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## ROUGH RUNNING NEWS

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### From the Editor

What a summer it's been with hot sun making running and racing more difficult, but who can complain? Well plenty do of course, but personally i love hot summers and if it means getting up and running early beating the heat then so much the better. Of course races happen when they happen and keeping cool can become an issue, never mind sunburn (sunscreen and running don't go so well together = sweat!) and extra chaffing due to sweat.

The countryside seems to have exploded in greenery (unwanted to runners) along all trails, far too many stingers, brambles and cutting legs to shreds crops. But all part of off-road running. I was lucky enough to be sent out to Chamonix from work at the last minute to lead a Tour of Mont Blanc trek a few weeks ago and saw so many runners out along the trails no doubt training for the UTMB (last weekend in August) or just out running, very inspiring. On our 'rest day' i went out and had a fabulous run in the Val Ferret (Italy) along the TMB route for 12 miles and pretended i was in the UTMB. It was glorious running - mostly a balcony path above the valley so not too extreme mountain wise - only marred by low cloud so no views.

Congratulations and thanks are due to Tilly for organising another great series of TACH races and good luck to Matt as he takes over this task. The races all were successful thanks also to all the people who helped organise, marshall and compete in them. Thanks one and all.

Before i finish i'd also like to mention and congratulate Tasha and Billy on their recent wedding. I'm sure we all wish them well and hope they have a great life together.

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## UP IN THE AIR

Midsummer's Day 2014

It was Richard Long's idea:

ON MIDSUMMER'S DAY  
A WESTWARD WALK  
FROM STONEHENGE AT SUNRISE TO GLASTONBURY TOR BY SUNSET  
FORTY FIVE MILES FOLLOWING THE DAY

1972

Richard Long is a Bristol artist more famous abroad than at home and walking is a fundamental aspect of his work.

...

Stonehenge stands in the middle a charnel ground. Over a hundred assorted burial mounds, tumuli and long barrows pockmark the landscape within two miles of Stonehenge - parts of the countryside look like the surface of the moon on the 1:25000 Ordnance Survey map of the area.

The stones seem to attract death.

The latest two memorials mark the new entrance to the site from Airman's Corner off the A360, which is named after Captain Eustace Loraine, the first airman to die in service in the Royal Flying Corps along with his spotter, Staff Sergeant Richard Wilson in a Belgian built Nieuport monoplane on 6th July 1912 (*I don't believe it!*). A second memorial off to the left past Fargo Wood (nothing to do with *the Coen brothers homespun murder story*) commemorates Major Alexander Hewetson of 66 Battery Royal Field Artillery, who was killed taking his Aviation Certificate test on 17th July 1913.

As I run towards the stones the skylarks remind me that although it is not long after 5 am, dawn has passed and some of the thirty six thousand revellers have already begun to stream off the site.

I should be concentrating on the concept. Richard Long recorded only the bare bones of what he did, but I wonder if he was really concentrating on '*following the day*' as he walked, without being distracted by sights and sounds along the way. If it was a sunny day his shadow would keep him informed of the progress of the day as he walked.

In the end, I didn't actually try to get to the stones. Instead I turned right parallel to the byway from Larkhill to Druid's Lodge that had been closed by the local council for the

duration of the solstice. It seemed to me that Long's Stonehenge at dawn on the solstice no longer existed. How could it with 36 000 revellers around it and a police presence.

My starting point was a pair of memorials to pioneers of the Royal Flying Corps and the sound of larks ascending.

I descended to the A303 over grass and the detritus of revelry.

Past the barriers on the byway, the chalk trackway was easier on the feet than it had been on my bicycle when I reconnoitred the route earlier, and I overtook revellers returning to their cars parked at Druid' Lodge.

I crossed over the A360 and followed York Road past a red phone box masquerading as a woodshed at York Farm and down to Druid's Head Farm nestling against Druid's Head Wood.

The second turning opposite the farm descends over Chain Hill down an ultimately overgrown path to Stoford, past the Swan Inn, then right to cross the bridge over the River Wylve into Great Wishford (*Wiche-ford*, the elm-tree ford). I have reached the edge of an ancient forest.

The church on the left is dedicated to St Giles, a forest hermit in France who followed a vegetarian diet and was looked after by a hind that gave him her milk. He got between the deer and the king's hunters and was crippled by an arrow, after which he came under the protection of the king who made him an abbot.

The pub at the end of the village is the Royal Oak. Great Wishford is intimately connected to the legend of Oak Apple Day, 29th May, which is said to celebrate the restoration of the Merry Monarch King Charles II who had hidden in an oak tree after the Battle of Worcester. I had followed the Monarch's Way footpath, which traces the route of Charles' flight from England, when I descended from Chain Hill to Great Wishford.

On 29th May the villagers enter the woods on the hill to gather an oak bough that is hung from the church tower. This is in pursuance of their right to gather wood in Grovely Wood on Oak Apple Day. To maintain this right they have to go to Salisbury Cathedral and chant "*Groveley, Groveley, Grovely and all Groveley*" in accordance with a charter confirmed in 1603. It is allegedly a medieval custom going back to 1189.

Before entering a forest, a 14th century Welsh soothsayer would chant:

*"To the king of spirits & to his queen,  
Gwyn ap Nudd, you who are yonder in the forest  
for the love of your mate  
permit us to enter your dwelling."*

Gwyn ap Nudd is a Welsh god, whom neo-pagans associate with Glastonbury Tor.

The swanimote of 1603 mentioned 14 coppices in Grovely Wood, seven north of Grim's Ditch and 7 to the south. Ebsbury and Bemershills are two of the coppices whose names remain on the OS map along with Ashgoe, Hadden and Powten Stone (Stotfield and Radneth are missing). Shortengrove, Himsel, Appledoe, Chilfinch and Thornhills remain to the south.

It is probably in Shortengrove that the ghost of the Barcombe Woodsman appears. He is either a poacher lynched by hanging in the wood or a watercolourist accidentally shot during a deer cull, a reminder of St Giles.

I turned right along Second Broad Drove in Grovely Wood through Four Sisters to Powten Stone. The four Handsel sisters were foreigners from Denmark who arrived in the Wilton area during a smallpox outbreak in which 132 people died in 1737. They were accused of causing death by witchcraft, but this had ceased to be an offence the previous year when the Witchcraft Act of 1736 was passed. So local vigilantes dragged them up into the woods, bludgeoned them to death and buried them there. Four odd looking trees are associated with their graves, and offerings are made there.

This sounds like the sort of things that the Roman and Greek writer's alleged of the druids.

Instead of following the main drag that follows the line of a Roman Road, I chose to follow Grim's Ditch along the northern edge of the woods from the approximate location of the mysteriously missing Powten Stone. This is a very old boundary ditch whose origins have been forgotten, so it is attributed to Grimr, a byname of Odin, which later became an appellation of the Devil. This path has been obstructed by fallen trees, but earlier footsteps have created new paths around them. One tree seemed to be hanging over the path ready to drop on someone's head!

Grim's Ditch rejoins the main drag in Dinton Beeches and crosses the road from Wyllye to Dinton. On the other side of the road the route rejoins the Monarch's Way and the Ox Drove, which has shadowed the southern edge of the wood up from Wilton.

From Dinton Beeches to the roads from the A303 to Teffont Magna and Chilmark, the Ox Drove has a concrete surface bordered by a broad grass verge. Sometimes, when the grass has been cut, it is easier to run on the grass. When the vegetation is tangled and the underlying clods dried hard, as on the solstice, the concrete seems inviting. As my shadow led the way in front of me, I tried to concentrate on maintaining my form and lifting my feet behind me in a somewhat superficial attempt to apply Danny Dreyer's principles as set out in **Chi Running - A Revolutionary Approach to Effortless, Injury-Free Running**.

I had been trying follow this system for some months as a follow up to experimenting with minimal shoes - starting with Merrells with Vibram soles and then going on to New Balance Minimus with hexagonal patterned Vibram soles. I found these did not give enough protection to the feet and I ended up with blistered heels in a multi-terrain

marathon in Bath. I realised I needed to adapt my running style to the footwear hence Chi Running. I also changed to New Balance MT810s which are fairly level but protect the feet. I think my style has evolved to a midfoot strike, but my worn heels tell a different story!

Danny Dreyer writes, *"In Chi running, every foot strike is an opportunity to feel your structure supported by the earth...feel the power of the earth beneath your feet."* Thich Nhat Hanh a Vietnamese Buddhist monk goes further. *"Consciously make an imprint on the ground as you step. Walk as the Buddha would. Place your foot on the surface of the earth the way an emperor would place his seal on a royal decree."*

Past the roads from the A303, Ox Drove grows grass between the ruts, tangled in June, forcing decisions - grass or rut - dancing from one to another - alongside Chilmark Down until the track from Manor Farm informs me that it is time to turn right up the bridle path past Hart Copse and across the A303 into the corner of Stockton Wood.

The route picks up Grim's Ditch again and follows it through Fonthill Bushes, twisting up and down the banks round more fallen trees until it reaches a forestry road. A right and left turn brings up another forestry road and the problem of what to do about the bodily necessity brought about by rising at 3-30am. Habits built up over decades require that I imitate the bear in the wood.

My shadow leads me along the forestry road with logs stacked on either side. There is nothing visible to me tell that the forestry plantation conceals Grim's Ditch on one side and a Roman Road on the other.

Beyond a crossroad, the route is supposed to follow a bridle path along the line of the Roman Road, but the line has been obliterated by forestry planting, whose serried ranks have little to do with the ancient concept of a forest, so it is necessary to turn right and then left along another forestry road from an iron age enclosure - only visible on the map - along the Great Ridge between Stonehill Copse, Musseldean Copse, Pound Copse and West Wood, where deciduous trees give a more natural impression. Some parts of the woods on Great Ridge still have a natural appearance with random trees and glades resembling the ancient forest that once linked Grovely Woods to the Great Ridge woods without any intervening farmland. Grim's Ditch winds through the surviving and felled forest separating the parishes clinging to the River Wylde from the settlements in the Nadder Valley. For medieval peasants, the forest along Grim's Ditch represented the margin of the known world. It is still a blank space on small scale maps.

The forestry road and the bridle path come together between Stonehill Copse and Pound Copse and debouch onto open countryside beside a memorial stone, which commemorates an air crash that took place at Cratt Hill nearby in the parish of Chicklade on 22nd October 1963.

The plane was a BAC One-eleven G-ASHG that was performing a stall test on a test flight from Wisley Airfield in Surrey. In the process they discovered a deadly effect known

as Deep Stall or Superstall, which afflicts jet aircraft whose tail is T-shaped. When the plane stalls, turbulent air from the wing fouls the tail making recovery unlikely, especially when the plane has rear engines like the One-eleven. Seven men died to discover this effect.

The memorial carries the epitaph, *'And everywhere the blue sky belongs to them and is their appointed rest and their native country.'* The epitaph is a gloss on the text of the Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Coleridge. It seems to be a reference to the albatross.

Finding this stone, on a second visit, after getting lost, was a key experience that led to my reinterpreting the whole project in terms of the Air Element. The Air Element is associated with the Green Buddha, one of the five Tantric Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism. This system differentiates between the Air Element, which is non-dual and supports effortless self-fulfilling action and the dualistic air element, which leads to paranoia and violence.

The role of green chlorophyll, in the production of oxygen in the atmosphere, connects the air element to the green trees of the forest.

From the memorial, the route goes left along the wood-margin to a pair of storage tanks then right along a bridle path under an accidental avenue, which ensures that mud and standing water survive the heat of summer.

My planned route followed the Roman road across the fields to Lower Pertwood Farm and up onto the access land leading up to Summerslade Down and on to Monkton Deverill, but I couldn't find the beginning of the track where it was shown on the map, so I went north past Botley Oak Brake and Pertwood Wood to a nameless crossroad on the A350. [I would have tried harder had I known then that Lower Pertwood Farm hosted Big Green Gatherings between 1995 and 2000 and is now an organic farm. I must go back and establish this route because another green connection at this point would be a beautiful example of serendipity. This was also the site of the Tribal Gathering Music Festival in 1993.]

As it was I headed north ignorant of the fact that Pertwood Wood marked the northern boundary of an extinct civil parish reduced to a single house at Lower Pertwood and a row of cottages, a small church and a manor house at Higher Pertwood. Larks sang and partridges sped away as I jogged along the top of Long Bottom and I didn't care.

I arranged to meet Libby at the crossroads off the A350. The crossroads is disconnected from the trunk road. Evidently 'travellers' have used this site, so someone has illegally obstructed the northern arm of the crossroads with earth and rubble to keep the travellers off.

Across the A350 the bridleway heads over Summerslade Down, where the water company was building a reservoir and laying pipes down the other side. The reservoir was incomplete and the scars from pipelaying were still fresh. The first part of the

descent had poppies and other weeds of cultivation that attracted larks and other small birds, which flew from my feet.

The path through the last field was tangled enough to make me appreciate the road through Monkton Deverill and Kingston Deverill, which is flat because it follows the River Wylde, also known as the River Deverill at this point.

### Afterthought

I have since discovered the Voice of the Deverills, a duo called Liesmaic and Laura, a.k.a. Deverills Nexion a *traditional Nexion of the Order of the Nine Angles*. They are a Death Metal group distributed by Todestrieb (Deathwish) Distro. They sound aetherial and I read it as angels rather than angles, but the Order of the Nine Angles are a satanist group who follow the teachings of Anton (rather than Richard) Long. If you were being kind, you could say that the Order of Nine Angles is an extreme form of Tantrism, which aims at self realisation through living alone in the forest for at least three months and extreme physical challenges like running from Stonehenge to Glastonbury Tor! However, there are other aspects like human sacrifice (culling) and links to Nazi organisations.

Past Kingston Deverill, the route goes diagonally up across a field of sheep from the corner of the track up to the Bath, Wiltshire and North Dorset Gliding Club. The path follows the contour for well over a mile, past a tumulus and a wood called Peter's Penning and round to the end of the airstrip - not easy when your knees are beginning to protest. They winched up a glider as I was underneath and I suddenly realised the cable was going to drop nearby. Luckily they knew what they were doing, so my alarm was unnecessary.

My nerves were further challenged in the next field, which held a herd of charolais cows with their calves and a bull. They took an unwelcome interest in me but responded to noise and a hand gesture. Nevertheless, I was pleased to get into the next field, which held nothing more alarming than sheep and another mile or more on grass, most of it nibbled short.

The path comes out on a byway from Hindon to Stourton. The route goes right along the byway and down towards Stourhead. It is important to go through the car park to find the Drove, a bridle way down to Stourhead. If you follow Whitesheet Lane, you end up in Kilmington. On this occasion, I decided to cut the corner from an interpretation board on the byway. This told the tale of the 8th Baron Stourton, an arch-papist who quarrelled with his mother and his neighbour, William Hartgill of Kilmington. He ended up kidnapping the old man and his son in Kilmington Church and holding them at Stourhead, where he ordered his men to cut their throats. The Baron was hanged with a silken cord and his four henchmen were hanged in chains.

I crossed the field and followed the edge of a Neolithic Camp and a quarry down to the car park and onto the Drove, which runs through the Beech Clump down to the B3092. In the Beech clump is another memorial to an air crash. This commemorates 20 pilots who had been trained in the technique of snatching gliders into the air without landing, at Zeals airfield a couple of miles away. They were being flown back to Leicestershire on Dakota TS436 of No. 107 OTU Leicester East when it crashed into the Beech Clump on 19th February 1945 killing all 20 passengers, all trained pilots. At the end of the Drove, the

route crosses the road and goes left along the verge and into a strip wood to a stile into the Stourhead Estate. the path heads towards the house then turns left at a lone oak tree to a kissing gate and a drive leading under an arch onto the road. A path leads up to a car park and a cafe where refreshment and a welcome rest can be had.

Ice cream, coffee, coca cola and ibuprofen restored my legs sufficiently to set off towards Bruton. Evidently, I had not been applying the principles of Chi running sufficiently assiduously.

I set off out of the car park and left along the road past the Spread Eagle and a grottoed underpass. I heard a crash as I turned off to the right and helped a woman get her bicycle upright before heading up the track past Beech Cottage. I headed up the side of Tucking Mill Hanging and Shady Hanging and up into the woods. I eventually realised I had taken a wrong turning and got out the photocopied maps from my bag. I soon found out where I had gone wrong and instead of going back to where I had gone wrong (the gate before Tucking Mill Hanging where I should have gone left) I decided to take a shortcut. The photocopy was not up to the task and the path was blocked by fallen trees. I ended up on a track where I met a man driving a Range Rover backwards down the track. He lived in The Convent in the middle of the wood and was able to put me back on track. The route was pretty much the opposite of what I expected. I had no compass and was even more lost than I thought.

Luckily I remembered the route I had been given sufficiently well to get back on track, out of the woods onto a minor road and through Blackslough Woods on the Macmillan Way and the Leland Trail.

The Macmillan Way runs from Boston in Lincolnshire to Abbotsbury in Dorset (famous for its swannery) and is designed to raise money for the Macmillan cancer charity. John Leland (or Leyland) known as an antiquary was a functionary of Henry VIII attached to Thomas Cromwell, who had a role in rescuing books from destruction during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The trail is a 28 mile route through Somerset from Alfred's Tower to Ham Hill. Leland's service to the Somerset tourist board was connecting King Arthur to Cadbury Camp, which is the main point of the Leland Trail.

The stretch of the route to Redlynch is remarkably straight on the map and nearly as straight on the ground. Intermittent metalling under the grass and the presence of Coachroad Farm halfway along suggests that this is a carriage drive rather than a Roman

road or a ley line. A felled wood, some dodgy stiles, asymmetric field boundaries and some aggressively placed wire are enough to ensure attention to detail on this stretch.

At Redlynch, the route follows Macmillan and Leland right along the road to Redlynch Cross then left to the end of a row of houses and right into a field. The nettles grew so thickly around the stile that I climbed the gate instead. The route into Bruton requires continued concentration, and I found it rougher underfoot than it probably really was. The last field requires a diagonal traverse of an arable field, which often feels awkward, when it hasn't been restored after ploughing as the law demands.

On the road, the route takes the second left down a minor road called Park Wall, past the iconic Dovecote and into Jubilee Park, where I had arranged to meet my wife.

History of the Dovecote is unclear. But it was built in the 16th Century in the deerpark of Bruton Abbey as a house or possibly a watchtower. It was converted for use as a dovecote in 1780. This is not the ornamental dovecote of bucolic tradition but an industrial production unit for eggs, quabs and guano. There is a similar unit in the remains of Hinton Priory at Hinton Charterhouse, which is no longer open to the public. It is basically a unit for the factory farming of doves. Squabs, which are doves fully grown but unable to fly are the preferred meat source. So the Dovecote is yet another memorial to dead flyers.

Bruton is the settlement on the River Brue, from Celtic *briwo* meaning 'lively, vigorous powerful'. reflecting the mill turning power of the river. The route discovers the meaning of the river after it follows the road (possibly Godminster Lane) over the railway, across the A359, into the park opposite down the path to a bridge over the river, where remains of a weir are visible. The route turns left along Lower Backway and round into Mill Lane to cross the High Street into a snicket.

The snicket follows a path alongside the Coombe Brook which spreads out into duck ponds on the right and gurgles behind hedges on the left after emerging from a mill. The route climbs a road and turns left into a path ascending Creech Hill after crossing a ford across the Coombe Brook. After winding round Chorley Hill, the route emerges from the weeds onto a wider track up to a cross track. The first time I came here, I followed the path across the field opposite, which came out onto the road between the farm and the farmhouse. On the solstice, the stile was cut off by a gate, because the farmer was bringing his cows in for milking so I decided to follow the track to the right, where I had to climb a gate to get out onto the road.

I followed the road up Portway Hill. The map shows a RUPP across the field on the left, leading to a footpath down the hill to Lamyatt. There was no evidence on the ground for the RUPP and the footpath proved to be choked in a sea of nettles, when I checked out the route, so I kept to the tarmac all the way to Lamyatt.

In the village, the route follows the road to the right to find a gap between the houses into a field. The path goes diagonally left across the field to a horse gate. It was marked by

hoofprints when I followed it, but I suspect it may become overwhelmed by maize plants. The next gate leads into cattle country - Higher Redlands and Redlands Farm - in the Parish of Milton Clevedon. When I went through last, there were a group of people in cars who appeared to be praying in the corner of a field. The route follows a farm track to a cattle grid and a bridge over the River Alham, which forms the border with Evercreech.

The route goes right parallel to the river towards Cutterne Mill, then left up some steps by a barn to a cross country path. This is a fairly convoluted way to avoid running up the A371, but it is probably worth it. You have to go right up the main road for a few yards anyway, and then second left into an industrial estate. A gate across the road closes it off to traffic at the weekend, but you can get past on foot. At the end the path becomes grassy alongside the dismantled railway and then left over a stile and the ghost of the track to set out along a service road over a stream into the countryside.

That was Evercreech Junction - the remains of a railway cut down by Dr Beeching I presume. Shame - a railway line to Worthy Farm might have come in handy!

The path from Evercreech junction to Ditchheat was characterised by long grass on top of hard uneven ground and nettle infested stiles; so I was uncharacteristically glad that the next section up Ditchheat Hill to the Fosse Way and on through Little Pennard to East Pennard was on road. There are views from the hill to take your mind off your legs, and there appear to be gallops on the left to think about.

Little Pennard brought up the first signs of the Glastonbury Festival that was on the following week - a lighting unit and a portaloos for the men who would control traffic down Pylle Hill.

In East Pennard, my wife was waiting in front of tepees set up in the grounds of Pennard House.

A little further on there were two men controlling access to Worthy Farm via Cockmill Lane in deck chairs beside lighting and a portaloos similar to those on Pylle Hill. A few yards further on there were men in a van trying to find the right route in.

I nearly missed the stile in the hedge and the path leading to (West) Pennard Hill Farm. The rising field had acquired generators and lighting and at the top of the field there was a light devouring barrier across the top of the hill - the famous Glastonbury Festival Wall.

Round the corner from Pennard Hill Farm, I found myself on nob hill. There was a row of Airstream Silver Bullet caravan trailers lined up on the grass beside the drive and herds of yurts and teepees in the field below, elegantly organised around a marquee.

On the other side of Worthy Lane, a low branch obscured access to the stile onto the path along Pennard Hill. The route through to Windmill Lane, was unexceptional apart from nettles obscuring stiles.

Descending the fields from Windmill Hill to St Nicholas Church West Pennard, the tower of St Michael's Church on Glastonbury Tor - hove into view - Glastonbury Tor, the reputed home of Gwyn ap Nudd - Shining Son of Mist - King of Annwn - leader of the Wild Hunt - King of the People of the Wind. I made my way down the hill towards the church and followed the roads right down Breech Lane - left on the A361 - right up East Street - round through East Street Farm.

The footpath on the other side follows the farm tracks rather than the definitive line on the map - round the edge of the field (no cattle today) - one stile then a narrow bridge over 10 Foot Rhyne. There was still a lying notice on the way into East Street Farm saying the bridge was out, but the hazards were a wonky stile and a track overgrown with nettles.

At the end of the farm road, the path winds through the vegetable garden to the right of Norwood Park Farm. Then all that's left is the climb up Stone Down Lane and the steeper climb up the Tor itself.

As I climbed up the steepest part of the Tor, a red and green microlite flew high overhead to fit in with the theme of the run.

Libby and Boris were waiting for me at the top of the Tor.

## The delights of the Severn Estuary

I've recently discovered a whole new world. It's a bit like TACH but it's watery. The breed of people that do it are not dissimilar to TACH runners. They get a buzz out of getting out there in the elements - just like we do. For us its lashings of mud and tough hills and for them it's the slightly dubious looking silty waters of the Severn Estuary.

It all began after I came a cropper and badly twisted my ankle during Cotswold Relay. Not being able to run I asked a fellow TACHer, Helen, if she was doing any swimming. Within a week I found myself gazing down into the water of the Clevedon Marine Lake. This was a spot that Helen had suggested enthusiastically remarking on how beautiful the reflections off the terraced pool were in the evening light. Rob and I had cycled over to Clevedon one day to have a look. 'Uggh! Don't fancy swimming in there' I said. Rob agreed. We returned to our ice-creams. In comparison to swimming from any beach in Devon, Cornwall or Wales this slightly tea coloured water did not hold much appeal!

However, due to Helen's insistence that it was to swim there I agreed to myself that I would be open minded and try it at least once. We arrived on a lovely sunny evening and it was actually a lovely serene place to come. It is a 200m long stretch of seawater filled pool replenished on higher tides. When the tide drops, and it drops a long way, it becomes a terraced pool supported by a stone seawall. You certainly couldn't complain about the pool being too crowded. Apart from us there were a few others on the rocky platform at the poolside who had just been in the water. No wetsuits I noted. We put ours on and slipped into the water. I was surprised to find that the water was actually quite warm. None the less, whilst I watched Helen immerse herself, head in, straight into front crawl I kept my head and nose raised high, suspicious of the murky water, doing breast stroke. However, the second time we went I went for the face in approach and was surprised to find it wasn't so bad. Couldn't see a thing in the water but I was confident that nothing was going to come up and bite me. It was pleasantly warm and as I swam alongside the seawall edge I could marvel at the sunny reflection off the pool and gaze across the Severn Estuary to the hills of Wales. There was certainly nothing like swimming outdoors in the fresh air gazing up at the blue sky above – I was being converted from a murky water snob thanks to Helen!

Since then I've met the Clevedon Sea Swimmers – a robust bunch who regularly launch off the shingle beach at high tide near the pier. I watched about 20 of them making their way back to the beach, one Sunday lunchtime, bobbing around in the chop. No one seemed to be in a rush to get out the water and they all had invigorated looks on their faces. I knew this had to be my next step.

NB: One of the Clevedon Sea Swimmers told me she preferred the sea to Clevedon Marine Lake. When I asked her why she said, 'there was a dogfish in the pool once!' (that's a member of the shark family but pretty harmless to us I think). This didn't upset me too much as I thought that probably doesn't happen too often and it's good to know the Severn Estuary supports more life than I thought it did (so it can't be that bad?).

## **IS COMING LAST SO BAD?**

After volunteering as the 'last runner marshal' at the Purdown Pursuit I came up close and personal with one of a runner's greatest fears - the situation of finishing last. From the start I knew I would finish last. That was the point of the role. But to do it on purpose just seemed a bit bizarre. Throughout the experience I kept on thinking to myself speed up, you'll be last. As a consequence I ended up doing a lot of sheep-dogging. This got me thinking of the connotations of finishing last.

Psychologically the thought of coming last takes us back to running as a beginner. When starting out there are fears about finishing the race, going out too fast, gear, hydration and a whole host of other worries. Coming last is something as runners we associate with shame or failure. We sometimes get caught up in the moment when competing against others becomes suddenly becomes more important than our own personal goals.

On the flip side there are positives of coming last. Spectators love an underdog in the UK. So there is more applause and cheering for the tortoises at the back rather than the hares at the front. If you are longer out on the course you will probably have had more time to actually appreciate the scenery too. For those big races, coming in later means shorter queues for the showers and toilets, than arriving at the line mid-field.

Those who have stumbled across the idea of mindfulness will be aware of the concept of 'non-striving'. In Western cultures the idea of not actually striving ahead may seem bizarre but there is the potential to do it. The theory is that to achieve goals, we need to actually take our foot off of the pedal. We no longer need to strive, instead focusing on things as they really are. The emphasis is on being yourself and aware of how you are here and now. Bit by bit, moment by moment we get there in a much happier way. Whilst I try and practice mindfulness (with mixed success!), here is a link to mindfulness practitioner Jon Kabat-Zinn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5H217U5VIE8>.

At the end of the day running is supposed to be fun. I know we all get sucked in, and take things too seriously from time to time. But think about this. So many people don't actually run or take any form of exercise. So be proud to have got to a start line at all.

Emma

I am running the Bristol Half Marathon Sept 21st 2014, and raising money for Bristol Next Link. If you fancy, you can sponsor me here: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/EmmaBagley>

## **THE ADIDAS THUNDER RUN**

Earlier this summer I was called upon by a friend who runs with Blackwater Valley Runners to fill a space in their team for the Adidas Thunder Run at Catton Park (near Burton on Trent). This was a race i'd been interested in getting a team involved in after I had heard about it last year, but had failed to get any interest.

Basically (for those who don't know) it is a 24 hour event for individuals or teams of various sizes - 2, 4, 6, 8. (see <http://www.tr24.co.uk> for details if interested) who run around a 10km off road trail (through woods and fields with some hills and single track) for 24 hours handing over a baton in the 'changeover area' or not - if running as an individual. The whole event is centred around camping with the course winding through part of the campsite so the support was fantastic around the course. There was an area where the race started, the handover was and the PA system together with various catering outlets some of which were open 24 hours and showers.

It was very well organised and a fantastic atmosphere - a real running festival feel to it. The whole thing kicked off at 12.00 midday on Saturday finishing (yes you got it ) 24 hours later at midday on Sunday. You could pick any order of runners within a team so if people wanted to run 30km straight off then hand over that could happen. Of course mostly people did 1 lap each until everyone had run and then started again. The winning team in each category was the team who ran the most number of laps.

In my team there were 7 of us, 3 women and 4 men. 6 of us ran all our laps under an hour and the other just over. One person did not feel comfortable running in the dark so we swapped the order as we went which worked OK although it was a bit confusing in the middle of the night when you forgot who to wake up next!

At night from where we were camping it was magical as you could stand and watch all the headlights coming down the hill past the campsite towards the changeover area.



As a TACH runner i relished the night running (apart from getting up for the 3.30am 'graveyard slot'!) especially through the technical wooded sections. I ran 4 legs all under 55 minutes and loved every minute of it. The team camaraderie was great fun and the general friendliness of all the runners, supporters, marshals etc fantastic.

Despite the horror of getting up at 2.45am, to get ready for and down to, the changeover area by 3.20am, i loved the early morning run. It was peaceful and the air was full of concentrated energy from all the runners trying not to fall over the tree roots or go the wrong way. As i came down the last hill the dawn was just starting and the sky lighting up on the horizon. A fabulous experience and one that has inspired me to repeat by finding an overnight run somewhere....

As a team we ran 26 laps in the 24hours and were very pleased with it.

Would i do it agin - YES! TACH should get a team together.

Deep respect to the solo runners - the winning man ran 20 laps and the woman 16 laps.

Personally i'd rather run 200 or 160km on a linear course but if you wanted a safe course where you could stop for food, rest, toilets etc easily then i can see it's a good ultra to do.

I thought the 10km lap would get tedious, but certainly for 4 laps it was not the case.

Each lap was different, different weather, different people, different light, different energy - e.g. the first at 1pm was boiling hot, the evening run 9.30pm was cooler and the light was fading, the 3.30am run was dark and quiet and the 9.30am morning run was cool and fresh and my legs felt surprisingly good, even on a few hours sleep.

I would encourage anyone to participate in this event. It is hard to get a team entered as it fills up in 30 minutes apparently. Maybe this is something we as a club could organise even.....??

## PLANNING A TACH TREASURE HUNT



The 2014 TACH Off-Road Treasure Hunt moved to Long Ashton, after two years based at The Bowl in Almondsbury. The excellent Miners Rest pub provided the 2014 Event Centre.

Twenty-six intrepid TACHers took on the challenge of navigating the hills, woods and fields around Long Ashton. Two classes were on offer - TACHKlets for solo competitors and TACHBatch for pairs.

As the starting command was given, ten TACHBatch teams and six TACHKlets headed off into the unknown. Runners were 'encouraged' to stay within the allowable time of ninety minutes by the deduction of one point for every minute they were late back.

In order to generate a variety of route choice, a bonus point was on offer for any control that was only visited by one team. I was pleased with the way this worked as of the sixty-three controls on offer, only eight received no visitors and thirteen generated a bonus point. The first teams back were well within the allowable time but only six teams avoided the dreaded penalty points. It is easy to underestimate how long it will take to get back, especially when route choice is limited by out-of-bounds areas.

I had great assistance from David and Laura with timing the finishing teams and entering the data into the computer. The winner of the TACHKlets class was Justin with 15 points (1 bonus, 1 penalty), with Tilly as runner-up on 14 points (1 bonus, 0 penalty). The winners of TACHBatch

class were Andy & Sarah also 15 points (0 bonus, 0 penalty) – it was Sarah’s first run with TACH and I am pleased to say that he has been back. Emma & The Albatross (aka Graham) were TACHBatch runners-up on 13 points (2 bonus, 0 penalty).

The highest number of bonus points was three, received by two teams - Sarah & Andy (not to be confused with Andy & Sarah) and Longhen. Both teams had their good work on route selection undone by leaving too little time to get back to the Event Centre and racking up half a dozen penalty points.

The winners each received a designer TACH ORTH T-shirt, in addition to the extra championship points, for their efforts. Justin did a good job of modelling the winners’ T-shirt.

Full results are:



TACHBatch			TACHKlets		
1	Andy & Sarah	15	1	Justin	15
2	Emma & The Albatross	13	2	Tilly	14
3	Rachel & Emma	11	3	Luke	6
4	Longhen	11	4	Anthony	4
5	Flying Faggs	10	5	Jason	-3
6	Sarah & Andy	6	6	Ruth	RTD
7	Rob & Alex	5.5			
8	Mark & Sara	4			
9	Sam & Jayne	3			
10	Sally & Rod	-1			

## **VEGAN CHOCOLATE BROWNIES**

### **Ingredients**

**Serves: 16**

- 250g plain flour
- 350g demerara sugar (I used approx. 280g sugar- experiment to taste.)
- 65g plain cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 250ml water (or soya/almond milk)
- 250ml vegetable oil (or half chocolate soya dessert)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Could also add dried fruit/nuts for flavour and contrast

NB – to prevent being too oily and make gooey I put in a tub of chocolate soya dessert and topped up to 250ml with oil. I also used about 2/3 milk to water.

### **Method**

**Prep:5min › Cook:20min › Extra time:5min › Ready in:30min**

1. Preheat the oven to 180 C / Gas mark 4.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. Pour in water, vegetable oil and vanilla; mix until well blended. Spread evenly in a 23x33cm (9x13 in) baking tin.
3. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes in the preheated oven, until the top is no longer shiny. Let cool for at least 10 minutes before cutting into squares.



My first encounter with a good wholegrain rye loaf was in the early 1980s, when I moved to London and stumbled across Neal's Yard, founded by the late Nick Saunders in the 1970s in a visionary move to create a wholefood refuge by the old flower and vegetable market in Covent Garden. The yard was in among old warehouses that kept it separate from the sprawl of the streets around and felt calm and tranquil. At that time I was living and cooking in an ashram in Notting Hill, and would trek there for vegetables and juice. The bakery at Neal's Yard was the home of the sturdy loaf, and this recipe is a nod of respect to those bakers who from the beginning practised and promoted organic breadmaking and the importance of sustainable, responsible living.

## Five-grain loaf

3 hrs prep  
1 hour cook

150g strong white flour (42%)	100g white leaven (29%) [see pages 25-27]
100g strong wholemeal flour (29%)	50g honey (14%) 1 tsp
100g rye flour (29%)	25g molasses (7%) 1 tsp
1½ tsp fine sea salt (2%)	150g water at 20°C (43%)
210g mixed, well-cooked grains, such as rice, lentils, rye or wheat (60%)	2½ tsp fresh yeast, crumbled (2.5%) 1.5 fast
50g whole millet (14%)	50g sunflower oil (14%) 10g
30g oatmeal (9%)	oats or fine oatmeal, for finishing the loaf

In a large bowl, combine the three flours with the salt. In another bowl, mix the cooked grains, millet, and oatmeal with the leaven, honey, molasses, water, yeast, and oil, and beat well until combined. Pour this wet mixture in with the dry ingredients, and stir well until you have a soft, sticky dough. Scrape any dough from your fingers into the bowl, then cover and leave for 10 minutes.

Rub 1 tsp of corn or olive oil on the work-surface and knead the dough on the oiled surface for 10 seconds, ending with the dough in a smooth, round ball. Clean and dry the bowl, then rub lightly with a tsp of oil. Return the dough to the bowl, cover, and leave for a further 10 minutes. Remove the dough and knead once more on the oiled surface, returning the shape of the dough to a smooth, round ball. Place it back in the bowl, cover, and leave for 1 hour in a warm (21–25°C) place.

Lightly flour the work-surface and shape the dough into a baton (see page 21). Rub a tea-towel with a handful of flour (or use a linen-lined proving basket) and place the dough inside, seam-side-up. Wrap the dough up snugly in the cloth, and leave to rise for 1½ hours, or until almost doubled in height.

Preheat the oven to 210°C/410°F/gas mark 6½. Upturn the loaf on to a flour- or semolina-dusted tray, spray (or brush) the upper surface with water then sprinkle the surface of the loaf with oats or fine oatmeal. Using a sharp blade, slash the loaf diagonally two or three times. Bake in the centre of the oven for 30 minutes, then reduce the heat to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5 and bake for a further 15–20 minutes until the loaf is a good brown, feels light in weight and sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

## Race Diary.

**Saturday, 06 September 2014**

OMM Lite ~ OMM

**OFF ROAD - Teams of two navigate paths and bridleways over two days returning to the event HQ at the end of each day**

RACE LENGTH: various.

**Sunday, 07 September 2014**

Cardiff 10k ~ Cardiff City

**ROAD - Through Cardiff castle grounds and around the city**

RACE LENGTH: 10k. LOCATION: Cardiff City Hall, Cardiff

Woodchester Park ~ Stroud & District Athletic Club.

**OFF ROAD - A challenging, hilly course of approximately eight miles along woodland tracks through Woodchester Park.**

RACE LENGTH: 8 miles. LOCATION: Woodchester Park, Gloucestershire, GL10 3TS (NB: TACH Championship Race.)

Wentwood woodlark ~ Chepstow Harriers

RACE LENGTH: 8 miles.

**Saturday, 13 September 2014**

mountain-trail-challenge ~ MTC

**OFF ROAD - The MTC Challenge is not a race but a challenge against your own personal best**

RACE LENGTH: 20 or 30 miles. LOCATION: Brecon Beacons (CF48 2HT)

**Sunday, 14 September 2014**

The Melksham 10 ~ Stampede Sports

**ROAD - Certified measured course, run through the heart of Wiltshire including the historic village of Lacock.**

RACE LENGTH: 10 miles. LOCATION: The Adventure Centre, King George V Playing Fields, Melksham, SN12 7ED

Kennet and Avon Canal 56 mile race ~ ULTRA RUN

**MULTI TERRAIN - Undulating**

RACE LENGTH: 56 miles. LOCATION: Canalside, A36 by Sydney Gardens, Bath, BA2 6QT

**Saturday, 20 September 2014**

Uphill to Wells Relay & Solo ~ Mendip Hash

**An off-road relay race starting at Uphill beach and finishing at Wells Cathedral. The route is 90% off-road and more or less exactly follows the West Mendip Way along footpaths and bridleways.**

RACE LENGTH: 30 miles . LOCATION: Uphill Beach

**Sunday, 21 September 2014**

Bristol Half Marathon ~ Run Bristol

**ROAD - Around Bristol City**

RACE LENGTH: 13.1 miles. LOCATION: Bristol City Centre

**Sunday, 28 September 2014**

Portishead multi-terrain ~ Portishead Running Club.

**MULTI TERRAIN – Undulating**

RACE LENGTH: 5K or 10K. LOCATION: Lake Ground, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 7HZ (NB: TACH Championship Race.)

**Sunday, 12 October 2014**

Mendip Muddle ~ Weston Athletic Club.

**MULTI TERRAIN - Set in the stunning scenery of the Mendip hills,**  
RACE LENGTH: 20K. LOCATION: Charterhouse, Nr Blagdon, BS40 7XR (NB: TACH  
Championship Race.)

**Sunday, 19 October 2014**

Devizes Half Marathon ~ Events Logic UK

**ROAD – Town and rural on a challenging course**

RACE LENGTH: 13.1 Miles. LOCATION: The Green, Devizes, SN10 3AA

Exmoor Stagger & Stumble ~ Minehead running club.

**OFF ROAD - This is a tough, find your own way run.**

RACE LENGTH: 6 or 15 miles. LOCATION: The Exmoor Sandpiper Car Park, Countisbury Hill,  
Lynton, Devon (NB: TACH Championship Race.)

**Saturday, 25 October 2014**

OMM ~ OMM

**OFF ROAD - Teams of two navigate paths and bridleways over two days returning to the  
event HQ at the end of each day**

RACE LENGTH: various.

Ashton Court 10k ~ Run Bristol

**MULTI TERRAIN - Ashton Court 2 lap course**

RACE LENGTH: 10 K. LOCATION: Ashton Court

**Sunday, 02 November 2014**

The Bog & Bryn Challenge ~ Fairwater Runners.

**MULTI TERRAIN - very tough and scenic**

RACE LENGTH: 20K. LOCATION: Cwmbran Stadium, Henllys Way, Cwmbran, NP44 3YS (NB:  
TACH Championship Race.)

Over the Hills ~ Avon Valley Runners.

**MULTI TERRAIN - Wonderful scenery and a very friendly race**

RACE LENGTH: 12K. LOCATION: Tithe Barn, Culver Close, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1LF (NB:  
TACH Championship Race.)

**Sunday, 09 November 2014**

Sodbury Slog ~ Bitton Road Runners

**OFF ROAD – muddy**

RACE LENGTH: 8.5Miles. LOCATION: Chipping Sodbury School, South Gloucestershire

**Sunday, 23 November 2014**

Trionium Bath Hilly Half and 12K ~ Trionium

**MULTI TERRAIN - A tough two-lap course with over 500m of ascent and descent.**

RACE LENGTH: 13.1 Miles & 12 k. LOCATION: Bath Racecourse, Lansdown, Bath, BA1 9BU

**Sunday, 07 December 2014**

Full Monty Cute ~ CREWKERNE RUNNING CLUB.

**MULTI TERRAIN - 10 Hills in 10 miles**

RACE LENGTH: 10 Miles. LOCATION: Ham Hill Country Park, Stoke sub  
Hamdon, Somerset. (NB: TACH Championship Race.)

Christmas Cracker ~ Weston Athletic Club

**MULTI TERRAIN - Flat, on tarmac and beach**

RACE LENGTH: 10K. LOCATION: Weston College, Knightstone Road, BS23 2AL

**Sunday, 28 December 2014**

SEVEN SINS CHALLENGE ~ British Triathlon Federation.

**OFF ROAD - Seven Tough Hills over Seven Miles of Beautiful Forest Trails**

RACE LENGTH: 7Miles. LOCATION: New Road off A48 Nr Blakeney,, Forest of Dean, GL15  
4ST (NB: TACH Championship Race.)