrigg Head when I needed to stop for 10 minutes as sleep waves were taking over. I lay on the track for a bit and closed my eyes, a few minutes was all I could bear though as the midges were out in force again. The light slowly came and it was good to switch off the head torch for one last time, it was still pretty misty but also quite mild.

The forest track was next that led to CP5.5 where hot and cold water was available. I had packed a packet of instant porridge to have with my tea here and sat down as again the midges descended. The final stretch of around 27 miles now lay ahead of me. It was warming up as I left the CP and at Byrness I stopped to remove my leggings and it was back to shorts for the climb up to the Cheviots. The climb seemed to go on forever as waves of sleep tiredness kept coming and going. I stopped frequently for a quick five minutes of shut-eye. The scenery was simply superb and it was a fantastic section.

I then saw a tractor in the distance, how on earth did that get here? The farmer was indeed fixing a fence and questioned why so many were out today, unaware of the event. He did say a month ago he would not have been able to



bring the tractor up with the soft ground but the recent dry weather had allowed this.

Hut 1 appeared at last and I could not resist the offer of a cup of tea and the Jetboil was soon on. I felt much more revived now and ate the sausage roll I brought from Hadrian's Wall. I was moving better with fewer stops but still could not shake the tiredness and with 10 miles to go I was overtaken by another runner. This didn't really matter in the scheme of things but demonstrated to me how slow I was going. I was determined not to let him out of my sight and so took a boost of a Caffeine Bullet (100mg of caffeine in a toffee). The clouds were gathering now for the last of the climbs before dropping to Hut 2. I overtook the runner again as he took a short break and picked my way down the steep hill to Hut 2. There was no stopping now, seven miles to the finish and the weather was turning and I needed to get down. I was running now as the rain started to fall. One last climb but the rain was getting heavier so I decided to put on my Gore-Tex jacket and I was warm enough to continue in my shorts. The mist was descending too as the rain turned the path into a stream and with two miles left I hit the tarmac road. Although I thought I was running well, the runner behind had his second wind and charged by me, but I was more than happy to be running and would soon be at Kirk Yetholm.

The mist cleared as the height was lost as one last climb came into view and it was half a mile down to the village and the finish. I turned the corner and there was the village green, flags and finishing banner and a few spectators. I ran through the finish line to touch the Border Hotel that marks the finish of the Pennine Way and the Summer Spine Race. As much as I wanted it to finish, I didn't. It is such a spectacular course and I had really loved nearly every minute of it, but it was wonderful to finish.

I was given my medal and asked to do a short interview. Mark Simpson had kindly come to pick me up; we have taken it in turns to support each other, me (and Bill) supporting Mark a few weeks back on his successful Hardmoors 160 and now here he was with the kettle on in his campervan and heating up some soup for me. Bill unfortunately works away all week so was unable to pick me up. I rang Bill on Mark's phone as mine was nearly out of charge; he was watching the tracker and commented I had nearly finished and how proud he was. No, Bill, I have finished and am sat down right now. I sat on the step of Mark's van for the interview with the rain dripping from the trees and felt no tiredness at all now.

After a shower in the cottage at the finish I collected a finishers certificate and t-shirt and Mark kindly drove me home. I



didn't sleep at all although Mark had come well prepared with bedding in case I did need to. At home you would think I would sleep for hours, but I went to bed at 12:30am and dozed and was up at 6:30am unable to sleep. It is hard to switch off when finishing such races. I unpacked some bits and pieces and put the washing machine on and by 8:30am had fallen asleep again only to be woken by Bill ringing to see if I was okay at 9:30am!

The final result was 5 days, 3 hours 8 minutes and 1 second, third lady and 23rd overall. There were 49 finishers and one of the poorest attrition records in this event with only 52% of participants finishing. It may be a summer event but one runner was rescued from Black Hill on the first night with a back injury and hypothermia, and the last night in the Cheviots another couple were brought down, one also with hypothermia.





BACK IN BLACK (MOUNTAINS)

By Adam Rykala

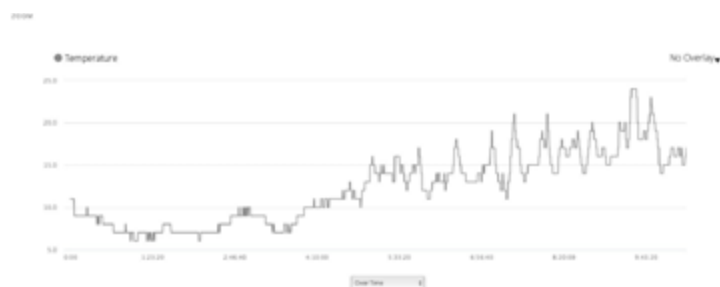
26 June / Felindre – Black Mountains Ultra 2021

18 months after the Brecon to Cardiff ultra, several lockdowns and waves later, it felt very strange indeed to find oneself crossing a start line again.

No sentence should ever include the words 'June' and '6°C' but my Tempe sensor told me the ambient temperature did indeed flicker between 6 and 7°C for a large amount of time at the beginning of the ultra. Coupled with low-lying cloud, strong winds and driving drizzle it seemed that packing sunscreen was a very optimistic choice on my behalf. It wasn't quite wet enough to warrant cracking out the waterproofs, but I was thankful that the UV arm sleeves I'd bought were actually doing an excellent job in keeping me warm.

The first 10K saw some steep climbs onto the northern edge of the Black Mountains, and then a quick descent onto CP1. After CP1 a few issues became obvious. The GPX provided didn't always align with the arrowed route, and leaving CP1 they deviated by 300m for quite a while until I eventually rejoined the route. A similar thing happened a few kilometres in at the top of the one peak where the arrows seemingly pointed to nowhere and it took a small crowd of us (approximately 15) to do some quick recceing and find the arrows.

Apparently, it's been said that there were some issues with the signage being moved, but in some cases the misalignment was definitely not that. I'd recced the route via satellite imagery and there were some odd choices of plotting. Nothing groundbreaking, but in these weather conditions it really did require some mental toughness. At the one checkpoint the marker on the GPX was 200 yards away from the real position. The marker was on the mountainside, but the actual position was in a lay-by on a road and clearly arrowed. I know I wasn't the only one a little frustrated at this.



Then a long, hilly, wet, low visibility (30m) run to CP2, with a steep descent. This sort of atypical June didn't really change until 2pm when the sun finally burnt away the low cloud and the temperature changed. Although it wasn't significantly damp, the ground was clay mud and had several horrendous (yet thankfully short) descents. The worst being the final one down a steep, dense forest on red clay tracks where the only option was to slide down slowly clutching onto trees. After 57km, the mind was frazzled and this was definitely one of the low points as physical and mental tiredness conspired against you.

I'd decided on Salomon Supercross shoes for this, and I'm glad I did. Their only weak spot was grip on wet flat rock, but to be honest most shoes are. They coped with all the rest of it admi-



rably. Kit wise, I'd packed for possible sun and obviously jinxed that – but this wasn't the stormy, windy, driving rain of the 2020 Brecon to Cardiff. It was just... unexpected.

This wet, driving run continued to CP3 at Llanthony Priory. Here, the checkpoint was a very welcome sight. Right up to this point the conditions, GPX issues and signage really did wear on me mentally and it was the closest I've considered to DNF'ing, ever. Being out of practice didn't help, although I've done some 20-30-mile training runs over the time, to be in new territory, and struggling to keep motivation, did sap me. Low visibility meant the social aspect was missing, and in places to be searching for signage and trying to see where GPX issues happened, did wear.

Over the lockdown, we had quite a cold and snowy January so I did some runs in driving snow in darkness on a local mountain. So that helped, as I've gotten far better at navigating in these sorts of conditions. But this was June. I wanted sun!

At CP3 I met John, a guy from Birmingham way and in typical ultra fashion we sort of overtook each other continually until around CP4 near the turnabout point to head back north, we ran together until the end. Typical chatter about life, the universe and

everything helped us fight through those niggles (his knee, my struggle to stay motivated) and we ensured that both of us got through it. If you're reading this buddy, I hope Sweden is a blast!

The turn around saw some great climbs, but now the sun had broken through and we'd finally got some views of the stunning scenery of the Black Mountains.

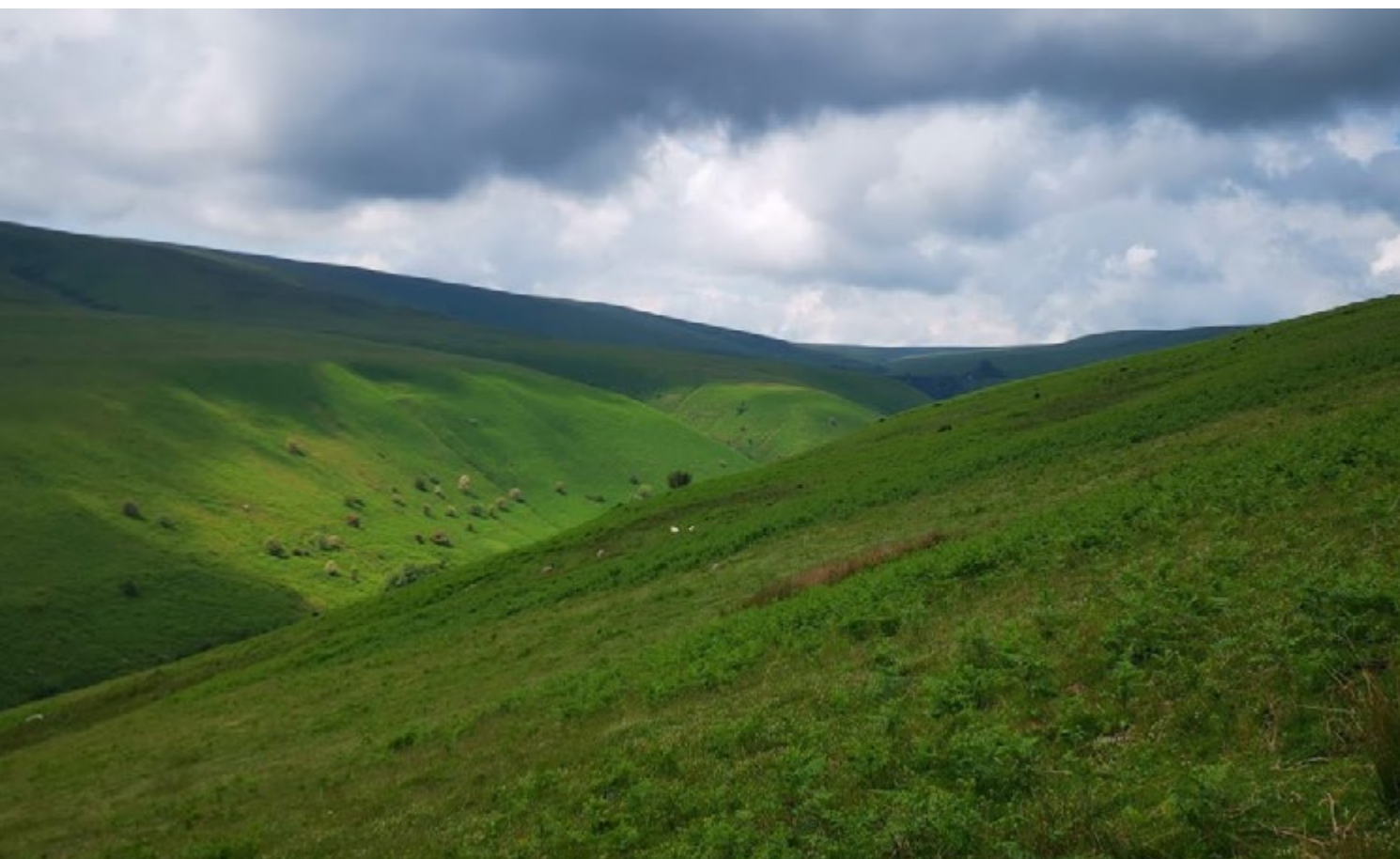
CP5 saw the greatest deviation of signage and GPX, but fortunately as the ultra-runners were the first out of the gate (I set off at 6:30 am, love these staggered, informal starts) it meant that not only did we allow ourselves the maximum time, the greatest opportunity to leave a full car park, but also the minimal risk of signage disruption.

Up just past this photo, we hit the top and it was a long, pleasant, gently meandering run over some amazing scenery. I entered this with no target time except to finish, John and I decided that this would be the way we approached this. And it worked. Chatting about normal things, the challenges we faced in life and how we surmounted them helped me elevate my mood and put me in a great frame of mind.

Before long we crossed over the route (as the ultra route was a very distorted figure of eight), had some friendly banter with the marshals and it was a slow and steady descent to CP6. After a packet of crisps, some sweets and more banter with fellow runners we left, in the proverbial 'high spirits' to put this to bed.

Then that final descent!

Dense old wooded land with a meandering path. Quite steep, with thick, wet clay mud and only foliage to support you. This was SLOW going. No other way around it. Four of us gently took these last few kilometres, slowly sliding down in a controlled manner, very mindful that a fall here could be a serious injury and a DNF at this point would be tragic. Eventually the path levelled off, we crossed some fields and had to ford a small stream. Cold, cold water on tired feet was one of the highlights of the whole event. If I'd had car seat covers, I would have considered just sitting in it to cool off...





Up a small hill, and the sight of a car sat there in the car park (I cheered, I would be running 26 miles home without it!). The final climb, and then to cross the line in just over 10 hours moving time. We both agreed we could have done much better, but for both of us the most motivating factor was not getting a DNF!

By the way, thank you for the coffee, John!

I almost look human at the end!

So yes, it was wonderful to return back to this after 18 months of disruption. Although things aren't yet 'normal', and are likely not to be for a while, it was great to get back to this. Even with the signage and GPX issues, it rekindled the love of this for me after such a long absence – that did indeed make the heart grow fonder.

If places are available, it's the EDDUM next!



BINE ATI VENIT ! WELCOME ! WILLKOMMEN !

BIENVENUE ! BENVENUTI !

ISTEN HOZTA ! ΚΑΛΩΣ ΗΡΘΑΤΕ !

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144H, 72H, 48H, 24H

and

a multi-stage race 300 KM (6X50 KM)

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Contact

Race director : Adrian Bontiu

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THE HELIPAD ULTRARUN 2022



The Helipad, aka Hertog Limburgpad (path of the Duchy of Limburg), was opened in 2010 by the Dutch king (then prince) as a 120km hiking track in 10 stages. In the 12th century the Limburg area was a duchy and already trilingual, going from Rolduc in Kerkrade, Netherlands, to Limbourg, Belgium and it covered a part of current Germany as well. A straight line from Rolduc to Limbourg is about 60km. Both places had the same crown artwork monument installed at the inauguration in 2010.

There is a book of the original The 120km track, which is partially marked. The race version started in 2012.

Through the years the race has been adapted with more off-road tracks as the original hiking route had too much tarmac for trail runners. The distances also became longer. The 167km track consists of approximately 31% forest tracks, 38% dirt tracks and 31% tarmac. The 202km has relatively a lot more forests and the 55km slightly more tarmac. It can get very muddy in times of rain along the river Geul. The race could be called a hybrid run, which imposes its own particularities. From hilltops there are a lot of wide open views, over 40km away in nice weather conditions.

The main asset to participation is the great variety of ambience and surroundings during the race of nature, nature parks and towns and the easy-going style of all runners and volunteers. It is a race with 50-60 participants. Many people know one another. Race director Willem Mûcher will likely know who you are and recognise you.

You can sleep overnight or camp at the start and enjoy an evening dinner and/or breakfast before the race. Getting to the city of Kerkrade and the venue is easy by public transport. The starting point is just a few hundred meters away from the train station. There is a Ryanair hub at the city of Eindhoven. Getting to Kerkrade takes a little over one hour by public transport. Maastricht Aachen Airport, Liège Airport, Brussels Airport and Düsseldorf Airport are options as well.

The cut-off for the 202km, which has around 3,000m of elevation, is 45 hours. One drop bag is allowed on the 167km and 202km. At the drop bag venue a decent meal will be served, with vegetarian and vegan options available. There is a drinks station approximately every 30km. All runners will cover two nights of running on the 202km and one night on the 167km. On the last 10km there is a 100m high coal hill as a cherry on the pie!

At 80km, participants will get a GPS tracker so friends (and foes!) can follow you online.

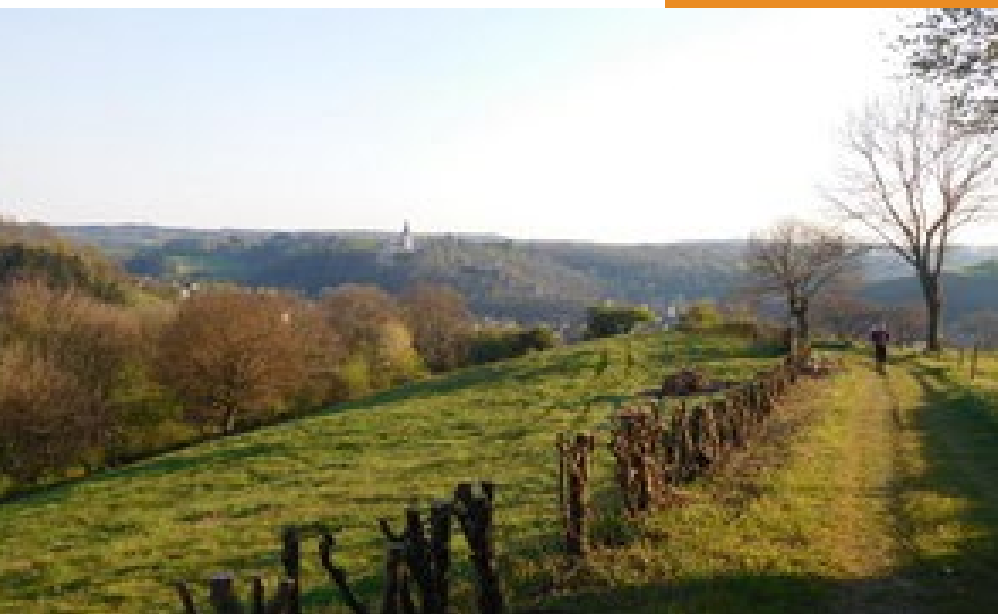
The track is not marked, everyone uses a GPX file, so you will need a GPS device. Experience with a GPS device is imperative! There is a limited number of volunteers and therefore there is no space for ill-prepared runners who might get lost. We do reserve the right to take you out of the race if you appear to be ill-prepared or getting yourself into danger. Start: Scoutinggroep St. Willibrord - Voorterstraat 90, Kerkrade.

REGISTRATION: [Register here](#) for the race being held 22-24 April 2022. Registration closes on 23 March 2022.

Finishers will be officially registered at MCNL and DÜV. Every finisher is a winner, therefore there is no winner's prize. Every finisher will get a medal.

Visit the race website for more details :

Willemmucher.com



PART 2

THE IRRATIONAL

S.O.U.T.H.

200 Miler

By
Harmony
Waite



My next pacer was Sarah and she had downloaded the course onto her watch and was great at watching it closely so I felt like I could relax a little with navigation. The sun had brought some vigour back to my spirit and we ran slowly for about a kilometre or 2 out of the Aid station as it was gentle downhill gravel road but soon it flattened out and was gentle up and I started walking again as the pain in my left foot exercised it's visitation rights. Over a stile, follow fence, repeat to insanity. We got to one paddock and a massive flock of sheep came running over to us and then slowed down to walk behind us. We would stop and they would stop. We'd start hiking again and they would follow at our pace. I felt like the pied piper but with sheep instead of children in buffs and hiking poles instead of a pipe. Slowly, in small groups they peeled off and rushed back over to the other side of the paddock. Until there was only about ten diehards but they eventually lost interest in us too. I'm so glad that happened during the day as it would have freaked me out at night time.

Sarah and I were chatting away about how she was from Kangaroo Island and various races she'd done when we crossed a stile and turned left onto a road. I suddenly got the feeling something wasn't right with our nav. Quick check of Gaia we were about 300m off course. We crossed the road and looped back to a tunnel we were supposed to have come through. So I went through it anyway back to the stile where we had gone the wrong way. It was flagged up the yinyang so not sure how we missed that one. Too much talking, whoops. Quick photo of the tunnel and we were following a fence line at the top of a creek bed that was riddled with wombat holes. We didn't see any alas but I did spot a few fresh wombat footprints. They left a deeper impression than my footprints so I marvelled at the heftiness of the creature that left them.

We could see the silos at Eudunda for kilometres before we reached it and I started running the gently rolling tracks but in classic Lavender Federation Trail style, just as it was looking super close we turned to the left, over a stile and followed a fence for well over a kilometre up long rolling climb. Only thing of note was passing a fresh corpse of a ewe that had died while birthing, poor thing. Finally we turned right back towards Eudunda and had another massive rolling fenceline climb with dips into creek gullies dotted with rabbit and wombat holes. We crossed paths with a walker and asked how far to Eudunda and she said not far. Wow so informative...

Eventually, we followed the markers away from the fence and it seemed to follow an aquaduct down the hill and then into the local golf course, skirted an oval and then around a shed to a caravan park with a massive blow up Santa was gently rocking and waving in the wind. We had reached Aid 9 Eudunda. I said thankyou and good bye to Sarah and Ted took her back to her car. This aid station was

like an oasis and a veritable buffet. I sampled all that was on offer, potatoes, minestrone, pumpkin soup and spiced rice and beans. All the vollies were so friendly and caring. I was pretty tired again and my back was killing me so I decided to have a shower and a 90 minute kip. I fell asleep quickly in Winterfell and could feel my back decompressing, divine.

I was rudely awoken by Juliet climbing on the van and I could already tell it was way before time. Great another interrupted sleep cycle. I'd only had 50 minutes. I felt so robbed AGAIN. This time we were being kicked out of our caravan site. Up I got, same layering on top minus the down jacket but this time I put thermal leggings under my shorts. I had also realised at Leake pass except Rd, that the larger distances between aid stations meant I needed to pack more real food rather than my gels and nougat which were great if I was moving fast but I was getting hungry moving so slow for longer and missing meal times. Nothing much had appealed at Leake pass except fruit. But Eudunda had an amazing spread. Especially these genius mini Vegemite and pizza scrolls. I grabbed a ziplock bag full and he gave me a while A4 size bag as no one else had touched them. I gave them to Ted to ration out to me at the coming aid stations.

And I was off again, power hiking though the streets of Eudunda in the gathering dusk. I had Juliet with me. She is very good company for an 11 year old. Loving your kids is a given but I actually really like my daughter. She is a cool kid and I love spending time with her and love that she wants to spend time with me. She's a chip off the old block and has done her share of long trail runs. Whatever your opinion might be of children doing extreme endurance events, there are worse recreational hobbies a child could have and so far she is happy and thriving. Ideally I would have preferred her to do a daytime leg with me but she still wanted to do it and I knew she had lots of experience to pull her through.

Heading down the last road at the back of Eudunda, we finally needed our head torches on and then we were over a stile and following a fence. It was quite hard to follow over rocks and gullies, tall weeds, wombat holes and piled up tumbleweed and the markers were hard to spot. For a long time we lost site of markers for ages but Gaia said we were on the right track. Finally we got a stile and on the other side we saw an arrow and that we should have been on the other side of the fence which looked like a lot easier traveling, oh well.

We climbed for a while through paddocks and along fencelines and eventually ended up in a flat wooded area. I hadn't seen a marker for a while and Gaia showed us off course a little so we back tracked and then cut into the woods until we found some flagging. Eventually we



popped out on a road and I knew this was the ridge top road that would take us to inspiration point. Seeing as it had flattened out I decided I wanted to clock at least one decent paced kilometre so we started jogging. Towards the end of the km, I noticed Juliet starting to make her little distressed noises. So once the km was done, I asked her if she would feel better if we put some music on speaker. She was instantly much happier and we bopped away along the road, power hiking.

There were so many lights visible from this ridge. I could see Robertstown down on the flats but so many other lights ahead on the ridge looked like the aid station only to be a house. Gaia said we were way further out than we thought we were which was frustrating but we chatted and joked and tried to ignore the wind and cold, and eventually made to what we definitely thought was the aid station but turned out to be a head torch heading towards us and it was Race Director Michelle videoing us. She said all those lights we saw were tractors driving round in circles, hahaha and Juliet chose that moment to talk about loo stops as she had been a little obsessed with going for the last 5km but didn't want to slow me down, bless her.

We got to the Aid 10 Inspiration Point and I flopped in front of the fire and Melissa was there and gave me some lovely bacon and spuds. The infamous Riley was there too but I didn't have the energy to chat, sorry. I was starting to get a bit tired and grumpy. I'd been there a while and was nearly ready to make a move but just thought I'd put my head between my knees to stretch out my back and massage my left ankle and calf. Just a few little moments to myself. But Melissa and Michelle were trying to kick me out! Sorry if I was grumpy, but I don't like being moved along. I do spend along time in Aid Stations but it's time well invested to help me move better on the trail. Anyway, I got up, shook off the grumps and twirled my poles like they were fire poi, a skilled learnt in a past life mispent youth partying on beaches in Thailand. Just because...

I started the next leg with my fresh pacer, Samantha. She said she had charged her audiobook, herself being the audiobook so I knew I was in for an entertaining time. She also had the course on her watch and had come out and recced the course a week before so I knew I could switch off nav mode a little bit. I had to stop about a km from the aid station to readjust my twisted bladder in my pack which was pulling on my neck and shoulders. Once I had that sorted we were off on a good hike pace. I tried to have a run but my left foot was really sore.

There were lots of fallen branches and sticks in this section and we had to divert around them. Over stiles, follow the fence, follow the track. There was a dirt bike race on the next day so there was lots of flagging up for that but Samantha knew where she was going which was great. We chatted like old friends and she told me she loved night time runs and hikes so couldn't wait to "buddy run" me. It wasn't the first time I'd heard this term and love how the South Australians have their own running lexicon.

It was not long after that, we were on a rocky hillside and I must have been quiet and staggery, as Samantha suggested a dirt nap. I wasn't feeling that fatigued but my back and feet were aching so I did as I was told. I let my mind wander and I think I was dreaming, when I noticed the cold creeping into my legs and under my body but I wasn't go-



ing to move until Samantha said. I must have been asleep as she woke me up and I was cold. She said she'd given me 15 minutes. This was a great learning point for future reference, 10 minute dirt naps seem to be optimal for a little reset but not long enough to get cold.

The climb up Webb Gap was a welcome long grind on a nice gravel road to warm me up again. Going down the other side was a bit hard on tired quads and I celebrated at the bottom with a nature stop. I glanced at my watch once I was ready to get going again and it was blank! NOOOOO! I hadn't charged it once the whole race and had been keeping an eye on it for low battery alert but hadn't noticed any and now it has died. So much for having one Strava activity, booooo. I quickly got a new Strava activity recording on my phone and over the next 2 kms, I charged my watch enough to turn it on and started forcing a sync to Garmin Connect. It took a long time but it finally uploaded to my phone and I stopped the Strava recording and started a new activity on my Garmin. Looking at everything afterwards, I only missed about 500m coming down Webb Gap. Phew.

Coming into a field we could hear the whirring of the wind farm turbines and it was starting to get really foggy. This place ended up being diabolical. We were following increasingly hard to see markers across a long hill line. They would be up and then I'd spot one down. We would have to walk 50m or so and then it would be up again. There were so many sheep trails none of them flat, all off kilter, absolute murder on my left ankle and foot. I'd pick a strong



line and it would peter out to nothing. Or I'd spot another market on another line. In the end Samantha could see my frustration and said just pick a line across the hill and slightly up as she knew the stile was in the top corner of the paddock, bless her local knowledge. After this we made good progress and only over shot the stile by about 50m.

Once we got onto the road, Samantha said we only had a few kilometres to the next Aid station. I decided to push the pace a little, I had a few little trots and really picked up my hike speed. All of a sudden everywhere I looked everything was made up of bunches of grapes. All different shades and varieties for different things. Like pixelated vision but the pixels were bunches of grapes. I thought it was hilarious and told Samantha she was made of grapes. I think she was worried and said I should stop for a sleep but I was quite enjoying my grape vision and there was no way I was stopping this close to the aid station. I backed off the pace a little and stared at my grape footsteps and grape hands. I had a sip of water and all of a sudden all the grapes popped juicily and my vision was back to normal. Ohhhh. That was fun while it lasted.

Bursting into the Aid 11 Waterloo at 5am, it was such relief and soooo warm. Katie was just about to leave. I had a feast of mixed pasta bakes and some Dahl. I met my next pacer Bonnie who had just woken up from her swag. She had a book to read and I retired to Winterfell for a sleep. Ted said he wouldn't come and wake me up for the world. I set my alarm for 3 hours and I slept solidly for those 3 hours and woke to my alarm feeling like I had had a complete night's sleep. I felt amazing. I got dressed and went back into the hall, had some more pasta bake and a sausage roll for breakfast. I went to grab some mini scrolls from the bag I'd given Ted but he'd shared them with the Aid station so there were only 3 left. Oh no! I grabbed them all anyway and Bonnie and I were off.

I had a little experimental run and found that it was doable. Amazing! So Bonnie and I settled into nice long stretches of running with short walk breaks. I'm so glad I was running again as it would have been really tedious and frustrating plodding along these long country lanes. Bonnie told me about growing up in Canada and how her and her husband had got together. I remember her telling me about her hubby teaching history and learning about this pioneer surveyor who made farming maps of SA so accurate that even today they are used as guidelines of what to viably farm where. I always think it's sad we learn about fools like Burke and Wills in school but not about talented people who's quality work was years ahead of their time.

We were running along one road when 3 boys ran down to the fence ringing cow Bells and cheering. Their dad came down too, Steve and he got a photo and wished us well. So lovely to get support like that on course on the middle of nowhere. I kept up my running to only a few km from Mintaro where it started to get a little hillier and we had a few stiles and





fences that broke my stride. I had made such good time in that section, I had got Bonnie to message ahead to Ted to make sure he was on time. An aid station volly ran out to us at the edge of town and shepherded us in.

The Aid 12 Mintaro was glorious in the afternoon sun. My friend Bernice, who I met at 2017 Comrades was there to surprise me, so lovely of her to take time out of her long weekend to see me. So good to see a familiar face so far into the race. SA really was turning it on. I sat down on a really comfortable recliner while the vollies fussed around me getting cushions for my bare feet and blankets to keep me warm. Juliet filled my pack up and helped me start culling weight for the penultimate push and the last big climb of the race. I had some extra crispy extra salty yummy potatoes from the bbq. It felt so good to have my feet up and relax my sore back. I slowly put my shoes back on and fresh thermal layers and finally my pack and off again with a few hours of sunlight up my sleeve.

My final pacer was Kirsty and she was a local runner from Clare. How lucky was I to have another local guide to ease my stress about navigation. She knew all the turns and distances and warned me very early that she had a feeling this leg was quite a bit longer than the 17km in the manual, closer to 21. I didn't want to think about that yet. I was feeling good and wanted to get over the last big climb, Mt Horrocks before the sunset. It was great chatting with Kirsty about her amazing marathon times and Boston experience. And we talked about her job as a teacher too.

The climb up Mt Horrocks was a bit of a grind and there wasn't much running but I had a good hike pace. We could see the silhouettes of people doing the summit loop which we would unfortunately miss. At the top I got some pics and a selfie of us. The countryside was like patchwork and I could see the wind farm on the horizon where I had been the night before. I used the last of the daylight to get down the other side of Mt Horrocks and we were just making our way into Watervale when we decided we finally needed out head torches.

We got onto the Riesling trail and I thought it was only a short trot to the Aid Station but Kirsty said it was about 7km. With the sinking of the sun so had my spirits, so I asked her to put some music on for me and discovered that we were both triple J listeners and it did wonders. The music helped me to push my little jogs as long as I could but they weren't fast and my left foot was in so much pain that it would force me to slow for walk breaks with great big sighs. I just wanted to chop it off and be done with it. It seemed to be slightly uphill the whole way too. There were some interesting things along the way and Kirsty told me about the pioneer man who had lived in a tree. But we couldn't see the

tree in the dark.

Finally Aid 13 Penwortham appeared around a bend with colourful laser lights pointed up into the trees, it was like a disco oasis. I sat down in front of a heater and the vollies piled blankets onto me and I put my feet up onto a chair. My first order of business was to loosen my laces on my left shoe. I thought it was worth a shot to help ease the agony. Juliet was busy pruning my pack weight again so I could run with bare minimum to the finish. The aid station vollies heated up some lentils I had brought over from home in Winterfell but had forgotten about until now and served them with some salted potatoes. Soo yummy. Why hadn't I been eating these all the way along? Oh well, better late than never.

Anyway, the lentils must have been magic or maybe it was the looser laces but I took off running from that aid station and fell into a fantastic rhythm with Kirsty. I felt great and I was eating up the hills with ease. Kirsty had a speaker with my music blaring and it got me right in the zone. I had reced a good chunk of this section on a visit to the region in Sept 2019. I recognised the single tracks of the Spring Gully Conservation Park. I love single track and was having fun whizzing up and down in dark and was quite sad when we popped out on the country back roads again.

My pace slowed a little on some of the long grinding hills and there was quite a bit of traffic, I guess it was a Saturday night so people were off to town. I got Kirsty to check the tracker and see how far ahead the next 2 runners were. I had gained quite a bit on Katie with her only leaving about an hour or so before me from Penwortham. I'm not massively competitive but targets on backs is always a great motivator at the pointy end of a long race. The thought of perhaps passing someone at this stage gave me a great boost but as I finished the last big road climb and came into the last little single-track. I could see they were both very close to the finish and it hadn't updated in a while. There was no chance I'd catch them so I slowed down.

It was like I was a balloon that had been burst with a pin. I started to feel a little nauseous. Even the celebration of climbing my last stile didn't make me feel better. From there I had 5km to go. Kirsty messaged to Ted to have Juliet ready at the BP servo as everyone's pacers were allowed to join runners for the last 3km. Those 2km all my pains started to come back with a vengeance, my left foot and ankle and my back we're slowly getting worse and I slowed to a shuffle/ walk combo. I came up out of a little park and there were some ladies cheering on the side of the road. I didn't know at the time but it was another RMA Tamara who was there on a girls weekend and realised her Airbnb was right on course. It did wonders to lift my spirits.

As we got to the BP, I couldn't see Ted so we kept running and then he was driving down towards us. He kicked Juliet out and she quickly caught up the us. I was so slow and in so much pain. I was getting really anxious as I'd heard Shaun was making finishers do fireball shots and I was feeling really sick. I needed something new to focus on to finish strong. I asked Kirsty what time it was 11.20pm. Ok let's

finish before 11.30pm only half an hour behind my predict time. With that I hastened as much as I could which wasn't much but felt good to not focus on my nausea and pain. We ran past the bakery and I knew we were close. Down some little narrow paths and I could see the finish gantry. I pushed really hard and ran in to finish 88 hours 31 minutes and 25 seconds. I may have dropped an F bomb, fallen into a big Shaun hug (he's famous for them) and then burst into tears.

I was hugging Juliet and Kirsty and Michelle and Ted and Mel and everyone. It was such a relief to finally finish something that had been on the cards for so long. I was a big pile of goo. I was ecstatic, Shaun didn't make me do a fireball but he did usher me over to a raging fire where Katie and Nicola were sitting. I congratulated them both (Nicola had smashed it and finished 3rd lady!) and then examined my massive kickass medal. We all chatted and made fun of Shaun but as he said "you're all whinging but all I see is big smiles and I love it!"

After a good 6 hours sleep, I got up and watched the next 3 runners finish Wilma and Andy together still (that made me teary) and then Kelly on deeply blistered feet. Nicola the legend, cooked me and Jimmy an amazing breakfast and then we witnessed something special. With only 20 minutes to spare before cutoff, Glen, bent horribly sideways, hobbled and staggered through our victory arch over the finishline. What a race!

In summary, I finished 12th (5th lady out of 7) out of 16 finishers and 18 starters. The DNFs were due to bronchitis and ankle tendon injury. Some stats to compare to my first 200 miler at Delirious WEST. I did approximately 68 hours 25 minutes moving time compared to 75 hours at Delirious (it is about 25km longer). So that's 20 hours and 6 minutes not moving compare to 26 hours not moving at Delirious. Of that I had 9 hours 45 minutes sleep and only about 8.5-9 hours at Delirious. There are less aid stations at Irrational but I guess it shows an improvement on not moving not sleeping time. I think I consumed less calories at Irrational due to less aid stations and the fact that it was so cold I ended up losing 1.5kg where as after delirious I gained 2kg. Definitely something to improve on at the next 200 miler.

Irrational SOUTH is an amazing event and I'm so glad I got to do the inaugural, So many altruistic vollies and supporters for only 18 runners but I will be happy not to climb a stile or follow a fence for a long time. This 200 miler is great if you want to set yourself a 200 mile PB as there are long sections that are runnable and the hills and terrain are very manageable through pretty farmlands and some interesting reserves aswell as the trail being quite easy to navigate and well marked. South Australian hospitality is simple extraordinary. Australia's best kept secret are the South Australians themselves, so warm and welcoming. Thankyou so much for having me.



THIRD TIME LUCKY FOR THE MENDIP MARAUDER 50

By Catherine Roberts

You'd be forgiven for thinking the Mendip Marauder is jinxed: 2019's race cancelled at the last minute due to insurmountable road closures; 2020's event falling victim to the c-word; 2021, RD Dave Urwin learnt at very short notice we wouldn't be able to finish at the finish! A third cancellation was unthinkable, so Dave and his team moved mountains (over 8000ft of them, to my legs' dismay) to create a new, out-and-back route, enabling runners to enjoy the stunning scenery of the West Mendip Way (WMW) from both directions – with an additional 3000ft vert! My apprehension was lessened by the fact I was running with three of the best running buddies anyone could ask for and we were committed to getting each other round as a team.

The morning of the race was mild and slightly overcast, perfect conditions. Registration on the outskirts of the beautiful city of Wells was very low key – get your bib from Dave's car boot and pin it on. After a few words from Dave, we were off up the WMW with a short but steep ascent of a wooded knoll to Arthur's Point, said to be a lookout used by King Arthur over the Vale of Avalon, offering us our first beautiful views of Glastonbury Tor. From this point, the scenery only got more spectacular. We trotted on through Wookey Hole, passing groups of bemused tourists and climbed the lung-busting Ebbor Gorge, pleasantly squelchy after the recent rainfall. Then followed a couple of welcome flat miles ambling through farm tracks and fields into the tiny village of Pridy, where CP1 awaited us at mile 4.5. We had been warned only to expect a few individually wrapped snacks, but there was a veritable feast of bars, sweets, crisps, nuts, fruit, water, squash, coke and even a few cheeky cans of Guinness available! The marshals were so supportive and encouraging, waving us on our way through more flat lanes and fields.

I'm not a huge fan of hills, so had been hoping Dave would move with the times and send us via the new WMW, which skirts along the hillside above Draycott, but he stuck to his guns and we took the quad-trashing descent into the village (grimly aware we would be stumbling back up it at mile 42 or so) then back up the other side. This was followed by another descent through rolling fields of cows, then it was up to the top of the iconic Cheddar Gorge. There followed a

tricky, technical descent, the steepest yet, down Black Rock, made all the more hair-raising by being wet, so the sight of the CP1 crew, who had temporarily upped sticks and set up an impromptu CP1.5, was incredibly welcome. Refuelled and relieved at the thought of a few flat miles, our spirits were instantly dampened by a torrential downpour. We plodded on into the welcome tree cover of Rowberrow Warren then up and over yet another hill, where we met the leaders of the 30-mile race coming the other way. We continued along some very muddy farm tracks to CP2 at around mile 16, which matched CP1 for friendliness and range of snacks. There was plenty for vegans and those with dietary intolerances too.

The following miles were my least favourite of the route, there was lots of mud, steep paths and steps impossible to run on for all but the most proficient fell-runner (which I will never be) and intermittent rain. I was beginning to wish I'd joined my friend in the support crew car when big groups of the 30-milers came past, friends among them: hugs and morale-boosting high-5s all round. At mile 18, we met our support crew and I changed into my Salomon Speedcross, normally only needed in winter, but I was struggling to stay upright in my summer trail shoes. We ploughed up an initially muddy, then grassy track to Crook Peak, the westernmost summit of the Mendips with beautiful views across to South Wales. I was glad of the shoe change as we slithered down the other side along muddy woodland paths to CP3, more friendly marshals and mini pork pies.

The route continued along lanes and

over the M5 bridge (cause of the 2019 cancellation). My legs were beginning to seriously fall out with me by now, correctly pointing out we had NOT trained for this level of hilliness, but my friend laughing "It could be worse, we could be in the M5 traffic jam" made me get over myself. The lead runners had been passing us on their way back for some time now and the mutual cheers of "well done" were a constant boost, a benefit of the out-and-back course. As we neared the summit of Bleadon Hill, up another muddy footpath, we met our running group buddies charging down, which gave us a further lift. The turnaround point was a bit of an anti-climax, just an empty lay-by with nobody even checking we made it, so we just circled through and started back the way we came, greeting and cheering the runners who were still behind us. By now, my legs were sulking badly but the brilliant team spirit of my group dragged me along.

As we returned to Rowberrow Warren, where I frequently run, it felt like home and I perked up, despite another downpour. We chatted and laughed our way over Cheddar Gorge and eventually staggered back up out of Draycott to the CP1 hero-marshals, still smiling and cheering. I was quite nauseous by now, solid food no longer my friend, but the flat coke was sustaining me. They filled our bottles as we got out our head torches – the changes had also involved a later start – and headed back to Ebbor Gorge in the twilight. The gorge was slippery, and we had our first navigational error of the day just after nightfall, gladder than ever to be in a team of four. The



route had been well marked in tape, but that wasn't much help in the pitch black. We were soon back on track, reluctantly passing rather than entering Wookey Hole's pubs. I'd been the weak link of the team for the previous 20 miles, so was glad to be able to use my navigational knowledge of Arthur's Point to guide us up the hill, through the cows with their eyes spookily illuminated by our head torches and back down into Wells. We reached the finish together, exhausted, elated and in firm agreement we wouldn't have made it without each other.

These are the lessons we carry from ultras into other areas of our lives. I know I can accomplish far more in a team than I ever will alone. I know when things are tough at work or in life, I just have to keep moving forward, one step at a time, and I will find my way out of the pain cave. The pain genuinely is temporary, already replaced by the glow of type-2 fun, the satisfaction of having completed something I thought was beyond me and the memory of the camaraderie of my team, supporters and fellow runners. A friend commented on my obligatory Facebook race post "it sounds horrendous but awesome all at the same time", which I think sums the whole day up perfectly.



Photos by Rat Race International Leo Francis



Ultrarunning World Interview:
**Australian
ultra-
endurance
athlete
Cath Wallis**

Cath Wallis is an Australian ultra-endurance athlete who has completed some of the world's most iconic foot races – from the back of the field. Her passion is encouraging those who do not consider themselves “athletes” to follow their wildest adventure dreams.

You were a relative latecomer to trail running. What prompted you to get involved at the age of 41?

It was the realisation that, quite frankly, I was a bit boring. I was trying my best to juggle work and parenting, but I had not stopped to think about what I really loved doing. I had always been attracted to wide open natural spaces and was looking to be more active. Trail running as a sport seemed like a great option because it welcomes walkers and slow runners, and there was no significant equipment or skills required to get started.

How did you build up to eventually be able to do the distances you now do?

My approach has been totally the opposite of all recommended strategies! The very first event I entered was a 100km single stage ultramarathon through a forest. I had three months to prepare and pretty much started from the couch. It had a really generous cut-off time and I walked it in just under 29 hours. Thinking back now, I was so naïve about what was required to take on such an event. But I persevered, and I finished. Afterwards, I was looking for my next challenge and I came across an Internet ad for a multiday ultra in the Simpson Desert. From there I was hooked.



What has been the most challenging environment you've faced during an ultra-event?

For me it's the extremes of weather that are challenging. The extreme heat of the desert is very draining. In Oman we had a day that hit 50 degrees Celsius in the sun. And on the opposite end, on the Mongol 100 we were crossing a frozen lake near the border with Russia, with winter winds blowing across from Siberia. It got down to -30 degrees Celsius at night and we had to think about things like frostbite and avoiding falling through seams in the ice.

How do you overcome these challenges?

A desert one-week event is about the long game. So the biggest thing to avoid is going out too fast on day one. You need to pace yourself for the week. You also need to avoid dehydration and calorie deficit (as much as possible). I think about it as, you are eating and drinking on day one to set yourself up for day four and five. Anyone can complete one stage without proper nutrition but it comes back to bite later in the week. You have to be disciplined.

What does your training involve?

For me, as a "back-of-packer", the training is really the same as any multiday ultra-event. You need to commit to get outside five times a week for about six months, practicing with your race pack and working on your skills for both running (if you plan to run) and power hiking. The most important aspect is building up "time on feet". That's getting used to being out for a whole day and then backing up to do it again the next day. In my opinion, mental toughness is at least as important as physical fitness, so it is also important to practice dealing with hardship and developing some strategies to cope with that. If you can practice on sand it is ideal – but if you don't have any, then stair climbing is a good alternative.

What was the reaction of your friends and family when you first got into ultras? Were they encouraging? Or doubtful?

Oh, they all thought I was mad! And then they thought I would do one and get over my madness! But I think they have given up on thinking that now. They were also concerned that I might seriously or permanently injure myself, and I think a lot of that was tied to societal beliefs around what fat people are capable of and what they can achieve.

What challenges do you have planned for the future?

On my wish list I have events in just about every country. One day I'd love to be fit enough to do the 6633 Arctic Ultra marathon in far northern Canada. I would like to travel to Bhutan for the Last Secret ultramarathon which finishes at the famous Taktshang Goemba - Tiger's Nest Monastery. And to cross the American continent on Rat Race's Panama Coast to Coast.

Read more about Cath Wallis' desert racing feats at [DiscoverInteresting.com](https://www.discoverinteresting.com)



CREWING

By Sarah Smith



Sarah C. Smith Capital Backyard Ultra photo by Keith Knipling



"Here's the chart of my splits. I'll need two to three scoops of Tailwind and a gel every hour." These were my instructions prior to Icarus, where Olivier Leblond was making a run for Phil McCarthy's 48-hour American record. I had never crewed a fixed-time race, and didn't realize they even existed. Sure, I had heard references to "Crooked Road", a local-ish 24-hour race that draws some ultrarunners I know, and I had run 12 and 24-hour trail races that utilized a 6.5-mile trail loop. In fact I had met Olivier while running the 12-hour trail race less than two months prior. When he told me that he intended to try to break the American record on his own, without a crew, I had respectfully told him he was nuts. "Who is going to make sure you eat, fill your bottles, wake you up after you take a nap?" "I'll eat at the aid station. Filling bottles doesn't take long. The RD will wake me." "Yeah, forget that. I'm going." I arrived in Florida, and the race has started (I had to work Friday night so I took the first flight out in the morning.) Sure enough, his one bag of gear was under the tree like he said, and the gels and Tailwind were there as well. Meanwhile, I brought everything but the kitchen sink. Chair, cot, blanket for naps, pop-up canopy, table, camp stove. Food - lots of it. Bananas, avocados, protein SmashPacks, mashed potatoes, eggs, shredded cheese, clarified butter, boiled potatoes, chicken soup, steamed rice. I had experience running and crewing 100-mile races, and my personal weakness is not being able to eat. I had my doubts that Olivier would be able to tolerate his proposed Tailwind and gel diet for 48 hours. If he could, great - but if not, I wanted to be prepared. Without fuel, he would not be able to keep running. When the 48 hours was done, he had logged over 262 miles and set a new American record, and although I can't take credit for that success, the difference between having someone there and not having someone certainly improved his efficiency. Over the past two years, I've gotten better at this whole "crewing for someone who runs in circles" thing.

Here are a few things to remember that can help you be the best for your runner:

1. Find a way to get the calories in. This is probably the most important thing you can do. Some athletes will give you a very specific plan to follow. Ahem, Bob Hearn(!) Others may not even know what they want to eat. Give your runner options. Mashed potatoes are brilliant, but anything gets old, so maybe cook it in clarified butter and add shredded Gruyère. You need to take into account your runner's pace while eating as well. Will they be walking or running while eating? Do they want something that involves minimal chewing, or would they be happy with a cheeseburger? You may not be able to know what they will be willing or able to eat on any given day, but the chewing versus not chewing question will give you some guidelines. Figure out a nutrition schedule and when

it is time to eat, offer three fueling options. Avocado with salt, chicken soup with rice, a protein SmashPack (these are available online). If your runner waves those off, find three more to offer on the next lap. Harvey Lewis' crew uses little cups, each with a few pieces of candy or some sort of food. What a brilliant idea! "Salty or sweet?" can be a good question to ask as they run by. If they have a sloshy stomach, sometimes the thought of something sweet is in itself enough to make them nauseous. Also, start the salty/savoury foods early on, to preserve your runner's ability to take in sugar, such as Coke, later in the race, when the sugar/caffeine can give a boost to sagging pace (and sagging spirits). Beer can be great. It settles your stomach and provides carbs. Worried about



Photo by Geoffrey Baker



Photos by Jennifer Marie Photography at the 2020 Canal Corridor 100 Mile Endurance Run





Photo by Geoffrey Baker



Photo courtesy of the Old Dominion 100 mile race

the alcohol as a depressant? Try a non-alcoholic brew like Athletic Brewing's Run Wild IPA.

2. Efficiency is key. In a 24-hour race, a 2-3% increase in efficiency can mean 2-3 extra miles for the 100-mile runner and 3-5 extra miles for the 150+ mile runner. If your runner is running a multi-day event targeting several hundred miles, that really adds up! First and foremost, find out what they need to eat/drink/wear (change of clothes at night, etc.) on the loop before they need it. Then get things ready as soon as they leave, before you do anything else. This is particularly important at night, when we as crew members get tired and forgetful. Have an "out-box" (either a spot on the table, or a physical box) for the things your runner may need, and put what you have prepared in the outbox. Do this before you help another runner, before you make something for yourself, before you get caught up in a conversation. Do it immediately!

3. Have a plan for your runner's downtime. Your runner may or may not need to rest during the race, but often if they're really starting to struggle with sleep deprivation, a 10-minute nap may be just what they need. When I ran my first 100-mile race I slept for 10 minutes at 4am, and my pacer informed me that after I woke up I passed every single runner that had come through the aid station while I had napped. If your athlete goes down for a nap, the process should roughly be as follows: have them let you know the lap before they need to sleep. Have a jacket

ready for them to put on as they lie down, an eye mask, and a blanket. When runners stop moving, they get cold! The best thing you can have for them is a zero-gravity chair. They sit down, you tilt them back, cover them up, and set a timer for the predetermined rest time. As they rest, make coffee/hot soup/mashed potatoes - something warm for when they wake up. As soon as they're up, they'll be a bit disoriented. Prop them up, lend a hand and get them moving! Jacket stays on, they start walking and drinking the hot beverage, eating something warm. Some time during that first lap they'll finish what you've given them, and if you're lucky, they're running again by the time they get to you. On the next lap they may even give you their jacket.

4. Stay positive. All runners have low points. I'm not saying to lie... ok, maybe I am. They look great! (Yeah, maybe not.) You're proud of them, in awe even!



(That's probably true.) Always, always stay upbeat. Understand they're under stress. They might snap at you. They don't mean it. Truly. You might be one of those lucky people whose runner thanks you on every single lap. I've been fortunate enough to have someone who really appreciates me and is always thankful, but that is always a surprise. Part of me wants to say "Stop thanking me - you're wasting energy!" For someone to push themselves to their limit, deal with pain, sleep deprivation, blisters, stomach issues, fears of possibly not achieving their goal and to try to be nice at the same time... well, it's not easy. When it's over you can be certain they will be grateful for your help. Don't take anything personally during the race, stay happy and smiling, and tell them they're amazing.

5. Take care of yourself, or make sure you have someone to take care of you! What are YOU going to eat for 24 hours? When are you going to take a break and sleep during a multi-day crewing event? What is the temperature like where you will be crewing? If you're crewing somewhere like the Dome, don't forget that you're in an ice rink! What is comfortable for a runner is not necessarily comfortable for someone who is standing around. I generally have several layers of clothing, a jacket or two, a few pairs of shoes, my own food, my AeroPress and mini baggies of pre-ground coffee, along with my travel mug to keep the coffee warm. For me, coffee is key in the middle of the night. Bring extra, you'll inevitably end up sharing. The backpacker's stove isn't just for cooking for your runner, it's for you as well.

It's even better if you have a co-crew or someone else to help. When Tracey Outlaw brought pizza to the tent for the crew in Albi, I couldn't have imagined anything more perfect. It was such a treat to have him taking care of us.

6. Be creative. I am constantly revising (and hopefully improving) how I take care of my runner. I keep Second Skin, Kinesiology Tape, and BlisterShield powder on hand in case I need to take care of blisters. Andrei Nana, the RD for Icarus, gave Olivier a Starbucks double shot in the pre-dawn hours on the second night and it really perked him up. It probably even saved his race. Now I always keep a couple on hand. At the Dome I discovered the value of a USB-rechargeable blender. When the Tailwind gets old, blend up some pineapple, banana, add mango juice and a scoop or two of Tailwind. I didn't count the calories in that concoction, but it was successful enough that I tried to bring the mini blender to Albi. Sadly it was confiscated by the TSA, but luckily for me, Nick Coury was creative on his own behalf and had a blender sent to his hotel in Albi. That blender in the crew tent helped several crew members keep pumping calories into their athletes. When it's hot, managing the heat can be a huge factor, and Howard Nippert's ice bandannas are magic! For women, ice down the bra is pretty wonderful as well. Keep learning; keep trying to think of things that can keep your runner fueled, comfortable, and moving forward. Remember, it's a team effort!



Photo courtesy of the Old Dominion 100 mile race



UPCOMING RACES



This weekend sees the **Desert Solstice 24 Hour Invitational** in Phoenix, Arizona and some of the best in North America will be vying for a spot on the US 24 hour team. Marisa Lizak, Sabrina Little, Simen Holvik, Pam Smith, Arlen Glick, Sarah Sawyer from the UK and Camille Herron are registered and the event kicks off 8 am Arizona time.

Andrii Tkachuk who has the 3rd best distance in history in **24 hours will be at the 24 hores d'ultrafons en pista de Barcelona** this weekend. Andrii ran 295km at the same event in Pabiance, Poland as Aleksandr Sorokin who set a new world record, crushing Yiannis Kouros 24 hour record with 309km in August this year. Anne Jennings (IRE) and Melissa Venables (GBR) will also be at the race which starts at noon on Saturday.

Thailand by UTMB® is the next race this weekend in the Ultra Trail World Tour 2021 Circuit. The event offers 14, 23, 54, 107 and 168km races around the highest mountain of Thailand, Doi Inthanon, also known as the roof of Thailand. The route climbs from 400 to 2100 meters above sea level.

Personliga Rekordens Tävlning 24 hour also takes place this weekend in Växjö (SWE) on a 373m indoor track.

Toward the end of December, the 36th **Across The Years** takes place in Phoenix, Arizona with a range of events for everyone from a 6 hour, a marathon up to 6 & 10 day races and it all kicks off December 28th.

In the UK the first big race of the winter is the 268 mile **Montane Spine Race** (and the other shorter options) which start from Edale on the 9th January, following the Pennine Way non-stop to Kirk Yetholm, in Scotland.





Adam Rykala is a relatively new ultra runner. As well as personal health benefits, he runs to raise funds for disabled adaptations for his wife at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/in-the-long-run-ultra>. In 2019 he ran his first 50K, and then his first 50 miles. He is looking to do a 100K in 2020, and still can't believe he told his wife in early 2018, "I think a half marathon will be the furthest I can ever manage." Adam spends weeks on the road and weekends in the Beacons. Strava profile is https://www.strava.com/athletes/adam_rykala



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/>



Catherine Roberts lives in beautiful Mendip in Somerset and enjoys both road and trail running. As a busy deputy head-teacher and parent, Cat uses running to support physical and mental health. She has developed some of her deepest friendships through running and loves undertaking challenges with friends.



Sarah Smith has spent her last 30 years as a Figure Skating Coach and the last seven as an ultrarunner. While she prefers spending her own time running in the Massanutten Mountains of Virginia, USA, she has crewed for the 48 hour American Record, at the 24 hour World Championships, and in Big's Backyard. She also captains aid stations at local trail ultras and directs her own race, the [Capital Backyard Ultra](#).



Harmony Waite, From Perth, Western Australia, Harmony is a Mum of 2 who has been running since 2013. She loves really long ultramarathons, exploring trails with her daughter and volunteering at local running events. She has completed a couple of 100 milers and 200 milers and loves to travel for events completing her back to back Comrades in 2018.





ULTRARUNNING WORLD

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