



John Bassinder

[From The Chair](#)

A bit of rambling from our Chair, with a lowdown of what's been happening during July 2023

Debbie Grunhut-Hinds

[Race Reports](#)

A summary of race reports from July 2023.

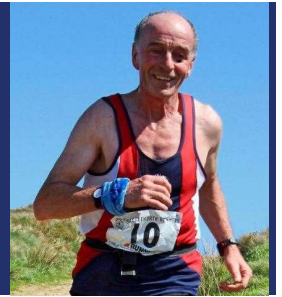
Various

[Contributors](#)

Maria's Ladies Captain's report. The Off-Grid Challenge with Mark & Helen. Coaching with Colin. In the Lion's Den with Gav.

From the Chair

John Bassinder



Following a sweltering hot June the kids break up school and we revert to a typical damp July – But it hasn't stopped the fun and games for us with plenty happening since our last letter. Following some superb performances at the track race on the 28th of June we had the Hare & Tortoise the very next evening which combined well with the final session of the beginners' course to make a lovely event all round. Congratulations to winners Michelle Rogerson and Jenny Town. One highlight for me was seeing the bemused expressions on the faces of Mr and Mrs Walker when they were drawn to run together [Something I'm told they tend to avoid], followed by their even more bemused expressions when they crossed the finish line in second place. Mark Preston's inaugural Off Grid Challenge looks set to become an annual fixture with brilliant feedback from all who took part. I was adjudicating elsewhere so couldn't do it, but it was interesting to look at the variations on Strava afterwards, so many definitions of a straight line or maybe some of you just deciding to get the best training value out of it.

It was a beautiful evening for Northowram Vets' race the following Thursday on a really scenic and varied course, over sixty clubs now in this league and once again it was the Lions with the biggest turnout! Jim Harris and team provided us with entertainment the following week and a lot of advance planning and effort from Jim paid off with another brilliant event. First time with anything like this for me, have to say I pretty much just tagged along, lucky to be in a team with a combination of good local knowledge plus some of those mythical beings who can actually read maps. Fantastic evening, really enjoyed it and again everyone asking for it to become a permanent summer fixture. [And Jim hasn't said no].

My turn the week after, sorting out the Downhill 10K. I've posted on FB so won't repeat it, but what a fantastic buzz it gave me seeing so many runners and so many volunteers. All I can say after hearing the lovely comments of our Puma guests is that you all did the club proud and I'm certain Hutchie would have loved it.

Next few weeks will see the August away run, a firm favourite from the Lord Nelson, Luddenden Foot, on Thursday 10th. If you've never done this one before, definitely worth the drive out, some beautiful trails with superb views and a lovely old Village pub to finish in. This is followed two weeks later [24th] by our Summer Handicap from the 1885.

Distracted ramblings [Like my running nowadays]; Writing all the above it strikes me how much we are thriving as a club - new members, more races, more fun! The away runs, club races and events where you have a choice of getting lost either with or without a map, all are well supported and always followed by lots of noise in the pubs afterwards. But it also gives cause for reflection. As a club we're thriving, but we also seem to be changing our habits. Some of us older members may hark back to the days when we got 60+ on a Thursday night for the main training session and it's all too tempting to lament how that no longer happens. But then I look at what we now have to offer, [so much more, and for so little!] and I think it's completely understandable.

I think change accelerated during the pandemic and I know other clubs have noticed this as much as we have, people had more flexible time for training through WFH etc. One of the positives of the pandemic was the increase in running, leading to an increase in running clubs, but also – largely unseen – an increase in informal “Social Running Groups”. It's great to see anything which gets folk out and running and I can understand why some may wish to “feel free” of a small degree of perceived EA regulation. But the pandemic also led to our own club's options increasing and becoming more flexible. When you look how much we now offer [for 67 pence a week membership!], all the social runs plus [unlike informal running groups] EA race discounts, qualified coaching, access to YVAA and Winter League races, use of Heath for private

functions and most important of all, the friendship of other Lions, then it doesn't make sense to me why anyone would settle for anything else!

As for the reduction in Thursday numbers, I can totally appreciate how members may now opt to do just the Thursday runs, or one of four Tuesday options, or just do a Monday run, or hill sessions, or Wednesday track, or train on their own and just appear at races, or just catch up with friends at the away runs or do some or all of these! I think we accept that we're all choosing what suits us personally and as long as everyone is happy to be a Lion then whether we see you every night or once every few months, you're all equally valued members of the club, you're all hopefully loving being a Lion, so [again hopefully] it all means you're happy with the way things are being done. If there's anything you think we should be doing differently, please let us know!

Talking of new members, I'd like to welcome Alison and Wayne Underwood, Kate Wilson, Katie Law, Louise Williamson and Naomi Eds. Most have already sampled an away run and Kate was even brave enough to jump straight in and run the Downhill 10K, great to see!

Finally, in the past couple of months we've read about the challenges of our more adventurous runners [affectionately known as our nutter's club] and I can't let this letter go by without mentioning President Colin's little cycle ride around the coast of Ireland a couple of weeks ago - around 700 miles with several thousand feet of climb, to add to his LEJOG cycle ride last year. I asked him how he got on and he told me how he really loved it, a great experience. Just as an afterthought he added that weather was horrendous at times, driving rain that they couldn't see through and gale force winds which blew one of the party off their bike.....but he still loved it!

PS, As I try to meet the deadline for this the Lakeland 100 and 50 milers are underway with Lions represented by Kevin Robinson, James Penson, Sandy Gee and Dan Marsden, possibly a round-up from Debbie below.

PPS, Thought I'd finished then we learn the Aileen has just set the age graduated record at Brighthouse Parkrun to add to her Halifax record! Again I'll leave it to Debbie for the details.

[PPPS, can you lot stop running for a minute and allow me to finish writing this before I get in trouble with editor Debbie for submitting late].

Lions Publicity Officer

Debbie Grunhut-Hinds



Race Report for July 2023

Heptonstall Festival Fell Race (1st July):

With 5.9 miles and 1,627 feet of ascent, this Category A fell race is a counter in this year's Fell Running Championship. The Race starts in the hilltop village of Heptonstall, the route then plunges deep into the neighbouring valley before making its way to the top of a nearby peak. It then returns in similar fashion – so yes, that does mean runners finish with an almighty uphill struggle! There is a mix of terrain – from cobbles to start with, to some grassy fields, muddy slopes, rocky bridleways and open moorland, some of it pathless! But if you do get chance to look up occasionally there are some great views. Three Lions took on this challenge with Ray Mooney leading them home in 1:15:27, followed by Aileen Baldwin in 1:18:32, and Rikki Hammond in 1:19:02.

Stoodley Pike Fell Race (4th July):

The Stoodley Pike Fell Race is just a quick dash up and down Calderdale's most famous landmark! The Category 'BS' race with 213m of ascent is run over 5km and is one of the longest established fell races in the area – original started in the 1970's – and it never fails to get a good crowd. It was the second fell race of the week for our Fell Queen Aileen Baldwin who was first in the F70 category. Paul Patrick was first Lion home in 29:33, followed by Lance Parker 31:26, Aileen Baldwin 31:56 & Helen Hudson 32:23.



Helen Windsor 10k (5th July):

Wednesday evening saw the popular Helen Windsor 10k, hosted by Halifax Harriers. This race is a favourite for Lions, with its beautiful runnable course and friendly atmosphere. Mags Beever was 1st lady home (and 1st F40) in 30th place with a course PB time of 40:22, knocking 25 seconds off her previous time. There was also an age category first for Gaby Ferris. The ladies also bagged 3rd place in the team results.

Results: Mags Beever 40:22 (1st F40), Paul Corns 46:08, Gaby Ferris 47:21 (1st F50), Gail Schofield 54:40.

Mags Beever – 1st lady & course PB

Holme Valley 5 Miler (7th July):

Twenty Lions descended on Holmbridge for this year's Holme Valley 5 Miler, a counter in the Club's Championship, which took place in beautiful sunshine on Friday evening. The hilly race is part of the Summer Wine Trail Series, a series of friendly and challenging races in the beautiful countryside around Holmfirth. The route was slightly altered this year due to a road closure. Richard Crombie led the Lions home in 17th place. It was the second race of the week for Mags Beever who was once again first lady home in 18th place. It was great to see lots of Lions win age category places, including Mags Beever, Dave Farrar, Mark Preston, Suzanne Patterson, Sally Caton, Ian Johnson, Amanda Zito, Angela Lee, Sue Cash & Paul Butterfield. The Ladies also took 1st & 4th places in the Team event, with the Men taking 4th place.

Results: Richard Crombie 36:40, Mags Beever 36:55 (1st F40), Dave Farrar 38:50, Mark Preston 41:36 (2nd M60), Suzanne Patterson 41:39 (2nd F50), Sally Caton 43:59 (3rd F50), Lorraine Naylor 44:39, Gerry Banham 44:55, Ian Johnson 45:09 (3rd M55), Laura Goodwin 45:39, Steve Crowther 46:28, Amanda Zito 47:07 (2nd F55), Angela Lee 47:47 (1st F60), Sue Cash 51:28 (3rd F55), Paul Butterfield 53:03 (3rd M65), Heather Anderson 54:15, Sandy Gee 55:25, Phil Richards 57:33, Rebecca Hill 59:24, Anne-Marie Killeen 1:02:40.



Richard Crombie – Holme Valley 5



Stainland Ladies win Team Event Trophy

Hollybank Eccup 10 (9th July):

Simon Rawnsley was the solo Lion at the Hollybank Eccup 10 on Sunday, finishing at 178th place with a time of 1:16:23. The course takes in rural closed roads and a scenic route around Eccup reservoir.

Stocks Lane Stinger (9th July):

Also on Sunday, three Lions took on the Stocks Lane Stinger, a tough 10k around the beautiful Luddenden Valley with 600 feet of climbing. Starting at the top of Stocks Lane, runners headed out around the valley and back to the bottom of Stocks Lane. The last mile is the “stinger”, a sharp uphill pull with a gradient of over 17% in parts. Aileen Baldwin was first Lion home in 1:00:50 & first in her F70 age category, followed by Martin O’Brien 1:02:00 (2nd M60) and Alan Whiteley 1:22:32.

Widdop Fell Race (12th July):

Lance Parker & Aileen Baldwin tackled this year’s Widdop Fell Race on Wednesday. The 7 mile race with 1200ft of ascent is a classic high moorland route along interesting paths with a few tussocks and chest high bracken thrown in! Lance Parker was first Lion home in 1:20:51 followed by Aileen Baldwin in 1:32:55.

Yorkshire Veterans’ Athletics Association – Race 4, Northowram (13th July):

It was all systems go for the first ever Vets Race hosted by our neighbours Northowram Pumas on Wednesday, with 27 Lions roaring to the start. The course was 5.5 miles over a multitude of terrains, with runners opting for a full range of footwear – from road to full on fell shoes!

The ladies were out to protect their lead in the Team Category, led home by Suzanne Patterson in 9th place, followed by Helen Armitage, Aileen Baldwin, Sally Caton, Helen Hudson, Angela Lee, Cat Daniel, Claire Haigh, Paula Pickersgill & Christine Gale.

The men were led home by YVAA Captain Gavin Mulholland in 3rd place, followed by Chris Hall, Gavin Foster, Dan Marsden, Jamie Westwood, Damien Pearson, Mark Pottinger, Jim Harris, Paul Patrick, Martin Wood, Mark Preston, Steve Hallam,

Steve Crowther, Tim Walker, Martin O'Brien, Ian Johnson, Dave Hudson, John Bassinder, Jonathan Taylor, Paul Butterfield, Tim Neville & Paul Armitage.



Mossley 10k (16th July):

Martin O'Brien ran his second race of the week, the Mossley 10k. The race started and finished at Mossley AFC's Steel Park ground with 'grandstand views' for spectators, with an undulating and picturesque course which took runners from Upper Mossley, around Lower Mossley and Greenfield, with views of the stunning countryside. Martin finished in 116th place in a time of 51:07.

Ilkley Half Marathon (16th July):

The Ilkley Half Road Race takes runners through scenic views of the Yorkshire Dales, challenging hills and breathtaking valleys. The event is organised by the Ilkley & District Round Table and all profits go directly back into local and regional good causes.

Results: Allison Bamford 2:46:09, Sue Shepherd 2:46:10.

Hepworth Trail (19th July):

Wednesday saw 19 Lions at the Hepworth Trail, a counter in the Clubs Championship. The race, in its second year, is part of the Huddersfield Summer Wine Trail Series. Starting and finishing in the village of Hepworth, the route takes runners on a mix of steep grassy climbs on footpaths, bridleways and quiet country lanes. Richard Crombie led the Lions home in 13th place, followed closely by Mags Beever who was 1st Female, 1st F40 and knocked a massive 10 mins 52 seconds off last years' time. There were also personal bests for Mark Preston by 2 mins 59 seconds, and Ian Johnson by 2 mins 16 seconds. Also bagging Age Category places were Daniel Sykes, Paul Corns, Martin Wood, Mark Preston, Lorraine Naylor, Helen Armitage, Angela Lee & Paula Pickersgill.

Results: Richard Crombie 39:20, Mags Beever 39:59, Daniel Sykes 41:31, Paul Corns 45:12, Martin Wood 45:18, Mark Preston 45:31, Steve Hallam 47:07, Lorraine Naylor 47:32, Helen Armitage 47:41, Ray Mooney 47:52, Sally Caton 48:43, Ian Johnson 50:22, Angela Lee 52:14, Maria Chandler 56:12, Heather Anderson 57:20, Paula Pickersgill 57:44, Jonathan Taylor 1:00:14, Phil Richards 1:01:38, Rebecca Hill 1:06:46.



Aintree Half Marathon (23rd July):

There was some brilliant running from Chris Hall and Jamie Westwood at the Aintree Half Marathon on Sunday, coming in 17th and 19th place respectively out of a field of nearly 400 runners. The entire race is run inside the Aintree racecourse on a flat and quick course involving four laps around the circuit. Chris Hall ran in 1:22:29, Jamie Westwood was 2nd V50 home in 1:23:18.

The Dave Hutchings Downhill 10k (27th July):

63 Lions & Northowram Pumas raced down Saddleworth Road on Thursday evening in the ever-popular Downhill 10k; conditions on the day were warm (and thankfully the heavens didn't open at the end this year). The race is named after a much-loved club member who sadly passed away and who was a great supporter of the race. A bus was on hand to take runners to the start line on the moors high above Scammonden Bridge, and despite the route being downhill the race is a challenge and notoriously hard on the legs (and knees!). Gavin Mulholland won the race in 32:06, and Gaby Ferris was 1st Lady in 41:17 – 34 seconds faster than last year.

The Montane Lakeland 100 (28th July):

The Lakeland 100 'Ultra Tour of the Lake District' is the most spectacular long distance trail race which has ever taken place within the UK. The circular route includes the whole of the Lakeland fells, includes around 6,300m (20,700 ft) of ascent and consists almost entirely of public bridleways and footpaths. The route starts in Coniston and heads south before completing a clockwise loop which takes in the Dunnerdale fells, Eskdale, Wasdale and Buttermere before arriving in Keswick – from here the route heads to Matterdale and over to Haweswater before returning via Kentmere, Ambleside and Elterwater to the finish at Coniston. The route does not pass over any of the Lakeland summits, but instead it weaves its way through stunning valleys.

There are 14 compulsory checkpoints on the course, all staffed by a great support team, providing food and drink. The 40 hours available to complete the course may seem manageable but don't be fooled – the climb, descent, rugged terrain, darkness and tricky navigation means there is a 40% - 50% failure rate over the 100 mile course – even seasoned ultra runners have tried and many have failed to obtain the treasured Lakeland 100 Finisher's Medal!

Kevin Robinson completed the route in 118th place in a time of 31:56:13. James Penson unfortunately had to retire at Dalemmain, but he still ran an amazing 60 miles in 20:01:20 (*Editor's Note: I cannot be bothered to drive that far anymore, let alone run it! Well done!*).

The Montane Lakeland 50 (29th July):

The Lakeland 50 is run over the second half of the Lakeland 100. As it's only half of the Lakeland 100 course it's the easy option right? Nope! The Lakeland 50 is almost double the distance of a marathon, it's on rough terrain with approximately 3100m (10,200 ft) of ascent to deal with. The route starts from the Northern end of Ullswater within the Dalemmain Estate before following the Eastern shoreline as far as Howtown; it's then a quick climb and a descent followed by a trek along the banks of Haweswater to Mardale Head. The route then visits Long Sleddale, Kentmere, Ambleside, Langdale and Tilberthwaite before the final climb and descent to the finish at Coniston. This route has six compulsory checkpoints and the time limit to complete the course is 24 hours.

Dan Marsden completed the course in 10:36:36, with Sandy Gee finishing in 17:30:04.

PB Corner

Parkrun PB's

July 1st

Centre Vale: Gaby Ferris produced a course best of 24:14, knocking 24 seconds off & coming in 19th place, 4th Female overall & 1st in her age group.

July 8th

Huddersfield: John Carless ran a PB time of 25:48, taking 14 seconds off his previous best.

July 15th

Bradford: John Carless ran a PB time of 25:45, knocking 1 min & 1 second off her previous time.

July 22nd

Brighouse: Wayne Underwood ran a PB time of 26:51, knocking 1 min 33 seconds off his previous best.

July 29th

Brighouse: Aileen Baldwin took the Age Graded record of 94:97% with her time of 23:50.

Other PB's

Long Eaton Parkrun – 15th July: David Farrar smashed the Club's M60 5k record by 21 seconds with a time of 20:26.

Helen Windsor 10k – 5th July: Mags Beever knocked 25 seconds off her time (40:22).

Hepworth Trail – 19th July: Mags Beever knocked a massive 10 mins 52 seconds off last years' time (39:59).

Mark Preston took 2 mins 59 seconds off (45:31) and Ian Johnson knocked 2 mins 16 seconds off (50:22).

Ladies Captain's Update - Maria Harron



Ladies' Report

I am going to be fairly brief and pass you straight over to four lovely ladies who have brilliantly contributed to the Newsletter this month. I would advise you get yourself a nice drink and a comfy chair as there is some great reading coming up

Laraine Penson



It was a damp Saturday morning in June when I arrived just after 5am at the Coed-y-Brenin Visitors Centre. Bumped into fellow Lion Kevin Robinson and, only half-joking, asked him if he was going to win. He just chuckled and said this was a training run for a longer race! A practice for him but the big one for me. Once a year I allow myself a mum-venture – a guilt free weekend away from the family for a good leg stretch outdoors somewhere fab. This year was the Wales Ultra 50 miles – part of the GB Ultras series. 50 miles starting and ending in Wales' greatest forest, Coed-y-Brenin and taking in forest trails, moorland, the Barmouth estuary and coast and a few lovely lumps – namely Cadair Idris Penygader (893m) and the 'Queen of the Rhinogs' Rhinog Fach (712m). 6 checkpoints and a 20-hour cut off, a total climb of

2,898m. I was one of the 132 participants at the start line, and I wasn't feeling overly confident.

About a month prior to the race, I had joined a two-day recce of the last 30 miles of the route so I knew what to expect. This was the most technical part of the race with steep ascents and descents, some of which might be run in the dark. I'm so glad I did the recce as it prepared me mentally for what was to come but I also found it tough and wondered whether I would make the start let alone the finish. I hadn't been running well and didn't feel particularly strong so wasn't sure how it was going to go.

The damp cooler start to the day was welcome and the first 10 miles was along forest tracks. I knew that, to make the cut off times, I had to set a good pace at the start to make up for the fact I would be slower on the later climbs and descents. A break in the clouds gave great views from the gorgeous Precipice Walk just north of Dolgellau – definitely want to come back and do that walk again, stunning views of the valleys below.



As is often the case there was a steep climb after the first checkpoint and I got the running poles out – hadn't used them before but they definitely helped. The next 6 miles to checkpoint 2 was across moorland, farmland and along tracks. I felt strong and was running well but knew what was to come. The weather didn't get any better for the ascent of Cadair Idris. It was a slow walk up and unbelievably I bumped into a work mate halfway up – of all the places! You need to be able to navigate the route but there are markers on lower level and then mountain guides are placed on the steeper tops. Near the top of Cadair Idris we were directed away from the summit as the weather was too poor.

I've run a few ultras before, including the Lakeland 50. The terrain on some of this race just made it really hard to gain traction. Perhaps I've been spoilt by the work of Fix the Fells in the Lakes, but I found the massive chunks of rock used for the paths here hard on the feet – there's definitely a technique to this I am yet to master.

Coming off Cadair Idris and into a valley we hit sunshine and heat and it was lovely. An update from home told me that I was mid-field a couple of hours ago. Arriving at the checkpoint at Ty Nant I was told there were only 6 people on the course behind me – what? Where did everyone go? I realised at that point I needed to get a shift on so I ran a lot of the next section which was really lovely, grassy fields and trail until you reach the Mawddach Trail. This is a cycle trail along the side of the Mawddach Estuary which takes you all the way to the coastal town of Barmouth. It's a flat-ish 4.5 mile run and I ran as much as I could to buy myself some time and get ahead of the cut-offs.



The hot food wasn't great at Barmouth checkpoint – pot noodle and cup-a-soup – I've been very spoilt by the Lakeland 50! But I swear by hot sweet tea to keep me going and checkpoint 4 at 30 miles was the only place you could get a brew. Sweet nectar! Reserves replenished I set off – straight uphill again but pretty soon realised my feet weren't happy. I stopped to change socks and blister plasters, but it didn't make much difference and I walked most of the next 20 miles. The downside to this was that I was out for longer and felt I could have run more. The upside was that it was getting hot, the sun was strong and this was the most exposed part of the race – so slowing down and taking on fluid regularly served me well.

For the first time ever I started drinking Tailwind, fuel, hydration, and electrolyte, several days before the race and then had a bottle with me throughout the race. Normally I just carry water and squash. I learnt recently that if you just drink water, it dilutes your own sugars and salts, which can impact performance. I definitely noticed the difference and will be using it again.

Across fields and moorland, up and down – boy it was hot but stopping to appreciate the view was a must – absolutely gorgeous. Checkpoint 5 at 39 miles is on a farm track in the middle of moorland. There were a couple of competitors here in a bad state due to the heat and exposure. The next part of the race was the bit I was most worried about. A steep

climb across boggy ground before descending to the foothills of the impressive Rhinog Fach. My aim was to get off of this mountain by the time it got dark but I didn't quite make it. But what views! And actually, the rocky scramble to the top was by-far my favourite part of the race. The steep descent on the other side wasn't and I fell regularly and slid on my bum without any sense of shame at doing so. I'm sure some competitors flew down here with the gift of better technique or maybe just bravery but this is where I slow down – I'm much better climbing up.

This is where I met my buddy for the rest of the race, Andrew, who had, earlier in the race, gone off course for 5 miles before his wife rung him and told him he was wrong. Can you image a 10-mile detour in a 50-mile race?? We both slipped, swore and stumbled across open moorland where paths had turned to rivers until we made it to the final checkpoint and back to Coed-y-Brenin Forest. We were 15 minutes clear of the midnight cut-off and had 5 miles to go in 2 hours. We were going to make it! Were we?



Those final 5 miles through the forest with the fragrance of pine in the air and the stars shining brightly in the night sky were just brilliant. I love running in the dark. All your senses are tuned in to what's around you. We made a steady pace through the forest and then the sound of cars on a busy road got closer and closer. Then there were lights, the sound of people cheering us in and the familiar slightly overwhelming feeling of achievement, pride and relief.

I don't mind saying I was the last finisher at 1.30am – 19 and a half hours after I started, a little over 9 hours behind the winner and 115th overall. But behind me there were a number of non-finishers and some folk who were timed out – sometimes just missing a checkpoint by 10 mins. I was never going to win so this was all about the journey and I loved it. I enjoyed it so much more than I thought I would. The whole time I was running my head was saying: “you never have to run again” and “I think you're past running ultras”. But do you know what? I love running ultras and while I can, I will.

And the brilliant Kevin Robinson? He didn't quite win but he came fifth overall in 11.5 hours. A brilliant competitor and absolute machine!

I would totally recommend this race but show it the respect it's due – otherwise the Welsh dragon might just bare its teeth at you! Entries are open now for 2024: <https://www.gbultras.com/ultra-wales/> A great film on the home page – you might just spot yours truly setting a good pace right after the mass start!



Karen Carless

Part 1 – Push Too Hard and you Might Just Fail

You know that feeling when everything is going really well? Your times and endurance are improving. Nutrition is on point and you feel confident in your abilities. It is the best feeling in the world when you have a passion and can feel your own progress.

That was where I was.

Each day I continued doing all of the things I thought would provide me with the ability to complete my first marathon and all of the events I had planned. It never felt like a chore or too much. I loved every single workout, even at 6am in the cold or rain. If I was slightly tired or not having the best day, a workout always improved everything, even the bad ones! I believe that you are truly lucky to find something in life that you can honestly say you have a passion for, the one thing that can always lift you. I do know that finding a love for exercise has had the most positive effect on my life.

Three weeks before the marathon I had my first 10-mile trail race and felt as prepared as I could be. I didn't plan to go off too fast, as the marathon was my priority and this was just part of my training plan. I hoped to finish in a good time, but not at the risk of affecting the marathon. I had worked so hard training for it and I knew to be cautious. The trail run was also my first club race, and I wore my vest with pride.

I took on board all of the tips and warnings about the route, warmed up and wandered to the start with all of the other runners it was encouraging to know that I would know many of the marshals on the course, as they were from our club. The pre-race buzz was fantastic. People chatting, stretching, jogging, and preparing for the miles ahead. To see all of those smiling but nervous faces is very motivational. It made the wait for the start less unnerving. I also have a bit of an obsession with looking at running shoes I love running shoes, so that kept my mind occupied before I ran too. Wondering why people choose to wear that they wear, and how much difference this makes. It is probably a strange thing to do, but I do it anyway! The Race Director information was complete. There was a distinct action of watches being pressed and minds switching their focus, a quietness of concentration . . . and we were off!

Through the park, along the path and into the woods. I was following the pace of a body of like-minded runners, friends and peers. That feeling of feet flying through and over the grass. A still, calming, peaceful sensation where my worries pale into insignificance. There really is nothing to match the joy of running through trails, trees, and crunching pathways. The senses are heightened to avoid a slip, but that just adds to the fun and the challenge. Half a mile in and my pace felt good and strong as I hit a mud slip and glided a few metres. A swear word, a nervous laugh and I found my feet again, so glad for my trail shoes. I wondered how those in road shoes were coping. I hoped there weren't any accidents.

As the first trail segment ended and we headed onto the safety of the towpath I felt a combination of relief and excitement for the next trail. Seeing the procession of runners in front of me and being aware of the people I hoped to keep pace with was encouraging. What a wonderful way to spend a Sunday morning. The thought of the cooling, iconic river crossing and celebratory food and drink at the finish was an additional bonus. The first few kilometres flew by with smiles and short chats to other competitors, all questioning how far to the famous Trooper Lane Hill climb.

And before I knew it there it was. All good intentions of running every step soon dissipated and my pace turned to a fast walk and the swiveling of my body to admire the views.

It was the hill that kept on giving

Over half a mile of the gift of cobbles, turns, and calf burning ascent. I resisted putting my hands on my knees to ease the ache. I could definitely do this. One step at a time, slightly on my toes, chest up and moving forward until the sight of people cheering at the summit. Their clapping and kindness made for a rewarding attempt at pushing myself as hard as possible over the brow to the much-needed water station. It was amazing how the support of others can help you find the extra inner strength. I had Trooped the Trooper and, in my head, completed the most difficult part of the race. I absolutely beamed as I headed downhill and towards the next iconic segment of Beacon Hill. Another first for me and another segment where the views were spectacular, although I didn't pause to take them in at this point. I was aware that my time had slipped a little and fully intended to pull some of that back on the upcoming downhills.

After a while I could see that the course was slightly congested again and people seemed to be treading more carefully. I joined the cautious flow, being extremely careful where I placed my feet. We had hit a lane I had been warned was slippery. It was a narrow, overgrown combination of mud and wet cobbles. Runners had stopped running and the line of bodies picked their way through the squelchy undergrowth. The previous days rain had left a steady stream of water meandering through cobbles and mud. The lead athletes churning up the soil with their fast feet and competitive pace. This was a real challenge.

My last challenge of this race.

My right foot jammed into the mud and as I tried to pull it free my left foot slid sharply and quickly to the left. The pain wasn't good at all, but the language was worse!! I was in pain but convinced it was just a muscular twinge and that I could run it off. Muscle strains are all part of running. I had had niggles before and managed to run them off. It was only a slip and nothing serious. I tried but for a while. I really did try, but it was evident that I wasn't going to run any further or finish this race. The tears started, but I'm not sure if they were caused by pain or disappointment in myself, or both. I hobbled the lanes and fields as runners passed and asked if I needed help. I hid silent tears with my hat and just said "no thank you" whilst smiling politely. I would have loved help, it hurt so badly, but I didn't want to spoil anyone else's run because of my stupidity. I finally made it to assistance, burst into tears and eased myself to the floor. Smiling faces, water and kind words soon made me feel less upset and encouraged me to climb to my feet again. But I couldn't. The pain was incredible. I tried again but I was not moving without help. An ambulance was on its way, thankfully, as there was another injured runner at the same point. I felt I should make small talk but the words weren't there. I wanted to be the kind me and show concern, but my throat was choked.

The ambulance journey was filled with silent tears, regret, and praying that this was minor and wouldn't stop my marathon. A muscle pain couldn't stop an event three weeks away could it?

My head was trying to convince my heart, or was it the other way around? I am not sure but there was an internal battle between them already and I did not know which would win. Could there even be a winner? I did know that I had pushed myself too hard after I had fallen.

A hard way to learn a lesson I had already been taught too many times in life

Push too hard and you might just fail again.

And I had.

Part 2 – Pain is Inevitable. Torment doesn't have to be

I had run my race, or at least part of it, and fallen. I hoped it was just something minor as the pain was only in my groin area, which indicated just a muscle pull or something similar. Marathon training and the slip had just caused a strain and I'd be back training soon. I was worried about missing my planned runs so close to the marathon, but I was tapering so thought it would be manageable. I would get a few more runs in and I would complete this marathon. I had my heart set on it.

But the injury wasn't minor, and I wasn't able to run the marathon.

For the following two weeks, even though I was in the most pain I had been in for years, I was convinced that I would recover and be able to run. My mind would not even consider any other option. The training was in my legs, and the determination was in my being. I didn't give in easily at all. I continued to swim (though with a pull buoy, as kicking was incredibly painful), I limped my way through frequent short walks and practiced gentle yoga to try ease the situation. I tried using a cross trainer which was good at first but then also became too painful. It wasn't just that I had my heart set on this single goal but training is a huge part of my life. It is my routine, my habit, my happy place. Without it I wasn't really sure who I was I don't think.

My last injury, eighteen months previously, has left me with a hand that only has 80% grip and hardly works in the cold. It caused a break in training, but only for about four weeks while the scars healed. Then I was back to the lower body training with my sling on. Walking, turbo training (in one gear) then running. I had managed to adjust and get back to it fairly quickly last time, and that injury was much worse. This accident was causing so much groin pain that I was increasingly struggling to walk properly. Getting up from a seated position caused more bad language in those weeks than in my previous 55 years put together!! I was very confused as to why the muscles weren't repairing as I rested iced and took anti-inflammatories. I had seen a physio and taken advice, and we discussed there could be a good chance that I would still take part, though my pace might not be as strong. I could cope with that (although secretly believing I would still run nothing slower than 11 minute miles). I was very naïve.

Seven days before Edinburgh, after a very painful 1.5 mile charity walk I admitted defeat. No marathon. I cried. A lot. Which is very embarrassing to admit. But I felt a little lost. I tortured myself by looking on Strava as my friends raced, worked out, enjoyed exercise in the sun and continued to do all of the things I wanted to do. I am not usually jealous of anyone's achievements, just pleased for them, but I felt more envious than ever that day. It was not my finest day!

The fact that I had set myself this huge goal and I had failed was consuming. I was letting myself and so many others down. Medical advice wasn't very forthcoming and three different physios offered three different opinions, but that was understandable considering the location of the pain. The not knowing exactly what the issue was, how long it would affect me, and the worsening pain was difficult to deal with at times. Constant pain takes a toll, that dull ache, then the searing pain on moving, it wasn't great. I gave myself the advice I try to give others and began trying to find little wins and positives.

When exercise is a huge part of your life losing the ability to continue to do so, for any period, is overwhelming. You want to cry, shout, swear, and wallow in self-pity. And perhaps you should, but only for a limited time. I know, and I think we all know that there are always people in a much worse situation that you . . . and I didn't need reminding of that. But I still felt sad at times. Injury time gives an opportunity to reflect and to learn. It is a chance to realise new skills, to rest, to support others, to spend time doing all of the things you may have left behind. It has encouraged me to find the confidence to participate in events in other ways, by marshalling and supporting however I can. Through watching others I can also learn a huge amount. Much more than I could learn from books. Not just about form or pace, but about mental strength and sheer bloody mindedness.

I watch and cheer with awe for those who do not lead the race, those who know they will never win but keep smiling and keep going. Running or walking for the love of it, for the sheer joy of completing the race. They are the ones I admire and cheer my loudest for. They are the individuals who I learn most from.

I have watched two marathons, half marathons and various races in the past six weeks. Each one causing a huge range of emotions, from pride to concern, and confusion to enlightenment. I have seen runners who look defeated and then find something within themselves to drag their aching beings the final mile. Athletes who fly through a marathon with ease and sprint over that finish line. I have also grinned and shouted at thousands of people who, like me, are somewhere in between. Who have that love / hate relationship with each run, no matter the distance. Loving some miles but wondering why they are doing this on others. The sense of accomplishment when they finish tells you everything. I love seeing that emotion on peoples' faces and saying congratulations. It is very gratifying watching from the sidelines and encouraging at the same time. It gives me the strength and confidence to know that I will be back amongst them . . . when I am strong enough. I do not doubt that at all.

A fractured femur was not what I hoped for this year, but it happened. And as ever I think it has given me an opportunity to learn a lot about myself and the determination of others.

Recovery is seldom as speedy as we would like it to be and that temptation to rush and try start back where we left off can be very tempting.

Exercise is an extremely powerful medicine for many of us, but perhaps we need to write our own prescriptions more carefully or ask for guidance with our medication (I think this may be me!!) Pain and injury are inevitable in life but the torment that follows does not have to be

Not for very long anyway.

Genevieve Thompson

The Jungle Ultra 2023

It is hot, I am tired, and the jungle won't stop. What doesn't help is that this area of Amazon is not flat, but endless up and down along narrow routes with big drops at the side and very muddy, slippery descents. The route goes on and on, winding along the steep sides of the Manu National Park of Peru. I have been running for hours and am totally sick of the jungle. I have no idea as to why I thought this was a good idea. What was I thinking?! If I ever get to it, I am going to quit at the next checkpoint. It is early on day 3 of the Jungle Ultra and I am done!

The Jungle Ultra was something that I had started to think about seriously 7 years ago, but the seed was planted many years before. I studied the Amazon at primary school and made my first visits to Peru in 1998 and 1999. A TV documentary before I started running showed mad people doing mad racing through jungle and I laughed at their stupidity. Roll on a few years and I am an Ultra runner longing to go back to Peru looking for something to celebrate turning 50. And the answer was The Jungle Ultra; a 5-day race from The Andes to the Amazon. 230km of tough jungle trails, mountain roads and village tracks leading down from 1050ft in the Cloud Forest to Amazon Jungle below all within the Manu National Park in Peru. A fully self-sufficient event carrying a hammock, sleeping bag, food, and supplies for the entire race. It took me a couple of years of deliberating over the idea – cost, time, leaving family behind – but I finally hit the Enter button five years ago for the 2020 event.

I trained and trained and by Spring 2020 I was ready. Just a few more weeks to go and then . . . COVID. The race was postponed to 2021 so another year went by, and I was feeling fit and ready but . . . COVID. Family commitments meant that 2022 was not an option, so finally I booked in for June 2023. Training resumed, but a torn plantar fascia in August 2021, not diagnosed until June 2022, meant the training was delayed, and related problems never really went away. Political unrest in Peru with many airports shut and cities under states of security put the whole event in question for many months, but finally I booked my flight on June 4th, 2023, I was on the start line ready to go.



had been created specifically for the race. Whilst the route wasn't steep at this point it was hard work as underfoot was not exactly easy, the route was narrow, and the turns were steep and challenging. After some time, I caught up with two other runners, one of whom had sprained her ankle. I gave her my poles and we finally made it to the bottom of the valley. Here we made the first river crossing, passed the first check point, and then headed up an almost vertical climb up to the road. From here the three of us stuck together for the remaining hours along the rough road, arriving in camp mid-afternoon, all feeling relieved to have got the first day of racing completed.

Day 1: 21 miles.

On the morning of day 1 we woke up in our hammocks to frost. Not something associated with the Amazon rain forest but at an altitude of 3000m it had been a very, very uncomfortable night. We were all tired, cold, and nervous as we packed everything into our running packs, handed in our excess baggage, consumed our various instant breakfasts, and made our way to the start. Some words of encouragement from the race organiser and the local major and we were off. A one-mile descent along the road until we headed through a door on the right and we were into the very steep sided, dense jungle that we had all been anticipating. This was it; I was actually doing it – I was running the Jungle Ultra! There was a very long descent down the side of the mountain, zigzagging across newly created routes through the undergrowth that



Day 2 was another early start preceded by a cold night, but we were all in good spirits. The first half of the day was along the road for many hours. The day grew warmer and warmer as the route descended slowly through a number of local settlements and then finally reached the second half of the day which was all jungle. The ascents were not a problem other than being hard work, but I hated the descents as they were so slippery. The flat sections had sticky mud and bogs. Wading in sludge above my knees was challenging and I was soon falling flat on my face and totally covered in muck from head to toe. But this was exciting and fun and was the whole reason for doing the race. As the day

progressed I was getting hotter, muddier and my clothes were really starting to smell. Only another 3 days to go until I could shower and put on clean clothes! Finally, I reached camp after nearly 10 hours and was surprised to find that of the 22 at the start line on day 1, there were already 2 DNF runners. **Day 2: 27 miles.**

Day 3 was when my mental stamina was really put to the test. I started the day in high spirits as we were taken across the river in a zip wire contraption to the start. And then it was straight into the jungle. On and on and on and on and this is where I began to question why I had thought running a 5-day jungle ultra had ever been a good idea. I couldn't imagine being able to finish today let alone another two more days. This was all becoming a nightmare that I wanted to end. I was tired and losing the mental strength to keep going, but I had no choice – I was on my own in the middle of endless rainforest and the only thing I could do was continue. And finally, I reached another checkpoint – over 4 hours to cover just 10k! If I had been told that I had another section of rainforest just like the last I might have crumbled, but luck was on my side. The rest of the day was to be along track and rocky roads so off I went. Another checkpoint and the road started to climb up, up, up. And then when I came over the top and looked down the other side of the valley, I could see the finish down below. And finally, the day was over, and I had not had a DNF. **Day 3: 16 miles.**



Day 4 was much more positive and whilst the day was another long test of mental strength through the endless jungle (despite the short distance), our packs were getting lighter, the end was getting closer, and spirits were high. The route headed into jungle and gradually the sides of the valleys became steeper and rocky, with the path becoming narrower. Whilst any fall would be caught by foliage, it was not something I wanted to test. There were lots of fallen trees along this section and clambering over them took its toll. At one point I reached a large fallen tree swarming with ants and little blue beetles. I had no idea whether any of them were going to bite but after some consideration decided the only way to get over the tree was to sit on it, swing my legs over then slide off. This worked but left me covered in ants and bugs!

Heading for the first checkpoint of the day required lowering myself down hanging ropes and finally I hit the river and support staff. I was shocked to see lying on the floor under a tarpaulin one of the other competitors who until now had been one of the race leaders. He had collapsed on the path and was found and helped to the checkpoint by a group of other runners. In total two runners failed to get further than this checkpoint. The rest of the route continued through jungle, broken up by fields, native villages, and wider tracks on flatter terrain. The route repeatedly crossed rivers and streams – some were just a short step across, some required a big boat with a team to take us across the fast-flowing water and one was sitting in a rubber ring being pulled across – as well as the usual zig-zag ups and downs. It was no surprise to reach the final checkpoint after the required cut-off which meant running the shorter finish; only 6 runners made it in time to do the longer distance. **Day 4: 14 miles.**



The final day 5 meant a very early 4:30am start in the dark, running through the town of Pilcopata with the locals cheering us on. A great start to what was to be a very long day. Fred became my running buddy which was a huge boost to both of us through to the finish. Initially the route was fairly flat along road, wide track and then eventually we hit the river. The organisers had promised 10k of river running and none of us had fully anticipated the reality of this. The route markers sent us back and forth across the river and along the riverbank repeatedly for endless hours. Luckily, I had poles which improved things but lots of others did not, and it was not an easy time. There was a lot of cursing of organisers! Finally, we came to the end of

the river and there was relief all round. We headed on along flat track and then to everyone's surprise we headed into jungle. We had been told there would be no jungle, but here we were back in overgrown foliage, along muddy trails. Nobody was happy at this point, but things got worse as we found ourselves back in a river within the jungle which went on and on. Gradually we all spread out and it was just me and Jack at the back. We reached the final checkpoint at dusk and were relieved to know there was just 10k along the dusty road to go. We had been promised all downhill, but of course it wasn't and the final 10k went on for a very long time. We were running now in pitch dark with head torches. Every so often we would hear music down below and see lights and think we were reaching the finish but again and again we ran on further and the lights and sounds disappeared behind us. Finally, we ran over a bridge and reached the outskirts of Pilcopata, the town of the finish. There were police and locals out to guide us down the last few streets and there was the finish. All the other competitors (except one) and race organisers were there to cheer us to the end. We had been running for over 16 hours. Just one more person to cheer to the finish was a few hours more – the only female to complete the full distance. **Day 5: 35 miles.**

The next day was the award ceremony in the main square. I had finally done what I had been planning for so long and was a Jungle Ultra Finisher.



A few links for anyone wanting to know more . . .

<https://www.beyondtheultimate.co.uk/race/jungle-ultra/> (Official race website)

<https://hillanddaleoutdoors.co.uk/blogs/blog> (A more detailed blog of the race)

Carol Heptonstall

Well I've done it ran on the treadmill for 5 minutes at physio this morning (Monday) and I can start building up running outside from Wednesday – I'm ok to run alternate days with a run / walk pattern I can't tell you how elated I am this morning 😊

I wouldn't be at this point without the support of everyone at the club, could you please give my sincere thanks to everyone for taking the time to offer their support, messages, and words of encouragement, they have all meant so much to me and kept me motivated, that people thought of me over this last 8 months is very humbling.

At the start I was told I would have to forget running that was setting me the challenge they didn't know me 😊 or what amazing support can do 😊

Thank you
Carol.

Stainland Off Grid Challenge

Stainland Off Grid Challenge – 9th July – From an Organisers Perspective – with Mark Preston

A few years back I did an event known as "The Drop" with my partner Lindsay. The idea was that you were blindfolded and driven to a remote location. Each runner, or pair of runners was then set off at different times & had to make their own way back to the start point without maps or electronic aids. The big difference was that they had a tracker system for each runner & could view their progress on a computer screen. I looked at this option but it looked expensive.

With this in mind I thought the idea could be transferred to the club. A few tweaks were required. Firstly it seemed safer to insist that runners go in pairs. The expensive GPS tracking system became a sealed plastic bag which contained phones, GPS, etc. in case of emergency.

The next thing to decide was where the start point should be. The route was to be 5 miles in a straight line from 1885. I looked at a couple of places & had a drive round. I was convinced the 1st place was perfect & no one would know it. When I got there I discovered there wasn't really anywhere to park a car, never mind a convoy of cars. The place I settled on was near the village of South Crosland. There was a small parking area & a dip in the road, which meant there were no visible landmarks, like Castle Hill for instance. There was also a small wood with a map (The Official Start Point). The start was actually on a footpath, which none of the 10 pairs decided to use.

Ok start point chosen. I then did a running recce of the route & timed it. I tried to run it at race pace, which proved impossible. It took me 1 hour 5. So I decided that if I had been racing it would have taken me about an hour. Bearing in mind I knew what I thought was probably the most direct route back. Based on this I gave everybody a handicap. Looking at park runs & other recent races I decided to base these handicaps on the slower runner of the pair.

So in theory everyone had an equal chance, providing they made some sensible route options.

On the day of the event I was quite nervous that it could all be a complete disaster, never to be repeated again. I drove to the start point early in the morning to make sure the council hadn't decided to close the road. On my way there my son Ben rang to say he thought he had left his car key in my car. Fortunately it turned up, so panic over.

The runners started turning up looking slightly agitated & bewildered. Especially when I gave them all the blindfolds. 1 or 2 felt a bit queasy on the drive over. It is a weird sensation if you've never done it before.

10 brave pairs signed up not knowing exactly what to expect. We met at The 1885. 6 drivers had kindly agreed to ferry the runners to the start. Runners were assigned to the drivers. Only myself & Lindsay knew where the start was. We travelled in 2 convoys with a 20 minute gap between, so that runners weren't hanging about for too long at the start. Also because the start point would not fit all 6 cars in. It must have been a bizarre site as we drove past people. 3 cars in a row all containing runners wearing masks.

I made sure we didn't drive the most direct route to the start point just in case someone had some sort of superpower that could commit the route to memory. My son Ben told me that Daniel Sykes appeared to have such a power but was completely thrown by a road closure diversion at Scapegoat Hill. I put a loop in near the end of the car journey so that the cars were pointing the wrong way round. My thinking was that any sensible person would look at which way the cars were parked & would run the opposite way. As it turned out only 1 person had the common sense to do this. Well done Fraser, sorry you fell for that little trick.

As it turned out the first 3 couples set off in what I would consider the wrong direction. I must admit I was a little concerned. Although just before Paul Butterfield & Claire Haigh set off Jonathan Taylor & Christine Gayle ran back passed the start line having spotted Castle Hill on the horizon. This gave Paul & Claire a good clue as to which way was best.

Full marks to David Farrar. He managed to work out from the map that they were in Kirklees, which is South of 1885. The journey over didn't give much of a clue as the roads in Kirklees are as bad as in Calderdale. He also noticed there were some basic compass points on the map, worked out where North was & made the right decision at the start.

As I drove back to the start point to do the timings I only saw 1 pair, which was Karen Thorne & Ally Audsley. This was a bit concerning, had they all got lost & would need rescuing, I had forgotten to record Wimbledon. Lindsay said she had seen a few other pairs on her journey back so I was still looking good for catching the Tennis. Lindsay Upton & Claire Thomas had been spotted on the road to Linthwaite Church pointing towards Cowlersley. They decided to ignore the massive hill across the valley just in front of them (Scapegoat Hill). For anyone that doesn't know it's the one just above Stainland. Instead they went off road via Cowlersley. They ended up being 1 of 2 pairs in the 9+ miles club. They came in smiling & insisted they had enjoyed it.

The person who lived closest to the start point who can't be named for legal reasons managed to do the longest journey, proving that while the handicaps were important, route choice was everything.

The banter at the end was great, with everyone coming up with various stories. Karen Thorne & Ally Audsley managed to pick a really direct mainly off road route. Karen showed me the profile of the route which looked like they had just ascended the North face of the Eiger. Others had nettle stings. So just like a typical club night really.

The eventual winners were David Farrar & Gerry Banham. David's astuteness at the start & later Gerry realising they were at a place he had done some work in the past, really helping. Special mention to Clare Thomas & Lindsay Upton, who despite not being the best route planners decided to go off road just for the hell of it.

The event seemed to be very well received & I have been asked if it can become an annual event. Yes it can.

By Mark Preston

From a Runners Perspective with Helen Armitage

On Sunday 10 pairs of runners set out on the Off Grid Challenge organised by Mark Preston. We had a vague idea that this would involve being driven to an unknown destination and then having to make our own way back to 1885 using the fastest/shortest route possible.

Sally had agreed to take part with me, and we arrived at the start point at 9.30am. Runners were each given a blindfold and a plastic sealable bag in which phones and Garmin watches were to be placed. These could be opened in an emergency but would result in disqualification! The first 5 pairs set off driven by Mark, Maria and Becki and once at the destination would be set off at intervals of 5 minutes apart. Blindfolds had to be worn and remain in place until it was your turn to get out of the car.

Our group of me and Sally, Fraser and Dan Sykes were in one car all trying to work out which direction we were going. It's fair to say we could not see a thing through the blindfolds, and though all agreed we had set off up the hill from 1885 we soon lost track of which direction we were going.

When it was our turn to get out of the car, we could remove our blindfolds and were given 60 seconds to try and figure out in which direction to set off.

Once out of the car I did realise that I knew where we were but could not decide which direction to set off in! Having decided on left I soon realised of course that right would have been better and probably wasted about half a mile getting us back on track. I think both Sally and I had visions of Fraser and Dan breathing down our necks but decided they must have taken a different route - then the dilemma starts with who had taken the best route?? Our option was to head for Milnsbridge, Longwood, Outlane, Sowood and then back to 1885.

Once back the conversation started about which route everyone had taken and how far we had run (the drivers were allowed to start Strava for us through the plastic wallets). It was a great amusement to see how far others had run and where they had ended up - Karen and Ally taking an off road option, Lindsey Upton and Claire Thomas taking paths no one has ventured on in decades and let's just say Steve Hallam and Ian Johnson took the scenic route via Netherton and Greenhead Park covering almost 10 miles. David Farrar and Gerry Banham had clearly taken the best route, and after Mark had taken the handicap in to account, they were the eventual winners, but win or lose we had great fun and a big Thank You goes to Mark for the amount of planning and organisation he put into the event, and to the drivers for taking part as well.

We all hope it is something Mark will organise again.





The Off Grid Challenge – with Gerry Banham

So, the inaugural Stainland Lions Off Grid Challenge, what the heck is all that about I hear you ask, well let me attempt to clarify the situation. What is meant to happen is 20 enthusiastic conscripts assemble at Stainland 1885 car park, they are allocated a sealable plastic bag in which to lock away any navigational device that may aid their progress and given a coloured blindfold to match their personality. They are then bundled into the back of a car, ordered to put their blindfolds on, and driven to a sneaky mystery location approximately 5 miles as the crow flies from the 1885. They then are allowed to remove their blindfolds and released in pairs into the wild at 5 minute intervals with the aim to navigate the quickest route back to the 1885. To make things as fair as possible each team is given a time handicap relative to their 10k speed which will be added to their time on finishing.

Sounds straightforward enough, doesn't it? Now let's see how it went on the day as seen through my eyes.

I drove into the 1885 car park at around 9.20am knowing that Mark Preston wanted to get things moving for 9.30am; my running partner Dave Farrar and most of the other participants were already assembled and within minutes we had the full complement of 20 runners (10 teams). Each runner was handed a sealable waterproof bag and a blindfold, Ian Johnson



wearing his alluring pink one with pride. At this stage I noticed a bright what analogue timepiece on Dave's wrist, when questioned he admitted it was his wife Sally's as his had no batteries, thinking back I could have raided my wife's jewellery box but all she had was a heart shaped one with no numbers, tiny hands and a gold bracelet strap, it may have suited me, but it was totally impractical.

The next stage was the drop off which would be carried out in 2 waves due to the runner/car ratio, and once dropped off the team with the lower time handicap would be released at 10.10am. the next lowest at 10.15am, etc. until the last and fastest (allegedly) team hit the road at 10.55am. A military operation indeed but it needed to be to make it work. Dave and myself were allocated Becky Ambrose (or vice versa) as our driver, so we were bundled into the car and blindfolds on and without further ado we were in a wave 2 convoy to the start. Dave was in the front and I was in the back with baby Ernie, although I couldn't see him I could certainly hear him, so I engaged in my finest baby talk and voila – so engaging was my conversation that he was asleep within 5 minutes. In the meantime Dave was doing his "Great Mesmo" impersonation and trying to memorise every stop, turn and gear change Becky made in order to ascertain our whereabouts, it was working too until we got through Slaithwaite and Becky stepped up the conversation to distract him, a ploy that worked, but it was too late we had already gleaned the vital information we needed in that we were heading in a direction South East of the 1885.

Once at our drop off point we remained blindfolded to prevent us seeing in which direction the other runners (escapees) were heading, it was certainly the closest I have been to being in a hostage situation and I was just hoping that no passer by had already contacted the police!



Our names were finally called and it was time to be released. The starting point was in a mischievous dip in the road so there were no initial landmarks to get your bearings but, next to us a useful information sign which had a "you are here" marker on it, but more useful than that, it had a tiny compass point marker on it at the bottom. So knowing that we were South East of our destination we plotted in which direction we had to run to be heading North West and raced off in that direction.

From this point on it was clue time and I was hoping that my working knowledge of this area and Dave's clinical route research would compliment each other and that we could keep running at a good pace whilst bouncing route options off each other, a tactic that seemed to work quite well. Within a short distance of the start we were out of the dip and could see a couple of key landmarks to gauge where we were; Castle Hill and an airfield, and then a caravan park and we were well and truly on our way. On our way back to the finish we first encountered Sandy and Paula and then caught sight of Paul and Claire, which confirmed it was a popular route choice, as surely we all couldn't be wrong!

The final home run was from Sowood down to the 1885 so we upped the pace and gave it a good last 100m sprint to the line, finishing at 11:44:15am, only to find Karen and Ally already finished at 11:41:32am and sat waiting. On finishing it was time to remove our phones from the sealed bag and compare and brag about route choice, running speed, etc. whilst the rest of the field finished.

Next over the line at 11:46:38 was Jonathan and Christine, who pulled a stroke of genius by coming off road and utilising the trail from New Hey Road which brings you out just below the 1885, a choice that could have saved them a minute or two. Still they came, and next in was Paul and Claire at 11:48:00, Sandy and Paula at 11:51:20, Helen and Sally at 11:54:28, red hot favourites Frazer and Dan at 11:55:15, and Laura and Anne at 12:07:00.

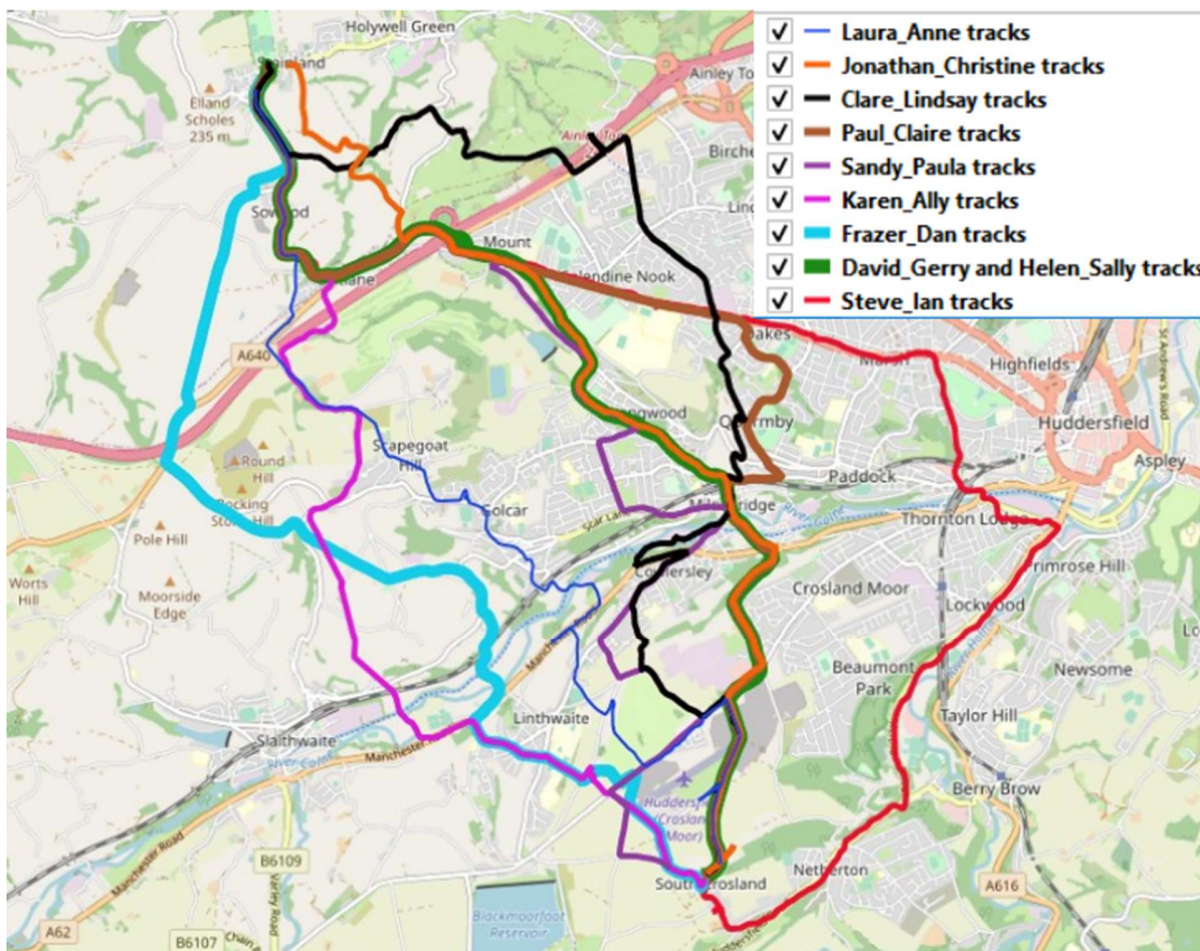
We were now getting concerned for the dark horses, namely Steve Hallam and Ian Johnson, who by rights should have finished well before 12pm; either Ian had taken such a likig to his provocative pink blindfold and had forgotten to take it off, or the pair of them had used up so much shoe rubber that they decided to run into Huddersfield to buy new ones! Alas, they finally appeared around the corner and crossed the line at 12:08:40pm having clocked up a distance of 8.7 miles.

Only one team to finish now, and as the minutes ticked by we waited anxiously for Clare and Lindsay to show their faces. The clock ticked to 12:20pm and no sign of them, we knew they must be ok because they hadn't used their emergency phones to contact Mark. It was getting close to rining Mountain Rescue to send out a helicopter when lo and behold around the corner they came arms waving in delight and thankfully in one piece, crossing the line at 12:23:40pm having set off at 10:30am. It was all over bar the shouting, and now it was up to Mark to collate the results including the handicaps and handing the prizes to the jubilant winners.

All in all considering this is the first time this unique type of run has been tried at Stainland, it went swimmingly with no real hiccups that I could see, which is a great accolade to Mark, his wife and the rest of the team/drivers, without who this type of race wouldn't be possible. I am sure I can speak on behalf of all the participants by saying thank you Mark and team and please make this an annual event.

Gerry B.

P.S. If anyone had said 8 years ago when I joined the club that on the 9th July 2023 I would be sat in a car blindfolded next to someone else's baby whilst my running partner was sat blindfolded in the front seat sporting a ladies wristwatch I may have hesitated in joining the club!

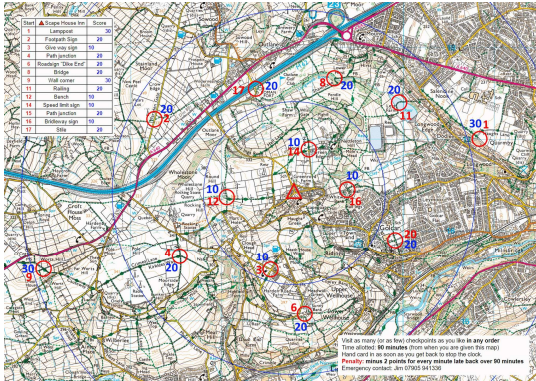


RESULTS - STAINLAND OFF GRID CHALLENGE 9-JUL-2023

<u>Position</u>	<u>Runners</u>	<u>Start Time</u>	<u>Finish Time</u>	<u>Running Time</u>	<u>Penalty</u>	<u>Overall Time</u>
1st	David Farrar & Gerry Banham	10:45	11:44:15	00:59:15	0:11:00	1:10:15
2nd	Helen Armitage & Sally Caton	10:50	11:54:48	01:04:48	0:14:00	1:18:48
3rd	Fraser Ambrose & Daniel Sykes	10:55	11:55:15	01:00:15	0:22:00	1:22:15
4th	Paul Butterfield & Claire Haigh	10:25	11:48:00	01:23:00	0:00:00	1:23:00
5th	Jonathan Taylor & Christine Gayle	10:15	11:46:38	01:31:38	0:01:00	1:32:38
6th	Sandy Gee & Paula Pickersgill	10:20	11:51:20	01:31:20	0:02:00	1:33:20
7th	Karen Thorne & Ally Audsley	10:10	11:41:32	01:31:32	0:05:00	1:36:32
8th	Steve Hallam & Ian Johnson	10:40	12:08:40	01:28:40	0:10:00	1:38:40
9th	Laura Goodwin & Anne Marie Ulliyot	10:35	12:07:00	01:32:00	0:08:00	1:40:00
10th	Clare Thomas & Lindsay Upton	10:30	12:23:40	01:53:40	0:07:00	2:00:40

Away Run - July 2023 with Jim Harris

July's away run was something a little different . . . a score event – a glorified treasure hunt – from the Scape House at Scapegoat Hill.



After splitting into teams the goal was to visit as many (or as few) of the 13 possible checkpoints marked on the map provided, in any order. The allotted time of 90 minutes started from when each team collected their map and ended as soon as the checkpoint card was handed in . . . with points being deducted for every minute late back over the 90 minutes.

The winning team with 170 points were “Are you Local?” . . . yep, I think they were!

																	Checkpoints visited	Checkpoints score	Time penalty	Checkpoint score minus time penalties	TEAM
30	20	10	20	20	20	30	20	10	10	20	10	20								SCORE	
1	2	3	4	6	8	9	11	12	14	15	16	17	Checkpoints visited	Checkpoints score	Time penalty	Checkpoint score minus time penalties	TEAM				
-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	10	10	-	-	20	3	60	0	60	Should have gone to spec savers				
-	20	-	-	20	-	-	-	10	10	-	10	20	6	90	0	90	Rikkis raiders				
30	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	10	-	10	-	-	4	70	0	70	Chilly Billy's				
-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	10	-	10	20	4	60	0	60	Magnificent 7				
30	20	-	20	-	-	30	20	10	10	-	10	20	8	170	0	170	Are you Local?				
-	-	10	-	20	-	-	-	-	10	20	10	-	5	70	0	70	Effing Idiots				
-	-	10	-	20	-	-	-	10	10	20	10	-	6	80	0	80	Reconnaissance				
-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	10	-	10	20	3	60	0	60	Famous 5				





Next Away Run – August 10th – Lord Nelson, Luddenden Village

On 10th August we will be making our long awaited return to the Lord Nelson Inn (one of the filming locations for Gentleman Jack) in the beautiful village of Luddenden. Prepare for a few hills but with some absolutely stunning scenery.

Food is a choice of Steak & Potato Pie, Cornish Slab, or Cheese & Onion Pie – for £6.50. Please add your food requests to Catherine’s Facebook post and arrange payment to Debbie (orders cannot be placed until payment has been made). Last day for food orders is the 5th August.

See you all there

Coaching with Colin Duffield

Things Runners Believe That Aren't True #4

The more you run the better runner you become

Nope . . . here's why:

Any training programme, regardless of the distance you're targeting will have a mixture of type of sessions, ranging from long and slow to shorter and faster.

What all these sessions have in common is the basic principle of adaptation. So longer slower runs denser mitochondria, increase capillary return, build musculo-skeletal resilience, and generally cause the changes that make you more efficient. Shorter harder sessions like reps and tempo runs improve oxygen use, build fast twitch mitochondria, muscular development, the ability to maintain threshold pace, the things to make you more effective. Most runners first mistake is to fall between the two types of session into a grey area that doesn't maximise either response. But let's stick to the original question. Can you do too much?

Regardless of this, all training relies on adaptation. Adaption needs recovery. If you're not recovering between your runs you're not adapting and will struggle to improve.

How much recovery and adaptation time you need between runs depends on a few different factors. How hard the particular session was, your own personal physiology (including age), your stage in a training cycle. It might sound difficult to gauge, but if you listen to your body, it will tell you.

Signs you might not be recovering and need to include more rest might be similar to other red flags for a poor training plan. Stuff like repeated niggly injuries, not improving as you'd expect, burnout, or 'mojo' loss.

Think on

Stainland Lions'
Lion of the Month

CLAIRE HAIGH

July 2023

Claire has made a big difference to the club with socials and beginners

For her work with beginners, who absolutely love her

She's been a fantastic support to me whilst I've been out of action

Has more importance than I think we realise as a club sometimes, so a credit to her for cracking on with it!

Embodies that need to not make it official and just get stuck in and help out

She's running really well and does a lot of volunteering for the club



CONGRATULATIONS!

In The Lion's Den with Gav Dodd



Steve Hallam



When did you first get into running?

I have been running regularly since 2008. However, I did complete the old Bradford Marathon back in '82 just for the hell of it! My next race was 23 years later.

Favourite Race?

The Harewood Trail 10 miler; but even this turned into a one-off event. Then, in early 2008, I entered a few local 10k's just to try to lose a few pounds and increase my fitness. I then got hooked and haven't looked back since.

When did you join the Lions?

I joined the Lions on the recommendation of a former Lion (Pete Bebb) who I used to play squash with. He left long ago but I'm still here!

Favourite distance?

I enjoy competing in all manner of races but my all time favourite is the Guy Fawkes 10, which I have just entered again for the 11th time. I love the 10 mile distance, which just seems to suit my capabilities, whilst the undulating and scenic course is outstanding (in my opinion).

Tips for beginners?

With the benefit of 15 continuous years of running experience, I would advise any beginners to build up slowly, don't force it, let yourself transform naturally by sticking with it, even when you just want to stop! For me, this process took several months after which I started to enjoy it instead of enduring it!

Favourite running shoes?

My "go to" running shoe is always last years' model, when they are previously advertised as the best thing since sliced bread. One year later when the new model is launched, that doesn't really change, expect for the price of course! My current shoes are Saucony Endorphin Pro for racing/track. Under Armour Flow Velociti Wind for general use, and Hoka Torrent Trail for off-road.

What do you do for work?

I retired at age 60 in 2019 but previously worked in the Scientific Sector, selling water purification systems.

Favourite meal / restaurant?

My favourite meal is a tough one because I just like eating! However, you can't beat a bit of fresh fish, followed by a proper homemade cake (none of that Mr Kipling rubbish!).

Favourite tippie?

Whilst I try not to drink much alcohol during the week, come the weekend I do enjoy a good glass of wine or 3 or a decent pale ale.

Favourite holiday destination?

My favourite holiday destination is a dog friendly place either in Cornwall or the Lake District.

Any bucket list items?

I don't really have a bucket list as such but we have booked a 3 week adventure in Canada for next year. I would also like to visit New Zealand at some point.

Any hobbies away from running?

When I'm not running, I simply try to live each day to the full, engaging with the world around us just doing simple things such as walking the dog, keeping the house and garden in decent nick and passing the time of day with almost anyone I come across. I believe in making every day count – we are only here once!

What's your taste in music?

My music choices these days become ever more eclectic. Whilst I can appreciate lesser known bands such as King King, who play blues inspired rock typically in the style of Bad Company, there are times when I simply want to relax with Classic FM or Burt Bacharach, easy listening stuff.

**August 2023:**

Thursday 10th – Away Run @ Lord Nelson in Luddenden Village

Thursday 24th – Summer Handicap @ The 1885, Stainland

September 2023:

Wednesday 13th – The second Stainland Lions Sports Day, 6.30pm at the Track – instead of the usual track sessions (details to follow).

Thursday 14th – Away Run (details to follow).

Sunday 17th – Stainland Trail.

2023 Championship Races:

- Wednesday 2nd August – Hopwood Trot, Hopwood College Sports Pavilion.
- Sunday 20th August – Piethorne Trail, Bulls Head, Rochdale.
- Sunday 3rd September – Tholthorpe 10k, The Village Green, Tholthorpe, York.
- Sunday 30th September – Stairway to Heaven, Holmbridge Church Hall, Holmfirth.
- Sunday 15th October - Holmfirth 10k, Hade Edge Bank Hall.
- Sunday 29th October – Bronte Way Fell Race, Aisled Barn, Trawden, Colne.
- Sunday 5th November – Guy Fawkes 10, Ripley Castle.
- Sunday 19th November - Clowne Half Marathon, Chesterfield.
- Saturday 28th December – Ambles Revenge, Waggon & Horses, Oxspring.

2023 Fell Championship Races:

- Wednesday 9th August - Pilgrims Cross (6.6 miles)
- Sunday 20th August – Piethorne (6.2 miles) ***also in Club Championship***
- September – Thievely Pike (4.3 miles) tbc
- Sunday 10th September – Yorkshireman Full (26.1 miles)
- Sunday 10th September – Yorkshireman Half (14.9 miles)
- Sunday 29th October – Bronte Way (7.5 miles) ***also in Club Championship***
- Saturday 9th December – Moors the Merrier (21.1 miles)

YVAA 2023 Grand Prix:

- Race 6 – 8th August 2023 @ Pudsey Pacers, Post Hill
- Race 7 – 1st October @ Ackworth RR, Fitzwilliam Country Park.

West Yorkshire Winter League 2023/24:

- 19th November: Baildon
- 3rd December: Queensbury
- 17th December: Bramley
- 7th January: Stadium
- 21st January: Lakers
- 11th February: Pudsey
- 25th February: Stainland
- 10th March: Crossgates

THIS WILL REMAIN IN THE NEWSLETTER – NEW DATES WILL BE ADDED BY REQUEST. EVENTS WILL REMAIN ON THE LIST UNTIL THEY PASS.

PLEASE SEND DETAILS OF ANY DATES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD TO THE LIST.

WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE NEWSLETTER - SMALL OR GREAT, THEY ARE ALL IMPORTANT. PLEASE ALSO LET US KNOW WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEWSLETTER GOING FORWARD