

ROAD, TRACK & TRAIL MULTIDAY
& ULTRA DISTANCE NEWS

// Issue 35

ULTRARUNNING WORLD

M A G A Z I N E



RUNNERS, IT'S TIME TO BE HONEST.

DO YOU SUFFER FROM NIPPLE CHAFING?

THE SOLUTION IS HERE.



A BRITISH COMPANY HAS CREATED AN AMAZING PRODUCT THAT RELIEVES RUNNERS' DISCOMFORT AND HELPS THE ENVIRONMENT!

"It's not the kind of thing most of us talk about," says Michelle Jarman, founder of Neplex and creator of the company's game-changing nipple shield. "We're too embarrassed. I know I was. But the thing is, chafing is a real issue for so many people living an active lifestyle. For me, keeping fit is far too important an aspect of life to be hindered by something as basic as abrasion. Our Neplex nipple guards are the answer to a very frustrating problem. Don't get us wrong, they won't make you run any faster, but they will allow you to forget about chafing and get on with your sport. That's a major win."

Since Michelle's 'Eureka' moment, her silicone Neplex nipple shields have been solving abrasive issues in a host of sports, from cycling to windsurfing. "They're so easy to apply," says Michelle. "Just use our simple sizing tool and trim the shield until it's perfect for you. It really is as easy as that!"

Not only will the Neplex nipple shield help ease runners' pain, it's also great for the environment. "With our shields," Michelle explains, "gone are the days of putting bits of sticking plaster over each nipple and discarding them after your run. Just think of all the plasters we can save from going to landfill! I'm proud of how sustainable our reusable shields are."

Some customer insights:

"I found that they adhered to the skin effectively, were easy to use and were comfortable."

"Stuck well, did the job for me on my turbo bike and when running over short and longer distances over five days of training. Would use again."

RUNNERS, WITH A REUSABLE SET OF NEPLEX NIPPLE SHIELDS COSTING AS LITTLE AS £19.99, ISN'T IT TIME YOU MADE CHAFING A THING OF THE PAST?

To get your Neplex nipple shields head to www.neplex.uk.

For more information contact Michelle Jarman, Director of NEPLEX LTD.

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2022 has already seen two performances that have been very impressive. Most recently we watched Eoin Keith win the Montane Spine after an inauspicious start for the winner of last year's summer Race. Finding himself with a dozen or so runners in front of him from the start he quickly decided to run his own race. Gradually picking runners off while the leaders ahead of him began to drop until finally he found himself in the lead which he held until the finish-line at Kirk Yetholm. Running his own race, on a course he knows, with runners he was familiar with, Eoin seems to have been attuned to himself and the situation. Relaxed and enjoying the race he was able to make the most of events as they unfolded.

Sania Sorokin's new 100 mile record is difficult to grasp. Few runners are able to get under 11:30 and to take half an hour off Zach Bitters 11:19 is incredible. His 24 hour record is equally phenomenal. When he heard Yiannis Kouros's quote that the 24 hour record would stand for centuries, Sorokin said "No, I can do better than that". He has said he will be going to the World Championships in Verona in September so it will be fascinating to see if he can lift the bar again.

In this issue we start off with Emily Dart who took on the newly formed Tough Trails organisation whose inaugural offering was the Edale's Inferno Ring of Hell in the Peak District, Derbyshire.

Emma Hancock and Peter Abraham write about contrasting experiences in the Sri Chinmoy 24 hour at the event's new venue in Battersea in the heart of London. Lauren Buffini was drawn to the Darkside Sunset Ultra on the North Norfolk coast and further south Lorien Cadier, a Druid interested in charting rivers from their source, decided to walk the first 60 miles of the Thames to Abingdon.

Emma Morton introduces the Raid des Cathares, a 101 km medieval trail starting in Carcassonne, France and we hear from Enar Warfvinge who ran the Gax 100 mile trail race in Sweden.

We are also delighted to have another article from East coaster Naomi Moss who won the South-East's biggest multiday, the 250 mile Thames Ring.

There was redemption for Ross Jenkins at the Moab 240 and we hear from someone else who has written about Moab for us before, Steven Battle who went to the 25 Hour Track Ultra, perhaps Cockbain Events easiest offering. In the same vein Vanessa Kellie went to Bath for some subterranean fun in another Cockbain Event, the Tunnel Ultra.

Regular contributor Gary Dudney writes about a new 100 miler in West Virginia and we hear from Laura Manuel celebrating the Canadian ultrarunner/triathlete and mum of two, Viktoria Brown, Vice-President of the Global Organization of Multi-Day Ultramarathoners (GOMU). A great mix of articles.

We thank everyone for their contributions and support for Ultrarunning World magazine, we wish everyone a satisfying 2022.

The House:

- **Editor**
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 - **Staff**
 - Ana Sanchez
 - Helen Hayes
 - Sarah Thi
 - Char Binns
 - **Front cover**
 - Lithuanian Alexandr Sorokin setting a new 100 mile world record at the Spartanion in Tel Aviv, Israel on January 6th 2022 Photo by Sami Vaskola and thanks to Noora Honkala.
 - **Back cover**
 - Viktoria Brown set a new Canadian 100 mile record of 14:57:13 in December 2021 at the Desert Solstice Invitational in Phoenix, Arizona. Photo by FinisherPix
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Ultrarunning World

January- February 2022

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Send inquiries, original and previously unpublished race reports/articles to the email address above. Last dates for article submissions: March 14th and April 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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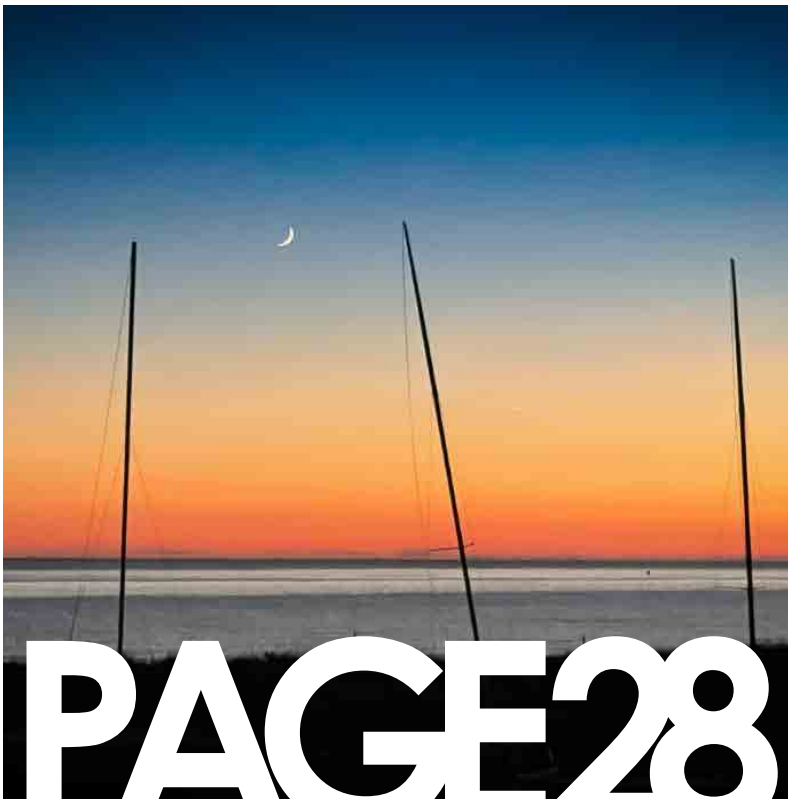
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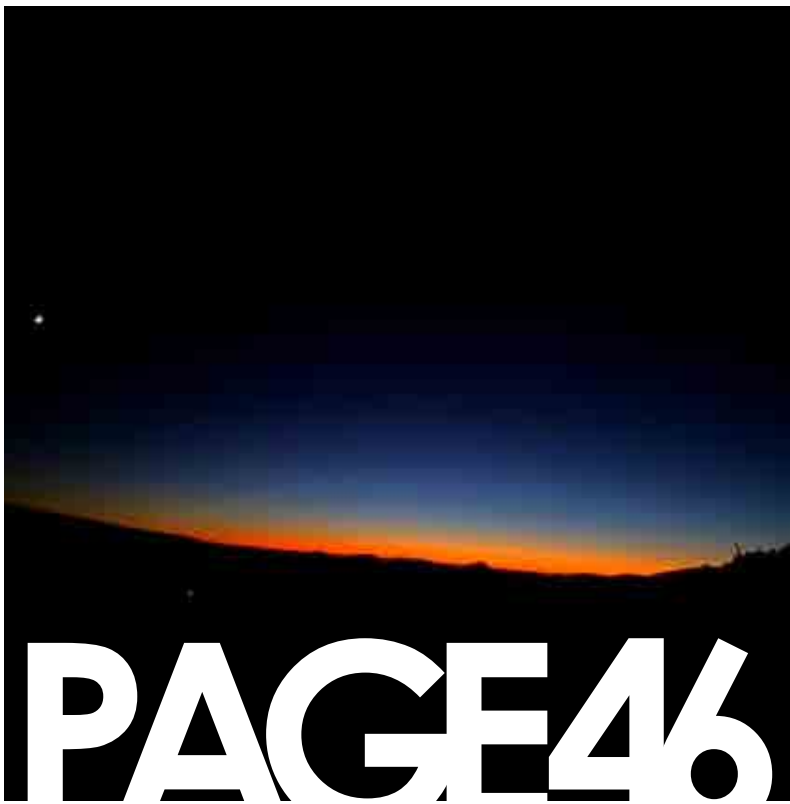
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The 1st [World Mountain and Trail Running Championships](#) will take place in Chiang Mai, Thailand rescheduled for the 17th – 20th November 2022. The LOC are very generously providing 66,000 US dollars in prize money. The event will feature four options, a vertical mountain race and 12/40/80k races. More details on [the IAU site](#).



The 2022 IAU 24-hour European Championships will take place at the [Lupatotissima 24 Hour](#), Verona, Italy taking place on September 17th – 18th, 2022 and they will be organised by FIDAL (Federazione Italiana Di Atletica Leggera).

The IAU have also announced that in December 2021, World Athletics agreed to give the top 50 km performances World Record status. Having introduced the first IAU 50 km Trophy in 2005, the first IAU 50 km World Championship took place on December 4th 2015 in Doha, Qatar.

The current women's world record of 2:59:54 was set in April 2021 by Desiree Linden from USA and for the men the world record of 2:42:07 was set in May 2021 by Negasa, Ketema Bekele from Ethiopia. Read the article [on the IAU](#).

The British Trail Running Championships are coming to Cornwall on July 16th as the **Black RAT 50k** event has been selected to host the British Trail Running Championships middle distance for 2022. The organisers are expecting the race to sell out early. Entry opens Feb 1st at 6pm.

[The Self-Transcendence 100/50k Ultra Races](#) also includes open 100km/50k events. The 100k race incorporates the annual **Anglo Celtic Plate** home countries event, as well as the Scottish 100km road championship for 2022. Confirmation of British championship status for 100km is pending. The 50km race incorporates the Scottish 50km championship for 2022.

[Four Nations Backyard Trophy](#)

This is an event that will take place at 4 Backyards in 4 countries, each country will have a team of 10 runners and each team must have at least 2 women on it. This is a friendly competition and will help push runners to bigger miles and help them get into their nations team for the Backyard World Team Championships which will be held in October 2022.

The Individual BYU World Championships will take place every other year, alternating with the Team Championships and will take place in October 2023. More info on [Backyardultra.com](#).

The Golden Trail World Series aims to promote professional trail runners as the world-class athletes that they are, competing in the six races in the series with each runner's best three results from the six races counting. The top 30 men and women from the overall ranking after the 6th race will be invited to the Madeira Ocean Trails Stage Race Grand Final.

The 2022 Golden Trail World Series races:

- May 5, 2022 – **Zegama-Aizkorri Marathon** – Zegama, Spain
- June 26, 2022 – **Marathon du Mont Blanc** – Champonix, France
- August 8, 2022 – **Stranda Fjord Trail Race** – Stranda, Norway
- August 13, 2022 – **Sierre-Zinal** – Sierre, Switzerland
- September 17, 2022 – **Pikes Peak Ascent** – Manitou Springs, Colorado, USA
- September 18 or 25, 2022 – **Flagstaff Sky Peaks** – Flagstaff, Arizona, USA
- October 26, 2022 – **Madeira Ocean Trails** – Madeira Island, Portugal

All the details are on: www.goldentrailseries.com

Les 6 Jours du Grand Est which was scheduled for July 3rd 2022 in France has been cancelled as has the Basle 24 hour in Switzerland which was due to start April 30th. The [Endurance 24 Hour](#) in Finland has also been cancelled. The February 26th 24 hour event at Espoo will now take place in 2023 due to the covid situation. The [Tarawera Ultramarathon](#), part of the UTMB World Series and scheduled for Feb 12 is also cancelled.

[The 17th International Ultramarathon Festival Loutraki](#), October, 48/24 hour race: October 2022, exact date to be announced in March 2022. The **Sri Chinmoy 6 day** race in New York is being planned, subject to confirmation, on April 18th without the 10 day.

The [6 Days In The Dome](#) event, which is actually 8 days as it features a 48 hour and two 24 hour events, starts on June 18th 2022 in Milwaukee, WI. New 6 day race was announced, **K6**, in the Czech Republic with 48/24 hour options. Course is a 3 km asphalt loop with an elevation gain of 12 m. Fee for 6 day approximately £170. More details on the [race website](#).

[Steep Life Media](#), the media and marketing branch of Aravaipa Running, will be live-streaming the [USA Track & Field Road 100 Mile Championship](#) at next month's Jackpot Ultra in Henderson, Nevada!

National Ultra Championships in Germany

The German championships of the four ultramarathon disciplines 50 kilometres, 100 kilometres, 24 hours and ultratrail will be held from 2022 as the German Ultramarathon Championships of the German Ultramarathon Association (DUV) in cooperation with the German Athletics Association (DLV). The organisers of the 100-kilometre road race and the 24-hour race have already been determined.

LSG Weiher will host the 100-kilometre road race on April 9, 2022, and Adler-Langlauf Bottrop e.V. will run the 24-hour race on May 14, 2022, as part of the 5th Bottrop Ultralauf Festival (BUF). The 100 kilometres will take place in Ubstadt-Weiher, Baden, on a 5-kilometre loop around the Hardtsee lake. Those who would like to test the course of the DM already over 50 kilometres away can do so at the “HaWei50” on February 26, 2022. For many athletes, the German Championships at the beginning of April will be a yardstick for their nomination for the 100-kilometre World Championships on August 27, 2022 in Bernau near Berlin. Checkout the race website for more information about the [HaWei100](#). Source [www-leichtathletik-de](#).

2022 National & International Championships

- 25/03/2022 [Sri Chinmoy 48 Hour Track Festival](#)
- 26/03/2022 [PFB-OmszkiUltra](#)
- 03/04/2022 [Self-Transcendence 100/50k](#)
- 23/04/2022 [Sydney International 100k](#)
- 14/05/2022 [Bottrop Ultralauf Festival](#)
- 26/05/2022 [L'équipe des 24 Heures de Brive](#)
- 03/06/2022 [Southern Sydney 24 Hour Ultra](#)
- 11/06/2022 [Survivorfest](#)
- 03/09/2022 [GOMU 48-Hour World Championships](#)
- 17/09/2022 [Lupatotissima - 24 ore](#)
- 23/09/2022 [6/12/24/48 Stundenlauf](#)
- 15/10/2022 [Big Dog's Backyard Ultra](#)
- 15/10/2023 [Big Dog's Backyard Ultra](#)
- 02/12/2023 [IAU 24 Hour World Championships](#)

- [Australian 48 Hour Champs](#). Canberra, ACT
- [24 Hour Hungarian Championship](#)
- [Scottish and GB \(pending\) Championships](#)
- [Australian National 100k Championships](#)
- [German 24 Hour Champs](#).
- [French National 24 Hour Champs](#).
- [Australian 24 Hour Champs Barden Ridge](#)
- [Canadian 24 Hour Champs](#). Alberta
- [Hainesport, New Jersey](#)
- [European 24 Hour Champs](#). Verona Italy
- [Swiss 24 Hour Championships](#), Brugg
- [World Team Championships](#), TN, USA
- [World Individual Championships](#), TN, USA
- [Chinese Taipei](#)



Last September Pretoria ultrarunner Tegan Edwards set new records at 24 and 48 hours by first improving Hazel Moller's record of 191km by six kilometres when she ran 197km in 24 hours. After that, Tegan continued running to break Molley Delainey's 48 hour record of 242km by completing 261km. Ratification pending. [Read more](#).

The 10th of December saw the Aravaipa **Running Desert Solstice** Invitational race, first held in 2011, take place in Phoenix, Arizona and features 24 hour and 100 mile events designed to be a qualifier for the National 24 hour team. The 24 hour race was won by Nick Coury with 173.01-miles, a new American 24 hour track and road record.

24 hour men

- Nick Coury 173.01 miles
- Jake Jackson 157.33 miles
- Scott Traer 152.36 miles

24 hour women

- Marisa Lizak 140.18 miles
- Stella Springer 135.17 miles
- Mandie Holmes 133.67 miles

Pam Smith's split of 6:40 for 50 miles was a new women's American 45-to-49 age group record. Her 12 hour split was an AGR at 83. 95 miles (AGR), and set another new U.S. AGR at 100 k in 8:21, and to finish, her 15:15 100-mile run was also an AGR. Camille Herron set a new US Women's 100 mile record in 13:21:51 and Viktoria Brown also set a Canadian Women's 100 mile record finishing in 14:57:13. List of all records set at the [2021 Desert Solstice Invitational](#).

Across The Years, also hosted by Aravaipa Running, is perhaps the premier multiday race in America at this time. With options from a BYU and a marathon every day, a 6 hour up to a 10 day race there's something for almost every runner. Amy Mower won the women's 6 day with 414.911 miles and Nicolae Buceanu (ROU) covered 473.585 miles in the men's race. The 10 day race saw Van Phan take the women's win with 603.507 miles and Budjargal Byambaa covered 690.471 miles. [Full results](#).

The Montane Spine Race takes place on the Pennine Way National Trail in the UK, a 268-mile (429km)

route from Edale in Derbyshire to Kirk Yetholm, Scotland. The race has four categories of different lengths with the Challenger being 108 miles, Sprint 46 miles and Challenger North 160 miles. Not much snow this year though it was a cold, wet start at Edale. This was an intriguing event to follow online with early leaders, men and women, having to withdraw by midrace. On the third day Eoin Keith who had been in 5th place at one point found himself in the lead as Kim Collison, Damian Hall and Eugeni Roselló Solé (ESP) all withdrew. At CP3 at Middleton events took a turn for Eoin upon learning that Tiaan Erween had pulled out and after passing Doug Zinis and James Leavesly at the Duffton aid station he could smell third place. On arriving at Garagill for a pitstop, Eoin heard that Damian Hall had dropped, meaning that he was now in second place. Just before Bellingham race leader Eugeni Roselló Solé (ESP) withdrew leaving a delighted Eoin in first place, a lead he held finishing in 92:40:30. Eoin is posting his report on his blog in several parts the first of which is [The Spine Race 2022, Part 1 – Teen Kicks](#)



Montane Spine Challenger MRT

- Josh Wade 24:54:50 Kendra Wedgwood 46:09:30

Montane Spine Sprint

- Jonathan Price 10:03:03 Alice Kershaw 12:16:15

Montane Spine Challenger North

- Simon Roberts 43:48:17 Victoria Morris 52:51:38

Montane Spine Race

- Eoin Keith 92:40:30 Debbie Martin-Consani 104:08:22
- Full results are on the [Montane Spine website](#).

SANIA SOROKIN

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

The Spartanion leapt into the awareness of the ultrarunning community on January 6th 2022 as a 24/12 hour race that serves as a qualifier for ultrarunners in Israel, and elsewhere, for Spartathlon. Taking place in Ganei Yehoshua Park in Tel Aviv, on a Thursday to allow Sabbath-keepers to take part, the course is a paved 1,460.23m loop with three metres of elevation gain per lap.

The field featured the current 24 hour World record holder Sania Sorokin (LTU).

Sorokin broke the 100-mile world record on April 26 2021 at the Centurion Running Track 100 Mile in Ashford, in his first official 100 mile race covering the distance in 11:14:56. And, amazingly, continued to set a new 12 hour record of 105.825 miles (170.309k).

For a man who weighed 100kg in 2012 and then began his running career this is an amazing story of how transformation is possible. According to an Irunfar article, Sania saw a flyer on the ground about a 100k race and decided that was the challenge he needed. In 2013 he entered the Baltic Cup 100 km, in Nida Lithuania, finishing 9th in 8:37:04. In July 2014 he won the Daugavpils 100 km race in Latvia in 7:20:41 and in November of that year took part in the IAU 100km World Championship open race in Doha, Qatar finishing in 7:30:26.

2015 saw Sania take part in the IAU 24h World Championships in Turin, Italy coming 22nd and set a new Lithuanian National record of 242.189 km. At the 2016 IAU 24h EC - 24 hours in d'Albi, France, Sania ran 251.611 km for 6th place having already exceeded 260 km at the Athens International Ultramarathon Festival in Athens in March that year.

In 2017 Sania won the Spartathlon in 22:04:04, the 6th fastest time ever.

In May 2018 at the IAU European 24 hour Championships in Timisoara, Romania he lifted the bar again with 260.991 km which earned him a bronze medal for third place. In May 2019 he went to Basle for the Sri Chinmoy 24 hour race which he won with 272.708 km setting new National 24 and 12 hour records. Later that





year he went back to Albi for the IAU 24 Hour World Championships on 26-27 October where he became the World Champion setting a new championship record with 278.972 km. It took 7 years to go from being an overweight, drinking, smoking, and non-athlete to World Champion. In December that year, in Taiwan,

Sania's 6:43:13 for 100 km at UltraPark in Poland in August 2020 was world's best performance for the year and world's best for 6 hours too with 89.254km.

With records continuing to fall seemingly wherever he went, Sania appeared at the 2021 Centurion Running Track 100 Mile race in April, an Invitational event at Ashford in Kent continuing the phenomena with new world records for 150 kilometres, (10:27:48), 100 miles, (11:14:56) and 12 hours (170.309 km), as well as a new Lithuanian 50 mile record (5:32:01). Sorokin's marks surpass the previous records of 11:19:18 for 100 miles and 104.88 miles/168.7928 kilometres for 12 hours, which were both set by Zach Bitter in 2019 at the Six Days in the Dome race in Wisconsin, USA.¹

Unable to work due to Covid, Sania focussed all his efforts into training and August 28th 2021 saw him on the start line of the Ultrapark Weekend 24 hour in Poland after the cancellation of the World 24 hour Championships. August 29th saw Yiannis Kouros's 'unreachable' record crushed as Sorokin reached 303.4 kilometres (188.52 miles) with 40 minutes to spare finishing the 24 hours with 309.4 kilometres (192.25 miles).

“[The world record] was my dream for about five years,” Sorokin told Runner's World. “It was an almost perfect race, but I know I can do better.”²

Now, in the New Year, Sorokin has done it again, at the Spartanion in Israel, setting more World Records by reaching the 100 miles in 10:51:39 and running 110.24 miles (177.41 kilometres) in 12 hours. With an eye on the 48 hour WR we will see if Sorokin can extend his dominance into the multiday arena as nothing seems impossible for the 40 year old Lithuanian at this time. [Spartanion results](#).

Video: [World Record Holder Ultra Marathon - Aleksandr Sorokin - 44km Run](#)

Photos by Sami Vaskola and Noora Honkala

1 Aleksandr Sorokin Runs New 100-Mile and 12-Hour World Records [IRunFar](#)

2 How Sania Sorokin Broke the 24-Hour World Record, a Mark That's Stood Since 1997 – [Runners World](#)





Jason Koop, one of the hosts of **Trail Runner Nation** has just released the second edition of [Training Essentials for Ultrarunning](#). TRN is one of trail running's oldest and most downloaded podcasts, devoted to sharing knowledge and advice with the trail running community. This episode, [556](#), features [Davy Crockett](#) who has his own Ultrarunning History podcast.

- Award-winning author [Adharanand Finn](#) interviews an eclectic mix of runners to try to uncover what it really is that gets us out there running around in big, pointless circles. And why we love it so much. [The Way Of The Runner podcast](#) here chats with Camille Herron, perhaps the world's greatest ultrarunner at this time alongside a complementary discussion with Ultrarunning World's Editor, Abichal Sherrington, who recalls his experience of running six 3100 mile races throughout the mid 2000's.

- The Running for Real Podcast connects a global community with a shared love of running exploring the reasons why we love to run and discover ways it helps us become better people. Ep. 277 talks with 3100 mile runner Harita Davies: [You Have No Idea What You Can Do Until You Try](#).

- [UltraRunning Magazine Podcast](#) chats with ultrarunner Adam Merry and a 2021 round up of the latest issue with UR magazine editor Amy Clark.

- Davy Crockett's [Ultrarunning History](#) continues with his series looking at the 6 Day Race, up to part 6 now and features pedestrian legend Edward Payson Weston.

- Check out the [Billy Yang podcast, Goals](#), which features Coach and Training Essentials for Ultrarunning author, Jason Koop along with 2021 Badwater winner Sally McRae. Longish at 2 hours.

- **Run The Riot Podcast** by David The Riot has weekly casts and EP106 – features [Gwen Zywicke and her new Book, Running Mysticism](#) which we shall be reviewing in the not too distant future.

- [Episode 221 of Talk Ultra](#) is with Speedgoat Karl Meltzer who recently won his 45th 100-mile race and maintained a 20-year streak of winning at least one 100-mile race every year.

Videos

- [“Begin Again”](#), a full-length film in which Dylan Bowman discusses his recent experience at the 2021 Diagonale des Fous.

- [Eryri: The Film](#) During the hottest weekend of 2021, ‘Eryri’ follows two runners as they attempt to complete the inaugural Race Across Snowdonia: a two-day foot race through Snowdonia National Park.

- [Highland Ultra](#): A runner's documentary of the first edition of Highland Ultra held in October 2021 – a self sufficient multi day ultramarathon in the area of Knoydart in Scotland.

- Leadville 100 Ultramarathon | [More Than The Miles](#) The Leadville 100 ultramarathon is a 100-mile race that climbs and descends 15,600 feet through the Colorado Rockies. Nick Bare faced an intimidating task in his first ultramarathon.

Race reports

Elliot Froidevaux [200 miles is for the birds, but GAX 100 takes guts!](#)

Mike Raffan – [The Tunnel Race 2021 report](#)

Eoin Keith [Montane Spine Race 2022](#)

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Yoga for runners

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Wednesday 6pm - beginners yoga

Wednesday 7pm - yoga for runners



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WINTER BASE TRAINING

By Susan Lister

I was so excited to see races starting up again this year and it motivated me to get my training back on track. I managed to get a 50k race in September and it felt so good. Unfortunately, I caught covid one week before my October ultra and so that one had to be shelved. I was disappointed to miss the race as I had been really looking forward to this one. I'd even booked dinner and a hotel afterwards with a few friends so we could celebrate.

Missing the race was not great but the thought of going back to the drawing board, again, with my training was even harder to take. It was a good 4 or 5 weeks before I could really get going again as I was tired with the virus.

When you find yourself struggling to run 10k or even 5k it can be really disheartening. It barely seems worth putting your trainers on for a 3 mile run when you're used to running 20.

I couldn't really face building up my mileage from zero to 50 and so decided I should maybe try to do something different. I would complete a base winter training for a few months before beginning to really build mileage early next year.

Focusing on time on feet rather than mileage has kept me on the hilly trails and away from the tarmac paths (I have a bad habit of gong there to get some easy miles in). I've been able to focus on form and improve my hill running and hiking.

During this time I've noticed the areas which need a bit of extra work are hamstrings, glutes, core and leg strength.

Here is a short yoga routine to help with these areas.

EVERYDAY YOGA #1

Try to do these every day. If you're running do them after your run.



1 RAG DOLL

The object is not to touch the floor but to fold the torso onto the thighs. Bend the knees as much as possible to allow this to happen. Take hold of alternate elbows and hang. Time yourself. Start with one minute and work your way up to five.



2 PLANK

Step back to plank then lower your body down to the mat. Push into your forearms and raise the hips. Use your core to hold you up. Start with one minute and work towards 5



3 WARRIOR 2

Take a wide step and turn your foot 90 degrees. Bend the front knee and keep the back leg straight. Tuck the tailbone under and feel the hips externally rotate. Arms out to a T and gaze forward towards the fingertips. Stay for 5 long breaths and then change sides.



4 WARRIOR 3

Shift all the weight into the front foot. Hinge forward at the hips while lifting the back leg. Extend the torso and breathe deeply. Stay for a minimum of 5 breaths.



5 WIDE FOLD

Take the feet wide and keep the feet parallel. stretch up as high as you can then fold forward from the hips, keeping the back straight, aiming to get the palms flat on the mat or on the shins. Bend the knees if you need to. Stay for one minute.



6 BOAT

Sit down with soles of both feet on the mat. Hold the backs of your legs and lift the feet up. (keep knees bent initially) Release your arms out in front.

CREATED BY ANANTAYOGA.CO.UK



TOUGH TRAILS

EDALE INFERNO RING OF HELL

By Emily Dart

The name says it all, Tough Trails, Edale's Inferno Ring of Hell. There's no need for small print here, everything about the name screams painful and challenging both physically and possibly more importantly, mentally. Your average Sunday morning Park Runner need not apply.

Given Kinder is virtually on my doorstep it would have been rude not to give it go and what a race! First of all, kudos to the event organizers, Tough Trails, for absolutely sticking to their guns going ahead with the race despite the current covid situation, a real testament to their passion of promoting challenging trail events with a 10k, Half Ultra (15.5 mile) and Full Ultra (35 miles). With numerous races still being canceled and changed due to covid, worryingly due to land permission disputes in many cases, it was great to be able to get to a race when it was planned for. I knew going into the event I'd had a sketchy year in terms of training and running. After a hiatus from Ultras since 2020's Rivelin Running events, Dig Deep 60 miler due to some IT band issues and race cancellations I was incredibly nervous. Having placed well in my races over the last few years this one felt like a complete unknown. I wasn't sure if I had it in me to even finish the race let alone place top 3. I did as much as I could to prepare in the weeks before the race, dialed in my nutrition and hydration really well, prioritised rest and recovery, especially in the days before. It didn't stop mega nerves on the day though.

Checking the weather forecast in the car on the way to Edale we were blessed with a yellow weather warning from the Met Office, this gave the promise of wind, rain and thunderstorms, just what you want on 630ft up in a bog on Kinder plateau. It was set to be a challenging day conditions wise.

If the name isn't enough to give you an inkling of what's in store for you, the scrutinization of the mandatory kit check really does leave you no doubt this race means business. If you didn't have your kit, you didn't race, I cockily refrained from carrying the optional head torch,

with a warning from my kit checker jokingly saying he hoped I'd not just jinxed my race! The first group start in a race in nearly 2 years felt very strange and very exciting. That anticipation as you stand on the start line of any race big or small is pretty electric and this was no different. We set off from Edale village hall after an emotional briefing from event organizer and race director Mike, it was clear how much getting this inaugural race up and running meant to him as an individual and how much he and the other organizers had invested in the event physically and mentally.

Straight through the village towards The Nab, running just behind the front pack with my partner and best running bud Chris, we were set to hit the race as a team. I glanced over and could see after a few hundred yards something wasn't right with him, less than a mile in he called it. He had some serious knee pain and decided early on to withdraw and DNF. We stopped and I offered to pull out with him, the rest of the field began to pass us and he said "no, get on with it, go and get it done and I'll see you at the end". So as he dejectedly headed back down to the start line, I began the ascent of the Nab up to the Kinder Plateau, managing to pull back ahead of most of the field. Everyone looking fresh faced for the 1st photos of the day from photographer and Ultra runner Tim Woodier, things quickly got tough on the 1st ascent. Visibility and conditions soon began to deteriorate the higher up we went, with definite 'thick as a bag' visibility once on the top.

The event was advertised as a way marked event with signs and flag markers along the entirety of the route. Clocking the little orange flags along the footpath east towards Crookstone Knoll I felt like I was running well and thought there was only one woman in front of me so I felt pretty good about how things were panning out. The little orange flags seemed to become less and getting to a path junction with no marker, I hesitated, I realized that in our meticulous planning me and Chris had only decided to upload the GPX of the route into his watch and we'd navigate together, bad decision, and not one I'll make again. I did have a paper copy of the route but clocked a few other runners dropping down so decided to follow the pack. It was the wrong decision. Meeting the race leaders heading back up towards me, there was a quick meeting of minds. I whipped out the OS map app (not for the first time that day, a godsend!) and we saw we were just off route. Getting back on route and heading round to Mad Woman's Stone I could see a large group of runners up ahead drifting in and out of view in the eerie mist, the main pack must have passed me when I'd dropped off route. Frustrated with myself for making such a silly mistake on home turf, I got my head down and cracked on with making up the time I'd lost. On towards Ringing Roger after passing quite a few of the other competitors I was faced with yet another unmarked path junction. The organizers had said that anything like this would be well marked, it began to look like something was amiss with the way-marking. Making my second bad nav call of the day I went round the nose of Ringing Roger instead of straight over to Nether Tor, realizing too late to rectify, I tanked it back to the main path with now no idea where I was in comparison to any of the other runners.

It was at this stage that I got the Ordnance Survey app up and decided from now on to disregard as much as possible the route markings and just navigate using the GPX file on my smartphone. Thankfully after this I made no more mistakes for the rest of the race. Heading round towards Upper Tor there was a sudden break in the weather, the un-forecast sun put in a spectacular appearance just as I was setting off on a brutal descent into Grindsbrook, with the spectacular views of the Edale Valley with the backdrop of Rushup Edge spreading out across the horizon. As brutal as it was dropping into Grindsbrook it was just as tough ascending out, most of it un-runnable, at best most sections were a hectic, rushed scramble. Back onto the plateau and a good section of running terrain. Round Grindslow knoll and on towards Crowden Tower. This steady section gave me plenty of time to think and relax into the race a bit, having a word with myself about the pressure I was putting on myself to catch up and speed up for no real reason, given I'd come into this questioning whether I'd even finish I decided to calm down, get a good steady pace on, forget everyone else, run my own race and most importantly just enjoy my day.

At the top of the 2nd descent of Kinder I caught up with quite a big group of runners, clocking the flags at the path that I'd inevitably be taking once I'd been down and back up again I conquered Crowden Brook, noting a complete lack of any



flags and signs at the top of here. I started to struggle a little with quad pain on the down-hills but cracked on and made it to a very jovial and welcoming checkpoint 1. One of the benefits of doubling back on yourself to go back up the same way we'd descended was that you were able to meet and say hello to other runners. Everyone was unbelievably friendly, with lots of wonderful encouragement and mutual appreciation amongst every single runner that I met. What an absolutely awesome group of the people running that day. The path back up was tough and on reaching the path junction that I had passed earlier the previously present flags were most definitely absent. It was clear now there was sabotage from someone up the hill, moving and removing way markers. I nervously headed out onto the Kinder Scout crossing. Having had experience of the plateau in white out blizzard conditions years earlier, I knew what a bleak and desolate place it can feel like in mad navigational conditions. It was very foggy and began to rain, after years of restoration on Kinder through gully blocking and the sphagnum moss project, the water table up there is pretty high and conditions were wet and mega boggy. Running was almost impossible, worried about getting stuck in a bog, on my own with no one else in sight, I went steady on the really wet sections, eventually dropping into the river bed that feeds Kinder Downfall. There was a lone woman like myself walking towards me in the distance, a quick nav check and reassured that I was heading in the right direction I jovially said hello to the on-coming woman who promptly put her head down and walked on without a word. Shocked by this uncommon mountain unfriendliness I trudged on into a heavy rain-storm that struck in earnest at the top of the Downfall. Time to get the wet weather gear out.

Moving south toward Kinder Low and nervous of missing the path at the top of Red Brook, I took it steady to make sure I didn't make another nav error, visibility had blown in bad again and it was tough going. Getting plenty of Mountain Fuel and water in ready for the ascent backup Kinderlow End. I made it to the self click checkpoint and met two of my fellow racers, one of whom was having a really tough race. We set off up the hill together and he said it'd broken him, that he'd been DNF'ing and pulling himself out at the next checkpoint. With a few words of encouragement to keep going I moved off into the hard ascent up a hill I've run up and down many times and fondly refer to as Mor-dor Steps which gives you an idea of what it's like. I didn't see the two other runners again but do hope he changed his mind about pulling out. Heading down towards Edale Rocks from Kinder Low I got nailed by a bad hit of quad cramp. Ultra's hurt, its inevitable, part



of the challenge of them is how much you are willing to let that pain hinder and hamper you, getting my head round that pain I pushed on through the excruciating cramps and eventually (and thankfully before getting papped by the awaiting photographer near the top of Jacob's Ladder) the pain subsided, and I started running really well again.

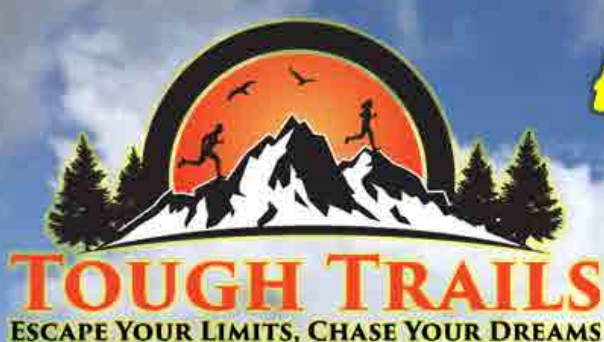
As I began to drop down the crowded paths of Jacobs Ladder back to Upper Booth checkpoint for the second time the weather came good again, with some stunning views coming into clarity. I'd not seen any other racers for a while but just before the checkpoint I was greeted by the lovely smiling face of who I now know to be Tracy Avill who shouted a massive 'well done' and a 'keep going, you're doing amazing!'. Running into the checkpoint to a massive round of applause from the checkpoint staff they helped me restock my fluids and stocked me up again with Mountain Fuel products. I also handed over the ruck of empty gel sachets that had been dropped by other runners that I'd been picking up on the way round. This is one of the few negatives of the day and I just feel that as runners and ambassadors of the race organizers and the wider running community out on the hill that day we could have done better when it came to littering.

Even though I'd said to myself earlier in the day to just enjoy it and get round, I tentative-

ly asked how many female racers had been through the checkpoint, they said only 1. Realizing that I was 2nd and not significantly far off the woman in 1st I had a new wave of energy knowing that the day was going far better than I could possibly have hoped for coming into the event. Passing on the news that the waymarking flags have definitely been being moved and removed altogether I set off out of the checkpoint with the wind right up me! Determined to nail the ascent back up the valley and Jacob's Ladder. I ran really hard and well only walking the really steep sections so by the time I set off towards Brown Knoll trig point I was doing it in first position. While I was clearly moving quicker on the accents it was very clear the descents were definitely not the case, by this stage my quads were on fire again and beginning to cramp so I just couldn't move any quicker than I was doing. I was only just in front, literally by a few steps as we started up Rushup Edge so I dug in and managed to pick up a lead which I'd completely lost again by the time I was leaving the 3rd and last checkpoint, I'd been caught up again, as I ran out they were running in and was greeted with a jovial "how on earth do you run uphill so fast!?". The same scenario on Mam Tor, widened the gap up to the summit and I was caught again by Hollins Cross. I knew there was an absolutely brutal ascent coming up in the form of Loose Hill and I knew that the decision on who'd take 1st and 2nd would be decided on that hill, so in a last ditch attempt to get a big enough

lead that I'd be able to get to the village hall first I absolutely tanked it as fast as my annihilated legs would carry me down to the clicker at Losehill End. They were hot on my heels so I went into battle with that hill and pushed as hard as I could, passing a guy going up who shouted, "how did I get in front of you?" I delivered the devastating blow that he'd missed a clicker so he dejectedly headed back down, retracing his steps back to the bottom. Managing to run quite a lot of it with just those awful rocky steps beating me near the top. By the time I hit the view point I was well on my own and couldn't see any other runners so I carried on pushing hard, over Back Tor, all the way off, back up the ridge again in one last gnarly hill up to Hollins Cross. I still couldn't see anyone behind me so I went as fast as I could manage down hill again with cramps, hitting the road with only about 600 yards to go. A quick glance round and Tracy was literally right behind me. At no point during the day could I have possibly imagined that I'd be finding a sprint finish from somewhere but miraculously I still had it in me and made it through the finish line with a few moments to spare, only to turn round to a huge embrace from the lady in 2nd who stated, "what an incredible race, you were amazing and deserve that so much!", an absolutely lovely lady and wonderful competitor, a paragon of the sport of ultrarunning. The applause coming in was awesome, the finish line staff helpful and they were really supportive as were the rest of the runners that had made it in before me.

I picked up my medal, finishers T-shirt and was made a very welcome cup of tea with a ginger nut biscuit, which was all I could manage at that stage, it was the day after until I could actually manage proper food again. I hung on at the finish line to make sure I could give a round of applause for the 3rd Lady, who put in an amazing race and was genuinely lovely. Getting 1st lady and finding out I'd made it 9th overall out of a field of some really amazing runners made me feel incredibly proud, it was one of those races where it really did all come together right for me on the day, one of my greatest running accomplishments to date. I will remember this day for a long time to come.



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A LESSON IN GRINDING OUT 83.8 MILES

By Emma Hancok

Photos by Surabhamat Galimov

Battersea Park track on the 18th of September 2021 is the closest I have come to DNFing a race through my own choosing. Yes, I have DNF'd races before for missing cut offs but that is something I can't control.

I decided I wanted to try 24 hour racing so I would have no excuse not to finish. I think I wanted to prove myself wrong after two big DNFs at CCC and then the North Downs Way 100. If I could finish a 24 hour race then I was an ultrarunner and deserved to call myself one.

First stop Gloucester 24 Hour, and it couldn't have gone much better, I'm not saying that there weren't some dark moments because there definitely were and not everything went right but I was over the moon with running close to 166K with a 100 mile split of 23.15.

This result planted a seed and I realised that running a Spartathlon qualifier of 170K or sub 22 hours for 100 miles was very achievable and my coach agreed - but only if everything went right. If I'm honest, I thought it was pretty ridiculous that I should think that one day I could run that race, currently I am not even anywhere close to being fast enough to make the tight cut offs. However, I thought I should at least see if I can try to qualify to enter the ballot even if I wouldn't be anywhere fast enough to run the race. There was nothing to lose but everything to gain in trying.

Fast forward to just under a year later, and I find myself at the Self Transcendence 24 Hour Track Race, somehow managing to gain entry through

the application only process and a race reserved for only 45 of "the most experienced and promising ultrarunners". That in itself threw me, was I really an experienced and promising ultrarunner? I'd done one 100 mile trail race plus Gloucester 24 hour, a few 50s and some shorter distances so I was practically a newbie compared to some of the other people I would be sharing the track with.

They say imposter syndrome is a thing and I have felt it many times before, at nearly every start line I have been on. However, even though I was sharing the track with record holders and people who would go on to run 200+ K in the 24 hours, I actually felt like I deserved to be there and that I could achieve something great for myself if things went to plan. Things didn't go to plan however, and I guess that is what makes this race more interesting to reflect on and where valuable lessons can be learned.

Looking back at those 24 hours now, it is a bit difficult to pinpoint exactly where things started going wrong.

I would say a pretty good bet was actually in the days before when I'd pre-warned my crew that a meltdown would happen at some point, when I say meltdown, I mean the point where I'd lose all confidence in myself, letting negative thoughts enter my head, the point in which tears would come and I'd just point blank stop believing in myself. I'd discussed this with my coach and I was supposed to think of strategies to deal with this. At Gloucester I'd come out the other side and got running again so I was confident I could do the same should this happen at Battersea, but at some point getting close to the 12 hour mark in the race, I went to a dark place and the pain came as it is called by Courtney Dauwalter and felt like I never really came out of it, both mentally and physically and everything else in between.

It was then that I started to reflect on the year and how it hadn't been a good one for me. Why did I do this? I had absolutely no idea. I stopped focusing on the job in hand, I wasn't anywhere close to my A, B, and C goals at this point so maybe sub-consciously I'd already stopped trying. I even tried to convince my crew that my heart wasn't in it anymore and that maybe I didn't want it enough so that she would let me stop. Of course she wasn't having any of it. She reminded me that it is totally fine and that we'd booked in this meltdown and were prepared for it. I told her that I was pretty sure I wasn't going to be on the track when she headed off to rest and return for the morning shift whilst my other crew took over.

Nine hours later though when she returned, somehow, there I was. I might have slowed to barely more than a walk but I was still moving, and that's all my coach told me I had to do, and the one thing I absolutely wanted to do without fail was to be on the track for 24 hours, or I'd consider that a DNF and I definitely did not want one of those, something I know I would later regret.

I have never wanted to stop so much in a race before, and told that to everyone who I spoke to. Competitors told me I'd probably regret it, and this was absolutely true. Volunteers never failed to shout my name and show their support on every single lap. When I got to 48 miles in 12 hours, I thought, I know, I'll stop at 50 miles, that's a nice round number. Another competitor who I call the queen of 24 hour and canal racing suggested I make it to 100k be-

cause that was also a nice round number, 100k came and went and with every single step throbbing in my quads and stinging under my feet.

It felt like someone had chopped my legs off, tipped the contents out and filled them with concrete. I tried to run, I really did but when other competitors are lapping you with their walking pace, I really wasn't sure if it was worth it. Of course, it doesn't help when another competitor says to you "I don't pass many people" when sauntering past as I was stuffing mashed potato in my mouth, yes, I did get one thing right in this race, and eating seemed to be it. Something I often struggle with.

Luckily, I was at a point where I didn't care what anyone else was doing, I was just too focused on doing everything in my power to keep myself on the track until the horn went off. If I couldn't run, then I would still move. I tried everything I could to do, what I thought would make it a tiny bit easier, from performing minor surgery on my feet to changing tops, changing socks, if only I could change my feet. I went to the toilet far too many times, probably not because I really needed it but because I just wanted to sit down and rest.

18 hours in and I still wanted to quit, and honestly didn't know if I could make it to 24 hours. 20 hours in and the queen of 24 hour and canal racing said that we should make a pact that we would both still be on the track when the horn went off. I mean there was only 4 hours to go, how hard could those 4 hours be when I'd already been moving non-stop for 20 hours. Turns out, it's really quite hard. But I'd made a pact and I was going to stick to it, and that was that! And then the horn went off and I have never felt so much relief as I felt then. It was over.

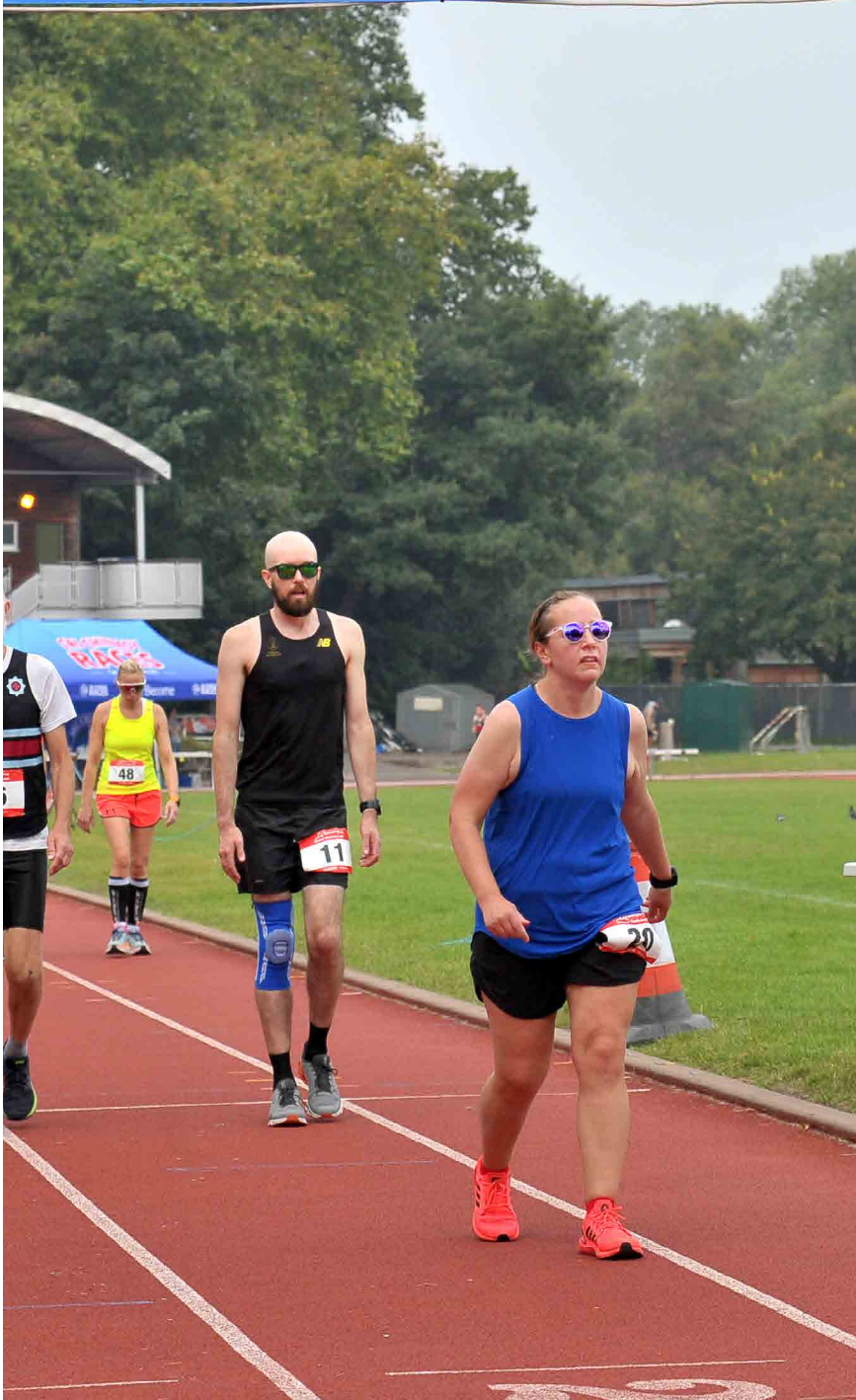
Would I do it again though? The answer is yes, in an absolute heartbeat.

There are definitely lessons to be taken from this experience, ones that I will hold close to my heart for every future race. Do not pre-warn my crew about a meltdown which might not even happen, later I got a bit of a telling off from my wonderful coach. I guess because it happened in my previous two track races, I just assumed it would happen again and psychologically I was probably waiting for it to happen, which is never a good thing in a race as long as 24 hours, as I'd already set myself up for a hard time by doing this. Also, no matter how hard things get in future races, I will always think back to the time I was on the track in Battersea Park where I managed to carry on moving for another 12 hours after I said I wanted to quit.

It wasn't the race I wanted by a long way, 23 miles to be exact. But it is one of the ones that I'm most proud of.



Self-Transcendence 24 Hour Track Race





SRI CHINMOY

24 HOUR TRACK

RACE 18/19TH SEP 2021 RACE REPORT

By Peter Abraham

Photos by Surabhamat Galimov

This was NOT my normal type of ultra, but I think I was destined to run mindlessly around a track for 24 hours. I knew I was ready physically for the challenge, but very nervous about the mental side of the race; would I be able to keep going for 24 hours...?

The Race

The Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence 24-Hour Track Race is one of the UK's longest established and popular 24-hour track races, usually held at Tooting Bec in London. For 2021 it had moved to Millennium Stadium, Battersea Park as the track at Tooting was closed. First held in 1989, this race has produced many great performances, national and world best records, and is renowned for its superb organisation.

I was very lucky to have Heather (long-suffering wife) and Paul (twin brother) crewing for me. This was new to them; I was excited about having them there to watch the race. Normally I go to races on my own, which can be a bit lonely, so having them there was great. Before the race I went through my nutrition plan and asked them to remember one main point: 'no negative thoughts'!

Training

I have been expertly guided by my coach, Martin Cox, over the last six years and been very fortunate to have raced many ultramarathons including Lakeland 50 and 100, Centurion Autumn 100/ SDW 100, Comrades, Spartathlon, Connemara, and many more.

This year I ran the South Downs Way 100-mile race in June, coming fifth after a fantastic build-up to the race. After one to two weeks of easy running I started a 10-week training block for the 24-hour track race. Normally I avoid the track as it has led to me being injured several times.

I must thank Mansell Pope for letting me run on the Timperley track outside club hours. This made all the difference; I regularly ran for an hour on Wednesday/Friday nights and built up to over 5 hours (40 miles) on Saturday or Sunday mornings.

My training week was broken down into:

Mon: 50-60 mins easy with strides

Tues: 4x1 mile hill reps with 20 mins easy warm up and recovery

Wed: 1 hour easy on track (with

strides)

Thurs: 1 hour at moderate pace on grass

Fri: 1 hour easy on track (with strides)

Sat: 1 hour easy on trails

Sun: track, building up to 5 hrs 20 mins at easy pace

As you can see the training load was not massive, it's all about consistency and not over-training.

Each day I would do strength and conditioning, going to the gym three times per week to use the leg weights machines. Running around the bends on a track puts extra demands on your body and it's very important to build strength.

My training went well, I stayed healthy throughout, and I knew I was ready for the challenge.

Race Format

I had been looking forward to this race more than any other race! To me the track race had benefits over other races: easy access to food and drink at any time, lap counters who cheer you on with each lap, sharing the track with 44 other competitors who give you encouragement throughout and share their experiences and stories. BUT the main benefit is you can't get lost! For me I was just able to run, no race pack, no mandatory kit, no tracker and logistically very simple.

The race started at noon on Saturday, and you simply run as many laps as possible before the race ends at noon on Sunday. You can stop whenever you want, and the pace is up to you.



Pre-race Targets

I want 2022 to be an epic year for my running as I will be a V50, so I have in mind the Centurion 100-mile track race in April 2022 and a return to the Spartathlon in September. My main aim was to run sub-15 hours for 100 miles which would give me auto-qualification to both races.

I hoped that after I reached my target of 100 miles in under 15 hours I would reset and try to carry on. For me this second target was a bonus: if I felt sore and tired, I would stop so that I would recover more quickly.

Race Breakdown

First 26 miles

It was dry throughout the race, with full sun on Saturday afternoon and temperatures rising to 23-25 degrees celsius. I knew it was important to look after myself, slow down a bit, drink regularly and stick to the nutrition plan.

At noon the race director set us off and, in true Peter fashion, I set off quickly (7:10 mile pace) and joined another runner, Hristo from Bulgaria, at the front. After two laps it became apparent that Hristo was very speedy, and I slowed my pace to 1:55-2:00 per lap.

I kept to my nutrition plan of Tailwind at 10 minutes, gel at 20 minutes, electrolyte at 30 minutes, gel at 40 minutes, Tailwind at 50 minutes, gel on the hour, repeating this format every hour. You can see my crew were going to be kept busy!

The first marathon went by with no issues, I kept the pace below 2 minutes per lap, passing 26 miles in about 3 hours 20 minutes. I felt hot but was managing my temperature effectively with regular ice and cold water on my arm sleeves and hat.

Marathon to 50 miles (6:53:20)

After about 30 miles I could feel my right foot rubbing which was causing discomfort in my big toe. I was wearing Nike Next%, an amazing shoe, but I think the high temperature was causing my foot to swell. On passing Paul, I asked him to have my Asics Metaspeed ready with a new vest on the next lap. It was like a Formula 1 pitstop: a quick change and I rejoined the track keeping my position. The trainers felt much better, with more room in the toe-box, so I was pleased with the decision.

Running the track race for me was more of a time trial. I wanted a time, not to race or beat any

other runner. Hristo was lightning fast: he regularly lapped me, and his pace never relented. I was in a comfortable second place at 50 miles (with a 2–3-mile lead on third place), but it was all about looking after yourself and maintaining your effort.

50 miles to 100 miles

Martin had given me some valuable advice before the race: 'Don't worry about your pace if it starts to slip; all runners will slow, and the more you think about your pace the worse it will get'.

My pace was slowing slightly; I would have a look at my watch every five laps. Pace was about 2:10-2:20, but I kept telling myself I was feeling strong and running well. I was getting a bit bored of Tailwind by 60 miles; gels were fine, and I had an urge for Lucozade (the original flavour). Paul kindly went to Tesco and bought a couple of bottles. It worked a treat, felt like rocket fuel and I powered on passing 100K in 8:39:07.

By 65 miles I was starting to get excited: my pace was good, the lap counters kept saying they were amazed how fast and consistent my pace was. We calculated I was on for about 14 hours 10 minutes for 100 miles, but still 35 miles to go!

Again, the next 35 miles were non-eventful, no dramas, I just kept running. I could feel blisters on my left foot; at one point my little toenail must have come off and was digging into my other toe, but I just ignored it, and all was good. By about 97 miles my pace had slowed to 2:20-2:30 per lap. But I had a dilemma! The superfast Hristo had run 100 miles in 12 hours 48 minutes (a new Bulgarian record) and then collapsed on the grass and subsequently went home. SO, I was thinking if I carry on after the 100 miles and keep running, I could win the race. Half of me wanted to finish as I knew I was going to run 100 miles in under 15 hours, but my competitive side urged me to carry on.

With two laps to go to 100 miles I sprinted and soaked up all the kind gestures and congratulations from the spectators and other runners: I was running at 1:45-50 per lap!

I passed 100 miles in 14 hours 37 minutes 54 seconds, was over the moon and carried on....

100 miles to 24 hours

On passing the 100-mile mark I had to accept that I was going to run for another nine hours. My feet were very sore, but I wanted to keep running as it was a 24-hour race, not 100 miles.

I walked for a bit and joined another runner, John, who was walking the rest of the race. He advised me he was walking about 3.5 miles per hour, so if I kept walking, I would complete another 30 miles. It all sounded good but the runner behind me, Jen, would catch me. Jen passed 100 miles in 15 hours 51 minutes, a great time.

So, after 50 minutes of walking (and eating) I started running again. Over the next seven hours it felt like torture to keep running: by now a blister had developed on the whole of the sole of my right foot which hurt with every step. I kept an eye on the leaderboard: Jen was running very strong and never relented, but I managed to keep six miles between us.

With one hour to go Jen could not catch me! I walked for a bit, chatted with other runners, even sat down for 20 minutes. With five minutes to go I started running again and made it to 24 hours with 143.5 miles of distance covered and in first place.

Improvements

I would not change the training block at all: I felt ready for the race. 24-hour track races are much more of a mental game. If I do another one, I need to accept from the start that I will be running for 24 hours, and not try to run the 100 miles as quickly as possible. I need to train more in the trainers I will race in and need to get my feet conditioned to the race trainers, not just save them for the race.

Track Ultras

Would I run another track ultra again? Absolutely! It was loads of fun and was interesting to see what your body can do.

I would like to thank my crew, Heather and Paul, for looking after me, missing out on a night's sleep and for sharing the experience. It was great!

A massive thank you to Shankara and her team of volunteers. The lap counters and volunteers in the catering tent made for a truly memorable race experience: you were so much fun!



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DARKSIDE SUNSET ULTRA

By Lauren Buffini

As I dragged my weary sun-soaked body into bed just before midnight on Saturday with a bar of dairy milk and a piece of my mother's homemade zucchini, my first solid food since the banana at 1pm that afternoon, I just had enough energy to check my phone to see if the tracking had updated from the race I had just completed. I barely had enough energy to drink the glass of fizz I had poured, it must have been a tough race.

Competing and going for a decent time in the Darkside Sunset ultra-marathon was not really part of the plan, rather my aim had been to get my nutrition right and enjoy a jog along the wonderful North Norfolk coast from Blakeney to Snettisham.

Due to covid restrictions, as in most races, there was a rolling start between 1.30 and 2.30pm. After much deliberation, I decided to start just after 2pm. I didn't want to start too early and be demoralised by the faster runners coming past me, however I also didn't want to appear as if I was one of the faster runners (something I had not been for a couple of years, being too busy running around after a toddler to take races too seriously) and start too late.

However, when I did finally start at 2.08 pm I was the penultimate starter, with the runner behind me running his first Ultra at marathon pace, needless to say I stepped aside to let him pass. I should probably explain the strange start time, the original race should have been the full 83 mile coastal path starting at sunrise however due to covid restrictions the race was shortened but the aim was still to finish before sunset at 9.22pm I believe.

I was therefore right at the very back and anyone tracking me

and dot watching was wondering what had gone wrong. I could not see another runner in sight which slightly concerned me, how quick was everyone else? Do I sit back, I thought, relax and enjoy the scenery or do I push the pace to try and catch someone. After the first two miles at 9.30 min mile pace and feeling very comfortable I decided to push on to Wells at this pace where I thought I would then be in the mix with the marathon starters.

Focussing on my nutrition and sipping my Colorado cola tailwind and SiS cola gels, I am rather partial to the taste of cola while running. I continued at a similar pace which is super fast for someone who loves to plod whether they're doing one mile, ten miles or 100 miles but I felt good and maintained my pace.

My plan to stick with the marathoners from their start at Wells fell apart a couple of miles in when I hit the sand and the distinct lack of beach training told on me, they started running past me with great vigour on fresh legs which left me beginning to feel a bit grumpy. This was substantiated by the fact that despite religiously taking a gel every hour and sipping my Tailwind I had neglected to take on board any water and the gels sat on my stomach making me feel rather sick.

Off the beach past Holkham, which in itself felt like a marathon, and back on solid ground along the seawall I was still not feeling my best and knowing CP2 at Brancaster wasn't far away I finally started to catch some ultra-runners which gave me a boost although not enough to feel confident in picking up the pace again. At a couple of points I stopped and walked for a few



moments, something I wouldn't normally do in a 35 miler unless there was a hill, however I really felt like I needed to refocus. I tried a breathing exercise of running one finger up and down the other hand, breathing in as I went up the finger and out coming down, something my lovely new coach, Sarah from Centurion, had mentioned the week before. I'd never seriously considered getting a coach but finishing in the bottom 20 of the TP100 a few weeks before and a couple of weeks before that taking part in a 50 miler. Hearing a fellow competitor refer to the front runners as being at the 'business end' a part of the race which was clearly not the part we were in (not that I would have changed anything about the Rose of the Shires running 54 miles with my wonderful friend Polly whom I met through doing these races and just so happy to complete the TP100 after 2 DNF's and 3 DNS's). I wished to get to some level of fitness that I knew I had inside me but clear that I was unable to push myself on my own. After the quick walk break and a couple of breathing exercises Brancaster was upon us and water has never tasted so good, not to mention liquidating the gels sitting on my stomach. I felt like I was practically bounding out of CP2, having also caught up with some more ultra and marathoners and two friends who had started before me which is always a boost to have a little catch up along the way. The bounding was brought to an abrupt halt about a mile later at the start of a hill, this would go on to be a much larger hill a few metres further on and some runners went past as I slowed to a walking pace, my mantra (taken from another friend met on the ultra-trails, thanks Vic) is if you can roll a marble down it then it's a hill. Needless to say within a few paces everyone was walking, a testament to certain places in Norfolk which are most definitely not flat. This was a welcome relief from the beautiful but flats of the coastal path and the boost I needed to reset and pick up the pace.

Over the brow of the hill I knew I was running towards Thornham which was a right turn onto the road and a nice long downhill into the village, or at least that was the memory from the Sunrise back in December 2019. Rather than downhill the road headed

up the hill into the village and somehow I managed to convince myself that this wasn't actually a hill and put in a decent effort to the junction where a lovely couple had come out of their house and were handing out bottles of water. It just felt so good to pour some over myself that I was convinced that next time I was in North Norfolk I must pay them a call and explain how wonderful that water had been. I knew I wouldn't but the thought occupied my mind whilst running past all the people in the lovely pub gardens drinking in the early evening sun.

There were then some gorgeous views back on the seawall until I hit the beach again at Hunstanton with sand dunes galore, however knowing that CP3 was just at the top of the Dunes I decided to try not to let the sand drain me mentally this time as well as physically. Calculating I could still do the 35 miles in under 6 and half hours despite the treacherous sand for the past two miles and being told it was about two more miles than I had anticipated. I tripped over dog leads and dodged holiday makers, relieved to head away from the seafront. By now I was constantly clock watching as the 7 hour mark was approaching and as I was running towards the finish line the sunset was looming beautifully to my right. I clicked my watch over and saw the time as 6 hours 57 minutes. I pushed myself over the finish line in just under 7 hours. It had been a lovely day and I had done what I set out to achieve. I had no gels left and only 1 tailwind sachet in my pack. However because of the rolling start I had no idea how I had gotten on, I felt that despite the small field, I had conducted myself well and hoped that I was at 'the business end' of the field this time. It wasn't until the following morning that I'd found by getting my nutrition right had put me in 1st place in the women's field and 11th overall. I cannot express the joy I felt at being back running and being in a fit state to compete.

Thank you to Giles and Mark for a great race and I am looking forward to seeing you for the overnight Darkside Sunrise 83 miler ultra-marathon, along the North Norfolk coast in December 2022. You can find out more about these events over on their website www.darkside.run.

THE CHARITY

www.bliss.org.uk

By Lorien Cadier

Bliss exists to give every baby born premature or sick in the UK the best chance of survival and quality of life.

They champion their right to receive the best care by supporting families, campaigning for change and supporting professionals, and enabling life-changing research.

Bliss was founded in 1979 by a group of concerned parents who discovered that no hospital had all the equipment nor the trained staff it needed to safely care for premature and sick babies.

Determined to do something, these volunteers formed a charity to give vulnerable babies the care they deserve. 40 years later Bliss has grown into the leading UK charity for the 100,000 babies born needing neonatal care every year.

The Cause - Walk 60 miles in August to support BLISS
Lorien Cadier

I was interested in this cause as our grandson was born premature and received excellent care in a Special Baby Care Unit for which our family are eternally grateful. It attracted me too because of my interest in walking to the sources and then the lengths of our rivers and finally the challenge it presented me personally to improve my health and fitness after an accident. I am 69 years old, suffer with osteoarthritis in the knees and I am recovering from a bicycle accident that happened in April this year in which I broke both my arms. Finally, I have never walked more than 5 miles at any one time in my life.

I decided to walk the 60 miles from the source of the Thames along the Thames Path and fortunately, my supportive 71-year-old husband decided to walk with me just to check I didn't fall again! Neither of us are super-fit but consider ourselves in good health and walk maybe once a week to a maximum of 5 miles. We decided to try for 12-15 miles a day, as we only had a 5-day period to walk in. Planning was key as there are not so many places to stay along the first part of the route, some 50 miles, between Kemble in Gloucestershire to Oxford and we would complete the last 10 miles later from Oxford to Abingdon. So, I spent a lot of time on the internet accessing accommodation which



Bliss

for babies born too soon,
too small, too sick



in only one case was actually on the Thames Path. This meant that we had to factor in walks to our nightly accommodation and back to the Thames Path. I had a good OS map of the route and also a written description of the route, but it was extraordinary how many times with this, the map, and the river in front of you we still had to have a discussion about which way to go! Map reading skills are key.

Firstly, we decided to travel very light with a small rucksack each, which was our saviour, although we had totally underestimated just how we would feel after 10 - 12 miles walking. The first day was very stressful as we had to travel early by train from London to Kemble and then start the walk. It did rain but I had light poncho-type rain gear which kept me dry, but my socks became damp, and my footwear let me down. By Day 2 my left foot was covered in plasters, but luckily it didn't impede me from keeping going and I think the charitable cause, the thought of my sponsors and my desire to complete it helped in this regard. Stopping for a water break and food intake helped to refresh and invigorate me,

After the trials of the first day, I decided to aim for 10 miles a day and in reality, did more like 11. This was a good plan, and I was interested to note that each day, despite a sore foot, it became easier. It seemed as though once I knew what to expect, I fell into a kind of rhythm of walking and was at ease and in a calm state of mindfulness with it all.

I was envious of the fit runners who passed me as they took part in the Ultra Running Thames Challenge but I am happy with my personal achievement and that I was able to raise nearly £500 for such a worthwhile and hard-working charity.

On reflection, more practice of walking 10-15 miles in tried and tested footwear, starting the walk fresh on Day 1 and carrying more food and water as there were so few places to stop and rest on this rural route would have meant I was better prepared.

More details can be found at www.facebook.com/groups/walk60milesinaugust/about
Lorien Cadier
August 2021



RAID DES BOGOMILES

Raid 101 not Room 101!!

By Emma Morton
Photos by Objectif-image11

If you'd have told me two years ago that I would run a marathon as part of my training for Raid des Bogomiles, I'd have laughed you out of the house! Yet here I am, a 100km finisher, and, yes, I ran a marathon as a training session. I'm not laughing at you, but I do have the biggest grin on my face every time I think of my achievement on this day.

I've been trail running for 7 years now, thoroughly enjoying increasing my distances here in the south of France and testing my legs in the Pyrénées mountains. The idea to run a 100km race came about via a throwaway comment from a fellow runner in our little club, and the seed was planted in my mind. I had originally entered for last year's edition, but you can guess why that was cancelled, and I'm sure you're all sick of that subject.

The weekend of the Grand Raid des Cathares is full of excitement, buzz and festive atmosphere. It's held the third weekend of October in Carcassonne, south-west France. There are distances for everyone – from a night-time 12km with gorgeous views of the old city lit up, a 40km event, a 60km one and up to the iconic 161km. It's a beautiful part of France, steeped in Cathares history, and with 4300 metres of positive climb on the 101km and 7300 metres on the 161km, it's exceedingly hilly, which makes for absolutely stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

In the week leading up to the race, rain was forecast on one day and night only – the Friday (race day itself) into Saturday morning. I felt totally out of my depth, this was the first event I'd had a drop bag. Sounds silly I know. I kept unpacking, repack-

ing. Should I forego my peanut butter and banana sandwiches for an extra waterproof or warm top? How long would this take me to complete? Should I pack spare gloves, another set of hand warmers? Do I have enough food anyway? But Friday thankfully dawned clear and sunny. At 9am 252 runners lined up at Porte Narbonnaise. The trashy rock music clashed terribly with the mediaeval backdrop of the old cité of Carcassonne. Luckily we were soon off, replacing the grating music with rhythmic footfall, nervous chatter and encouraging words from onlookers. All along the route, I was blown away by the huge support and encouragement from the volunteers at the well stocked aid stations. Hot soup at midnight feels so luxurious. Families and friends of fellow runners were out in force too, cheering every one of us, even well into the night.

For the Raid we ran 50km south of Carcassonne to the Chateau d'Arques, then turned back north on a different, almost parallel route. We ran through quaint, sleepy villages, through pastures of grazing sheep, lazily clanking the bells around their necks. At one moment I stopped to watch two bulls fighting, the clashing of horns echoing around the valley. There was a tricky moment crossing a military terrain where I thought I'd found the perfect bush to hide behind. Already feeling relieved, I approached it only to have three camouflaged and heavily armed soldiers march out of it. Needless to say I (figuratively speaking) crossed my legs and carried on another 15 or so kilometres to a forest. Maybe with a few more events under my belt, I'll become more




adept at, and less worried about, discretion, the guys certainly don't worry about bearing all when needed. At the Chateau we were able to delve into our drop bags, taken there by the organisation. My treat was tucking into cheese and cucumber sandwiches, which, on our Sunday running club outings, my run buddies found extremely weird. The route is not published beforehand as it covers a lot of private land. Thoughtful organisers even provided step ladders to climb over the electric fences on farmers' land. This led to a hilarious scene where a group of five male runners decided to straddle the fence altogether to try and save time. You're guessing right! As I (calmly as I could through my tears of laughter) climbed over the ladder and carried on, I left them all cupping their "chestnuts", hobbling bravely forward.

Some descents were quite slippery and tricky, especially as dusk was falling. We were treated to a clear night sky and a full moon. I have a degree of hearing loss, but don't wear my hearing aids when I run as they only increase the whistle of the wind in my ears (yes, I'd like to think I run that fast) So when something in my backpack started making a strange noise, by nightfall I had convinced myself someone was running behind me. Every time I turned around, no one was there of course, but I think I freaked myself out so much that I was nearing a negative split.

There were ropes on occasions to help with the steepness of the climbs and descents. But all in all Raid des Bogomiles is a very runnable race, reassuring for the first time 100km-er like myself. I made sure to reign in my excitement at the start and not set off too quickly. I power hiked the hills and ate as I walked. All the distances have very generous cut off times which shouldn't deter newcomers. This race was such a spectacular adventure for me, challenging myself and achieving a dream goal, but most importantly making new friends, supporting runners who were flagging and being part of our amazing community of trail runners.



As it turns out, 100km doesn't feel that painful at all. Maybe I'll register for the 161km next year!





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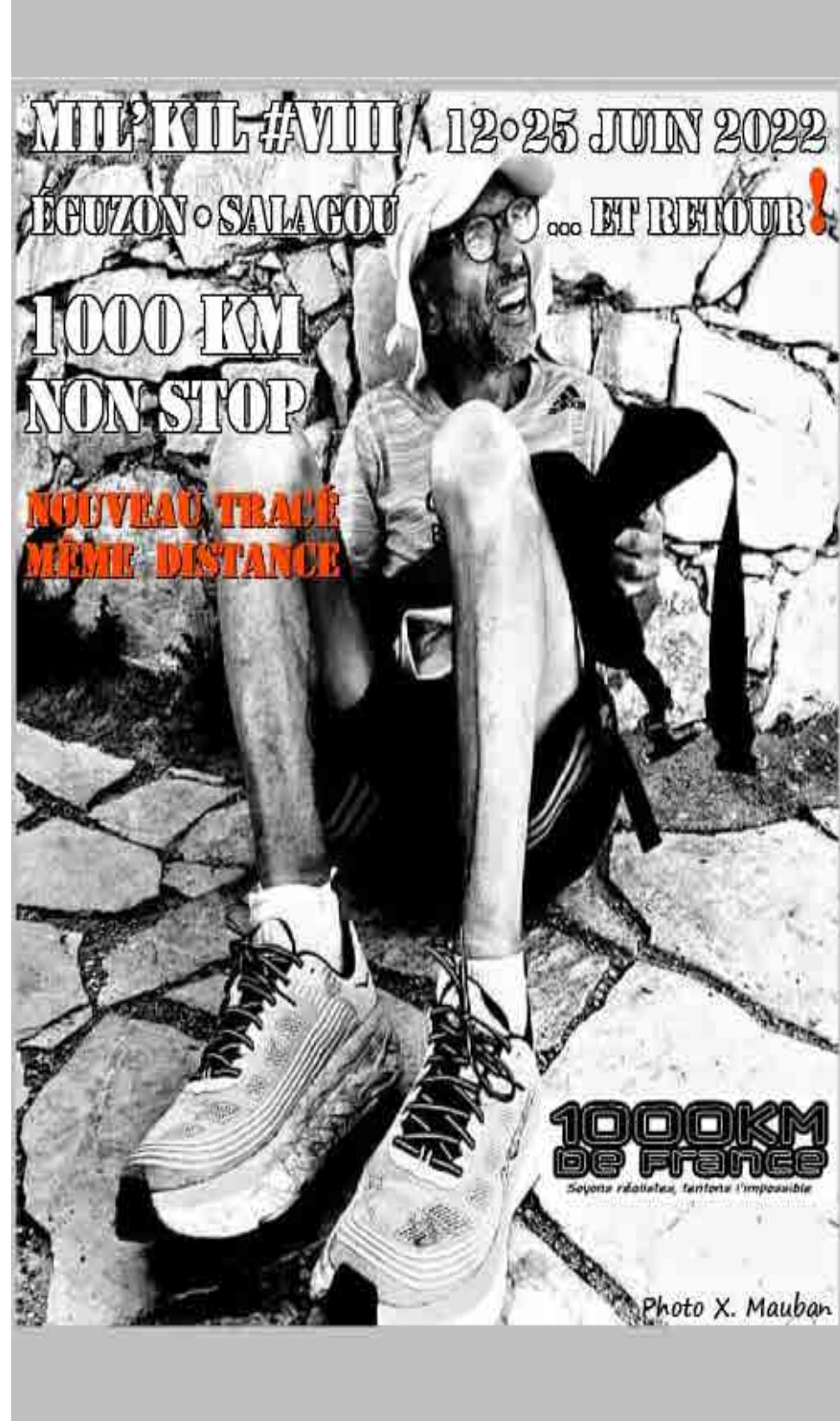
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GAX 100

By Enar Warfvinge

Ok, I think I'm ready now.

I was sitting in a Baden-Baden, mostly because someone told me to, trying to eat a plate of meatballs with potato salad (mainly for the same reasons as I was in the chair) and feeling very much a burden. It was mid-way into Gax 100 miles and I had been on the move for ten hours.

The day had started off well with a good night's sleep following the pre-race dinner, a decent breakfast and plenty of time to spare when I arrived at the start with my one drop bag. We were allowed three, but I couldn't handle all that planning so I packed one and sent it to Haväng, the 80k checkpoint.

After socializing and having a cup of coffee it was time to get ready. It was hot, sunny and what breeze there was did not do much as we left central Ystad. Time to have some fun!

Gax follows the Skåneleden SL4 (<https://www.skaneleden.se/delled/sl4-osterlen>) backwards. After we left the city we were almost immediately met with the beautiful open agricultural landscape and lush forests. Lots of views, little shade. An hour into the race I noticed that I could not keep my pulse down. It would, unless I walked, inevitably end up in zone 4. Not a sustainable situation. I started alternating jogging and walking and tried to drink more. I was alone and slow and not in a good place. A random person handing out popsicles at 33 km almost made me cry, and while enjoying the best pop of my life a kid following the race informed me that I was in 13th place. My immediate thought was, "that's not right, I've started off way too fast!" When CP1 showed up at kilometer 43 I felt an almost overwhelming relief.

The support team was the absolute boss and after helping me refill water, energy and coke, stuffing me with watermelon and nuts, they basically told me to stop loitering. So off I went.

It was 3pm and still very hot. Sometimes there was a gust of wind, and if that happened in the shade it actually felt cool and nice. By now I also found a friend that I'd end up spending the next twelve hours with. We ran and chatted, then he'd be off in the distance; after a while I would catch up and pass him. Then we'd run together for a while. I started chafing on the inside of my thighs. Nothing catastrophic but it required application of my go-to ointment (Idomin) every now and then to stay that way. On this leg of the race the scenery was sometimes almost dreamlike. Running in a forest preserve, next to a creek with the clear water of Verkaån flowing and playing across rocks.

Up and down, up and down; one foot before the other. My pulse was high and my legs were sore, but nothing was worse than before. As the afternoon turned into night my pulse came down a bit and I was beginning to enjoy myself, even letting go and just sprinting downhill.

At eight o'clock we arrived at the halfway checkpoint at Haväng and the first thing the crew told me was, "You're staying here for a while longer than everyone else. It's in your eyes."

So here I was, sitting in a Baden-Baden feeling my

legs stiffen up as I ate and drank all I could while at the same time changing into long sleeves and tights. The humongous headlamp came on, fluids, gels and candy was refilled and off we went. It had taken 20 minutes but felt like half an eternity. It took 20 more for the legs to unstiffen and go back to low key complaining.

We ran on beaches now and a blood red full moon rose as darkness descended. It was very beautiful but sand is not easy to run in and there was a high tide, so the choice was to either run in the water or walk on dry soft sand. I chose the former, figuring it'd be ok with sandals. It ...sort of worked, somehow. My feet dried pretty fast once we left the beach and I had no noticeable issues with sand sticking to the socks.

We ran and ran. Now two of us, now four of us. Through the beautiful town of Kivik, where all the apples are grown; up on Stenshuvud in the middle of the night with an amazing view of the coastline we were to follow.

Beaches and towns, sand and asphalt. Kilometer after kilometer of rather flat walking and jogging. 100k now, yay! Next CP at 131k. Random dude leaning on a streetlight like a drunk gave us Coke and candy bars. Only after the race did I learn that he was a fellow ultrarunner doing some spontaneous support. We kept jogging and walking, cursing sand and making up time on the asphalt.

At the end of the third leg there is an eight kilometer stretch of beach to run. We spent many chats discussing how we'd manage that hurdle. Neither wading through the loose sand or jogging down in the waves sounded like a recipe for enjoyment after over 16 hours and 120 kilometers. To our surprise and delight this beach had a wide zone of wet, packed sand above the water's edge. This gave me so much relief that I began running again. After this I never walked except when it was impossible not to do so.

Arriving at Sandhammaren I was surprised to find the leading woman sitting in a chair being miserable. I felt great! It was almost 4am and I had a burger for breakfast. After ten minutes everything was refilled and I left, alone. I would be alone for the final leg.

I ran and I ran. Through dark forests, open roads, into the sunrise. I walked and cursed what felt like an eternal beach of pebbles. Up the steep hills towards Ales stenar, past grazing cows and sheep. Up and down, up and down. Suddenly I saw two runners a few hills ahead. My tired mind and spent body found a purpose: The Chase!

I ran so fast. It was easy and crazy how soon I had caught up and passed those two. And then it was only 17k to go and a long stretch of road ahead. I ran and I ran, at a pace not seen since the first leg of the race. I was full of joy.

Eventually reality set in and my speed slowed down to a trot, then to a mix of trot and walks. I was in the woods, alone and sore and tired of this shit. My water was running low and I was getting nauseous from all the sweets.



With two kilometers to go something completely unthinkable happened. The two runners I left in the dust way back passed me. How the ...? I was so fast! Like lightning! And now these two that I already had "beaten" were now back and beating me! NO. NOT TODAY. THIS WAS SUDDENLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN MY LIFE!

My sleep deprived mind forced my body to sprint. Actually, it's a sprint. Like a mad man I ran as fast as I could. The 161th kilometer clocked in at 4:59. So with absolutely no dignity nor in the spirit of ultrarunning I finished 50 seconds ahead of the "competition." Yay me.

Once I stopped nothing could have made me run any more. My everything was sore, sitting down, standing up, laying down all hurt. Someone claimed I came in fifth place and I laughed at the ridiculous notion. After a while I asked them to look again and sure enough. Not only had I beaten every expectation I had regarding time, finishing in 21 hours and 46 minutes, but also top five?

A kind and skilled volunteer helped puncture a blister on my heel, and then I spent the rest of the day in the grass, cheering for finishers before boarding the train back home. It's still unreal.

You can find another great article about the 2021 Gax 100 on the race [Facebook page](#) by Elliot Froidvaux.

250 MILES, 175 LOCKS, 100 HOURS, 10 CHECK-POINTS, 2 FEET AND A HAIRBRUSH...

By Naomi Moss
Photos by Elizabeth Moss

The Thames Ring 250 is, for me, an iconic 250-mile trail race that grabbed my attention back in 2017 after helping out at a TR250 workshop. This was hosted by Challenge Running who organise the race (www.challenge-running.co.uk). Lindley Chambers, owner and Race Director is also my running coach, I call him Boss. It had guest speakers sharing their wisdom and experiences, both good and bad and I found it fascinating. From that day I knew I would, at some point, stand on the start line.

Four years later, on Wednesday 23rd June 2021, I was standing on the start line outside the Morrell Room in Streatley-on-Thames, listening to the pre-race briefing along with 46 other hardy runners, some had been here before and finished, some not and were returning to slay the canal towpaths.

The TR250 starts in Streatley-on-Thames and follows an anti-clockwise loop East along the Thames, up the Grand Union canal and back to the Thames via the Oxford canal and finally back to the start. The brave souls who take on this event have 100 hours (4 days 4 hours) to complete the race, navigating using waterproof maps (supplied), gpx files and being supported by checkpoints every 27 miles or so between which you have to be self-sufficient. The route is almost entirely on canal and riverside paths and relatively flat, yet this doesn't make the race easy by any means.

My plan was to finish and to finish 1st Lady!

This may sound bold but after having my lead up 100-miler in January postponed to April, then cancelled due to Covid-19, I could now focus all my efforts and training towards the TR250 race. My mind was engaged, focused and determined to prepare in every way I could. I dreamt of the moment that huge 1kg medal would be placed around

my neck. Thames Ring was now officially my "A" race for 2021.

Boss writes my plans monthly and we discussed that for the first few months of 2021 we would be working on increasing my pace over the longer distances and adding miles to my monthly norm. I ranged between 240-310 miles each month and that included long runs, tempo runs, intervals and my favourite back-to-back 35-mile runs which I used to recce as much of the route as possible. I loved the variety, although fitting that mileage into a working week was tricky at times but if you want something enough, you make it work, right?

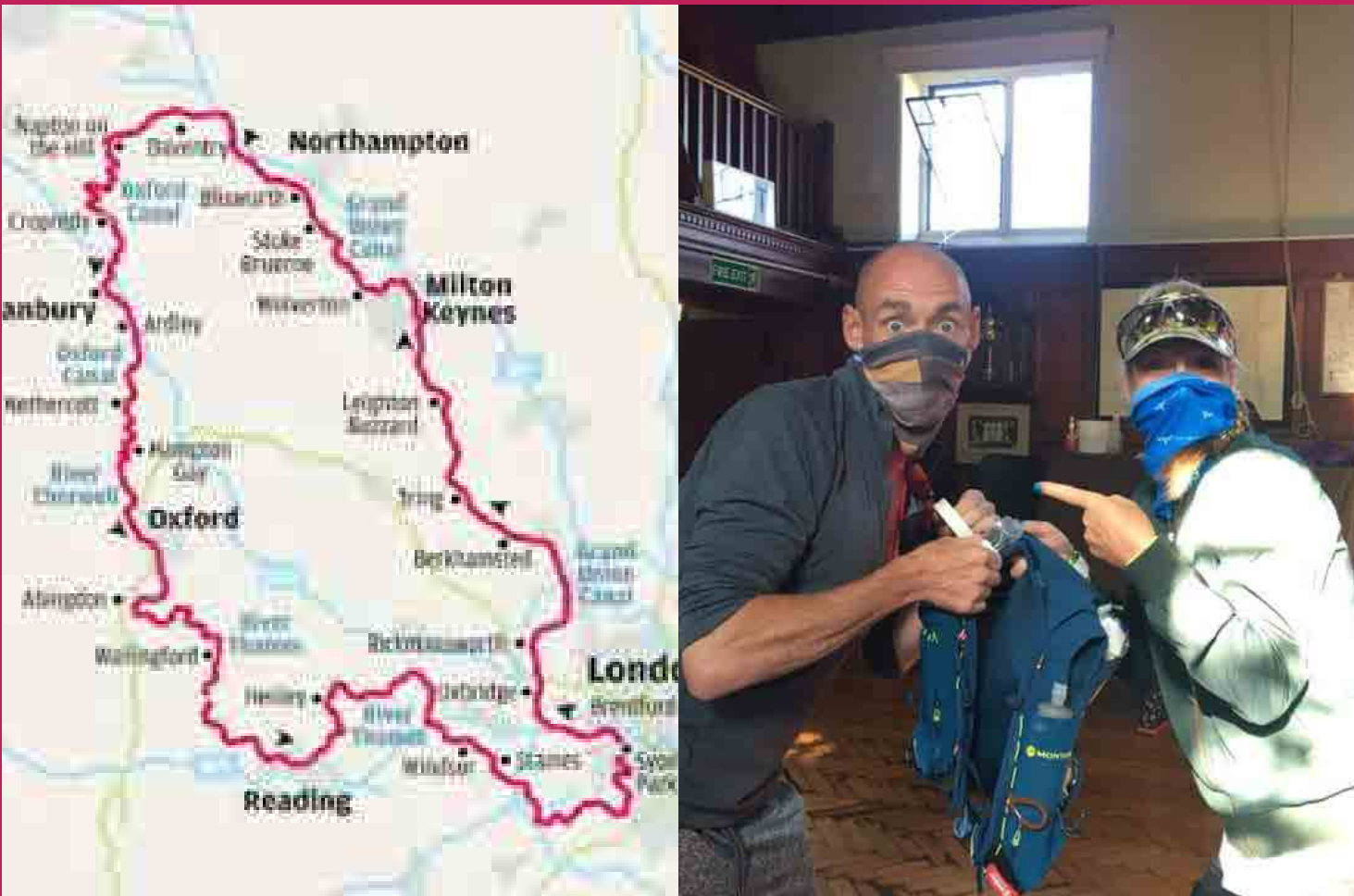
Part of my race preparation included picking the brains of Paul Mason and Nicole Atkinson, both of whom have completed the race before and had a wealth of knowledge that they willingly shared with me. Their experiences made me realise I had to respect this race and my prep needed to be spot on.

I like to be prepared for a race and love to train in varied ways which is why I included callisthenics training which gives me upper body and core strength, specific conditioning work for my leg endurance and strength, balance and proprioception work for my ankles and I like to include bilateral and unilateral workouts to add variety and make me more aware of my body's uneven tendencies, Reformer Pilates and active/static stretching. These workouts are specific to my body and also adjust depending on the race. Many Ultra runners just run, but I feel stronger and more confident on my feet when I include the above on a weekly basis.

CP1: Hurley, 27.25miles

I remember it being very warm and running sections of this leg with Paul Mason and Karl Baxter. The chat was lively and we all felt

Registration & a photo with
Suffolk Back Yard Ultra Winner
John Stoker



pretty comfortable and even stopped for an ice cream, courtesy of Paul. Pretty views surrounded us and the paths were fairly packed with people out eating and drinking in cafés and on the river's grassy edges. It was good to be ticking off the miles with these two legends.

At this CP I ate watermelon, quiche, chia bar and swiftly changed my socks whilst chatting to Nicole, who was busy darting about snapping pics of everyone. She had completed the race back in 2019 and had been kind enough to take me on a recce run. On her recommendation we did Oxford to Goring as I would be tired at this stage of the race and not 100% with it. I will be forever grateful for her advice, encouragement and time.

Maxine (Lindley's partner and event medic and foot care queen) and Boss hovered around the CP making sure everyone had what they needed and kept spirits high with a few jokes and a bit of light-hearted banter. Life was good and I was getting into the swing of things. One CP at a time, I kept telling myself.

CP2: Chertsey, 55.05miles, 8 runners dropped out

Leading up to this CP2 I continued my 25min run/5 min walk ratio while I chatted with fel-

low runners and continued to feel good. Food and fluid were going in and I was looking forward to some warm food and the first night section.

Night running is the best, I find a comfort in the dark and always find myself in a more relaxed state. This next leg I had not reced so knew I needed to pay attention and have my brain in gear, I wanted NO wrong turns or extra miles. As I sat munching on a pot noodle and instant oats, I rummaged through my drop bag for charger, bars and my foot care kit. Drop bags were to be no heavier than 20kg and it would be available at every CP. There were at least 10 of us here, each with our own agenda. Next thing I know my sister and her friend appeared with smiles and cuddles in abundance. What a huge boost this was for me mentally as I wasn't expecting to see anyone till CP5. This was the first Ultra event my sister had seen me participate in and I quietly wondered what she thought of it all? I felt extremely lucky to have her here and I wanted to make her proud.

As I took my trainers off, I was aware of a couple of blistered toes and especially one brewing nicely on the ball of my left foot. With blisters popped, squeezed and taped, fresh socks and waterproof trainers on I made my way out of the CP.



Run buddy's forever.



CP 1 Hurley – Feeling hot.

Five minutes later, I proceeded to throw up and thought what a waste of calories. Now I had to get those calories back in somehow. Thankfully, I had left the CP with a goody bag of foods from my drop-bag along with some fruit. I walked, ate and mulled over the 25 miles ahead of me. My mind was fresh but my body was covered in a dirty sweat from the day's heat. My treat at the next CP would be a wet-wipe wash, fresh deodorant, a change of clothes and maybe listening to a podcast on the next leg. That was my 'something to look forward to' sorted.

CP 3: Yiewsley, 82.5miles, 10 runners drop out

It's weird as I have no recollection of this CP at all, what I did have was major watch issues. At around 80-ish miles I found another run buddy, Colin, who I suitably named 'the young one', well he was in his 30's and the majority of runners in the race were mid-40's upwards. We talked about race experiences, expectations, preparation for this race and family. It must be an ultra thing that when you run with someone you share a huge amount of information about yourself quite openly. His watch had already died on him and mine was now saying 're-calibrate' but it wouldn't and I couldn't even close the damn activity, grrrrrrr. I reverted to using the waterproof maps provided, which was a blessing, as it gave my mind something else to focus on other than the blisters that were growing with every step.

CP 4: Berkhamsted, 106miles, feeling a bit shit but still daylight!

This CP was at The Rising Sun Pub which meant the luxury of toilets, YESSSS!!! A change of clothes, that I never got round to at the last CP, felt wonderful and gave me the pick me up I longed for and to sit on an actual toilet was amazing.

As planned Colin and Glenda Jackson volunteered on this CP. This couple play major roles in and are also members of Grange Farm and Dunmow Running Club and kindly volunteered to help here so they could see me. I was delighted to see them, though I doubt that they will ever know how much having them there meant to me. They helped top up my backpack and refilled my soft flasks. I remember their gentle words of encouragement and general amazement over how runners were dealing with themselves and the race.

My sister showed up again with chips for whoever wanted them. I thought oh YES, yummy, but 2 chips later and a small gag reflex I decided an Ambrosia creamed rice from the CP supplies may slide down better. 100 miles is a perfectly normal distance for eating issues to arise (literally) but as Boss had told me so many times, a constant trickle of food was what was needed when feeling urghhhh.

I left the CP with Paul and we caught up

about pace, food and how each of us was feeling. Paul is a super guy who loves any race that contours a canal towpath and he was kind enough to call me several times before the race to see how my recce runs were going and we chatted about my feelings and kit preparation. He is one of the kindest and tallest ultra-runners I know. It wasn't long before Paul pulled away from me. He had his race to run and I had mine.

Now, trying to stick to a 16min jog/4min walk ratio my negative thoughts came thick and fast (that's the sleep monster tapping at my door), what was I thinking? I can't do this, I don't deserve to be here, I'm going to let everyone down!!! Then, within my next thoughts, I was overwhelmed with gratitude to those friends and family who had willingly offered to help me before and during this race in numerous ways. It must have been a logistical nightmare for Race Director, Lindley Chambers to even get the go ahead for the race given Covid-19 and the ever-changing pandemic rules and regulations.

CP5: Milton Keynes, 130miles, daughter and husband/chafe cream/waterproof trainers/ SLEEP/food/major wobble.

Heading towards CP5 I knew I was officially tired, I needed to sleep. My pace had reduced to a drunken-like staggered walk. Music would pick me up, I thought, or listening to an audible book maybe.....no such luck, my hands were so swollen at this point that I struggled with attaching the head-



Myself & Paul leaving CP4 Berkhamsted



First sleep at 130 miles, Milton Keynes

phone cable to my phone so gave up quickly. My hands always swell on long runs so I wasn't concerned but I waved them above my head for a short period of time in an attempt to reduce the chubby-hand syndrome. I stretched and rotated my arms in every which way I could to alleviate some of the pain in my right levator scapulae, upper trapezius and posterior deltoid muscles.

In a zone all of my own, a familiar voice shouted my name. "Come on Ni you're nearly at the CP, you're doing amazing, you got this." I recognised the voice but thought I was hearing things. Next thing I see is a good friend, Nikki, standing on the side of the towpath full of excitement, bouncing around like she had taken everyone's energy and harnessed it all for herself, (I so wish I felt like that right now). We chatted at the CP while I tried to eat something...anything. All I can recall after that was me telling her that I had to get some sleep and apologised for not being talkative, and that I felt so bad she had come all this way to see me and I was moaning like a child.

CP staff had erected two tents for sleeping and I asked to be woken in one hour. Paul was already sleeping in one tent and as I crawled into mine, I face planted the floor ungracefully and that's all I remember. It's strange how you can sleep but be totally aware of voices and movements going on around you. My daughter, Elizabeth, woke me by shaking my leg telling me "It's time to get up Mum." I replied, "10 more minutes?" The answer was "NO" and with that she got me on my feet. As I crawled out of the tent, I saw a fellow runner Nathan lying curled in a tight ball on the grass getting his own nana- nap in.

I clearly remember telling Elizabeth and hubby Alan "I'm done, I can't even bloody walk, I feel sick, I can't do anymore, I'm done.'" My MAJOR wobble of the race was happening right now, and it was only half way. How the hell was I going to turn this around? Elizabeth's stern response told me that I was NOT done and that herself and Alan hadn't taken a day off work to come pick me up and take me home as a DNF-errr!!! And how would I feel with a DNF instead of 1st lady next to my name?

I felt and looked (photo evidence) like an 80-year-old, changing my top felt like a mammoth task and my motor skills were a little off, to say the least.

Maxine, (The Foot Care Queen) checked in on me and my feet as I changed trainers for the 2nd night section. By now 15 minutes must have passed and my vegetable ravioli was about to make its second appearance of the night. A quick poop-and-puke

later, with head torch in place and a backpack full of food (that I probably wouldn't be able to eat) I was saying thank you and goodbye all in the same breath as I walked out of the CP.

Those next few minutes or was it hours, I felt alone but happy. My body was saying enough but, in my head, I knew I was over my mini-meltdown and even started running again, amazing what a few calories can do for the body and mind. I took my CP list out of my zippy pocket and turned it over. Oops, a trip and a skip nearly sent me nosediving into the canal. Pay attention Ni! I shouted at myself. Upright again, I continued to read my pre-race affirmations that I scribbled down a week or so before the race. This reminded me of my WHY and HOW I was going to complete this race.

I switched my mind to the glare of my head torch and repeatedly checked my map as my watch was still behaving badly. I was not going to get lost and there would be no need to get lost as I had recced this section, in the dark, with Elizabeth six weeks before. In total, I think I recced about 150 miles of the route. I had tried and tested my kit out and always ran my recce runs with a full pack and used the maps to navigate and only used my watch gpx file if I doubted myself or wanted to double check I was heading in the right direction.

I trotted along nicely trying to keep to a 16min jog/4min walk ratio. Rain was due for tonight, which I looked forward to as I had a good waterproof jacket and my waterproof trainers on so I would be dry as Bugger, I looked down and cursed myself.... I hadn't changed into waterproof shoes at the last CP, such a dahhhhh move on my part.

Next CP was the only indoor one and I decided another power nap would be in order, this was going to be my treat to myself.

Elizabeth, Alan and another great friend Rebekah (who was volunteering at the CP) would be there to greet me. This helped the miles pass quickly yet I think it was one of my longest legs but at this point I knew I just had to keep moving forward. A cooling misty rain was falling and I found myself quietly content that I hadn't quit when I felt rubbish. I honestly know that this was mainly down to my family, friends and the fabulous CP staff.

I swear I just walked for like 5 minutes with my eyes closed or was I dreaming? I sat under a bridge and fuffed with my socks/trainers. I could feel blisters filling with fluid and forming on odd areas of my feet but had no intention of trying to deal with them here. Sleep was calling again and I thought it best

to have a nana-nap under this bridge. I set my alarm for 8 minutes and then watched as the bugs crawled along the path beside my head. I was awake after only 5 minutes; I ate a peanut butter bar and half a cheese pasty which looked more like a pancake as it had been my head rest while asleep LOL! Awake and excited to get to Nether Heyford to see everyone I sang a little mantra to myself and trickled along once again.

CP6: Nether Heyford, 158miles(ish), 2 runners drop out - family/friends/watch issues/food/SLEEP

As I turned right off the canal path and joined the long road towards the Village Hall I began to run. In the distance I could see a few figures waving and heard them calling my name, it nearly made me cry but I decided there was no room for crying in this race, it was a waste of my energy. Elizabeth ran towards me and immediately asked for my food and drink order and ran off to prepare it. She is brilliant at crewing and had my drop bag waiting for me along with pot noodle, pizza and a cup of coffee.

As I approached the hall my dear friend Rebekah excitedly rushed to me and put me into a comforting head lock, telling me how proud of me she was and that everything is amazing and wonderful and that she'd been waiting for me. This volunteering lark was a whole new world for her and she was loving every minute. She fired questions at me, hugged me several more times and generally made me feel special. Her energy was heartfelt and infectious. I ate what I could while Lindley tried to do a factory reset on my watch. Maxine tended to my sore feet which needed a bit more attention than on her previous visits. It was lovely to sit in a firm chair and chat to the volunteers and friends in the hall. Alan looked a little lost to me, I felt like I had somewhat neglected him on this journey of mine. Without his encouragement, emotional support and help with recce run there is no way I could have even contemplated taking this race on.

I remember seeing Paul and Nathan preparing to set off on the next leg and wished them well. They made a great team and were obviously now going to finish together. Part of me wanted to get up and go with them but my body told me I should have another sleep. Into my sleeping bag I went but my body was shivering uncontrollably. Rebekah covered me with her duvet, Elizabeth zipped up the sleeping bag and I was out like a light.

Elizabeth woke me gently and I jumped up ready for action....at least I thought I jumped up. A change of clothes, a brush of the teeth, fresh trainers on, backpack in position, a few hugs of love and a few words from Coach Lindley I was off again. Rebekah walked out to see me off and passed me a hand written note. "Read it when you like or don't," she said. We chatted and said goodbye. I felt blessed and loved.

Just before I reached the canal towpath again John Stocker (2021 Suffolk Back Yard Ultra Winner) was walking towards me, he offered me some of his pearls of wisdom which made me even more determined and at that moment I believed in my ability to finish this race no matter what it took. I got my GymBoss (interval timer) out and started running again, yes actual running.

This section had me running along the Grand Union Canal followed by the Oxford Canal. I knew the path was narrow on this part but totally underestimated how overgrown it would be. With chest high grass, thistles and nettles it made for an interesting and frustratingly slow leg. The hedge to my right was so overgrown it made me lean to my left for what felt like 20 miles.

As the path cleared a little, I approached a man and his canal boat which he seemed to be struggling to tie it up. I asked did he need help and for the next 10 minutes or so I found myself pulling another boat down the canal out of his way. He explained that he came across this boat untied and blocking the canal and was trying to get it tied up out of the way as its owner was nowhere to be found. He thanked me and I marched on.

The pain down my left shin was now pretty bad, every run stride I took felt like a needle being dragged along my shin. It would ease with a walk then as I ran again, I'd feel a sharp stabbing pain. Was this all down to my leaning to the left?

CP7: Fenny Compton, 184 miles, Friday at 5:29pm, The Wharf Inn, Alan & Elizabeth, 10-minute sleep/baked beans /potatoes / cup of tea/great volunteers

Don't remember much about this section apart from it raining, thinking I was lost (even though I had reced this leg) and checking my map 200 times and feeling like the next CP was never going to appear.

I will always remember how much volunteers do for us runners. So many races rely on people giving up their time with no payment, in return they build up volunteer points to then enable them to enter a race at a later date. How cool is that!

CP8: Lower Heyford, 205 miles, dry robe warmth/coffee/gloves/rain

Sleep deprivation was kicking in strong now so I decided I'd have a 15-minute nana-nap at this CP but only after the best pot noodle and coffee from the kind Kathy Tyler. One of the other volunteers was kind enough and brave enough to let me have his dry robe to keep me warm while I slept.

The night was cold and clear but I was nearly there.....

CP9: Abingdon, 230 miles, Sat at 12:13 Another 3-4 runners drop out -10-minute sleep/food/coffee/foot care

Abingdon was in sight. The relief was overwhelming. A lovely volunteer had walked

out to meet me and let me know the CP was under the bridge. Alan, Elizabeth, Colin and Glenda were all waiting for me with huge smiles on their faces. They now believed I was going to finish and within the cut off. My shin was now puffy along with everything from just below my knees down and I had a permanent left lean yet thought I was straight.

Maxine worked her magic with my new blisters and taped my left shin. If I was honest the shin had been a problem for the last 70ish miles and each time I ran I would be greeted with that unforgettable shooting pain, it had to be ignored!!!!

We all laughed and revelled in the thought of a finish. A short sleep and I wanted to get these last 18 miles done. I thanked everyone and gave Alan and Elizabeth a kiss and said "see you when I'm done."

Colin and Glenda walked me out of the CP and told me how most of the running club had been dot watching me and that they had kept everyone updated on my progress on social media. I didn't think people would be that interested so this information lifted my mind and re-instilled my determination.

This was the hardest section of all mentally and physically. My body was seriously sore and my running was becoming less but if I could just keep fast walking at 18min/m I would finish within the cut off.

As I approached Oxford, (I think it was Oxford) I stopped for a Calipo at a café which was just heaven as it had become hot and stuffy. My next challenge was opening it with my chubby fingers. A few miles later and to my surprise Alan and Elizabeth popped up on a bridge or two waving at me frantically and bellowing out "COME ON, YOU GOT THIS!" It was hard at times seeing them because NO outside assistance is allowed. All they could do was verbally encourage me.

Goring seemed to never appear and it was a super-hot day which was making me struggle more. I wet my buff at a tap and placed it around my neck which worked nicely.

I did need to find my positive thoughts as negative thoughts were taking over my mind and body! I read Rebekah's letter which made me cry for a second or two and then realised how damn lucky I am to be able to take on this challenge and have the support and love of so many people.... I had nothing to be negative about, I had everything to be thankful for.

Finish: Goring, 1st Lady in 81hrs 47mins

I walked across the finish line and immediately hugged Lindley then Alan and Elizabeth. The race had been amazing, testing, humbling, enjoyable, painful and exciting all rolled into one. We walked into the Morrell Rooms and I was presented with my 1kg medal, which to me will always be the BEST and most deserved piece of bling I have ever had the delight in receiving. I was also given a beautiful glass plaque with a map of the route and First Female engraved on it.



The left lean (only ran 70ish miles like this) and walking it to the finish line. Happy Days!!!

The Ultra Marathon running Store donated the prizes and I now have a great Nathan Hydration running vest to use in future races.

How did I feel? It was a mixture of elation and total relief. I had finished what, deep down, I knew I could do and needed to show others I could do. Of course, I was happy, but mostly, I was quietly proud of ME! While I sat in the hall in a chair trying to decide what to do next, I took this moment to acknowledge to myself the time and effort I had put in into getting on that start line.

My mind did a rewind remembering all my wonderful family, friends, running buddies and clients that had all played a part in supporting me leading up to this race and during the last few days.

My goal, set by Lindley, was 80ish hours so I was a bit over his estimate but that included 2hrs 45mins of sleep, 7th overall and the only lady finisher.

I had finished the most unique race I have ever entered and finished as First Lady.

The 2021 Thames Ring 250 race saw 57 entries, 46 starters and only 14 finishers. This race may be flat but it's more than tough. It's a physical and mental BEAST that I highly recommend participating in.

Hindsight and reflections

Preparation – I feel like I did as much preparation as possible and was pleased with my recce runs and kit choices. My strength training was completed three times per week. The main focus, mobilise and strengthen my glutes/hip flexors/adductors and core.

All the workouts paid off as I had no groin/hip pain. I worked on my mindset a huge amount this year. I ran along boring routes that were familiar to me, no music or distractions, I found my mind's quiet place and learnt to be in its company for long periods of time. That's a bit deep I know but it helped during the race as I tapped into it on numerous occasions. Would I do anything differently if I ran the race again?

There is always room for improvement with an event of this distance. I had a lot of unnecessary food in my drop bag, that would have to go. I realised I could eat the same foods at the CP's and I didn't need as much variety as I thought. For example, foods that could be swallowed easily and needed little chewing such as custard, ambrosia, quiche, and veggie pot noodles. I should have packed more drinks such as Oasis summer fruits, canned coffee/latte or flat Lucozade. I missed these during the race, and yes, I could have stopped at more shops but I made the choice not to waste that time.

Feet, where do I start. My daily foot care routine is strict and I like to think that during races I treat and deal with my blisters adequately but never before have I suffered so much with heel blisters. They grew nicely on the outside and inside edges of my heels and every time Maxine or myself dealt with them by the next CP another would have taken its place. They took me totally by surprise. Maybe it was because I did more walking or was it just the length of time on my feet?

What have I learnt? The more I run the more curious I am about how far I can push myself. I can do anything I set my mind to, all I need to remember is commit to the goal, enjoy the journey it takes you on and always respect the race. My family and friends are truly amazing, generous, loving, helpful and caring individuals and I hope to help them one day like they have helped me. Finally, my coach is PROUD of me and I have proof because he wrote it on Facebook LOL!

If anyone reading this is now tempted to take on this race, please check out www.challenge-running.co.uk for more details and www.ultramarathonrunningstore.com for new race vests and kit.

I highly recommend this race not only for its understated toughness and simplicity but because it's superbly organised, has friendly volunteers and a few nutty ultrarunners. You will make friends along the way, learn things about yourself that no book will teach you and you may or may not complete it but I guarantee the memories you leave with, will last a lifetime.

You can find me on Instagram at [naomi-mossruns](https://www.instagram.com/naomi-mossruns)

Finish Line



The Morrell Rooms, FINISHED!!!!

MOAB 240

THE COMEBACK

By Ross Jenkins

So what does a comeback really mean?

We talk about it A LOT at a professional level but what does it mean for an amateur ultrarunner... Scott Jenkins details his own personal and humbling experience after setting a new British record for the Moab 240 Mile Ultramarathon this October.



The Comeback:

The definition states that it is reflective of a return by a well-known person, especially an entertainer or sports player, to the activity in which they have formerly been successful.

This very definition in itself suggests a comeback for the worthy, the well-known and the successful.

However, don't we all have our own personal comeback story? Whether it's sports related, illness family reunions, business, love stories, there's a comeback story in all of us and it should not only be a phrase favoured, used or applied to just superstars.

My comeback story relates to that of the sporting endeavour, whilst it may not be a professional one that doesn't make it any less meaningful to me or the charity I support (Operation Smile).

I'm an amateur ultra runner who's hobby outside of a corporate job for Johnson and Johnson, is to run extremely long distances whilst raising money for charity.

Over the past 11 years I have undertaken a lot of ultra endurance endeavours to raise money for charities close to my heart, none more so than Operation Smile.

These challenges have offered me the opportunity to experience the world and make memories with friends and family (new and old) and I'll always be thankful for that.

Each year, I would set myself goals to try and push myself and my body further for charity, 2021 was prized to be my most exciting year of running yet.

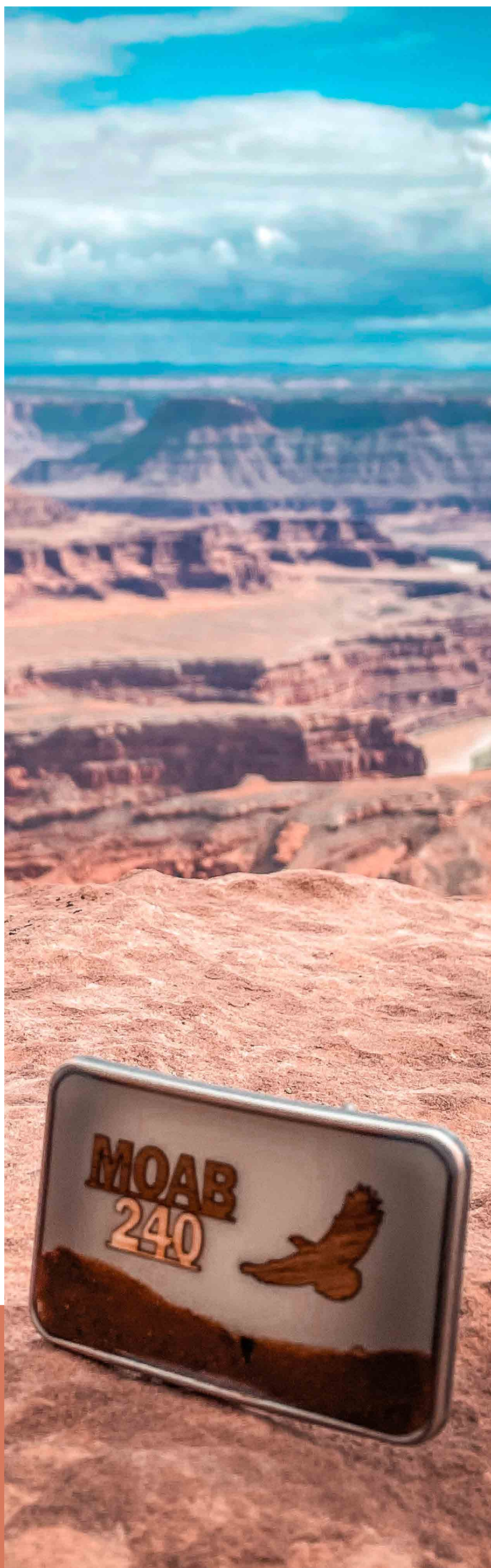
Run the Cocodona 250 mile run in Arizona (May), run Badwater 135 in Death Valley (July), run Bigfoot 200 in Washington (August), run Tahoe 200 in Tahoe (September) and run Moab 240 in Utah (October). It felt ambitious. It scared me. It would push me to my limits. But it would do good. It would hopefully inspire. It would hopefully raise money. It would hopefully raise awareness.

I'm no professional athlete just a regular guy, who works 9-5 in a job he loves and uses his spare time to train and drag his wife to ultra running events. However, I am proud of what I have achieved to date in my running.

Now with that rather ambitious goal set, plans slowly started to disintegrate as 2021 progressed.

Cocodona fell off the radar as Covid travel restrictions meant I couldn't get to the race. And Badwater very much looked to be going in a similar fashion as the restrictions continued.

Thankfully though, 2 weeks prior to the leave date, I was granted special travel dispensation by the US Olympic committee due to the fact that Badwater was an invite-only race.



To be granted this, I felt very privileged and lucky to be afforded such a unique opportunity and to represent my country at these races.

I was highly motivated and I had continued to train hard and felt ready to tackle the 135 miles, 18,000 feet of elevation and 52 degrees of summer heat in the desert.

I set off in the 9.30pm wave start at Badwater Basin and was instantly hit by the unusual wind wiping around us.

To put it into context, the heat felt like that of the oven door being opened in my face and then being continually blown in my face like a hairdryer air stream.

It was energy sapping.

Then there was the unusual humidity that hit me hard and played havoc with my digestive system.

I couldn't keep the calories down and I was slowing.

Slowing way more than was optimal to do well in such a historic and dream race for me. It was hurting me both mentally and emotionally. I just kept thinking about putting one foot in front

of the other.

Now within this race there are 3 key cut offs. The 1st was the most aggressive, which was to cover the first 50 miles in 12.5 hours.

My historic race performances suggested that this was more than achievable but this is one of the most brutal races in one of the most inhospitable places on Earth. Every step needed to be earned. As a direct result I found myself battling to make the cut off and make it I did, by 1 minute, 1 minute to spare.

My 11 year dream nearly brought to an abrupt end at a mere 50 miles in.

If it was not for my best friend, Chris, encouraging me to sprint up a 10% gradient to meet the cut off ahead of schedule, it very truly would have been over at the first big hurdle.

Now, I'm glad to say, I recovered from that and finished 53rd and covered the 135 miles in 42 hours 42 minutes but this as you will have guessed from the title is not the comeback, it is merely a blip in the road.

An achievement I'm proud of but one I think I could have performed better at.

Next up was Bigfoot 200, a 210 mile race through the Cascade Mountains with 43,000ft of elevation gain and surrounded by imposing dense dark forests, hence the race name of Bigfoot. You could be forgiven for believing Sasquatch would reside in such a place.

Now coming from Wales and living in London, let's say I was slightly concerned about bears



and mountain lions because let's be honest the U.K. doesn't really do dangerous animals unless you count foxes and cows.

At the start line I felt good but realistic about the task ahead, the temperature was predicted to be a sweltering 40°C but I was hopeful my recent Badwater experience (3 weeks prior) would see me well on the first day alongside my treadmill heated hikes with a 10kg weighted vest prescribed by my coach, Marcus Smith of Innerfight (www.innerfight.com).

However, 20 miles in and I began to struggle with the mixture of heat and altitude.

The distance between aid stations and lack of streams for water supply saw me get severely dehydrated and slow to a power walking cadence.

Not my finest moment but determined not to give up, I ploughed on to the 40 mile aid station convinced I had rhabdomyolysis for the second time.

My once strong mental fortitude had started to betray me. I rested, I ate and I drank in the hope I could muster enough energy to continue to the next aid station 20 miles away.

The rest did me good and with a few choice words from Marcus and my wife Abby over Whatsapp, I sprang into action and started to be able to run at pace. I felt ecstatic for a while but those moments were fleeting and by mile 60 my IT Band tightened to the point I could no longer run.

However, my mental fortitude was back with full vengeance and I knew I would not quit this race. I was lucky to even be here in the United States, let alone being able to take part in many people's dream race.

I carried on subdued to a slow

walk but it was forward motion nonetheless.

I found river crossings helped numb the pain and gave me the ability to move for 6-8 miles at a time.

Due to the slow nature of my now walking ultra, I was starting to run out of time for sleep and the cut off times for the race were starting to catch me.

Determined to refresh and give it my all, I got to mile 160 and left the aid station after 30 minutes.

However, those 30 minutes proved to be insufficient and after leaving the aid station, I got confused and ended back at the aid station, sat down, fell asleep and got timed out. The dream was over. I came up short. 50 miles short and now my dream 2021 race season was over. I was devastated. I can't think of a time when I gave my all to a race and left with a DNF. I cried. I'm not ashamed to say I cried because I poured everything into it and came up short.

I felt I had failed people, failed Operation Smile, failed my coach, failed myself, failed my friends and family.

Now this may sound dramatic to any non-runners reading this especially after everything we have been through in the last 18 months but for me, this was my sole focus and purpose that got me through the harsh isolation of Covid and now I had failed. I'd left nothing on the field. The tank was empty.

I returned home, worried about whether my IT Band would be healed in time for Tahoe 200. I was still going to give it a go but feared another painful and emotional DNF.

However, I had set a goal and I was determined I would meet that goal head on.



I continued to recover and receive regular physio to try and rehabilitate my IT band.

However, at the beginning of September a huge wildfire hit the Tahoe region of California and the race was rightly cancelled as a result.

Of course I was disappointed but also very aware of the much larger reality, that many families and businesses would lose their homes and incomes in the region as a result of the fire, so I was pleased the race organisation made the right decision to postpone the event.

This left one large huge race, the Moab 240 Ultramarathon, as the perfect arena for a comeback. The last race to really try and live up to my full race/running potential.

The last race to put the last 18 months of training with Marcus to good use for a good outcome. The Tahoe race cancellation, in hindsight, was probably a blessing in disguise as it allowed my IT band to recover well ahead of the Moab race.

I refocused, I strategised, I honed my sights on doing well at Moab and not only righting the mistakes of the Bigfoot race but also that of the Moab 2019 race, where previously the wheels fell off in the last 16 miles, which cost me 10 hours in race time and saw me drop from 18th to 35th due to sleep deprivation.

Moab for those that don't know is a 240 mile circular loop round the Utah canyon lands, mountains and desert with 30,000ft of elevation gain, steep climbs, hot days and freezing evening temperatures.

It's no joke when Runner's World magazine dubbed this as one of the hardest foot races in the world alongside Badwater, they weren't wrong. I can testify to that for sure!

I was ready though. I had a desire to do well and I was dialed in physically, mentally and emo-

tionally.

However, things took an unexpected turn the Thursday before I was due to fly. I found myself in A&E in West Middlesex hospital with swollen glands and struggling to breathe.

No one knew what was wrong with me. I spent half a day in the hospital and was given some antibiotics to try and reduce the swelling. It helped but only a bit. It became clear I had some sort of glandular fever but had taken a reaction to the first round of antibiotics I was given.

This was restricting my breathing. I made the decision to still fly to the USA and try and recoup and recover in hope of being fit for race day one week later.

I tried to remain positive and upbeat but it was hard. I felt impending doom that this last chance of redemption and comeback might be over before it even started.

However, I rested, I preserved and took care of myself more than I ever have and by race day I felt 90% fit and thought, let's go!

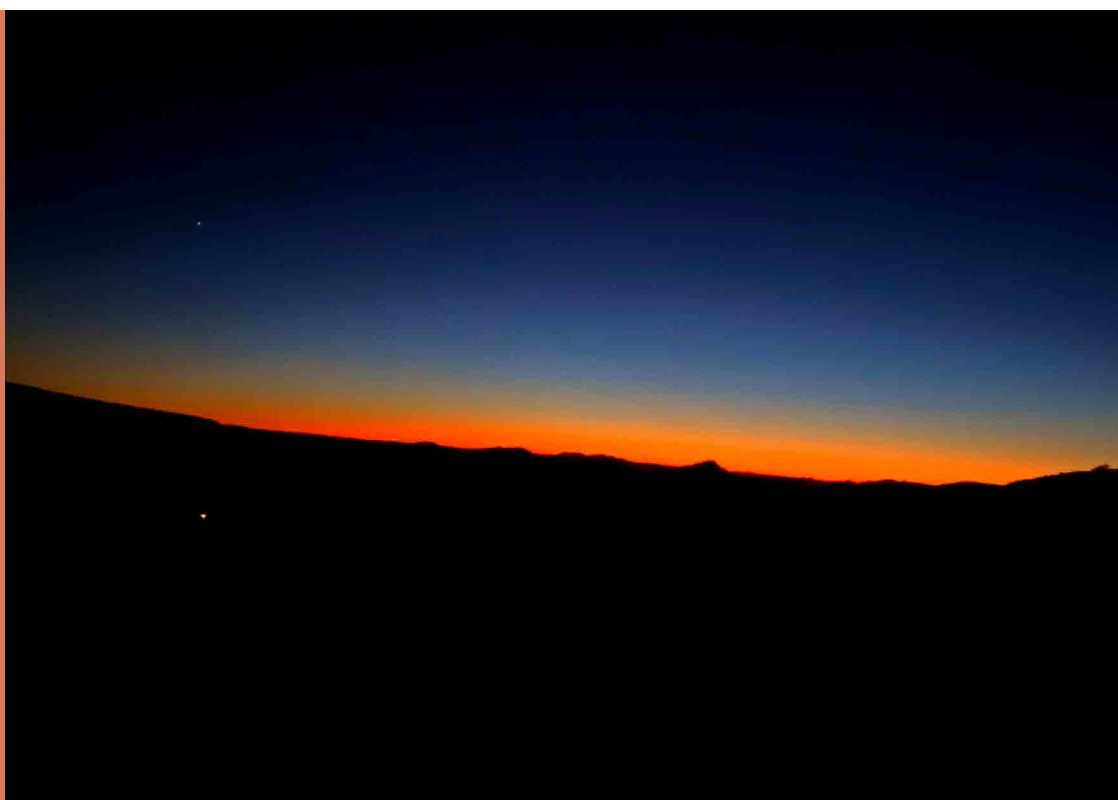
The first 17 miles were tough, my chest tightened due to the altitude and temperature changes and as the day progressed, much like Badwater, I struggled to keep the calories down.

Yet something was different this time. I felt optimistic. I felt inspired by those around me. I felt I had the strength to outweigh the negatives and slowly and surely as the race went on I got stronger.

This was most likely helped through the friendships I forged on the trails with the other runners and through my pacer, Jason Wooden who joined me for the last 38 miles.

I felt with every step I was writing wrongs and gaining stronger mental fortitude than I had ever experienced in a race.

As a result, I started to climb the race ladder battling my way





through the field and inhospitable desert and mountain terrain. At the halfway point I was 6 hours ahead of my 2019 time for the same race. I knew at that point if I could get my sleep and nutrition right then I could fight to do something special at the race.

With that in mind, strategic sleeps really aided my pace and actually by going slow to sleep, it helped me go faster overall in the race.

By the time the sun rose high over castle rock and porcupine rim I felt like I was flying. I zoomed past the spot where my race had fallen apart in 2019, the demons were expelled. It's just another nondescript rock on the trail on just another sunny running day in the mountains.

As the miles began to tick down I finally got a glimpse of the mighty Colorado river, the river I last saw some 236 miles ago.

The pavement beckoned me home, like the last lap around a track, or the landing lights on a runway guiding a pilot home, by the time I hit the road surface I knew the plan and so did my pacer Jason.

Run as fast as I can, run like never before, flat out for 4 miles.

I sprinted my heart out and was breathing hard, the type of exhausted breath that only comes from running that far.

I glanced at my watch as the pace felt fast, 9.30 min/miles, not

impressive if you are a 5k runner but not bad for an amateur runner who's just run 238 miles.

I turned the corner and the entrance into the home straight and final bend, 100m to complete one of the world's toughest races but also to complete an even bigger comeback and get redemption.

And then it happened, I crossed the line with my Welsh flag flying high, 16 hours, yes 16 hours quicker than 2019.

The comeback was complete, the Moab 240 Ultramarathon was in the books with a 15th place finish out of 227 runners.

Then something wonderful happened, I was told I'd set a new British course record by running the 240 miles in 77 hours and 2 minutes and 44 seconds (beating the previous British record by 25 minutes). I couldn't believe it.

But most importantly I'd raised enough money to help 15 children smile for the first time.

When I started this race, did I think this was possible?

Simply put - No. I know I'll never be a professional ultrarunner but this I do know, I can achieve more than I think I can and so can you. I was willing to learn from my mistakes and failures to try and push myself to new levels.

So I guess why I tell you this story, it is not to be self indulgent.

I tell you this story because it

demonstrates that a comeback can happen for all of us and not just the superstars.

A comeback can happen in momentous occasions or in small daily wins in any walk of life.

A comeback can be in any situation or circumstance, not just sport.

I tell you this story because what I have found is that by learning from our mistakes we can achieve positive outcomes.

Learning to apply mental fortitude and taking help, advice, inspiration and support from those around us can help us to reach new levels.

If we can do the above and find our 'why' we do what we do, then we can all achieve something that we never thought was in the realms of possibility.

So give it a try, set yourself a challenge that stretches your abilities and limits.

The journey and adventure along the way will be fun and educational, you may or may not get the outcome you want at the end.

However that's the very essence of a challenge, if a positive outcome was guaranteed, then it wouldn't even be a challenge in the first place.

On the 30th of October 2021 I took part in a 25 hour Track race. A Mark Cockbain event.

I know his events are very tough but this time I think he was more than generous giving us all that extra hour with the clocks going back one hour.

25 HOURS TRACK 100

By Steven Battle

At 10 am, 38, runners set off in pursuit of reaching 100 miles. No mean feat.

I wanted a good start so I was aiming between 56 and 60 miles in the first 12 hours, and then hang on and be mentally strong during the last 13 hours.

I personally wanted to finish in under 24 hours. It had been a few years ago when I actually reached that magical number and became a centurion. Could I do it again?

I was trying to feel positive and I was quietly confident. It was very blustery, with rain during the first hour, then it became more settled.

Everyone seemed to be running quite well. After 12 hours, we changed directions and I was happy to be around 56-58 miles. So I was more than happy!

I kept snacking on bananas, apples, Snickers and Hobnobs. I decided on eating two meals during the event, pasta with tuna and sweetcorn.

This really helped fuel the tank and kept my energy levels up plus plenty of water.

Every now and then I enjoyed a walk when I started to feel tired giving my legs a break from running and feeling better when I began to run again.

The first runner from Denmark, was Mikkel Birch Gormsen, who finished in 15 hours 56 mins.

What a fantastic time!

Not only a good runner but a runner who encouraged everyone else on the track.

The first lady, Alex Marshall, came in 4th overall with a good time of 18 hours, 40 mins, and looked comfortable for most of the race.

I was now getting nearer my own target and I now knew 100 miles was in sight. When you have one lap to go Mark, rings the bell signalling you have one lap left.

I used to be a track runner in my younger days so I thought let's go for it and ran my fastest lap in 2 mins 15 secs, finishing in 23 hours 22 mins.

I achieved what I wanted - getting under 24 hours.

Time still remained for those runners still out on the track to get under 25 hrs.

I'm pleased to say 3 of the 4 runners reached a 100 miles.

I managed to come 10th overall out of 14 finishers so I was happy I achieved my goal.

Surprisingly 24, runners dropped out due to injury and maybe going out too fast.

Running on a track can certainly be tough physically and mentally.

Mark presented each runner who reached a 100 miles with a wonderful medal and I must say it's the best medal I've ever received in my 37 years of taking up running.

THE TUNNEL ULTRA

By Vanessa Kellie

Like all good things, I first heard about The Tunnel Ultra through Facebook. I had a good laugh with my work colleagues, 'What sort of lunatic would enter that?!' Strangely I just couldn't get the race out of my head, so I thought I'd apply and leave it to fate as to whether I got in. At the point I applied I'd only done one 100-miler and a handful of smaller ultras (I only started running four years ago, and we're talking couch to 5k territory). I honestly didn't think I'd be accepted, but for some reason I was and the excitement/ terror of actually training for the race started.

The original race was to be held in March 2021, but due to covid was pushed back to October which was fine by me as it gave me a lot longer to prepare. I trained really hard this year with 18 training runs or races of marathon or ultra distance, including another 100 miler and another ultra race in The Tunnel by way of a recce. Whilst I knew in my head that this would be my first DNF, my heart refused to give up on the possibility that I could actually do it. I prepared a spreadsheet of rough pacing broken down into 20-lap blocks; packed a box with all the food/clothing/emergency kit I could possibly want and had a stack of notes from family and friends with things to think about when bored. I even had my wonderful friend Chris Roberts on hand to help me get to the start and drag me out after I finished so I could give it 100% without worrying about driving home. I got to the start line feeling prepped, ready and excited. I'd already run a 23-hour 100-miler this year so surely the very least I would do would be that, right? The Tunnel is flat, there's no weather, no navigation to worry about and access to your drop bag every other mile. What could possibly go wrong?...

The first 20-lap block, recorded on my trusty tally counter was bang on pace schedule. Nutrition and hydration were good, and I was really loving the experience. There was a fantastic camaraderie amongst the runners, particularly with the other six ladies who were all willing each other to get as far as possible. The second 20-lap block was uneventful and still felt good. Day turned to night inside the tunnel and half the lights went out. Weirdly, a fog rolled in on the dark end of the tunnel which I wasn't expecting, but just added to the unique atmosphere. A trick of the light meant that the visible bit of runners' legs between socks and shorts running towards me looked like wagging dog tails down the centre of the tunnel. I also hallucinated an entire 3D forest around Debbie King whilst she was talking to me which was somewhat distracting, but also very cool. There was a paint splodge on the floor on one section which I established early on was flat, but as it appeared raised in the dark I duly hopped over it each lap despite knowing this was entirely unnecessary. Night time visits to the drop bag were interesting, rooting around for stuff in a box whilst witnessing a huge number of slugs crawling over anything on or near the ground. Eating became a bit of a struggle overnight at some point. In a particularly low moment I found myself trying to swallow down lukewarm Pot Noodle (expertly made by Dave Fawcner) whilst walking



through the tunnel and questioning my life choices.

Daylight brought a fresh perspective on things, albeit the tunnel was obviously still dark. I could feel by this point though that I was falling behind schedule. I felt really physically tired in a way I wasn't expecting given it wasn't that far really at this point. At the 68-mile mark I decided there was no way I could actually finish the race given I was walking every lap and finding even that hard going. My plan was to keep going until I got past 100 miles, or I was timed out at 7pm. I plodded on, but even though mentally I was still fine, physically I felt like I had less and less to give. I was breaking every six laps, then every four, and towards the end after every out and back I was having a sit down. The very last out and back I just got the feeling that I absolutely couldn't do any more tunnel. I reasoned that there was no point flogging myself for a 'more miles still DNF' and so I would bow out at 80 miles. I called Chris and duly hobbled out of the tunnel back to my hotel. Just half an hour later I was more or less fine. I could absolutely have made the 100 miles, and I think a fair bit more. The following week I ran a fast 5k, and the week after that a second-best half marathon (would have been a PB if I wasn't monumentally hungover, don't judge me). I think this is what makes this race so unique, the mental toll of running in a blank space for so long messes with your head to the point where you feel physically beaten long before you actually are. Back home after the race I did watch my fellow runners, but especially the incredible Mandy Foyster. I don't think I've ever wanted anyone to succeed as much as I did that night. Most of my friends who'd been following me were also willing her to be the first woman to make it over the line and I couldn't have been more pleased for her when she made it in a spectacular, nail-biting finish! Would I try my hand at The Tunnel again? Almost certainly not, but doesn't every runner say that after every hard race?...

RIM TO RIVER 100 MILE (11/6/21)

NEW RIVER GORGE, WV

WEST VIRGINIA'S NEW 'CLASSIC' 100 MILE

By Gary Dudney

Calling the Rim to River 100 Mile course “scenic” is like calling Helen of Troy “pretty”, it just doesn’t begin to capture how amazing and epic the course really is. There is an overlook at the Concho Rim aid station, visited twice during the race, where you can step out onto a deck and peer hundreds of feet down into the New River Gorge where the river bends almost 360 degrees around a mountain. The site is so surreal it could be an illustration out of a fantasy novel.

Just as surreal is the New River Gorge Bridge, the longest single-arch, steel-span bridge in the Western Hemisphere and the third highest in the US. From one vantage point runners see the bridge materialize before you, suspended in the air like some kind of futuristic vision. Then there’s the beauty of the Appalachian fall with all the brilliant colors of the leaves on display in the forest. There is a remarkable array of trees, including spruce, white pine, hemlock, poplar, aspen, cottonwood, willow, white oak, chestnut, beech, maple, sycamore, birch, basswood, hickory, sweet cherry, sweetbrier, peach, and chokeberry.

Rock formations are scattered throughout the forest. The high cliff walls of the gorge tower above speaking to the ancient geology of this region. The New River is in fact one of the oldest rivers in the country. It actually cut down through the Appalachian Mountains as they formed and once flowed westward to a great inland sea in the central part of the country. Waterfalls are everywhere leaping down in stages toward the river. Runners cross numerous streams and tributaries that flow to the New River, a broad river with churning whitewater in places. The course alternately runs high above the river or drops down to put you beside it.

The trails, paths, catwalks, roads, and bridges of the course also lead runners through the area’s history. The coal discovered in the gorge was exceptional in quality and led to the railroad opening up the area in 1873. Towns and coal mines flourished until the mid 20th century and have left behind half-buried rail-

road tracks, empty towns, and abandoned mining sites such as Kaymoor, where you encounter an old “safety board” and a poignant company sign that reads: “Your family wants you to work safely”.

Runners are wise to use the beauty and interest of the course to keep from focusing too exclusively on how they feel during the race as Rim to River offers an array of challenges. The elevation gain of about 11 to 13 thousand feet is not too severe but then it’s also not insignificant. There is a big stretch of steep uphill in the last 15 miles of the course that seems like a 10,000-foot rise just by itself. For slower back-of-the-packers, the 32-hour time limit is tight as a tick.

Temperatures below freezing at the race start and early on Sunday morning offer another challenge as well as the very long November night. If you don’t get your drop bag contents right, you might get frozen out of the race or find yourself stumbling around in the dark wishing you’d brought extra batteries.

The many miles of forest single-track were only mildly technical for the most part but there were enough roots and rocks jutting up beneath the covering of fallen leaves that you had to pay attention to your footing almost constantly. But even paying attention, you couldn’t avoid the occasional surprise trip as leaves conspired to completely hide the obstacles until your toe found them.

There is also a diabolical stretch of trail leading up to mile 70 called Dalton Trail (also Le Croix, Adena, and Clovis trails). It’s one of several departures from the out and back nature of the course where you run a fresh section of trail just once. At the start of this section, you cross a bridge into a dark enchanted forest where a twisting singletrack endlessly loops back on itself and teases you with making progress toward a road that you can see in the distance but you never ever get to. Instead, you get to a hopeless mental state where you know you must be lost, you know you’ve screwed up and are repeating trails you ran on before,





and where you know runners visit just before they are swallowed up by ultra gods that hate them and want them to fail. And this was my second cut at Dalton Trail. Last year I went through the forest pathetically calling out Arabella Romeo's name because I knew she was somewhere nearby and might reassure me. This year I was begging my running buddy to check his GPS over and over again to make sure we were on track.

But offsetting all the difficulties of the course are fabulous aid stations and great support from beginning to end. As RD Bryant Baker told us at the race orientation, the volunteers for Rim to River are part of the New River Gorge community, not necessarily runners, but dedicated to creating a great experience for everyone who comes to West Virginia to race. The food prep is way over the top, with hot, cold and vegan choices that work no matter what kind of stomach issues you might be having. There were plenty of camp chairs for the taking near fires and heaters in the night, and people juggling drop bags and helping you out any way they could.

If you could keep going, you were cheered along and fully supported. If you were among the half of the field who succumbed to the cold, the long night, the difficult footing or the twisted ankle, you were cared for and quickly shipped back to the Start/Finish. The Rim to River 100 is only in its second year, but it feels like a well-grooved classic. The near-

by town of Fayetteville seems all about the mountains, the river, and everything outdoors. Stores in the old mountain town support mountain biking, climbing, world class whitewater rafting, hiking, running, kayaking, and camping. What a great idea it was to run West Virginia's only 100-mile race out of this area, to locate the Start/Finish at the Ace Adventure Resorts, and to showcase the New River Gorge.



Pursuing Distance

Another Canadian National Record for Viktoria Brown

By Laura Manuel



If you don't yet know the name, **Viktoria Brown**, you may want to take note.

On December 12, Brown became the first Canadian woman to run 100 miles under 15 hours. She broke the record with a time of 14:57:13 (averaging 8:58 mile/min pace) at the Desert Solstice 24-hour track invitation-al in Phoenix, AZ. The old record stood at 15:19:45, held by Michelle LeDuc.

Brown completed 404 laps in total in 15:24:45 before stopping due to an asthma attack.

Viktoria Brown's 100-mile accomplishment was her fourth Canadian national record. One might imagine Brown is an experienced ultrarunner. However, this triathlete only started tackling ultra distances in 2020.

"I always thought ultrarunning was about trails", confesses Brown. "Then I realized I could run on a track and I was curious to know how far I could go."

Brown's ultra debut was in the summer of 2020, just weeks after winning the Hungarian national triathlon championship. During a 24-hour race in London, Ontario, Brown ran 213.8km in 24 hours, breaking the previous women's record on Canadian soil of 210km.

"After running for 24 hours, my eyes opened to what was possible", says Brown.

Soon after, she ran a 48-hour race covering 325.2km, earning Brown a second record.

In May 2021, Brown set her third Canadian record in the Women-45 division during a 24-hour race in North Carolina. Posting a time of 15:24:23, she beat the previous record by 14 minutes.

By July 2021, Brown was ready to attempt a six-day race at Six Days in the Dome in Wisconsin. While she couldn't run the whole six days due to an ankle injury, she managed to break her 48-hour record, setting it at 346km. Brown continued on the track to break the Canadian 72-hour record at 440km.

"I love running track," says Brown, "My crew is right there. I don't have to carry anything. I love the convenience. And I have a high tolerance for monotony."

At the age of 46, Brown shares that she only recently discovered her potential. Growing up in Hungary, she was not interested in sports as a child. Undiagnosed asthma kept her from doing many physical activities other than horseback riding. It wasn't until Brown started to have her children in 2014 that she began to take an interest in fitness.

"After having my first [child], I made myself a goal to run three times a week for 30min," says Brown, "I didn't even fully realize people competed recreationally in running."

Turning towards sport and fitness prompted Brown to start her own nutrition business called, **Hold The Carbs**.

Gradually, Brown moved from 10k races to running her first marathon in 2016. Then, she progressed to triathlons.

"I place well in triathlons in my age group, but I'm never going to be a world-class triathlete," says Brown. "Once I ran the 24-hour race, I knew I could be a world-class runner."

When asked about training, Brown shares her triathlon program supports ultras; one sport complements the other.

"I'm not a high-volume runner. My longest training run - other than races - before the 100-mile record, was two and a half hours... based on when my kids needed to be picked up from school!"

What's next for Viktoria Brown? She hopes to break the record for the longest distance in 72 hours at the Vegas Jackpot Ultra in February. This will be a training race for the six-day Italian Ultra in March. In Italy, Brown hopes to break a world record that has been standing for 31 years. All this before competing in the Ironman Kona World Championship in October 2022.

Only two things stand in the way of Brown. The first is tightening her strategy to manage her recently diagnosed chronic asthma.

"I got a really bad cough at the end of the first 24-hour race," says Brown. "And I even ran the 48-hour race without knowing I had asthma."

Now Brown has a diagnosis, she is re-learning how to pace, train, and identify her triggers. *"I have to adjust everything like speed work because I am re-learning how to breathe."*

Brown's second obstacle is strengthening her ankle so it can tolerate repetition on the track. Anterior tibialis tendonitis is common among athletes competing in track ultras. Brown is learning how to treat and manage the condition.

Soon, Brown may venture away from the track and looped courses. She is eyeing up Badwater and Spartathlon in the coming years. And despite Brown's reluctance for trail running, she confesses she may be [not-so] secretly considering MOAB 240, Cocodona 250, and Big Foot 200.

"I think I'm done with 100 miles... and 24 hr is a bit short... my strength is in the long, long distances."

Brown lives, trains, works, and parents three children in Whitby, Ontario, Canada.

Keep updated on Viktoria's upcoming events through:

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/viktoriabrownathlete/>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/viktoriabrownathlete/?hl=en>

Hold the Carbs - <https://holdthecarbs.ca/>



RUNFURTHER- AN ULTRA RACE SERIES FOR ALL

Each year we select 12 races for our series and encourage runners to complete at least four. We team up with race organisers, assisting them by attracting more runners and providing prizes from our sponsors. The championship is based on points from each race with male and female winners awarded 1000 points and other runners points based on a proportion of this. We have V50, V60 and V70 too.

Some runners complete a Grand Slam of all 12 and get a coveted hoody. All Runfurther runners who complete four races get a reward like a Runfurther neck-tube.

We divide the races into short, medium and long with runners needing one from each category and one extra to count. Some do not manage four every year and that is no problem. We also include team prizes at our annual AGM and awards ceremony.

The races are varied and we try to include something for everybody. Most are on paths and tracks but some have pathless sections. They vary from rolling countryside to mountainous areas. Occasionally the route is marked but usually it is not. We avoid races that are laps or mostly on road. The races are biased to the north of England as that is where most of our members live, but we do try to



some further away too. We try to pick races with lower entry fees and also races that will be helped by the promotion we might bring rather than those which fill easily.

Flags and banners

Registering for Runfurther is free and once you are a member you are eligible for spot prizes at races and will appear on our leader-board. You can download a membership form from our website www.runfurther.com or by filling in a form at a

race. We also have a public facebook page and a strava group. The committee emails are on the website.

The boards and prizes

Our sponsors are currently Romney's who provide mini mint cakes for all runners at the events we attend, Injinji , Ultimate Direction and now also Icebug shoes via one of the original organisers Si Berry at Betarunning, Tent Meals and Mountain Fuel.





runfurther.com
the home of ultra-running
.... step beyond and run further ...



2022

| | Event | Location | Miles | S/M/L |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Sat 5 th Feb | Pendle Way in a Day | Pennines | 45 | M |
| Sat 12 th March | Haworth Hobble | South Pennines | 32 | S |
| Sat 9 th April | Calderdale Hike | South Pennines | 36 | M |
| Sat 30 th April | The Fellsman | Yorkshire Dales | 61 | L |
| Sat 14 th May | Spire Ultra | Derbyshire | 34 | S |
| Sat 25 th June | Lakeland 5 Passes | Lake District | 32 | S |
| Sat 9 th July | Hallow 12 Parishes | Worcestershire | 40 | M |
| Sat 16 th July | Pennine 39 | North Pennines | 39 | M |
| Sat 3 rd September | Bullock Smithy Hike | Peak District | 56 | L |
| Sun 27 th September | Lancashireman | Pennines | 27 | S |
| Sat 1 st October | Round Rotherham | South Yorkshire | 50 | L |
| Sat 22 nd October | Yorkshire Trod | Yorkshire Dales | 62 | L |






1 race from each distance category plus one other to count in the series championship.
 Lots more information at www.runfurther.com



Karen Nash (Current Chairman of Runfurther)

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1000 Miles - 10 Days - 1000 K

6 Days - 48 Hours - 50 K - 100 Miles



ITALIAN
Ultra Marathon Festival

**Dal 3 al 20 Marzo
2022**



Susan Lister is a back of the pack ultra runner and Yoga teacher. She provides a variety of online seasonal yoga classes including yoga specifically for runners. She loves to spend her time jogging around her local Scottish trails. Check out her website [Ananta Yoga](#) for more details.



Laura Manuel writes creative non-fiction and short fiction. As an avid trail runner and outdoor enthusiast, she looks to the mountains and wilderness for inspiration. Laura's work has been recognized by the Writers Union of Canada and the CBC. Laura lives, writes, and runs in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. You can find Laura at <https://lauramanuelstudio.wordpress.com/>



Lauren Buffini is a Secondary school teacher who lives in Cambridgeshire with her partner and two year old son Kit. She enjoys running many Ultra marathons and during the first Lockdown, completed 100 miles in her garden in under 22 hours for charity.



Lorien Cadier After a wide-ranging and eclectic career and inspired by my spiritual practice as a Druid I retired to run a local Friends of the Earth branch and more recently work with Sacred Earth Activism (www.sacred-earthactivism.org). I offer workshops, act as a celebrant, and engage in awareness-raising activities for the need for practical solutions – including beach and river cleaning – supported by sacred ritual. Journeying to the sources and walking the length of our rivers is part of this work to connect with the power of the earth and water for guidance and protection.



Naomi Moss I have been running ultras over the last 9 years to a monthly training plan with my two dogs as my run buddies and have a keen interest in nutrition, strength and conditioning. Ultra-runners blogs and write ups continue to inspire me and give me a huge incentive to want to push myself to achieve more and run further. I am NOT the fastest or the slowest runner but I am probably one of the most stubborn.

Instagram-[naomimossruns](#)



Peter Abraham runs daily around Greater Manchester and is an experienced pharmacist in a busy hospital. He has been running for 20 years, completed his first marathon in 2009 and has moved onto ultras. He is very competitive and enjoys pushing himself at the front of the pack.



Emily Dart A self confessed running addict, whether it be a poo-tle around our local Dales with my dog (Skye) or Fell running with the local Real Ale Thursday gang you can usually find me running around the Peak District National Park most days.

I've found my niche in the longer distances and Ultras with notable finishes coming in events such as The Winter ½ tour of Bradwell (3rd), Man v Coast (2nd 2019, 4th 2021) & Dig Deep 60 (1st Fsen). I'm also a Tough Trails Ambassador.



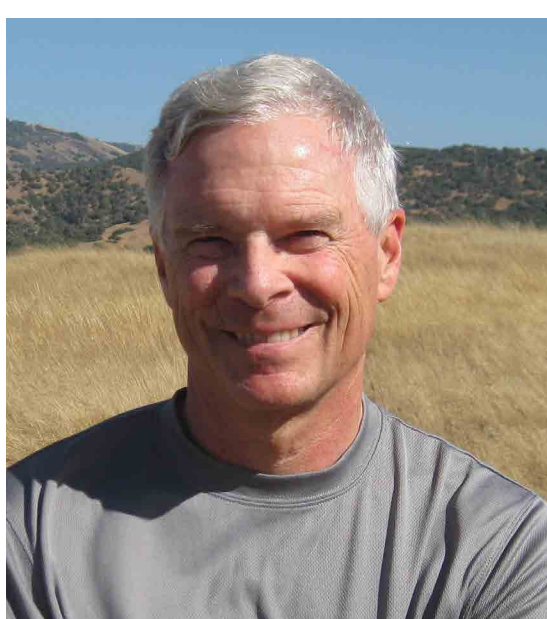
Emma Hancock started running to lose weight in April 2011 but never in her wildest dreams did she imagine she would one day end up running 100 miles along the South Downs Way and around a 400 metre track for 24 hours. She lives in East London but is originally from Dorset where she loves to run along the Jurassic Coast.



Emma Morton I live in the south of France, close to the Pyrénées mountains. I discovered trail running seven years ago, aged 41. As mid-life crisis' go, I can't think of a better one! I'm an active member of our village running club, and I love to encourage more women into our sport.



Vanessa Kellie took up running at forty to lose weight and sort of got a bit carried away. Drawn to ultra distance and adventure running, she has completed twelve ultramarathons with a second and third place to date. Her aim is to win a race before she gets too old.



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

<http://thetaoofrunning.com/>



Enar Warfvinge, I'm a 39 year old IT-project manager living in Stockholm, Sweden with my wife and two children. I rediscovered running when I was on parental leave in 2018. In 2020 I ran 5,000 kilometers for charity, collecting over £7,000 in donations for the Swedish Blood Cancer Society. Gax was my third 100-miler finish.



Peter Hammond Surrey based graphic designer and spare time 'back of the pack' ultra runner. Since crossing from marathons to the dark side I've chalked up a few decent races including the Marathon des Sable and Thames Ring 250 amongst others. Goals for 2022 include breaking 24 hours for the 100 miles.



Scott Jenkins was born in Penarth, Cardiff, Wales, he moved to London in 2013 to pursue a career change from a GP exercise referral personal trainer to join the corporate world of Johnson & Johnson. Scott recently just set a new British course record for Moab 240 following finishing Badwater 135 (second Welshman ever). Scott completed the Canal Slam, a series of 3 races (130, 145 and 145mile races) along the UK canal systems. Having raised over £75,000 for a variety of different charities, Scott has been selected as 1 of 3 UK Ambassadors for the charity Operation Smile



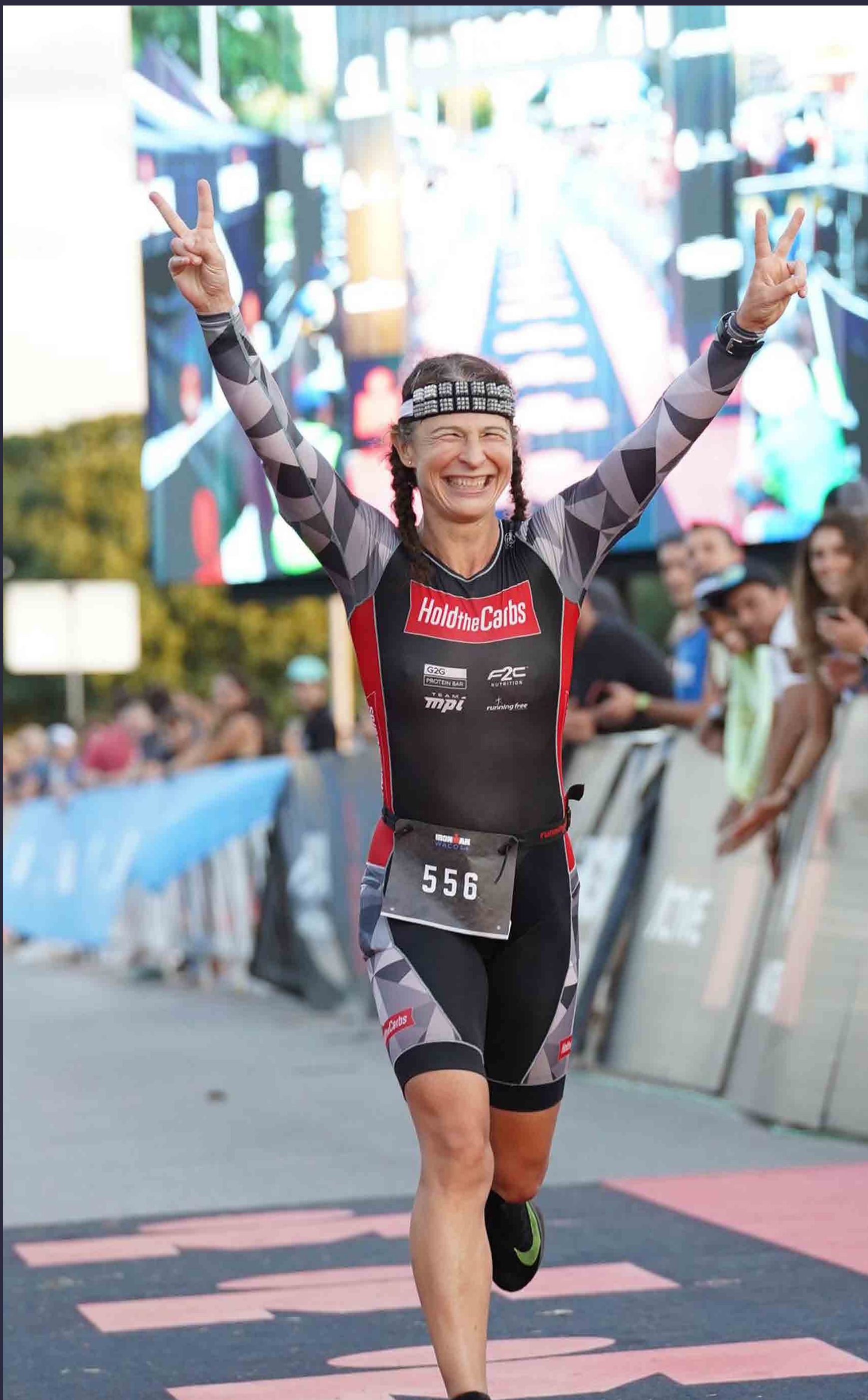
Steven Battle, 56, born in Sheffield and now living in Worksop, Nottinghamshire with a wife and two children runs for Clowne Road Runners. Began ultra running in 2007 and races to date include Trans-Gaule, Trans-Alpine, Moab 240 Lakeland 100, EMU 6 Day World Trophy, Italian 6 day Ultramarathon Festival, Gloucester 24 and 48 hour races to name a few. Steve was inspired by George Littlewood, who also lived in Sheffield and who held the 6 day record for 96 years with a total of 625 miles.



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- Race Start Time: September 3rd 09:00,
- Location: Hainesport Township Municipal Park (1401 Marne Hwy, Hainesport, NJ 08036).
- Course: Certified, paved, flat and fast, 0.9913 mile loop at Hainesport Township Park in New Jersey.
- Packet Pickup will take place from 8am-8:45am on race morning.
- Event sanctioned by USA Track & Field.
- Early bird pricing through 31/01/2022
- 10% of every entry will be donated to the Hainesport EMS***
- Website: <https://beastcoastpro.com/hainesport-endurance-run>
- Register on Ultrasignup.com <https://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=91144>



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