

# TODMORDEN HARRIERS

BRINGS YOU ..... **THE TORRIER**

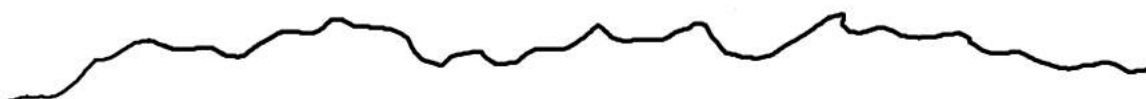
Summer 2013  
EDITION,

NEWS, GOSSIP, RUNNING, CYCLING, TYPE EERRORS, LIFESTYLE,  
INSPIRATION, BANTER AND WHATEVER ELSE YOU WANT TO PUT IN



## Mandy & Phil's Joss

**Team Captains and runners  
needed**



A big thanks to all contributors.



To help us make introductions each edition we shall be profiling a selection of members – some new and some established. This month we have Dan Taylor and Chairman Mandy Goth.

## Profile **Dan Taylor** AKA Dan Todman and Downhill Dan

- I started running in... about 1980 soon after I could walk
- I started running because...I could and it was faster
- My favourite thing about running is... the Freedom to go places hardly any goes and see things and places others don't
- I joined Tod Harriers in...2008 two of my mates had joined
- My favourite thing about Tod Harriers is...we always have a pint after a race or a training session



- My personal running achievements (big or small) are... winning the

Cannonball Hill Roller Race. 20th at Peris Horseshoe and Winter Hill.  
Finishing Al races Wasdale, Peris, Jura, Arrochar Alps, Tour of Pendle  
and Buttermenre Horseshoe

- My favourite race(s)... The new Flowerscar – my new favourite training ground (I was first Tod man 2013)

- My personal bests (can be fell, road, track, etc.) are...

5K–18.26                      5hrs4mins at Haworth Hobble

10K–39.55                      3hrs3mins at Tor of Pendle

1hr29.55 Half Marathon

- Anything else you'd like to say... Today (28th Aug) is the 263rd day in a row that I have ran in a row

## **Champagny Forest running – Dan Taylor**

So there I was on my skiing holiday in France. I was running every day and had found a nice little track up through the forest on one of my morning runs. We were staying in Champagny en Vanoise and the path I found was sign posted to Champagny en Haut (1 hr 30 mins) and Meribel (2 hrs 30 mins) This was obviously for summer trekkers but I could see no reason I couldn't do it in winter. One afternoon we finished skiing earlier than usual and I decided to go for a run before hitting the beer/sauna. I went to the path with the aim of running all the way up through the forest to Champagny en Haut. There had been heavy snowfall 2 nights before and the snow was really deep (between 6 – 12 inches). From the look of it there had not been many people up or down the path since the snow (though I saw what I think were deer prints and they were approx twice as deep as mine so it was a large beast that did them). The path zig zagged up through the forest with a constant gradient for the first couple of miles. (see pic 1 and 2). I saw some more animal tracks and began to scare myself by thinking what else was lurking in the forest with me even watching me. I had checked and apparently there were wolves in the area having been reintroduced to Italy a few years ago. Eventually I decided if there was anything there that could attack me I was probably

doomed anyway, as no one would have heard my screams and it would have taken ages to locate me even if they had.

The track then reached a clearing and I had to choose a way to go. I continued towards the direction I knew the village was in and criss crossed up the mountain following the winding path. After a quite up and down section involving some route choice (where the path disappeared and I had to climb around a few trees) I reached an opening with a stream crossing. There was an arrow to show where the path went from here (see pic 3). You can just see on the picture (pic 4) where the path went across the mountain at about the only place it could have been possible.

The path then started to traverse and there seemed to be quite a drop off to the left so I trod carefully. After a while the path started to head downhill and I knew we were going to get to the village soon. I was still very anxious about the large drop but didn't really fancy going back the way I had come either. As I descended further I could see a small reservoir and river at the bottom of the hill about half a mile away. I sped up a bit as the drop at my side started to reduce and started to enjoy the run again. I came out at the village which had only about 5 houses and a beautiful little church. (pic 5 ) I decided not to go back to the chalet along the path (as it had been quite precarious at times and I had been quite worried about what might have happened if I fell or slipped) and took the road back down to the village. Upon getting about a kilometer down the road I could see a very large cliff to the left and could just make out the path I had taken winding its way along the top of it (I was glad I had come back the road way and not gone back up the path). You can see the path in these pictures of the cliff (pic 6) which shows how it looked as if it was painted along the top of the cliff, the next picture which shows the full height (pic 7). I jogged back down the hill and across some snowy meadows back to the Chalet and a well earned swim/ sauna and a well earned beer. All in all a lovely afternoon run even though I was definitely in a bit of danger at some points. Didn't ever run up the same hill again one for next time I think.



# Important Information

## What's On

**Wednesdays**    Pack Runs for September    Staff of Life 6.45 pm start

**Tuesdays**        Speed Work/Interval training    6.30pm Todmorden High School

**Thursdays**       Pilates starts again this Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September  
£5 6.45 start Macpelah House end of station road  
Hebden Bridge –ALL WELCOME.

## Kit– change of keeper

The new keeper of the kit will be Kath Brierley at most pack runs and centrally placed in Todmorden.

Ring her on 01706 819417

## Time to put something back into your club?

Still needed a B team captain for the FRA relays.

Runners for the relays if available please post on the forum or ring the team captains.

## Ian Hodgson Sun Oct 6<sup>th</sup>

Mens Captain    Craig Stansfield        07920522104

Ladies Captain    Elise Milnes        01422 845406

This may well become a mixed team as to press we only have 4 ladies

## **FRA Relays Sun Oct 20<sup>th</sup>**

Mens Captain Nick Barber 07974454094

Mens B – situation vacant

Ladies Sarah Warburton 07854678605

Mixed Simon Galloway 01253 827411

## **Membership Secretary**

Bev would like to hand over the job of membership secretary.

The job involves keeping all the information on the club laptop and liaising with English Athletics.

If able to help then either contact Mandy 07915073393 or Bev 07823556306

## **On line**

Continue to keep up to date with whats going on with the use of the forum. In addition you can now keep up to date with the latest Todmorden Harriers race results by following on twitter – <https://twitter.com/todharriers> and joining 6the Todmorden Harriers Facebook group



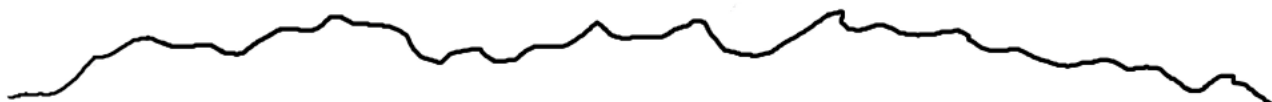
## **Mandy and Phil's Joss Naylor Challenge**

June 1<sup>st</sup> 2013

Dawn was breaking as we left the Ratti Langdale hut. The white knuckle ride to Pooley Bridge, with five of us squeezed into Mark's Audi sports saloon, added to the nervous tension. We'd been anticipating this day for six months. Mandy & Phil's Joss Naylor Challenge. Mandy had trained incredibly hard and changed her regime to include a lot more strength work at the gym. Phil had just done lots of cycling. Mandy, as a V50 woman, had 14 hours to complete the JNC. Old git Phil, having already completed the JNC in the sub 12 hr male V50 category, now had 15 hrs – but intended to stick with Mandy. Inaugurated in 1990 by the legendary Joss as a fund raising challenge for the over 50s it involves 30 peaks, 48 miles, and 17,000ft of ascent. You get more time to complete the older you get (in 5 year age categories). Successful completion and a donation of £100 to charity entitles you to a coveted JNC tankard, presented by the great man himself at the annual dinner.

At 05.00 we left the bridge in Pooley Bridge and jogged the first mile before the long power walk up onto the ridge which culminates at High Street. The hills were clear and bathed in early morning sunlight. A half moon looked down benevolently on our progress. We picked up time against a forgiving Leg 1 schedule. Andrew, Mark and Malc fed and watered us. Perfect navigation (I was the navigator!) saw us running into the Kirkstone car park five minutes up. We got a great welcome from the reception committee, including the JNC "meeter and greeter" Reiner, and a big contingent from the Ratti.

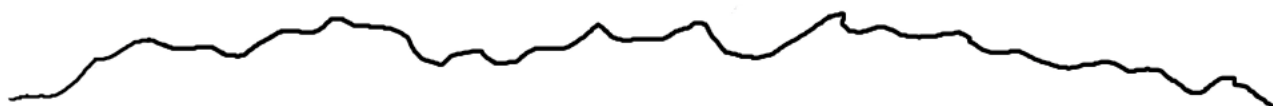
Two minutes isn't much of a rest but it enabled us to gulp down a buttie and a brew. Leg 2 passed quickly with Andy's optimum route finding and Kath and Jackie forcing shotblocks and tangfastics on us. Toddies Issy and Amanda were sat half way up Red Screes taking pics and shouting encouragement. A few minutes were lost on the rougher ground but pulled back off Fairfield and up Seat Sandal. We could hear the encouraging shouts and cowbells of the masses gathered at



Dunmail as we pattered down the steep descent. What a reception. Even Monica Shone, the first woman to do the JNC and recently retired secretary of the challenge, was there to take our picture. Janet and Rhys had again provided a veritable feast which we were unable to do justice to in the brief two minutes rest.

Off again on Leg 3 following Dave up Steel Fell, with Rachel, Straight Jeff, Tall Jeff, and Tony. Jackie and Malc carried on as well. With Dave's impeccable lines and Tony's cajoling and mothering, (and prodding by his wooden spoon!), Mandy kept up the relentless pace, with occasional profanities directed at Tony's, "You should be running this bit". She departed the summit of High Raise like the pied piper as another three friends (Sheila, Peter and Gerry) joined the merry band with Dave W and Ali joining us a little further on. A few minutes were dropped but, despite being slightly behind the schedule we were still on for sub 14 as we topped out on Great End. The most testing part of the route followed as we plummeted steeply past the top of Custs gully and down Dave's new grassy line. Mandy jumped off the small crag barring the way half way down, deftly caught by Jeff. What a great way off. We pulled a couple of minutes back as we legged it down to Styhead and another welcoming party. We wolfed down the proffered food and drink, glad for the few minutes of respite.

The climbs up Gable and Kirk felt steeper than usual but spirits were still high as we skidded down Jos's Gully. The perils of copied schedules became apparent when we topped out on Pillar and found that the schedule suggested that we should already be on Scoat Fell. The low point in morale was amplified as clag and light drizzle rolled in from the west. I now had significant doubts as to whether Mandy could finish in the required time but she dug in as we traversed Scoat, dashed out and back to Steeple and ascended Haycock. The thick clag persisted causing a slight navigational mislocation as we dropped down the wrong scree off Haycock but a quick traverse took us to the right line. More minutes were lost as we all extracted stones from our shoes. (Mental note: – Next time remember the mini gaiters!). The Pots of Ashness seemed endless. The time at the summit of Seatallan confirmed that we were now unlikely to achieve the 14 hour deadline. Undeterred, Mandy encouraged us on, "C'mon, let's go for it".





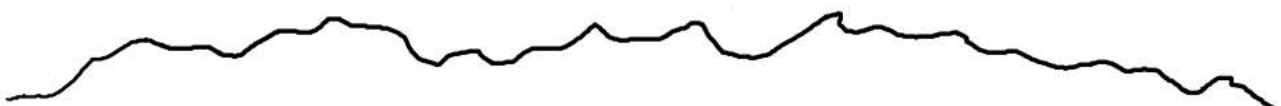
Upping the pace we crossed the col and, urged on by Tony, Dave and Chris L, climbed Middlefell at a phenomenal pace. We reached the summit as the clag lifted with 15 minutes left...an outside chance at best. "Mandy, you're going to have to run faster than you've ever run before" Tony growled. We hammered down the grassy descent following Tony as he picked the best line through the odd rocky section. At the final steepening, with half a kilometre to go, we could hear the waiting supporters ringing cowbells and hollering encouragement. We could see the finish. I looked at my watch. Touch and go. With Chris and myself on either side holding Mandy's hands we legged it down the steep grass and bracken. "C'mon, you can't fall, we've got you...Run"...and she did! With legs whirring like the cartoon road runner she raced down the path for the finish with Chris and myself leaping boulders either side, still holding on tight. The final sprint...can we do it? A tumultuous welcome saw us both touch the bridge near Joss's house. Joss and lots of friends were there to welcome us. I hardly dared to look at my watch. The digits 19.00



stared back at me. The magical time. We'd done it. More importantly Mandy had done it. She certainly couldn't have cut it any finer but all her hard work had paid off. Only the 10<sup>th</sup> V50 woman to do it...and being the first married couple to complete was the icing on the cake. "Yippee" said Mandy and Phil ☒

Our thanks to everyone for their help and support on the day. We couldn't have done it without you. What a top crew...Toddis, Rattis and everyone else from other running clubs - thank you for helping make it one of our best ever days on the hill. Mandy's already anticipating the taste of champagne from a JNC tankard.

**Mandy Goth & Phil Hodgson**



# Mandy Goth has been the Chairman of Todmorden Harriers for 23 years! Who is she?

## Mandy's version:

I first started running in 1987 when I went to Danny's Gym in Todmorden, Danny a diminutive figure (who would make us do squat thrusts & burpees shouting like a sergeant major) announced that running was the way to lose weight. This filled me with horror as I was the kid off the back at school puffing and panting with a bright red face (I have since learned that I have vocal chord dysfunction which restricts the air going in). After a few weeks and some help with my breathing I could actually run from Todmorden town centre to the park and back. At Danny's I met Tracy and we started running along the canal bank where we hoped no-one could see us in shapeless clothing.

to the Sourhall), at the end of which someone from the Harriers thrust a membership form in my hand and the rest, as they say, is history.

In the Harriers, encouraged by Dave Wilson and Ian Morris, Hazel and I started competing on the Lakeland Fells. We did our first Mountain Marathon in 1989; the KIMM in the Howgills...and there



Tracy worked with Hazel Chapman and learned that the Harriers were organising a race from Hebden Bridge to Todmorden which we did (again with a bright red face & lots of puffing). This was closely followed by the 'Sourhall 6' (up Ewood Lane

began the start of my passion. I love running in the hills and mountains and fortunately have the ability to find my way especially in adverse conditions. There have been numerous races when in thick clag I have been passed by the same person on more than occasion.

Meeting Phil has to be the biggest milestone in my life, having a partner who is encouraging and supportive enables you to be more obsessive. Our life revolves around running, cycling, mountaineering and our friends in the Harriers.

The second biggest milestone was in 2006. I'd had the best year ever (I completed my Bob Graham Round and won the Ladies team prize in the OMM Long Score) when I discovered that I had breast cancer. The support I received from the club was amazing and thankfully 7 years on I'm clear and still here... and still cramming as much into life as possible.

Ambitions: 21 Ben Nevis's, Paddy Buckley Round, the Munros, the Matterhorn...the list goes on and on...

**Who is she? Phil's version:**

**My wife:** We met(\*) at the Ben Nevis Hill Race in 1996 and we've been inseparable ever since. (\* this was for the second time – we'd briefly been an item 20 years previously when she was sweet 17 ☺).

**An Optometrist:** She's spent over 30 years working in a small windowless room repeating her mantra "can you read this". A professional approach and attention to detail has saved the sight of quite a few patients and gained great respect from local optical consultants – if you need your eyes testing go and see her.

**A Runner:** she's been competing in fell and road races for 26 years. She might not be particularly fast but can keep going...and going. An endurance athlete with successful attempts on the Bob Graham in 2006 and the Joss Naylor Challenge in 2013 (the 10<sup>th</sup> V50 woman to complete the JNC). Her preferred events are the toughies like Jura, Borrowdale, Langdale and Duddon...and the Ben Nevis Hill Race. She's about to complete her 19<sup>th</sup> Ben race and should (fingers crossed) become the first ever woman to

complete 21 and be presented with the coveted Connachie Plaque in 2015.

Victorious Tod Totty team member in the 2006 High Peak Marathon she's most at home in mountain marathons. Having completed 22 KIMM/OMMS she has quite a number of class victories and podium finishes in the KIMM, Saunders, LAMM, RAB and Highlander.

She loves either running, walking or cycling in the mountains...any mountains. Forget beach holidays...Mandy's always involve mountains and have included trips to the Kashmir Himalayas, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, Australia, and much of Europe.

**A Mountaineer:** she's climbed Aconcagua, the highest peak in the Americas, nearly half the European Alps 4000m peaks, and is well over half way through the Scottish Munros.

**The Chairman:** She'd only been a member of the Harriers for twelve months before being voted into the Chair. She's friendly and approachable, a trait that I think is reflected throughout the club. Also known to some friends as "The General", her natural "bossiness" is a useful bolster to her diminutive stature. Presiding over a thriving and active membership, with unstinting help from many other members, her life revolves to a large extent around the club's many and varied sporting and social activities.



# YET ANOTHER BOB GRAHAM ROUND REPORT

## Prologue

April 15th 1989 – Thornethwaite Crag, The Lake District

"Wow," I say, standing alongside the beacon, taking in the scenery all around. "Its like you see on TV! This is great!" Stretched in front of me, all around, were mountain summits, topped with snow, under a steel coloured cloudy sky! A vista never seen before with my own eyes!

This was my first visit to the Lake District and I was doing the Kentmere Horseshoe route whilst doing a Mountain Leadership Course at College. Previously, my only walking experiences were confined only to the Peak District and the South Pennines. This time, here in the Lakes, I was way out of my comfort zone. We continued along the route until the top of Harter Fell when the course leader, Bob Tait, announced he was running on and we would see him at the tea room back in Kentmere. "What...!" I said, watching him run off into the distance whilst I unpacked my flask and lunch box out of my 300 litre framed rucksack. "Is he mad? How on earth can he run after doing ALL that climbing? You'll never see me doing that!"

April 27th 2013 – The Fellsman – Stonehouses Checkpoint (33 miles into the race)

"Number, mate." The checkpoint staff member says to me. "I'm retiring, pal. My arse is killing me!" I reply with regret. "Tell me your number then go and have a brew and some pasta. Then if you still want to retire, come back to me with your tag card. You may feel better after a rest" he replies back, with a sympathetic smile.

An hour later I'm on the bus back to Threshfield with other 'retired' runners.

The Main Story.....at last!

This year's Fellsman was yet another low point for me. I've had a few this year; slowest time in 3 years at the Hebden, 20 mins slower at the Calderdale Hike, too many niggles, my constant achilles problem and Dan Taylor constantly beating me! Then this! A pain in my glute! I love the Fellsman and wanted to do really well this year, but it wasn't to be. Yet again, I had stopped myself continuing to race due to 'The Bloody Bigger Picture!' Because of the 'Bloody Bigger Picture' I haven't done many races this year and concentrated in long days in the Lakes so I was missing the races and LDWA events. To be honest, I was fed up with the Bob Graham Round!

Don't get me wrong, I did love the training. Great days were had with great friends and I did love every minute. I just wanted to do everything.....and just couldn't!



Preparing for the Bob Graham has to be a long time of training. I've spent over twenty years spending long, long days in the fells, challenging myself to how many tops I can get in, sleeping in bivvy bags on places such as Crinkle Crag and Kentmere Pike, once taking 7 attempts to get off the top of Scafell Pike in the mist, wild camping, chasing a fox near Angle Tarn in the

middle of the night as it had snatched my food bag from under my flysheet.....happy memories! But none were of running and I'd never even heard of the Bob Graham Round!

So once I decided to do it, how would I approach it? 10,000ft of climbing each week? No chance! Work on my downhill technique because I'm useless at down hills? Didn't want to risk an injury (which is the reason I'm rubbish at downhills, and crossing little streams!) So, instead I planned to visit the Lakes as much as possible, do long days and whilst at home, just keep the running going but pick some nice hilly routes. This worked for me but I confess to not doing the 10,000ft of climbing each week. It just never happened.



Instead I relied on previous years walking the fells, current fitness and assembling a BG team version of.....THE AVENGERS!

June 14th 2013 – Moot Hall, Keswick (23.50pm)

"It's going to be dreadful up there but the forecast is for it to blow over," Phil says to me, reassuringly. "I've got my GPS in case it does get tough" he continues, but this time not as reassuring as I'd like him to be! This was it! All the months of training and sacrifice was for this day! I had assembled my Avengers and on leg 1 I had Phil Hodgson, Craig Stansfield and Andy McFie. I was in safe hands, I knew that, I just wished the weather wasn't the enemy!

So, a final farewell to Joolz and friends and we were off! Phil took the lead and got us out and onto Skiddaw in no time, even without his GPS! We were soon in the mist and by the time we got to the top

of Skiddaw, the weather was awful! Today was not a day to hang around tops of summits and admire the views so we carried straight on and off the summit asap! By the time we got down towards Great Calva, the rain had eased and it was actually quite pleasant whilst running in the dark. The fairly good weather continued throughout leg 1 and over to Blencathra, where we were expecting gales, but again, it was ok. We dropped down to Threlkeld where Mandy was waiting in the campervan.

Now, doing the Bob Graham does have its plus points; you don't need to carry anything, people carry your food and gear and others navigate for you. All great, but the best parts are the road stops. People are there to help YOU, not others, just YOU. They'll take your muddy trainers off and change your socks whilst you sit there, being handed over food and drink.....it's the best!!!! I will always recommend the Bob Graham to anyone, even if it's just for the road stops experience!

The start of Leg 2 saw 2 more Avengers join the assembly. Kath Brierley took over Phil's role as Navigator and Colin Duffield joined in alongside Craig and Andy. It was starting to get light so headtorches were packed away, hopefully for good! Kath led us all up Clough Head easily. In previous reccies, I went up different ways each time to the top. Kath had obviously done her homework and showed us what was probably the best way and we soon reached the top. We swiftly ran over the Dodds whilst experiencing great early morning views and the occasional hailstone shower! The base of Fairfield was soon reached and this climb was to be the first real test as I noticed that my quads were twitching slightly. More water, I thought. Fairfield was soon done and before I knew it, we were heading down off Seat Sandal and the road stop of Dunmail Raise was in sight. Great stuff! The road stop, that is, not the achievement!



More pampering and generally soaking up the 'King for the Day' atmosphere and before I knew it, I was being told to get moving. My avengers on this leg were Dave Makin, Dan Taylor and from Newport



Running Club, John Taylor and Noel Hogan. Also coming along for a training run before his own BG was Malcolm Christie from Chorley Harriers. Dave sped us all up Steel Fell and along over to High Raise and the Langdales. The weather had improved and I decided that the Buffalo mitts were now not needed. I even managed to take off my windproof.....for a few

minutes. We soon reached the bottom of Bowfell and it was there at that point I decided not to look at any more views and the road ahead.....unless it was a road with a crew waiting to feed and pamper me! Bowfell felt hard, really hard. I knew we were around the half-way point, and that I was around half an hour up on my schedule so I took it nice and steady up to the summit. Inevitably, I got there and saw my first close view of the Scafell range, well, I would have done if it wasn't covered in mist! Onwards and over Esk Pike, Great End and onto the rocky summits of Ill Crag, Broad Crag and Scafell Pike

Now Dave Makin is a great bloke and he will do anything for you.....as long as you don't upset him! As my navigator for this leg, I had failed to tell him if I was doing Sergeant Man before High Raise

or visa versa. Ok, I was a bit neglectful there, but no big deal, Sarge was first! Simple, no problems and solved. Move on. But.....when we reached Broad Stand, Dave asked "Where's your rope?" "Huh?" I said as I had now reached the one word answer stage of the round. "Daz, did you organise someone to do Broad Stand?" Dave said, slightly agitated. "Er, no. Couldn't find anyone. Thought we might as well do Lord's Rake." I replied, slightly worried at getting thrown off Scafell Pike by Dave. "So why didn't nobody tell me? After all, we are a climbing club at the Achille Ratti hut!" He was right, I thought. Why didn't I think of that. Might be a bit late now, though! "Jesus! Have you done Lord's Rake?" All eyes were upon me, "Er....." Again, one word answers! "For f\*\*Ks sake! Keep with me and be careful!" He said as he shot off down the mountain. He's ace Dave. Just keep him informed is the only advice I can give!

Hats off to Dave, he got us up through Lord's Rake and onto the summit of Scafell. Lord's Rake has now been done and to be honest, I don't think I'll be visiting it again for a while. Right, Scafell done, next stop Wasdale and the road crew! Just a small downhill section and I'll be pampered again!

I felt knackered coming into Wasdale. The downhill was unpleasant and relentless, even with the easy scree run to help speed up things. However, here I was in Wasdale and the sun was shining! I savoured every moment once again at the road side and ate well. I even changed into 3/4 leggings!

So, the start of leg 4 was upon me. My Avengers now consisted of Ozzy Kershaw, Tony Shanley (who actually appeared whilst coming down Esk Pike, but you would never have known! Oh wait, Dave's constant apologies about Tony reminded us all he was with us!), Mandy Goth, Malcolm Christie, Andrew Bibby and Dan Taylor, who was continuing for as long as possible.

They say there is no easy way out of Wasdale.....and it's true!

Yewbarrow was hard, as predicted, and I just kept my eyes on Mandy's feet whilst climbing. What I failed to notice was the incoming weather from the south. Last time I looked, it was fine but now the clouds were gathering and I was starting to feel the BG getting harder. Tony, a constant companion who did his job really well kept his eye on me. Asking if I was warm enough, I hesitated in replying saying I was ok. This wasn't enough for the Sergeant and before I knew it, my wind proof and base layer was off, replaced with a fresh top, fleece and waterproof jacket. This proved to be a godsend and I felt much better. By the time we all reached Scoat Fell, we were back in the cloud, but dry.....for now. A quick there and back to Steeple and we were heading for Pillar. Things started to get a bit hazy now but once the rain arrived just before Kirk Fell, the doors were well and truly slammed into my face and the brick wall was well over 12 feet high! Mandy and Dan decided enough was enough and headed down to Honister before Kirk Fell and the rest of us continued over to the summit. It was raining hard now and I felt dreadful. Ozzy was yelling like Thor to the gods "BRING IT ON!" and if I had the strength, I would have killed him! The wind and rain was terrible on the top of Kirk Fell and we stopped in the shelter to get extra gear on. I was like a rag doll here whilst people sorted me out with my kit and felt well and truly awful!

No time to hang around, we had to keep moving. So we left Kirk Fell for the lovely delights of Great Gable. Tony kept feeding and watering me and shouting to Ozzy words of encouragement like "Ozzy! I've broke him! He's not answering back!" "Wahay!" was the reply.....great team building experience was had here. I couldn't believe it when we reached the top of Gable. Tony reassured me that I had broken the BG's back and that it was straight forward from now. This started to bring me round again, although Ozzy did end up fireman's-lifting me over a fence at one point! Before long, I was in the carpark at Honister, wet, tired, wet, wet, wet and tired!

I was stripped of my waterproofs and pushed into a car to have some soup out of the rain. The carpark looked like hell on Earth. Low clouds, heavy rain and grey everywhere so you can imagine my enthusiasm for setting off again! Oh, and my enthusiasm for the road crew was lost between Kirk Fell and Great Gable!

So, this was it. Leg 5. The final leg and with plenty of time to spare. I had my leading Avenger, Tony as Navigator with Jono Wright and Rhys joining the team. Malc, of course, was still there. Dale Head was a slog as the rain really did come down whilst going up. But, once the top was reached, it stopped! Or at least, calmed down a lot! The final 2 summits were now in sight and Keswick was ahead to the north. Nearly done, I thought. So we got over the last 2 summits and started to head down off Robinson. My descending, as I've mentioned earlier, is terrible but coming off Robinson, I was totally useless! I really struggled with the descent and was so grateful to reach the track at the bottom which led to the road.

At the road, Joolz, Louise and Norman were waiting to change my trainers and Joolz and Norm wanted to run the final 5 miles along the road with me. How disappointed they must have felt as I decided to walk most of it due to a pain in my leg and with plenty of time, I felt I didn't want to do more damage.

So, with a sprint finish up the High Street of Keswick, I rolled in at 22.41, 11 minutes behind my planned schedule. I think I can live with that.

The end was amazing. Most people who helped were there. The buzz I got, which somehow got me running up the road was amazing. When I got my breath back, I tried to remember to thank everyone individually for their help, advice and inspiration! It was a great experience! What more could I possibly want out of life at that moment.....!



## EPILOGUE

July 20th 2013 – Robinson Summit, The Lake District

I'm standing at the top of Robinson with a guy called Jake, whom I've never met. He is doing his own Bob Graham Round. I've helped him on both legs 4 and 5. His other supporter, John, is from Bingley and I've never met him either. The sun is shining and there is hardly a cloud in the sky. Jake kisses the summit cairn and we pause for a moment to admire the view of the fells all around. We may not really know each other well, but there on the summit, it's like we've known each other for many years. It's at this moment I realise just what an achievement I did 5 weeks earlier. Back then I couldn't see the view or even if I did, I probably didn't appreciate it like I was doing now. We gaze at Skiddaw and list all the summits Jake has just done since setting off yesterday evening. As each summit is named, the thought of doing each one in one go hits you. I can't really describe it but the achievement is overwhelming. "Well done Jake, the Gods really shone for you today" I say. "Come on, it's not over yet til we get to Moot Hall." And with that, we turn and head down off the summit, leaving behind the views for another day.

# Hardmoors 55

It went something like:

- 'Rhys you're going to fast, you can't keep this pace up for long';
- 'Listen, I'm getting cold, I can't even feel my fingers, I've got to keep going';
- 'How can you keep going if you're not eating?';
- 'Good point, maybe I should slow down to get some food out';
- 'Hang on, I won't be able to use my fingers properly';
- 'Rhys, something is going to have to give, wise up and get some food down your neck';
- 'Shut-up, I'm just going to battle on'.

A few minutes later, the same thoughts rattle in my brain:

- 'Rhys you're going to fast,..... I'm just going to battle on'

I'm sat in the car in the supermarket carpark, head in my hands, trying not to cry, no really.



I can't put my finger on what's wrong, but I suspect it's my body dealing with the shock of the Hardmoors 55. It's now days after, and my numb thumbs are still tender as a reminder on how cold it was. I avoided the supermarket chiller section, and felt sick when near the frozen area.

The Hardmoors 55 route is spectacular in places, fabulous views, and some great exposure. With that lies the problem, we (Jane Carpenter and myself) were buffeted with cold Siberian winds for most of the day. Sure plenty of snow underfoot, but it was the vicious wind.

Fortunately, the runners in front made a grand job of clearing a route through the snow drifts, and by leaving such a good marked path. Map stayed in my pack.



Do Eccles cakes make you fart? I found it amusing that this occupied my mind for longer than it should have. I take pride in the non-invasive smell of my trumps, but not today.

We were becoming fine tuned Pathfinders, 'footsteps here', 'footsteps over there'. I chuckled at the thought of the pathfinders behind us, maybe thinking, 'heavy footed slow runner went through here 5 minutes ago, no wait, my nose reckons 2 minutes and they like Eccles cakes'.

The route is a bit of a roller coaster. Up onto the Cleveland Way ridge for long sections, with shallow drops into the valleys. There was lots of snow on the tops, with little in the valleys, which meant that our micro-spikes would be on and off, so in the end they stayed in our packs. At times I wasn't happy about this as the path did get quite icy, but we weren't for stopping.

To be honest I was kidding myself, I know that the proper reason why we didn't stop was because my hands were so cold, for too long, and were getting pretty useless. On top of this, my worry was that every so often, for no real reason, my hands and body would start to get warm. I wasn't too sure whether this was wearing good kit (other than maybe my gloves), or whether this was the onset of hypothermia. Whatever it was, it was cyclic, and it was a bit unnerving, and I wanted to get off the ridge.

Relief in the valleys was short lived before we were back on the ridge again, fingers not quite thawed out, longing that we wouldn't need to stop.

I didn't relish the 'self-clip' checkpoints, where Jane often had to put my card away 'cos I didn't have the dexterity in my hands.

I was smiling at the thought that there was 'only 25 miles' to go. At what time in my life did I get comfortable with this. 55 miles is a long way to ponder over whether it's normal to be out in these conditions. Still it gave a spring to my step, and strange how the route got stunningly beautiful, and views over the edge breath taking.

My spring lasted until the next downhill, when my knee started to hurt, and the churned up uneven hard path causing my feet to jar. Painkillers were taken.

It amused me that we stormed past a bloke with ice axe and crampons. How could he now boast to his mates that he was out doing 'ard stuff, when 160 odd runners merrily skipped past him with just trainers on?

A few miles later, of which the last couple of miles took over an hour, I started to noticeably slow down. Jane was battling on ahead, I hung on back like that kid that doesn't want to go to school, dragging his feet.



It's peculiar that after dreaming of food and drink, that when you get to the warm and dry check points, the place was too hot, too humid, and generally too uncomfortable. Mad how I'm keen to get out into those life sapping conditions.

It was surprisingly grippy underfoot. Although I did slide on a bit of ice, legs kicking out in all directions like a new born giraffe trying to stand up. I failed. Sat on my bum, I took the opportunity to get my pack off and swap my water bottle for the unfrozen one in my pack.



In the end enough was enough, I wanted out. The only way this was going to stop was to crack on and finish. Our vigour to finish became unrelenting, the first time in ages my hands are warm enough, and we were pushing a good pace. I thought it was bit too fast to be waffling with cereal bars and chocolate. But it was simple, eat now or the pace will drop and you'll be out here longer. I like simple. First bar gets devoured, whooop whooop, I don't stop there, 2<sup>nd</sup> bar gets demolished. Now why didn't I do this earlier?

Pale Rider



# **I CAN 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 125 Challenge – Todmorden Triathlon Challenge**



**helps children  
communicate**

REGISTERED CHARITY 210031

## **Why?**

**I CAN**, the Children's Communication Charity, is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, staff and supporters (the "125 Champions") are being challenged to raise funds and awareness of the importance of communication.

I CAN's mission is to ensure that no child who struggles to communicate is left out or left behind. Our vision is a world where all children and young people who struggle to communicate receive the help they need so that they can have a happy childhood, make progress at school and thrive as adults.

## **Why a sponsored triathlon?**

In my book, any event worth sponsoring has to be a proper challenge requiring effort beyond what would normally be considered (or considered normal)! In recent years I've completed many unsponsored ultras including the Coast-to-Coast (in 5 days), the Fellsman, Hardmoors 55 and the Lakeland 50.

So you might think that this is not much of a challenge then...?

Well, normally, I'd agree with you. I used to do these sorts of distances (and more!) in training. However, while hiking in Scotland last year, I was unfortunate enough to pick up **Lyme disease** from a tick bite. My slow recovery from this means that I have been unable to do any proper training for over a year – so the distances I've chosen, and doing the 3 events on the same day, mean that this is going to be challenging enough!

## **Why Todmorden?**

Around Todmorden in the Calder Valley, West Yorkshire is a very special area which I've only just started to explore. This challenge takes in some of the best bits that I have found so far – and of course, having joined Tod Harriers this year I know it's the sort of even that will appeal to many!

I hope you'll be able to support me –

1. Go to my Just Giving sponsor page – [www.justgiving.com/Jonathan-Wright](http://www.justgiving.com/Jonathan-Wright)
2. Join me on any one, two or all three of the sections!
3. Find out more about the cause at [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

### **The challenge –**

Swim – 1.25km open water – Gaddings Dam, Todmorden

Bike – 100km – Calderdale and surrounds, including Cragg Vale, Stanbury & Trawden (TBC)

Run – 25km – Trough Edge End – Flower Scar – Bride Stones – Stoodley Pike (TBC)

The date – 12<sup>th</sup> Oct 13

If you fancy joining me on the challenge, or want to find out more just ask at a Pack run, or get in touch via the Tod Harriers Forum.

Thanks,  
Jonathan

# My First Audax

Lucy Hobbs

Plagued by running injuries I decided it was time to utilise my new Planet X road bike. Not having cycled any great distance since holidaying in Spain last year decide to plunge right in at the endurance distance deep end and partake in the legendary 'Spring into the Dales' Audax, setting off from Hebden Bridge and doing as the title suggests riding out into the beautiful Yorkshire Dales.

I'd heard a bit about Audax – primarily, 'its not a race', 'there will be lots of beards' and it will be 'a grand day out' and yes I can concur with all of the above

So, having had to drop out of legendary fell running epic 'The 3 Peaks' a week before the race, due to the re-emergency of a pesky Achilles injury, I decided to still do something that would at least test me a little .... some lovely Todmorden Harriers mentioned doing an Audax ..... this weekend. Ok no time to train, worry or find excuses to back out I pounced on Paul and milking sympathy vote got day out pass stamped. Stocking up the day before on energy bars and gels (weighed more than the bike), filling up water bottles with hydration drinks I lovingly laid out my new Castelli kit and went to bed, having had a relatively dry Saturday evening in preparation for the day ahead.

Arrived at Audax HQ with a certain amount of trepidation having never cycled more than 50 miles, never cycled with a group and not sure if I knew how to pronounce Audax! Faced with a massive amount of lycra, bikes and men.... felt slightly intimidated... but 'manned up' and looked out for familiar faces – JP, Chrispy, The Leonards all seemed to know what they were doing. . Advised not to bother with

the shorter 60k version (for newbies, unfit and injured...erm yes sounds like me) and never finding it easy to say no, especially when 'challenge on', went to sign up for the 110k ...

Few surprises to start the day

1. it's only £4!
2. You get sent a card stamped by Audax UK a few months later (took a while longer than that to arrive but I'm proud of it!)

Set off surprised at how fast the front men ride (not a race though is it....!). We set off at a much more sedate pace out of Hebden Bridge, up steep climb to Cock Hill, then towards Haworth and into the Dales.

The rest of the day passed in a blur of sweeping descents, sweaty ascents and yes cake

### **Highlights:**

- Café stops are actively encouraged – and we visited a few of the best the Dales have to offer. They are important for a number of reasons 'its not a race so why not' and 'fuel is essential and cake is the best fuel of all'
- You get to see The Dales in all of their spring glory
- Riding as a group is fun
- Huge spread laid on by Audax UK on return home

### **Low lights:**

- Mechanicals (Audax don't provide a support team, so unless taking your own 'spanner' mate along go prepared – thank you JP, Reidy and Leonardo)

- Riding through Keighley (this will be never a pleasure for anyone!)
- Last five miles back up the other side of Cock Hill in driving rain (I can only apologise now to my fellow unknown rider who's back wheel I latched onto all the way)

Some **useful advice** for fellow novices...

1. Breathe gently when climbing (puffing and panting won't help)
2. Relax arms, shoulders and face muscles (no need for race face today)
3. Don't get upset when hoards of beardy old men charge pass (they have been riding bikes for 80 plus years you haven't)
4. Eat cake

Great day out, highly recommended, check out Audax UK for local events to you .... Autumn Leaves anyone?



# The Paddy Buckley round

Dave Swift

The Paddy Buckley Round is a long distance fell running challenge in Snowdonia, Wales. The route is a circuit of just over 60 miles long taking in 47 mountain summits. The aim is for participants to complete the route, on foot. Although no time limit is set, an arbitrary 24 hours is applied, similar to the Bob Graham Round. Runners may start at any point on the circular route (finishing at the same place) and may run the course in either a clockwise or anticlockwise direction. The route takes in the well known high mountain ranges of Snowdon, the Glyderau and the Carneddau as well as the slightly less well visited ranges of Moel Siabod, the Moelwynion, Moel Hebog and the Nantlle Ridge. The route was devised by the Paddy Buckley, Hence the Paddy Buckley Round. (C/O <http://www.gofar.org.uk/>)

I have had 3 previous attempts at the Paddy Buckley round with varying degrees of success so had decided this was my last attempt, i was also keen to complete in less than 24hrs but TBH, was happy to just get round in any amount of time.



Waiting to set off – a little nervous

Leg1 – Aberglaslyn to Pont Caer Gors (Argument car park) Distance: 8.8 miles, Ascent: c.5100ft, Time 4hrs (approx)

With me on this leg were Helen Skelton and Jules Coalman.

Not number 1 on my list of favored legs because the first ascent, Bryn Banog, is a bog fest at the bottom and too short at the top. To my disappointment the first ascent brought with it my first doubts and i could feel myself drifting into a dark place, a cloud coming over me and it takes all my effort to keep moving and not sit down and call it day. (as i did only 3 hours into my third attempt)



Jules, myself and Helen

3 weeks previously i had decided to reccie the first 2 legs over night, starting at 9pm just like i had planned for the actual attempt, things went well that night and boosted my confidence for the big day.

So here i was on the big day and things were going wrong already, it's been an hour, WTF is going on? What is wrong with me? Luckily for me a late addition to the support team had been a stranger, Helen Skelton, who i had been told was a very capable runner and great fun to have around, with the added bonus of having a good knowledge of the route. I also had Jules Coalman along, whom i have a great respect for as a real quality runner.

Helen has a potty mouth (her words not mine) she puts emotion into her conversation and this sometimes includes swearing, which i found

really quite amusing coming from a young woman, in turn this tell me it's ok for me to use a little bad language. We are soon taking the piss and making daft comments, which of course distracts me from the drama going on in my head and my mood begins to pick up. Despite my moaning, Helen and Jules managed to navigate almost perfectly for the rest of the leg, apart from one tiny error where they were daft enough to listen to me.

When we arrived in PGC i was feeling pretty good and despite my nagging doubts i was keen to get going on the next leg, unfortunately this was without Helen as she had manage to “tweak” her ankle and was forced to drop out at this change over.



Leon

Leg2 – Pont Caer Gors to Llanberis – Distance: 13.1 miles, Ascent: c. 6100ft, Time 5hrs (approx)

My favourite leg of the whole round and i have Chris Armour, Andrew McCracken and Johnny Moore supporting.

The first ascent to Crag Wen is a real slog, its pure horrible boggy hell that seems to drag on for ever and true to early form the cloud starts to ascend and the doubts are back again.

On my reccie 3 weeks earlier i had hammered this climb and taken 10 minutes off the schedule, feeling great at the top and looking forward to the climb up to Snowdon.

I feel worried that i have asked Johnny to navigate and Andrew was leading the way following a trace on his GPS. I had met Andrew on a BG support some weeks previously and found him to be great fun and very good in the support/navigation role with some fantastic idea's about food strategies. Obviously i asked if he would support me on my PBR attempt, now i was thinking "Bloody hell" it's all going to end in a pile of shit (like leg2 of my first attempt) with navigator and support people arguing about route choice and really doing my head in.

As it turns out i was totally wrong, Johnny was really quite chilled and seemed to have no issues with this, spending most of the leg keeping me reassured and pointing out any route tweaks that you can only get from a good local knowledge, while Chris and Andrew led the way. We arrived in Llanberis a little up on schedule, much to the surprise of the support crew who had only just arrived. Johnny, Andrew and Chris had done a great job on me and i was feeling like this whole Paddy Buckley thing could actually be possible.

On my reccie 3 weeks earlier i had asked Debbie to have a rest and not bother to meet me for this change over. I had taken a half hour rest a bought some food and drink at the local Spar shop. Without road support i had no choice other than push on and do the next leg to Ogwen, although i was deliberately taking my time i was also still feeling good, so doing a third leg was no problem.



Andrew

Leg3 – Llanberis to Ogwen – Distance: 9.3 miles, Ascent: c.5900ft, Time: 4hrs (ish)

Joining me on this leg were Chris Rainbow and Mark Ruscoe.

This leg has a lot of ascent for only 9.3 miles covered, starting with the first one out of Llanberis up to Elidir Fach, this is a great ascent, steep all the way and very honest, what you see is what you get, no false summits. It was a real help to have done this climb 3 weeks earlier, my confidence was high and i was feeling good.

Chris and Mark talked a lot about football on the first ascent and i learned that Liverpool football team are not as good as Manchester United football team. Liverpool players like to bite their opponents and historically, Liverpool are apparently less successful then Manchester United. I also learned that Manchester United have a new manager who was, apparently, only temporary. Chris and Mark moved on from talking about football to taking the piss out of each other, Mark was kind enough to share a couple of stories about his time in the Army. Although interesting i think sharing them here might be a little inappropriate.

Before i realised how well we were progressing we had arrived at the foot of the Glyders, the ascent up to Glyder Fawr is fairly technical but another one of those climbs that gives just what you see. We made



good progress over the Glyders with lots of jumping from rock to rock, it felt good to be out there and i was having a good time. The descent off the Glyders to Tryfan is fairly technical as is the ascent and i messed up a little and lost some time.

The descent off Tryfan is very steep and rocky, in my rush to make back a little time i slipped and bang my head on a rock, luckily it's a part of my body i don't use much so no harm done. When these things happen you could be easily distracted, so its important to get straight up and push on. I could see Ogwen in the distance and the half way point of the round, i was feeling great and ready for one of my favorite climbs of the whole round.

On my reccie 3 weeks earlier i had gotten this far and still felt quite good, although way off schedule i didn't want to miss the ascent up Penny Ole Wen so pushed on and completed the leg at Capel Curig. I had done 4 of the 5 legs in 19.5 hours and had cracking blisters on my feet to prove it.



Keep moving – stops the midges biting



Chaos in the car park at Llanberis

Leg 4 – Ogwen to Capel Curig – Distance: 9.5 miles, Ascent: c.4100ft, Time 3 hrs (perhaps)

With me on this leg were Chris Rainbow, Mark Ruscoe and Leon Hockham.

The ascent up Pen yr Ole Wen is a monster with lots of scrambling and a cracking scramble/climb at the top, although Leon is not familiar with this ascent he took the lead setting a good steady pace and unbelievably finding the scramble/climb near the top. For the rest of this leg there is plenty of good running, i was feeling good and the company was great. The almost constant banter keeps me focused on enjoying the whole experience. For a change i found a cracking line off the final descent arriving right at the bridge. As we ran into Capel Curig i felt quietly confident of getting around even if it took longer than 24 hours.

Leg 5 –Capel to Aberglaslyn – Distance: 19.9 miles, Ascent: c.7900ft, Time 7hrs (maybe)

With me on this leg were Chris Armour and Matt Forbes.

Sat in the car park at Capel Curig i struggled to eat any real food and became aware that i still had a third of the mileage left to do. I was a little down on schedule and starting to wonder if it was a mistake to leave the longest leg until last. This leg is really 2 in 1, the first being from Capel to the quarries and then 5 good ascents to the long run in at the end.



Molly looking after me at Capel Curig



Mark & Chris A getting ready

There was no chance of quitting so i forced down what food i could and stood up ready to go, i got that awful feeling in my chest that says something bad is going to happen but forced myself to think positive and start moving. Chris and Matt were by my side and we set off to whoops and cheers from my support crew.

Moel Siabod is a long, long drag and i was happy to arrive at the top, the following descent is peaceful and we settled in to a gentle jog, so i took this opportunity to have a good moan at Chris and Matt, obviously this made me feel much better. The following hills started to become a blur and i could feel myself sinking into a hole (metaphorically speaking, i didn't actually sink into a hole) negativity was creeping into my head and for the next hour i moaned for England.

Descending down from Carnedd y Cribau i had decided i would walk the rest of the round and forget about getting round in under 24hrs. However Chris Armour brought out his secret weapon (not the taste of paradise) i noticed a group of people sat by the gate and as we got closer realised it was a group of friends who had been supporting

earlier. I was so pleased to see them my spirits began to lift and i started to nurse the idea of a sub 24hrs round again. Cheers Chris

From here to the quarries it gets a bit blurred again but Chris and Matt kept feeding me gels and making sure i took on plenty of liquids. Arriving at the quarry i became aware that i had forgotten to give up, this led to the realisation that, regardless of time i would complete the round, however i was pretty sure i would not get under 24hrs. Completing in less than 24hrs is not essential to get your name on "the list" but there is a certain amount of pride in doing so and i am the sort of person who would consider it un-finished business. Shallow? Perhaps it is.

Up to this point the weather had played along but the forecasted rain began, heading towards Foel Ddu and the nasty little steep ascent to the top, i kept telling myself, you can do this, ignore the rain, just keep moving, its the last leg, run if you can but don't stop for anything. Moel yr hydd was next followed by Molwyn Bach and Molwyn Mawr. A quick run back down to the quarry and another good line by Matt, left us with one last ascent. At the foot of Cnict i looked up the final ascent and wondered why i had left this one until last, I have done this climb many times and it can be tough, but Matt and Chris pushed on relentlessly and told me to put my head down and keep moving.

Since completing my Bob Graham Round in 2010 i have reccied and trained for this round relentlessly, most of my weekends have been about training for this and after each failed attempt i said i would not consider another, yet i never stopped thinking about it. (Although i never admitted this to anyone, not even myself) The Paddy Buckley Round has dominated my thoughts for the best part of 2 and a half years and finally i was cresting the summit of Cnict.

<http://dave-swift.blogspot.co.uk>



# **“Pain is our friend”**

## **Highlights of the London– Edinburgh–London – AUK ride 2013**

Can you imagine cycling 1440 kilometres, more or less non-stop, with a few hours sleep here and there? Neither could we. Although we'd ridden a few 300km and 600km Audax events, the leap to 1000 kilometre + was optimistic to say the least. A Land's End-John O'Groats trip earlier in the year had covered a similar distance but over a much more leisurely 11 days. It was with some trepidation that we drove down to London on a sunny Saturday afternoon. Registration at Loughton, the event HQ, on the outskirts of London was quick and easy and, having opted for the additional 30 kilometre Prologue departing from Buckingham Palace at 6am on Sunday, we left the camper van in Epping and cycled into central London. The Travelodge in Bethnal Green was easy to find...once we'd found Bethnal Green. We eventually unravelled the urban maze, after an unplanned tour of the Olympic Park, and booked in. "I'll set the alarm for 04:45", I told Richard, "that'll give us plenty of time to get to Pall Mall".





“What time is it?” I groggily asked Richard when he shook me awake. “Quarter past five”, he replied, “what happened to the alarm?” I checked my watch. “Oh bugger”, I’d set it for 05:45 by mistake. We wolfed down some instant porridge, quickly packed our scant baggage and headed into the City with only a vague idea of the whereabouts of Pall Mall. Our plan was to find the river and follow it but spotting a river in a landscape obscured by soaring skyscrapers proved more difficult than anticipated. Everyone we asked was a tourist. “Pell Mill?” they’d reply blankly with a shake of the head. At last we spotted a London cabbie. I politely knocked on the window and asked directions. “Straight on mate”, he told us, “you can’t miss it”.

It was after 6am and we thought we’d missed the start of the Prologue. Our planned leisurely introduction to the LEL saw us hammering through the streets of London, jumping red lights and avoiding the numerous drunks wandering in the road. “I can see Pall Mall” Richard shouted. Even better we could see the hordes of cyclists still penned up behind a big LEL banner. Fortunately for us the planned road closure of Pall Mall hadn’t happened and it had taken race organiser, Danial Webb, an extra 15 minutes to grab a London bobby and sort it. Phew! We posed for the mass photograph – 250 of the 1000 riders in the LEL



had opted to do the Prologue; a tour of the sights of London by bicycle. Danial shouted “Go”, and the peleton cruised off. It was the start of an epic four and a half day adventure to Edinburgh and back. The Mad Badgers, N46 and N47, were off!

We were set off in groups of about 25 riders every 10 minutes or so, the mini-peletons soon fragmenting as the surge of adrenalin kicked in and those in boy/ girl race mode pedalled off as if on a 25 kilometre time trial. We soon hooked up with three other riders and stuck together for the next two days. Mark, a big young lad who worked at Evans bikes, great for sheltering behind, Gary, the Wigan lad who stuck at the back gritting his teeth to keep up, and Caroline, the incessant chatterer with an opinion on everything, who kept us entertained. We rode the relatively flat (compared to Yorkshire) route at a pace we’d rarely achieve on a short Thursday ride. As there were riders from 34 different countries we rehearsed “hello” in umpteen languages: “bonjour”, “ola”, “chiao”, “guten morgen”, “gros got”, “g’day mate”, “Namaste”, “owdo”... and marvelled at the variety of bikes being ridden. Carbon racers, steel and titanium tourers, sportive bikes, recumbents, bullet bikes, tandems, Moultons, and elliptigos (these are like running machines on wheels?). It was sunny and warm, we had a tailwind, good company and fresh legs, and we got fed and watered every 60–80km at the school based checkpoints. Marvellous; the miles flew by.

The weather was kind (with only two hours of rain on the whole ride) and the landscape varied as we traversed the flat fens of East Anglia, the rolling Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Wolds, the Teesdale and upper Cumbrian moorland, and the Southern uplands of Scotland...and then reversed it. We rode through some stunning scenery. I particularly remember the long ascents and never-ending downhills of the Devil’s Beeftub and Yad Moss at dawn, the meandering lanes through Traquair and Eskdalemuir, the straight, panflat roads across the Holland fens battling a headwind on the way south, and the sungold wheatfields south of Cambridge stretching horizon to horizon. The route stuck mainly to quiet, country lanes and small villages, rarely passing





through the larger towns. Unfortunately many of the roads were potholed and pockmarked causing painful bruising to our palms as the days progressed...and, as for the nether regions, one of the most enduring memories of the ride will be pain. Painful palms, painful quads, stiff shoulders and very painful backside. Shifting on the saddle every few minutes kept it at bay... just.

Unlike many of the other riders we suffered no punctures or mechanicals (other than a broken bottle cage). The mechanics at each checkpoint were kept busy, mainly repairing wheels. Our main malfunctions related to GPSs. Mine frustratingly switched itself off every time I hit a bump and I heard Richard on several occasions threatening to throw his GPS in the gutter “if it didn’t stop F’ing bleeping” (water in the connection). The team of volunteers at each stop were unfailingly cheerful and helpful and the food was great; usually a choice of three or four main courses, a pudding, drinks and a variety of snackfoods. As we ate at least a three course meal every four to six hours Richard actually put weight on! Most checkpoints provided an air mattress and blanket if you needed a sleep. The downside was the “bedroom” was usually a sports hall full of sleeping riders... a snoring and farting fest. Imagine the sounds from a pig farm after they’ve had a good feed and the sun’s gone down...and treble it. On four occasions, after eating and showering, we grabbed three or four hours fitful kip, with the occasional half an hour power nap thrown in. Life was seen through reddened, sleep deprived eyes. Despite the farmyard noise it often took several minutes to rouse Richard from his dreams of padded seats and perpetual downhills.

As the days progressed and the novelty waned, sore quads kicked in, and our backsides became even more bruised and tender, life became a wheeled treadmill. The LEL mantra: Ride, Ride, Ride – Eat, Sleep, Eat – Ride, Ride, Ride. Our focus was on reaching the next checkpoint. Our mental arithmetic, calculating how many hours it would take for the next 70 or so kilometres to food and a brief rest, was invariably optimistic. After four hours or so I’d be thinking, “we must be nearly there”, but uncannily, when consulted, Richard’s GPS would always



show 15–25 kilometres to go. These were hard won miles. (we're of the age where we always convert to the old fashioned measure). Perseverance was the name of the game; just dig in, head down and keep pedalling, even more so north of the Humber when the hills gradually got bigger and longer. Interestingly, the "hills" south of the Humber seemed much bigger and longer heading south, particularly in the dark! The often monotonous tempo required Dextrosol and Kendal Mint Cake sugar hits to stop us nodding off on the bike. We nearly did at times. The hundreds of baby frogs on the wet road near Hull after a sudden downpour were real enough but I remember hallucinating a sign showing a steep downhill ahead after we seemed to have been climbing in the dark for miles. Needless to say I'd dreamed it, and the road continued relentlessly upwards.

Disaster nearly struck at St Ives with only 120 kilometres left. Someone took my shoes? Easily done, as everyone was just kicking them off at the entrances to the schools. What to do? There didn't seem to be a matching pair left by anyone else. "There's a bike shop in town", one of the volunteers informed me. I rang them and confirmed that they had shoes in my size and cleats to match my peals. Having to cycle the mile and a half in my red spotted King of the Mountain socks was a little embarrassing and attracted not a few comments. Arriving at the shop I walked through the door to be told "they've just rung up, someone's handed your shoes back". Bugger! Another painful mile and a half in stockinged feet saw me reunited with my shoes.

The temperature on the last day was 34 degrees. Black cycling shoes seemed to amplify the heat and our toes were on fire. At one point we were desperate to see someone watering their lawn. "Can you point that our feet" we were going to say. No such luck. We had to buy bottled water and pour it over our sizzling socks. We were glad to see the sun setting before we reached the last checkpoint. 45 kilometres to go. It's amazing how you can feel stronger at the end of an epic endurance event than half way through it. The mind is a powerful ally. From being deadbeat as we'd battled the gratuitous hills of the penultimate leg, we set off for the finish like we were chasing a PB in a





road race. We beasted the hills and swooped down dark lanes, heart rates boosted by the adrenalin rush of completing the most awesome ride of our lives. We reached event HQ just after midnight, exhilarated and exhausted; the Mad Badgers had done it. We were LEL'ers.

So, was the pain worth it? Course it was. Would we do it again? Definitely. I remember agreeing with Richard, "Pain is our friend". We can't wait for more – bring on Paris-Brest-Paris in 2015. Bring on the pain. Who else is up for it??? 🏠



**Richard and Phil – The Mad Badgers**





## Still time to qualify for club's Grand Prix



Summer may be disappearing into autumn, but the season is certainly not over. Even if you haven't yet done a single race in the club's 2103 Grand Prix competition there's still to qualify. We've got another ten races to choose from before 2013 disappears. If you want full details and access to the application forms log in to **[www.todharriers.co.uk/grandprix.htm](http://www.todharriers.co.uk/grandprix.htm)**.

Here are what's on offer over the next few weeks.

Thursday Sep 5<sup>th</sup> sees the annual **Hades Hill** race, just across the moor from Summit and Littleborough. OK ok we won't make the usual comment about Hades being simply hellish. Actually, it's a shortish fell race, about 5 miles in length, although it does have a nasty uphill start before the hills arrive. Marshalls required if you're not planning to race. (Turn up on the day to race).

What could be a more beautiful setting for a half marathon road race than Great Langdale in the Lakes. More often the location for GP fell races, the **Great Langdale Half Marathon** is an old favourite for many in the club, even if it's not precisely flat. Book soon if you're interested.

From a half marathon to a 5K and from the Lakes to Littleborough: another of the short road races organised by Andy O'Sullivan is the **Ron Hill 75<sup>th</sup> birthday race**, on Weds Sep 25<sup>th</sup> at 6.45pm. This could be the one to do if you're really a fell runner but need to get your road races in to qualify. Andy says that it's strictly pre-entry only.

The **Edale Skyline**, the last English Championships qualifier (and the race which was postponed from the Spring because of snow) takes place finally on Sunday Sep 29<sup>th</sup>. It's a circuit of the hills around Edale in the Peak District, very runnable but with plenty of climbs. Includes Win Hill and Lose Hill. You win some... Needs pre-booking and may already be full.

Races normally are circular. Here's one which isn't. You start at Blackpool and run along the coast to Fleetwood, a distance of 10m in all. The **Blackpool-Fleetwood 10** is on Sun Oct 6<sup>th</sup> and is, we think, a new one in the club's GP. Meant to be flat and therefore fast. Could be a PB? Pre-book (involves bus from Fleetwood to Blackpool).

Which takes us to Sunday Oct 13<sup>th</sup> and a low-key local fell race, **Withens Skyline**. This is one of those races which start at Penistone quarry at Haworth, organised by Dave and Eileen Woodhead. Ali Brownlee has the course record, so if you fancy beating an Olympic gold medalist's time, this is the race to try.

Oct 27<sup>th</sup> and its **Tandle Hill** - a 5.8 mile trail race hosted by i-run and cannonball events. Check out <http://www.cannonballevents.co.uk> for more info on this one.

Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> **Capesthorpe Hall Half Marathon**

Nov 17<sup>th</sup> **Preston 10**

Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> if you've left it to late it's **Tour of Pendle**

## Other great non GP local races

Sat 7 – Skipton parkrun starts

Sat 7 – Cross Keys Relays (Uppermill) – Teams of 4, 2 road, 2 fell legs, great pub

Sat 7 – Colne Lenches 5k

Sun 8 – Tameside 10k – special guest appearance by Jack Duckworth

Sun 8 – YMCA Walkden 5 mile Trail

Sun 8 – Yorkshireman off road Marathon & Half Marathon

Wed 11 – Brownhouse Wham '5k' Trail – if this is over 3 miles, then I have two good feet, but a lovely mixed terrain route all the same

Sat 14 – Sabden 6 Trail Race – brilliant race, even better cake, tons

of it!!! (and it's made by real old church ladies too! 🍌 )

Sat 14 – Rombalds Romp

Sun 15 – Boggart Hole 10k

Sun 15 – Turbine Tangle ~ 3 hour score

Sun 15 – Wild Goose Chase Fell

Tues 17 – Brownhouse Wham Trail

Sat 21 – Good Shepherd Fell Race

Sun 22 – **Cannonball** Littleborough 10k

Sun 22 – Stainland Trail 10k

Sun 22 – Beefy's Nab – follow the white powder, unless it rains!

Sat 28 – Thieveley Pike Fell Race

**Sat 28 – RRCC – Leigh Cross Country** –to sign up see XC captain John Cannonball Lloyd – 4 races for a fiver, great crack whatever your speed – this one is probably the flattest grassiest least muddy xc in the world!

**Sun 29** – Netherthong 10k – brilliant road race, not flat!

And not forgetting parkrun 5k every Saturday 9am, Great Run Local 5k every Sunday 9am, and runsunday 3 mile Otley Chevin trail every Sunday 10:30am – all FREE!

## Discovering Dartmoor

Somehow I stumbled upon the Dartmoor Discovery Ultra a couple of years ago. 33 miles on road in a loop, hills and sheep – what not to like (the road bit I hear a lot of you cry... 🤔). So I entered and ran the race last year. It was well organised, friendly and run in good conditions. The winner posted a course record, and I was pleased with my 5th place, picking up a few places in the last few miles, finishing in 4.06. Perhaps, I was still suffering from the impact of Boston Marathon in tropical heat, so wondered if I could do better.

I pitched up again this year, the long drive from the house surrounded by hills and sheep to reach another place surrounded by hills and sheep was rather surreal, but they have wild ponies and a high security prison here too. This lad knows how to live. Collected my number and very nice tech top the evening before and heard last year's winner wasn't running this time.

We all lined up in Princetown for the start, and we were off. Then something odd happened, I went off at reasonable pace, but as always far away from a Cannonball lick. But I was leading the race from the start line, I settled in and a guy was on my shoulder. Then it got to a mile in and it was feeling somewhat pedestrian so I upped it a bit and a gap opened up. Conditions were again good and there was lots of support. I cautioned to myself to keep it under control, but I felt very fresh. And it kind of carried on from there running through beautiful surroundings. Just past the 4m point a cyclist came past and shouted I had a lead of 1min 2 seconds. Right, I thought now I am committed, I might as well keep this decent but steady pace going and see what happens. I am on my own now.

There is a really steep long hill at the 10k point but it felt easier than last time. A spectator shouted "can I have some of what you are on" but given I had left the porridge at the B and B I just smiled. From this point it kind of became a blur. The lead cyclist gradually became a companion and towards the latter part of the race a great support.

I was still feeling fine passing halfway, and reaching the long endless climb out of Ashburton there was a strong headwind but I knew we all would be facing this. I reached the marathon point 4 minutes up on last year, so wasn't sure if that elusive sub 4 hour was on. The last part goes onto the main road, and is less visually appealing and you

have the long climb back into Princeton to come. With about 4 miles to go, I did a rare thing and looked back on the long drag and saw the 2nd placed guy in the distance. He was catching up. The lead cyclist, Stuart, sensed my anxiety, and at this point I felt angry. I had led from the first step I wasn't going to let this one go. "Leave it all out there" Steve Way recently said, and I repeated this to myself. Somehow on an undulating section I picked it up and ran 6.39 from mile 28-29. I never saw the runner up until the finish after that.

The last mile comes into town and there were a lot of people, horns sounding, and it was great to hear my name and Todmorden Harriers announced. Stuart shouted you are well under 4 hours, and I gave it my all to go through the finish in 3.57. Nine minutes up on last year, mainly through slowing down much less in the last few miles. Result!

As always. I was well looked after at the finish, food, massage and a great buzz. The runner up came in 4.01, so it was rewarding to be the only sub4. The presentation in the evening was friendly and well humoured in the evening sun and the large trophy has pride of place. But perhaps the most amusing thing is the local press coverage where I am referred to as "the race winner, Robin Tuddenham, a fell runner from West Yorkshire". Trade descriptions act anyone? 😄



## **Richard Leonard**

### **Our Tour of Mallorca 2013**

### **300km DIY – 11 April**

The idea behind our short break in Mallorca was to get some early season fitness. A gang of five of us rented a villa near Pollenca close enough to Calla San Vicente for those wanting to swim and very handy for the Formentor and Alcudia areas. We hired Orbea carbon road bikes from Rent March in Puerto Pollenca (thoroughly recommended, nothing too much trouble) and early in the holiday enjoyed the excellent cycling on smooth tarmac in warm weather around the North and West of the island. It transpired that our training coincided with that of Sir Bradley on three occasions including a friendly " Good Morning " as he effortlessly spun past us on a climb. I think the Tour of Majorca DIY was Phil's (Hodgson) idea. We had ridden a 200 (Delightful Dales) and hoping for SR status this year needed a 300 so this 'holiday' was the ideal opportunity. Phil planned the route and had it checked and authorised by Alex Pattison as a DIY before we left for Mallorca.

Thursday dawned cold but dry We set off from our villa at 5.45 am in pitch dark with quiet apologies to the neighbours whose dogs registered our passing. We verified our start time and location at a 24 hour cash machine in Pollenca and then it was off for proper with every km counting. The first half hour was ridden with lights on with only the very occasional commuter sharing our road. Gradually the sky lightened to the east and we were treated to a beautiful sunrise. The benefits of an early start. We enjoyed easy navigation past Inca and on toward Benissalem, taking 1 km turns on the front to cut through the head wind.

But this ride was not going to be flat easy riding all the way. At Santa Maria we turned North and toward the mountains and Soller. At Bunyola we met the main road from Palma but thankfully this soon disappeared through the mountain in a tunnel leaving us to enjoy an Alpine like climb with only the birdsong to break the silence.

Our first checkpoint at Soller at 48km coincided with breakfast in a roadside bar. We didn't join the workmen in a glass of beer or wine but did enjoy a very welcome spanish omelette with english tea! After a couple of photos to place us in Soller it was into the hilliest section of our ride. The road largely follows the coast so we were treated to spectacular views of cliffs and mountains also passing through scenic villages such as Deia and Banyalbufar. We were enjoying both the climbs and descents until the aptly

named Col de Bastide. Perhaps I was a little too confident on the smooth tarmac. Perhaps the sun was in my eyes and I didn't see the seep of water across the road. There was a quick warning from Phil but the very next second I was on my side sliding down the road with the bike a couple of yards in front of me. I gingerly picked myself up and finding myself bruised rather than bleeding and the bike still rideable I carried on. Phil had to be a little patient until I got some confidence back.

Onto Andratz (103km) and into the first cafe with a bike hanging outside. They knew what food we needed....a large bowl of spag.bol. The third leg took us through the most populated area of the island where we rode on cycle tracks to keep away from the busy main roads. This meant that our average speed went down especially through Palma. We had chosen to ride close to the sea front on a cycle path which turned out to be 2 feet wide with speed restrictions of 15 kmh! After several k of this and too many tourists it was good to leave the built up area. We then enjoyed about 25k of quiet fast lanes or 'Cami' in Majorca en route to our next checkpoint at Colonia St.Jordi (182km). Having found the small town our next challenge was to find somewhere to eat as nowhere opened until 7.00pm. After wasting a good 10 to 15 minutes we found a small bar with the usual ham and cheese bocadillos. It seemed a good idea to order a plate of chips to go with the sandwich. The 'patatas fritas' arrived after the sandwich had been eaten and were thickly cut deepfried slices of potato. Phil's delicate constitution complained after he had eaten them. We were keen to crack on. Get the next 68 k section under our wheels and the ride was cracked. More idyllic cycling through Mallorcan countryside and villages with three elderly ladies busy sweeping the town square with hand brushes. I busied myself with mental arithmetic....17k to next to next town, how many miles? 16 mph average and it's 8.00pm when will we get there? It all helps.

The wind picked up with the sun going down. As we entered Caja Ratjada the gusts were bending the thickest palm trees. We battled into the wind to the first store before it closed at 9.00pm to get the all important receipt. To complete our circuit we rode back through Arta and then onto familiar roads. The lights went back on and with hardly any traffic we were able to ride two abreast so I could avoid being driven completely crazy by Phil's very bright flashing rear light. Back to the same Cash machine in Pollenca.

Looking back on the ride now I cannot imagine a better way of seeing the whole island in one day; from the quiet small rural villages to the bustle of Palma; from the almost empty alpine like smooth mountain roads to the motorways and underpasses of the south; from the old ladies in their home villages to the packs of visiting foreign cyclists. An island of contrasts from the saddle of a bike.

# TOILET SEAT



WELCOME TO THE SUMMER ISSUE OF THE 2013 TOILET SEAT. I CAN SAY VERY LITTLE HERE AS YOU'VE ALL BEEN THAT BUSY COLLECTING POINTS THAT THERE'S VERY LITTLE SPACE FOR MY WORDS OF WISDOM..... ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT CURRENT CHAMPION, JOHN LLOYD, HAS HAD A VERY QUIET SUMMER AND IS SLIPPING DOWN THE LEAGUE TABLE...  
UNCLE BARRY

**Who's that runner?** Not who Richard thought it was - thinking he'd passed his main rival in the V70 class, Richard went to claim his prize for winning, only to find his rival had finished a few minutes in front of him. Not to worry Richard, you won the V70 English champs plus 5 toilet points as well.

**Where's my phone?** Gemma asked after finishing a Lakeland run to find her phone was missing. With the aid of modern apps she pinpointed it to be on Fairfield, then a quick return trip and call to find her phone ringing in the grass. She also found 5pts

**Every toilet seat issue has one.** This time it was Lucy's turn. Yes it's that time of the month: the change of pubs. Lucy went to the wrong one - but on the advice of partner Paul, so to be fair that's 5pts each.

**New bike Mel? Very nice.** Pity you fell off it 3 times on your first ride. That will be 5pts (ps hope the bike is OK?)

**Sole Man.** Dave Collins was overtaken by his sole, his shoe sole that is whilst descending Buckden Pike as one of his shoes fell apart. Who won - you or the sole Dave? What I do know is that you won 5 toilet points.

**Whose vest is that?** Dan the man ran the Fairfield Horseshoe in his partner Andrea's vest, picking up the wrong vest in his rush to win 5pts

**Whose Keys?** Jules, whist at the Achillie Rattie hut in Langdale helping on partner Darren's Bob Graham attempt, spotted a bunch of keys with a Tesco bar code strip. Thinking they were her keys she pocketed them. Later, after finishing a leg, Kath returned to the hut to collect the car and go home. Problem? No keys. After a long search still no keys so she phoned partner John to bring the spare set from Todmorden. A day later Jules finds two sets of keys in hr pocket with Tesco bar codes - oops. 5pts to Kath for leaving her keys lying around and 5pts to Jules for thinking only she had a Tesco bar code on her key ring.

**Most popular man?** I think not - as Steve Pullen managed to get his campervan stuck in the mud, blocking the entrance to the parking field at Fairfield causing one long tailback. Most unpopular man would be more like it on that day. This is worthy of 10pts.

**That most popular man again.** This time he managed to knock Dave Collins' dinner out of the waiters' hands at the Hinchcliffe. That's 5 more pts Steve.

**Ben Crowther - what can I say** - airport madness? Flying to do the Highland Mountain Marathon, no ID, full beard and dressed a bit like Bin Laden (or whatever his name was). I am totally confused by what was said or went on - I can say no more, only award 10pts for this plus 5 more pts for forgetting your leggings.

**Unluckiest man?** Dave Collins must be the most unlucky man after seeing his dinner spread all over the floor one week - the next week he had his dinner taken by a Calder Valley runner by mistake - 5pts for being so unlucky.

**Where's me boots?** After a great day in the Howgills, Mandy & Phil set off for home. Ten miles later, "the boots! We have forgotten the boots - they were under the van!" A quick return to find Phil's boots complete with socks standing there. Mandy's socks were also laid there but her boots were nowhere to be seen. Gone, vanished, probably on eBay by now Mandy. 5pts to Mandy for losing her boots and 5pts to Phil for having a pair of boots nobody wanted.



Dave Collins	20
Ben Crowther	15
Steve Pullen	15
John Lloyd	10
Jon Wright	10
Dave Wilson	5
Chris Preston	5
Richard Blakeley	5
Gemma Kendal	5
Lucy Hobbs	5
Paul Hobbs	5
Dan Taylor	5
Julie Wyant	5