

ROUGH RUNNING NEWS
(Back to basics EDITION)



T . A . C . H .

(TOWN AND COUNTRY HARRIERS)

See also: www.tach.org.uk

and www.gaveller.wordpress.com

and www.closetothecountryside.co.uk

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Editorial

For artistic reasons, I have placed the run list on the back page, It seems to work! If all goes well, this edition should be out before the run from the Merchant's Arms on May 15th, which has been designated a bring a friend run. So, if you have a friend, bring him or her along to this one if to no other! Family members and non-running friends are also welcome at the Ashton Court B-B-Q on the 18th May – details below. The summer run list has been constructed on a back to basics theme. That means that that there are no runs in the unpopular northern reaches of Cuba (Counties that Used to Be Avon). There are no town runs either to make up for the plethora of town pubs on last Christmas' list. (By special request, The Nova Scotia will open the Autumn list.) Instead I have concentrated on good basic pubs to the south of the city. This seems to me to be our core territory; it is where our races are; so we ought to like it a lot.

Green Man aftermath

Pete deBoer and I finished the Green Man Challenge after the last edition of Rough Running News came out. I don't suppose that there any TACH members out there who don't know that the pair of us completed the 45-mile course in 9 hrs and 33 mins. However, I have only had one article sent in to go in RRN (albeit an excellent one from Don Juan) so I thought I ought to revisit the old Weblog to see what I could dredge up. (In case you haven't seen it, it is on www.gaveller.wordpress.com)

THE MEANING OF THE GREEN MAN

February 14, 2008 by gaveller

As I crossed the bridge towards the setting sun, there were tears in my eyes. I had done it!

True, I had set the challenge in the first place, but, until that moment, I had no idea that I could do it. I thought I would keep Pete and Mike company for a bit over half the 45-mile run and then fade away to let them finish without me. But Mike had to drop out because of a cold, and there I was, nine and a half hours after we had set off from the Dovecote in the frosty dawn, jogging across the Clifton Suspension Bridge. The pink sky over Dundry Down looked the same as it had at 7-15am, but this time it reflected the glory of the sun setting behind the trees of Leigh Woods and Ashton Court.

I had already imbued the westward crossing over the Avon Gorge with special significance in the first chapter of my new book ('Around Bristol, Off-Road, On Foot - Beyond the Urban Fringe' - it should be in the shops by April)*¹. There, I linked it with the meeting between the hermit sage, Lao Tzu and the Keeper of the Pass, who persuaded Lao Tzu to write down his thoughts in the Tao Te Ching before he passed over the western mountains on his way out of China.

Now the bridge had personal significance for me as it took me on the returning path past the Green Man to the Dovecote.



But what did it all mean after the euphoria had passed and the pain and the stiffness had subsided?

By coincidence, before my legs had recovered, I had to drag my self to the solicitors to discuss my will, and I was inspired to send off for 'The Natural Death Handbook', which arrived almost immediately. This proved an amazingly positive book, including all you need to know about green funerals and an injunction - 'Live each day as though it were your last.'

¹ Well May then!

Perhaps that is the meaning of the Green Man with the tendrils of a tree growing from his mouth - accept death and, in the light of its inevitability, achieve what you can, whilst you can.

These slightly morbid ruminations reflect a fin de siècle frame of mind, which I needed to shake myself out of, so I picked up an entry for the Grizzly and another for the Hogweed Hilly Half. I reckoned that I could get by on the training I had done for the Green Man Challenge – poor fool that I am. In the meantime, I received the following news from another of the fell running fraternity.

GREEN MAN RECORD - SMASHED AGAIN

February 24, 2008 by gaveller

The Green Man Challenge record has fallen yet again!

Another fell runner, Martin Beale, has had a go and claims to have taken another hour off the record.

Martin, a friend of current record holders Pete Darwood and Tim Laney, filed this report yesterday:

Hi Gaveller,

I did the Green Man Challenge. It was a fine route. I particularly like the southern section from the Suspension Bridge to Keynsham. I'm hoping to write a report soon. This a solo unsupported round. The supporter I had for Patchway to the Suspension Bridge had to pull out at the last minute due to family reasons. This made things a little difficult for the last 12 miles!

I started and finished on the Bristol side of the Suspension Bridge (this made most sense as I live in Kingsdown / Bristol).

I did the route in 7h 48m 14s. My GPS gave me a distance of 47.14M (I went slightly wrong in Stoke Gifford and Warmley and had to cut back at right angles to get back on the line: this added to the distance). My altimeter gave an ascent of 1000m.

I mates with Pete Darwood and Tim Laney so we carved from the same block running -wise.

Thanks for inventing this challenge. It's great to have this in the Bristol area.

Best regards

Martin

Congratulations Martin! It is good to be able to welcome another Woodwose.

Martin also had some ideas of what might be possible for future Woodwoses.

WHAT IS POSSIBLE?

February 25, 2008 by gaveller

The latest Woodwose, Martin Beale, completed the challenge in 7h 48m, which is remarkably quick. But he puts that achievement in context.

My feeling is that with good support it would be possible to do the Green Man Challenge in under 7 hours. The record for the Round Rotherham race is about 6h20m and that is 50 miles long. I don't know how hilly it is compared to the Green Man Challenge though (I'm not saying that I'd do it in under 7 hours).

I thought you did a good time with 9h33m. Pete and Tim have done some good things. I think they both have top 20 Bob Graham times!

The Bob Graham Round is reckoned by some to be one of the ultimate running challenges in the UK. It is 75 miles long and involves climbing 42 peaks in the Lake District in under 24 hours. I checked out the Bob Graham website at

www.bobgrahamround.co.uk and found Peter Darwood and Martin Beale listed as members under 2006. Tim Laney is listed under 1987, but I don't know whether that is the same man as the Tim who completed the Green Man Challenge

Martin also had some ideas about the best time to do the Green Man Challenge:

I reckon that spring or autumn would be the best time for the Green Man: you need it to be somewhat cool, but I think it helps to have the ground a bit soft as it eases the going over the cow and horse hoofprints (which is significant over the southern part of the course). I had pretty good conditions on Saturday.



What that means is an excellent distance athlete, well supported, could do the Green Man Challenge in 6 hours. I know I couldn't do it – but I bet it is a possibility for a relay team.

In the meantime, I was cracking on with my fantasy of completing the Grizzly in record time.

[THE GRIZZLY - OVER THE HILL?](#)

March 10, 2008 by gaveller

The awesome Grizzly used to be one of my all-time favourite races. The course, starting in Seaton on the southeast coast of Devon, can be anything up to twenty miles long and winds across the shingle, along the coast path up steep-sided, wooded valleys, through streams and knee-deep black mud, more hundreds of metres of shingle, up a winding path up a cliff and across the grassy cliff-top path, which offers spectacular views of the shingle beach leading to the finish on the esplanade two miles below.

The race is a community affair and all sorts of people participate in the organisation. There were pipers on the hills and bands of all kinds at strategic points, including a folk band and a folk duo and a drum band in a barn booming out across the hills. Out on the course, everything was as I remembered it, except my ability to cover the terrain, which rather got in the way of my appreciation of the Kantian and Taoist jokes and Buddhist shrines along the route. At the pace I started, I used to pick people

off as the race progressed. But this time I had to look on as fat old men and young girls hurried past me in the later stages. In my late fifties, I am definitely over the hill, and it was silly to suppose that I would find it easy, just because I had managed to complete the 45-mile Green Man Challenge a few weeks before. As my much younger Green Man partner, Peter DeBoer, remarked it is whole different thing - and he too suffered in the last three miles (although he was way ahead of me!)

But at over 20-years old, the Grizzly too is showing its age. In the past, the race had the use of a holiday centre with a big hall, in which the participants could meet up before the race and could congregate afterwards to exchange experiences and wait for the prize-giving.

Now all that has gone. The only group of runners that were able to pose for a pre-race team photo were the Axe Valley Runners who organise the race. Members of other clubs, who I happened to bump into at the start and on the course, had no idea whether other members with entries had actually made it to the race. In the absence of a proper gathering place afterwards it would have been impossible to find out afterwards either.

I found the post-race experience a let-down, a definite anti-climax. It could have been better if a hail storm hadn't driven everyone into the surrounding pubs, restaurants and cafes shortly before I finished. But this year's perfunctory Grizzly T-shirt was definitely below the standard that had been set by earlier models and the organisers cannot possibly rely of fine weather at the beginning of March for a satisfying end to the Grizzly experience.

If there had been such a place, I could have met up with and swapped notes with the following:

John Tarkanyi (3:06:55), Peter de Boer (3:20:42), Patrick Winstone (3:23:04) Dave Palmer of Thornbury who went past me whilst I was suffering half way round (3:33:43), Tony Fletcher (lapsed) (3:47:33) (I came in at 3:55:22), Joe Harling (now with Vegan Runners) (4:09:14) and John Gilliard (4:45:56).

The Hogweed Hilly Half

Still in a ridiculously over optimistic frame of mind, I set off to the Hogweed Hilly Half Marathon on March 30th. Now this is probably the best road race in the district. It is as firmly anchored in the village of Horton as the Grizzly used to be in the town of Seaton. That means that there is a proper HQ in the Village Hall and parking has been arranged in a neighbouring field. The course is scenic with views across to Wales from country lanes, village churches and the Fleece at Hillesley provide a community feel and it follows a section of the Cotswold Way (albeit a stretch along a tarmac road.) There is then a ferocious hill up to the back road around Hawkesbury Upton and a return along the lanes to Horton.

No; there was nothing wrong with the route or the organisation; the fault was entirely with your correspondent who simply was not up to the distance! There is no comparison between a 45-mile stroll around the City and a proper Race. By the time I had reached the half way mark at Hillesley, my feet were shot and I had to keep stopping on the return journey to catch my breath. What a disaster! To cap it all, one of the reasons I had decided to run the race was so that I could firm up the plans for a relay version of the Green Man Challenge – but my contact was out of town!

There were very few runners from TACH, but you may be interested to know that Jim Plunkett Cole came 12th in 1:27:57. John Hargreaves, who is an old rival of John McD took 1:37:30. Our Patrick Winstone took 1:45:21. Mike Coupe of Nailsea (Seventy years old – but he hasn't done the Mike Coupe Challenge yet!) took 1:49:56 and I took 2:02:35. Jules Smalles of Nailsea nearly overtook me in 2:13:32
What a disaster!

Hangham High – by Don Juan

23 March 2008 was a cold wintry day. Well, it was when I was getting ready for the race; a Helly under the club vest, gloves, cycling shorts and hat sort of day. I had a pleasant surprise whilst getting ready, as I saw Richard Dempster clutching a race number heading back to his car. Apparently he had been out for a run along the river and seen them setting the course the previous day, so on making enquiries decided it was a good opportunity. I filled him in on as much detail as I could remember about the course from racing it last year; he already knew about the rope up the shale bank.

TACH was represented by myself, PK and Pat. There were a few familiar paces around, including Vito Graffagnino and Mike Coup from Nailsea. PK was hoping for a better run than last year when he had a 'mare having to pull out because of being under the weather.

We trotted down to the start where I discovered that a 4th TACH rep was in – Dickie was there and ready to go. As we assembled for the briefing the sun broke through and winter became summer. I got the hat off and put it in my bumbag, then we were under starter's orders and off. Realising that I was now totally overdressed for the occasion, I paused by my car (the race does a little loop at the start to spread the field before the first staircase descent) and took off the Helly and wedged it under the wiper, rejoining the race about 50 places down from where I started.

Having carefully briefed Richard, the route had been changed from the previous year and we looped and set off in the opposite direction from the one I had told him, with quite a long road section. I moved up through the field and had Richard in my sights 50 yards and about 10 places ahead as we headed into the first off-road section. Unfortunately I got stuck behind someone in road shoes running like a chorus girl in Swan Lake and with no opportunity to pass I watched Richard pull away in the distance.



We eventually came onto track and I managed to get by and with wider trails now available through the woods was able to push on a bit. Past the water station we then dropped down onto the towpath which provided the chance to do some steady state threshold running and overtake as people tiptoed round the mud sections instead of driving through. I then glimpsed Richard 100 yards or so ahead and tried to push harder to make up ground, narrowing the gap to 70 yards or so before we pulled off the towpath onto the shale bank. The man in front of me straddled the rope but I let him know the inadvisability of doing it before his pride (and whatever else!) was hurt.

Off the rope and up the last ascent to the bottom of the field just left a straight 200 yard run to the line; however, coming up the rope was sapping and for most people it was more of a bandy-legged shuffle than a sprint. I tried my best but was only able to come in immediately behind Richard. We were both shot and trying not to hurl, but managed to recover enough to take on a restorative pint in the bar afterwards with PK and Pat (Dickie – where were you?)

Summoned by megaphone we went outside for the prizegiving. Vito had won, collecting his 1st prize shoes wearing a fetching orange sweatshirt with his name followed by '1st again' embroidered on it. I hadn't seen it before, presumably because the last time I saw him was at the Terminator where he was 2nd. . .



PK 17th 47 minutes; JM 44th 52 minutes; Pat 66th 54 minutes; Dickie 140th 64minutes

Members

All fully paid-up members are now affiliated to UK Athletics and you should have received your official Card etc. **However** It has been a bit of a shambles this year as cards have only just been sent out (rather than last September as promised) and Membership Secs still can't access their club details to add new members and delete old ones! I'm sure it will all get ironed out in the end. Meanwhile, any problems? – let me know and do use your old TACH cards for races if your details haven't arrived. All clubs should accept this as they know all about the problems and are in the same boat as us!

While on the subject of races, it would be nice if we could circulate details of races you are planning to do. So either contact Club Captain Rob or let me know so I can post info on the weekly e-mail.

Happy Running - LB

Social Calendar

Summer Barbecue: bring families and friends; bring own food, drink and games.

Venue: Ashton Court: somewhere near here:

THURSDAY RUN-LIST: SUMMER BACK TO BASICS

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

WHEN?	WHERE?	WHY?
May 8 th	Beaufort Arms , Hawkesbury Upton Dfc 15M ST778869	GBG + a taste of the Cotswolds + a visit to Hogweed country
May 15 th ***	Merchants' Arms , Hotwells Dfc 1M ST572725	GBG (Bath Ales) run will go across the river ***
May 22nd	TACH RACE from the Dundry Inn Dfc 4M ST557668	Dundry Thunder Run (Killer Edition) I hope the pub's open again!
May 29 th	White Hart , Cold Ashton Dfc 8M ST749729	Another taste of the Cotswolds
June 5 th	Prince's Motto , Barrow Gurney Dfc 4m ST 530679	GBG Butcombe, Bass and Wadworth IPA + Weston's trad.. cider. We have been away too long!
June 12 th	Queen's Arms , Chew Magna Dfc 6 ½ m ST 578633	There are at least a dozen excellent routes from this pub. I wonder which we shall do?
June 19 th	The Crown , Churchill Dfc 13m ST446595	An excellent GBG pub, but I often struggle to keep up on the run from here, so I expect I will lead a slower group.
June 26 th	Compton Inn , Compton Dando Dfc 10K ST646646	We're not doing the race this year, but that is not a reason for leaving the pub alone.
July 3 rd	Black Horse Clapton-in-Gordano NB 7.30pm start Entry £5.00 UNATTACHED £7.00	NAILSEA RUNNING CLUB proudly present: BLACK HORSE DASH An undulating 5.8 mile race starting beside the pub, snaking its way up and over the Tickenham Ridge and down the other side and then back up past the golf driving range and just beyond Cadbury Camp we plummet back down into the Gordano Valley with a little bit more upping and downing before that sprint finish outside the pub. All operating profits are being donated to 'Holding Out Hope' a charity dedicated to providing help to Romanian and Bulgarian orphanages. Please do not park in the pub car park. Park in Wood Lane and if you can car share please do
July 10 th	TACH RACE from the Swan at Rowberrow Dfc 13m ST451583	Another back to basics race, from a GBG pub at which we are now welcome again.
July 17 th	The Yew Tree Pilgrims Way, Chew Stoke BS40 8TX Dfc 7m ST558620	Haven't been there for a bit. We were going to try the Stoke Inn, but Libby had to join the smokers outside because of the TV so we'll give that a miss!
July 24 th	The White Hart , Weston in Gordano Dfc 8m ST 446743	A chance to look at the other end of the Gordano Valley
July 31 st	Carpenters' Arms , Stanton Wick Dfc 8m ST615620	A trip out to explore the southern end of the Three Peaks Walk, which starts in Chew and takes in Maes Knoll.
August 7 th	George , Abbot's Leigh Dfc 3m ST543737	Now in the hands of a Hasher, this pub offers access to east Gordano Round
August 14 th	The Crown , Regil Dfc 7m ST540637	The locals have gone back to drinking there, so it must have improved again
August 21 st	King's Arms , Easton in Gordano Dfc 5m ST514754	A reasonable pub with a route with potential for a paddle!
August 28 th	Queen's Arms , Chew Magna Dfc 6 ½ m ST 578633	Another visit to the cream of the Chew valley

Dfc = Distance from Centre (IE Neptune's Statue) GBG = Good Beer Guide Entry

*** see editorial



Time: from 11am Sunday 18th May; Due to work on the Bower Ashton car park, use the car park just before Dovecote on the one-way road from Long Ashton to Bristol.

Also: If we put in a team for the Cotswold Way Relay (get on to John McDonough and volunteer if you haven't already done it!) Chris and Libby would like to invite the team, their families and anyone else short of something to do on the evening of Saturday 28th June for another B-B-Q at 161 Wellington Hill West Henleaze. Probably best if you bring your own drinks and slabs of meat. We will supply charcoal, salads, bread etc.