



**Town and
Country
Harriers
(TACH)**

ROUGH RUNNING NEWS

July 2026



Welcome to Rough Running News for Summer 2026. This month, we've all had to get used to running (or not running) in hot weather. Andy Grant shares his top tips for staying cool, you can read about Nick and Luke's running adventures and meet Chris Hill-Scott. As always, do get in touch with any tips or stories for the next edition (Oct 2026) and let us have any suggestions for how we can improve TACH communications comms@tach.com
Alex and Sarah



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Do you have a product recommendation to share with fellow TACHers?

Perhaps you have a favourite recipe for some delicious running food?

Or you have an interesting story to tell, or idea you want to explore with others?

Why not write about it for Rough Running News!

Next edition copy deadline is **31 September 2026**



Meet a TACHer

Chris Hill-Scott



How did you first discover TACH and when did you join?

February 2025. I was invited by a friend who'd been running with TACH for a few months.

What led you to take up trail running?

I've started running several times but the habit never stuck when it was just on the road. I think the variety of running on trails is what keeps me coming back.

What do you do for work?

I work for the part of the civil service that does the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

What's your favourite thing about TACH?

The variety of different routes and the shared passion for exploring the local area.

Do you have a favourite place to run/ running route you'd like to share with RRN readers?

Lower Wye Valley viewpoint loop: to/from Chepstow via the Eagle's Nest, Tintern, the Devil's Pulpit and Wintour's Leap.



If money and time were no obstacle, what would your dream run be, and why?

I'd love to go back to New Zealand and try fastpacking some of the Great Walks.

What's your favourite distance and type of terrain?

Half marathon (so far); technical (but dry).

Do you have a favourite bit of running kit – and why?

A phone app called 'Organic Maps'. It's free, works offline, and is amazing for finding tracks and paths anywhere in the world.

If you had one tip for anyone new to trail running, what would it be?

A bright headtorch lets you run more smoothly and with less effort.

If you had to put these in order from like to dislike, what would the order be?

Sunsets - Sunrises - Hills (down) - Hill (up) - Bluebells - Marshalling - Mud - 5am alarm - Races - Cows - Getting lost - Tics - Brambles

What's the most interesting book you've read in the past year, and why?

Maybe 'The 4000m Peaks of the Alps – Selected Climbs'. Unfortunately the internet has ruined my attention span for proper books.





Getting out and about

Old County Tops - Nick Rickard

"A beast but the best fell race there is" - Nick's friend on Strava.

Fran had come across the Old County Tops race last year and, subsequently described by her as "the friend I thought might say yes to a silly run", asked me if I wanted to be her pairing for the event. Clearly short on excuses that particular day and not properly understanding what I was signing up to, I agreed. Our first challenge was the entry process. The entry form required us to state "our fell running experience, including three recent Cat A fell races". Between us we had completed the sum total of zero fell races and were now trying to enter arguably the hardest fell race in England. We crammed as much "we've kinda done sorta similar stuff" as we could within the word count and submitted and waited. Fran followed up with the Race Director and he took what I think is the pragmatic decision that we both had good experience of long unsupported runs out on the hills and whilst we might be slow we should be safe. So that was another excuse to not do it struck out.

The race itself is a self-navigation circular route around the Lakes, taking in the summits of Helvellyn, Scafell Pike, and Old Man of Conistone, the three highest points in the old counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire respectively. Hence the name. The summits and the interim valley checkpoints were known in advance, and seem to be the same each year, so we had plenty of time to study maps and prepare knowing that no GPS/GPX would be allowed on the day. Exact distance and elevation would depend on the chosen route, but 37 miles with 10,000 ft of ascent was the event headline. Converting it to metric doesn't make it any better.

ROUTE PLANNING AND RECCES

Piggybacking on a small group weekend up to The Lakes, we planned two recce runs. The route lent itself to dividing into two smaller loops (making car logistics easier) so we thought we'd be able to cover most of the route. The weather and terrain had other ideas.

On the first recce, we'd barely got onto the race route - having had to do a run-in and climb to join the route - when the hail and wind removed our sense of humour and we made the wise decision to cut short and retreat to the warm pub for lunch.

The second recce saw much better weather but a combination of very wet ground and our pace saw us have to cut that a bit short as well. And the second recce included a large section



that we subsequently dropped from the chosen route. Watching a video of the race start after the second recce we realised that the runners are set off down a specific gravel lane and if we'd stuck with our original plan we would have been running off in a direction to all the other runners!

So two recces down and only a small percentage of the race route covered. But it was good to reacquaint with the Lakes terrain and to start to predict our likely pace on the day and the realism of the challenge. The spreadsheet (there's always a spreadsheet) showed us right on the cut-offs. We had an open conversation about whether to withdraw and DNS and agreed that we'd make the call the week before: any significant bad weather would see us DNS and save the fuel cost and a wasted weekend.

There then followed lots of email and text message exchanges about the route and, as I reflect on later, the time that I put into looking at the route options paid us back in the day as I was confident throughout of where we were, where we were going, and how we were doing. My OS Maps subscription paid for itself in those couple of weeks.

A week out, the forecast was not dire so we loaded up and headed to the Lakes. By the time we made the decision to definite go it, we were too late to get into the nearby Great Langdale campsite, so instead stayed at Rydal Hall campsite. We were barely there for any waking time, but it was a nice campsite: good local pub and 1 mile gravel track walk into Ambleside with all its facilities.





RACE DAY - START

We got to registration early, so no queue. Kit check was appropriately vigorous in checking the mandatory items but not obsessing over details. It was a nice and relaxed atmosphere at race HQ and, given it has been running since 1988, all very organised. After getting our race numbers it was time for hanging around, making and remaking last minute kit faff decisions, and the inevitable pre-race Portaloo queue. I was pleasantly surprised that others appeared to have similar levels of warmish kit and running rucksacks having originally feared that we would stick out as ultra runners in a field of fell runners. Several people were returning having completed the event a number of times which is a good sign of a well-run event.

RACE DAY - FIRST TOP: HELVELLYN

Then we were off. The first mile or so was on a level and reasonably wide hard pack path, allowing people to find their natural pace, in addition to the self-sorting that usually goes on at the race start anyway, and everyone to settle in for a long day out. Everybody went out the same way so we were super glad that we hadn't stuck with our original plan and not been the only people to leave the start heading in the opposite direction! Fran and I had self-sorted ourselves towards the tail end and staying in the pack for this first section. The first small, but steep, climb and technical terrain of the day got everyone's pulse lifted and the nervous chatter started to become more serious.

It was a good morning of weather for running. Mild, very little wind, and good visibility. It felt like we were making good progress and not being spat out of the back of the pack in the first few minutes helped us to grow in confidence.

The big sorting of places came on the long ascent of Helvellyn, the first of the three Old County Tops. We found ourselves being overtaken more than we would have liked but were making decent progress. I had noted the split times of the last runners from the last two years in order to give us an indication of our progress. We got to the summit a few minutes behind that planned pace but I hoped we would make up some time on the descent. This was when Fran and I discovered we were not (yet) fell runners. So far, the route had all been on well defined paths. The two options for descent were the main path that took a more winding but defined route, or a straight line descent across the rugged fell. Given the good visibility and reasonably dry ground we made the call on the day to straight line it. It was a balance between descending quickly and freely, versus trying to maintain control and not having an early ankle or face-plant DNF. It was the right route decision as we did make time up on another pairing that had summited Helvellyn before us and chosen the main path down. But at the CP at the bottom of the descent we were some fifteen minutes behind where we needed to be. We barely missed a step as we grabbed water and, for me, the first egg sandwiches of the day



which cheered me up no end - I'd looked forward to those since the CP food had been announced.



RACE DAY - SECOND TOP: SCAFELL PIKE

The next leg was a long boggy ascent then a plateau on to the first timed CP at roughly half distance (and half elevation) on the ascent of Scarfell Pike. Knowing that the planning spreadsheet had told us we were going to be close to the cutoffs, and with being a pair, we'd discussed beforehand the various scenarios. We had agreed that if we missed the cutoff by a small amount then we would aim to carry on self-supported to complete the round unofficially. We both had kit and food with us to do so. And if we missed it by a larger amount we would call it a day and accept we were way out of our league as neither of us were in the mood for an overnight sufferfest.

We had the advantage that we had recced much of this next section to Angle Tarn (the CP and cutoff). So there was less need to stare intently at the map - although I still did as a comfort blanket - and we could get our heads down and push on. We both knew time would be a challenge but we were doing our maximum so it wasn't as if we could tailor our effort or push any harder. So we didn't look at the time. As we reached the top of the ascent and began a long cross-country contouring on the plateau, we were grateful that the two hundred or so pairs of shoes ahead of us had helped to make the sheep trods slightly better defined.



And the visibility was still excellent so picking a medium distance line to minimise any unnecessary down and ups through stream gullies was easier. A waypoint tarn came and went and, having glanced at my watch but not shared the information with Fran, I thought we were going to be outside the cutoff, albeit not by much. I don't think we ever said to each other during the race that we didn't think we'd make this first cutoff. The downside of the good visibility then came into play as we could see the hi-vis vests of the marshals at the CP and they never seemed to get any closer whilst the seconds ticked away. The run in to Angle Tarn was possibly the longest mile I've ever run.

We somehow reached there exactly on the cutoff time. A very quick and thankfully sensible conversation with the lead marshal that we were in a good state to continue and he allowed us to carry on. The marshal asked "are you feeling strong?" to which I have the correct answer of "yes" with a smile whilst Fran's internal monologue was "are we?" having just sprinted for the cutoff and about to face a climb. The only proviso to continuing being that we couldn't loiter at that CP and had to carry straight on. Another marshal kindly grabbed a water bottle from us each, filled them up as we started the climb out of the CP, and sprinted up the hill to catch us up. We'd made it. There was now a long stretch to the next timed cutoff and it had given us confidence that we could complete the route even if we got timed out at a later stage. In many ways this cutoff, which was probably the most 'aggressive' was our finish line target and anything later a bonus. As we started the next climb I muttered something to Fran along the lines of "that was too close, don't ever do that to me again". Little did I know what the rest of the day had in store.

Just about back on schedule but fatigued from the push into Angle Tarn CP, the ascent of Scafell Pike - the second top - saw us slip back slightly against the planned timings and we summited this some fifteen minutes later than hoped. The cloud started to come in as we climbed and whilst we hadn't recced this together I had done this leg twice in the last year so I was comfortable with the navigation. There were two main options for the descent off Scafell. For locals and experienced runners there is a straight line through the crags; for everyone else a short backtrack and then a steep but well defined gully. The race director had been very clear on the perils of attempting the steep straight line option and Fran and I had agreed that even if we found ourselves with other experienced runners we would stick with the plan of the longer gully descent. The low visibility in the cloud only reinforced that this was the right decision.



We hadn't seen anyone else on the backtrack from Scafell so thought we were quite a bit behind any other runners, and firmly at the back. The descent gully was slower than I'd hoped. I was expecting scree at the start - which was as unjoyful as expected especially as it started to get wet in the cloud and mist. Then I'd hoped it would start to flatten out and maybe become more runnable but the steep gradient stayed and we carefully picked our way down. It was certainly slow going – I think that descent turned out to be our slowest mile of the day - but as we started to descend below the cloud and could see the valley floor we saw at least two other pairs who must have done the direct descent off Scafell and lost time on us in doing so. Whilst we were racing the clock not other pairs, it was a small and welcome boost to have sight of others. And for the long stretch down the valley towards the next CP and timed cutoff it was reassuring to see another pair taking the line that we were expecting to take meaning whilst we had to stay aware of our location we could take a short breather from the more detailed nav.

And worry about time instead. Looking at the distance and time to the next CP it seemed an impossible equation. The ground was just about runnable but tussocks, bogs, and small rises and falls meant the pace wasn't where it felt we needed to be. As we had descended into the valley, I had spotted a small wooded area the other side of the valley that I knew was the other side of the CP and it never seemed to get any closer. I had pretty much written off our chances of getting to the CP within the time and was already rehearsing the conversation with Fran about whether to do all of the final section or cut it short as the rain and cloud were coming in. As the track eventually became truly runnable we somehow gained on the other pair and joined them. Once again, we could see the CP hi-vis. The last few hundred metres was downhill on a tarmac road and, as every inch counted, the CP had been set up in a layby about a hundred metres short of where we expected it to be. We charged down the road to



be greeted with "you need to leave within one minute to stay in the race". Music to our ears, an entire minute ahead of cut-off, we were in luxury. No time to fill water bottles, I grabbed another couple of egg sandwiches without breaking stride and we were through and out the other side.

RACE DAY - THIRD TOP: OLD MAN OF CONISTON

We'd plotted a route for the first bit of the final main ascent, to Old Man of Conistion, that was less popular but was on a easy to follow and hardpack farm vehicle track. So time to relax from the nav and try to process everything. I think my pulse had hit a new record high on the run in to the CP and the start of the final ascent was a blur of mixed emotions. Fran's heart rate hit new record highs and was hurting so she asked for a two second break as she was worried she was having a heart malfunction. But apart from that we were both doing great. Whilst clearly thrilled to have got through the cut-off, the finish line was now the only other cut-off we had to face, it had been a supreme effort and had taken a mental toll on me. Additionally, from our study of previous last runners, others had left that cut-off with at least twenty minutes to spare in order to make the finish. So the odds seemed against us and the rain and cloud were now setting in. If I was on my own I might have given up or at least let my pace drift to near zero. But I was latched onto Fran who took us up that final last steep climb at the perfect pace and picked the best line through the crags. Emerging onto the ridge seemed to take forever and, given the low visibility, we'd deliberately aimed slightly off the optimum line so that we would definitely pick the ridge path the right side of where we needed to fork off it.

On the ridge and then plateau it was a 3km out and back to the final old top summit. We saw a number of runners coming the other way and many of them seemed to have grouped up with other pairs to share morale and navigation. We exchanged cheery waves but we knew they were heading back and safely within the time limit whilst we were still going out. We had an increasing sense of humour failure with cairn builders. Whilst small, say 2 foot high, cairns are invaluable for navigation in the cloud, we kept seeing much larger, and some quite intricate, cairns that we prayed would be the summit cairn, only for them to be just another way marker.



As we reached the summit CP, I dared to glance at my watch. Two hours and five minutes until cut-off and I knew some tail runners had done this last stretch in two hours. And I knew that the asset that Fran and I had was our experience of long runs and the ability to keep going and not fade pace. Somehow and suddenly the whole thing was back on. Disaster almost struck as soon as we turned around as we headed off on a path that was approximately the same direction we'd come from but not quite. We caught it quickly and got back onto the main return path. This also explained, with hindsight, why some of the other runners approaching us on the out and back had seemed to come from an off the path direction.

Retracing our route and deliberately not cutting a corner to keep on marked paths, we began the final main descent. A zig, or was it a zag, that seemed to take forever eventually arrived and then I knew we were approaching the road and the final marshalled CP. Visibility meant we could not see the road but starting to hear vehicle traffic was a joy to behold. We'd lost a bit of time against schedule on that descent in the cloud and, by my calculations from the CP we had fifty-seven minutes to do a one hour leg.

My main thought and fear now was that if we missed the finish line cut we would have to come back and do it all over again and I'm not sure my body and brain could take that. We had to do this.

We held a good pace on a downhill road section and, having studied the run in even more that the rest of maps and aerial, I knew we were now on established paths and relatively straightforward navigation.



Fran wasn't looking at the time but I was. She dug deeper than I've possibly ever seen anyone dig and I was doing mental maths knowing it would be tight but not saying anything. As we got past a tarn I pointed out where we could see a road ahead that signified the start of the final descent and then a one mile flat road to the finish. Fran found yet another gear and we were off.

As we hit the final descent Fran absolutely sent it and I was struggling to stay with her but glad that was the case. When we reached the bottom road and got into a proper pace, I knew we would do it but still didn't say anything. I afterwards learnt that Fran had an alarm every hour on her watch to remind her to eat and was waiting for that to go off as the signal we'd missed the cut (ie exactly 12hrs). There wasn't even time to get emotional on the run in and with 200yds to go I told her we'd done it.

FINISH

We actually finished five minutes ahead of the final cut-off which, given how the rest of the day had been, seemed an unnecessary luxury. Although as we subsequently discussed with the RD we had validated that the cut-offs were aligned.

With the last bit of energy we each had left we muttered some gibberish at each other and then got presented with our finisher t-shirts. Fran suddenly became professional and changed for the finish line photo whilst I just limply held mine up.

Then it into the finish marquee was cups of tea for both of us, soup for me, and copious amounts of cake for Fran. Then the short drive back to the campsite for a long, warm shower, clean clothes, more food, and bed with a t-shirt and a grin.

Entry for team = £50

Camping = £74

Dinner at Pub = £48.40

Parking = £5

Getting the T-shirt = Priceless





REFLECTIONS

Would I/we do anything differently?

Our biggest asset was the time that we had put into route planning and options. Not just plotting routes on OS but jointly pouring over options, aerial maps to see what the terrain might be like, memorising where key features were, looking on Strava at what others had done previously, and adapting route choices based on weather and our ability. Every single moment of that paid itself back as we were bang on the nav throughout and any slight mistake would have been the difference between a t-shirt and a DNF. You can't outrun bad navigation.

In the second half of the day our ultra experience came to the fore. Many of the runners were fell runners doing a long run, Fran and I were ultra runners doing a fell race. I felt our pace didn't fade and when it got a bit cold and wet later on whilst I wouldn't say we loved it it was certainly nothing new.



And we knew each other as a run pairing: when to push, when to lead, when to be quiet, to be the most economical and efficient unit we could. We were both proud that we didn't give up even when it seemed unlikely we'd make it.

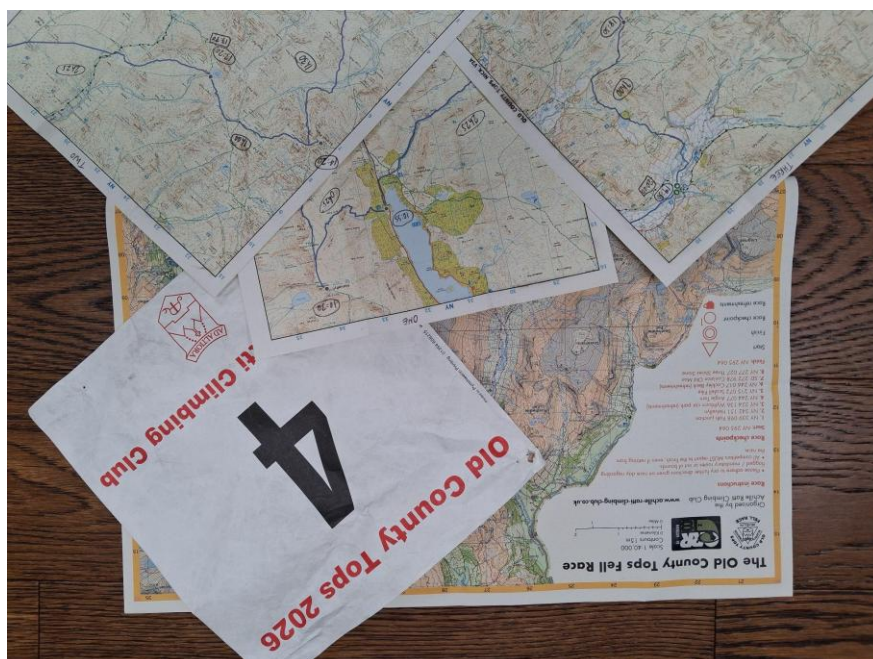
We would have loved to have more time on the ground in the Lakes recceing but life gets in the way. And maybe doing some more local fell races to allay any fears that we didn't belong in the crowd might have helped pre-race nerves even if it wouldn't have altered the actual performance.

Old County Tops is a fantastic event. It's a well oiled routine and even though it's been going since 1988 they still make everyone feel personal and the small field size - capped at 160 pairs and this was the first year it had sold out - helps to keep that feel.

The marshals are enthused and knowledgable and willing everyone to success. A special shoutout to those stood in the cold and rain on Old Man of Coniston waiting for us to come through, and the ones at the timed cut-offs that were pragmatic yet uphold the rules. And those at the finish that couldn't do enough to force tea and cake down us.

Clearly it's a hard race. Both the physical route itself and the requirement to self-nav, self-support, and adapt on the day. It won't be for everyone and the distance to The Lakes for recces and the event itself is another consideration.

But as a rewarding experience it will be hard to top; I'm still processing all the emotions a month afterwards. Entries open in January...

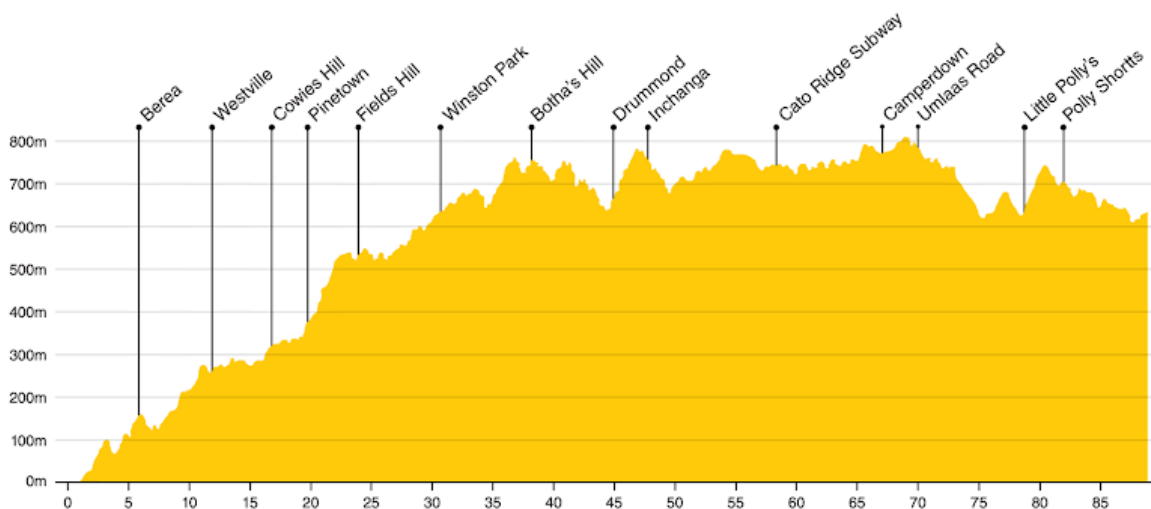




Town, country - and a load of concrete: Comrades marathon 2026 (Luke Taylor)

The Comrades Marathon is a road ultramarathon of about 85-90 kilometres which is run annually in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa between the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. It is the world's largest and oldest ultramarathon race. It was first held on 24 May 1921. It was conceived by World War I veteran Vic Clapham to honour fallen soldiers, the race was intended as a test of endurance and resilience.

The direction of the race alternates each year between the "up" run starting from Durban and the "down" run starting from Pietermaritzburg. This year the race was an "up" run with about 1,900m of ascent across the route. Altogether about 22,000 runners took part in this year's race. The race has a strict race cut-off time of 12 hours. There are then different medals awarded depending on each runner's finish time.



I decided to attempt the Comrades Marathon because I have a good friend who did part of his medical training in South Africa, and now regularly goes back there to help train other doctors. It was through him that I learnt about the Comrades Marathon, and a small group of us decided it would be an amazing adventure to go and do the race this year.

When preparing for any event, I think training specific to the event is key. So, to prepare for 85km of road running and plenty of climbs required hardening up my legs to withstand the battering of running long distances on the road, along with hill training.



At the age of 61, it was important to balance the volume and intensity of my training. I had to make sure I didn't suffer from any significant over-training injuries during the build-up to the race.

Also, I bought some super-springy, lightweight running shoes, thinking these would help get me to the race finish more quickly. But I found that they added impact to my legs and hips, which was starting to aggravate previous injuries. So, I swapped to an older pair of running shoes that were more 'soggy' feeling, but absorbed more of the road impact.

In addition to gaining an entry for the race (which required quick action as soon as the race opened for entries) every entrant is required to run a qualifying marathon race in less than 5 hours. I chose the Running GP marathon at the Goodwood Motor Racing circuit in West Sussex, which took place on 7 December 2025. The marathon is 11.5 laps of the motor racing circuit. On race day, the weather was cold, very wet and windy. However, I finished in 03:56:20, so that was 'job done', time to move on.



My training for Comrades was a bit hit-and-miss. My 'dress rehearsal' 50km road run ended after 36km when my left hip seized-up. This left me feeling very nervous about my ability to



complete 85km on race day. I subsequently did a lot of mobility and strength work, which seemed to improve the issue, and I was then able to complete back to back runs of 32km and 20km without any problem, leaving me a little less nervous about finishing the race.

I read articles and watched YouTube videos to help create a race strategy. The main takeaways were:

- Do all you can to protect your legs in the first 36km, where most of the up is. Attacking the hills while your legs are fresh will just result in a miserable last 30km, and a slower overall time. Expect to run a negative split.
- Don't run to a target time. Instead, focus just on what you can do on the day.
- The Comrades "up" run has 5 big hills (but none of the course is flat). Don't worry about which hill you're on, how long it is, and how steep it is. Just run/walk what's immediately in front of you. Run or walk according to feel.
- If you've run for 3km or so without a break, take a 1 minute walk break to allow your legs to recover.
- Keep moving at all times

Race morning started with a 2:15am alarm, breakfast, and then a shuttle to the start. At the start I felt a combination of excitement and trepidation about the race.



The race is so big it starts in 3 waves each separated by 15mins. But there were still lots of runners in each wave.



The first 36k is all uphill. I started running with the friends who were also doing the race. This meant that we were slowed as each of the group needed a loo stop or a walk when the



others would have continued running. Even though this held me back, that was exactly the strategy I needed, preventing me from going off too quickly.

From about 40k, I left my friends and set-out on my own.

Nearly the whole way around the course, the support was just amazing, with people singing, cheering, and offering homemade foods.



I have a sensitive stomach, which struggles with both gels and solid foods. However, I have found that I can ingest Tailwind for hours without any digestive problems. So, my nutrition strategy for Comrades was just Tailwind and extra water to prevent dehydration.

The Comrades “up” run has five named hills: Cowies Hill, Fields Hill, Botha’s Hill, Inchanga and Polly Shortts. Polly Shortts is the hardest: It’s long, a constant, steep gradient, and it comes about 80k through the course, when legs are tired. My legs were feeling surprisingly OK - tired, but not to the point where I couldn’t run. After Polly Shorts, there is only about 6k to the finish, and most of this is downhill. I was super happy to see the finish. I finished in 10h36m, for which I was awarded a bronze medal.



The Comrades Marathon was unlike anything I've done before. I swapped hills, mountains and coastpaths, for tarmac and crazy support. While I probably won't do Comrades again, it was an epic adventure. One that I will never forget.



The Heat is On: Here's how to stay cool (Andy Grant)

Please ignore the cheesy 80's song reference (Glenn Frey I believe) but we do need to look after ourselves now in this, a warming world, especially if we are daft enough to want to go running in this heat as well.

It's now so hot that even the scorching heat of the summer of 1976 that some of us old'uns remember is now deemed to not have been that bad, when compared to today, I know the roads melted so badly they had to be spread with sand, people could be seen out frying eggs on the pavement and all we had was state of the art 1970's "wind the window down" air con in our cars, but it wasn't that hot, right?

So, enough of the misty-eyed nostalgia, on to tips to help you stay cool out running, now, today. I'm sure people will have heard most of these tips before, but they all work to some degree, and I guarantee none of them will make you any hotter

Obvious this one but still a good place to start, not possible for everyone, but try to go out early in the morning or later in the evening, it maybe still hot but will be more bearable without the glare of the sun. Even so extra water, a hat and a small tube of suncream just in case will never go amiss.

This one makes a big difference, before a run take some ice cubes from the freezer and dump them in your hydration bladder, they take longer to melt than you think. Not only keeping your water cool for a while, but also helping to cool down your back as well. I have only ever tried this once and it worked an absolute treat, but I have never used it since, shows you what a muppet I am.

You could plan a bit of respite from the heat during your actual run, if you know your going through a cool bit of woodland then plan to walk through it rather than run, letting yourself cool down for a bit before you carry on (or you could be really clever and just plan to do your whole run in a nice cool wood somewhere).



Even if no woods are handy, planning a 5 minute rest, stopping somewhere cool and in the shade can really help and keep you from overheating.



If you want to be decadent then plan to stop for a short rest stop where you can dip your feet in a nice cool stream (like this one in Grey field wood), if ones handy then why not?

Going out for a training run and think you will feel guilty about walking for a bit or stopping? Then use the extra energy from your brief rest to do the return leg of your run faster as a negative split, you will get a good training stimulus from pushing yourself faster and you are out in the sun for less time overall, so everyone's a winner.



Now this one really works for me, how about taking your hat and soak it with cold water before you go out, it's amazing how much cooler this can make you feel, you can keep the effect going by keeping it wet it for the whole run, just make use of cattle troughs, streams, ponds, lakes, outside taps, hose pipes (if not already banned) etc. wherever you find them.



Talking of (not so cool) headgear to keep you cool there's always the classic Legionaires hat, yes, they look daft. After all your running round Marshfield not in the Marathon des sables, but when the already powerful golden early morning sun slowly rises up above the sand dunes (of Brean Down) and begins to beat down, the protection this hat can give is invaluable, what works running across the Sahara Desert also works for the parched fields of Bishop Sutton.

Then as for looking daft, well who else (but the likes of us) is bonkers enough to be out in the countryside in the heat anyway to see how daft you look.

Also, not in their favour is the extra coverage of these hats can make them feel hotter when you first put them, but of course not if you keep them wet, then it's like swapping the heat of the sun on the back of your neck for with the feeling of a nice cool choc-ice placed gently there, it's a million miles better than letting your neck get a right roasting in the harsh sun, trust me.



Another life saver just in case the heat gets too much is a small dry towel/flannel, it needs to be just big enough to go round your neck and then hang down around the front either side and stay put, like this; Dry it takes up no room in your backpack but if you feel too hot - whip it out, soak it in the nearest bit of water and put it round your neck. Not only will it keep the sun off the back of your neck, but lots of blood flows close to the skins surface here, so any cooling effect applied here will really be effective in keeping your core temperature down, helping stop you from overheating.



Hydration, yes, you always take as much water as you can practically carry, but what if you still run out? just in case this happens I would advise taking a water flask with a filter cap (Salomon, Hydrapak etc.) and get the necessary knowledge on how to use them safely, they are light, take up no room in your pack and can save you from dehydration/heat stroke if your water runs out.



Filtering water on the trail will always incur risk and needs to be done carefully, recently some hikers had to be rescued from out in the Cairngorm's, apparently, they became severely ill after drinking clean (looking) water from a nice bubbling Scottish stream, and through a proper filtration straw. It turns out even though their location looked remote it was on a popular hiking trail, and their ordeal has since been put down to drinking water that had been subject to human contamination!



So, avoid drinking filtered water on the trail unless you need to, but if done carefully it can be a lifesaver. If you run out of water and still have a long way to go, find a safe source of water to filter and fill your flask from it, I would always advise drinking the first flask of water you fill up, then fill up the flask again before setting off and take it with you. In my experience by the time you run out of water, decide you will need to filter some to drink, then find a safe water source, you can be already dehydrated, drinking that one flask straight off before you move on and drinking the next one as you continue can really help to get your hydration back on track, plus you don't know how long you will run before you come across the next safe place to filter water from either.

Lastly if you are driving to a run, you can always leave a towel and a bottle of water (with ice cubes) in the car for a cold rub down when you finish, and don't forget some cool water to drink before you get going home as well.

So, there you have it, just a few tips to help you keep running in this hot spell. I expect by the time you read this the great heatwave of 2026 will probably be over and be just a memory. By now you will probably be camping in a tent in Wales, enjoying the sound of the lashing rain being driven into the side of your tent by the wind. Happy days, never mind it was good (?) while it lasted. Still, it's boiling hot right now, so time for a run for me? not bloody likely, I'm not that mad, for me it's ice cold choc-ice time, take care and till next month and stay cool folks.





TACH Runs and Events

Congratulations, King Dave! The Cotswold Way Relay

The Cotswold Way Relay has been running for 34 years. Starting in Chipping Campden at 7.00 and ending in front of Bath Abbey in the early evening, there are ten stages across 103 miles. There's no baton; instead each stage works as a mass-start race, timed to coincide with when the first finisher is expected to complete the previous stage. A total of 100 teams take part - and TACH typically enters two or three teams – this year entering an open team and a veterans team. Over the years, runners aim to complete all ten stages to be crowned King or Queen of the CWR - this year, that honour fell to Dave Bignell. Most of the route is trail - and takes in some beautiful countryside and cracking views. Definitely one to look out for next year if you haven't taken part!





Backyard Ultra - 26 Sept 2026

Back by popular demand, Jonny's backyard ultra is taking place in Blaise on September 26. The idea is to run as many loops of the 4-5 km loop as you can/ feel like in 12 hours. If you have never run a loop race before, it's very social with everyone re-grouping on the hour to set off again. And there will be plenty of food and drink to keep you going.



TACH Kit



New to TACH? Want to look the part representing TACH when you run your next event? You can order any of the items below from George Hancu , our friendly Kit Meister (modelling the short-sleeved t-shirt in the photo), by emailing kit@tach.club. Or you chat to him when you next see him. George also organises a bulk order of TACH hoodies from time to time which come in a very attractive range of colours and styles for only approximately £20. If you want to be notified next time a hoodie order is happening, please do let George know.

Classic T (£18) 	Summer vest (£16) 	Long-sleeved top (£19) 
Buff (£5) 	Mug (£5) 	



TACH Championship Points

Compiled by Tom Houseago, TACH Captain

Championship points recognise TACH members who lead runs, help at events, and write articles for Rough Running News. The points system is as follows:

- 1 point for leading a run
- 2 points for first time leading a run
- 1 point for volunteering to help at a TACH event (marshalling, course setting, etc)
- 2 points for writing a Rough Running News article

Five TACH-ers share the glory in Q2 with three points each - Tom Hunt, Alex Smith, Martin Cott, Jonathan Gledson and Chris Hill-Scott.

General Club Information

Leading a TACH run

The club relies on its members to lead its weekly social runs every Thursday. If you want to give it a go, you just need to think about your favourite regular route and nominate a local pub (it doesn't have to have food). If you need more information, chat to the runmeisters Emily and Jenny (runmeister@tach.club) or some recent run leaders in the pub, or have a look at the guide on <https://tach.club> for leading runs.

Liftsharing groups

TACH has several liftsharing groups across Bristol to help us all to get to our club runs in a more sociable, decongesting way. Current liftsharing groups are in the following areas:

- South Bristol
- North Bristol
- East Bristol
- Long Ashton
- Cliftonwood, Clifton and Hotwells

If you'd like to join any of these liftshare groups, please do ask around when you're next on a run to find someone who belongs to one of these groups, so you can be invited to join the relevant WhatsApp group. If you'd like to set up a group in an area not listed, or there are enough people to form a smaller sub-group, please do take the initiative – these groups are



all self-managing. You can contact comms@tach.club if you want to promote a new liftsharing group through our regular weekly emails, which can then also be added to this list for the next edition of Rough Running News.

Know your committee

Club Captain: Tom Houseago - captain@tach.club

Chair: Helen King - chair@tach.club

Secretary: Emma Truner - secretary@tach.club

Treasurer: Jonny Riley - treasurer@tach.club

Webmeister: Tom Hunt - website@tach.club

Race Committee Chair: Luke Taylor - races@tach.club

Social Secretary: vacant - social@tach.club

Membership Secretary: Pawel Baranowski - membership@tach.club

Run Meisters: Jenny Crouch and Emily Griffiths - runmeister@tach.club

Kit Meister: George Hancu - kit@tach.club

Rough Running News Editors/ Commsmeisters: Alex Smith and Sarah Smith
- comms@tach.club