

The latest round-up of race news, interviews and everything that's happening at club



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Running... it's all in the mind

Richard Gilham

Recently *The Psychologist*, the journal of the British Psychological Society, devoted an issue to running. These are some of the questions it posed.

What motivates people to start running?

It's a way to get fit, to lose weight, as a challenge (couch to 5km or Race for Life). However, recent research into data from running websites found that first-time marathon runners were especially likely to have an age that ended in a "9"; in other words to be on the cusp of a new decade. Maybe we are more likely to reflect on the meaning of our lives at such times and for many people, running offers the perfect chance to forge new goals.

What goes on inside a runner's mind?

Perhaps part of the appeal of running is the chance to clear the mind. Even on short runs, we have to focus on avoiding obstacles, keeping balance and even breathing. How often do you notice time seeming to have gone by quickly with little awareness of the steps in between? Running can help you to organise your mind. Recently, 10 amateur long-distance runners were asked to record their

thoughts out loud while running. As well as predictable musings about pacing ("Slow and steady, relax the shoulders..." or the pain ("Effing hill; when will it end?") there were other, more creative, problem-solving thoughts perhaps related to relationships, work, childcare or the world at large.

How do runners keep going?

How do the human body and mind cope with mile after mile of pain and exhaustion? When you set out to run 26 (or even 13) miles there are periods where you feel awful. Knowing that this will happen and accepting it can make it easier to cope as when it happens. It's just what you were expecting – no surprises...

Another helpful psychological method used by many long-distance runners is to remind themselves that no matter how bad you feel at the present moment, there will always be an upturn later on. This phenomenon of swinging between high and low points is something all marathon runners describe. "The pain doesn't keep getting worse and worse" is the phrase and even though you may feel like death one minute, not far ahead will be moments of calm and even exhilaration.

Another key way long-distance runners manage the pain and exhaustion is through positive self talk. For years it was thought that fatigue is purely located in the muscles and that we can only go as fast as our body will let us. Increasingly, however, sports psychologists have come to realise this is only part of the story. In many ways physical exhaustion can be more of a mental state in the sense that our muscles are weighed up by the brain in the context of the strength of our motivation and our belief in how far we have to go. Mental attitude – "I can get through this" can drive us on, even at the point of what feels like total exhaustion.

Phil Whiting provides a great example of this in his report of the Spine Flare 2017.

DESIGN THE MEDAL FOR THE 2018 VALENTINE 10km

The Valentine 10km is Gazelles' flagship race, held every February and attracting the cream of the Norfolk road-racing field to this Leathes Prior Grand Prix and County Championships fixture. The Valentine 10km wouldn't be a success without the amazing commitment of the Gazelles themselves, as marshals and timekeepers... which of course means we can't enter the race itself.

So here's a chance to be a real part of the race, by designing the medal! It can be any shape or size but must have our Gazelle logo on it and the wording "Valentine 10km".

Entries welcome from all ages – the prize will depend on age but for runners we're thinking about a paid-for race entry to the three races in one of the summer five-mile/5km series.

Email entries to Steve Sadd at stephen.sadd@yahoo.co.uk. Entries close 31 October 2018.

REJECTED FROM THE LONDON MARATHON AGAIN?

Don't worry. If you've got a rejection slip for the 2018 ballot, you may be eligible for a place through the club. There's a ballot, which will be drawn at the AGM on 4 December at City Academy and the committee has created rules so that the draw is as fair as it can possibly be for all members. So if you meet the following criteria, you might be in!

- If you've already got a Good for Age entry, you're not eligible for the club ballot
- You must have been a club member for at least the current calendar year
- You must have represented the club in other events
- You must have made a significant contribution to the club in some way eg. marshalling at events, newsletter input, RNR support, helping with the walk/run group.
- You can't have had a club place during the past three years
- You must have an official rejection slip, not a charity rejection
- You must be honest about your health at the time of entry, and your capability of running the distance.

We have two places, but we'll also draw a third name out as a reserve (who must also fit the above criteria). Thanks and good luck!

Dorcas vs Chinkara... vs the rest of Norfolk – RNR 2017

Once again, Gazelles fielded two teams for this year's Round Norfolk Relay, the weekend in which no one really needs to sleep and van-driving is not for the faint of heart

The Round Norfolk Relay is undeniably a unique weekend... the race comprises 17 unequal stages carrying a baton around Norfolk's coastline and county boundaries, and lasts for 24 (or indeed more) consecutive hours from Saturday to Sunday morning. What's more, this isn't one of those races where you turn up, stretch, run, grab a medal and eat cake in a church hall. The event requires A-Level Logistics as each team must ensure handovers are carried out correctly, runners are accompanied by cyclists or vans, and that each runner can get back to his or her car to get home. And that's before we even think about timekeeping.

Gazelles entered two teams: Dorcas, captained by Pete Thompson (racing in the mixed category) and Chinkara (open category) captained by Sam Barwick. If you're ever in a pub quiz, Dorcas and Chinkara are both types of gazelle. Dorcas came third in the mixed category, in a total time of 24h39m53s, while Chinkara came home 25th overall in 21h21m45s.

Gazelles also marshalled the handover between stages at Wells... which all went well until a wedding party tried to cross the road... As ever, super-talented snapper and Gazelle runner Ian Edwards was on hand with his camera (pictures right). And indeed, his bike and his licence to drive a van at 7mph in the forest in the middle of the night.

Thanks to everyone who took part, whether running, marshalling, cycling or driving. See you next year!



Boulders, views, climbs and bogs... Spine Flare 2017

One June weekend, 108 miles along the unpredictable terrain of the Pennine Way, eating mostly baked beans? You'd have to be mad... or perhaps you'd have to be PHIL WHITING

I'd wondered about the Spine Races for a while but didn't fancy getting cold for that long, so I'd never entered the January fixture. With the introduction of the summer series, I seized my opportunity. I was doing the (shorter) Flare race, which at 108 miles I thought would be well within my grasp – I'd raced many 100-milers. The 60-hour cut off had me a bit concerned, though; most other 100s stop at 28 or 30 hours. Why was this so long?

I was nervous on the start line: I'd had minor problems a few weeks previously at the Stour Valley Marathon and I was running my first ultra as a vegan. This was also going to be my first unsupported race (only one checkpoint and friends and family not allowed to help or pace etc.).

The two races (Flare, and Fusion, which lasts seven days) set off together from Edale near the start of the Pennine Way. After some brief confusion as to how we would navigate the car park, we jogged up the road to the start of the trail. I was determined to keep it steady (I have a habit of going out too quickly), but soon found myself in third place going up Jacob's Ladder, a steep climb out of the valley. It didn't feel too taxing until I tried (briefly) to keep up with first- and second-placed Stuart and Richard as they seemingly floated up. The 400m climb takes more out of your legs than you would want with 105 miles to go. At the top I got the first taste of the landscape that would surround me for the next day and a half: Peaty bog, yet very desolate, at times more like a moonscape, with granite boulders adding to the drama. I found it tough going on the trails and I was soon caught by another runner, Lisa Wallis. She breezed past, pointing out that the cloud had started to clear and so we had a view over Kinder Reservoir at last. No sooner had I glanced over my shoulder to check out the view than I found myself on the floor. I'd tripped. Quick check for blood: no. Does everything still work? Yes. Did anyone see me? No. Plod on then, and concentrate. Bloody idiot.

Before long another runner seemingly jogged past and I grew frustrated at my lack of ability on the technical trails. But soon I was out of the difficult terrain, running on slabs, and I started to cheer up. But no sooner had my spirits started to rise than I found myself on the floor once more: another trip. Oh well, push on. After a couple of miles on the slabs we crossed Snake Pass and the running became harder again. The undulating, rock-strewn, non-path through the heather and peaty bogs of Bleaklow Hill was not ideal



Crossing the start line, facing 108 miles

ALL PICS: TEAM WHITING

for me and three more runners came past as I descended towards Torside Reservoir. I was finding this mentally tough: four-and-a-half hours to run 17 miles, two falls, behind schedule and going backwards down the field. Not good. I filled my bottles at the water stop at Torside and pushed on. I was pleased to note three of the people who'd passed me were faffing with kit and attending to blisters, so I moved back up the standings. (At this point in the race the leaderboard was trivial, but at that moment it was a nice boost.)

I crossed the reservoir and began another long ascent up Black Hill I caught up with a Dutch runner, Mark Kromeich, and we yo-yo'd positions for the next few hours, occasionally running together and chatting. The climbs to Wessenden Head and Standedge were tough, but then the running grew easier and I managed some decent pace over more slabs.

Around mid afternoon, Team Whiting appeared near White Hill and gave me a huge boost. It's a tough thing running and talking to hardly anyone for hours, so having the chatter of my family, big hugs and smiles was a welcome lift.

Crossing the M62 and that felt quite significant. I could visualise most of the landmarks almost up to the checkpoint at Hebden Bridge – I hadn't recce'd the last few but how far could it be?

Then the rain came, and the wind, and suddenly the moorland of Blackstone Edge was bleak. The sound of the weather

lashing my hood seemed unending, but in reality lasted less than an hour. Soon I'd reached Stoodley Pike Monument and I thought it would be a simple run down to Hebden and a quick hike up to the checkpoint. In reality it was a torturous slog off the moor, then the Pennine Way winds back out of the valley through overgrown alleyways, across people's gardens and follows unsignposted roads. I got lost. I was only saved by a couple of local runners who recognised me as a Spine racer and "ran" me to the checkpoint. Team Whiting were waiting for me, so after feeling quite down my spirits were restored.

My plan for the checkpoint was not to hang about too long; bit of hot food, change of socks and T-shirt then crack on. Lots of other runners seemed to be planning for a longer stop, but I didn't understand their reasoning – I'd be finished before I needed sleep.

Mark was still at the checkpoint when I arrived; we chatted a while and although he was obviously quicker than me it seemed a good plan to walk the night section together. With the added jeopardy of following a poorly marked trail and the cold bleak moors it suited us both to spend the night together. I left the checkpoint, got another hug from Team Whiting (they hadn't been allowed inside) and we started off. The journey through the night was quite geographically unremarkable, other than we passed the house where Emily Brontë set *Wuthering Heights*. Conversation flowed easily and Mark and I talked **continued Page 5**

from Page 4 our way through the night as we trudged on. We'd only covered about 25 miles in the dark but it felt like reasonable progress. I was feeling very sleepy at dawn, however, so told Mark to push on without me, and I got out my bivvi bag and had a power nap in an empty farm shed. It did me the world of good; I woke 30 minutes later ready to push on to Gargrave – the next milestone. I was moving OK, but my walk/run combination didn't eat up the miles very quickly. What had seemed no distance at all during the recce took almost two hours.

The next milestone was Malham Cove. I celebrated my arrival by using the public toilets: what luxury! Malham Cove is stunningly beautiful: an 80-metre high limestone cliff (as seen in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part I*). Mind you, I had to climb it. I decided the best way to cope with this would be to just count each step up to take my mind off the torture: I got to 400 and gave up. That was the easy bit: the route crosses the top of the cove, which is actually made up of columns of rock worn away by acid rain – all uneven heights, surfaces, and gaps between. Not helpful for legs with 75 miles in them and a sleep-deprived brain. Not helped either by the event photographer who filmed me crossing them, but I made it.

The next few miles were straightforward... well, other than the indignity of being overtaken by a group of shuffling scouts, who managed to take a better line around grassy mounds at the top of the cove.

Team Whiting were waiting for me just before Malham Tarn and we'd agreed to meet next at Pen-y-Ghent. Before that, though, I knew I had a longer climb up Fountains Fell. It's not as high as the cove, but it starts lower down and felt a bit dull after Malham. Still, I slugged it out, and made it down the other side. The downs were harder than the ups as I lacked co-ordination, and indeed any natural ability running on trails. At this point I was in fifth place, which I found remarkable as the miles seemed to be passing very slowly.

You're not allowed pacers in Spine races, but I didn't think my family climbing Pen-y-Ghent with me would be wrong. It was great to share the climb with them, and the last hundred feet really are a climb. We made it to the top and said our goodbyes, the they scaled back down to the car and I plodded down the slope heading towards Horton-in-Ribblesdale. The climb must have taken it out of me as I was suddenly very tired. I found the path down very hard going: it was uneven and rock-strewn and I was moving slowly and cautiously. At one point I was so tired and fed up I just fell on to the grass verge and fell asleep for a few minutes. I pulled myself from my slumber by reminding myself there was a lovely café in Horton, and I could get my first bit of hot food for almost 24 hours.



Tracks, slabs, grass and boulder-strewn paths made up the 108 miles of the race

Beans on toast have never tasted so good; vegan cake bars too and filter coffee. And a couple of lovely race marshals there who were happy to agree with me that the last 13 miles were easy. I jokingly said: "Thirteen miles – 90 minutes!" thinking maybe double that, but surely that would get me finished. Oh no. Despite walk/running it took nearly four-and-a-half hours. My GPS wasn't working so I couldn't judge distance, only time. I felt I was moving OK, but the path went on forever, all over Dodd Fell. If I'd had more energy I might have been able to appreciate the view as the evening sun moved around, but all I wanted was for the track to start heading back down towards civilization. I'd convince myself that every time the track disappeared over the next hill, I'd then be heading down, but for hours it just kept going. In the end I found myself swearing at it at the top of my voice, alone on top of the moor.

Eventually the descent came. I knew I had to get to Hawes first, then two miles further on was Hardraw. What I hadn't been expecting was that before Hawes came Gayle. I was beyond despair now – that was the easy option. But my resolve had been hardened by the race, I was focused on the finish and I was running on asphalt (yes, running!). Then I got lost.

However, just as I was starting to stagger around the back streets of Hawes, I bumped into Eddie. What a sight for sore eyes. I didn't even know if Team Whiting were still waiting for me – we'd previously agreed that they'd leave at 6pm for the five-hour drive home, whether I'd finished or not; it was now nearly 10pm – and it was a huge relief to know I wouldn't be bunking down in a communal tent.

I did some running and shuffled into the finish at Hardraw at just under 38 hours, still in fifth place.

It was great to have finally made it. I was tired but physically in good condition. My left knee was a bit sore, but I had no blisters, chafing, pulls, strains or broken bones. The race had gone according to plan; my time was slow but I'd simply underestimated the toughness of the course. I'd just finished my hardest ultra yet.

A few things to note: 108 miles is a long way – especially on the Pennine Way; 38 hours with only three half-hour breaks is too much. High-fat, low-carb vegan fuelling works. Team Whiting are awesome. It was tough, but a great adventure and an awesome weekend.



Relief, triumph and a sense of achievement marked the end of Phil's Spine weekend

Get down to some serious drinking – why hydration is vital

Should you drink water during your training runs? What if you're only going a couple of miles? And are sports drinks any good? NIGEL BULLEN has the answers

Hydration is often overlooked, especially on longer distances, usually because it can be daunting and there is uncertainty about what to do. However, it isn't as complicated as you may first think.

When you run, you sweat, unless you are unique or have a very rare condition. It's a fact and something that the body is designed to do. The more you sweat, the more your blood volume decreases, as you lose essential fluids. The more your blood volume decreases, the harder your heart has to work to deliver oxygen to your working muscles and as a result the harder your exercise becomes.

This sounds potentially dangerous, but it's really not; it's the body's natural way of cooling you down. Runners almost never experience dehydration levels sufficient to cause major health consequences, but normal levels of dehydration will make you feel uncomfortable and cause you to slow down. This could be an issue for the mind as well as the body over longer distances. If you want to achieve that elusive PB, then perhaps thinking about hydration may aid you, maybe even more so than strapping lightweight shoes to your feet or shaving your body...

Drinking while you run can help limit the negative effects of dehydration. But what should you drink, how much, and when?

As we get better at understanding the body and how it performs, we have learned to tweak old practices. In the past, athletes were encouraged to drink as much as possible during exercise, or at the very least enough to completely offset dehydration. However, it is now understood that this is bad advice – and here's why.

First, it is possible to drink too much during exercise. Forcing yourself to swallow more fluid than your body really needs while running may cause gastrointestinal distress, and in extreme cases it can cause a dangerous condition known as water intoxication, or hyponatremia. Secondly, research has shown that drinking to offset sweating completely offers no advantage with respect to performance or body temperature regulation compared to drinking based on thirst.

Newer exercise hydration advice is to drink according to your thirst. As long as you keep an adequate supply of a palatable drink accessible during your runs, you will naturally drink enough to optimise your performance if you just

drink as often and as much as your thirst dictates. This requires you to have increased body awareness BUT an understanding of what you feel like. Being mindful of your "thirst" feelings will enable you to react to your body's needs.

Dehydration only affects performance in workouts lasting longer than an hour, so you don't have to drink during workouts that are shorter than an hour. However, you can if you like. Carry some liquid with you, just in case you are planning to go for a longer run. It's better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.

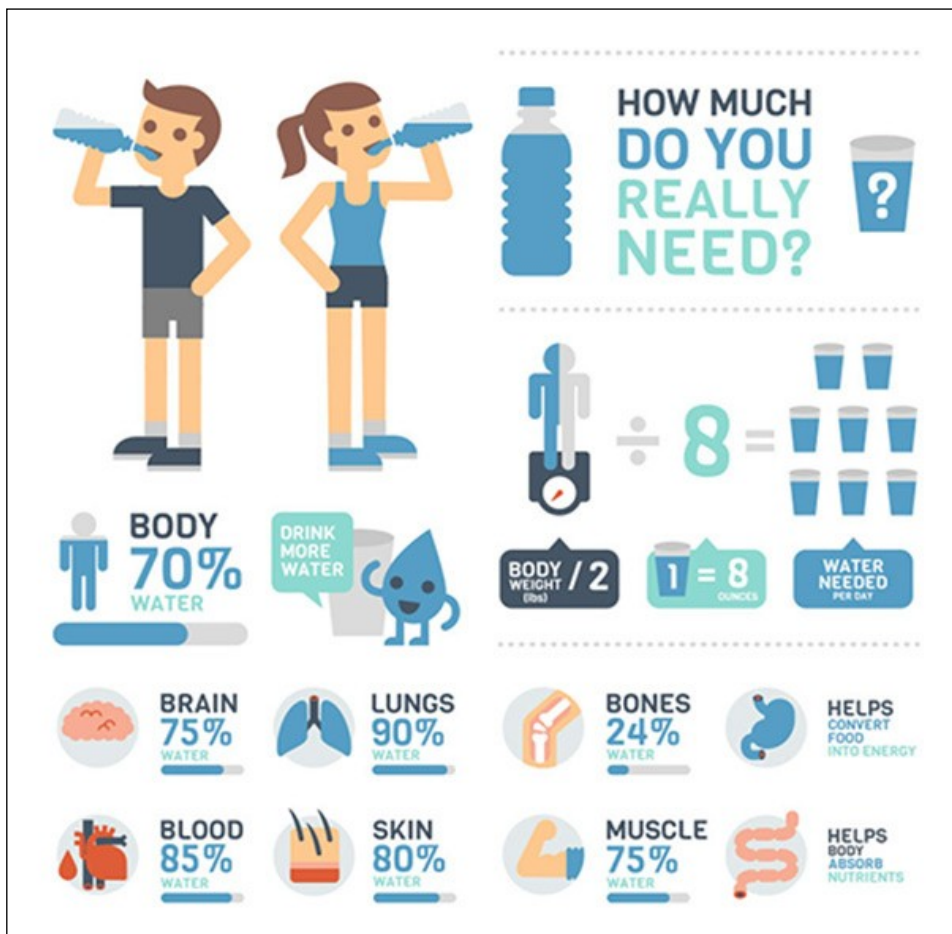
Plain water is adequate, but sports drinks can offer advantages. Specifically, sports drinks replace some of the sodium and other minerals that your body loses in sweat (along with water). In addition, sports drinks provide an extra energy source for your working muscles in the form of carbohydrates. Research has shown that sports drinks enhance performance significantly more than plain water in high-intensity and long-duration runs and races.

Since you do not seek to test your performance limits on every run, it is not necessary to use a sports drink every

time; it is safe to use plain water in your easier runs and save the sports drink for your faster, longer workouts. But if you're planning to use a sports drink in an event, take the same brand of drink on a couple of your longer runs. There is nothing worse than having an negative reaction to a drink during a long race.

Maintaining access to fluids during runs can be challenging; we're not camels and we don't have a car driving by our side like in the Tour De France. You can carry fluids in a squeeze bottle in a belt, although this may not be enough to cover your longest runs. You could plan to return home midway through the run to refill your bottle, carry some money and buy a new bottle or try a more volumetric solution such as a [bladder pack](#).

Wearing a fluid belt may slow you down, but hydrating will in the long run increase your performance. On your shorter runs, either carry something just to get used to taking and carrying water and/or stash a bottle in a convenient place and grab it as you pass by. On longer runs, plan to take more with you so you can hydrate when and where needed. Remember though, don't force down fluids; drink only when you're thirsty.



I can move, move, move any mountain

A “Gazelle on tour” postcard from EMMA O’KELLY, who climbed Martinique’s 1,397m volcano Mount Pelée



After a tough climb, Emma reached the summit

PIC: EMMA O’KELLY

In February 2017 I went on an amazing jaunt to Martinique to celebrate my 50th birthday and to visit my daughter, Olivia, who works on the island. Although there are no parkruns in Martinique, Olivia and I were up early on Saturday morning. I had donned my Gazelles vest, but rather than running we were going to climb Mount Pelée, the 1,397m-high volcano that destroyed the then-Martiniquois capital, St Pierre, in 1902.

The day was blissfully cool and the top of Pelée was shrouded in mist – at the time I didn’t realise how fortunate this was, but appreciated the freshness of the day. After a quick selfie Olivia and I started climbing, climbing, climbing... The route consisted of steep steps with short stretches of path where the incline wasn’t as great. After about an hour and 20 minutes, I was delighted to reach the top of the main climb and felt enormously proud of myself. Olivia had climbed Pelée with one of her friends and he had, apparently, moaned non-stop. I hadn’t moaned once! I enthusiastically said that I would like to traverse the caldera – the cauldron-like bowl at the top of the mountain. It was still misty, so I couldn’t see what I had let myself in for...

I soon found out that the path led us to vertiginous drops immediately followed by sheer inclines. Olivia told me the first half of the caldera route was tough but that the second part was almost flat. SHE LIED! It was like walking a rollercoaster. Occasionally the mists parted and it was possible to see the route ahead – it was terrifying to see what I still had to tackle.

As we neared the other side of the caldera the mist finally lifted; we walked around the rim in glorious sunshine. That stretch was like walking with The Grand Old Duke of York of nursery rhyme fame – we were constantly going either up or down. When we were up, there were stunning views out across the island to the Caribbean. The sky was gloriously blue and the countryside below a rich verdant green. (It rains in Martinique. A lot.)

At last, we arrived back at the top of the main incline. Hurrah, I thought, but steps that had been easy to climb up were difficult to get down. I hadn’t appreciated on the way up quite how steep some sections were. I was terrified that if I just stepped down I would overbalance and, Humpty Dumpty-like, tumble down. (It’s all about the nursery rhymes.) To make matters worse we could see the car park in the distance. The far, far distance. I’m sure someone had moved it while we had been up the mountain.

I can safely say that climbing Mount Pelée is the toughest physical thing I have ever done (and I’ve given birth three times without any pain relief) but one of the most enormously satisfying. I am proud to have climbed wearing my Gazelles vest. Lots of people run Pelée and there are several long distance runs in Martinique. If you fancy a trip to the Caribbean (and who doesn’t?) Martinique is stunning so check out the [race calendar](#). There is something for everyone, from a gentle 5k run in the comparatively flat capital to a 133km ultra for the likes of Phil Whiting and Ian Thomas!

RACE CALENDAR

Sunday 1 October

Bure Valley 10 miles (Banningham)
Nelson Knee-Knobbler, race three (Sea Palling)
Lowestoft Half Marathon

Sunday 8 October

Marriotts Way 10km (Aylsham)
Great Eastern HM (Peterborough)

Sunday 15 October

Ryston Runners Open XC Grand Prix race one (Shouldham Warren)
Saxons 5 Mile Race (Saxmundham)

Wednesday 18 October

EAACL Winter League race two (West Runton beach)

Sunday 22 October

Trowse 10km

Saturday 28 October

Norfolk Coastal Marathon

Sunday 29 October

Holt 10km
St Eds Running Festival (marathon, half-marathon, 10km and fun run)

Wednesday 8 November

EAACL Winter League race two (Whitlingham Country Park)

Saturday 11 November

Kings Forest 50km (Bury St Edmunds)

Sunday 19 November

Snetterton Half Marathon
Ryston Runners Open XC Grand Prix race two (Shouldham Warren)
St Neots Half Marathon

Wednesday 22 November

EAACL Winter League race three (Fritton Outdoor Centre)

Sunday 26 November

Rag-it-Round Repps XC
Horsford XC race one

Sunday 10 December

Buxton Fun Run (Gazelles event!)
Turkey Trot 10-Miler (Waveney)
Ryston Runners Open XC Grand Prix race three (Shouldham Warren)

Wednesday 13 December

EAACL Winter League race four (Whitwell Station, Reepham)

Sunday 17 December

Horsford XC race two