



**Town and
Country
Harriers
(TACH)**

ROUGH RUNNING NEWS

November 2025

Letter from the Chair

It's been another fabulous year of running for the club since I took over as TACH Committee Chair last November. This summer we've had the successful Purdown Pursuit and Keynsham Dandy. Both races sold out, and we received excellent feedback from the participants and shared profits with local charities, further cementing our annual series of races as firm favourites in the Bristol (and beyond!) trail running calendar. We have been trialling the use of chip timing (Purdown Pursuit and Keynsham Dandy) and trackers (Butcombe Trail Ultra), which have proved useful additions to our race organisation arsenal. As always, a big thank you to the Race Directors and marshals for their hard work and commitment.



Our members have been taking part in all sorts of adventures this summer, formally organised and self-led. You can read about Matt Claydon's epic achievement in this edition of Rough Running News, as he became the first TACHer to enter and finish the iconic [UTMB 100M](#) (kudos for waving a TACH flag as he crossed the finish line).



As the nights draw in, we're still all out there doing our thing and we have several events to look forward to over the winter and in the New Year. This month we have **TACH's 30th anniversary run** on Thursday 6 November at The Angel, Long Ashton and the **AGM** on 13 November. The annual **Twelfth Night Party** is taking place on Saturday 10 January 2026 with food, awards, a band and general conviviality – looking forward to seeing you there!

Helen King, TACH Committee Chair

Editors' Note

Welcome to Rough Running News for November 2025. Meet regular TACHer and outgoing Membership Secretary Hannah Tracey, read Matt Claydon's remarkable account of his 100-mile UTMB experience, find out about TACH Committee roles before the AGM, pick up some handy tips about cakes and shoes from fellow runners, and peruse the events schedule for some new race ideas.



Sarah

We always welcome contributions, so if you'd like to share some thoughts with fellow TACH members, why not send us something for the next edition? Deadline is 31 March 2026. Also, let us know any suggestions for how we can improve TACH communications. Speak to us on a run, or email comms@tach.club



Tricia



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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 March 2026**

Please send your articles, photos or anything else you want to see included to

comms@tach.club

Thank you 😊



Meet a TACHer

Hannah Tracey

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

I joined TACH in 2020 literally just before the pandemic hit. I think I managed about two runs before we went into lockdown! When the pod runs started up, I went to almost every single one, and I absolutely loved it. I've now been Secretary for three years, and it's been brilliant to be more involved in such a great and inclusive committee. This role really suited my love of organisation and paperwork. However, due to my work commitments, I will be sadly standing down this year. But I am sure to be back once life is slightly less crazy!



What led you to take up trail running?

I didn't actually start running until my 20s. I was never really into sports growing up. In university, I joined the Swansea University Canoe Club, a sport which involved a lot of sitting down and drinking. A colleague persuaded me to try Couch to 5K, and that's what got me hooked! Since then, I've completely fallen in love with running and being outdoors. I quickly worked my way up to marathons and then ultras, and (not sure if I've mentioned it!) but I've even completed an IronMan. But trail running is my real passion. I just love being out in the wild!

What's your favourite distance and type of terrain?

Anything long - I could honestly run all day if you let me! And probably somewhere in the mountains like Scotland.

What's your favourite bit of running kit, and why?

Shorts! It basically has to be snowing for me to wear anything else.

What work do you do?

I'm an Associate Ecologist and Team Lead for the Southern region (which, confusingly, covers everything from Birmingham southwards!). I started my career chasing bats and newts around the country from Cumbria to Gravesend and now focus on large-scale habitat restoration and creation projects that support Biodiversity Net Gain. Although I still love being outdoors surveying beautiful habitats, in reality I now spend a lot of time on Teams calls trying to corral a bunch of wild ecologists into doing their jobs properly!

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

I recently read *The Lost Rainforests of Britain* by Guy Shrubsole. I am very passionate about Britain's habitats and wildlife. We have so much on our doorstep. This book really showcases that.

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

I am at my happiest in Scotland so would love to spend a summer there just running around the mountains.



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

Believe in yourself - those longer distances might seem intimidating, but if you just keep moving, you'll surprise yourself with what's possible.

What's your favourite thing about TACH?

Without a doubt, the people. TACH is genuinely the friendliest, most welcoming club ever. It feels like a big trail-running family.

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

I have so many favourites, but one that really stands out starts from The Swan in Rowberrow. It takes you up over Beacon Batch and down through Dolebury Warren. It's a beautiful mix of open views and woodland. I also volunteer there doing dormouse surveys, so it's a spot that's particularly special to me.

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

- Mud
- Sunrises
- bluebells
- 5am alarm
- cider
- hills (down)
- sunsets
- hills (up)
- marshalling
- races
- nettles
- gels
- black toenails (although never had one!)
- cows
- ticks
- getting lost





Race report

UTMB Race Report By Matt Claydon

Advance warning - this is rather long and detailed! But I've been writing it over the two months since the race and with my memories already fading, for my own benefit I want to put down everything I can remember.

If you're interested in the race but don't want to read 19 pages, check out my YouTube video [here](#). For those who do have the patience, watching the video before or after reading (or both) should add a bit of life to my description. Grab a drink, get comfortable, and read on...

Prologue

I'll try to keep this bit short(ish), as I'm sure most of you want to hear about the race, but this event feels like the culmination of my trail running journey and so it's nice to set the context. As you'll get from this prologue, I owe this achievement largely to TACH, so want to do justice to how I got here. If you want to skip to the race, it's about four pages on...

This journey started on Boxing Day 2014 when, having been largely sedentary for some time, I signed up for the short-lived Bristol to Bath Marathon. I ran that on 25 October 2015 and whilst I finished, the strain of training and the physical impact of the race put me off running for the next six months or so.

In early summer 2016 I decided it was time to start running again, but I had no interest in pounding the pavements and so bought a pair of knobbly shoes and started planning my own countryside runs south of Bristol. I really enjoyed this and didn't really know trail running was much of a thing, but in researching what off-road events might exist to spice things up, I first came across the Butcombe Ultra and then TACH. After putting it off a few times, I plucked up the courage to join my first TACH run on 20 October 2016 from The Angel in Long Ashton.

Skip forward a year via the Gordano Round, Green Man 30, Rok the Stones, Green Goddess, CTS Exmoor, Double Gordano Round, BTU50, Ham & Lyme 50k, and countless other runs long and short with TACH friends, Michelle and I found ourselves in Chamonix at the end of August 2018 having made a last-minute decision to tag along with a bunch of TACHers who had travelled out for UTMB week. A year before, Sam Edwards and Liz Noakes had been the first TACHers at UTMB when they ran the 100km CCC, and this year Lucien Campbell-Kemp was giving it a try. We were all there to cheer him on.

I'd barely heard of UTMB at this point, and despite having now run lots of ultras, the idea of a mountain 100km with 6000+m of elevation seemed completely nuts to me. But I was blown away by the landscapes, intoxicated by the Chamonix atmosphere, and inspired by Lucien's achievement, and so decided I had to experience the event. At this point UTMB hadn't become what it is today, and entry was via a simple ballot with about a 50% chance of getting a place. I was nevertheless surprised to get in, so had to set about getting mountain-fit with regular trips to the Brecon Beacons, lots of hill sessions (thanks Jarek and Emila), and a trip to Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany for a final big weekend of alpine training. I



struggled through the CCC in August 2019, not helped by having the remnants of a cold including a hacking cough, but was immensely proud to finish - cheered across the line by a huge TACH support crew. This photo of me crossing the line with Sam and Simon carrying a TACH banner behind me, and the TACH crew in the background (both of which I was oblivious to at the time), is a really cherished memory.



At this point I was sure that CCC would be my longest race, and as we watched the UTMB runners finishing a day later I couldn't really comprehend how they could do 100 miles of this when I'd felt CCC was at the absolute limit of what was possible. The next few years didn't entirely go to plan, but for me went something like this:

2020: Global pandemic, no UTMB. Holidayed in Garmisch twice after borders were reopened and then, perhaps somewhat rashly, sold up and moved there!

2021: Entered and started TDS, race was stopped 65km in following a fatality

2022: Entered TDS, broke spine in a sledging 'incident', pulled out of TDS

2023: Completed TDS (155km, 8500m)

A lot had changed in this time, in particular UTMB had got so popular and commercialised that the 'big three' races in Chamonix had become the "World Series Finals" and now required a complex and expensive circus of qualification to get into. Nevertheless, I'd been playing their game since 2021 and had enough 'running stones' for a reasonable chance in the ballot; I put my name in the hat for UTMB but unfortunately was unsuccessful. So, in 2024, the TACH interest in Chamonix was supporting Michelle in TDS, which she completed in much more style (and a rather shorter time) than I had the year before.

Fast forward to this year, and with a few more stones in the pot (15), I got an email on 16 January saying "you have been selected for the UTMB". Eeek!

Training

I have three main strategies, which seem to enable me to get away with 'just about enough' training to get me to the finish line of a big race:

- 8-900m vertical gain hikes wearing a 10kg pack, one or two times per week in the three months leading up to a race – weighted training is my secret weapon, and I really recommend it to anyone doing events with serious elevation. If you don't have the luxury of a cable car descent, carry water and empty it out at the top.
- Joining Michelle on as many long runs as possible, especially in the winter when my own motivation is lacking – I'm very lucky to have someone so motivated to drag me out and do what needs to be done.
- Being well-rested by race day; there's an old adage that it's better to be 10% undertrained than 10% overtrained – 'overtrained' isn't likely to be a risk, but lots of



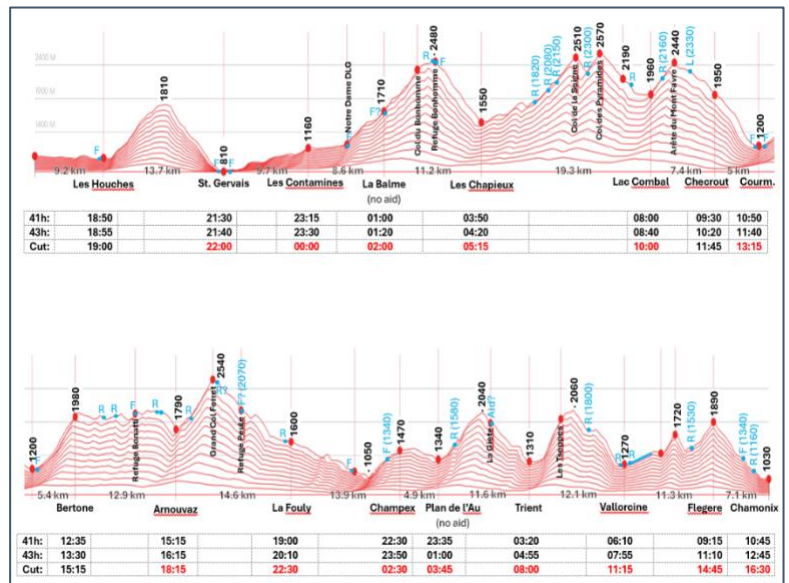
miles in the last two weeks are not going to get you fitter and will just mean you're tired on the start line.

Race Prep

I knew this was going to be on the edge of what was possible for me, and so it was important to try to stack the cards in my favour in every way possible. I've always done a lot of 'admin' prep for races - planning out my schedules in detail and producing timing charts and profiles to carry with me on the race. My approach is to have three target schedules - a realistic goal, a stretch goal, and 'just finish within cut-off'. Having the detailed timings for all three schedules means there's no complex mental arithmetic to be doing, no risk of making mistakes, and I always know what to expect next and what I have to achieve in the moment.

I also like to have a copy of the race profile with every summit, valley and checkpoint marked with its altitude. My watch screen for a big mountain race has only four items on it: time of day, current altitude, current air temperature, and battery level. All of these data are deliberately about the here-and-now - I don't want to know how far I've gone, or how far there is to go.

The watch data complement the timing chart, so at any given time I'm only thinking about "where am I", "what's the next high point / low point / aid station" and "when do I need to get there".



For UTMB, one of my main concerns was high temperatures and water availability. So, in addition to the usual data, I also added every stream crossing, water trough, and lake to the profile in blue. I didn't want to be carrying more water than necessary and wanted to be able to know how far I would need to go if I was out of fluids at any point. I got this data from a mixture of map/satellite image browsing, and first-person videos of a complete lap of UTMB. Watching [these videos](#) was also great for learning about the terrain and what to expect (side note - OCC and CCC videos also available from the same channel).

Apart from this data, my other main preparation was avoiding my usual hectic work travel schedule for a month or two, to minimise the chances of catching an illness and have a somewhat healthier lifestyle in the final weeks before the race.



Start

And so, five pages in, we finally get to race day! For the previous six years, a TACH contingent had travelled to Chamonix for UTMB week, but this year it was just me and Michelle so we didn't arrive until Thursday - the day before the start. This was good, as it's not much fun arriving in Chamonix at the start of UTMB week and then having to wait all week being 'sensible' because you have a race at the back end. It also minimised my chances of catching any illness right before race day.

I registered on Thursday afternoon - a fairly typical affair, but with a level of formality and grandeur befitting a race with 2,700 runners. I spent the rest of Thursday and most of Friday constantly checking the weather forecast and doing final kit prep and packing. And repacking.

The start was brought forward by 15 minutes this year because the course had been extended in the section out of Chamonix due to a rockfall. There are no start waves for UTMB, and although I expected to be generally running toward the back of the field, I didn't want to get disadvantaged by early bottlenecks, so I arrived in the start area at Place du Triangle de l'Amite about an hour before the start to get myself a spot somewhere in the middle of the pack. From here I could see the big screen showing the elites arriving one-by-one, and the atmosphere really started to build.

In the final few minutes before the start, as Conquest of Paradise by Vangelis (the 'UTMB theme tune') started to play, everyone edged forward and the first few droplets of rain could be felt. The start itself was predictably epic, with 2,700 runners storming through the pedestrian zone of Chamonix, lined by many thousands of cheering supporters for several kilometres. For me, like many of us, trail running is largely about solitude and peace; but as a one-off, there can't be a more exciting and energetic start to a trail race anywhere in the world, and it's truly a privilege to experience it from the runner's side.



Chamonix - St. Gervais (23km / 1,080m↑) - Les Chapieux (52km / 2,890m↑)

About 1km into the race, just outside Snell Sports and still in the big throng of supporters, I got a high five from Mich; from here onwards I was on my own until I expected to see her



again for my first supported checkpoint at Courmayeur. The cheering crowds continued right through Chamonix and its outskirts, and the rain started to fall heavily as they thinned out a few kilometres in. The air was still warm, and I was comfortable in the shorts and t-shirt I'd started in, but I quickly started to worry about the consequences of getting soaked-through. About halfway through the first leg, instead of continuing along the normal route which follows the north bank of the river directly to Les Houches, this year we were diverted due to a landslide and so crossed the river to the south - a diversion which adds 2km and 200m of climbing.

Les Houches is the first checkpoint and the crowds of supporters reappeared there in force, but the race pack is still so dense that the only facilities provided are a lot of water taps and a few benches with energy drinks. I'd not planned to stop here anyway but did take the time to refill the flask I'd drunk during the first hour. By now the rain had stopped, and although wet-through I was optimistic that perhaps the 6+ hours of rain that had been forecast had all come in 45 minutes.

Shortly after Les Houches we finally leave the tarmac and begin the first significant climb – 600m up on dirt roads through a ski area to Col de Voza, before descending to the ski town of St Gervais. On the ascent there was still a lot of support from groups cheering at various small mountain huts / refuges, and the crowds really built again coming into St Gervais. This was the first really significant checkpoint, with the full spread of food options expected – hot and cold drinks, biscuits, cakes, cured meat, cheese, crackers etc. I didn't stop for long, but refilled bottles and took a few cubes of cheese and some crackers to nibble on the way out of the town.

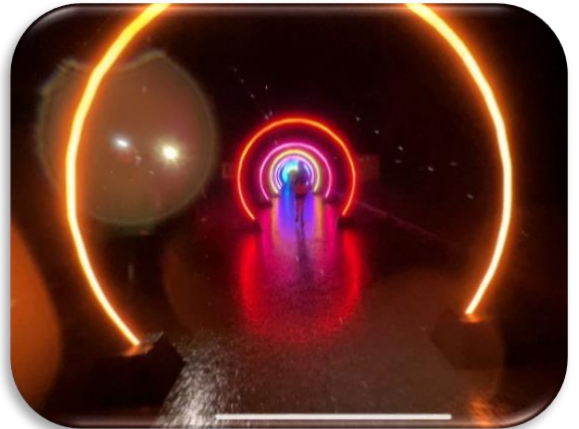


It was fully dark now, and the next leg to Les Contamines was more or less a continuous gentle climb following a river, ascending 450m in 10km. At Les Contamines the checkpoint was split into two tents – the first one was only for runners with all the food and drinks, whilst the second one allowed runners to have a supporter come in to assist (support is only allowed at selected checkpoints on UTMB). I spent a few minutes in the first tent stocking up on supplies, and as I moved to the second tent it started raining heavily again. This was good timing, as it meant I could stop and layer-up in the dry. I



wasn't cold, but it seemed prudent and later on I was very glad to have done so.

I didn't stop long at Les Contamines as the second tent was very busy and there was no space to sit down. Leaving here felt slightly ominous – it was now torrential rain, around midnight, and I was heading out into the more remote parts of the course where there would be far fewer people. I did have one more highlight to look forward to – the famous atmosphere in Notre Dame de la Gorge. Coming into Notre Dame there is the 'Hoka light tunnel', a slightly incongruous installation in the middle of nowhere, but it appeared that earlier in the evening there had been a Hoka party venue here, with big crowds cheering the elites though.



Leaving Notre Dame there's a steep climb on a rough concreted track, and videos from UTMB always show this as one of the most lively places on the course – a tunnel of supporters with music, costumes and red flares. Sadly, by the time I got there, the crowds seemed to have been put off by the weather and there were only a few hardy people in full waterproofs with umbrellas still out cheering. This really was the last support before heading into the depths of the night and real remoteness, so the hardcore who'd stayed out this late were much appreciated.

In previous years there has been a remote checkpoint about halfway between Les Contamines and Les Chapieux, at Refuge La Balme. However, for the first time this year, the La Balme checkpoint was removed, so this leg was now 21km with 1300m ascent. Despite putting on extra clothes at Les Contamines, a little before La Balme I became very cold and realised I needed to stop and put more warm layers on. Without the checkpoint at La Balme I took the opportunity, along with several others, to stop at a small plateau where there was an information board with a tiny roof to shelter under. I already had my leggings, merino top, beanie and waterproof jacket on, so the extra layers I had left were my waterproof trousers, another merino top, neck buff and gloves. All these went on, and I was very glad that my waterproof trousers unzip all the way so I could put them on without taking off my shoes. It was still very awkward trying to do this whilst standing in a bog in heavy rain, and it probably took ten or more minutes before I was ready to set off again (a pattern that continues!). Annoyingly, about 10 minutes later I reached Refuge La Balme, and whilst there wasn't a proper checkpoint there was a big shelter with floodlights and benches - this would have been a much easier place to do my layering-up.



After La Balme, we continued up the climb to Col Du Bonhomme at 2480m elevation, and although the rain had finally stopped, there was now about 5cm of fresh snow on the ground (and the associated mud bath underfoot on the trail). I distinctly remember feeling amused at this point by the amount of effort I put into researching potential water sources, as I knew there was a trough behind the refuge but more water was the last thing I needed right now! From Col du Bonhomme it's a 1000m descent to Les Chapieux, and finally a chance to rest and reset.

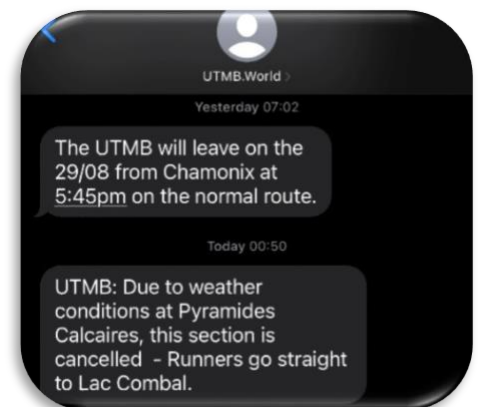


Les Chapieux - Lac Combal (71km / 4,200m↑) - Courmayeur (83km / 4,700m↑)

It was still dark when I finally arrived at Les Chapieux, and whilst 52km and nearly 3000m of climbing is always going to be tough, I really felt like the conditions had taken their toll. The aid station here is large and heated, with plenty of space, and so I took my time to have a good rest and recover. Everyone around me was covered in mud, and I seemed to be one of the only people who hadn't fallen over in it at some point, but staying upright was definitely quite an effort.

Because the 'cold weather kit' had been activated, I had one more layer in my pack that I hadn't worn yet. It was still very cold outside, but no longer raining, so I took off a couple of soggy layers and put the dry one on, hanging the other layers on the outside of my pack in an attempt to dry them out a bit. I also put on fresh, dry socks (not on the kit list, but worth every gram!)

Whilst at Les Chapieux, I got an SMS saying that the course has been modified to remove the section to 'Les Pyramides'. This is good news to me, as it's a totally unnecessary diversion off the TMB route which takes in some very rocky and little-used paths up and down between Les Chapieux and Lac Combal. One of my worries coming into the race was that they'd shorten the course for some reason, and so I wouldn't really have 'done UTMB'; in this case however, it's a stupid detour and not much different in statistics than what was added in the first leg, so I don't feel bad for having missed it!





I've little memory of the descent to Lac Combal, but I do recall it getting light and seeing the sun shining on the other side of the valley. After 12 hours of generally atrocious weather, sunlight was such a welcome sight. I was still cold and wet coming into the tent at Lac Combal at 7:50am, and although it was warm inside and I had some hot soup, I didn't stop for too long because what I really wanted was to get into some sunshine.

Lac Combal to Courmayeur is quite a short section – 12.5km with 500m ascent and a small checkpoint halfway. As I started the gentle climb out of Lac Combal it was still very cold and we

were in the shade of the mountains, but I could tell that at any moment we would emerge into the sunshine. Finally there was a gap in the slope and trees through which the sun appeared, and I stepped off the trail onto the grass and basked in the morning sunshine – this immediately started to warm me up, and I took off the remaining wet layers. A few more minutes and I finally stopped feeling cold; after so many hours of deep unpleasantness, I was finally ready to start enjoying this race!





I briefly stopped for a cup of Coke and some cheese and biscuits at the small checkpoint (Checrouit) before the descent to Courmayeur and then headed down the twisty and very steep descent. The last couple of kilometres are through the backstreets of Courmayeur, and then finally I reached the 'halfway' checkpoint (as have you – go and get a refill!).

It's very well organised here, and as you enter the sports centre there's a snake of metal racks with everyone's drop bags in numerical order. My number was quite high, but the marshals had seen me on the way down the first row and as I walked back up the other side a marshal had found my bag and handed it to me. I rounded the corner and saw Michelle and Mum waiting for me at the barrier; a truly welcome sight!



Courmayeur - La Fouly (116km / 6,700m↑) - Champex Lac (130km / 7,300m↑)

As I write this, six weeks after the race, most of both the physical and psychological pain has faded into the past, but in the days after the race I particularly recall feeling that it was very much a race of two halves. The first half was unpleasant because of the weather conditions, and the second half was unpleasant because of how much pain I was in. Not much of it was fun! On reflection though, the section from Courmayeur to Arnouvaz (with one minor exception) was probably the bit of the race that I enjoyed the most as the weather was now lovely, my body was still moving pretty well, and I think this section along Val Ferret is the most stunning part of the course.



I wanted to go to the toilet at Courmayeur, but there was a big queue and so I decided it could wait until the small checkpoint after the climb to Refugio Bertone. When I reached Bertone though, I was told the only toilets were back down the hill at the restaurant 20-30m below. I didn't want any unnecessary extra elevation, so pressed on. I stopped briefly at Refugio Bonatti, which used to be a checkpoint but isn't any more, and filled up water from their fountain. Arnouvaz was about another 5km along the undulating balcony trail, but a couple of hundred metres above the checkpoint my toilet needs couldn't wait any longer and so I found a place to leave the trail and crouch in the bushes. My good packing helped here, as I had both loo paper and a bag to put it in easily to hand, but nevertheless taking a 'nature poo' is a surprisingly time-consuming experience!

After Arnouvaz, where it was really nice to briefly see Mum again, we started the big climb to Grand Col Ferret and then crossed the border into Switzerland. At the col I'd now covered 105km and 6600 metres of climbing, which is a bit more than the full CCC and so a daunting prospect that there was still 70km and another 3400m of climbing to go.



However, the weather here was simply beautiful, I was feeling pretty good under the circumstances, and it's a very long and mostly gentle descent down to the next checkpoint at La Fouly. Darkness arrived for the second night during this section, and upon entering a forest just before reaching the river in the valley that runs to La Fouly, I succumbed to the need to get my head torch out. I'd prepared for this by having it ready in a convenient pocket leaving Courmayeur (having swapped to a fresh battery there) but I was dismayed to find that it didn't work. I took my pack off and found the old battery, but that didn't work either. I persevered running for a bit, trying to use the light of others' torches, but eventually gave in. This is why the mandatory kit list required carrying two head torches, both with spare batteries. I stopped again, took my pack off, and using light from my phone I rummaged deep within the pack for the emergency gear pouch containing my spare torch. Wishing I'd done this when I could still see what I was looking for, I finally continued on down to La Fouly.

I spent most of this section worrying about what I would do if there was a kit check at La Fouly – I now didn't have two working torches, which in theory could lead to disqualification. Mich had a spare torch in my drop bag, but I wouldn't see her again until the following checkpoint at Trient. In the end, when I reached La Fouly, I fiddled around with the torch again and it magically started working. Good news, but this was an extra stress I could have done without!

Things were generally happening very slowly by now, and I spent more time than I really needed to in La Fouly. This was a pattern that was to continue, as at this point I'd acknowledged that any particular time goals were no longer relevant but that I was still comfortable I could finish within cutoff, so I used the time I felt I had at each checkpoint to mentally and physically recover.

The long gentle descent continues from La Fouly, with a few undulations along the way, and at the bottom you run through the pretty village of Praz de Fort. I remember this in the daylight on CCC, but in the small hours of the morning it didn't have much going for it. On my course profile I'd marked it as a place to get water, but I didn't need any so even that small highlight was denied! After Praz de Fort, we began the steep climb to Champex Lac and the next major checkpoint. The climb looks relatively short on the profile, but at this point, 500m feels like at least a thousand. I refreshed myself at a water trough that I knew was about three quarters of the way up, but what I hadn't remembered was a significant amount of traversing and some descent after that, which made the top, and therefore the checkpoint, take forever to get to.



I arrived at Champex and Mich was waiting for me outside, waving the TACH flag. I think I was probably as much a welcome sight to her as she was to me, as I'd taken a lot longer than expected and she'd been waiting in the cold for a long time. I walked in via the runners' entrance whilst she walked around the back to meet me, and just inside the tent I was greeted by a very friendly marshal who gave a lot of encouraging words about how there was plenty of time left, I was well within cutoff, and that I could do this. Of course, I already knew this deep down, but it was definitely a boost to hear kind words from a random stranger. I don't remember much else about the stop at Champex, but Mich helped me out with food, refills, a further sock-change and probably some other fresh clothing. I'm sure I stayed here longer than I really needed to, but Mich was balancing 'kind' and 'firm' very well.



Champex Lac - Trient (145km / 8,000m↑) - Vallorcine (157km / 8,900m↑)

I had faint memories of the section after Champex from CCC, with the first few kilometres being basically flat until reaching a timing / cutoff point at Plan de la Au. It's not clear why they have this cutoff, but on CCC I remember setting off up the climb (which was steep, rocky, and hard on the feet) and being able to see the endless trail of head torches disappearing into the heavens across the valley. This is pretty soul-destroying, and I saw a lot of people coming back down this hill having seen what was to come and giving up, so perhaps that's why there's a point where you can succumb to the pain and wait for a lift home. At least three people asked me at various points up this climb if we'd been through that checkpoint yet, as they were expecting an aid station. I'm not sure if they were glad to hear we had (and so were well on the way to Trient now) or disappointed (because the rest they were expecting imminently didn't exist). I was once again glad of my detailed time/distance chart.

I wasn't mistaken in my memory of how horrible this trail was. The rock is mostly granite, and the trail is very steep and strewn with between fist and football size rocks which make it very awkward and uncomfortable to hike. Partway up you follow a streambed for 100m or so which requires significant concentration stepping between rocks to avoid a foot-soaking.





The climb continues for about 750 vertical metres, and after a few hundred metres descent I reached 'La Giete'. This is marked on the race information as just a timing / cutoff point, but I knew that in fact there are always hot / cold drinks here, plus shelter. I was cold and feeling pretty terrible, so really looked forward to a cup or two of hot soup. They did indeed have soup, but on taking a sip it was completely cold and so I chucked it out the



doorway. I'm not sure whether it was the disappointment at the lack of soup or general fatigue that had hit me, but I sat down to refill one of my soft flasks with drink powder and probably ended up sitting for 10-15 minutes while I summoned the courage to get going again. It was 04:30 now though, and I did mentally note that the sun would be up within the next couple of hours and so things should start to seem happier again.

The descent continues from La Giete, and eventually I was at a short climb before the trail briefly joins a road at Col de la Forclaz. The elite runners experience a huge crowd here; I heard some noise and was surprised to think supporters were still out, but it turned out to be a farmer beginning milking at about 5am. I also remember his cows had made a right mess of the trail.

Trient is famous for its pink church, and as I finally reached the bottom of the steep switchback descent, I could see it in the village across the road; after crossing, I was intercepted by the very welcome sight of Mich. She'd been sleeping in the 'base camp' - a hostel commandeered for the night by UTMB and available to supporters to grab a few hours' sleep in a real bed. It turned out



the chip timing hadn't clocked me at La Giete, and so she thought I was further behind than I was. She realised this at the last minute, and I found out later that she'd arrived at the checkpoint only a few minutes before I did.

Trient was the second point I needed a 'proper' toilet stop, and fortunately there was a trailer with loos just outside the checkpoint. The obvious row of cubicle doors were all engaged, but I realised there was a second row around the back. A combination of fatigue, the tiny size of the cubicle, and the complication of race clothing and pack led to me again spending far longer than needed doing my business, and a shout from Mich outside asking if I was still awake spurred me to finish up and get on with things!



Trient is famous for having a party atmosphere - there's a bar for supporters and a DJ, and I do remember being livened up a little by the buzz. I don't recall exactly what I did here, or how long I stayed, but I probably changed socks and shirt once again as this would be the last time I'd see Mich before the finish. I also asked her to take a picture as I'd had no photos at checkpoints up to now.



I ditched all the gear that wasn't mandatory here, to shrink my pack as much as possible for the last two legs. It was close to dawn when I left, but I wasn't sure if there might still be dark sections for a bit after the checkpoint, so I put my spare headtorch back on. This was a waste of time, as within about five minutes out of the checkpoint it was very obviously now full daylight.

The route is flat for a couple of kilometres out of Trient and then heads steeply uphill. From CCC I remembered this being a steady 'keep putting one foot in front of the other' grind, but as soon as we started climbing, I was taken aback by the steepness. My left Achilles was really unhappy, and with 8500m of climbing done, every step was a real struggle. Having reviewed the course post-race I realised they'd changed the course here – what used to be two or three very long steady switchbacks was now a 2km flat run followed by a long climb directly up the fall line that gains 600 metres in its middle 2km. Not what you need this far into a race. But worse was to come...

At the top of this climb the heat of the day started to hit, and I briefly stopped to strip down to vest and shorts. This was my penultimate clothing change and by now I'd probably spent well over an hour, maybe two, adding and removing layers during the race.

The descent to Vallorcine was uneventful, but my knees were really protesting now. Despite the steepness I was still climbing at about the pace of my original 43h goal, but I was losing a lot of time on the descents and overall was now going slower than 'cutoff pace'; I had a couple of hours in-hand though, so could still afford this.

Another recent (and inexplicable) route change takes you on a very tortuous route coming into Vallorcine. I was looking forward to seeing Mum here though, and combined with the prospect of entering the final stretch, which starts with several kilometres of gentle hiking, gave me a somewhat renewed optimism.

**Vallorcine - Flegere (168km / 10,000m↑)**

Mich was taking a well-deserved few hours' kip in Chamonix before being ready to get up to greet me at the finish, so Mum was nominated as my support crew in Vallorcine. My (lack of) pace meant she was there rather earlier than expected, and I'd missed an SMS asking when I was due to arrive, so as I hobbled through the timing gate and into the checkpoint, I wasn't sure where she was. After a minute or so I found her in the crowd, and she filled up my flasks while I went for my third and final toilet stop. There were only two loos, one ladies' and one men's, so I



had to wait a while for my turn. At the back of a pack of 2000+ runners, the 'throw some sawdust on it' type of dry portaloos are pretty aromatic, and combined with a stiff body, a load of gear, and a general lack of energy to do anything, I once again took rather longer than was probably really needed.

But after another couple of minutes putting a fresh TACH vest on, drinking a Coke, and saying bye to Mum, I was finally ready for the final leg. 18km and 935m ascent – only ten per cent left, how hard could this be?

The first few kilometres out of Vallorcine were exactly as I remembered and expected, gently ascending through fields, following the river and railway line. As the sun properly hit me a couple of kilometres in, I realised that given I now wasn't going to finish until mid-afternoon, I needed to stop and apply some suncream. Another avoidable delay if I'd done this while resting earlier, and what felt like a minute or two was probably ten.



The 'old' route that I was familiar with from CCC turns off the flat trail and ascends steeply from Col de Montes to Tete au Vents, before traversing at altitude with a few undulations to the last checkpoint at Flegere. A few years ago, the route was changed to continue along the valley and take a different ascent route, which initially seems less arduous than the original. However, instead of a continuous ascent, it now goes up about 500m, descends 200m, and then goes up another 400m or so. The descent and traverse in the middle are indescribably unpleasant – an endless gauntlet of technical, rocky clambering - up, down and along. I'd read race reports, seen videos, and had a first-hand account, but I still wasn't prepared for just how tough and slow this was. There was a medical crew at the bottom of the scrambly descent, presumably because of the high likelihood of injuries; future runners beware – keep some energy in reserve for this section!

Many people describe hallucinating on 24h+ ultras. I'd not experienced this before, but on the final section I started to succumb to some odd brain activity. I didn't see anything as vivid as lions running across the trail, but I started to see non-existent detail in my



peripheral vision – it's really hard to describe, but it just seemed like there were patterns or significances at the side of the trail, which always turned out to be just rocks or plants.

I knew that once I'd got through the technical section and onto the final ascent, I would emerge onto a wide gravel ski piste where I would have a final 200-300m ascent up to Flegere. Before getting there, I kept seeing through the trees what looked like a snow cannon or a lift station, but each time I got closer it just turned out to be a large rock or group of trees.

When I finally did reach the piste, I took a quick photo stop by the trail sign and then set about grinding my way up the gravelly slope. I was still going pretty strongly on the ascents and overtook several people in the next kilometre or two. The atmosphere and crowds started to build as I approached the checkpoint at Flegere lift station, and I had a nice chat with a supporter who walked with me for the last few minutes before the checkpoint.



During the descent to Vallorcine, and then the tough section to Flegere, I'd started to genuinely worry about how much time I was losing, but I knew that although there's technically a finish line cutoff, they always let people finish after that as long as they have made it through Flegere within the time limit there. So, for some time my mind had been completely focussed on Flegere as the real 'finish line'. I was so pleased to get there, and comfortable that however painful it would be, I'd get down, I stopped for maybe ten minutes to drink a few Colas, eat some snacks, and absorb the realisation that I was going to do this!



Flegere - Chamonix (176km / 10,000m↑)

Leaving the Flegere tent, I stopped for a moment to take this photo with Mont Blanc in the background. Given the conditions this race started in, I was so happy to be able to enjoy this stunning weather and scenery for the final push.

I was really hobbling by now – for some time my knees had been so sore that on any downhill I could do little more than walk, using my poles as crutches. Uphill was equally slow due to fatigue, so the only time I could do anything that might be described as a ‘run’ was on the flat, which is in short supply until the final two kilometres into Chamonix.



Also at this point I started to exchange messages with my various online support crew - I didn't care about time anymore, I knew I was going to finish and I wanted both to share the experience with friends and take any excuse to stop or slow down for a bit.

I'd looked forward to running through the terrace at the La Floria chalet halfway down, as every year the TACH crew gather here to sink a few carafes of rosé and cheer runners through, along with a hoard of other supporters. So I was a little disappointed to find only a handful of people there and muted support; I initially put this down to the lack of TACH, but quickly realised that I was so late, everyone had already left to be at the finish line for the last hour!

From Flegere to La Floria is steep and technical, much more so than I remembered, but after the chalet the gradient flattens to a gravel road that can just about be driven in a 4x4. It was an interesting mix here – I overtook many people who were hobbling much worse than I was, but also got overtaken by many others who were still running nicely. It's busy with supporters on this section and I was kept busy thanking everyone who cheered me on. At the bottom, I reached the final obstacle of the UTMB – the sting in the tail that the official stats lie about. There's a road crossing at the bottom of the descent, and although it's not that busy, in recent years they've built a scaffolding bridge over the road so that tired runners don't have to cross at road level. This involves three flights of stairs – probably only ten vertical metres, but the stats say 0m of climbing after Flegere so it's an unpleasant surprise if you don't know it's there! From the top of the bridge there's a magnificent view of Mont Blanc and you know from there you really are on the home straight.

Finish

After the scaffolding bridge you cross the river and are then finally on the last stretch to the finish line. A kilometre or so through the outskirts of Chamonix and then back across the river before arriving at the High Street and (at least when you finish as late as I am) a huge crowd of supporters cheering for the last 500m through the town and around to the finish.

As well as losing time on the descents exchanging messages with friends, I also spend some time working out how to hold my TACH flag as I ran across the finish – after nearly two full days of running,



I didn't want it to be upside down or back-to-front! I unfurled the flag before the final wiggle before the finish line and prepared to soak up this once-in-a-lifetime moment of glory.



When I finished TDS two years before, and Mich joined me at the finish line, I burst into tears with the sheer relief of it being over. I was fully prepared for the same this time but for reasons I can't put my finger on, the emotions of finishing UTMB were different - maybe I'd already done my emotional release up at Flegere when I realised I'd done it; maybe the chatting with TACHers on WhatsApp on the descent brought me back into the real world a bit; or maybe I was simply too tired. In the video you see I nearly fall over when trying to stand still and take in the finish line.

Mich and Mum were both there to cheer me across the line, and I staggered with them back to Place du Triangle where I'd been waiting to start nearly 48h earlier. Mich unfolded a camping chair for me to collapse into, and I took off my race bib which she then took to redeem for the two most important things – my UTMB finisher's gilet, and a cold beer; a sandwich bag full of Tuc biscuits and local cheese completed the trilogy of immediate needs for a tired runner.

Our apartment was only a few hundred metres from the finish line, but up a very steep hill.





Mich helped by pushing me up, and after painfully removing my clothes and taking a shower, I collapsed into bed to grab a couple of hours of sleep. Later on, two beers, a lasagne, and lots of bread completed the evening before I finally collapsed to catch up on two nights of missed sleep.

Epilogue

It's an overused word these days, but I have no hesitation in describing UTMB as simply epic. It's far from the toughest 100-mile mountain race out there, but the combination of the difficulty in getting to the start line, magnificent landscapes, unpredictable weather, and incredible atmosphere at the start, finish, and around the course make this truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



I've finished most of my big ultras saying "never again", for a day or two, but before long thinking about when to give them another crack. Almost two months after UTMB I'm still in no hurry to go back. This was a box I wanted - needed - to tick, and will be one of my proudest achievements, but for the time being I'm going to stick to things slightly less painful.

Three weeks after UTMB I ran the 26km race at Wildstrubel and finished in the top 25%. It's a long way from the adventure of a 46-hour mountain epic, but clearly something I'm more suited to! In 2026 I'm looking forward to sticking to shorter events and social runs, but despite the pain I know it will cause, a repeat of TDS in better style is still on my wish list sometime in the future. And then there's the PTL...

Don't forget to check out my race video [here](#). Best of luck to all other TACHers who aspire to UTMB or one of the other races in Chamonix - I wish you good fortune in the lottery and can assure you of a fantastic experience once you get there. Finally, another huge thank you to everyone who inspired and helped me to get here, and in particular to Mich.



TACH Committee roles information for the AGM

Resume of TACH Committee roles in the words of the incumbents!

The TACH AGM takes place this year on Thursday 13 November 2025. All committee positions are open, and any individual from the club may stand to be considered for any role. Those committee members who are definitely standing down this year have been identified below.

Club Captain - Tom Houseago

Club captain is a great role. I see this role as mainly being a friendly face on Thursday runs, welcoming and getting to know new members. Main responsibilities are organising TACH entries to Cotswold Way Relay and keeping track of the club's championship points. This year we had two teams running Uphill to Wells as well. Attending committee meetings and presenting a captain's report is also part of the role. There is scope to do more, for the right person.

Chair - Helen King

TACH Chair is the overall coordinator of the TACH Committee. The formal duties are chairing the Committee meetings - normally quarterly - and the AGM. In-between it's: helping anyone else on the Committee if they need some support; nudging and prompting Committee folks to make sure we do the stuff we need to do; being a point of contact for all Club members should any incidents arise; generally making sure TACH stays a great running club. There could be liaison with other Clubs and organisations but this hasn't come up much. The overall time commitment is not that great and with lots of great folks on the Committee then the workload is quite well spread. Committee meetings can be scheduled to suit, but there is a small aspect of being 'on call' should any incidents arise.

Secretary - Hannah Tracey (standing down)

As Secretary to the TACH Committee, the main responsibility is supporting the Chair and documenting Committee business. As an 'officer' of the club, the Secretary has responsibility for contributing to the management of the club. The main role is organising committee meetings (normally quarterly) and the AGM. Prior to the meeting, this involves agreeing dates, organising a suitable venue, pulling together the agenda including requesting committee reports and agenda items from each member of the committee and following up on any outstanding actions. At the meeting, take notes, clarify decisions and actions, contribute to discussions. Send around draft minutes from the meeting for corrections before sending out the final version. The AGM runs in a similar, but slightly different, format with timescales and documents looking a bit different but the premise is still the same. Other duties include organising our yearly membership to a governing body (currently Association of Running Clubs) which also provides our insurance, and generally helping out as and when needed.

Treasurer - Jonny Riley

The main role is to help the committee make decisions about the club's money. This is one of three mandatory committee positions, along with Chair and Secretary, for TACH to be registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club. The Treasurer does not need accounting



qualifications, but they should be interested in bookkeeping and willing to do the job for a few years. The current Treasurer will remain available to support a new treasurer with the annual accounts. The specific recurring duties are as follows:

- Process reimbursements for people
- Pay invoices
- Provide financial updates to the committee meetings
- Consolidate the annual accounts
- Present the annual accounts at the AGM.

WebMeister - Tom Hunt (happy to stand down if someone else is interested)

As TACH Tech Meister you are responsible for assisting with various platforms TACH uses.

- Domain and Email alias hosting
- Simple HTML for our website
- SiEntries for race admin and membership and bulk emails
- TACH Google Drive used for all TACH documents and useful information
- Admin of the Facebook group (this is a shared role)
- General assistance to members of TACH or committee less technically minded :)

It's more about keeping the various platforms working than content creation / editing. Sometimes this role can have long periods where everything "just works" and then a burst of activity. Most of the platforms are fairly simple for those immersed in the modern world. There is a lot of scope for creativity here if you are inclined.

Race Committee Chair - Luke Taylor

Bring together a race team to organise each race, which are Butcombe Trail Ultra, Purdown Pursuit and Keynsham Dandy. Purdown and Keynsham races require an event application to the respective councils, which the race director or chair can do. Help each race team organise the race and be the contact point between the race teams and the TACH committee. After each race, tidy up the race kit (stored in a TACH member's garage), order anything that we are running low on.

Social Secretary - Sharon Jones (standing down)

This role involves organising the annual Twelfth Night social event in January and the venue for the AGM in October. There is also scope for other social events such as a summer camp or BBQ and Grand Day Out style longer runs at the weekend.

Membership Secretary - Martin Cott (standing down)

Day to day tasks include answering questions from prospective members and approving people to join the Facebook group. There are a few annual tasks such as updating the welcome email and membership info on the website, giving the Facebook group a spring clean, and (in recent years) organising the members survey. Membership payments and registering key information are now all done online, so that looks after itself. As with all committee roles, there is flexibility to make the role your own, for example suggesting improvements, helping with new initiatives or ad hoc committee tasks, and welcoming new members on their first run.

RunMeister - Emily Griffiths (happy to stand down if someone else is interested) and Jenny Pitman

Co-ordinating and encouraging volunteer run leaders for weekly runs. Where possible trying to balance the type and location of runs across weeks (e.g. not run from the same



place in two consecutive weeks). Updating the Google spreadsheet of scheduled runs and run calendar and making sure there is a description of the weekly run to go out in the weekly email. Supporting prospective run leaders by answering questions and arranging buddying up. Opportunity to arrange runs further afield, but all dependent on members of the Club volunteering to lead runs.

Kit Meister - George Hancu (happy to stand down if someone else is interested)

It is a fun, straightforward role and a great way to get to know people in the club. Main duties include: storing and ordering the kit, selling and supplying it, often at Thursday open runs, and keeping stock and sales sheet up to date.

CommsMeister/Rough Running News Editor (two positions) - Tricia Allen (standing down) and Sarah Smith

There are three parts to these shared roles:

- Sending the weekly emails via SIEntries. This is pretty straightforward (it only takes 10-30 minutes per week) but has to be done regularly - it's the main way that TACH members find out about the Thursday runs and other events. It also means that you get to know what's happening! Tricia and Sarah currently alternate (roughly one month on, one month off).
- Working with the Race Committee Chair and Race Directors to market our races. We produce fliers and facebook posts, spread the word to local running clubs and race directories and have been known to hand out the odd flier at local parkruns! We currently split the races with Sarah doing Butcombe and Tricia taking the lead on Purdown Pursuit and the Keynsham Dandy.
- Soliciting articles and editing three editions of Rough Running News each year. We have discussed moving to an alternative format such as substack - there are some great articles but it is never entirely clear who is reading them.



TACH top tips

Run. Eat. Cake. Smile

Andy Grant

You have finished your run and you are back at the car but what's next? Time to take heed of the latest scientific advice for your post run refuelling strategy. Now advice is that you only have a short window of opportunity to eat and refuel after your run. If you want to aim



*some very nice coffee cake
(other very nice cakes are
definitely available)*

for optimum replacement of the carbohydrates that you have just burned, then time is crucial. So, it's official - whenever you finish a run you need to get to the nearest café quick and eat the biggest slice of cake you can get your hands on. I'm only joking of course, and yes, we all love to finish a run at nice country pub here in TACH, especially with winter coming on. You know, good food, a warm welcome and an open fire, you can't beat it can you, but what if sometimes there was an alternative when you finish a run during the day? I refer of course to the other old rural favourite, the country café. Not only a warm welcome, but warm drinks as well, and seriously, you do need to replace all those calories that you've just burned, and indeed what better way do it than with a big slice of luscious cake.

So, if you're wondering which cafés around Bristol are situated near good running locations, I've compiled a list of a few below, along with some suggestions of where some of the best local trails are. Please don't get caught out, like I have many times before, and always check they are open before you go, and what time they close. Also for those running with our four-legged friends, it's always worth checking if they are dog friendly too. Most of these cafés have small car parks that can get busy, so it's best to park up nearby and enjoy a short post run, leg stretching walk back to your café of choice.

So, here in no particular order is the list of a few post run cafés you might want to try.

Meadgate Café, Timsbury BA2 0NH (currently shut Sundays)

This is a nice rustic café in prime running territory. One look at an OS map will reveal a network of surrounding footpaths that resembles a right nest of adders. Take your pick - left to High Littleton and Greyfield wood, right and up to Priston, or down and right to Carlingcott. Also close by are Wellow, Combe Hay and Midford, and many of the other surrounding villages are also not far away and easily accessible from here. It's a great area for running, with the added bonus that the surrounding countryside contains lots of evidence left behind from its industrial past, with disused railways line, disused canals and old mine workings etc. all clearly still visible from the surrounding footpaths.

Farrington's Farm, Home Farm, Main Street, Farrington Gurney BS39 6UB

Can be busy at peak times but well worth a visit. The best running here is the other side of the A37 over towards Litton, as we all know Litton Reservoir from the Butcombe Ultra route, but it was also a dam bursting here that caused the worst of the flooding back down in the Chew Valley in the great floods of 1968. You could also easily run just a little bit further on, over to East Harptree woods, interestingly these woods contain evidence of lead mining going back as far as Roman Times.

**Priddy Good food (café), Plummers Lane, Priddy BA5 3BP**

Nice place with a nice view of some of the actual Mendips out at the back. The local running? - Hello - come on - it's in PRIDDY!

Sweet Apples Tea Shop, 21 High Street, Marshfield SN14 8LR

Cracking café, recently refurbished and well worth the wait. There is more quality running to be had from here than you can shake a stick at - the Marshfield Mudlark route starts a stone's throw from here, and many footpaths spread out through this beautiful countryside to Batheaston, St Catherines Court and Charmey Down airfield. If things get familiar when down towards Batheaston Way, that's because you are probably lucky enough to be crossing an old TACH favourite, "The Green Goddess", a cracking route that is actually named after shiny leotard wearing 80s fitness guru - Diana Moran.

**Bath Soft Cheese Café and Shop, Park Farm, Kelston BA1 9AQ**

Situated just down the road from the pub in Kelston is this cracking café, once sign posted (till the sign fell down) from the top of Kelston Roundhill itself. It sits at the crossroads of several footpaths, one of them leading to the Bristol to Bath cycle path. With so many routes going up over Kelston and Lansdown from here, it's impossible to pick a duff one, and pretty hard to pick one that doesn't end with a nice final gravity-assisted sprint back down to the café, happy days.



An honourable mention must also go to the Café Box in Stanton Drew, it's a café with outside seating working out of an old Shepherd's Hut in a field, it's in a lovely spot, beside an orchard, on the main footpath next to the river Chew, literally just a stones throw from Stanton Drew stones. Handily for lots of running routes all round the Chew Valley, and right on the Rok The Stones route as well.

Now lastly is my current favourite....

The Frankie Howerd Café and Hub, Sevier Road, Luxton BS26 2XE

It's a bit further away from Bristol but its handy on both the Uphill to Wells and Butcombe Ultra routes, and it sits within the shadow of Crook Peak itself. I dare you to sit there and look miserable, enjoying your post run coffee and cake, as several large portraits of the great man himself look down upon you from the surrounding walls. I know it all sounds like "a bit of a carry on" but don't worry, all proceeds from the café go to The Frankie Howerd trust, a very worthwhile charity whose current chair is none other than veteran Welsh comedian Griff Rhys Jones OBE himself.



So, there you have it, a few ideas for places for your next post run cake fix. Remember, an important part of any runner's training is recovery. Effective recovery means adequate rest and re-fuelling, so go for a run, sit down, eat some cake and get fit, simple 😊



DIY Shoe Repair 101

By Michelle Claydon

Many of you reading this will know well the sad feeling of discovering that your favourite pair of trail shoes has developed a hole that is no longer small enough to ignore... which often comes together with the worry of wondering if they will last for an upcoming important race or challenge. Last year, after getting me round the whole of TDS, my beloved Altra Lone Peak 4 Chamonix Edition shoes started to develop holes in the uppers. This was especially tragic, as just a couple of months before, they had been resoled with amazingly grippy Vibram soles that still had years of life left.

My initial reaction was denial - I don't wear those shoes in the winter anyway, so I put them away in a cupboard and forgot about the issue. Fast forward seven months, I have a hundred-mile race looming and no shoes that I am confident will go the distance without causing me any foot problems. I panic buy a new pair of completely different shoes – they turn up in the post and it's immediately clear that they are not going to be suitable for the race. Only at this point does it occur to me to see if the internet can offer any advice for repairing the Lone Peaks.

Of course it can. To cut a long story short, after trying a couple of techniques that lasted for at most a couple of long training runs, I found the winning formula: KT tape plus flexible superglue. The glue brand I used is called "Schuhfix", and it definitely works, but is possibly only available in Germany. I don't have personal experience of any of the available alternatives, but the UK equivalent that the internet recommends is called "Fantastic Elastic".

The repair process is really quick and easy. The trickiest parts are deciding what shape to cut the tape, and managing to apply it, in the correct orientation and using the glue, without also gluing yourself to anything. These are the basic steps:

- Clean the area of the shoe where the patch will go.
- If it will need to partly stick to the rubber sole, I suspect it could be good to abrade this with some sandpaper. That said, I have done one repair where I didn't bother with such faff, and the patch seems to be stuck just as well to the rubber as the upper material.
- Cut an appropriate shape of patch from the KT tape.
- Stuff the shoe with some old paper so that it keeps its shape whilst you stick the patch on.
- Apply a bit of glue to the patch and a bit to the shoe. I found it works well to apply a line of glue around the edge of the patch, and the rest to the shoe. Not too much - I think you want to aim for all of the patch area to have a thin layer, but not have much (or any) glue splurge out around the edges.
- Somehow stick the patch to the shoe in the intended position and orientation without supergluing it to your fingers, clothes or carpet in the process.
- Press it on firmly, making sure you push it well into any textures or profiles on the shoe. You should feel it getting hot already – this is normal and is caused by the chemical reaction of the glue curing.



- Leave for a while to cure. 24 hours is recommended, in reality it seems a few hours will do.
- Enjoy many more runs in your newly hole-free shoes!

Since my first success with the Lone Peaks I have done this to several more pairs of shoes, including a pair that Matt wore for a large part of UTMB. So far, none show any signs of not holding. And of course there is no reason not to simply repeat the process over again for as long as the soles are still good.



Matt's UTMB shoes



My trusty old Lone Peaks (hopefully one day my UTMB shoes!)



This repair job survived the first 60k of Wildstrübel 110 (before I changed to a less minimalist pair... the Lone Peaks of course!)



My latest (and most complicated) repair



TACH Kit

New to TACH? Want to look the part representing TACH when you run your next event? Or perhaps you're keen to collect the full range of TACH kit, to get you through every season and even promote TACH at work with your TACH mug? Here's what's on offer. You can order any of these from George Hancu, our friendly Kit Meister, by emailing kit@tach.club. Or you can ask him when you next see him to arrange your purchase. 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)	



Race Calendar

Forthcoming races organised by local running clubs

TACH relies heavily on other local running clubs to make our races a success. A lot of promotion of TACH races happens through word of mouth, and running clubs are an essential source of positive recommendations and tips on great races to take part in locally. So while we encourage other local running clubs to spread the word about our upcoming races, we also want to promote upcoming off-road races organised by our neighbouring running clubs to reciprocate. If you know of other off-road races coming up through the year which are organised by local running clubs that we haven't listed here, please do let us know via comms@tach.club and we'll aim to include them in the next edition of Rough Running News – thank you.

Dates and Events

9 Nov	Sodbury Slog, organised by the Bitton Road Runners (10 miles) https://sodburyslog.co.uk
16 Nov	Bath Hilly Half, organised by Team Bath Athletic Club (13.1 miles) https://bathhillyhalf.org
23 Nov	Brent Knoll race, organised by Burnham-on-Sea Harriers (10k) https://www.burnham-on-sea-harriers.com/our-races/brent-knoll-race/
18 Jan	Riverbank Rollick, organised by Thornbury Running Club (9.6 miles) https://www.thornburyrunningclub.co.uk/trc-races/riverbank-rollick/
8 Feb	Doynton Hard Half Marathon, organised by Emersons Green Running Club https://www.doyntonhardhalfmarathon.co.uk
15 Feb	Dursley Dozen, organised by Dursley Running Club (12 miles) https://www.dursleyrunningclub.org.uk/races/dursley-dozen/
22 Feb	Ironwood Challenge, organised by Nailsea Running Club (10k) https://www.stuweb.co.uk/organisers/nailsea-running-club
1 March	Imber Ultra, organised by Avon Valley Runners (33 miles) https://imberultra.wordpress.com
12 April	The Big Cheese, organised by Cheddar Running Club (15 miles) https://www.cheddarrunningclub.co.uk/the-big-cheese
tbc April	Hanham Horror, organised by Bitton Road Runners (9k)
tbc June	Bradley Stoke 10k, organised by Sole Sisters North Bristol
4 July	Cotswold Way Relay, organised by Team Bath Athletic Club https://cotswoldwayrelay.co.uk
tbc August	Crook Peak Cake Race (5k fell race)
tbc October	Mother Tuckers 10k, organised by Axe Valley Runners

TACH race calendar for 2026

25 April 2026
tbc July
tbc October

Butcombe Trail Ultra
Purdown Pursuit
Keynsham Dandy



TACH Championship Points

Compiled by Tom Houseago, TACH Captain for 2025

The TACH Championship recognises TACH members who lead runs, help at events, and write articles for Rough Running News. The annual prize (for the most points accumulated in the year) is given out on the Twelfth Night awards and party evening. 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

Q3 2025	Members
5	Alex Smith, Sarah Smith
4	Emily Griffiths
3	Antony Clark, Dave Roy, Tom Hunt, Andy Grant, Dave Bignell, Luke Taylor
2	David Giles, Fran Pratt, Jonathan Gledson, Richard Breakspear, Tom Houseago, Tony Spears, George Hancu, Terry Rogers
1	Chris Smart, Emila Turif, Graham Sleightholme, Helen King, Judith Chubb-Whittle, Lucien Campbell-Kemp, Martin Cott, Natasha Breen, Nick Rickard, Pavel Teklinski, Richard Grant, Ruth Pitchers, Sharon Jones, Tricia Allen, Emma Turner, Andy Little, Liz Little, Dave Bradley, Jenny Pitman, Jon Evans, Sarah Jane Wright, Jeremy Hutchinson, Jim Batty

TACH Discounts

As a member of TACH, you're entitled to 10% off at the following shops. Simply mention the club when making your purchase in store.

**Up and Running - Moti - Easy Runner -
Kinisi Run Club (Bedminster)** (use tach10 for online purchases)

Also, **Charlotte Arter** offers 10% off sports massage. Bsc (Hons) Sport Conditioning, Rehabilitation and Massage; SPS Diploma in Sports Massage (Level 4); Great Britain athlete. 07555 273016 charlottearter@hotmail.co.uk



General Club Information

Leading a TACH run

Everyone is encouraged to “do their bit” and to lead runs. It's great fun introducing people to your favourite run (and pub). 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.

Lift-sharing groups

TACH has several lift-sharing groups across Bristol to help us all to get to our club runs in a more sociable, less polluting way. Current lift-sharing 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.

Next edition of Rough Running News

Copy deadline is **31 March 2026** – please send your articles to comms@tach.club – many thanks.

Know your committee

Club Captain: Tom Houseago - captain@tach.club

Chair: Helen King - chair@tach.club

Secretary: Hannah Tracey - 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: Sharon Jones - social@tach.club

Membership Secretary: Martin Cott - 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: Tricia Allen and Sarah Smith
- comms@tach.club