

# ROUGH RUNNING NEWS

## (NEW EDITOR EDITION)



**T . A . C . H .**  
(TOWN AND COUNTRY HARRIERS)

See also: [www.tach.org.uk](http://www.tach.org.uk)

and [www.gaveller.wordpress.com](http://www.gaveller.wordpress.com)

and [www.closetothecountryside.co.uk](http://www.closetothecountryside.co.uk)

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# Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of Rough Running News with a new editor. It is going to be a hard act to follow the previous editor (known variously as Chris, Travelog, The Gaveller, Mr Closer to the Countryside) but I'll give it a go.

Congratulations to the five new Woodwoses who completed the Green Man Challenge on November 1<sup>st</sup>. There is much more to read about that momentous day in the this edition of RRN

The AGM saw myself and Jonathan volunteering to assist the club. Jonathan was unable to make the first meeting of the new committee – was it because he read the agenda, issued by our illustrious Chairman, more closely than me? Perhaps he was concerned at the strange initiation rites implicit in the agenda item entitled 'Bedding New Committee Members'. Turtle's missing preposition caused much hilarity (and relief from Jonathan and myself when we realised it should have been 'Bedding In')!

In the last edition of RRN it was suggested that TACH should join the Open Space Society, which provides professional help for those concerned with rights of way and green spaces. I am pleased to report that we are proceeding with this and Chris Bloor has volunteered to act as the club's representative on this body.

Many thanks to all the contributors to this edition.

# Green Man Challenge Day

## Now we are twelve! (by Chris Bloor)

On 1<sup>st</sup> November, five new Woodwoses completed the Green Man Challenge in a group effort organised by Town and Country Harriers (TACH).

First in was Ruth Pitchers – the first female Woodwose – in 9 hours 54 mins, looking as fresh as a daisy. She certainly looks capable of knocking at least half an hour off this time, if she feels the need to try it. (She really wanted the route to be 46 miles to match her age!)

Next in was Mike Bastow in just under 10 hours, accompanied by Emma Oughton, who had guided Mike and Ruth in from Patchway Community School (at 32 miles). Mike had been the stronger and more eager up until Patchway, but Ruth was looking stronger by the time they reached Blaise car park. Emma found herself torn between guiding Ruth, who was unfamiliar with this section and supporting Mike, who was looking wobbly on his long legs “like a young colt.”

The remaining group came in an hour later. These were: George “Woodbine” Gilham, Jim Plunkett Cole (and his dog Alfie) and Rob Hicks – motto “Service before Self” – the winner of the inaugural Hogweeds Muggle – who had stayed back to help John McDonough guide George and Jim (and Alfie) home. This had become necessary when Gaveller – Chris “Travelog” Bloor had dropped out at Patchway – “I’m cold, my legs ache and I’ve done it before!”

9 of us had started in the Dovecote car Park at 7 am. Woodwose, Mark “Gypsy” Vogan kept us company till Dundry. Sue Baic joined us from Pensford to the Lockkeeper at Keynsham. Tony “Rebore” Bishop’s legs let him down on the way up to Shortwood Hill (21 miles). Antony “Turtle” Clark was still going strong at Hambrook (27 miles), but he thought he had better drop out because he had not done the training and he had only meant to stay with us for a couple of stages (the boy’s a natural!).



Nobody would have been able to drop out were it not for the motorised support team, who also supplied food and isotonic drinks made to dietician Sue Baic’s recipe. These were Jason Pitchers, Woodwose Peter de Boer and children (Lisa made the flapjacks), Sue Baic, Libby Bloor (and Jana), Ruth McDonough (and Sylvie), Jan Clark (+Susannah and Catriona) and Jo Hicks.

TACH really seem to be getting the hang of organising these long distance events, which is a good thing as there is a growing body of runners (and walkers) who have unfinished business with the Green Man Challenge.

# Comments from Green Man participants

I would like to thank all involved for creating such a wonderful 'atmosphere' throughout the day that it really did not seem like I was out running for nearly 10 hours.

Running together for the first 26 miles made time pass so quickly and the wonderful feed stations just made it all worthwhile.

Chris, I am indebted to you for putting this 45 mile challenge in your newsletter. It tempted me to do an endurance event that deep down I have always wanted to try. I cannot thank you enough for the long Tuesday runs, for introducing me to a few parts of the route and for always making it rain! Had you not decided to run on the day I would have felt very unconfident about finding the way so thank you for your guidance and for being there. I still cannot believe we only ran up to 21 miles before the event and yet I achieved 45 on the day. Thank you Libby and Jana for being patient when we were still out running at lunchtimes and Chris should have been home.

I would like to thank each and every runner + Alfie for keeping me company. The wonderful group atmosphere made the run really enjoyable. It just felt like we were out on a TACH run for the first 30 miles, particularly as Turtle and Sue joined in. I still think you could have made it to the end, Ant and I was really glad you stayed with us until 26 miles.

Thank you to Pete and the children for welcoming us to Dundry so early in the morning, It was really nice as it made me think of my children still tucked up in bed!

The tea stop in Pensford was just 'cool' and I say 'tea stop' because I couldn't believe my luck – a cup of tea! And then before I knew it, tea time again with Pete's children making proper tea and can I please have the recipe for those flapjacks! Mine are just not the same and they tasted wonderful.

John, I loved the way your daughter so eagerly greeted us a little before each stop. She was always there excited and waiting and ran off to say we had arrived. Thank you Sylvie and Ruth.

Alfie, sorry I couldn't help you over the stiles but I'm just not a natural with dogs.

If it had not been for Chris and Rob I would most certainly have got lost trying to find Patchway but Mike obviously knew where he was going so thanks for letting me tag along with you to Blaise to help me find my way.

Emma, I cannot thank you enough for being there at this stage. For some reason I had lots of energy and the pace you set just meant I was able to feel I could get on with making it to the end. Thanks again to Mike and Emma who kindly shouted instructions so I could find my way out of Blaise. Once I got near the Downs I knew the way so sorry I left you but I had another burst of energy and my friend Marie was a welcome sight and came to support me to the end just as the rain began to hammer down.

John, thank you for running part way and I was sorry not to have spent time running with you that day. Thanks so much for keeping George, Jim and Alfie going and I have no doubt Rob was heroic at this stage and was out far longer in the dark and rain than he needed to be, to support the others getting to the end. Thank you Rob. If you would like to run around faster anytime I will provide a support wagon and include hot tea.

As for my husband Jason who spent the whole day before working out every detail of the route and then being there to support me throughout, I love you too.

If I'm really honest, I felt strong throughout and didn't have any bad moments when I thought I couldn't make it. The reason, I guess, is that you all came out and were there in some way or other which made it just such a lovely day.

PS What was in the Flapjacks that gave me so much energy and even better helped me to get away without aching legs these last couple of days?????? And yes, I am a tea addict so I was so grateful for those hot cups of tea.

In return for all your wonderful support I would love to help and support any that wish to try or repeat the event. I'll make sure I have 'leaf' tea and not tea bags and my son Frazer makes great flapjacks.

Love Ruth xxxxxxxx Oops sorry  
Woodwose Ruth

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A big thank you to all those that supported the run and made it all bearable. Those sugary cups of tea went down well. Thanks also to Pete meeting me with the kids to run the last ½ mile, Tony for the spare shorts, Ant for the Vaseline (sorry for the double dipping) and Sue for reminding us she was "off to the pub now". Also to Emma, running the last 2 legs with me.

Mike

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I would like to echo Chris' sentiments. The support was magnificent. My memories in particular are of Pete's cafe, Jason was a trooper in providing a rolling convoy throughout, having first constructed a detailed route map with ETAs and gradient profiles and an overlay of the route on OS, and the welcome at Blaise was nothing short of magnificent. Congratulations to all finishers; in particular I would like to flag up the achievement of my friend George who unlike the rest of us seasoned hacks is not a runner, having devoted his energies to a life of sybaritic indulgence heretofore. When he visited me in the spring I mentioned the Challenge and suggested he do a leg, so in a fit of pique he said he was going to do the whole lot and got himself up to 30 miles in training. At times I think it was his own personal Calvary (but with isotonic drink and Jaffa cakes as sacrament) but he drove himself through and I am full of admiration.

My final thanks go to Rob who eschewed any opportunity for a PB to stay with me and support George and Jim through to the finish; for such a selfless act he has our (inadequate) thanks and I look forward to returning the favour when he decides to make a serious attempt on the Challenge.

Neither Emma nor I were fit to attempt it this time, but intend to have our time in the spring; I am hoping to persuade Ant to join us. That leaves one notable exception - Jason, would you care to join us?

John

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Thank you once again for your organisation. When my legs stop hurting, I may well be back for more.

I like 'Woodbine'. Has a certain pre-war stylishness about it that nicely echoes my attitude to life. John will testify that I appeared for dinner last night in a blazer lined with pink satin, and immaculately pressed chinos... before falling asleep in my bread and butter pudding.

Hail to the Gaveler!

The Woodbine

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The legs are fine now - although Sunday was a bit of a trial!

Pip pip

George (Thursday following)



# Race Reports

## Isle of Wight Fell Races - September

(by Bill Charnock)

Most runners don't associate the Isle of Wight with fell running but in fact this is a recognised event although not as rugged as the Lakes, Pennines or particularly North Wales.

It consists of three races, two on Saturday and one on Sunday all based on Ventnor the "town of a thousand steps". The Saturday morning event is a three mile dash to the top of the fell, reminiscent of the cake race, while the afternoon is a seven mile race with a bit more climbing. On Sunday there is a fourteen miler known as the Wroxall Round which takes me just under two hours. If you do this one and not the other two remember to crumple and abuse your number so that you don't get snide remarks about fresh legs and Johnny-come-latelys.

Accommodation available at all levels including camping in the Rugby club grounds and even dossing on the Rugby Club floor. Also concessionary ferry rates for entrants and their families provided you don't stay more than five days. Beer and food are good and I believe the cider too although I am no expert.

The event is held in late September and on both the occasions I have done it the weather has been so good that races have ended with a swim in the sea which is right by the start/finish.

One word of warning if you go to the prize giving take a packed lunch. With three races, two genders, four age categories, team prizes and often multiple prizes in each category plus at least two competitions at the same event, it can take a while. This year the event was dominated by the Serpentine Club of London which normally see no hills of any kind.



# The Mendip Muddle – 12<sup>th</sup> October

(by Rob Hicks)

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October the sun shone hot and bright. The Muddle has seen an array of weather in the relatively few years that I have competed (this was my 4<sup>th</sup> go) and this year produced the warmest day for weeks and had runners reaching for the sunglasses and caps that had gathered dust for much of the summer.

Jo was spending the weekend visiting London with her Mum so Dylan the dog and I rose early, had our breakfast and left for Charterhouse in good time. My cheque had not cleared and I was worried I would need to re-enter on the day and didn't want to miss out. I was really looking forward to this race that would kick off 4 consecutive weekends of racing climaxing in the Green Man Challenge in November.

Joining the other early late entrants I put on my wellingtons to avoid the dampness of the car parks long grass and collected my number. They were expecting me. I drank more water and sports drink and took Dylan for a walk to pass time. It was already hot, with few clouds in the sky and little breeze.

As the time passed TACHers arrived and prepared themselves for the start. Emma who was surprisingly nervous; Antony and Jan who had the distraction of Susanna and Katrina; Chris (S) and Jonathan both cheerful and chatty; Patrick smiling as always and John, Ruth and Sylvie who arrived in time to dog sit my increasingly hot hound.

As we approached the start Ant and I talked tactics – we would approach it differently. I felt I should start swiftly and hold on for as long as possible using the race to get a good workout for the forthcoming longer events. Ant would begin steadily and gauge his fitness as the distance passed. He suggested he was under-prepared but I expected him to grow in confidence as the miles passed and less strong entrants faded.

I warmed up, turned to listen to the pre race instruction and re turned to eye the trail; however I was dismayed by the hordes of runners who had managed to push in front but clearly wouldn't be there 200 metres in. This is a problem that constantly annoys me. I cannot be tolerant of this happening in races such as this, where very few entrants are 'novices'; it is not inexperience that leads them to the front, but selfishness.

The news that this was the biggest field ever (over 300 starters) received a round of applause and the starter let us go. The scramble for position began and continued down the single track as each inch of the trail and several feet of the bank were trampled by those who wanted to advance.

I was among that number. I love the sloping trail towards Velvet Bottom and always enjoy leaping over boulders fuelled by adrenalin, fresh legs and competitive spirit. Entering the woodland about a mile in I settled into a steady rhythm happy with the start and the pace of those I flanked.

The first half passed without incident, I neither lost or gained ground and felt refreshed by the water offered by cheerful Marshalls. I was overwhelmed by the support on the course. Weston are a big club but it seemed that at every turn was a group of fluorescent clad stewards and photographers. This must have been the most photographed race I have run. I thanked each one for their support and in turn was rewarded with extra applause.

By the descent from Dolebury Warren I had gained a couple more places although wasn't sure where I placed overall. I sensed the runners I was passing were struggling with the heat and distance more than me and that they would continue to fall back. It would be a long 5 or 6 miles home for them.

Passing Tony Hogg's house offered raucous pan bashing and whistles blowing. I drank 2 cups of water upon entry to the cool shady forest. I stopped to walk whilst doing this, lost a place to a runner who pressed on but overtook him within 300 metres. I didn't see him again.

The climb from the car park to Tynings Farm was swiftly negotiated and I received warm encouragement from a few gathered by the stables. I'm not sure if they were there for runners or riders, but either way seemed to be enjoying the sport before them.

I ran up the steep rocky footpath onto Black Down. It may have been as quick to walk but I wanted to experience the pain and discomfort of running. I needed to know I could do it and felt in the context of the other challenges ahead this small battle was worth winning. Passing more photographers I knew the bulk of the climbing had been done and pushed myself to run hard and fast for the last 3 miles.

The trig point was predictably crowded and spectators who may not know me were still eager to support a Town and Country Harrier and for the umpteenth time I felt proud to belong to the finest running club in the area. "Go on TACH" was called out. I tried even harder.

I was not able to gain on the runners ahead, nor did those behind gain on me so the finish was uneventful. I was glad – not enjoying the final twists, humps and stiles.

With friends lining the finishing straight I smiled for the last photo opportunity. After 7 or 8 cups of water I joined PK, John, Ruth and Sylvie on the bank near the finish to await the rest of the Harriers. Jan and the Clark girls were there too. It was a really good atmosphere and we chatted and joked between applause for the finishers.

Jonathan emerged from a crowd to sprint to the line, beaming ear to ear. Emma defied her nerves to finish among the first handful of ladies. Chris looked as strong as expected for someone about to tackle the fells of the Lake District. Patrick's shorts (you know the ones) were spotted in the distance and he looked comfortable as he approached the line in just over a couple of hours. Ant followed shortly after and looked hot but was running strongly. He was cheered in by the full Tach clan, now joined by Michelle and Isaac.

The tea and cakes were excellent. The fluorescent yellow hats of last year were replaced by flimsy backpacks bearing the Muddle logo and a few flyers. Bring back the socks!

For most the effort was over. For John and Jan it was about to start as they set out on their bikes to peddle home to Bristol leaving Ant to go and have another cuppa.



# Hogweed Muggles I – 18<sup>th</sup> October

(by Sue Baic)

The first running of this epic multi-terrain race took place on Saturday 18 October 2008 from Hawkesbury Upton Village Hall on the Cotswold Way, only 30 minutes from the centre of Bristol.

Three challenging, hilly, and very scenic courses were available:

- MINI MUGGLE ~ 5.5 miles with 500ft of climbing
- MIMSY MUGGLE ~ 10.5 miles with 1000ft of climbing
- MAJOR MUGGLE ~ 15.5 miles with 1300ft of climbing

TACH were represented over each course with Rob Hicks and Pete Kennedy selecting the Muggle, John Seager (running in a new category of Male Vet 50) the Mimsy and Sue Baic the Mini.

At 9.30 sharp the runners set off in groups according to selected route – the longer route going first. Each course followed the same start and finish but very different middle routes. The light drizzle and ground underfoot did make for challenging conditions with several runners returning with mud covered backs and bottoms telling a tale. The territory was familiar from TACH training runs and the Cotswold Relay.

The courses were indeed scenic, well marked and marshalled and carefully thought out to avoid too many road crossings and unrunable hill sections. The staggered starts and finishes made a pleasant change, with the short course runners changed tucking into homemade cheese scones and tea by the time the others arrived back from their respective routes.

Results from TACH were as follows:

Rob Hicks	1 <sup>st</sup> Male overall in Major	1:55:12
Pete Kennedy	22 <sup>nd</sup> in Major	2:28:13
John Seager	21 <sup>st</sup> in Mimsy	1:37:25
Sue Baic	22 <sup>nd</sup> overall in Mini and 1 <sup>st</sup> Lady Vet 40	1:01:07

Supping beer in the Beaufort afterwards we all agreed we would do it again next year but might each select a route. It would be fantastic to see a bigger field to support Hogweed including a few more TACHers. Well-done Hogweed Trotters for an excellent new addition to the autumn race schedule!

(and by Rob Hicks)

I was drawn to the race by a couple of factors: The early start (0930) which would leave the afternoon free to spend time with Jo; that it was on a Saturday; that there was a choice of distances (an idea I really like and wanted to see how they did it); and the distance (which would fit into my Green Man training plan).

Gathering at the front of a respectable size field for the first running, PK and I eyed up the competition and had our usual pre-race banter. I felt quite confident of my ability to last the distance, having run the Mendip Muddle the week before and know I was fit. Pete seemed less sure and spoke about taking the first few miles steadily, which I agreed was sensible. We set off at a conservative pace and about 10 runners eased away from us. The first mile or so sloped downhill through fields and then onto a lane. The course did have several miles of country roads linking the off road sections and these added to impression I am left with that it is not an especially tough course.

There were of course a few hills including two steep ones; a tarmac lane about half way in and the climb up from the church back to Hawkesbury Upton at the finish. By the first proper hill, about 30 minutes in, Pete and I had passed a couple of runners tackling the longer distance (for we had split from the Mini and Mimsy runners by now) and had the leading group in our sights. At this point I felt really good and so pushed myself harder and closed the gap, passing the runners at the front of the field by the top of the hill which started as woodland and ended in pastoral farmland.

The mist became an issue for the only time in the race shortly after as the route navigated a couple of larger open fields using little-worn footpaths. I picked the right line and hoped those behind we able to do the same – using my fresh footprints in the longish grass would also have helped.

I cannot be sure how long was left when I started passing the Mimsy back-markers, but I knew that it signalled the final few miles. After a tough ascent (from the church) through woodland and a set of fields with high stiles to negotiate, I was directed onto the final stretch of road and the finish.

Because the three races started together, over 70 people had already finished, but I was thrilled when it was confirmed that none of them had been doing the longer distance. I thought (and hoped!) as much.

In conclusion, this was an ambitious and unusual event which was planned and executed brilliantly. As well as the 3 races on offer were 4 different fun run distances for children of all ages. The village hall provided a good venue and the very inexpensive and plentiful catering added to the feeling of goodwill I sensed from the other athletes.

The best thing of all was sitting having a pint and a chat with John, Sue and Pete on Saturday lunchtime knowing that we had the perfect excuse to miss our usual long Sunday training runs and spend an extra hour in bed.

## **Exmoor Stagger - 26th October**

**(by Jonathan Gledson)**

It all looks like great fun on the website. Then when you look at the map, you realise that this could be a race with a sting in the tail. The climbs from Minehead up onto Knowle hill and then from Wootton Courteney to Dunkerry Beacon are challenging but you know what to expect. Just hang in there, keep putting one foot in front of the other, keep breathing, try to appreciate the magnificent scenery and it'll all be great fun in the end. But that return climb up onto Knowle Hill...

It's only when out in the thick of it that you discover more small stings tucked away in the middle of the race. The first unexpected one comes just as I'm getting into my downhill stride, bounding recklessly down, overtaking fitter stronger runners who had pulled away from me on the climbs. Rounding a bend I realise that I've been tricked. The return leg isn't a nice, long down hill. It's more like roller coaster, but one without the wheels to carry you back up the hills.

Later I find myself running alone along a forest track. It's flat so I should be making good time but the track is an energy sapping mush. Not liquid enough to feel the hard ground beneath and not firm enough to run along the top of it. It seems to go on forever. With no one ahead to chase and no one behind to run from, finding the

motivation to keep pushing is hard. Another climb would be preferable. My wishes are eventually granted – a runnable hill and some company. I'm gaining on someone. Someone else is gaining on me. We all come together then drift apart, our place order reversed but my placing unchanged for now. Then comes payback time for two of the runners that I overtook on the earlier downhill. Here they come, still going strong, I try to hold on but I can't. I try to hang on behind them but I already know that they're stronger climbers than me and we are fast approaching the dreaded return climb up to Knowle Hill – the green field that's so steep it should have stairs. I'd love to know if anyone has ever run up that hill. Walking up is hard enough

Up on the hill, in a ridiculous comedy moment, I accept a banana from the banana man "You're the first person to take one" he says and after running along with it in my hand or a few hundred meters, I realise why. I'm so knackered that I can't even be bothered to peel it, let alone chew it or swallow it! Away banana! Twisting, turning and zigzagging down through the forest tracks I feel sure that there can't be any more nasty surprises. "Not far to go now" shouts a marshal. Alone again on the final descent into Minehead, I get that familiar final straight feeling that I always get when finishing on a road. That bone jolting, joint jarring, energy sapping feeling of fell shoes on tarmac. The race for places is over. The only race now is to get to the finishing line before all energy and will power is spent. And then it appears, crowded with people awaiting friends and family members but happy to shower praise and encouragement on anybody else who happens to stagger past. After crossing the line I join them for a few minutes before realising that I've finished fast enough to get a shower and tea and cakes without queuing. Result!



## **Escape From The Morgue**

### **The Original Mountain Marathon – 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> Oct** (by The Editor)

You may have seen some coverage on the national news of the cancellation of the Original Mountain Marathon (OMM) in Borrowdale on the weekend of 25/26 October. One of the locals, the manager of the Honister Slate Mine, to whom the press spoke, seemed to take credit for getting the event cancelled and was reported as saying "we have come within inches of turning the Lake District mountains into a morgue".

The lead up to the OMM was pretty eventful for me, so I guess it was only to be expected that the event itself wouldn't be straightforward. On the Tuesday before we

were due to head north, Jim, the work colleague who had talked me into putting in a late entry to the A class and was therefore responsible for me doing all the TACH runs with a pack for two months, told me that he had injured himself on his final training run and would have to pull out.

Fortunately, the event forum has a section to assist those faced with such a dilemma and, by the time I told my wife that Jim was injured, I had identified another entrant who was in need of a partner for the Long Score class and appeared to have similar expectations to me for finishing position.

Horrendous traffic for large parts of the journey northwards on Friday afternoon meant it took me over 8 hours to get to Borrowdale and led to a rather negative state of mind. However, once I had met up with Andy, we had sorted out our team changes and completed registration for the Long Score and I had managed to buy replacements for the kit I had forgotten, I felt we were well set for a good performance the next day.

At first it seemed that the weather forecast might have been wrong, as it was still not raining as we walked from the car park to the start. Our start time was 9:35 and just a few minutes before, as if taking a cue from our appearance in the start area, the heavens opened. Once we had been handed our maps by the marshal, we took a quick decision to head for a control almost due south. This allowed us to stay in the shelter of Borrowdale as much as possible but when we did have to climb out of the valley the full force of the weather made itself felt – horizontal rain stinging the face and gusts of wind blowing us off the bearing we were trying to follow.

The first control registered, we continued south to a control located in a re-entrant on the northern flanks of Scafell Pike. This time we were on the more exposed western side of the ridge and the going was much tougher – but we pushed on and navigated almost directly to it. Our third control was registered after two and a half hours and we seemed to be going well, having scored 75 points.

And then disaster struck (or so it seemed) when my Walsh fell shoe disintegrated – within a handful of paces the sole and upper had almost completely parted company. I tried to hold the shoe together by tying the lace under the sole but it did little good and we decided that another day and a half in that condition was not feasible. So we headed back to the start, still an hour and a half away. As we dropped back into Borrowdale, the volume of the rain that was falling became apparent as the side of the valley, along which we had walked just a few hours earlier, was now covered with the white streaks of newly formed torrents.

Back at the start, we despondently handed in our timing chip only to be told that the event had been cancelled. Thoughts of redeeming a few brownie points by making an early return to our families were swiftly dashed by the news that the road out of the event centre was impassable due to flooding. We managed to get Andy's car out of the parking field and onto the road without the assistance of a tractor but no further progress could be made and we spent the next fifteen hours in the car waiting for the waters to recede.

As we all now know, the event area was not turned into a morgue and there were only a few injuries. The event organisation was excellent, despite the unprecedented conditions, as it has been in all the KIMMs and OMMs I have done. I am looking forward to slightly more benign conditions next year so that we can complete both days of the event, as I'm sure are the vast majority of this year's competitors. Oh yes, and a new pair of fell shoes for Christmas.

# Words Of Wisdom

## Footing the bill ....

(by Don Juan)

Friday 2 May. With my once in a lifetime trip to the TT a month away, I thought it would be a good idea to get out on the motorbike. After a great ride up the Wye valley, I was trickling home through town when I stalled the bike as I was coming out of a junction, and it fell over sideways.

I did not get my left foot off the peg in time, so helpfully it saved the bike from any damage by serving as a nice cushion between the bike (230 kilos) and the road. Two men in a Park Furnishers van behind lifted the bike off me (thanks guys) and I rode home. By the time I got there and got my boot off, the foot was throbbing nicely, so a (precautionary, I thought!) visit to Casualty revealed a fracture of the bone running to my little toe just below the joint, and about a quarter of an inch below that, the bone was hanging on by a thread (remember pulling your loose teeth out when you were a little kid? Yes, just like that). A temporary plaster was fitted, and the next day I went to Frenchay to see a consultant and have a full leg plaster fitted, reduced to a foot plaster 3 weeks later.

Fast forward 6 weeks, and the foot is still not showing as healing on the x-ray, so I am told another 4 weeks on crutches; if it has not healed then, they will operate, chipping a piece off the bottom of my shin, wrapping it in mesh and putting it in the gap.

I go for the 10 week check up with some trepidation. Bad news first; according to the x-rays, the images are not showing the spurry growth anticipated. However the surgeon I see (grandstanding a little for the attractive student accompanying him) seizes the little toe and the waggles it up and down whilst holding the outside middle of my foot; as (a) he can feel movement at the middle and (b) I do not have to be scraped screaming off the ceiling. This suggests that, despite the x-rays, healing is taking place, so I can toddle off, suck it and see and if I have any problems come back.

On the Monday 4 days later I do a slow lap of the Downs on the grass (3.5 miles). Foot seems OK, so I phone Rob up and we go and do the Crook Peak cake race on the Wednesday. I let the field go off first and just take it steady going round, especially coming off the Peak, although inevitably I get involved in a race to the finish when a young girl tries to take advantage and overtake the old fella (I may be going slow, but I'm not dead yet).

So what have I learnt?

- Being on crutches is a pain. I once worked with a bloke who had done some jail time and broke his leg while inside. He said that he was everyone's bitch, as if he didn't do what he was told, they just kicked his good leg from under him (makes picking the soap up off the shower floor easier, I suppose . . .).
- Your leg muscles atrophy very quickly. My calf muscle dropped an inch within a week
- You can't carry anything (I used to make tea in a flask and carry it around in the outside pocket of my shorts, as you can't carry a cup of tea and use crutches at the same time).

- Unloading the dishwasher takes about 30 minutes carrying 1 item at a time and putting it away (you only try to carry >1 item once (e.g. putting a cup on a plate) – you know that thing where you are running downhill and you start over-rotating and are desperately trying not to fall flat on your face – try it on crutches)
- The rubbers on the bottom of crutches wear out in about 4 weeks. Take them back and get them replaced – the metal bottom which protrudes skids and the crutches slip away from under you which is dead handy when you are hurrying across the road to avoid that oncoming car
- Be eternally grateful to visitors. Being off sick is no fun if you can't do stuff. I lasted 3 weeks before I was begging to go back to work
- You'll be really good at hopping (unless you live in a bungalow)
- When coming downstairs, put the crutches on the step BELOW the one you're on
- If you throw the crutches downstairs and descend holding the banister, you'll have a lot of chipped paintwork to repaint once you're back on two legs
- Your family will rapidly get fed up of doing in your stead all the things which you used to do (shopping, driving, DIY etc) [unless of course you were already congenitally idle, in which case they will notice no difference]
- Your wife will notice how often you used to go out for a run/surf /bike ride/gym session. This can be negated to a certain extent by lying in bed all day watching TV. Ensure you set your alarm to go off every 30 minutes to remind you to bang your crutch on the floor and shout 'Any chance of a cup of tea?'
- When the full length plaster cast gets unbearably itchy in the middle of the night, it really helps to stick it out of the window and let the cool night air get to it. This also generates a conversation piece for the neighbours and any drunk students passing by on their way home. Especially if you are naked.
- Even when you are bored, a crutch is no substitute for a light sabre. However, crutches are quite good for that scene in Aliens where Sigourney Weaver fights off the Queen Alien to protect the little girl.
- Kids of all ages love playing on crutches, and their parents love the irony if they fall over and break a leg while playing on them
- Your own children are sympathetic as long as it doesn't involve them doing anything for you
- Forget about showers.
  - Hopping up into a shower stall with a wet floor is something you only do once.
  - making your own plaster protector with a bin bag round one leg held up by an elastic band is not a good look. Also, although about £20 cheaper than the designed for purpose things they give you a leaflet for in the hospital, they are only waterproof if the elastic bands are tight enough to cut off circulation
- That irritating drone which never goes away is in fact, on closer listening, your family telling you that you have to sell that motorbike NOW. It just blurs into a noise when you start blanking it out

## Social / Running Events

# 12<sup>th</sup> Night Dinner

A reminder that the 12th night dinner will be on the evening of **10th January 2009**.

A year of TACH running and racing to celebrate.

Location is Sergio's, an Italian restaurant at the bottom of Park Street in central Bristol.

We are presently negotiating BYO drink, which will help keep prices down.

Please add this to your diary. More details will follow. In the meantime, if you have any questions then contact Mike ([michael.bastow@hace.co.uk](mailto:michael.bastow@hace.co.uk), 07738982642).

## Off Road Day @ Moti

Moti are hosting an Off Road Day on 23 November starting at 11am.

Simon Baynes from Inov-8 will be giving an informal demo on the different types of off-road shoes.

Edward Flik and Phillip Howells of Ed & Phil Training Logs will be there too, talking about training and off road running techniques.

Then there will be the opportunity for all to go out for an off road run.

Moti would be very happy for anyone from TACH to attend.

*Moti 49 Whiteladies Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2LS*

*0117 973 7000*

## London Marathon Entry

We have one club entry for the Flora London Marathon on Sunday 26th April 2009.

If you are interested please contact Libby Bloor, Membership Sec. (0117 9624088).

If more than one member is interested, there will be a draw at the Hare on the Hill on Thursday, 18th December. We cannot leave the draw until our club dinner as the entry form must be completed and returned by 9th January.

## THURSDAY RUN-LIST: MID-WINTER

**ALL RUNS START at 7pm (with 10 minutes leeway for latecomers)**

Don't forget torch and water-wings.

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHY?
November 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Old Crown</b> Kelston Dfc 8M ST700672	There's cider here, but Lansdown provides the real point
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Prince of Waterloo,</b> Winford Dfc 6M ST540651	An old original with a history involving flooded roads and descending frozen waterfalls!
November 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Wellington Hotel,</b> Horfield Dfc 3M ST595768	Chris and Libby's local, so there will be a long and a short route.
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Cross Hands,</b> Staple Hill Road, Fishponds ST638760	Route by Chrissie Kelly from one of Dawkins' best from the Good Beer Guide
December 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The George,</b> Backwell ST497692	
December 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hare on the Hill,</b> Dove Street ST589740	Annual handicap race and p*** up
December 25 <sup>th</sup> 11am	<b>George and Dragon,</b> Pensford ST620638	Why not run up Maes Knoll in the morning and have a swift pint before lunch? <b>You're having a laugh!!!</b> – Libby
January 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>The Fox</b> Easter Compton ST572824	Chris Smart has volunteered to reccie a route in his lunch hour. There were at least two good real ales on last visit.
January 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Eldon House,</b> off top of Jacob Wells Rd ST576730	Treasure hunt by Chairman Antony from one of the smaller Bath Ales pubs
January 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Black Horse,</b> Clapton in Gordano ST473739	Arguably the best pub in the district, with hills.
January 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>The Shakespeare,</b> 1, Henry Street, Totterdown ST598717	A Good Beer Guide pub off the Wells Road, for a bit up the hill and a trip down the river
January 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Swan,</b> Swineford ST616642	One of Bath Ales' finest, with excellent running country attached
February 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Lamplighters,</b> Shirehampton ST527763	John McD. Will probably involve riverbanks and Kingsweston Ridge
February 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Bag O'Nails,</b> Bottom of Jacobs Wells Rd ST578726	Handicap Race. The pub is a real ale haven
February 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Dundry Inn,</b> Dundry ST557668	Peter DeBoer. Pub is under new management. Flat run impossible.
February 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Salutation,</b> Henbury ST 565788	Sue Baic Special. <b>Toby Carvery</b> . So the brave may make a break for the Blaise Inn!
<b>Dfc = Distance from Centre (IE Neptune's Statue)</b>		