

# THE TORRIER

AUTUMN/WINTER 2023



NEWS, INSPIRATION, RACING, OBSESSION,  
MEMORIES, ADVENTURE AND MORE!





**Running and racing on the fells, trails and roads. We're a friendly lot, and we cater for all, come and join us for a run, and bring a friend!**

Every month we visit a different pub on Wednesday evenings and try to organise four different groups: slow, moderate, medium and fast. We also try not to lose anyone. All runners are welcome. The runs are off-road in daylight hours and on road (or choice of off-road with headtorch) in the winter months. Take a look at **[www.todharriers.co.uk](http://www.todharriers.co.uk)**

*Front cover: moonrise over Gaddings near the end of October.  
Right: who gave Dave all those cream eggs??*





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## A word from the Editor...

Oof we've got some quality stuff in this issue (and quantity!). Lots of gurns, a banana, some AI-generated content (controversial), musings on GPX, tales of starting and (not) retiring from fell running, fashion taking on the Hodgsons (relays not Phil's family), stories of at least four ultramarathons and a touching tribute to an inspiring club member who sadly died earlier this year.

It's been another busy period since the Winter/Spring edition; people have qualified for champs, committee positions have changed hands (seats?), apparently we had a summer and Toddlies have bravely faced countless challenges (many self-inflicted—see race reports and the Toilet Seat). You are why I am proud to be a Tod Harrier.

For transparency's sake: a couple of items in this issue may seem a little 'vintage'...I could try to blame gmail but basically I found several emails that I received and missed before the last issue, so my

sincerest apologies for that; I hope you really enjoy Simon's Ironman tale, Doni's RRXC '22 account and Kerry's poem now. (We're all human—again, see the Toilet Seat! If this ever happens again please do contact me.)

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*Pic: looking chuffed with myself having somehow persuaded friends to walk single file in a bog for the purposes of Strava art mid-34 mile birthday outing...*



## A word from the Chair...

As we get towards the end of the year we still have lots to get involved in. Cross country is underway with the usual Red Rose XC League and the West Yorkshire Winter League has the largest number of Toddlers signed up that I've seen so far.

Relay season is almost over with Tod turning out a strong team on the Ian Hodgson, three teams at the British Fells and an ever-increasing number of teams for Lee Mill as I write!

The Grand Prix is done for 2023 so it's time to start organising next years. There's details on the forum of how to get involved with that.

Our monthly meeting, which now seems to have settled at Jack House 8pm on the first Monday of the month has been attracting more members. Various roles within the club have cropped up recently which I am pleased to say have been filled quickly and enthusiastically.

My 4 years as Chair will be up at the next AGM in March so a new Chair will be required. It's a role that have really enjoyed and I'm honoured to have been able to do my part for this great club. I'm sure the next Chair will enjoy the role as much as I have. One thing I am certain of is that whoever that may be will bring a much better standard of jokes to the Christmas Do ...sorry, Presentation evening.

Have a great winter!  
Stu



## A tribute to Clare Harris

My sister, Clare Harris, who has died aged 63 from cancer, was a remarkable fell runner, triathlete, cyclist and inspirational individual.

Clare worked as a buyer for companies including Regatta, Lakeland and Lancashire Wildlife Trust, but her work was very much a means to support her active life outdoors. Later on she took up cross-country skiing and cycling and had many trips around Britain and Europe with her husband, Nick Harris, whom she met in 2003, and married on a Scottish hillside in 2013, with the couple wearing matching running tops and shorts.

Born in Leicester, to John Sutton, a lecturer in printing, and Carol (nee Walker), a radiographer, Clare grew up in Plymouth, where swimming, sailing and walking on Dartmoor were family activities. At Plymstock school she was in sports teams for athletics, cross country, hockey and swimming.

After studying chemistry at Trent Polytechnic, Clare moved to Lancashire and became a member of a number of fell running clubs, including Kendal, where she was a ladies fell-running champion. She won numerous medals, including First Lady in the Manx Mountain Marathon in 1999, and completed her Bob Graham Round (42 Lakeland peaks in 24 hours) in 1989 - only the 32nd woman to achieve this.

In 1994, Clare visited Nepal to take part in the Everest Mountain Marathon, raising £7,000 for Water Aid, and then in 1996-97 she embarked on a (very) late gap year and travelled around the world by bicycle with a friend. She was a member of the Calder Valley Fell Runners women's team during the golden period from 2003-08, when they won 11 British and English team medals. In the 2006 British relays, which Calder Valley were hosting, Clare ran the anchor leg

after jumping out of the commentary box to grab the baton for the winning run, then returning to it to announce the win. In recent years she started cycling and taking part in triathlons, and in April 2022 she won a Female Vet 60 triathlon trophy and cycled the 170-mile Way of the Roses from Morecambe to Bridlington.

Nick and Clare started to spend their winters in Spain in their camper van with friends and in 2022/23 she managed four podium finishes in five mountain and trail races, as well as cycling and walking in the mountains.

On her return she was training for a John o'Groats to Lands End cycle ride, but tiredness and stomach symptoms led to a cancer diagnosis and a rapid deterioration in her health.

She is survived by Nick and me.

Rachel Sutton



*Clare pictured at Trail Barx at the end of 2022*



# My first fell race: Duddon Dash April 2023

*Why did you decide to do the fell race?*

Because it was really close to my sixth birthday and I had to be six to do it.

*How did you feel at the start?*

A bit nervous because I didn't know where I would be, what the route would be like (we had time and energy to walk part of the route, not the full thing before the race).

*Describe the route*

We started running across a little field and then we went through a little river, then up a steep hill, around the top and back down to the finish. The ground was very wet.

*How did you feel at the finish?*

It was fun and I was very hot at the end.

*What made it fun?*

It was tricky and I like tricky things.

*What was the most fun part of the race?*

The running down the soggy wet hill.

*What did you learn?*

Never give up. When I was going up the hill, I thought: I really want



to give up but I'm not going to.

*What would you do differently?*

I might run a bit quicker. I wouldn't wear my coat because I got very hot.

*What would you say to someone thinking of doing their first fell race?*

It might be a bit tricky. If you get too warm, take your coat off. You should practice before it, like going up and down mountains. Orienteering helps, you can get stronger and a bit quicker.



Úna May, interviewed by Pauline May

## **Adoption of a club Environmental Policy**

After a couple of meetings and a number of discussions regarding a club environmental policy a draft document was put forward & subsequently agreed at the August monthly meeting this year. This document, copy below, sets out how as a club, going forward we will try to minimize the impact our activities have on the environment. This document should be considered as an ever evolving way of how we do things, if you've got a suggestion not currently in there don't hesitate to get in touch or come along to a monthly meeting and put your idea forwards.

A couple of real examples of the ways we are now operating with this in mind are as follows;

- The club will have donated something in excess of £300 this year

# **Adoption of a club Environmental Policy**

to Forus trees for the growing and planting of trees locally. This is an amount calculated to help offset the carbon generated by people travelling to Tod Harriers organised races.

- Once a month we now have a litter pick at pack runs.
- Once a month we now have kit swaps where old/unwanted kit is available to anyone rather than it just getting thrown away.

Sent in by Bob Halstead

## **Todmorden Harriers Policy on Environmental Impact.**

Running by its nature is a relatively low-impact sport. Having said that, we still have a responsibility as a club to identify and respond to key areas where we can reduce our impact on the environment where practically possible. Todmorden Harriers can play a part in ensuring that the activities the club provides and its members participate in remain sustainable by defining a clear strategy for reducing environmental impact and promoting this approach so that it might inspire others to do the same.

### **Principles**

The key principles of this document are:

1. Carbon emissions from transport should be minimised by encouraging car sharing, cycling and use of public transport to club events. Where possible carbon emissions can also be offset
2. Reducing material waste including the use of single use plastics
3. Club events should not cause excessive erosion or disturb or harm local wildlife
4. TH should work alongside other clubs and organisations to provide a wider strategy for reducing environmental impact in the local area
5. A positive image of the club and of running in general should be promoted including its impact on the environment
6. Members are encouraged to provide new ideas and feedback on how the club can better manage its environmental impact



## Codes of conduct

Race Organisers should:

- Include a carbon cost in budgeting for an event. A suggested rate of 5% being donated to the local organisation [www.forustree.org](http://www.forustree.org) to aid with tree planting which may have the additional benefit of helping with flood management in the area.
- Work with local environmental organisations to ensure race routes do not cause erosion of sensitive areas nor harm local wildlife.
- Ensure any litter is cleared up from the course
- Attempt to minimise waste involved in running the event including catering materials
- Attempt to provide recycling facilities at the start/end point
- Consider ways of reducing the number of cars at an event.

Race organisers could:

- Not provide single use cups at the end of races and advertise that people will need to bring their own drinks containers.
- Implement a clearly advertised tiered charging system for vehicles at events to promote car sharing, for example, £10 for a single occupancy car which is halved for each additional member.
- Time events to allow people to make use of public transport or cycling and promote the use of this – for example half price or free entry with a bus ticket or for arriving by bike.
- Buy reusable fabric numbers
- Charge a small sum for safety pins to encourage their reuse (suggestion: 20p)
- Use online entry systems to avoid unnecessary printing of entry forms.

## Club Members

You should:

- Follow the Countryside Code (see appendix)
- Where possible walk/cycle or use public transport if the car is the only option attempt to lift share. There is a club carpool WhatsApp group available (details on the forum)
- Attempt to minimise material waste involved in running activities, use reusable drinks containers for example. There is a currently a kit swap at pack run on the second Wednesday of the month.

You could:

- Pick up and take home any litter found whilst running (there is a litter pick on the last pack run of the month)
- Volunteer with local organisations (Keep Tod Tidy, Crows, Canal and River trust etc.) to assist in the managing the local area we run in.
- If a large number of people are attending a distant event, consider hiring a minibus/coach

## **Appendix**

The Countryside Code:

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

June 2023

## **The rise of GPX and the mapping app**

I don't know how many club members aren't on Strava but I'll bet it's not many. Strava tells me there are over 200 signed up members of the Strava Todmorden Harriers club. Personally I find it a great tool to record what I've done, see what other people are doing, get ideas from other people's posts for new routes and generally to look at photos people have taken of nice places!

All that information (apart from the photos) is based on a GPX file and a background open-source map.

With the use of GPX firmly banned for fell races and probably not necessary for road races it may not be on everybody's radar, so what exactly is a GPX file? The definition of a GPX file is simply a text file with waypoints, tracks and routes saved on it. So this is not much use until combined with a mapping app of which there are many besides

Strava. OSmaps, Komoot, Map my ride, Google maps and the list goes on. Once you have a GPX file you can generally upload it to the app of your choice or alternatively create your own GPX route on one of the said apps by plotting the route you want to follow. Hence if someone gives you a GPX file you can upload it and you've got their route laid out in front of you. In the old days we'd have just used a highlight pen on our OS map.

Personally if I'm going running or walking in the mountains and following a GPX file I'll use it on OSmaps, if I'm on a bike ride I tend to use Komoot. However I think most work well and it's a matter of what you get used to more than anything, I know many people subscribe to Strava and wouldn't use anything else.

Over the last couple of years I'm finding myself using GPX files more and more and it is more often than not opening up great new opportunities of discovery. Cycling UK has created a number of new cycle routes all of which are advertised on their website ([www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org)) They all have great descriptions, photos, a booklet and most importantly a GPX file of the route available to download. I recently rode The Rebellion way, a 370km cycle route around Norfolk, it was a great route exactly as it was described on their website, however there was one crucial difference to the C2C cycle route, for example, in the whole 370km there wasn't a single physical signpost, there is no way I could have followed the route without the GPX file on an app on my phone attached to my bike handlebars.

When considering cycling or walking in a new area I'll often start by looking at Komoot which will suggest routes to me within a certain radius of the place I enter and it will often have reviews of those routes. When going cycle touring from one place to another it will often suggest great traffic free cycle routes to take, that if you didn't have local knowledge of the area you'd never discover. With fell races while you need to have good navigation skills and can't



use GPX, it is still a good tool for planning outings and races. By looking at other people's routes you can find lines you'd never have normally considered. It's a bit like doing a recce sat at your laptop. Earlier this year I did the George Fisher Tea Round which starts off up Catbells above Derwentwater, looking at other people's attempts on it there was a definite better line round the back and straight up to Catbells summit rather than the normal tourist route which goes over a couple of minor tops before onto the summit. I'd have never picked that without access to other people's GPX files.

Away from fell racing there are lots of adventure races and ultras that now do the same as CyclingUK and give a GPX file of the race route available to download from their website. With today's acceptance of technology this probably makes these sorts of events more appealing to people, it gives them a better understanding of what they are attempting and more confidence about finding their way along it. The note of caution is obviously what happens when the technology goes wrong! Firstly, we should never be entirely dependent on anything electronic and we should have a map/compass with us and the knowledge of how to use them at all times. That said I've not yet found myself in a situation where I've been let down by the technology. The obvious things to be aware of to minimise the risk of things going wrong are downloading your route so you're not dependent on a phone signal and knowing the battery life of your device in relation to how you'll be using it or ensuring you have a battery backup with you.

So what next for GPX, will there be louder calls for it to be allowed in fell races? Personally I hope not, in my view it's a fundamental element of the sport to know & use your navigation skills. Not to mention it's much more enjoyable running round the fells with your head up rather than dot watching on your phone.

However that said the more people use these apps and allow open access to their routes the more information gets put out there to be

discovered. I'll certainly be using it as much as possible when planning future trips to obscure and unknown places. Happy travels!

Bob Halstead

## **Chat gpt write an autumn poem about fellrunning**

Amidst the amber hues of autumn's grace,  
Fell runners race, in this wild, rugged place.  
Leaves of gold and crimson underfoot,  
As they climb the hills, their hearts resolute.

The moorland whispers secrets of the past,  
As runners forge a trail, both strong and fast.  
Misty valleys echo with their breath,  
In the crisp, cool air, they conquer death.

The hills, like giants, stand both tall and proud,  
Their challenge met by those who dare, unbowed.  
Through heather, bracken, and the rocky scree,  
Fell runners find their wild, untamed decree.

With every stride, they touch the sky so near,  
In this autumnal realm, without a fear.  
As daylight wanes, and twilight takes its hold,  
They find their way back home, to hearth and fold.

Oh, fell running in autumn's splendid gown,  
A dance with nature, where courage is renowned.  
Through valleys deep and peaks that touch the sky,  
In this rugged land, they'll run until they die.

Prompted by Paul Colledge, created with artificial intelligence

## Shit shorts and mist: Tod Harriers take on the Hodgsons

The first Sunday of October saw eight of Todmorden's finest (?!) head to the Lakes for the annual Hodgson Bros Mountain Relay. The early pick-up time and drive to Patterdale couldn't deter eight of Calderdale's hardiest souls from the challenging routes that awaited. That is, until the sun started to rise and shone a light on the mist that formed a barrier over the tops of the fells.

"Surely that will clear by the time we get going," each member of the team was heard to mutter repeatedly as we waited for the race start. (Narrator: It didn't).

The early start, rain and seemingly immovable clag failed to take into consideration Tod Harriers' secret weapon, though - a special request from captain fantastic Doni Clarke. He ensured the Harriers wouldn't





be missed by those who could see them on the hills with each member adorning the shittiest shorts possible, the fulsome colours that greeted every leg meaning spectators surely would never forget each pair's heroics.

It was a fantastic day out for the team, where we posted a credible 26th place - the highest Tod Harriers finish in the Hodgsons in over a decade. A thanks to our cheerleader and unofficial photographer, Jon Wright, who got the full glare of the shorts in every shot. The top 20 is already in the club's sights for next year! Here's a leg-by-leg breakdown of the day:

### **Leg 1 - Patterdale to Hartsop**

Stu Hyslop - fresh from a gentle 106 mile run at the UTMB - and Darren Tweed led the Harriers off from Patterdale on the first leg; a 4-mile route with 1,500ft of climb. The team couldn't help but notice, though, that Darren looked to be sporting basketball shorts after borrowing Stu's multi-coloured pair - presumably forgetting when he agreed that his partner was a few inches taller. When the race started, he and Stu were soon nothing but a pair of brightly coloured, flapping shorts in the distance, and were right in the mix amid a fast stampede out



of the gate. The leg soon followed a climb into the soupy mist, picking a bit around Angle Tarn before plunging headlong down into Hartsop. The descent saw Darren suffer an unfortunate bracken related backside injury, giving his newly acquired shorts a good christening in every crevice imaginable - you're welcome, Stu. Fortunately, a fun final charge down the track showed it was only a flesh wound and Gaz's snazzy shorts (more on that later) helped them easily identify



the team and make for a slick handover. All over in a brightly coloured flash.

## **Leg 2 - Hartsop to Kirkstone**

Gaz Pemberton and Chris Kay picked up the mantle on the challenging second leg - roughly seven miles but with just under 3,000 foot of climbing across High Street and Raven's Crag. The typical Lakes weather had fully set in by the time they hared off with very wet and cold conditions on the first summit. The team reccies in the weeks before the race paid off, though, with Chris leading the way with his nav and hitting the ideal lines down the juicy descent towards

Kirkstone - with Gaz pretty much emerging as a Walshes ambassador afterwards, thanking his decision to wear Walshes PB and not slipping over once as the pair plunged downhill, setting the Harriers up nicely as they handed over in 32nd position.

## **Leg 3 - Kirkstone Pass to Hartsop Hall**

With the hills surrounding Kirkstone Pass Inn covered in mist and the rain falling, Red Screes - a mere 50 or so metres away - was invisible from the inside of Captain Clarke's campervan, handily placed in the changeover car park as myself and Dom awaited Leg 2. Any worries that we would miss the Harriers coming in were dispelled by Gaz - wearing the reddest and shortest shorts known to man that pierced their way through the fog like a beacon as he and Chris charged to the handover point. A quick exchange of the dibber and - once Dom had finished tying his laces - we were off, straight onto Red Screes and the

challenging climb up (my thanks to Dom for waiting as I struggled up the ascent!) Once at the summit, we found a good trod down and then up towards Scandale Pass that let us pick up a good rhythm on the ascent to Dove Crag.

Unfortunately, with the clag fully in, it was then that mine and Dom's famed navigation skills inexplicably deserted us, leading to a couple of minutes of fruitless wandering around. Fortunately any major incident or dressing down from Cpt C was averted when we were able to pick up the route (by following another team who knew where they were going) on the descent.

Dropping around 2,000ft in a mile only involved us falling on our arses about half a dozen times (my only disappointment being that I was in front of Dom so didn't see him nearly submerge in a river crossing), but we were able to pick up a couple of positions and leave it to Ash and Doni to make up the 29 places required for the win.



#### **Leg 4 - Hartsop Hall to Patterdale** (written by Doni)

I'm writing this basking in the glory of us winning the shittest shorts competition at the HBMR, the only prize we were going for! Leg 4 started exactly how it shouldn't have, 4.36 mile pace - Ash's fault, he was pumped! We quickly over took a pair, slowed down and then clawed ourselves onto the back of a group of about 8 pairs at the top of Hart Crag.

After following the ever so reliable (not very) Ricky Lightfoot on a magical mystery tour of the Fairfield plateau, we eventually scree'd off in the right direction, out of the mist for the 1st time in about 6 weeks and heading towards St Sunday Crag. That went by in a blur

and we were full gas for over 2 miles downhill, me screaming back at Ash 'you all good, you with me?' Ash, not feeling very chatty at this point, was shouting back 'yes' whilst probably thinking 'will you shut the f\*\*k up'. We sprinted down the road, into the finish field and dibbed in for what was the end to an amazing day, spent with old friends and faces but also some newish friends and faces. Super proud of the team and their efforts. Couldn't have asked for anymore. In my opinion Gaz won the shittest shorts award, votes welcome for the next issue! Peace.

Ben Blossie

## **Bivvy**

Lay in my bivvy, needing a wee.  
3 lovely bivviers, all sleeping next to me.  
I ought to get up, but I just can't budge,  
With the sky all grey like a pencil smudge.  
The air's full and heavy, a mizzle all around,  
And the birds are making one hell of a sound.  
A warbling gurgle with chirrups and screeches.  
Almost as loud as seagulls on beaches.  
The wind stirs the campsite with a rousing percussion,  
And I'm still perched up, on my blow up cushion  
Wondering, wondering when will I pop?  
If I wait a little longer, will the urgency stop?  
It's chilly out there, yet I'm as warm as can be.  
But darned it, oh darned it,  
I do need that wee!

Kerry Edwards

## Ironman Switzerland, 10th July 2022

Swim: 3.8km      Bike: 180km      Run: 42km

Having decided that I'd like to revive my glittering Ironman career, I set about choosing a suitable event. Preferably: driveable distance, fresh water swim, reasonable temperature, inspiring course and great scenery. So fellow Tod Harrier Simon Galloway and I eventually settled on Ironman Thun, in the Bernese Oberland. You can see the Jungfrau and Eiger from many points around the route, so no complaints on that score.

Having paid the entry fee, which I didn't dare convert into pounds sterling, I started my training in October, hoping that would give me plenty of time to build up the required strength. All went well, and I hardly missed a day's training over several months. I had some amazing rides with friends, and also on my own. Sea swimming in January was a real delight, and I sneakily adapted some of the Monday Fartlek sessions to suit what I was doing in my programme. At the same time, I did some of the Tod races, just for the fun of fitting them in, and to remind my body and mind that racing is hard. Nearly every time I went running, I felt better at the end than when I set off, so I knew that things were going well. One of my favourites was doing bike intervals up on the Long Causeway, followed by runs around Bride Stones and Whirlaw, in sight of Lydgate, where the Anderton boys grew up.

As race week approached, we grew paranoid about Covid, and Simon moved into a tent in his back garden! The drive out was great, and Simon and I arrived at Thun camping with 4 days to go. Triathlon is notable for the amount of faffing with kit that goes on, and we both established new PBs for this. I just tried to stay out of the sun and not exert myself too much. (Some of my friends will say that this was entirely in character)



**Race Day.** Slept pretty well, for me. Three Weetabix and a spoon of peanut butter at 4.30.a.m. Tea. Walk down to transition carrying wet suit and clothes for later. At 6.30, I had a gel. Shouting going on over the PA system, revving everyone up. On the start line, a rolling start, meaning a relatively calm first few hundred metres. The water was beautiful and early sunlight made it easy to sight the marker buoys. Both Simon and I had really pleasing swims, and I was buzzing: 1:16 ish for 3.8k. Get in!

My plan was to treat the bike leg like a day ride and go easy. Dozens of really lean, ripped people sped by early on, so I knew I'd swum well, and also that my bike plan was working. Aid stations had water, Gatorade, Maurten gels and bars, pretzels, bananas and oranges, and the people manning them were amazingly enthusiastic and helpful. It was described as a hilly course- 2200m is quite a lot, but there was nothing too bad, maybe like the Oxenhope side of Cock Hill. The countryside was lovely, and the tarmac smooth as a mirror. It was two laps of 90k and a delight all the way round. I spent loads of time in an aero position, and finished feeling ok in about 7:30.

As soon as I left T2, I knew that I wasn't going to be able to run freely. My legs were tight and I was limited to a shuffle/jog. Ok. Play the cards you've been dealt. I started power walking and jogging, and I made a deal with myself that every time someone overtook me, I would start running again. This happened a lot, as it was a 3 loop course. The run route went along the shore and into the old town, and was partially in shade. I started the first loop at about 4pm, so the temp was fine. The first lap of 14k took me 1:40. You have to finish Ironman within 17 hours, i.e.at Midnight and I knew I had plenty of time in hand. Horror stories happen at every event where some competitors approach the finish at several seconds after midnight and the lights are switched off, meaning that they haven't been successful, despite having completed a 17 hour day.

My 2<sup>nd</sup> lap was a bit faster, 1:38ish,and I finished reasonably strongly ,

posting a 5:32 marathon time, 14:32 overall and well happy with that. The standard is so high - a bloke on our campsite in my age cat MV60, was 3 hours quicker than me, and was only 5<sup>th</sup> in our age group!

I was a bit spaced out at the finish, so collected my stuff and went back to the camping. Simon G came in about 55 mins later. A good sleep later, we were invited to a cooked brekkie by our new friends who had made their Ironman debut. I didn't move all day, just lay around reading. The 2 day journey home was great again, and there may have possibly been a discussion about a possible future event. Possibly...

Thanks to Simon for an amazing week, and to our families and friends for their support, i.e. putting up with us.

Simon Anderton

## **Stanza Stones 2023 from behind the scenes**

In 2012 I lived in Silsden, Keighley. One day I was running along a regular route when I was stopped in my tracks by a stone. Two stones actually, with a poem carved on them. It was the Dew Stone, the 4th of the Stanza Stones. That year the poet laureate Simon Armitage had written 6 poems on a theme of water and placed them in locations along the South Pennines between Marsden and Ilkley.

From the start I wanted to run the whole lot in one go.



But in 2012 I wasn't running ultra distances, and my life wasn't really set up to do that. So it waited.

In 2022 Daz told us he was organising the Stanza Stones ultra. We knew he'd need all the ultra experienced crew he could get, so we decided to forgo running it for now in favour of helping.

We'll quietly elide months of planning. Ideas being put forward and carefully written down (or completely forgotten). Early draft art work. Watching Sientries lists growing. Recces and GPX files.



Let's resume at 5.45

Saturday morning. Claire had choir practice Friday, so we'd driven down to Marsden late Friday night and just about managed to get to bed for midnight. At 5.45 the loud birdsong from the recorded robin I use as an alarm tone dragged us out of bed. Daz had messaged the team Whatsapp late the night before to say that we couldn't get into the building until 6.30 rather than 6, then again at 5.30 to say that they had vehicle trouble and were running late. So I made some coffee.

By 6.15 we were in the building and waiting. It turned out the vehicle hire firm had let us down, so we were down a vehicle. This is the kind of thing that happens, and adapting quickly to hitches - hopefully without any of the entrants noticing - is part of the fun.

We'd used the extra waiting time to work out where to put kit check and registration, so when Daz and Joolz arrived we were able to

unload and set up very quickly. Karen and Bob appeared with the Runfurther flags and I lent a hand setting up.

Coming up to 8 the bus arrived from Ilkley and we started kit check and registration. A few people had registered on Friday night in Ilkley, but the majority were registering Saturday morning. I had time for a couple of kit checks then I was heading out to flag the descent from Pule Hill to the Snow Stone. This is a faint trod that allows easy access to the quarry from the south, and we wanted to make sure it was clearly visible to keep people away from the cliff edge. It was chilly and windy on the way up, but I was climbing reasonably quickly so I wasn't too cold. Once that was done I placed the clips and kites at the stone itself (taking care not to block the stones in case anyone wanted to take photos) then followed the route down to the road crossing at Manchester Road.

On reaching the road crossing there was a ewe and lamb on the wrong side of the gate. I popped to the farm next door, where I was told "it's just like this in Marsden. They wander around all over the place. We've only got four in the field".

Promising to keep an eye on the four in the field while 78 people came through, I went back to my station at the side of the road. Thankfully it was too early for the road to be particularly busy, and I was able to wave most of the entrants straight across, keeping an eye on both gates and all four sheep as much as possible.

*Road crossing photo  
courtesy of Nick  
Ham*



Towards the end of the rush, Claire popped up needing the keys to my van to get some stuff out. Once she brought them back I trotted back up to the quarry, gathered in the flags and kites and returned to the van to get to my next assignment. Plans were shifting and, instead of going to Haworth to set up, I was due in Mytholmroyd. I turned on the radio and got a R3 program about 'Peter and the Wolf' and dragged my way up Scapegoat Hill and back down into the valley.

At Mytholmroyd it was absolutely baking. The volunteers there had everything set up, and I spent half an hour or so filling water bottles and fetching food, then Claire turned up with her van which had been parked at my house and we loaded up with food and kit for the finish. I set off for Haworth, with Claire not far behind me.

The traffic through Hebden wasn't awful and I got across to Haworth fairly promptly. The CP was already set up and Ricky, Louise and Anthony were there, along with Andy Smith from CVFR cheering on some of their members, Steve Foster (who was supporting Sally) and a lad from the Scouts helping us with the village hall facilities. The next couple of hours mostly consisted of fetching jugs of water from indoors and filling up runners' bottles. Kev Hoult turned up and hung around for a little while eating and rehydrating. We had a few retirees early on, including James Chapman who had been in the top 3.



*Pic: still fresh and cloudy - 8.30am on Pule Hill*

Once things were definitely settled into a rhythm at Haworth I headed down to Bingley. I still had the food for the finish to deliver



and time was getting on.

At Bingley things were fairly quiet still. Claire and Joolz were just about to leave for the finish, Andy Brookes from Peak District Ultras was helping out, and Mick and Alan appeared soon after. The first couple of runners came through, then a very frustrated Kev Hoult turned up having struggled to find us. Navigation through built up areas is always a pain, and the map we supplied was an OS 1:25k rescaled to 1:50k. I've noticed before that printing OS Explorer symbology at 1:50k makes it really hard to read. Next year we'll have better signage for the Bingley CP. This time we quickly put out some signs we'd collected from earlier in the route, and that seemed to help.

A hectic spell of filling bottles, cooking pizza and checking on people. It was mid/late afternoon and a lot of people were coming in much the worse for the heat. Jono Wright appeared and quietly lay down in the back room, so I was kept occupied checking on him and feeding him water & electrolytes for a while.

Generally though most people were in pretty good order. A lady came in asking for blister plasters. We don't generally keep Compeeds or anything like that - foot care is really personal. We also have to be quite careful about 'treating' people - I'm first aid trained so I'm equipped to deal with emergencies but I am not a doctor. Mostly I clean up grazes and cuts, and check for anything more serious. I checked her blisters and they were pretty bad - blister plasters most likely wouldn't have helped anyway. In those circumstances what I'd do for my own feet is to tape the area with gaffa tape to reduce friction. I have some gaffa tape that isn't too madly sticky, so it comes off after a race fairly easily. I checked she was happy with that then taped them up, and I did see her at the end so I guess it worked ok. Quite a few of us are first aid trained to some extent, but Helen W and I are the usual FRA trained first aiders and Helen wasn't around, so I was pretty busy. Jono was still not well, and I wasn't convinced he was going to be



finishing. But with the CP open until 11pm, 17 miles to go and the temperature dropping rapidly things could (and did) change. Around 7pm or so I got a call to go to the finish as there had been a couple of falls on the final descent, and they wanted me around

just in case. Just as I was packing up to leave and cleaning the bars of the oven Laura and Sarah arrived, and Jono was on his feet looking tired but fully functioning. I checked he really was functioning properly, then off he went, and so did I. We had 2 retirees (one was Bernard, I'm terrible with names so unfortunately the other escapes me) waiting to head to the finish, so we all squeezed into the front of my van and headed for Ben Rhydding. We had a nice chat on the way over and my passengers were full of compliments about the event, which was great to hear.

It took me a while to figure out how to get onto the field, but once I was there I parked up and went into the school to help out. Claire and Joolz were looking after the timing, so I got on with distributing water, tea and chilli to the finishers, gathering in trackers, occasionally taking a finish with the scanner when the others were unavailable. The Opentracking scanner wasn't working quite as expected, so we tinkered with things a bit and worked out a reliable process.

Dave Garner had put up the Runfurther banners along the finish funnel which looked great. Later on when we took the flags down I put up some fairy lights as well which made for a nice atmosphere.

The night spell is a bit of a blur. I was bustling about most of the time, making sure people were fed and looked after, removing trackers and checking occasional finishers in, and keeping a close eye on some of the finishers who were more than just tired. I spent quite a while with one guy who had some slightly worrisome symptoms, but seemed to be just exhausted and hypoglycaemic. He was actually suffering very much the same effects as I sometimes get. After a lot of tea and some food (and several warm layers) he was fine. Merrian (LDWA stalwart and regular at the last CP of the hundred) was around helping (while she waited for partner Dave, but actually mainly because she enjoys being involved).

There were other impromptu helpers around the course - partners of runners helped out in various ways, one guy was handing out water at Warley Moor reservoir. Chris Driver of the Fellsman set up an impromptu water station in front of his house in Riddlesden while his kids guided people in and kept them company.

Various Runfurther friends showed up at different times: Karen, Nick, Jenny (Ken had retired at Bingley with knee problems while I was there). Imtiaz Ilahi came in looking only slightly tired. Other Cragrunner & Tod friends too: Jack Cooper, Guy Whitmore (who retired but made his own way to the finish), Mark C. Jono came doggedly in, and around 3am or so Dianne & Kieran arrived, very tired and footsore but glad to have finished (and only a couple of weeks after the EBB100 at that). A little later Dom Camponi was greeted in by some CVFR members who had been waiting up for him to finish. I read about Dom's backstory in a blog post a couple of years back and noticed he'd had a couple of DNFs due to injury last year, so I'm always happy to see him finish a tough race.

At 4:15 we only had 2 people left still on the course. They were over by the swastika stone and I estimated their remaining time at 2 hours. Claire and I crawled into bed for a couple of hours, and at about 6:20 I heard the final finishers walk past our van. We popped into the hall to

see how things were going, then went back for 'a couple of hours' more sleep. Unfortunately we forgot to set an alarm and slept until 10. By that time the hall had been cleared and we were pretty much all done and dusted.

The feedback we got on the event was fantastic, everyone seemed to have a great time in spite of the weather. The hitches we had were handled smoothly and hopefully weren't apparent to the competitors. Next year's event looks assured - in fact as I write this there are 12 confirmed entrants, and less than a week has passed. By Sunday afternoon Whatsapp was already crackling with suggestions and ideas for next year's race.

I've volunteered at a lot of races, particularly Cragrunner ones but also other ROs and our club races. The Stanza Stones was intense and exhausting to be involved with but enormous fun. Being able to look after people while they undertake something like this is an absolute joy.

Next year we'll be back. Claire and I will probably run the course ourselves in the interim so we can be part of the organisation of the event. Maybe we can get a few more walkers aiming for that quiet 20-24 hour slot, especially if we're a qualifier for LDWA East Anglia 2025. Hopefully it'll be a bit cooler!

Charles Colbourn

## **Awkward, as expected and enjoyable**

Red Rose Cross Country 2022

Round 1: Awkward, Todmorden.

My 1st XC since primary school (31 years ago) and because it had hills I knew I was going to win after the 1st lap but because Langdale was looming, I didn't want to go too hard, so I awkwardly ran behind Grant

until the last lap and then beat him by 6 secs, perfect, it's easy this XC-1st place.

## Round 2: Reality, Townley

My 2nd XC since school made me realise why there had been a 31 year break! I was in 4th place half way around the 2nd (1st big) lap, checked my watch, was going far too fast! Grant was paying me back for round 1, sitting on my shoulder and waiting for revenge, half a lap later he cruised past me like I was going backwards, revenge is best served on weirdly warm November day in Townley (or so the XC saying goes) From there it was survival mode and exactly what I'd expected, a beasting! 5th place.

## Round 3: Enjoyable, Sefton - Euro Qualifier!!!

Because there were thousands of people, doing warm ups!! Wearing fancy kit and wearing air pods, I decided to do a warm up but because the ladies were racing and no one could look after the gazebo I ran around that a few times! Warm up done. Due to the amount of people in the race I decided to get out fast and settle in for maybe top 30. Part 1 of the plan went far too well, after the 1st half lap, I was about 15th and the pace was 4:36 mile-ing (a speed I don't ever want to run again) so I decided to settle in to a 5:30 pace knowing that was sustainable for me. I then proceeded to get overtaken for the rest of the race. It's the first time this year that going for 1st overall or 1st V40 was clearly not an option! So it became a really fun and humbling race, after getting my arsed kicked I enjoyed some of Kath's vegan cake. What a weird race for me to enjoy. I wish I'd have set my targets on top 130 instead of top 30. 125th place.

P.S I never check my watch during hill racing. Something weird and not wonderful happened to make me keep doing it. Thoroughly an un-enjoyable part of XC.

P.P.S I imagine they'll be another 31 year wait at least until my next XC. So whoever is captain next year, put me down for head baker.

Peace, mother nature & running

Doni Clarke

## **The trials and tribulations of fuelling for running**

I think most Toddies will have sorted out their fuelling needs for racing or long runs by now, but it's something I've struggled with over the past couple of years. With new runners coming through on C25K I thought it might be an idea to carry on my food theme and talk about fuelling for the longer runs.

The first thing to note is that we are all different, and we all process what we eat at different rates. So it's important to find out what works for you, it may well be different to what works for me both in timing and the food you can tolerate. The second thing to note is that I am not a qualified nutritionist, this is just what I've found to work, and the mistakes I've made in the hope that others can avoid them.

5K races: I normally just have my usual breakfast for these (marmite on toast and a coffee), or a banana about half an hour before I run. If it's an evening race I eat more at lunchtime, then have a large snack about 2 hours before I run, then the banana half an hour before. You will notice that bananas feature quite highly in my recommendations. This is because they are easily digestible and seem to provide the energy I need.

Longer than 5K races I usually have coffee and porridge with some dates and maple syrup. There's nothing special about the maple syrup, I just like it. I often have a slice of toast, and I scoop the porridge up with the toast, much to Neil's disgust. Whilst doing so I'm



hassled by my cats who want in on the toast. Then there is the obligatory banana half an hour before the race. A few times I have mistimed the banana. Noticeably at Blackshaw Head Fell Race, which started an hour later than I thought it did. This ended up with me close to passing out on the final uphill, nearly falling off a stile and being overtaken by a number of people who had until that point been quite some way behind me. I had to have an emergency can of Tango from the drinks tent before I could start on the more important task of drinking beer. Apparently, I'd gone a bit grey in the face. So, make sure you know what time you are starting.



*Picture: we couldn't find a picture of a Toddy eating a banana, so this one of Toby Leckie at Race You to the Summit'll have to do?!*

I recently did a half marathon, which meant that I had to try and work out fuelling that was a bit more sophisticated than my go to porridge and banana combo. I was going to have eat whilst running, and bananas probably weren't going to work. After a few attempts and a botched long run when it was exceptionally hot and I didn't take enough water, I finally worked it out. The standard porridge and banana combo, followed by a SIS gel after 45 minutes, water with electrolytes – the more you sweat the more of these you need, then a Styrkr caffeine gel after another 30 minutes, I also had some medjool dates with me just in case, these are easy to eat and release sugar quickly. These are amazing and taste like tiramisu, I could happily eat them without actually doing any running.

Of course when it came to the day it all went bottoms up. I ended up having breakfast earlier as I was leaving earlier than planned, then I had my banana slightly early, then the race started late. I decided to bring the gels forward (I had an extra SIS gel) which worked well, however it was a hot day and I just didn't drink enough water. Even though I was carrying 500ml and there were 4 water points on the way round, and Simon gave me some orange flavoured drink. By the time I was 10 miles in my pace slowed, and I ended up slightly down on my expected finish time. So always have a contingency plan, drink more water than you think you need and plan for hot days in October. Oh, and always carry an emergency banana.

Helen Tipping

## The Lap: Windermere

I took up athletics in 2013, mostly to fill a '*vacuum*' that appeared after stepping back from team sports. Growing up in South Wales during the 1980s - where rugby union was less a hobby, more a religion and where girls & boys start playing as early as 4 or 5 years old, my friends and I were accustomed to landscapes littered with colliery wheels and rugby posts.



By contrast there was a relative scarcity of football pitches. The national team mustered little success after Cliff Jones, Ivor Allchurch and John Charles led Wales to the quarter-finals of the 1958 World Cup. Eliminated by Brazil to a single goal (scored by Pele), the three subsequent decades of failure stagnated enthusiasm for the round ball. This stagnation - coupled with rugby's Grand Slam winning sides

of the 1970s - offered the oval ball tremendous prominence where we grew up.

Dad threw my first 'Gilbert' to me in Bryncoch in 1988. The *hearty slap* of ball-on-skin snapped life into my system! White leather, cold fingertips, that distinctive pig-bladder shape and the quirky, unpredictable bounce were an instant balm. Best of all, there was a field of mud - 97 metres of it (!) - coarse with sand, thick with gloop and sodden with rainfall. Dad and I spent hours at *c/wb rygbi Bryncoch* studying ball-rotation, learning running angles, perfecting head placement in the tackle and researching *how* to read that elusive bounce (truly, you can *nearly* achieve this!)



Whenever he left I stayed out longer, enjoying more lonely hours imagining myself a young Jonathan Davies, an upcoming Ieuan Evans, a burgeoning Allan Bateman. Against invisible opponents on desolate fields I'd shimmy, swerve, duck and dummy past an array of make-believe school friends or national demigods, before sliding six metres through sludge for match

-winning tries near the corner flag. Later, I trialled with Neath RFC and the Ospreys, but eventually put the 'ball to bed' when masculine mortality muscled-in on ambition ("*you're much too skinny for the modern game, son!*").

Hence the 'vacuum'.

No more team mates. No more tightly-taped ears... and even tighter

shorts. No more mud! No more coach journeys to obscure, bleak valleys beyond Cwmafan, Cilfrew and Cwmgwrach. No more scrums. No more shoving one's head between two friends' backsides at the breakdown. No more liniment oil. No half-time oranges. No more choruses of 'Cwm Rhondda' or 'Delilah'. No more sitting at long console tables scattered with Allbright bitter mats, in welfare clubs and working mens unions in locations like Tonna, Tonmawr, Godre'r-graig and Glais.

Strange, the things you miss.

\* \* \*

Vacuums can be filled, however... and for me, athletics was the matter that expanded within. I traded try lines, turf and trauma for tarmac, towpaths and trails. I also noticed that when you first begin running, the notion of covering a single mile without stopping is anathema. Somebody else then suggests you *try 'two miles after tea'* and you tell them to *'trot on'*. What mindless masochist attempts to run 5 kilometres in one go?!



My earliest pair of running shoes were actually an old pair of converse high tops that I first wore with skinny jeans at a Super Furry Animals gig in Aberystwyth. Seven days later (when the suffering from the shin-splints subsided), a well-intentioned mate from Rotherham suggested we enter the Barnsley 10K together.

*"Ten kilometres, seriously?" I asked him. "You joggers make me laugh, with your niplash and your fartleks. How many people out there can genuinely run 10 kilometres without stopping?"*

As it goes, 568 finishers got round that day.

When, two years later in 2015, I completed the Sheffield half-marathon, I assumed that I would receive some kind of knighthood.

Then, after moving to Bingley in 2017 and discovering in astonishment that *“some people in the north routinely run up & down the high fells for pleasure”*, I genuinely spat out my brew and muttered the word *“wazzocks”* beneath my breath.

*Right: Bob Graham and pacers at Dunmail Raise on his 1932 round.*



The final straw occurred that same Christmas, when I learnt from a book called *‘Feet in the Clouds’* that if you traverse 42 miles within 24 hours from a place called Keswick and call it a ‘Bob Graham’ you are diagnosed medically insane. It wasn’t until New Years Day that I lifted my bottom jaw shut, rested the book on a table and said, *“Dad, you’ll never hear of me running that distance”*

\* \* \*

And so it was, with a certain inevitability, that I rose from bed at 5:00am recently, in the comfortable surroundings of Lakeside’s YMCA on the shore of Windermere, to tackle *‘The Lap’* - a 47 mile ultra-marathon circumnavigating England’s largest lake. The course climbs 8,214ft and is held twice annually - a clockwise edition in May and an anti-clockwise route in September.

Now, let’s be clear. There is no ‘secret sauce’ or special key to long distance running. Ultra marathons are not the preserve of elite athletes; neither are they *rarefied air* where only uniquely gifted competitors flourish. Ultras are for the whosoever: the misfits, the nonconformists, the bloody-minded, the cake-lovers, the fancy-

dressed and the frankly hilarious. They are for engineers, teachers and plumbers, accountants, carpenters and nurses, architects, sales reps and solicitors, those strapped to office desks between 8 and 5pm. Ultras can be for hill-lovers or those who simply enjoy meeting new friends.

You don't need to be super fit, you just need to be super-friendly. I once ran 16 wet miles over Cross Fell in the high Pennines from Dufton to Garrigill with two complete strangers - a Polish guy living in Edinburgh and a cyclist from Barnoldswick. We still keep in touch today.



Setting off in darkness at 6am, the ascent south through native broadleaves and conifers heads firstly to Finsthwaite and then to the foot of the lake at Newby Bridge.

From there it's a stern climb over Gummer's How and Brant Fell to Orrest Head, where an exuberant border collie yelps her approval and licks my salty hand. Then it's on to Troutbeck for a change of socks at the midway checkpoint (23 miles).

At midday we reach the high-point at Wansfell Pike but I'm not tired; rather, I'm elated to be out in the fresh air and the rapturous views. When I first joined Tod Harriers I couldn't quite summon the courage to chat with long-distance leg-turners like Kim Ashworth or Daz Graham – believing them to be a semi-separate species! Of course, it's clear to me now... they make a success of things partly by being appreciative of everything and everyone around them. It's quite a beautiful trait.



Through Ambleside, past the chippy, over Loughrigg Fell to Skelwith Bridge and on towards Latterbarrow - the final significant climb at 36 miles. I'm running with an IT Technician from Runcorn, a chemist from Sunderland and a student from Gloucester who



*"fancied something different"* this weekend. I've eaten a colossal sum of calories in the form of soup, hot dogs and cake and I've drunk seven litres of water and electrolytes - vital when exercising beneath warm sun.

Now then, I mustn't lie... the final six miles from Far Sawrey with its celebrated Beatrix Potter connections, to the finish line at Lakeside were grim and gruelling. Everybody suffers low ebbs at some stage, whatever the distance. My coping strategy is simple:

1. Swear very loudly (it helps).
2. Swear very loudly, but this time, accompany it with motivational 'self-talk' e.g., *"C'mon Pete...you can handle this, you dopey welsh p\*\*\*k!"* (also very helpful).
3. Breathe deeply through the nose (this increases oxygen uptake and regulates air flow to arteries, veins and nerves).
4. Keep driving the legs (it ends the suffering sooner).

At the finish line I discreetly and deftly disappear indoors on account of a puzzling shyness that always seems to appear amid the presence of razzmatazz, music, megaphones and applause. I finish in 69th position from a field of 426 runners, in a time of 11 hrs, 29 mins and 6 seconds. Whilst taking a shower I involuntarily begin shedding tears (I've no idea why but I quite liked it since it doesn't happen often and it feels quite cleansing). Then it's a stiff, sore, muscle-cramping car drive home.

There were no oval balls, no teammates, no liniment oil and no coaches offering advice. There were no Max Boyce songs and not a single chorus of Sosban Fach, Calon Lan or Myfanwy. There wasn't even any mud!

Yet there we all were: the 'misfits', the 'also-rans', the 'comedy-errors', the 'whosoever', the large, the little, the unlikely – rooting for each other amid ridiculously self-imposed flagellation – all of which culminates in a tiny, thimble-sized dose of personal triumph.

Nobody was particularly elite but everybody was particularly friendly.

As our running club – with its open-armed ethos and proud history – begins gearing up towards a fiftieth anniversary year (2028), we do so against a wider backdrop of uncertain social unease. There is a good chance then, that 'friendliness', 'kindness' and 'appreciation' will be some of the traits that help keep all of us going the distance.

Pete Rolls



# Ultra Tour Monte Rosa

Superb scenery, great company, and technical trails. 170km over 4 days in the Swiss and Italian Alps.

Starting at dawn each morning from a different town. Sharing a room with an unknown runner each night. Making friends along with way, either when running or with roommates. Nice cool mornings and sweltering afternoons.

Day 1: Grächen to Zermatt, 36.6km, 3020m ascent. Flowing forest trails; waterfalls and stream crossings (with dipping of hat and buff to cool down); steep climb to first aid station; crossing the Charles Kuonen Hängebrücke, a 494m long suspension bridge; runnable trails; short tunnels through rockfall areas; long rooty descent to Zermatt; lugging the drop bag back up the hill to the hotel; pasta dinner and early to bed.

Day 2: Zermatt to Gressoney la Trinité, 42.9km, 3055m ascent. Dawn view of the Matterhorn from the start line at Zermatt; 1500m climb in the first 13km; crossing the Theodul glacier; views of blue lakes and rocky ski resort areas; going wrong and needing to retrace steps back up about 100m climb (the route was flagged, we didn't notice the turn-off); climbing through a boulderfield; descending on rocky trail, forest trail, grassy trails and finally along the river to the finish in Gressoney; having evening meal with random Dutch runners who struggled to train for such a hilly race in their native land.

Day 3: Gressoney la Trinité to Macugnaga, 46.0km, 3724m ascent. Two huge passes; following the pack on ascent; wonderful reflections of the mountains in a still lake; ascending a ski slope; over the pass to a wonderful inversion; hoping to get down into the cloud to escape from the heat but the inversion had dispersed by then; descending through meadows; running out of food and water before next aid station; sit down with pasta and lots of fluid; 10km ascent on old

Roman Road followed by 10km rocky descent on old Roman Road; the Romans have left neglected the upkeep of their roads!; runnable track through forest into the finish town; feeling very strong at the finish; pizza at the finish line but stomach unable to take it in.

Day 4: Macugnaga to Grächen, 43.8km, 3469m ascent. 1500m climb in the first 6.4km; Monte Moro aid station with fantastic chocolate brownies; back into Switzerland; technical rocky trails on tired legs; boulder fields to cross; runnable section around the lake of Mattmarksee; forested descent; gradual climb to (upstairs!) aid station at Saas Fee; technical, seemingly never-ending, Höwenweg trail with sheer drop to one side for about 10km, final checkpoint (Hanigalp) and last 3.5km technical, rooty, descent to Grächen; crossing the finish line with relief; sociable post-race meal with new-found friends.

I ended up with tendon pains in my left shin and 4 black toes so it was difficult walking around for a few days afterwards but it was a fantastic experience and there is a great pull to go back again next year!

Pauline May

## **The last few miles - Ultra Tour du Mont Blanc**

France, September 2023

Surely it can't be down there? Can it? It's a little past something in the middle of the 2nd night of the race, I'm at the top of the last climb staring down into what feels like the abyss. A gulley choked with boulders and gnarly tree roots poised to grab the unsuspecting. On fresh legs maybe, after 90 something miles with battered feet and sore legs I am less keen. A quick map check first – really an excuse to rest a moment longer, only confirms the inevitable. It's the first of several cruel twists at the end of the Ultra Tour of Mont Blanc (UTMB

for short). It's a great route around the base of said mountain – 100 and a bit miles crossing alpine valleys and cresting high passes, visiting 3 countries on a single trip. Take a week or 10 days and savour a fantastic hike or sign up for the race and get comfortable being uncomfortable.

I pick my way down, cursing every uneven surface and trying not to trip and plunge head first. Everything is now taking far longer than it should – even thinking is taxing. Thoughts drift slowly through the fog in my head, often drifting off as half thoughts before any conclusions are drawn. The same ones soon come back around again, circling lazily like birds that never land. Finally the gulley eases into a narrow path that snakes its way round the mountain. There is probably a great view and a big drop, but it's still pitch dark and I have only the bubble of my head torch to rely on, I'll focus on that. I plod on, glad to be able to run a few steps to stretch out a bit. Maybe this last bit will not be too bad?

Picking carefully along the narrow path I spot a croissant on the ground – 'mmm, soft flaky pastry goodness' I think. Should I pick it up? It looks fresh enough... 'oh that's sad, it's just a rock'. A rare moment of rational thought follows – 'this isn't a great sign', but in these situations previous experience tells me food is usually the answer - 'you should try eating something'. The squashed energy bar I have left is not what I really had in mind though. 'There is surely something else in my bag?'... several minutes of searching reveals the other half of the same bar that I rejected hours earlier; only that side has various assorted crumbs and bits of crisp stuck to it. So no choice then, force it down, continue on. Eating gives me something to focus on, but as soon as I painfully swallow the 2nd mouthful I'm conscious of another problem to solve. I have relaxed a bit after getting down the canyon and now I'm falling asleep on the go. Time slows down, increasingly vision is going fuzzy and my eyes are now barely half open. This is getting a bit dodgy – so time for a stop. The urge to sleep becomes overwhelming, a comfy looking rock will have to do. Head

back, mouth open and I'm snoring in seconds....

30 seconds, 20 minutes, 2 hours? I really have no idea how long passes, but eventually I snap back to consciousness with a sudden jolt. This is a race, time is ticking, got to get moving again. It's remarkable what 10 minutes sleep can do – I'm restored and moving better; I can think more clearly and see straighter again too. As with all good courses it turns out there is one more hill to get up, and as befits this race, it's a steep bugger straight up a ski piste. Engage low gear and grind away, only 500m to go, it barely even made it onto the saw tooth race profile. I find a rhythm and tell myself each step is one closer to the top. A sudden flash then has me diving for cover – my sleep deprived brain sensed danger, but it's just a camera flash. The photographer lurking in the shadows chuckles and is not apologetic – I wonder how many others thought they were being shot?

Cresting the final final hill is a little victory, and one that is crowned with the red dawn light just starting to catch the rocky cliffs across the valley. Just a short downhill trot back into town from here. A short downhill trot down another ski slope. It's steep and rocky, hammering my blistered toes with every step. Then out of the frying pan and into the steep rooty forest switchbacks. Awkward through the trees, no chance of building any flow. I feel pretty battered, but others look worse: limping painfully downward with crooked step. The mood has changed now though, the zombies of the night have woken up - in good spirits and sensing that the worst is over. Each runner passed is a little boost that spurs me on. Sharing the pain makes it easier to hold out just a little bit longer. Still far below I can hear the town now – the clang of cowbells getting ever closer.

Finally I reach the river, and mercifully some flat ground. I could lay down and savour it, but there's now only a mile to go. It's just after 7am on a Sunday morning but the streets are alive and buzzing. First it's a few shouts from passers-by, but the crowds soon swell as the centre approaches. All the time the anticipation builds for a moment

that I never thought would come. Turn onto the main street and it's a continuous wall now, an overwhelming tunnel of noise after the solitude of the long night. It's with a great sense of relief that I run up the blue carpet and cross the finish line – back where I started after a day and 2 nights on the go.

Physically and mentally I'm exhausted, it has demanded a lot. There are tears of relief or joy or a perhaps bit of both – I'm really not sure anymore and totally overwhelmed by it all. It's been a day and a half of grinding away, never fast but always chipping away. The finish seemingly never getting any closer, but also never in doubt in my head. Years of planning and training, and full commitment to the big scary goal: weekends in the tent, packruns in rain and hours in the gym. It's a moment I'll savour but it's also shared with my long-suffering crew. They have been up all night too and brought life giving pizza to remote villages to get me through. I finished UTMB in 37hrs 15mins in 589th place of around 1500 finishers. Around 2500 started the 107 mile course that serves up 10,000m of elevation gain and loss.

Stuart Hyslop





## Race Across Scotland

*Clara sent in her account of an incredible adventure on Race Across Scotland 2023. Unfortunately it was a wee bit long for this publication so in keeping with Stu's theme, here's the juicy sufferer end bit. When we join Clara, she's been going for days, has covered around 200 miles, with tape on every toe, having struggled with her sight due to conjunctivitis, her knee is swollen, she's been hallucinating in the daylight but she's still going...at least it's stopped raining...*

I took on a place for Race Across Scotland in May 2023, a few months before the race in August; entries had been closed for a while and I enquired only to be told that I had the place, I hadn't really meant to actually take it but took it as fate to give it a go. It's a hefty entry fee at £599 and I sold my old running buggy to help cover the cost. Following the southern upland way, a coast to coast remote national trail in southern Scotland, the course would be 220 miles long with 28,500 ft of elevation. It was very intimidating and I was fairly certain my chance of finishing it would be around 2%...

...22 miles to go, I realised unless there was a catastrophe I was going to do this.

A few miles in and I was severely hallucinating, I didn't mind this but I felt very tired and stopped with a support crew to wait for the next runner behind. I felt that otherwise I was going to fall asleep on my feet, this was night 4 and I had had 3 hours sleep total. The plan had been to push hard and hopefully finish by 3am and get some sleep before the family would arrive the next day.

Here I teamed up with Alaister and Aaron; they were also in a bad way. I actually thought they were worse than I was. They had been working together since Saturday and having done most of the race alone I felt a bit odd not being self sufficient, I very much liked running my own pace however this last leg is has probably the most

memories in. It's the last bit but due to the twisting terrain the nav is very hard, in the dark it was very challenging, at times between us we had 5 GPS units running and we still struggled to find the trail.

We stumbled and limped for 5 miles when we first dropped for a 5 minute nap, initially for Alaister but then we all napped, I would set an alarm and we would lay down on the trail and wake and just get up and move. Adam could not sleep, I don't know how he survived. Alaister was struggling massively with sleep and was largely quiet, I tried to navigate but it was very difficult. My left leg was now painful and I wouldn't do anything but walk, I had taken all the pain relief I had. All I could do was keep breathing deeply, my toolbox had run out. After our third 5 min nap it was around 3 am, I had a message from my nanny, she was tracking us, it really gave me a bit of a boost. The hardest hours are 3am-dawn, that last night was very hard, we were so tired and the sky was black. We reached the road and couldn't work out how to cross, it was surprisingly busy and seemed to have a central reservation, turns out it didn't but we still had to jump a barrier (we probably just got it a bit wrong).

I was in a lot of pain and could now not breathe normally, each breath I forced to be very slow so that I could try and manage it. A brutally uneven rocky path and through the woods, we came out to by the cliffs as dawn broke and waves of relief that we had made it was evident. I felt very out of body and did not feel like I was actually alive but felt very happy for my two compatriots who were on repeat attempts to finish. We enjoyed those last few miles along the cliffs, we were not in a rush, it was 5 am and we had loads of time until the final 10am cut off.

500m from the finish I came back to earth, my two daughters (Summer and Florence) were with James picking blackberries, I was quite surprised as it was very early. I came out of this strange world and suddenly was back to the reality of assisting with wet feet, refusal to walk and wear shoes, I tried to carry one but couldn't so we

struggled the last 400m to the finish and there it was done. I was handed a silver buckle and there were lots of photos, I felt like a celebrity. Sadly we couldn't get a nice family picture as Florence was crying (James trying his best to appease her with biscuits) and Summer was hiding behind my legs. My 2 worlds had collided, but I was so relieved it was over, after 4 days and 4 nights I could finally stop. I had no idea I would finish it and at so many points my mind was telling me to give up but something just kept pushing back and I'm not sure what that was.

Things that didn't work:

- Take any medication you've been on recently and carry it with you, just in case!!
- Shoes: they started to split away from the sole and I expect they would have peeled away by lunchtime (relatively new before the race)
- Massive risk as did not have change of trainers; I could not afford to get any more, it was a risk but I tried to mitigate it by starting in a size up, luckily my feet coped with this but I know many people who needed + 2 sizes by the end
- Poor CP disciple: I wasted a lot of time chatting, it made me happy but it meant each CP stop was 1-2 hours (could have been half this if I was more efficient)
- Forgetting essentials when leaving CP's (not having full water or leaving without food)

Things that did:

- Nutrition: I ate so so much proper food, loads of food out on the legs (at least 2 flapjacks, sandwiches, chocolate bar, fruit per 20 miles), then 2-3 bowls of food at CP's, never let my stomach get empty to feel sick
- Sealskinz: stopped maceration of the feet, my feet were wet where water got in (from the rain) but not as much as if I was in normal socks
- Sudocrem: as a barrier and lubricant on my feet applied every CP

- Popping and taping blisters: 100% works to remove pain
- Planning: GPX plotting, endless contingencies and meticulous organisation of what was in drop bags (no control over that lost one at CP 11, did get it back at the end), I was aware of where I was, what I had on me and what was available to me at all times
- Water filter: essential bit of kit if you don't have a support crew, it will be used on the longer legs
- Starting in shoes a size too big to accommodate sealskins and swelling feet
- Carry a 3 pin plug and cables to charge stuff at CPs, they will have plugs but not the other bits

Clara Barber

## The shortest Grand Prix ever?

(or: an antidote to all those articles about Harriers running 54 miles across Lapland before breakfast)

By December 2022 most people would have had me down as a High Achiever:

- I had earned a *Blue Peter Badge* at the tender age of 23 \*;
- I had survived 22 nights of DJ'ing (as "*Superstyle Me*") with Paul Brannigan; and
- I would have been *The Lead Passenger* on our family package holiday in June 2022 (if *TUI* hadn't cancelled the holiday).

So why (oh why) did I get it into my head that it would be a good idea to try qualifying in Tod Harriers' '23 GP 🏆?

Who knows. But there were at least 13 immediate obstacles to be overcome. The Main Obstacle was that my running has always been a

bit “below average” - and has slipped further below average over recent years. That led me to a dastardly plan ... .. I would try to qualify by doing eight races of 10K or less each .

This is how it panned out:



Date:	Race:	GP:	Ks:	
15 January	East Lancs Hospice	T	10	Struggled for the first 10K
29 January	<u>Meltham</u> 10K	R	10	Struggled for the first 10K
25 April	<u>Orchan</u> Rocks FR	F	5.4	First fell race for about five years - struggled
11 June	The <i>Flat Caps 10K</i>	-	-	Organised by <i>Sowerby Bridge Snails</i> , this 10K seemed to be 90% uphill (in ludicrously hot weather). It's not in our '23 GP? Seriously?! <i>Nil points</i> 😊
18 June	Dr Ron Hyde Seven Mile Race	R	11.26	Distraught remonstrations pre-race after officials revealed that 7 miles is more than 10K. The Toddy reputation for stoicism lies shattered on the tarmac of Hyde High Street
28 June	Cragg Vale FR	F	6.4	My second post-COVID fell race – struggled
26 July	Black Knight Charge	-	-	My first & last visit to Failsworth. Had pre-entered for the 1930 start of this trail race. Got to the vicinity by bus in ongoing torrential rain with drenched phone reluctant to run <u>SatNav</u> . At the start by 1908 - then discovered that those I had been following had already registered elsewhere (" <i>15 minutes' walk away</i> "). Failed to find Registration in time. Did Not Start 😊 - <i>Nil points</i> 😊. But I did get in for a £5 "Recovery Massage" before anyone else had finished the race 😊

29 August	Littleborough Lions 5K	R	5	Similar distance to a Parkrun (not that I'm any good at Parkruns 😊)
21 October	Stansfield Hall Trail	T	10 (approx)	Muddy
21 October	Race You To The Summit	F	7.4	Went pretty well - for me! Now qualified for a '23 GP Certificate (! thnk)! 📄
		8	-	
Total kilometres:			65.46	

Paul Cruthers aka DJ Wide

\* not every assertion made in this article should be treated as entirely accurate.

PS: Pursuant to a Permanent Loan Arrangement, and for logistical reasons, Pippa (*dog of previous Torrier fame –Ed.*) and I will be transferring to *Sowerby Bridge Snails* from January 2024 – from one great & very sociable running club to another!

## Todmorden's Premier Road Race (probably)

Sign up on our website or save the date to volunteer at the Red Hot Toddy in March...excellent company, hills and fun guaranteed.\*  
Tell your friends!



Sunday 3rd March 2024 - 10K Road Race 11am - 1 Mile Fun Run 10am  
Registration at Todmorden Cricket Club OL14 7BS  
[www.todharriers.co.uk/hot-toddy-road-race](http://www.todharriers.co.uk/hot-toddy-road-race)

# STRAVA™ USERS: A FIELD GUIDE

In the wilds of the internet, one place lies more than any other as a hub for runners, cyclists and fitness fanatics. On Strava it's survival of the fittest vying for Kudos and KOMs.

One noticeable characteristic of these intriguing beings is the variety of ways in which they display their athletic prowess and adventurous endeavours on their activity feed. I have compiled this handy guide to some of the more common you are likely to encounter...

Which one are you?

## **The “Morning/Afternoon/Evening” Runners**

Creatures of habit: You will usually see them upload the same route 5 times a week. Aside from a planned rest day, the 6th run is usually a packrun but only if starts at a pub that is somewhere along the aforementioned route.

## **The Ronseal (Does exactly what it says on the tin)**

They run the race. They name the race. And earn more trophies and multiple PBs in one run than you ever will. Probably because they spend more time actually running than thinking of punny activity titles (although real Strava pros manage to combine the two.)

## **The Documentarian**

Every activity has a description to go with it to rival the narrative complexity of a Tolstoy novel. Think 10-paragraph race reports of a casual Parkrun to get you started.



### **The Rounder-Upper**

An OCD type who can't finish a run without it summing-up to exactly a number ending in a zero.

Most of their yearly miles therefore seem to be run around their front yard or a non-descript car park in Rochdale.

### **The Addict**

Running, commuting, gym sessions, walking the dog- every activity that requires more than opening your eyelids is documented. If bowel movements were an activity option you would probably see them on their feed. They are also the ones most likely to give you a Kudos at 3:00 in the morning. Every morning.

### **The Vindicator**

No matter their pace, there is always an explanation attached as to why they weren't as fast as "normal". Such excuses can vary massively between it being their 17th recovery run in a row, encountering killer cows, or by donning fell shoes bought cheap from the back of a van at the start line...

### **The Statistician**

Every run is rigorously documented by separate warm ups and cool downs, time in intensity zones, length and amount of reps and other assorted superfluous data. Would probably be better suited to a Mathlete competition.

### **The Navigator**

More often than not, a nice-looking route on the tops has a few questionable squiggles in the middle of it. Wouldn't be surprised if they manage to get lost on Lap 3 of Centre Vale parkrun.

### **The Enigma**

Uploads some mysterious activity titles that lead you to wonder what really happened on Erringden Moor. Usually paired with an urgent

request on the Forum for advice for removing barbed wire from one's underwear.

### **The Socialite**

Treats Strava as an influencers' paradise - Think selfies galore wearing their best kit, and no excursion is complete without a review of the latest coffee joint to open on Patmos strip. Burn more calories chatting than doing any kind of running.

### **The Uninitiated**

Out of a fear of technology, lack of peer pressure or sheer upholding of an old-school mentality, these rare creatures lurk in the shadows. But as the ancient Chinese proverb ponders: If it's not on Strava, did it even happen?

Toby Leckie (132 Followers, 5 KOMS, 7 Local Legends, and 0 shame admitting I'm a massive Strava nerd)

## **Best seat in the house**



Paul Colledge on marshal duties on the Lost Shepherd at the top of the steep climb to Stoodley... he must have seen some sights there!

## Twilight of an Idler

*“There is something comically neurotic about an athlete with existential anxiety”*

James Hibbard – ‘The Art of Cycling’.

Three years ago, I wrote an article contemplating coming to the end of my running life.

Untimely Meditations – Torrier, Autumn 2020 [https://  
www.todharriers.co.uk/torrier/2020autumn/TorrierAutumn20.pdf](https://www.todharriers.co.uk/torrier/2020autumn/TorrierAutumn20.pdf)

The reflection and dilemma back then centred on my identity as a declining, maybe soon to be ex, runner. And worse, one with philosophical baggage – seeking a path away from Descartes “I [run] therefore I am” towards an existentialist “I am nothing, therefore I am free [to run]”

The obituary was, though, too hasty. I’ve carried on running – slowly and somewhat painfully, my name now firmly towards the bottom of race and park run results. Recently I’ve come across a book that shares similar philosophical outlooks and insights, which has prompted further musings. Distinct from the first article, these are issues arising from my diminishing intensity of activity, rather than identity.

To make it clear, this is not an essay about sports motivation. It is about thinking and feeling. Still forward looking, not a sad sense of loss.

James Hibbard is an ex-pro cyclist coming to terms with his retirement. Whereas I’ve been no more than an average runner, there is however a commonality that may be of interest to anyone who ‘defines’ themselves through challenging activities, whatever the respective level or degree. Those who race or train, who embrace the

dedication and self-identity required to do so, have bestowed upon themselves a value and meaning (without adversity, life lacks focus!) that has created worth and character (the need to endure, without self-pity).

Hibbard's view is that those who engage primarily in individual (as opposed to team) and pure (as opposed to equipment reliant) sports can gain a specific outlook on life. Not the traditionally viewed balancing act between pleasure/gain and pain/loss but, through determination and self-endurance, an implicit *becoming*: a contemplation of a more complete, joyful life.

Having striven to 'become', Hibbard then struggles when retirement forces a readjustment. Whilst acknowledging that thinking long and hard about philosophy does little to improve performance, it does help (as for me) overcome the inward-looking mindset that dedication to improvement can lead to; as well as assisting a post-performance life where this dedication is no longer required.

Whether post-performance or retired, the previously honed body and focused mind is simply ticking over – or, as in an engine, idling; to reference this article's title. For me it has had two impacts: i) psychological – predicted and acknowledged - a loss of self-identity, addressed in the previous article; and ii) psycho-physical – surprising and unrealised (though it should have been obvious) - how the actual decline in physical ability affects a sense of self, and discussed here.

Whilst the majority in society get through their lives regarding sporting activity as superfluous and its obsession pointless, those of us who are engaged will have the attitude towards these on-lookers summed up in the opening of *The Rider*, Tim Krabbe's cult novel on suffering and bloody-mindedness. "Non-racers. The emptiness of those lives shocks me." So, how do racers react to becoming non-racers?

Trying to shake off, or come to terms with, physical decline by placing yourself as an agent of your new situation makes, for me, an ideal correlation between philosophical existentialism and being a current or past athlete. Where the non-active population will perceive incomprehension or boredom, or a materially driven sporting participant check their stats, the existential athlete will embrace a sense of absurdity. “Why do I train?” has a series of simple answers; “who do I run/race for?” is more complex and challenging.

Aligned to ability declining, there is a realisation that whilst physical exercise is transitory it is also a treasure of memories – a recognition of place. Perhaps not always in a good way: when lapped at a park run and the passing runner finishes in a time you used to do, or a novice is faster despite all your years of training and running. Spending years on something that has now gone. Am I really no better now than someone who has never done it? reflects Hibbert. But very importantly: for him his athleticism/existence is significant and meaningful not in spite of its impermanence, but precisely because of it.

Waning physical ability (old age, maybe also long-term injury) has implications for the transformative nature of endurance training – to put it bluntly, going through pain and suffering. Hibbard though, as a pro cyclist who would have certainly suffered more than I have ever dreamed of, dismisses a simplistic view of *how* this confers benefits. He opposes what he views as a conservative outlook (with a small ‘c’, as it is prevalent in left wing ideology) of moral vs physical superiority - that the victor didn’t just win, but because of their ‘character’ they were able to endure hurt more.

Instead he embraces an existential delight in the beauty of self-suffering and striving - to welcome it as a force for self-change. Likewise, my albeit light-weight dedication to training had adopted this approach; one that is opposed to a rationalism that becomes an obsession aimed at statistical improvement. My pleasure is in pushing

oneself as hard and as far as you want *only for the moment*. It is to suffer for the immediate pleasure and feeling of exercise – it is *not an outcome*. This is the temporal, ephemeral and impermanent perspective of my running that has become even more important and relevant as my performance declines.

What I previously saw as training was for it to be measurable and, in one's prime, progressive. When I go for a run now it has little impact on how I race - I will not get faster -but this is no longer a frustration but an embraceable freedom. Remember: "I am nothing, therefore I am free [to run]". What used to be an activity of perfecting is now one of pragmatism; a flexible '*be-coming*' to terms with yourself, rather than a fixed/fixated '*being*' the best.

A caution. With society's embedded mythology that sport serves to establish discipline and build character, we must be wary of equating or overstating preparing for sport and the hardships of training to that of life in general. What is character forming can also be de-forming. It is a trap to believe all pain has purpose. The big question is - why endure? The answer? - you have to be astute enough to know when your actions have meaning (to change attitudes, or life, for the better) and are not a Stoic suffering that changes nothing.

For me, the decision to carry on running is to choose a convenient and proven challenge against which to test, through enduring, my sense of willing and willpower. It is an antidote to contemporary society moving in the opposite direction; a culture that enables, even encourages, as little effort as possible. It is through stimulating and engaging this sense of will that one senses feeling, self-worth and true identity.

Whilst not making this his conclusion, Hibbert does offer a possible final insight into this point of self-enquiry: "What shall I do now? Here I have no answer or way forward; only the distinct feeling that not knowing – not feeling this – would be far worse."

Dave O'Neill



## **Save the date: Flower Scar Fell Race**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024 11:00am**

Next year's Flower Scar race hosted by our good selves as been chosen as a counter in the English Fell Championship 2024.

Consequently we'll need lots of helpers and will likely have a large field of runners. We'll put out a request in early February but this is an early heads up on the race date.

Details of the race are as follows:

AM 13.3km/8.3miles; 660m/2165ft

Records: Holly Page (2018) 1:18:50; Chris Holdsworth (2023) 1:02:37

*Pictured: Chris Holdsworth back down to Burnley Road enroute to a new course record, 2023 race.*

The race has always been hosted by Todmorden Harriers, it was first started in the early nineties and has been running for 30 years now. It was last held as an English Champs race in 2015. Originally it was a



short fast mid week race out and back to Flower Scar summit. Over the years it has evolved and takes in wider and more interesting terrain and woodland around the Flower Scar area, the introduction of Wind Turbines to the moor (where there used to be coal mines!) has also changed the nature of the race, slightly easing navigation for anyone unsure of their route choice.

Starting from Centre Vale Park in Todmorden the route heads steeply up through the woods and out onto runnable fields and open moorland across to the high point of Flower Scar summit. From there you drop quickly down to the next check point at an old barn ruin where route choice & good navigation comes into play with no obvious paths across Todmorden moor to checkpoint 3. From there it's down and across to run along a dark tunnel through mature pine woods and on to a dramatic descent back down into the valley bottom. From here you're back climbing again onto a short but steep pull up above the valley and across the original fields to drop back and finish into the park.

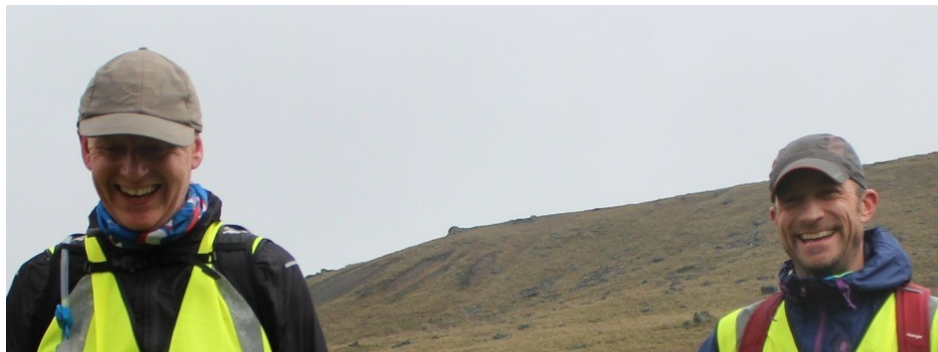
The route is well flagged out across the fields and back through the woods but leaves all the sections across the open moorland down to personal route choice. Navigation is not usually a problem unless the mist descends when on the section between checkpoints 2 & 3, runners may require the use of a map and good compass bearing.

The race in 2023 was the club's first attempt at being more environmentally aware of the impact we cause through racing and we calculated the CO2 generated by competitors travelling to the event and purchased trees to be planted locally with the dual benefit of mitigating this CO2 and also helping with local flood alleviation which has been a huge problem in the upper Calder Valley in recent years. We now do this for all our races including Flower Scar 2024. (See page 10 for more info on our club environmental policy)

Bob Halstead



# TOP GRINE

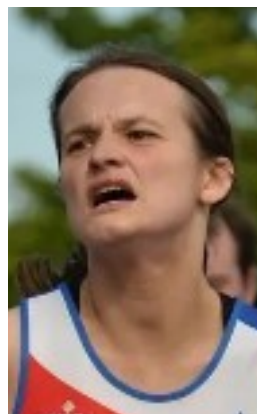




# TOP GURNE







*We love to see the determination! Send your favourite running gurns in to Torrier editor **[torriernewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:torriernewsletter@gmail.com)** to be featured. Winner to be announced at the Presentation Do, details on back page (it's still all to play for, send em in!)*

# TOILET SEAT

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONFESSIONS OR TALES ABOUT YOUR CLUB MATES, EMAIL THE MYSTERIOUS [ARMITAGESHANKSTODMORDEN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ARMITAGESHANKSTODMORDEN@GMAIL.COM)

REMEMBER: I WALK AMONGST YOU, I HAVE SPIES EVERYWHERE AND I KNOW WHAT GOES ON!

SEE YOU EVERYWHERE (OOH, THAT'S A BIT DARK ISN'T IT) - A.S.



**Mark Tempest** rocked up at the 6.45pm New Delight Packrun at 7pm. 0 points for Mark as he wasn't the only one but he was brave enough to own up to it!

**Nick Barber** was driving back from a reccy of the Calderdale way wondered where his phone had gone? After an unsuccessful search of his pockets he realised he hadn't seen it since putting on the car roof whilst getting changed (!) No longer there he turned the car around to go of fin search and spotted it, apparently undamaged in the road outside The Shay in Halifax. He went to retrieve it just as a car drove over it\* 10 Points!

**Kath Brierley** stood in B+M car park waiting for a lift to Pilgrims Cross when everyone else was at Lidl. -5 points

**Dave Weedon** got jumped and given a shiner by a tree, he didn't run into it. Honest. 5 points

**Alan Davies** ran the Stocks lane Stinger with his vest on backwards – 5 points

**Dan Taylor** was at the start line of the Stainland Trail 10k raring to go. The race organiser gave his briefing and asked “is everyone wearing their timing chips?” “Oh! Did I need that?” asked Dan before having to sprint back to his car in front of a cheering crowd!



Increasingly marginal, marginal gains sent in by whoever the heck these people are...?

**Improve** your aerodynamics by sellotaping your ears to the side of your head – Barry Cuda

**When** running always increase your breathing rate to compensate for your body's additional oxygen requirement – Barry Stir

**Nutrition tip** - Use sand in your brew instead of sugar, not only is it calorie free, it doesn't dissolve so can be used more than once – Barry Cade

**Record** the London Marathon then watch it on fast forward. It will be twice as exciting and you're guaranteed to witness a new world record! – Barry Areef

## Next Torrier: We need YOU!

Want to contribute to your club's newsletter, but not sure what? Past issues are available on our website, but here're some ideas...

Send a high res arty image for the cover. A few words about a run. A haiku. FAQs about fellrunning. An article about badgers. Five words about your favourite race. An abstract black and white drawing about what it means to live in Calderdale. A gurn. A grin. A list of types of runners. A picture of your dog. A cross stitch pattern. A picture of your dog. Front cover artwork. A drawing by your 6 year old child. Three things you learnt about running in the last year. A crossword. A picture of you reading the Torrier somewhere amusing/interesting. Time-of-life musings, holiday stories, tales of epics, vintage articles from the past... We even permit submissions that aren't running-centred, triathletes ride among us... Openings always available for Torrier Special Correspondents (ie I can give you an idea for an article).

Send word documents, email text and jpeg files to **torriernewsletter@gmail.com** (thank you for not sending PDFs and Pages files) for the next issue - **send at any time from now** (to make compiling the next issue as seamless as possible) until the deadline



which will be in the spring. If writing an article, aim for 500-1500 words. Deadlines will be announced on the Facebook page and forum.

-Ed.



## Dogs of Tod Harriers



This issue's feature is Leonard, Mat Gray's 4 month old Labrador puppy, pictured here in Ambleside. "Hopefully he'll be on the fells soon enough when he grows into his legs."

# TODMORDEN HARRIERS' CHRISTMAS DO

Vegetarian food from Kirstie  
Fagan, superstar DJs &  
ringmaster Stu's end of  
season presentation

£15 per person

Email [cmgoddard@gmail.com](mailto:cmgoddard@gmail.com)  
or see Chris at a pack run



**Saturday 2nd December**  
**The Mill, Walsden**