

# STRUGGLER'S POST



## My First Ultra Marathon

BY CHRIS SIMPSON

An Ultra marathon is any distance further than a marathon. I like a challenge, and I had read Born To Run, so how hard can it be? I decided to find out.

### Training

I basically followed a marathon training plan but with emphasis on time the feet rather than clocking up the miles. The main things to train for that are different from a marathon were:

- Getting used to running with a backpack, as there is usually a mandatory kit list.
- Most Ultras are usually on trail with lots of hills. But the good news is you walk up all the hills on an Ultra.
- Getting nutrition right: you need more than a few gels.
- Night Running as you may be running in the dark.

I tried to run two to three times during the week, for about an hour each time, and this was when practised running with a head torch. My main runs were the long runs at the weekend. I built up to 5.75 hours as my longest run, and made it as race specific as I could by running on the actual route, with a fully loaded backpack, and practised eating on the go, which is harder than you might think. During the last few weeks I eased my training down to a few gentle runs. I also carb loaded for the last week.

### The race

The week before I was more than a little nervous. I had a goal time of under twelve hours, but I truth, I just wanted to finish it. I set off at an easy pace, and the first few hours were good as it was dry and the sun came out. It was good to chat to people on the run after lots of training on my own. It was when I hit the 15 mile mark that the first rain started; luckily I was on a wooded section for a few miles. It was an out and back race so it was not long before the first runners came past on the return. I got to the halfway point in about five hours, pretty much spot on pace. I now passed people going the other way, about as far behind me as I was from the leaders. As I went over the marathon distance I thought every mile now is the furthest I have ever run, and I felt good. This did not last long though as about mile 28 it started to snow heavily and I got cold feet. This lasted for about an hour. By about mile 32 my knees were starting to get very sore and I started to walk on some of the flat bits because it did not hurt to walk. At about 36 miles I had one last big hill to climb and then six miles to the finish, once the hill was out of the way. I managed to run the rest of the way back with what felt like a sprint finish.

I finished the 43 miles in ten hours and seven minutes. Did I enjoy it? People here asked me that, and the answer is yes. I am already planning the next race.

## Pub Quiz

**18th May - Coaching Inn.** To raise money for the North Devon Hospice as a combined effort for those doing the North Devon Half/Marathon.

£5 per person, teams of up to 6 people. **Book your table now** - speak to Julie Colman - 07766 913 724 or juliecolman78@gmail.com

### Race Results

#### Bampton to Tiverton

PAUL COOKE 00:43:52  
 MIKE CLARK 00:44:11  
 PAUL MORGAN 00:45:41  
 LUCY GOODMAN 00:46:40 **3RD IN CAT**  
 CHRIS MURRIN 00:48:31  
 RICHARD CONNETT 00:49:51  
 PAUL BRAYLEY 00:50:34  
 CAROLINE SHAPLAND 00:57:47  
**1ST IN CAT**  
 ANDREW JONES 00:59:22 **1ST IN CAT**  
 POLLY GOODMAN 00:59:50  
 NAOMI HUGHES 01:03:12  
 JACK FRIENDSHIP 01:15:08

#### Taunton Half

MIKE CLARK 01:22:16  
 BECKY HOPKINS 01:42:54  
 ELAINE FIELDS 01:43:42  
 TINA MCCrackEN 01:47:08  
 JONATHAN LAWRENCE 01:51:23

### Coaching Corner - Julie's top tip

Don't just run, core strength exercises are equally important so include at least one session per week of strengthening such as circuit training or pilates.

If you have something to say that would interest other members and would like to write an article then please speak to Julie Colman or Richard Connett or email us at the address below.

The deadline for the next issue is **Friday 26th April.**

# The Grizzly: Marmalade and Cheese Sandwiches

BY JIM GOULD

Cath very kindly entered me into the Grizzly and I was lucky enough to get in. I waited for everyone else in the club to post their successful entries on Facebook. I waited and waited. Nobody else had got in!

I decided that some sort of training would be in order and turned to Jack Batchelor as a prospective training partner, well that was a disappointment as he was injured. In fairness to Jack he would still have run rings around me even injured but it was not to be.

The training went ok but all too soon Race Day arrived and I headed to Seaton. I have never been to such a race - it seemed the whole town had come to watch the start. The cold wind whipped off the sea but we were kept amused by the Race Directors' banter. I joined the back end of the pack then we all turned around and faced the other way so I ended up nearer the front than I am used to. The Town Crier sent us on our way and we were off.

Within 100 meters we turned on to the shingle beach. Well, if running on marbles is your thing then this is the race for you! We looped back and under the start line again and the crowds were really encouraging. All the way around the route the marshals and the crowds were so enthusiastic. It was snowing and bitterly cold yet the support was incredible. There were drummers, bagpipe players and a rock band playing to spur us on; every now and then there was a witty inspirational sign and always a cheerful marshal with a tub of jelly babies.

The route itself was mostly off road and off road shoes were a must; the people in road shoes were in real trouble on the hills and there were plenty of those. We waded through thigh deep gullies, ran through knee deep mud, slipped down grassy banks, ran along pebbly beaches and climbed hundreds of steps but always with a smile.

After nearly 4 hours I returned to Seaton and the crowds were still out in force, a banana, a t-shirt and a hose down from the Fire Engine and it was all over.

Remember: Entries closed within 4 hours this year, wear off road shoes and eat marmalade and cheese sandwiches – the food of champions!



## Low Back Pain

This is the most common presentation at the practice. There are many things that cause LBP, some nasty such as disc prolapses pressing on nerves and some innocuous, such as muscle fatigue.

One of the reasons for this condition in runners is the fact that the low back has to absorb the shock created by running.

In a well-conditioned runner the shock of striking the ground with the feet is transferred up through the body and is absorbed by bones, the muscles and ligaments of the joints. This absorption of the forces can be very efficient.

However problems arise when the body is insufficiently conditioned, tired or out of alignment. In which case the forces can be concentrated in key areas such as knees, hips and low back.

The muscles of the low back may then tighten to protect the area producing discomfort. Over a period of time chronic and acute low back pain may manifest, as the ability of the structures to absorb the shock diminishes. The ultimate effect is wear and tear of the tissues, leading to osteoarthritis or disc disease.

In order to prevent this you need a balanced training regime with sufficient rest. Stretch before and after exercise. Warm up properly and cross train from time to time. The coaches should be able to advise.

I would also recommend massage and regular checks by osteopath, chiropractor or physiotherapist who would be able to mobilise the low back following the protective tightening.

**Jonathan Lawrance**

## Race Report

### BAMPTON TO TIVERTON

It was a strong showing and a good turn out from the Strugglers at the Easter Monday 7.1 mile Bampton to Tiverton race. There was more success for Lucy Goodman who got another excellent third place. Caroline Shapland was a well deserved if surprise winner of the o/35 lady trophy and Andrew Jones took the men's o/65 prize. Paul Cooke was the first Struggler to finish but was pushed hard all the way by Mike Clark. Jack Friendship who has just graduated from our first beginners running course stepped up to the challenge of his first ever race and finished in great style. The excellent performances by the Strugglers meant we were very close to taking the team prize but Tiverton just managed to cling on to it.

## Upcomming Fixtures

21st Apr	London Mar'n
24th Apr	Relays - Braunton
5th May	Hartland H'breaker
12th May	Black Death run

## An interview with ...

RICHARD WESTCOTT

### 1. How/why did you start running?

I found myself standing around in the rain in muddy fields supporting my daughter at cross country runs, and wondered how to get a bit warmer. Amazing how children change your life...

### 2. How old were you when you started running?

Blimey, it's so long ago...

### 3. Your pre race fuel?

Actually it's a case of dumping rather than taking on board

### 4. Recovery food/drink?

A nice cup of tea goes down well (you must remember we're oldies)

### 5. Any pre race superstitions?

I find I keep having to check my laces are done up nice and tight - OK it's not a superstition, just anxiety (after a shoe once fell off)

### 6. Make of running shoe?

Used to be Clark's Startrite - only joking - hang on, I need to go and look to remember

### 7. Favourite race – and why?

Has to be the London - what an atmosphere! I ran it four times, best time 3 Hr 16 min - I had to get that in! Once near the start a little girl's voice called out 'Come on Dad' and a hundred heads turned and smiled. That's what it's all about.

### 8. Sporting idol?

Jack

### 9. Recurring injuries?

Hey, where shall I start?

### 10. Running aspirations?

Just to keep going - isn't that what we all say to ourselves every time we go out?!

### 11. Any other sports/activities?

Hang on a moment while I get my breath back...

### 12. Why do you run?

Now really, do I have to tell fellow runners why one runs?

(Good question though...)

### 13. Best running achievement?

Once a long time ago four of us (including John Carter) went in for a weird event when we carried a very heavy load round a hilly cross country race - good training for Mountain Rescue? - the crazy things runners do...

We each won a horse brass - beat that!

### 14. Closest club rival?

Was Andrew Jones, but now there are some threatening ladies, like Rebecca (only joking Rebecca)

### 15. Favourite biscuit?

Dark chocolate digestives please

### 16. Best excuse for not running?

Having a partial hip replacement - the other one needs doing, so I've still got the excuse

### 17. Who do you nominate for next months interview?

Andrew Jones