

TODMORDEN HARRIERS

NEWS, MOTIVATION, INSPIRATION, RACING, OBSESSION, MEMORIES, BANTER AND MORE!

Aim Higher

Skills sharing workshop materials, You've trained smart - Now race smart! navigation tips, diet and race preparation

Maps from Toddie, cartographer Chris Goddard. Taken from his next book 'The Woodlands of Calderdale'

Explore new runs

YOUR CLUB - YOUR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

The mighty classic Fell race of Ennerdale in early June will mark the half way mark in our season and what a fine beast of a race it is.

Turn out in races and you are guaranteed you'll enjoy yourself and in post race or car share banter you'll take at least one nugget of knowledge away with you that will make you quicker and happier in your running.

Trail Champs - Only open to those who haven't won anything - next race is an evening race The Millbrook Monster 10K at Stalybridge Country Park - let's see a big turnout, organised by Hyde Village striders. Just 3 races to qualify for this great award.

Fell Champs - If you can do a pack run then a fell race is for you.

Road Champs - the awesome Hendon Brook on June 15th, a fell race on the roads, forget your flat poncey city centre half marathons and prove yourself to be a real man or woman at Hendon Brook.

The Grand Prix - it is handicapped, so if you're old you can compete on a level playing field with the whippersnappers. Only 8 races needed (2 road, 2 fell, 1 trail) and if you get your 8 in you receive a warm round of applause as you step up to collect your full colour certificate at the presentation do.

The Club Champion - this is a toughie as you have to run a short, medium and a long on both fell and a road. Guaranteed to take you out of your comfort zone, but that's a GOOD thing.

<http://www.todharriers.co.uk/grandprix.htm> http://www.todharriers.co.uk/grandprix/essential_info.pdf

THE

TORRIER

SUMMER 2014 Thanks for all contributions

Race preparation

Todmorden Harriers skills share Feb 2014

with Geoff Read: many thanks to all who attended and contributed ideas.

Assuming that you are well nourished, healthy and have done enough of the right kind of training to a plan, how do you prepare for key events and arrive on the start line fresh, focussed and raring to go so you can execute the best race you can?

Here are some aspects to consider:

(and see the handy table on short/medium/long race prep at bottom)

When not to race

Never race when ill, especially with chest infections. It is very unlikely you will have a good run, and it will delay your recovery. Dropping out when there is something wrong is clearly the best thing to do – there is toughness, and then there is plain stupidity! If you are new to running have a medical check: racing makes a lot of demands on your body compared to just going for a run – and it is a good idea to get checked out every year or two as you get older, too.

Recces and navigation preparation

Route recces are invaluable for pacing, navigation and shoe/equipment choice and essential to do well in medium and especially long races. Take your time and spend time on problem sections, going up and down trying different routes if necessary and noting useful markers and features. Recceing in mist is good navigation practice, but not nearly as useful as a clear day when you can see and understand the shape of the land.

Preparation races

It is impossible to race well every time, and most people race too often and rest too little to ever achieve their optimum performance – especially fell runners! However for short races and to an extent medium distances it is better to do a couple of practice races first to get used to the intensity of competition and to learn how to pace yourself, as long as they are not too near the key event. Usually it isn't necessary to reduce training for these races otherwise your season will be all tapering and not enough training, so they are sometimes called 'train through' races. The when you do taper for a key race you have more chance of flying! Because of the demanding nature of long races and the length of recovery after them it is hard to race well at long distance more than 2 – 4 times through the year, and prep races are not needed in the same way: they can tire you too much. Short and medium races are also good prep for long races, as long as you have done the longer distances in training, and again they should not be too close to allow recovery for the key event. See table below for suggested number and timing of preparation races.

Tapering

Tapering, that is, reducing training amount (but retaining some intensity until the last few days to keep feeling sharp), is fundamental to doing your best in key races. How much tapering for each type of event suits you varies from person to person, but the mistake most people make (sometimes for their whole career!) is trying to race when tired. It can be done, but you won't reach your full potential. See table below for suggestions for different distances.

<http://www.runnersworld.com/race-training/tapering-optimal-race-performance>

Sleep

Lack of sleep, both in general and before events has been shown to damage performance:

<http://sportsmedicine.about.com/od/anatomyandphysiology/a/Athletes-Sleep.htm>

It can be hard to sleep when keyed up for an event, especially the night before, so make sure you give yourself the best chance to sleep well, especially for the week before events. Avoid caffeine and sugar in the evening, don't eat after 9pm, dim the lights for the hour before going to bed, use black-out curtains and make sure your race focus doesn't go OTT – running is for fun after all.

Sleep strategies for athletes:

<http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/features/sleep-like-an-olympian>

Logistics

Research route to the race and leave early to allow for traffic problems. Prepare your equipment, food, hydration, map and bearings, safety pins, pen etc. at least the night before leaving. Take different shoe and clothing options with you in case conditions change. Arrive early – at least an hour before to allow for parking, queues at registration and toilets, a walk to the start, kit check etc. For short races arriving in time to walk the course, or at least the finish, is useful. If you blow all that training and hard work because of some dumb practical mistake you will feel a right numpty and your only reward will be toilet seat points from Uncle Barry!

Mental approach

Racing well requires mental, as well as physical preparation and strength. Wikipedia identifies 4 main technique areas:

- Arousal regulation (oo-er missus)
- Goal setting
- Imagery
- Pre-performance routines
- Self talk

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_psychology#Commonly_used_techniques

Here are some more ideas:

- Have a goal that stretches you but is realistic
- Focused and relaxed concentration throughout event
- Confidence: don't listen to the 'negative voice in your head'
- Trust your training
- Run to succeed not to avoid failure
- Remember, if you are hurting others probably are too, even if they don't look like it
- Imagine and mentally run yourself through the race in the days before
- Use positive self-talk: but probably not out loud...
- Ego-focus can be negative, where it is about justifying or proving yourself: a performance focus, where it is about the pleasure of feeling your body working as it should and reaching your goal is more positive
- Be 'centred': don't give energy to worrying about others
- If you lose concentration or make a navigation mistake re-set and re-focus
- Avoid compulsive training / racing addiction and self-punishment for perceived failures. There are times when doing nothing (cancelling or dropping out) will get you fitter: be kind to yourself
- Don't take it too seriously – it is only sport!

Some more strategies:

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-winners-brain/201004/8-can-t-miss-boston-marathon-brain-strategies>

<http://www.runnersworld.com/running-times-sport-psychology>

Warm-up

Cold, stiff muscles don't work well, so some sort of warm-up is essential for avoiding injury and getting a good result. The aim is to raise the body and muscle temperature, get heart and lungs ready for being worked hard, and to get muscle

fibres ready for work. It also helps you get your race head on. Heavy static stretching before races is now discouraged, with some studies showing that heavy stretching is harmful before events – stretching should be done in a controlled way separately as part of training programmes. Light, very gentle stretching of all parts of the body after muscles are warm is safer. Typically this might involve:

1. Average runners: 10-15 minutes jogging; elite runners 20-25 minutes jogging
2. Dynamic loosening / light stretching
3. Strides (pops, pickups) 4 or 5 x 50 metres at race pace on the flat
4. Keep loose until the start

Keep wrapped up until close to the start, especially for short races, when it is good to start with a bit of a sweat on. Aim to finish just in time to get your extra clothes off and get to the start. For long races the strides can be omitted for the average runner. *See table below for suggestions for different lengths of event.*

Pacing

There are three basic pacing methods regardless of the length of event:

- **Pacing by feel:** if you know your body and what your body is able to do, this is probably the method used by the most successful athletes, even if they are aware of split times and other runners.
- **Pacing by time:** this is simpler in track and road events, but you may have guide times for checkpoints or features in fell races. It is the classic approach for marathon runners, but not all use it.
- **Pacing from others:** sticking with runners you know should be going at your pace – this is a useful guide, but it can mean you hold yourself back from your best performance because you ‘know your place’, or because they are having a bad day.

Evens: A theoretical ideal is to aim for an even energy output (cyclists can do this with power metres to show wattage live – runners can’t), however in practice it will vary depending on factors including nutrition, morale, focus; and in fell running the steepness and roughness of terrain. Most people inevitably slow down in the last third.

Faster 2nd half: A common approach is to aim for ‘**negative splits,**’ which means running the second half faster than the first on purpose. This usually works well and also feels much more positive as you are passing others rather than being passed as the race goes on – but it requires judgement to know when and where to press on harder.

Going off hard: Sometimes it is good to try and set off more positively when you feel that your training justifies it, especially with very short races where there are no second bites at the apple. The majority of races are won from a group at the front, but it also happens that winners pull through from 10th or so, especially if they are exceptionally strong finishers or descenders, like Ian Holmes.

Recovery

After race hard training should be avoided until you feel you have fully recovered, otherwise you will delay the next good race you can have. One day’s recovery for every mile raced is sometimes suggested as a guide, so it is unlikely you can race well again until at least 3 weeks after a long race, and usually longer. Carbs and protein should be replenished in the first hour after a race if your stomach can take it, as that is when muscles can replenish glycogen most efficiently. Iced-bath water (or a dip in a cold beck or lake) after races aids leg muscle fibre recovery by reducing inflammation. Gentle non-load-bearing cross-training aids recovery and the variety avoids you getting jaded. If your legs are still hurting, you feel mentally or physically exhausted, or your resting heart rate in the morning is elevated by around 10 bpm, it is too soon to start training hard. Avoid racing until you feel fresh again, otherwise you will further delay your recovery.

Good luck! Geoff (table on next page)

Preparing for and recovering from key target races

| | Short | Medium | Long |
|--|--|--|--|
| Prep races <i>Little or no taper, expect a lower result than for key race, cycle there and back if near enough</i> | 2 short 'train through' races, last not nearer than 7 days. Long and medium races will not help your speed and are likely to slow you down. | One medium <u>not nearer</u> than three weeks, but perhaps 2 or 3 short races are safer, the last not nearer than 7 days | <u>Not needed</u> if you have trained over equivalent distance and terrain – <u>recce much more important</u> . If doing long races avoid nearer than 6 weeks before. If medium, not nearer than three weeks. If short races not nearer than two weeks before. |
| Recce <i>For navigation, pacing and race / nutrition / hydration plan, conditioning to ground, shoe and equipment choice, confidence and focus. Take time to look and compare routes – don't rush</i> | Advised – can be walked the day before or on race day for very short races. Looking at good lines and the finish can make a big difference | <u>Essential</u> - concentrate on key navigation / route choice points. Can be weekend before if at gentle pace. | <u>Essential</u> – more than once if time allows, second half only if time is short. Spend time, repeating key sections if practical. Not nearer than two weeks before. |
| Taper for key races <i>Remember to reduce after heavy load period for at least two weeks to allow training effect to come through. Keep some intensity but reduce distance / climb</i> | 7 days at 60 – 80% if heavy load has already been reduced for two weeks. Last speedwork not nearer than 4 days. Avoid hill-reps | 7-10 days, last week at 50%, last speedwork not nearer than 4 days, no efforts more than 2 hours weekend before | 3 weeks: e.g. 80%, 50% & 25% of usual distance, last big run 2 weeks before, no efforts more than 2 hours weekend before |
| Rest before race <i>It is essential to avoid arriving at the start line already tired. You can't get fitter by training in the last week, only more tired</i> | Last 1 or 2 days short jog with 'pops' to elevate heart rate and breathing briefly, or rest. Self-massage / foam roller | Last 3 or 4 days jogging only, nothing the day before. Self-massage / foam roller | No efforts in last week, last 3 or 4 days jogging with 'pops', last two days nothing. Self-massage / foam roller |
| Mental prep | It is going to hurt (a lot) for a short time. Picture your pace and form over the course. Today can be your day: intense focus | Look at the map a lot the week before. Run the race in your head, thinking about where the main efforts / climbs will be. Plan to maintain focus as you tire. | Trust your training. Look at the map and picture your run and pace. Where will you hold back until? What is the crux of the race? |
| Pre-race and during race nutrition <i>Always test nutrition and hydration choices in training or minor races, never use them for the first time in a key race. GI+ glycogen index: the speed at which your muscles will be fuelled after eating. High GI is quick release, low GI is slow release – search for list of foods. Little and often is best during events</i> | Avoid heavy meals for the 2 days before. Light breakfast (low GI) <u>at least</u> 3 hours before race, hydrate well (before last 90 minutes to allow bladder to empty) (closer on hot days). No sugary foods before race to avoid 'high then low' effect. No food or drink should be needed in event if you get prep right | Higher proportion of carbohydrate day before, good (low GI) breakfast <u>at least two hours before</u> , avoid high GI snacks before the race, hydrate well up to an hour before (closer on hot days). During race: eat after 60-90 mins on bottom of uphill | 'Carbo load' for 3 days, ie. Higher proportion of carbohydrate, good (low GI) breakfast at least two hours before, avoid high GI foods before the race, hydrate well up to 45mins before (closer on hot days) During race: eat and drink little and often, usually after 60-90 minutes and <u>at least</u> every 60 minutes after that |
| Warm-up <i>Tailor to your fitness level. Flat warm-ups preserve your energy, if on fell to acclimatise go easy.</i> | <u>Essential</u> : 15 minute jog (Well wrapped up until last few minutes to keep muscles warm), with 5 short strides or 'pops' on flat to elevate heart rate and breathing | 10 minute jog on flat, 3 'pops' to elevate heart and breathing rate, light stretching if any | 10 minute jog on flat, light stretching if any |
| Warm-down & post-race <i>Tailor to your fitness level</i> | 10-15 minute jog Hydrate + carbohydrate in first 30 mins | Short jog / walk/ easy cycle / swim Hydrate + carbohydrate/protein in first 30 mins | Easy cycle / swim -after hard events next day is more practical. Hydrate + carbohydrate/protein in first 30 mins |
| Recovery <i>Approx. 1 day for every mile raced before you are likely to be able to train or race hard without delaying your recovery</i> | Rest or low-impact gentle cross training: 1-2 days. Self-massage / foam roller <u>Overall recovery: 1-2 weeks</u> | Rest or low-impact gentle cross training: 2-4 days. Self-massage / foam roller <u>Overall recovery: 2-4 weeks</u> | Rest or low-impact gentle cross training: 3-7 days. Self-massage / foam roller <u>Overall recovery: 3-6 weeks</u> |

JURA

The Isle of Jura Fell Race took place last Saturday from Craighouse off the west coast of Scotland. The route takes in the famous Paps of Jura on a 17 miles route which includes 7600 feet of climbing. The race is renowned as one of the toughest fell races in the British Isles. Much of the route is off paths, with the runners climbing, sliding and stumbling through steep rocky ground, then throwing themselves down scree slopes and grassy banks. In between this there were boggy expanses to cross, no one knowing when their foot could disappear beneath them at any moment. The race was won in a new record time by Hector Haines of Hunters Bog Trotters over 12 minutes ahead of the next runner. Dan Taylor of Todmorden led the way for the club over the first 3 hills and up the giant first pap. He was caught towards the top of the second pap by Phil Hodgson, who used the experience of his 10th Jura Race to catch Dan by using a different route to the top. Phil disappeared down the other side of the mountain and up the 3rd pap with great speed. A quick run up the last hill and down to the river and he only had to then negotiate the 3.5 miles of road to the finish.

This is well known as a very tough challenge after the mountains the runners have already climbed. Phil managed to keep going well to finish in 4 hours 44 minutes his best time for a few years. Dan followed him home to finish in 4 hours 51, 15 minutes quicker than last year. The next top runner Rob Tyson was in his first Jura and had a great run finishing just over 5 hours 10 minutes, just ahead of Andrew Bibby. Richard Leonard managed to beat his better half Jane for once showing that riding a bike can help you to climb mountains. Last top runner was Ben Beckwith who in his first AL race did well to compete the toughest of races. A great evening then commenced with many Jura Whiskys, beers and glasses of wine being drunk, before the festivities moved to the Village Hall for dancing at the Ceilidh.

Finishing positions

83 Phil Hodgson 4.43.36
98 Dan Taylor 4.51.11
118 Rob Tyson 5.08.02
121 Andrew Bibby 5.10.48
148 Richard Leonard 5.30.30
153 Jane Leonard 5.34.47
171 Ben Beckwith 5.51.38



The basics of navigation

Geoff Read

“5 D’s” for getting from A to B

Direction: use compass if necessary, orient the map

Distance: how far to next checkpoint, or to the next feature along the way? (pace short distances)

Duration: how long should it take to next checkpoint, or between features?

Description: what features / contours do you expect to see along the way? Keep noticing, tick them off, tell yourself the story

Destination: what are you looking for?

Choosing your line / route between points:
Faster line over open ground in good visibility or safer line following handrails in mist?
Faster but longer use of paths and trods or direct line over rough ground?
Over a hill/valley or round?

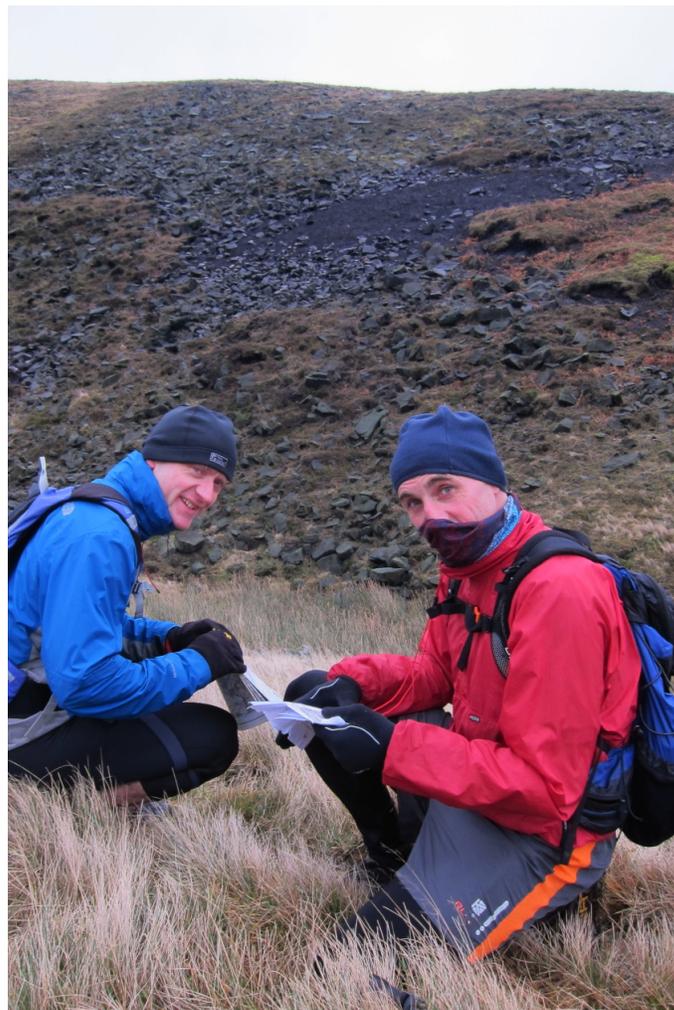
Do you need:

A handrail? A feature to follow instead of open ground

To aim off? So you know which way to turn when you hit a feature

An attack point? Easier than from open ground

A catch feature? So you will know if you have gone too far



Notes

When following a bearing – run to the furthest point on the bearing you can see, repeat.

Keep checking what is around you, don't keep running or following a bearing without thinking.

Natural physical features are the most reliable, bearings are only a rough guide and man-made features can change eg paths may not exist, walls fall down, forests can be cut down.

Contours are important – is the land doing what you expect it to from the map?

Beware the temptation to drift off your line downhill because it is easier

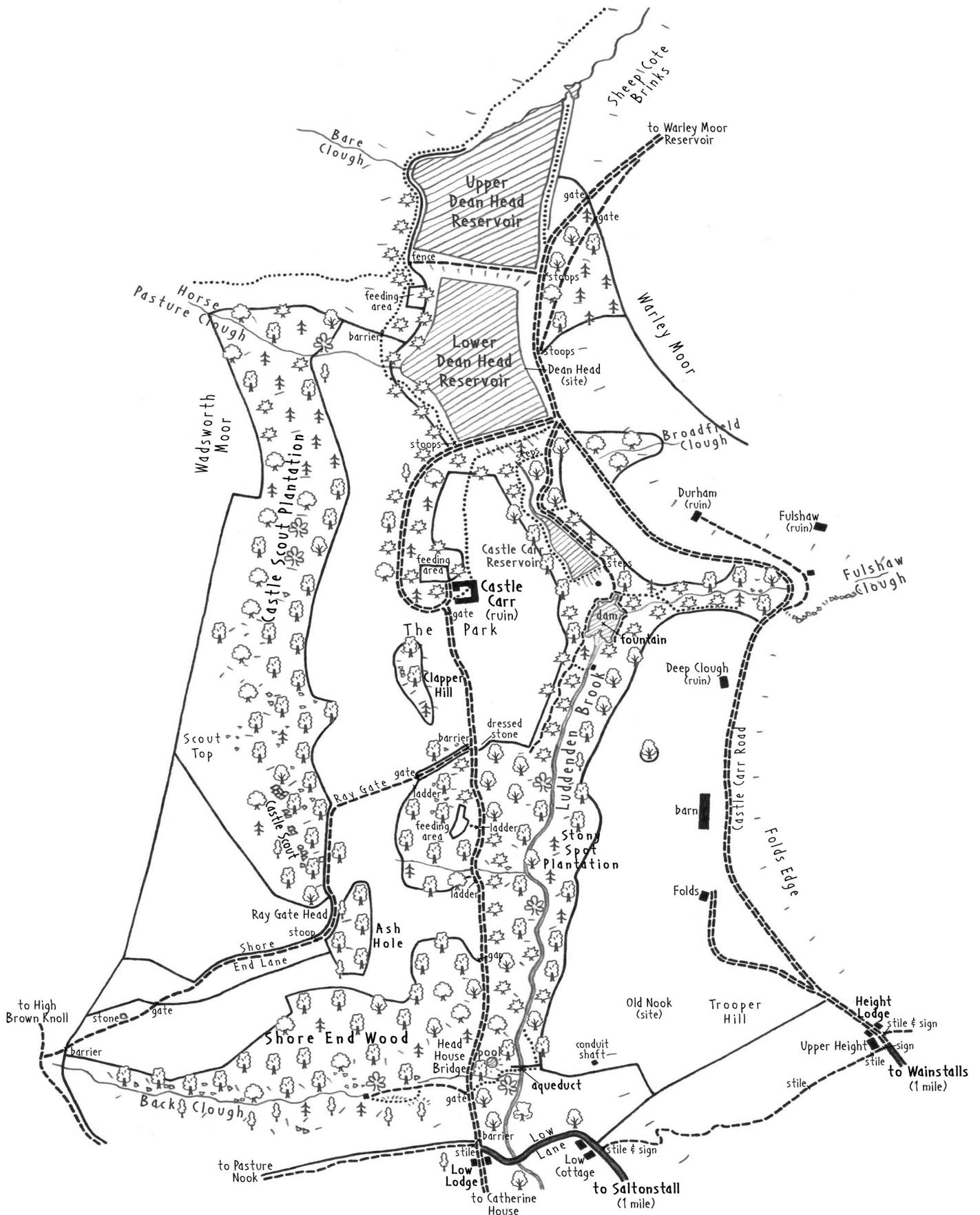
Time spent checking the map and thinking is well spent – no point running fast in the wrong direction!

Be especially careful to think properly when cold or tired

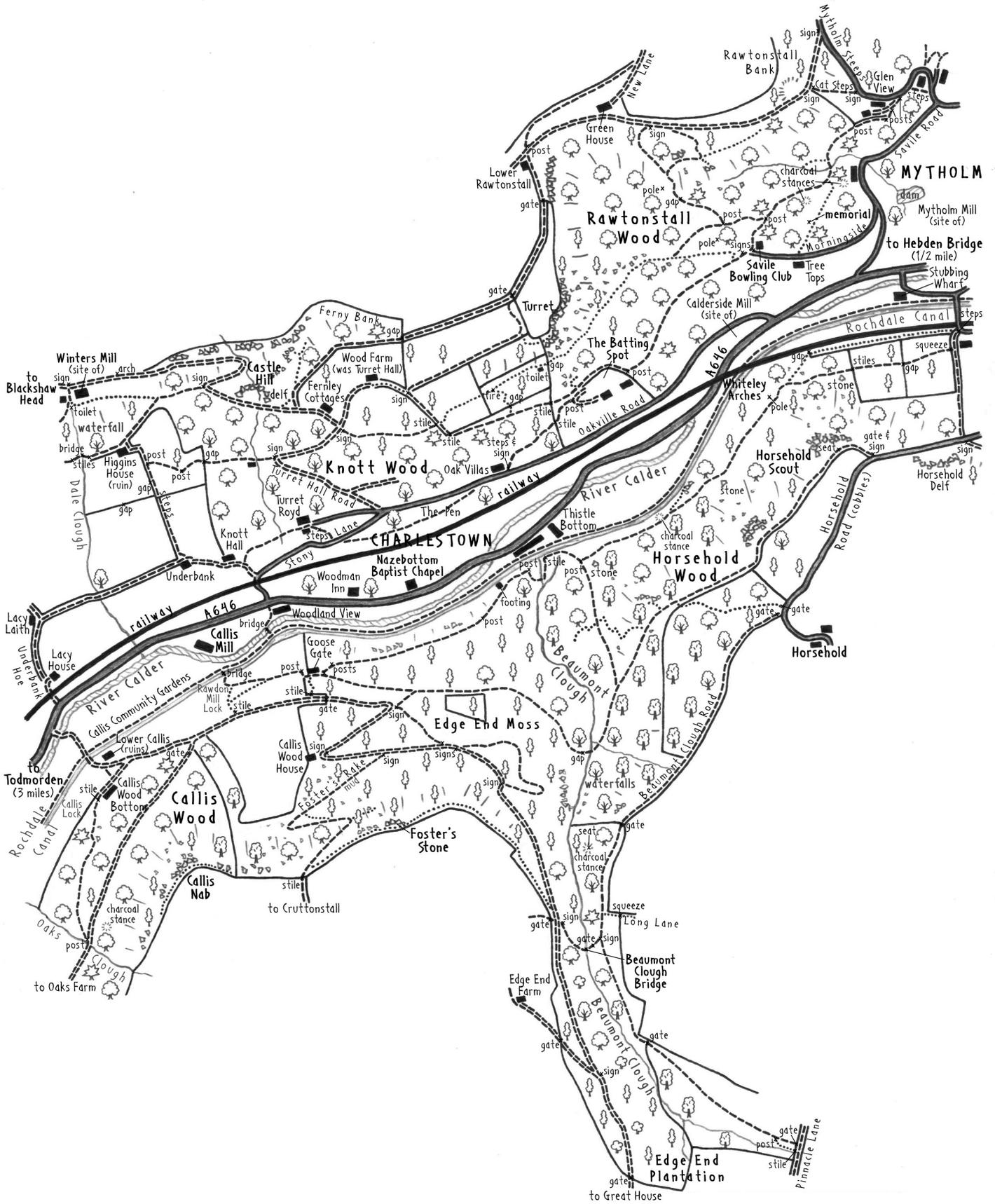


Toddies at skills workshop

Luddenden North - Castle Carr Try a new route with maps from Toddie, cartographer Chris Goddard. Taken from his next book 'The Woodlands of Calderdale'



Rawtonstall, Household & Callis



Food and hydration for athletes

Geoff Read and James Riley for Todmorden Harriers skills share, February 2014

There is a scientific consensus that the foundation of health and athletic ability is eating a varied diet containing sufficient carbohydrate, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals and fiber, which is high in fresh, whole (single origin) foods and water and low in processed foods, sugar, added salt and alcohol. This is much more important than race food choice (and see piece from JR, p5 below). Other aspects of diet and special nutrition for athletes are more complex and unhelpfully you will find opposing views on nearly everything. What works will vary greatly depending on our physiology, weight and fitness; the event and the weather. We need to be wary of information from those trying to sell us something, always looking for good evidence across a variety of sources. If in doubt, choose the healthy option and test out food and drinks in training, not during target events. Things to consider include:

Ratio of carbohydrate, fat and protein for athletes

Cue an argument, but for example, 70%, 18%, 12% has been suggested ('Nutrition and prolonged exercise' 1988). See JR's piece below for suggested types of each.

Glycogen: the most available energy store for athletes

Most available glycogen is mainly stored in the muscles and the liver (1,200-2,000 calories) and is used up in 1 ½ to 2 hours of exercise. Without eating, the body begins to convert to burning fat, which is much less efficient - you will know because you will feel rough. Body fat stores are much greater even in lean people (15% body fat = 90,000 calories, potentially enough for 6 ultras) but much slower to come through and you will run (or walk!) much slower than when using glycogen. The body can usually only digest around 60g of carbohydrate per hour (or 1g per kilo of body weight), but we often feel like eating more than that when tired.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glycogen>

Carbo-loading: designed to increase the amount of stored glycogen for endurance athletes, originally people did a depletion run a week before the key event, ate minimal carbohydrate for three days (usually feeling dreadful!) then ate a lot of carbohydrate in the last three days. Now it is thought that depletion doesn't help much, and increasing the proportion of carbohydrate for the last 3-4 days - not necessarily overall food quantity - makes more glycogen available for long distance events than an ordinary diet. It doesn't help for short and medium events.

Glycemic Index (GI)

The idea of learning about the Glycemic Index (GI) of foods is so that athletes can select slow-release and fast release carbohydrates at the right time in relation to racing and training. You need to net-search a list as some are counter-intuitive: chocolate is low GI, meaning slow release; white rice is high GI or quick release. Some sources suggest that high GI foods are good for a quick boost but can result in a low afterwards and should be avoided just before races, especially short races, and that low GI foods are best before endurance events.

http://www.uni.edu/dolgener/UG_Sport_Nutrition/Articles/GI_and_Performance.pdf

However research is not conclusive on the benefits, for example this quote from a review of studies is from 2010:

"Despite the fact that the relationship between GI and sporting performance has been a topic of research for more than 15 yr, there is no consensus on whether consuming CHO [carbohydrate] of differing GI improves endurance performance. Until further well-designed research is carried out, athletes are encouraged to follow standard recommendations for CHO consumption and let practical issues and individual experience dictate the use of HGI or LGI meals and supplements before, during, and after exercise." <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20479489>

Hydration

Dehydration reduces aerobic capacity, severe dehydration risks heat exhaustion. We can absorb 800-1200ml of liquid per hour (but you can lose up to 2 litres an hour in severe conditions!) Typically runners might drink 150-250 ml (4-8oz) or 2-3 mouthfuls every 10-15 minutes, which is 500-800ml per hour as this is easier to absorb than drinking larger amounts less regularly and helps avoid bloating and risk of hyponatremia (low blood sodium through over dilution and

sweating). Carbohydrate/sodium drinks may reduce this risk. Perceptions of thirst have been found by some studies to be quite accurate, suggesting that your body will tell you when you need to start drinking, but occasionally we can make mistakes and get dehydrated, so make sure you are well hydrated before long events, and be especially careful and self-aware in hot and humid conditions. On the one hand you need to be well hydrated, on the other hand don't go over the top and risk hyponatremia.

Is it OK to drink from streams?

Many fell runners traditionally drink from UK mountain streams, but not in warmer climes, though increasingly people are carrying their own liquid in bottles or hydration packs (be very careful with hygiene with the latter). Possible risks if you are unlucky include bacteria like E.coli, parasites like liver flukes and viruses. Most solutions for purifying water are either impractical or unpalatable for a racing situation. The usual advice given if you are going to drink untreated water from mountain streams is to choose a spring coming straight out of the ground, or at least a fast-flowing, steep section of a stream, having followed it downhill for 100 metres to check there isn't a carcass in it. It is hard to find anything but anecdotal information on this subject, but here is a positive view:

<http://v-g.me.uk/WildCamp/WildCampWater.htm>

In areas like the Lake District, Snowdonia and Galloway which were contaminated with radiation by the Chernobyl plume in 1986 (and until recently were not able to market livestock without testing), and areas downwind of nuclear plants, internal exposure to radionuclide particles ('hot particles') may be of concern, as the science on possible risk is un-developed and contradictory. Some scientists think that ingesting one small radioactive particle can be damaging, others that the risk is negligible as it is overall dose that counts. See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_particle

[Note from Geoff: I drank from streams throughout my running career and always enjoyed it, including on the Duddon race in 1986 while unbeknownst to us, heavy rain from the Chernobyl plume was falling there. Was the chronic fatigue that ended my career related to this, or to a virus I picked up in the water? I will never know. Having been in Fukushima at the time of the disaster and researched as best I can since, I would now only drink from streams in the Lakes/Snowdonia/Southern Scotland in an emergency, and would recommend that children and young women don't, just in case, as they are more susceptible to radiation.]

Special sports drinks and nutrition

Although many people, including some professionals, use special sports products and supplements for race drinking and eating, there is little reliable peer-reviewed independent evidence of sufficient scale suggesting any special effect over water and ordinary foods, which have the benefit of being healthier. See research cited in: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_drink

Pros: the electrolytes (minerals & salts) and carbohydrates they contain may be needed, depending on the person and the event, for races over 90 minutes; you know how much carbohydrate or sodium you are taking, you can repeat this if it works, and they are designed to go down easily; you can try them and know you will get exactly the same thing next time.

Cons: it is also possible they can cause problems including upset stomach and salt-induced cramps for some people, and they are usually processed rather than a natural whole food and contain preservatives. They should certainly not be drunk or eaten regularly outside competition for the same reason that all sugary drinks and snacks should be minimized, as they are associated with increased weight gain and bad teeth. They are more expensive.

Nitrates

There is a current fashion for increasing nitrate intake before endurance events to increase energy efficiency by 2-3% and race times by up to 4% (but only if you avoid mouthwash, which interestingly kills the mouth bacteria needed for absorption!), usually in the form of beetroot juice 2-3 hours before the event, although you can actually get more from rhubarb, as you will see from this list of nitrate-rich vegetables:

Arugula (rocket): 4,677 mg/kg

Rhubarb: 2,943 mg/kg

Swiss chard: 1,690 mg/kg

Beet (root): 1,379 mg/kg

Celery: 1,103 mg/kg

No doubt the 'evidence,' which seems to come from one source (take a bow Andy Jones of Exeter University), will change with time. In the meantime, if you want to try it, stick to vegetables, in juice form if you prefer, but don't overdo it, keep it to before selected events and try it in training first. Avoid any manufactured supplements that come out.

<http://www.runnersworld.com/nutrition-for-runners/beet-juice-how-much-and-when>

The fitter you are, the less benefit you may notice:

<http://www.runnersworld.com/nutrition-for-runners/beet-juice-for-milers>

Artificial supplements

Supplements can cause as many problems as they solve. As a general rule, they are best avoided. Even extra vitamins, for example, are controversial in that it is possible to cause damage if not properly supervised and can harm athletic performance:

<http://www.runnersworld.com/nutrition-for-runners/the-seductive-lure-of-supplements>

Always check with a doctor and research yourself before using any supplement and consider whether it is healthy - or ethical for competition. Want to improve your performance? Eat more healthily, loose weight, plan and increase your training, periodize, and race less.

Caffeine

There is some evidence that taking caffeine 2-3 hours before an event increases endurance performance by increasing fat burning, thereby sparing muscle glycogen, though it isn't understood how. There is no benefit for short events. Deliberately taking large amounts of caffeine for competition can be considered doping. Caffeine can cause nausea, stomach cramps or speeded up heart rate in some athletes.

<http://www.acsm.org/docs/current-comments/caffeineandexercise.pdf>

<http://www.rice.edu/~jenky/sports/caffeine.html>

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/psychology/health_psychology/caffeine_sports.htm

Anti-inflammatory drugs eg Aspirin

Before or during competition some people take Aspirin-based anti-inflammatory tablets, or Paracetamol-based pain killers to help them ignore pain. Neither of these can be recommended, both for health and ethical reasons. Anti inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) used in endurance events can have serious side-effects including reducing the protective lining of the stomach, impairing kidney function and affecting electrolyte balance, and thinning the blood therefore impairing muscle repair. In the worst case effects can be life-threatening. Running through pain and injury is a pretty bad idea, but if you want to do it, toughen the hell up, don't take a pill. For more detail see this literature review (by a sports company, and even they warn against it!)

<http://firstendurance.com/2011/09/06/prerace-caffeine-aspirin-and-more-a-literature-review/>

Alcohol and athletes

A lot of the socializing in running, especially fell running, as in much of English life has traditionally centred around the pub, and there has been a close association with beer in the lore of fell running. Sadly, the evidence is that it has a bad impact on athletic achievement and on recovery. Alcohol:

- Reduces the energy available to muscle cells, reducing efficiency and endurance
- Reduces Human Growth Hormone (by up to 70%) and testosterone, both needed for muscle repair
- Each unit contains 100-150 empty calories which are not used as glycogen but get stored as fat
- Can dehydrate unless very well diluted
- Can prevent the liver's glycogen stores being used while it metabolizes the alcohol
- Inhibits the absorption of vitamins and nutrients essential to athletic performance
- Reduces the ability to keep warm

Clearly for general health it is best to keep alcohol consumption low and avoid bingeing, and for athletes especially to avoid alcohol immediately before and after events.

<https://www.princeton.edu/uhs/pdfs/NCAA%20Alcohol%20and%20Athletic%20Performance.pdf>

Review of studies:

<http://www.athletestore.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/>

[The_Effect_of_Alcohol_on_Athletic_Performance.7.pdf](#)

If your alcohol consumption is affecting your health, work, or relationships, seek help:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/Alcoholsupport.aspx>

Geoff Read

NUTRITION SEMINAR FOR TOD HARRIERS 26 FEB 2014

By James Riley

Introduction

Much of what follows may be considered to be 'general health' but perhaps unsurprisingly not a lot of it is well known. This is, in no small part, because the public health message in the Western World over the past three or so decades has moved increasingly towards the consumption of a diet that is low in fat and relatively high in (processed and chemical) carbohydrates. This has been (and still is) positively reinforced by government in partnership with Big Food, through initiatives such as the Eat Well Plate (which groups good and bad foods together), and such as Fast Food being the primary sponsors of the 2012 London Olympics, all helping to muddy the waters and affect our ability to make informed food choices for the benefit of both our long-term health and optimal running performance.

Add into that mix Big Food using pseudoscience to sell us snake oil in the form of 'healthy' processed foods – a wise man once told me to never to buy anything that needed an advert to sell it – and pyramid selling schemes such as Weight Watchers, Juice Plus and Herbalife, we find ourselves in 2014 with an obesity epidemic that is seemingly out of control, and a general population in the UK that is overfed but under nourished.

So, the ranting being over for the moment, what steps can we take to improve our nutrition that might better support our training requirements and our racing goals?

It's worth saying at this point that if you are absolutely happy with where you are at the moment both physically and also training wise, are never injured and/or never ill, then you will learn little by continuing. Otherwise, read on.....

In contrast to the aforementioned processed food revolution, a great deal of evidence instead points towards choosing well-sourced, whole, single-ingredient foods as close to their natural state as possible, and this applies across the board irrespective of individual ethical, moral or indeed religious beliefs that determine that choice. A simple rule of thumb could be to go shopping for your fridge, not your cupboard.

This is important because these foods contain their own enzymes to break down in the gut – think foods that go off as opposed to those that have a sell by date of 10 years next Thursday. Otherwise, we rely on the body's own digestive enzymes to break down the food and over time this has an adverse effect on gut health. A lot of current research appears to strongly suggest that gut health is the key to absolutely everything else, for example 90% of the body's immunity is in the gut. If the digestive system is broken there would appear to be little point worrying about emptying and absorption rates.

Water

Water is vital to the body functioning efficiently on a daily basis; it's made up of 80% water with muscles being 75% water and the brain being 70%.

It has been well documented that an athlete needs to be dehydrated by only a small amount to see performance suffer. Conversely, research undertaken on highly-trained professional athletes in endurance sports has demonstrated that these individuals can suffer an amount of what has been termed 'voluntary dehydration' with no detrimental effect on results. Nevertheless, for us mere mortals, the consensus suggests we try to drink on a daily basis as much good quality, clean water as we need, and – especially for individuals with non-sedentary jobs and/or us runners who train frequently – to supplement it with minerals as otherwise the muscles will really struggle to absorb the water.

Factors to consider when determining your individual requirements for training and racing will

include temperature, intensity and duration and will therefore vary.

Leafy greens

Leafy greens, such as kale, spinach and broccoli, are full of micronutrients and are also alkaline in nature and therefore help to neutralise blood acidity. If you want to understand more about why this is important search on the internet for post-renal acid load, or “PRAL”. For example, meat tends to be generally mildly acidic and brown rice very acidic. Leafy greens are at the other end of the scale so help to bring blood pH levels back to normal and in an ideal world would be consumed at every meal.

It is best to eat them wilted as this breaks down their cell membranes and allow the body to digest the nutrients they contain. The easiest way to do this is simply to add them directly to the dish, to steam them or, my favourite when overall calories are not a particular concern, put them in a pan of hot water mixed with garlic and raw butter.

Protein

One of the three macronutrients, the main function of protein is the maintenance and development of the body's muscles. Therefore, like leafy greens, in an ideal world some would be consumed at every meal. Like your training, try and rotate different protein sources to prevent boredom.

Good options for vegetarians are pulses (legumes) especially soya beans (or tofu); seeds and nuts, wholefood peanut butter, almond butter, cheese, cottage cheese, eggs and Greek yoghurt. Quorn is readily available and provides variety, but is a man-made protein rather than a wholefood. Vegetarians usually eat 'combination,' or 'complementary' proteins, pairing different protein sources to increase the availability of the protein for absorption, for example legumes with grains, though variety is increasingly seen as being more important. *(added notes by Geoff)*

Common choices for carnivores might be:

- Skinless chicken breast bought from a supermarket – but often the welfare of the animals is poor, pumped full of artificial proteins and water. Better perhaps to get to know your butcher better and source free range, full term chickens, or grass fed beef. Other lean meat protein sources include venison and buffalo, these days readily available online from UK-based supplies;
- Tuna – but a lot of tuna is caught in mercury polluted water and also the fishing methods result in many other species being caught, only to be discarded; better options are perhaps wild salmon, mackerel and trout; or
- A recovery drink/powder, many being made with whey that has received a heat treatment and containing chemical nasties. More on cleaner choices later but other good choices are free range eggs, legumes and pulses.

Fats

Fat is also a macronutrient and vital for cell function, recovery and development amongst other things. Search “Ancel Keys” and you can read about his ultimately flawed study from the 1950s into possible connections between CHD and the consumption of saturated fats. In the United States in particular, in the late 1970s, the misinterpretation of his results led to the development of the low-fat culture, in particular paranoia towards consuming saturated fats. It's also worth noting that most heart/diabetic associations were set up by Big Food, not by expert un-biased cardiologists.

However, the consumption of dietary fat does not mean you will gain body fat, unless over consumed in vast quantities. Quite the opposite in fact, because any product that claims to be fat free/low fat is a sugary, chemical 5h1t storm!

Optimal fat choices to consider including in your diet:

- Saturated fat: butter (preferably raw if you can handle it, like Kerry Gold), coconut oil (choose extra virgin varieties. It's very heat stable so superb for cooking, and contains high levels of

Lauric acid which assists the body's immune system), meat;

- Monounsaturated fat: nuts, avocados, olive oil (again, choose extra virgin varieties. It's superb in dressing so salads, poor for cooking though so avoid), meat; and
- Polyunsaturated: fish (see protein section above), nuts, seeds, leafy greens

Personally, I steer clear of margarine. Its origins are in fattening turkeys, but that was stopped when the turkeys started dying. Search You Tube for examples of how margarine is made; this should put you off – it is grey without the artificial colourings.

Carbohydrates

When we train, our primary fuel source is the glycogen stored in our muscles as glucose and in our liver as fructose. To replenish these stores we eat (quality) carbohydrates, which is broken down into glycogen and moved around the body by the hormone insulin. The body is most receptive to this around the training window, and the process is made even more efficient when consumed with a quality protein source. When these glycogen stores have been topped up to the brim, the body stores the excess as fat.

Some individuals can tolerate carbs extremely well and can happily consume porridge oats for breakfast, a butty for dinner and pasta for tea, irrespective of when they train that day or indeed whether it is a recovery/rest day.

Others, like me, are not able to tolerate carbs particularly well and if you carry excess timber around with you or feel sluggish and/or bloated, that could be a possible cause (amongst other factors). By using carbs to bracket training and reducing – but not eliminating – intake with other meals you may find your carb tolerance increases and fat loss occurs. This protocol is most commonly used by physique athletes when shredding for competition, but still works for me and many others in difference sports.

Search “Carb Cycling” and you will find endless material to get you started; when I first came across it about fifteen or more years ago it was a real light bulb moment.

In practice this means that whilst all meals are important to support training and recovery, my most important meal is the one I consume immediately after my previous session; remember, the body deals with carbs most effectively around the training window. By doing this I know I will be in a great place to attack the next session or race. Again, a net search for “carb *backloading*” will provide plenty of options for further consideration. At other times I simply consume a maintenance amount of carbs depending on need.

Optimal carb choices are vegetables, fruit, sweet potato, basmati rice for general use, jasmine rice post training as it is high GI, buckwheat and quinoa (which in addition also contains all 9 essential branch chain amino acids or “BCAAs”, the building blocks of protein).

A quick note for those of you who love breakfast biscuits – Belvita, for example, contains lots of grains and sugars, plus the GMO-derived canola oil. Marvellous.

Top fruit to include pre-training are apples and raisins, post training bananas (a just-ripe banana contains almost the perfect balance of glucose and fructose for the body and dependent on training duration and intensity you may find you need more than one) and cherries, and evening “sweet tooth” snacks could be raspberries, blueberries or kiwi fruits (fresh berries are dear, frozen more cost-effective).

So, how to put all this together?

This may sound odd, but treat food as you would training – draw up in advance weekly meal plans that fit around, fit with and support your budget, family, training, work and social life. Factors you will need to consider are appetite, satiety, (dis)likes, allergies/intolerances, habits and your schedule. Then keep a food diary so that over time you can see what works well for *you* for a particular training block and what perhaps worked less well, allowing you to monitor and adjust as required..

Similar to when starting a new training programme, if you alter what you eat it will need time to have an effect, and you should apply it consistently; you wouldn't (I hope) only do one 4 mile run a week during March, April and May and expect to put in a good performance at Ennerdale at the beginning of June.

If there is interest I can prepare follow ups dealing with sleep, supplementation (both daily and training-specific BUT it is very important to ensure your diet is on point first allowing you to extract the maximum benefit from supplements) and looking at how you start to calculate the amount and proportions of protein, fats and carbs you need to consume within overall calories.

Further reading

The best advice I can give here is to pretty much ignore nutritional information provided by running and fitness magazines, the health section of the Daily Mail website and books. I could write a book that says the moon is made of cheese or the world is flat and have it published – it means nothing. The best source is evidence-based research that has been independently-funded and peer-reviewed.

That said there are a lot of people putting out some really good material and a few just for starters are:

- Graham Close and James Morton from the Sports Science team at Liverpool JMU (Morton is also head of performance nutrition at Liverpool FC)
- Barry Murray is currently head of sports nutrition at BMC and also runs ON4S (Optimal Nutrition for Sport). In his spare time he trains with Terry Conway and Paul Tierney and is a superb ultra runner in his own right, placing high in the L100. He was the first person to teach me the concept of fat adaptation
- Ben Coomber owns Body Type Nutrition and he and his team put out lots of really useful, general stuff. Also, look for "Ben Coomber TV" on You Tube, specifically his less-than-five minute clips on a variety of subjects

JR

Collated by Geoff Read for Todmorden Harriers skills share, February 2014

Leeds Liverpool canal & the prime minister

I have a just giving page set up, I've been interviewed by sports relief press release people, I've run constantly (often twice a day) for a couple of months, I'm all set.

A week before I'm due to set off I run (slowly) the howarth hobble, then I get home from work on the Monday to an email from the prime minister inviting me to a reception lunch. After much deliberation my daughter persuades me to go.

Rhys & I arrive at no. 10 & after photos we go in to find Davina McCall there, Rhys pounces on her, I stand quietly in the corner feeling like a spare part, eventually I get a few words in & she moves on.

After chatting to several people it appears my efforts are not trivial & I can actually hold my own. The prime minister comes round to have a few words with us all about what we are doing & he says " ah yes I've read about this, well I must say you look very fit" & moves on.

The following Friday the fun begins at granary wharf at 9.30 my brother appears to wave me off, I take a few pictures & off I go, I see Rhys again at 13 miles, quick refreshments while a hailstorm passes & I set off past salts mill. We have lunch on the tow path at keighley. & on towards Skipton & colne the section through Barnoldswick is surreal & eery, it's gone dark, & I mean dark! There's no lights anywhere even in the distance, no shadows no trees, nothing, every now & then I bump into a gate & I can just about make out where the water is with my head torch, Rhys says he's by a lock but I haven't seen one, all of a sudden I turn a corner & there's a factory, it's enormous & lit up like an airport, sure enough there is the van. It's 10.00 & time to stop for the day, I'm 4 miles short but it's sleeting & the dark is just odd. Home for a bath, food & to catch the end of sports relief on the tv.





I wake the next day feeling good, no aches or pains anywhere, no blisters. We pick up Nick & go back to where we left off, it's funny in the daylight it's got buildings & barges & trees, we set off towards burnley at reedley marina Nick stays with Rhys & I carry on alone, I belong to an internet support group called "run mummy run" & 2 of the ladies from Burnley are meeting me along the way, they are with my mum by the bus station, my mum has asked everyone in her village who runs what I would need, & is sat on the tow path with home made flapjack, coke, Mars bars, & jelly beans. I eat a piece of flapjack & fill my pockets & set off with these two girls, we run another 6 miles & they get picked up, I pick up Nick again & we run through Accrington & Blackburn. As night falls so does the temperature & nick is with me again for a last slippery muddy section finishing 4 miles earlier than planned again. We head back to Rhys house for the night.

We plan an earlier start on Sunday morning as I have further to go than hoped. I feel great, better than Saturday. We set off & nick is with me for the start, but it becomes apparent he's in pain, at 96.5 miles we meet Rhys & nick stays with him for the afternoon, I set off & as the weather is better today I get a wriggle on, the paths are getting better & I pootle along quite happily. When I have 13 miles to go, nick rejoins me & is flying along we are counting down the bridges coming I to the docks, & suddenly we find locks, with very short sharp downhill bits which are very tricky at 127 miles! In the distance on the other side of the canal someone's head torch is having a disco, it can only be Rhys! We cross the bridge & Rhys declares the run over.

Coniston Fell Race Weekend 2014 ... and the Krypton Challenges

I've lost track of the number of times I've done the Coniston Fell Race. It used to be an annual must-do for lots of Toddies a few years back when we camped at the social centre and Sam, the race organiser, laid on a Saturday evening ceilidh at Coniston village hall or the social club. I do remember that we used to have some great post-race parties. Well, the tradition appears to have been resurrected with this year's race weekend.

Over 60 Toddies and friends camped in vans and tents on the National Trust group field near Torver (thanks to Duncan Ritchie for pulling this together). A top spot right next to the lake and perfect for kids and adults to run wild. Over 30 Toddies were amongst the 400+ runners competing in the race on Saturday, this year chosen as an English Championship counter. Lots more Toddies were up on the hill shouting encouragement. The conditions were near perfect; overcast but reasonably warm with little wind. It's only 14km but, typical of many of the "shorter" Lakes races, it's a real test of character. You dash up the track from the start and before your legs know what's hit them you climb, hands on knees, straight up Mouldry Bank. A short runnable section is followed by the tough ascending traverse to the summit of Wetherlam. Grassy lines through the rocks, for those in the know, can then be descended to reach the rock ridge of Prison Band which takes you steeply to the summit of Swirl How. Full on racing from here on the long traverse of Brim Fell to the summit of the Old Man of Coniston. This is where prior knowledge helps you navigate the wickedly steep descent through the slate quarries, mainly on grass if you get the right line, until, rejoining the main tourist path, it's full pelt for the last 2km to the finish. With lots of great Toddie performances on the day we gave a good account of ourselves.



Post-race festivities for those staying on involved copious glasses of the locally brewed Consiston Bluebird bitter and other alcoholic beverages. The evening's entertainment was provided by Russ Blackhust (guitar and vocals), Geoff Read (mandolin), Oscar Reid and Jake Blackhurst (percussion), Sue, Jane, Kath and Lucy B (dancing girls), everybody (singing along). A large circle of us sat round a blazing firebowl and contributed enthusiastic, if not particularly tuneful, backing to Russ and Geoff's marvellous repertoire of pop and folk songs.

A light drizzle pervaded Sunday but did not deter the resurrection of the Kiddies Krypton Challenge and the main event of the weekend; the Krypton Quadrathlon Challenge for adults regressing back to childhood. 18 kids, aged from 6 to 14 competed enthusiastically in a triathlon of space hopping, running and welly throwing. Outnumbered by cheering and overtly competitive parents the kids gave their all. (I hope all that mud washes off!). Jamie Harris and Jake Blackhurst eventually emerged as Krypton Kids 2014 (6-8 and 9-14 age categories respectively).

The drizzle appeared to dampen the commitment of some of our “well-over-18” age group but nine of the boldest committed themselves to the fray. Some donned wetsuits for the frenetic lilo race through the waves and round a boat moored a long way out in the lake, others braved the cold water in nothing more than budgie smugglers. The various lilo styles included traditional air beds, a lobster, a crocodile...and a “love seat”? The paddling styles were even more diverse. Side on leg kicking looked particularly ineffective but proved a lot quicker than Paula’s unsuccessful attempts to actually get on top of her lilo. Poor Russ’s lilo deflated at the deep end (skulduggery was hinted at but not admitted... who pulled Russ’s plug out?). We soon warmed up after this refreshing dip as we ran our socks off in a 200m dash and then space hopped with varying degrees of ineptitude. Welly throwing, an event introduced for the first time, proved to be the big leveller. The safest place to stand was in the direction the wellies were meant to be thrown. Stu’s camper van came in for some hammer from wayward size 11’s and the welly somehow ended up five metres behind Mark when he gave it his best effort.

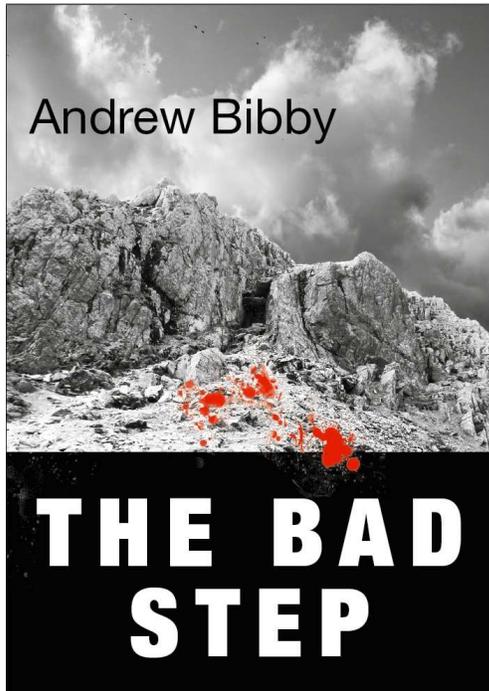


The proud recipient of the prestigious title of KryptonPerson 2014, and the handsome trophy whittled from toughened glass by master craftsman and organiser of the event (me), didn’t win a single event but, by perseverance and finishing in the top 4 in each challenge, he somehow sneaked it. There were loud cries of “fixed” at the announcement that the winner was...me! ☺ The trophy now has pride of place on my mantelpiece.

So, what a top weekend. The kids and “big kids” enjoyed themselves immensely. With other activities undertaken by some, including football, rounders, cycling, kayaking, lazing around...etc, there was something for everyone. It’s on again for next year’s early May Bank Holiday weekend...there’s going to be a ceilidh at the village hall on Saturday night and singing round the firebowl on Sunday night. The Coniston Fell Race is on Saturday May 4th and the Krypton Challenges on the Sunday. YOU could be KryptonPerson 2015, so put it in your, and your kids, diaries now...and don’t forget to bring your lilos ☺

Phil (aka KryptonPerson 2014)

Now available in e-book format for Kindles, i-pads and other e-book readers



For Nick Potterton, a high-flying London journalist who has opted out and moved to the Cumbrian countryside, the death of a runner at the foot of the rocky cliff called the Bad Step should be just another story to cover. The weather at the time had been atrocious and the rocks greasy and treacherous.

But the longer Potterton investigates, the more disturbing questions he has to answer.

Was the death as accidental as it seemed? Or is somebody hiding the full story of what happened at the Bad Step?

Andrew Bibby is a writer and journalist, the author of *The Backbone of England: Landscape and Life on the Pennine Watershed* and of the *Freedom to Roam* guidebooks to open country walking. He is also a fellrunner, and has completed the classic Joss Naylor Challenge in the Lake District. This is his first crime novel.

The author is making a contribution of 60p to Langdale and Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team for each copy of the book sold.

*Review copies: Copies of **The Bad Step** are available on request from the publisher Pennine Pens in Kindle format (.mobi file) or Apple format (.epub file) for use on e-readers. Alternatively, journalists and reviewers who purchase a copy from usual e-book suppliers for review purposes will be reimbursed the cost, on request to the publisher.*

For more information contact Chris Ratcliffe, info@penninepens.co.uk.

Excalibur Off Road Marathon 10/05/14 By Simon G.

I did this race a few weeks ago – nice to do exactly 26.2 miles off road (a new experience) in an area of Wales I've rarely run in before. The race is quite expensive (£40 I think it was), but it is for the good cause of Claire House Children's Hospice.

The race website...

<http://www.conquerexcalibur.org.uk/>

As a non-FRA race the "feel" was different. Basically there were 4 race options... either run or walk the full or the half distance. This meant there were plenty of "non-competitive" runners/walkers about at the start (although most of those doing the full marathon distance seemed to be taking it pretty seriously!). The checkpoints were plentiful (about 8-10), with a variety of different snacks e.g. chocolate brownies, swirl bars, pretzels etc. and always water. You just needed to carry a water bottle for refilling. No electrolyte drinks or gels but overall you didn't need many provisions.

The course itself was mostly along runnable tracks. There was a fair amount of climbing but no cutting across wild moorland or such like so trail shoes were the order of the day.

See map below...

The race itself

On the day it took less time than I expected and I arrived in time to see the walkers set off at 8:30. Moments later I received a text I knew was coming, letting me know that a friend of mine had lost his battle with cancer. Only 49, less than a year ago we'd been camping together in Eskdale, unaware of his impending illness. After a few moments of sadness, I told myself once again to make the most of my time alive and I resolved to run hard this day for Simon.

I spent the next hour getting ready and observing the different kit options people were choosing.

Soon it was 10 am and us runners were counted down to start. Both half and full marathoners set off together which was quite nice really, I thought.

We began with a gradual twisty ascent along forest tracks which I took very easy as I was unsure how I'd fare in the latter stages of what for me was to be a very long race. The weather was dull but visibility was basically fine. I was pleased about that - not because route finding was an issue (the way marking signs and marshalls were excellent) - but because I wanted to see the views! Past Checkpoint 1 and the forest trees dwindled as we climbed onto the slopes of Moel Dywyll. By this point, in fact up to about 16 or 17 miles, I was continually overtaking people because of my very conservative start. My aim was not a particular time but to get round in reasonable shape, pushing it towards the end, if possible.

The next sections were really enjoyable. As the hills are not that big, the views were ever changing and the terrain too. At one point, just as the sun made an appearance, we ran across an area of grassy hillside the organiser had aptly described as “Teletubby land”! I felt great and this feeling continued as we ascended back up to the main Clwydian ridge before the half marathoners turned for home. We descended to the road before climbing briefly back up to Moel Arthur (nice hill fort on top).

Now we followed the main high ridge, along Offa’s Dyke up and down for a few miles, before gradually turning back for home after climbing Moel y Parc. Here, things started to get a bit tougher for me as my legs began to seize up. I’d been out for about 4 hours by now and it seemed to take an absolute age to reach the Moel Arthur checkpoint again. The field was pretty spread out by now too which was probably a good thing as for the first time a few people I’d overtaken earlier came back to haunt me. The weather had also deteriorated to a fairly constant drizzle and strong wind so it was time to put my cag and hat on.

Luckily I came out of this bad patch and for the remaining 6 or 7 miles I passed some runners and some passed me. Thankfully (unlike some long races I’ve done!), I wasn’t just going backwards. Up we went back to Moel Dywyll - now there was just the climb to Moel Famau to go. “Dig in!” I told myself and soon I was at the impressive summit. The marshalls there were fantastic – leaping about madly and shouting encouragement for the final section (partly to keep themselves warm, I’m sure!).

“How far?” I asked and was surprised to hear “only about 2 miles” in reply. Crikey, I thought it was much less than that. I instantly felt a bit deflated but didn’t bother to stop to consult the map. Instead, I hurtled off (ha ha!) down the main tourist track in a bid to stay ahead of another closing runner. Might still beat 6 hours, I thought.

It was with great surprise that I rounded a corner to see the finish gantry 200m ahead. That was more like 1 mile, definitely not 2. I crossed the line in jubilation, a tear in my eye. Partly in celebration, partly because I was still able to get out and do such things. Make the most of it folks!!



Finally, this was a very friendly event that I would thoroughly recommend as inclusion as a “long trail” in next year’s Grand Prix. My time was 5:46.

TONY SHAW 1938 -- 2014

I'm sad to report the death of Tony Shaw, who died on April 15th, aged 75. He will be much missed by Brenda, his wife of 52 years, and their two sons, David and Ian. Both Tony and Brenda had the same outlook on life. He would tell me that, despite suffering from arthritis, Brenda would never complain, her attitude being that you've just got to get on with things.

At the age of 16, Tony joined the Army where he served his joinery apprenticeship. He later became a member of the Parachute Regiment, Airborne Division. He did much of his training at Glenmore Lodge, near Aviemore, followed by spells of duty in Cyprus and Palestine and then a longer spell of duty in Kenya, in the Rift Valley. By this time Tony had taken up running in his spare time, often competing against bare footed Africans who would set off like rockets at the start of races.

Back home, after nine years army service, he became employed as a joiner with two local firms, later becoming self employed. Tony was very meticulous, taking great pride in his work. He applied climbing skills in his final job at Antler in Bury, where his abseiling and rope techniques came in useful when replacing large window frames.

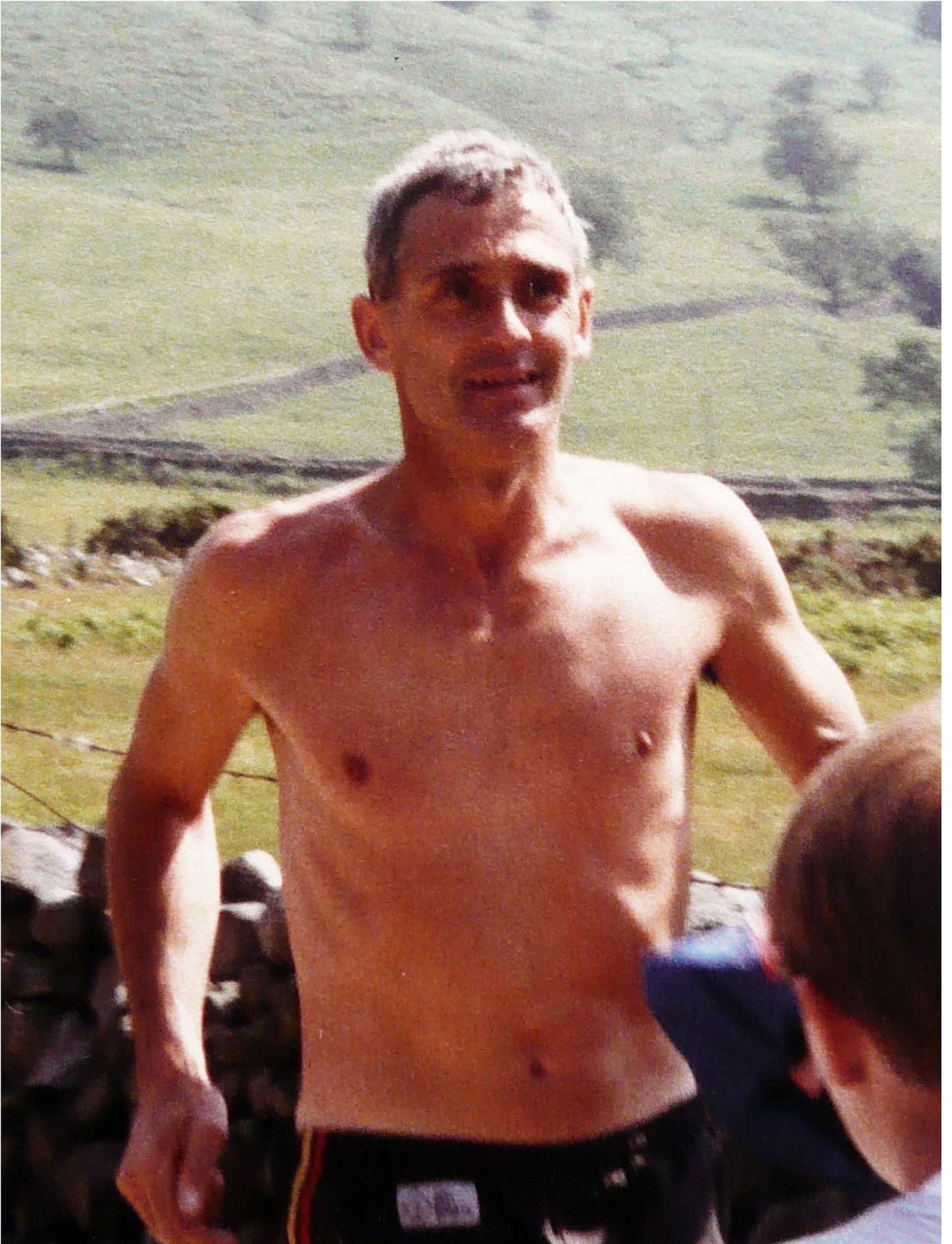
From about 1975, by which time Tony was in his late 30's, he increased his running training in order to improve performances in his beloved Wasdale event. He showed me a clean pair of heels, not only at Wasdale, but in other classics such as Ennerdale and Borrowdale. Over the next seven years he would regularly finish in the first 10 or 15 in these tough races. His time in the 1976 Wasdale race was 3 hours 54 minutes, giving him 5th place. Hardly any achieve such a fast time, even today. He recorded 3 hours 58 minutes at Ennerdale and

3 hours 5 minutes at Borrowdale. With Tom Sykes, Tony won the 1976 Karrimor Mountain Marathon, A Class event. This was held in appalling weather conditions over the hills of Gal-loway. Typically, he gave full credit to Sykes' brilliant navigation.

He was quite pleased to complete the Lake District Bob Graham Round, but more delighted to have assisted Steve Tosh, the youngest person at the age of 17 to have completed the round. Tony held the Saddleworth 5 trigs record for five months in 1977. He recorded fast times at Skiddaw and Ben Nevis. At the age of 62 he posted a time of 2 hours 10 minutes in the 2000 Ben Nevis race, defeating 250 younger runners. He recorded a fast time of 2 hours 35 minutes in the Manchester Marathon. He came 4th in the Lairig Ghru race, organised by Eddie Campbell. Tony never walked up hills, he always ran up them. He was rather scathing when he saw teammates walking up a hill...he would tell them "What are you walking for; get running!"

In the early 1990's Tony switched from Rochdale Harriers, where he spent 20 happy years, to Todmorden Harriers and, together with Alan Ainsworth, myself and two of Tony's favourite dogs, Murphy and Meg, spent many happy hours running and walking over the beautiful Calderdale countryside, each outing followed by a couple of pints of real ale. He was appreciative of the efforts of Chairman of Todmorden Harriers, Mandy Goth, who would organise packruns, Sunday runs and social get-togethers. Bill Smith asked Tony to fill in a questionnaire for inclusion in Stud Marks. His answer to the question "How would you summarise your running career?" was a gem. He wrote- "We can't run, but we've shifted a few pints!" This was his modesty coming through. Despite what he said, Tony could run and run very well.

Let's remember Tony as a man with a good sense of humour. To me he was an amusing and entertaining walking companion. Above all, he was a top class person and a true friend.



Tony Shaw 1938-2014