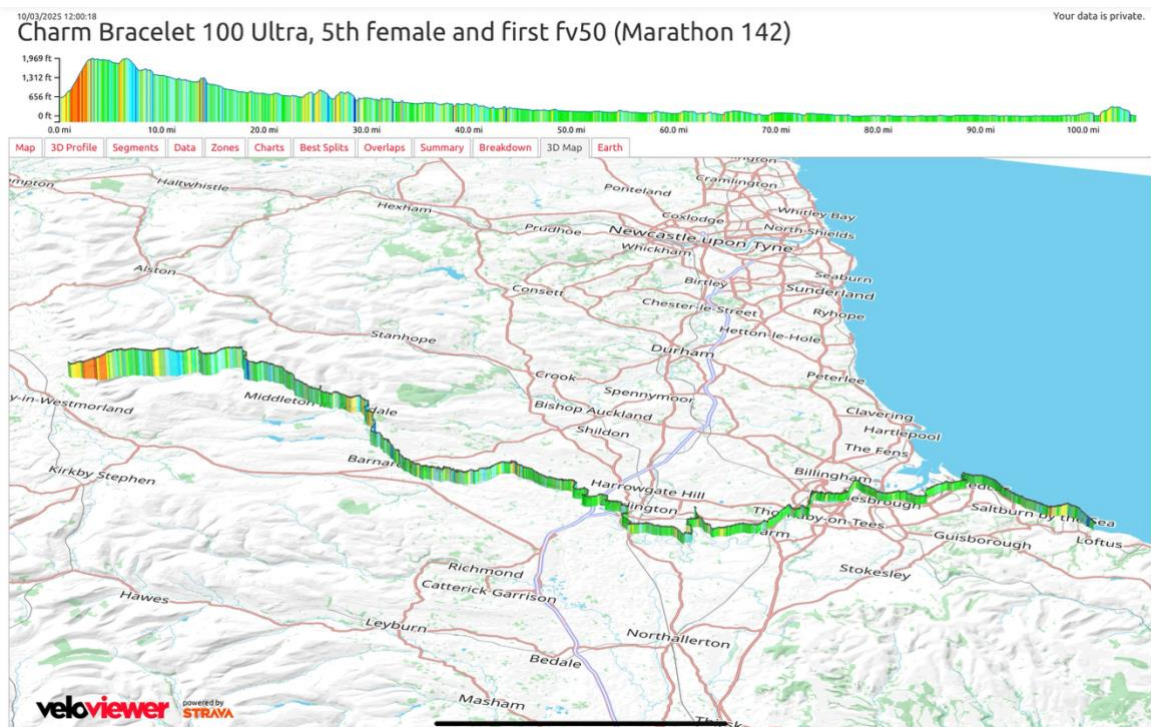




Charm Bracelet Trail Events' Charm Bracelet 100

03/10/2025

I entered this race as soon as I heard about it, I like a linear race, I like being on a journey, and this one would be almost the length of the River Tees with a few lumps and bumps at either end, still, predominantly downhill.

I recced a few sections, Dufton to Cauldron Snout and back (the start) Barnard Castle to Darlington and Darlington to Preston Park, as I figured that most of these sections would be in the dark, as the race start was midday.

There were 40 competitors on the start list, 22 female and 18 Male. 36 starters (20f and 16m) and 24 finishers (11f and 13m). These lower numbers indicated that I would be spending alot of time on my own. I knew a few names on the list so was amongst friends. I planned to run unsupported, there were plenty of checkpoints on route and the organisers Cath and Tim had asked for dietary requirements in advance to make sure everyone was catered for, Cath had even made me my own allium free lasagne.

CP	LOCATION	MILE (approx)	DATE	TIME	REFRESHMENTS	DROP BAG	W3W
START	Duften Methodist Church	0	3/10	10:00 – 12:00	Water	NO	good.scorched.mild
1	Sayer Hill Farm Layby	12.58	3/10	13:00 – 17:00	Snacks	NO	shuttle.recap.treaties
2	Middleton Sports & Social Club	20.47	3/10	15:30 – 20:00	Cold Food	NO	timer.unclaimed.ripe
3	Cotherstone Village Hall	28.48	3/10	16:00 – 23:00	Cold Food & Soup	YES	excavated.freedom.consoles
4	Whorlton Village Hall	36.6	3/10 – 4/10	17:00 – 02:00	Hot Food Cooked Breakfast	YES	clinchier.awoke.mystery
5	Piercebridge Car Park	45.45	3/10 – 4/10	20:00 – 06:00	Snacks	NO	clef.tutorial.tokens
6	Croft Village Hall	55	3/10 – 4/10	22:30 – 11:00	Cold Food & Soup	NO	haircuts.terms.magnets
7	Middleton St George Community Centre	63.60	3/10 – 4/10	23:00 – 12:00	Hot Food Lasagne	YES	rust.crypt.unscathed
8	Stockton Preston Ln (Gazebo)	76.62	4/10	01:00 – 16:00	Snacks	NO	regime.bikes.edges
9	Teessaurus Park (Gazebo)	84.35	4/10	02:30 – 19:00	Cold Food Pasta/rice salad	NO	oiled.grin.deny
10	Beach Base Redcar	94.2	4/10 – 5/10	04:30 – 00:00	Snacks	NO	either.breath.third
FINISH	Skingrove VH	103.49	4/10 – 5/10	06:00 – 08:00	Hot Food Pie & Mash	YES	mute.grit.expansion

CP	Type	Food
1	Snacks	Flapjack, bananas, sweets, pretzels, gluten free flapjack – all vegan
2	Cold Food	Sandwiches, wraps, fillings, crisps
3	Cold Food/Soup	Sandwiches, scones, soup
4	Hot Food	Cooked breakfast, bagels, toast and jam
5	Snacks	Chocolate brownies, oranges, sweets, pretzels – all vegan
6	Cold Food/Soup	Sandwiches, wraps, fillings, crisps
7	Hot Food	Lasagne, toast
8	Snacks	Flapjack, bananas, sweets, pretzels, gluten free flapjack – all vegan
9	Cold Food	Pasta salad, rice salad, biscuits
10	Snacks	Chocolate brownies, oranges, sweets, pretzels – all vegan

After a particularly poor night's sleep, Billy drove me to Duften on Friday Morning, we got there at about 11:15 and most of the other runners were sat in the Methodist Hall. I queued for a full kit check

Mandatory Kit List – Unsupported Runners

Minimum of 1 litre of liquid in refillable bottle/hydration pack

Reusable cup.

Hooded waterproof jacket with taped seams

Waterproof trousers

Thermal base layer

Basic first aid kit

Head torch and spare batteries if applicable

Mobile phone and power bank

Route map/guide downloaded to your phone

Survival Bag or foil blanket

Whistle

Hat and gloves

Emergency food, equivalent to two flapjacks

With Storm Amy on its way I had packed extra. Extra head torch and batteries, 2 powerbanks in case one failed. Extra socks x 3 pairs, extra hat gloves, and buffs in case the others got wet, an extra thermal top. The route map and guide were downloaded to my phone and printed on paper. I also had 2 watches on, one purely for navigating and the other for time. I also had plenty of food with me as well as putting 3 drop bags with lucozade, chocolate and rice pudding in for later. My pack was heavy.

I collected my number (3) and tracker, and waited for the briefing and start. The route had been updated recently to avoid some lively cattle and some closed bridges, but were told we could divert for safety if the river rose or the woods felt unsafe in the coming high winds.



It was soon time to set off a very short run before we started to turn up towards High Cup Nick, the small field soon spread out as the hill steepened. You couldn't see the top because it was shrouded in mist it was breezy and drizzly but the journey had started. I was very soon, much towards back, I really need to practise the long hills more. After a 3 mile uphill jog/hike I finally arrived at the top of High Cup Nick.



I took a quick picture and cracked on across the moor. The moor had been quite dry when I had recced this section, but the recent rain had made it much softer under foot. Soon I was running back amongst people. The rain started with a vengeance and the winds hammered it at at me. I made the decision to put my waterproof trousers on when I made it to the first checkpoint at around 12 miles probably a mistake because it was a harder trek than I had envisaged to get to the checkpoint. Having been as far as Cauldron Snout waterfall (9 miles), in the past I expected that it would be a bit of a tricky descent down the side of the waterfall but I didn't know what was to come afterwards. I approached the waterfall it was roaring absolutely deafening as it is it thundered down into the valley, the rain and the spray soaked the rocks. I was picking my way down the side of the waterfall, I put one foot on a large flattish rock and as I put the other foot on the same rock I found myself sitting heavily onto my bottom and clattering my elbow. I got myself up and carried on down trying to ignore the pain in my elbow and my shoulder and my bum I was now wet and dirty so it didn't really matter too much as I got down the steeper drops by sitting on my bum and letting myself down. At the bottom it was a bit flatter even though the river was fairly close to the path, I was hoping I'd get a good run now to the checkpoint but soon I found that it was not good running at all it was a boulder field, constantly trying to work my way across the boulders without standing in the river which was roaring past, I was very very slow at this point. I was in a lot of pain from my arm, shoulder and my bum and was worried about falling again. My Brooks Cascadia shoes did not let me down, I don't know why they failed on that one rock but they did not let me down through this boulder field. Other runners passed by trotting across the rocks like mountain goats, but I had to just take it steady. By now I was absolutely soaked through the rain had got into my jacket through the hood which kept blowing down and the vents which I had opened to allow me to vent off on the way up the big climb up High Cup Nick and then forgotten that I actually had them undone so the rain was pouring in and later I realised because my hair was in a bun it was meaning my hood wasn't fitting well enough so that the strong winds were easily

blowing my hood down but it wasn't cold it was just wet and windy. At last I made it to the checkpoint at just over 12 miles had a flapjack topped my bottles up and stopped to put on my waterproof trousers, which was a bit of a nightmare over wet trousers anyway and got out my gloves and waterproof glove covers and then off I set again.

Checkpoint 1 to 2 Felt like a really long slog, alot of it wasn't particularly runnable it was muddy slippery with a couple of cheeky climbs with the wind just trying to blow me over. Going up past High Force I had originally intended to be able to make the most of it take some photographs, but to be honest I just needed to get away off the high ground with it's slippyness and the puddles and the tree roots. I Made a couple of navigation errors as my watch was not zoomed in close enough.

I was soon caught up by a couple of runners Lisa and Caroline and stuck with them for a little bit I had to really push myself, clearly they were going faster than me 'cause they caught me up but I wasn't having to navigate as much because they seemed to know where they were. Lisa's husband Paul joined us on his bike for the last little bit which was lovely, he opened some of the gates saved a bit of work but there was no escaping the variety of stiles. As we arrived in Middleton on Tees, checkpoint 2, there was a lovely surprise, we had expected an outdoor checkpoint but it was indoors and they were making us cups of coffee, drying our gloves on the radiators and feeding of sandwiches and crisps it was just what we needed it was tea time in real life so I was ready to have a little bit more substantial food than what I had been carrying. One of the volunteers asked about my arm. I pulled up my sleeve an revealed a cut. I said it would be ok,



but she insisted it was looked at. She contacted Julian the medic and he would look at it at the next checkpoint.

Lisa, Caroline and I set off again together but the light was dimming quite early about 6:30 and I couldn't really keep up with the other two, they seemed to be able to run much better in the dim light. I let them go but later on, caught back up and we were caught up by another 2 runners. For the next section we just took it on together, it was dark, rainy and windy and we were close to the river. The river was really high there was one point where there was a wall and I thought if this gets much higher, when it breaches this we're in trouble but we managed to get through we made a couple of little errors but good teamwork got us through. Some little sections were actually good running bits of road, avoiding tree fall and at one point an owl flew right past my ear, I got a right shock. With a couple of miles to go we could see headtorches ahead of us, I figured out it was Richard Sean and Simon so I just focused on keeping them in sight and that saved us with a bit of navigation to be honest. We caught up with them just before checkpoint 3 and we all went into Cotherstone together.

Warm Soup was a right treat here, it was also a drop bag stop so I got the chance to have some rice pudding and chocolate as pudding after my soup. I refilled my bottles and took my waterproof trousers off. It was raining less bit more drizzly but the warm wind made for good drying. Julian the medic cleaned and covered the cut on my arm.

I set off alone towards checkpoint four. I'd gone about 100 metres and realised I'd gone wrong so I went back to the junction and zoomed in on my watch set off on a lane, it felt wrong, it felt like I'd been there before, so I went back again I opened up the tracking app, worked out that it was right. I set off again checking the tracking app regularly until it was clear I was on the right route. Most the time I couldn't see anybody around me. It's like that when you're running in the dark, somebody could be reasonably close but unless you catch a hint of their head torch, you just don't see them, and in the woods and round corners they just disappear. I did see one torch ahead of me and the person had made a mistake, as I made the turn I shouted them to come back, which they did. I carried on knowing there was now somebody behind me so I wasn't really on my own. This section Barnard Castle to Whorlton is actually quite nice, a couple of woody sections but generally quite good going. I was relieved to get to Barnard Castle because now I knew where I was, and knew the route having been there before and it just took a lot of the effort out of it not having to navigate as well as stay upright in the wind and mud.

Getting into Whorlton for the next checkpoint actually seemed to go quite quickly, I was looking forward to the cooked breakfast, had already been planning it in my head bacon and fried egg sandwich that would sort me out and it did. Setting off again, I knew this section could be quite tricky in a couple of areas The trail was very close to the river but there's also a lot of field sides where the ground was soft and the going tough, but steady away the miles were passing by. I caught up with and passed a few other runners on the route I didn't like the woods, I didn't like the way that the trees were squeaking and shrieking in the wind, I just hoped they wouldn't fall on my head. I was just running through the leaf litter in a wood, when I caught my toe on a hidden tree root and went flying like Superman, my poles clattered off into the distance and I lay there trying to work out what had happened and how to get back up again. I didn't feel too badly hurt actually just a bit shocked it's been upright one minute flat out the next. I was covered in mud, I staggered up, picked up one pole but couldn't find the other, I searched all over and finally found it in the undergrowth. I walked for a bit just while I sorted myself and made sure I actually wasn't really hurt just probably would have some bruises and my shoulder was aching more than it had been when I fell earlier.

I recognise the route from my recce and knew that I was approaching Piercebridge and it would have another out and back to go to the number 5 checkpoint. I was surprised on the out and back not to see the others behind me 'cause I didn't think they were that far back.

It was 10 miles to the next checkpoint this one would take me through Darlington kind, of close to home really. I wondered if I'd manage to get through Darlington in the dark still, because I knew I was not as fast as I'd hoped to be. The weather had been horrible. It was still windy but raining less but there was still the scariness of tree falling and now the worry of tripping on hidden things in the leaf litter. A lot of this section was soft field sides with the river at one side and a field on the other, but the sky was bright and the stars were stunning it was a good night to be out, it actually wasn't even that cold. My wet clothes had totally dried out. Getting through Darlington was a bit of a landmark really, Halfway, halfway there it was still dark, I was making reasonable time and headed past the golf course to the road towards Croft on Tees, checkpoint 6. More soup, an odd thing to have for breakfast, but it did the trick, really perked me up, I cleaned myself off after my fall so many miles ago, clothes were just absolutely covered in thick mud and I was covered in sticky burrs which had been prickling me for hours.

Setting off to checkpoint 7, I felt quite perky I had changed the battery in my head torch but didn't actually turn it on because there was street lights. By the time I was out of the streetlights it was daylight. I would normally perk up once you get to the dawn and the daylight, but today I just felt tired, I just wanted to sit down and have a sleep on a bench, but I didn't I just kept onwards. It was only just over 8 miles to lasagna. I didn't see another runner, not behind, not ahead, just me out in the countryside battling the wind. I started making my plans for checkpoint 7 at Middleton Saint George. Get plenty to eat, change my top and change my socks. It a long slog up to the checkpoint but worth it.

It was good to be in a fresh top and fresh socks I ate some lasagna and the lovely sweet goodies from my drop bag and put my bottle of Lucazade in my bag for later. I was about to leave when I was told not to go by the riverside as the river burst its banks but to go by road to Eaglescliffe and then the checkpoint. I used Google Maps to get me to Eaglescliffe and then changed to what 3 words to get me to the checkpoint. 6 miles on road, normally I would think that's OK but not in trail shoes, it felt like someone's battering the bottom of my feet they were so sore and I had to keep jumping off the road into the hedge side to avoid cars. Soon I made it to Eaglescliffe, I felt like I was ticking off the miles now, once I got to the checkpoint I would have about 30 miles left. I made my way through housing estates wondering where I was going to pop out, and then suddenly, I found myself on Yarm road, I knew where I was now. I stuck to the road past Preston park rather than go by the river because I thought we were to avoid the river, I then struggled to find the checkpoint coming in from a different area. I was so glad to see it, I had a seat, sorted my bottles, had a banana and flapjack and just rested my feet. They were so sore. I wasn't sure that could go another 30 miles this was now going to be mind over matter. Another runner came in, he was very swift in the checkpoint and set off before me. I set off and it didn't feel right so I checked the route on my watch, I was off course, but I'd followed an arrow, right, try another path, check my watch, not that way either, one route left, I set off and met the other runner coming back towards me, he told me the route was blocked and we went down the first path again. He was still moving well and soon left me, though I kept him in sight for a while. In Stockton I couldn't get under a bridge so had to cross the river on the bridge and cross back later, steps I could have done without. This section

went on and on, and on. I was now shattered, my feet hurt, in fact everything hurt. Where is that check point? Teessaurus Park? Would there be dinosaurs, I hoped so. There was.



I was so relieved to reach the checkpoint. They had empire biscuits yum. I wear 2 pairs of socks on long runs to protect my blister prone feet, I decided to take a pair off, as my feet were swelling.

I set off again, 20 miles, one more checkpoint, come on feet. The route was a little confusing in this section, near the football ground it led me to a locked gate, I walked back around, then it was a narrow path by the railway, through housing estates, crossing busy roads, so different from the rest of the route. Every time that i felt like I was heading to the coast the route went away. Over bridges, under bridges. Suddenly the path was flooded, my feet were lovely and dry, they had been since I had changed my socks at Middleton St George, there was no way around and it wasn't normal water, it was black and smelly, chemically, yuk. I waded through. I was glad to get back out on the road but fed up of Teesport. I could see Redcar. A signpost turned me north, away from the houses of Redcar, I could have cried, I was tired and sore and just wanted to finish now. This section eventually led to a golf course and sandy tracks, finally, as the sun sank, I was at Majuba Road car park, and under a blazing sunset, I arrived at the final checkpoint.

At last, just follow the coast now to the finish, I had to put my headtorch on, and navigating the many trails in the sand dunes was tough with a tired brain. The lights of saltburn never seemed to get any closer. Time had no meaning, just one foot in front of the other, over and over again. As pleased as I was to reach Saltburn, it was a double edged sword, I had been dreading the steps up to Hunt Cliff. They were awful, my legs screamed and the gale force wind tried to blow me over the edge, but I knew I was nearly at the end. I have never gone this direction in the dark and it was hard to make sense of it and judge the distance. I was so tired, I kept thinking that the bushes wer buildings, then they would move in the wind, it was exhausting, and the wind was bitter cold, unlike yesterday. I slogged onwards and finally got to the Charm Bracelet.



Now it was nearly over. I was surprised to see someone camping up there in that weather, wonder what they thought of people passing by at that time of the night. It took longer than anticipated to get off the cliff top, and the steps were torture on my battered quads, but finally I was in the sand dunes and heading to the finish. I was so relieved that this physical and mental battle was finally over.

Billy and Tsar were there to meet me and Cath came out to greet me. Tim presented me with my medal and Cath surprised me with the FV50 cat trophy, I was shocked but pleased to receive it, but even more I was so glad to remove my pack and sit down, I just needed sleep, I had been awake since 03:10 Friday morning and it was now gone 22:00 on Saturday.

