

# Macclesfield Harriers at the UTMB

by Martin Rands, 2020



The official soundtrack for this is “Conquest of Paradise” by Vangelis

*‘In nòreni per ìpe,  
in noreni coràh;  
tiràmìne per ìto,  
ne dominà.’*

*(apparently these are made up lyrics with no meaning)*



The UTMB is Europe's best known ultra trail race. The details have varied over the years but the distance is around 163km with 8900m of ascent.

Macc Harriers have been taking part since the beginning in 2003. In fact no other UK club has had as many members finish the race.\* A full list is at the end.

Over the first 6 years, Macc Harriers made up over 10% of all British finishers, and over 30% of female British finishers.

\* The only club with anywhere near as many finishers is Serpentine, based in London



Start of the first race on 28 August 2003  
Andy Addis was the first Harrier to finish -  
35<sup>th</sup> of 67 finishers from 722 who started. He was  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> British finisher.

The first year's results list as finishers runners who  
stopped at Courmayeur or Champex.  
Mark Hartell stopped at Champex and was in first  
place for this category



Mark and Mandy receiving the route in 2004

In 2004, Mark returned and  
finished the race in 21<sup>st</sup> place (1<sup>st</sup>  
British finisher).

Mandy Calvert also ran that year but  
stopped at Courmayeur.



Mark Hartell at the finish in 2004

In 2005 a larger group made the trip, with Andy Addis finishing for a second time, together with Steve Watts, Julian Brown and Mandy Calvert. Steve was the first British finisher.

This was the year Lizzie Hawker won the race for the first time, and her book Runner tells the story of her run, amongst her other amazing achievements.



Steve with family and Jo at the Arnuva checkpoint. In the early years it was easy to drive up to here and see the runners.



At the start; Julian, Steve, Andy, Kath, Mandy and Louise Bell. Kath and Louise would go on to finish in 2006



Julian drinking tea (obviously) at the Trient checkpoint, where against stereotype the Swiss are surprisingly uninhibited



Mandy at the finish – not much company in Chamonix at 6am in the rain

In 2006, there was a group of returning runners, Andy Addis becoming the first Harrier to join the select group of 3-time finishers.

Julian Brown and Mandy Calvert both finished for the second time, together with Kath Turner. Mandy was the first British female.



Kath at Col de Voza  
(Photo: Greg Turner)



Mandy after the Rifugio Bonatti checkpoint



Another wet early morning finish in Chamonix



The CCC (Courmayeur-Champex-Chamonix) was first held in 2006, and Jo Miles was the first Harrier to finish this event, coming 4<sup>th</sup> in her category.





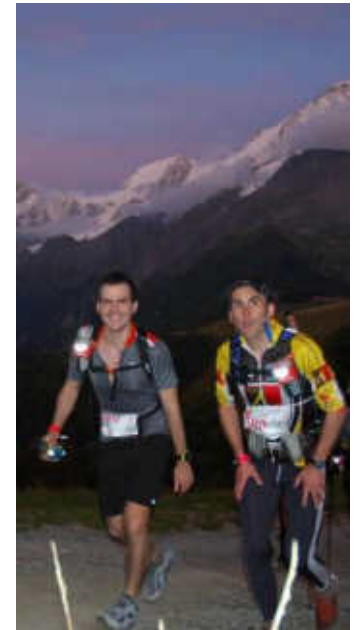
Karen, Mandy, Alex, Spyke  
Kath, Ang  
(Photo: Greg Turner)

2007 was the year most Harriers took part in the UTMB, with Mark McDermott, Ross Litherland, Karen McDonald and Mandy Calvert all finishing. Future Harrier Julie Gardner also finished.

Mandy finished for the third time and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in her category (V1F 40-49).

Chris Rhodes ran and stopped at La Foley. Mark Hartell stopped at Courmayeur.

In the CCC, Ang Leonard finished.



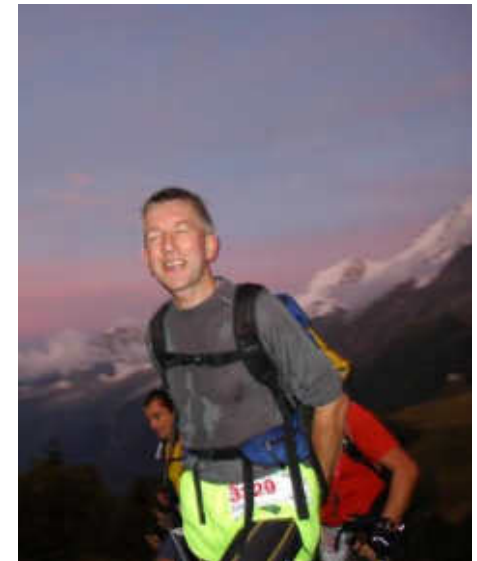
Ross Litherland  
(Photo: Greg Turner)



V1F podium; Mandy with Sarah Rowell (2<sup>nd</sup>) and Pascal Fouques (1<sup>st</sup>)



Mark McDermott at Col de Voza  
(Photo: Greg Turner)



Chris Rhodes  
(Photo: Greg Turner)

In 2008 another large contingent of Harriers participated in the 3 events; this was the first year for the PTL (La Petite Trotte à Léon) – a long and unmarked route for teams that is said to be non-competitive.

In the UTMB, Mike Nelson, Pete Coppack and Alex Langdon all finished.

\*Pete finished despite your correspondent leading him astray on the final descent from La Flégère.

Jo Miles also ran, stopping at Champex.

In the CCC, Karen MacDonald, Julie Fletcher and Kath Turner all finished.

Steve, Julian and Mandy completed the PTL being the 5<sup>th</sup> team, first mixed team and only British team to finish.



Mike Nelson, pictured on the TDS route in 2011



PTL team at Tête aux Vents heading to the finish shortly before Kilian Jornet overtook them, and with Léon in Champex

By 2009, the increasing popularity meant that getting places was more difficult and so the number of Harriers taking part in the UTMB has reduced. Instead many Harriers have run at other similar events such as the Grand Raid des Pyrénées.

Nevertheless, Ross and Catherine Litherland both finished the UTMB for the second time.

Kirsty Hewitson and Nancy Bunyan finished the CCC.



The TDS route, which goes South through Beaufortain area, with more challenging terrain than the UTMB (but not the PTL)

The PTL followed a longer route in 2009. Two Harriers were in the 19 teams to finish;

Julie Gardner (with Alison Brind and Jillian Ross) and Matt Kowalski-Hicks (with Michael Kenyon and Paul Vousden)

Another new event “Sur les Traces des Ducs de Savoie” (TDS) started in 2009. For the first year it ran from Chamonix to Courmayeur, subsequently the direction was reversed to finish in Chamonix.

Mandy ran and finished first in her category.



Mandy at the Cormet de Roseland CP, and with cowbell prize





The 2010 event was hit by a bad storm, causing the UTMB to be stopped after a few hours. However the organisers rearranged the race for the next day, following the CCC route from Courmayeur in better weather.

Kirsty Hewitson, Steve Swallow and Nancy Bunyan all finished the race.

The CCC was also stopped, Martin Rands had reached Vallorcine when the race was abandoned.



However, no-one told the teams in the PTL that the weather was bad, so they carried on regardless. Digby Harris and Steve Watts together with Spyke completed the event. Although it is non-competitive a perusal of the results will show they got back to the finish before anyone else (only 2 teams completed the full route)

PTL team at the finish and at the presentation with the winners of the UTMB\* Jez Bragg and Lizzie Hawker

\*or "fun run" according to Steve



Digby returned in 2011, to complete the UTMB, together with Richard Brown.  
*(Sorry don't have any photos of that year)*

2012 was another bad weather year with the UTMB using an alternative route. Ross Litherland, Steve Swallow and Nancy Bunyan all finished. Larry Day started but was unable to finish.

In the TDS, Catherine Litherland finished. Martin Rands stopped at Cormet de Roseland.



Nancy at the UTMB start



Catherine at the Cormet de Roseland CP in the TDS



Steve with Larry at the UTMB start



... and at the finish

2013 was the first time since the first race in 2003 that no Macclesfield Harriers finished the in UTMB.

However, Steve Watts finished the PTL for the third time, together with Digby Harris for the second time and with Tim Laney. Once again they reached the finish before any of the other teams (in a non-competitive manner).

Nancy Bunyan and Martin Rands started in the TDS but did not finish.



Maps of the PTL route at race control



Start of the PTL and the team back at the finish 103 hours later, after 300km and 24,000m of ascent



Mandy and Melanie Watts anxiously awaiting news of the runners



Mandy Calvert made her fifth start and had her fourth finish in the 2014 UTMB. She finished first in the V2F (50-59) age category\*, collecting another cowbell.

Sarah Ledbury finished the CCC.

In the PTL, Julie Garner finished for the second time, with Mark Townsend on this occasion.

(Julie and Mark set a record together for the South West Coast path in 2013)



Leaving Courmayeur Dolonne checkpoint



UTMB V2F Podium



At the finish, with the French commentator

\* Mandy will be the first to note that the V2F winning time this year was one of the slowest. Martin will be first to point out you can only beat whoever turns up.



In 2015 Kirsty Hewitson ran the UTMB, finishing for the second time.

It was also a second finish for Mandy Calvert in the TDS. Steve Swallow also ran in the TDS but stopped at Cormet de Roseland.



Kirsty finishing the UTMB in the early hours.  
With the change of main sponsor this year, the final part of the route was altered to not pass in front of the North Face store in Chamonix



An additional race, the OCC, started in 2014, going from Orsières in Switzerland. This is the shortest of the races.

Martin Rands finished the race in 2015, finally reaching the finish in Chamonix at the fourth attempt.

In 2016 Rob Gittins finished the TDS for the first time.  
Kirsty Hewitson ran in the PTL.

This was with Mark Townsend, who had run with Julie 2 years before.  
Steve and Digby started the PTL but were unable to finish this time.  
*(sorry no photos from 2016)*

2017 was the first appearance of Tom Whittington, who finished in the CCC. In fact it was a family affair with Zoe and Daisy also running.



There were no Harriers in the race finishers in 2018.

In 2019 Rob Gittins finished the TDS for the second time, on the revised and much extended route.  
*(He had also started in 2017 but did not finish)*

## UTMB finishers from Macclesfield Harriers (31)

Year	Position	Name	Category	Pos. Cat.	Time	
2003	35	ADDIS Andrew	V1H	9	32:48:46	
2003	1	HARTELL Mark	SEH	1	15:03:05	<i>Champex finisher</i>
2004	21	HARTELL Mark	V1H	8	27:10:26	
2005	41	WATTS Stephen	V1H	12	28:03:02	
2005	132	BROWN Julian	V1H	46	32:56:42	
2005	219	CALVERT Amanda	V1F	4	35:12:10	
2005	425	ADDIS Andrew	V2H	73	39:07:54	
2006	99	BROWN Julian	V1H	46	29:04:33	
2006	263	CALVERT Amanda	V1F	4	34:41:42	
2006	855	ADDIS Andrew	V2H	119	42:07:06	
2006	1007	TURNER Kathleen	V2F	14	43:29:19	
2007	152	MCDERMOTT Mark	V1H	61	31:11:46	
2007	152	LITHERLAND Ross	SEH	75	31:11:46	
2007	353	CALVERT Amanda	V1F	3	35:25:24	
2007	761	GARDNER Julie Ann	V1F	15	39:47:49	<i>Ran as Dark Peak</i>
2007	941	LANGDON Alex	V1F	20	41:29:18	
2007	1151	MCDONALD Karen	V1F	25	43:09:17	
2008	182	NELSON Mike	V1H	71	33:48:23	
2008	580	COPPACK Peter	V2H	70	40:18:03	
2008	683	LANGDON Alex	V1F	12	41:20:47	
2009	94	LITHERLAND Ross	SEH	47	30:55:48	
2009	705	LITHERLAND Catherine	SEF	22	41:18:39	
2010	668	HEWITSON Kirsty	SEF	18	20:32:03	<i>Bad weather route</i>
2010	673	SWALLOW Steve	V1H	268	20:34:58	<i>Bad weather route</i>
2010	907	BUNYAN Nancy	V1F	46	22:44:46	<i>Bad weather route</i>
2011	105	HARRIS Digby	V1H	41	33:19:05	
2011	161	BROWN Richard	V1H	70	35:20:38	
2012	266	LITHERLAND Ross	SEH	146	16:38:39	
2012	530	SWALLOW Steve	V1H	205	18:10:37	<i>Bad weather route</i>
2012	1446	BUNYAN Nancy	V1F	42	22:18:46	<i>Bad weather route</i>
2014	485	CALVERT Amanda	V2F	1	38:25:59	
2015	344	HEWITSON Kirsty	V1F	12	36:04:10	

## CCC finishers from Macclesfield Harriers (9)

Year	Position	Name	Category	Pos. Cat.	Time	
2006	326	MILES Joanna	V1F	4	18:25:58	
2007	888	LEONARD Angela Josephine	V1F	54	20:30:27	
2008	478	MCDONALD Karen	V1F	13	21:34:23	
2008	1057	FLETCHER Julie	SEF	44	24:59:19	
2008	1282	TURNER Kathleen	V2F	23	26:23:53	
2009	316	HEWITSON Kirsty	SEF	7	20:11:53	
2009	865	BUNYAN Nancy	V1F	30	24:09:22	
2010	673	RANDS Martin	V1H	213	17:06:40	<i>Vallorcine finisher</i>
2014	1223	LEDBURY Sarah	V1F	57	25:39:41	
2017	616	WHITTINGTON Tom	V1H	188	20:25:04	

## TDS finishers from Macclesfield Harriers (7)

Year	Position	Name	Category	Pos. Cat.	Time	
2009	115	CALVERT Amanda	V1F	1	20:52:45	<i>Chamonix start</i>
2011	30	LITHERLAND Ross	SEH	19	19:45:08	
2011	306	LITHERLAND Catherine	SEF	5	25:49:20	
2012	166	LITHERLAND Catherine	SEF	7	23:54:12	
2015	437	CALVERT Amanda	V2F	9	26:38:02	
2016	388	GITTINS Robert	V2H	37	27:11:51	
2019	740	GITTINS Robert	V2H	99	38:37:38	<i>New route</i>



## PTL finishers from Macclesfield Harriers (11)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Time hr:min</b>
2008	Julian Brown	Montrail UK Macclesfield Harriers	79:55
2008	Amanda Calvert	Montrail UK Macclesfield Harriers	79:55
2008	Stephen Watts	Montrail UK Macclesfield Harriers	79:55
2009	Matthew Kowalski-Hicks	Haglofs UK	110:30
2009	Julie Gardner	Midget Gems	113:00
2010	Digby Harris	Flipper's Gang	80:20
2010	Stephen Watts	Flipper's Gang	80:20
2013	Digby Harris	Macclesfield Harriers	103:08
2013	Stephen Watts	Macclesfield Harriers	103:08
2014	Julie Gardner	Footless Crows	137:08
2016	Kirsty Hewitson	North and South	148:24