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Leeds Country Way in a day

31 May, 2021 in [Communications](#) / [General communications](#) by [Nigel Fuller](#)

In May 2021, 4 people from St. Theresa's completed the Leeds Country Way in one day. One leg of the LCW is usually enough for mere mortals, but for these intrepid runners they took on the full 62 mile route in one go!

First on the 7th May Chin Yong did it in an incredible time of 10h 41m, made all the more remarkable as he took on the challenge solo with no support. Then on 29th May; Sam Jackson, Jo Loftus and Jason Albrecht completed the run, with teams of STAC's helping out and supporting on route.

We spoke to Jo, Sam, Chin and Jason to find out why they did and what it takes!



Why did you do it?

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Chin: Coming from a hiking background, running trails is like a speedy way to see the countryside. As a 'trail-bagger', of course I would do the LCW which is right by my doorstep.

Sam: We were out strolling one day before lockdown fully hit when we could still run in groups and talking about running/races etc and someone, (I think it was Jo) said "I really fancy doing LCW all in a day" and I remember replying as I'd never had the chance to do any of it before "I wouldn't mind doing that either!"

Jo: I've always admired the ones who have taken it on but never thought it was for me. Off road has never really been my thing. When lockdown hit and we were not allowed to venture too far the LS15 tarmac started getting a little boring so more and more trail crept into my routes. I started thinking "ooh I wonder where that path goes..." When it was discussed with the Saturday strollers group it just grabbed my attention and time seemed right to give it a go!

Jason: I initially thought about it when Glen, Dan, Heln and Tillie did it last year. I ran the last 2 legs with Glen and Dan and I was so inspired with their determination. Then the Saturday Strollers started thinking about it and having done an ultra I fancied I bash at it.

Sam: Originally we were all hoping to do it but injury and other races happening got in the way. We set a date and that was that, we had to start training for it then! I think we chose this particular weekend as we were supposed to be running a marathon anyway and with it being a bank holiday we all had that extra day to recover! I think with lockdown and races being cancelled left, right and centre it gave us something to aim for and focus on as well as being such a massive challenge.



How did you prepare for such a challenge?

Jason: All my prep was done last year as I've been struggling to run from January but I just tried to maintain my fitness levels through short hard runs and long slow runs.

Sam: It was hard at first as when we decided to definitely do it and start training for it, lockdown had hit and we could only run in pairs. We couldn't travel to reccie any of it and at one point we thought we might have to actually run it in pairs!

Jo: I reached out to as many people as possible who had done it before or something similar. They all gave me invaluable advice. The tiniest bit of detail can make all the difference.

Sam: We got some really great advice from Paul Atkinson about everything to do with ultra running. Double long run days at the weekend were a must to get our body used to running on tired legs, run and get used to running at a slower pace, practice eating during long runs, (I was really bad at that part and kept forgetting to take food out with me).

Jo: I had to learn to run tired and also to slow down. You can't run 64 miles at your usual pace. So it was back to back weekend long runs; one of them at a slower pace than normal. You have a natural pace and it takes a lot of focus to slow down but I learned a lot from them.

Sam: I knew I wouldn't be able to increase my mileage as massively as Jo did, (although I did put in a few weeks of really high mileage for me) as I seem to get injured if I run too much so I

kept up my strength work and cross trained on the exercise bike to keep my fitness up as much as I could. It seemed to take over your life with all the weekend running and I can tell you I was honestly so glad when it was time to taper!

Chin: I ran it part way a few times and planted supply drops every 6 or so miles the day before.



Best part of the day?

Jason: Best part of the day was the ice pop at harewood and obviously all the support along the way and especially at the finish

Chin: Kinda odd because I enjoyed being alone with the vista of leeds to myself or even bouncing down the woods when it was hailing, but I also enjoyed best the unexpected company at the end.

Sam: Apart from finishing?! Definitely running with different people on different legs, it was so good to see new faces. The scenery on most of it is beautiful and some of the views are amazing. Seeing all our cheerleaders on the last leg! Especially the first big bunch at the mexborough – towards the end of leg 5 I started to get really emotional for some reason when I thought about how close we were to actually finishing it, so when we saw them all cheering us in I started to well up I honestly don't know how I kept it together and didn't start bawling my eyes out at that point!! The support from everybody was just amazing, it was like a club day out! And obviously running it with my fellow strollers.

Jo: By far the team spirit. It was absolutely overwhelming and made me very emotional. I can't put it into words how much the support meant to me.



And the worst?

Sam: Leg 3 was the worst part for me. The heat had started to build at the end of leg 2 so by leg 3 I was just boiling. I found it really difficult because of the heat, I mean my face goes red within 3 steps of getting out of the door on a normal run so you can imagine what I looked like with the heat as well! I think John Robson said I did look a bit flushed haha! and if I'm honest when we had done the reccie of 3,4 and 5, it was my least favourite of the legs so I knew it would be tough anyway. We had the worst of both worlds with how hot it was plus the mud of

the last few weeks of torrential rain!

Jo: I think we felt unlucky with the weather. Weeks of rain meant the ground was saturated still and trail shoes were needed. (I'm not a fan of trail shoes in general) but on the day it was 20 degrees and glorious!

Chin: I think it was 80+km in when I hit a wall. I could only run intermittently at that point and there were only muddy fields to look at. Plus my audiobook had finished!

Jo: And at Harewood house I fell and must have jarred my leg funnily. I got the worst cramp ever and cried like a baby. They all thought I'd hurt myself from the fall. The cramp passed and I got up and carried on like nothing had happened. A group of walkers had been waiting to pass and must have been so confused given my outburst

Jason: The worst bit for me was when Jo fell down I thought she broke her leg as she looked in agony but it was cramp. Plus I had a few moments of doubt but Wanda and Shaun both gave me a kick up the arse



What got you through the toughest parts?

Sam: I think definitely having different people running the different legs with us helped massively, hats off to anyone who has done it on their own or, as in Chin's case, self supported as well – full respect to each and every one of them, I don't think I could have done it without the support.

Chin: Music and staying relaxed/chilled. Classical music or ambient electronica. Leave the tempo music for when you want to empty the tank.

Sam: The little things like changing my socks and trainers at the start of leg 4 and then changing into clean kit at Golden Acre Park- absolute heaven!! Faye brought a flask of tea at the beginning of her leg as well and that was to die for, ice lollies were the best thing since sliced bread when we got those on leg 5!! Who knew that's what you needed right at that moment, there was two women walking by when we got them and they must have thought what the heck?, When they heard us all raving about these rocket lollies! Richard Jones had a backpack that must have belonged to Mary Poppins with all the different things he brought with him that he thought we might need when he came out to find us en route!

Jo: I thought leg 3/4 would be the hardest mentally. They include the half way point and mean you're the furthest away from home. But the company changed that. I'd not seen Wendy, Nick and Robbo for ages and we had a good catch up. The miles flew by and I think the double long runs got me comfortably through to about 50 miles

Sam: Obviously all the cheerleaders on leg 6 when you just want to get to the end was absolutely amazing! And I must say a massive thanks to Shaun – as well as running a couple of legs with us, he got up to take us to the start, came out on leg 2, brought Faye and supplies for leg 4, brought himself and Clare for leg 5 and 6 and more supplies! – he did some right running around on Saturday for us!

Jo: So leg 6 was my tough one; it was where I really had to shut up and dig deep. The fun stopped and it was just about getting to Garforth. I am so glad leg 6 is home territory because seeing so many familiar faces who genuinely want you to succeed is the only thing that got me through that leg. Garforth feels so close, yet so far away. Every step at the point is from your head and not your legs.

Jason: Just running with people who are hardened experienced runners plus I've been in the trenches on long difficult runs ultra, 3 peaks so I had an idea of what pain was coming so I just tried to block everything out.

Sam: As I said on one of my Facebook comments, I hope everyone who supported us in no matter what way – running with us, bringing food/water, cheerleading, everybody at the finish, sending us tips on the run up, messages of good luck and just rooting for us online, realises how much of an important part of our day they were, it was so much appreciated.



Tips for any mad person considering doing it?

Sam: Don't put pressure on yourself, I think the fact we just wanted to do it and wasn't going for a particular time etc helped massively, I always knew we would do it as that's what we had set out to do in our heads.

Chin: One can even walk it in one go or divi it in stages. So ask yourself first why do you want to do it? The reason needs to be strong enough to carry you through the tough times.

Sam: Defo a change of kit and shoes if you can!! The little things make all the difference!

Chin: Next tip is to play to your strengths. If you are a morning vs. night person, sunny vs. cloudy, runner vs. hiker, pizza vs. electrolyte gels.

Sam: You don't know what you want to eat en route (I found that so tough and had to force food down – tuna sandwiches got me through it!) so take/leave with people bits of allsorts you think you might want/crave.

Jason: Train hard and get plenty of miles in the legs before even attempting it, eat and drink plenty even when you don't want to, don't do it on the warmest day of the year after heavy rain and get plenty of support around you.

Jo: Take it seriously. Train specifically for it. Respect it and get as much help as you can.

Chin: Lastly, train as for similar conditions including bringing gear you will carry, experimenting with fueling and receiving helps mentally.

Sam: And obviously train, train, train! As Shaun would remind us at every opportunity leading up to it (and on leg 6!!) “it's such a long way, it's going to be hard, you're gonna find it tough especially when you're 50 miles in!” But seriously it's such a long distance that you need to respect it.



What next and how do you beat that?!

Jo: Back to the road for me!

Jason: Next is a Half Iron-man 20th June followed by coast to coast 160 cycle challenge on the 2nd and 3rd July and after that a long rest before a London marathon pb attempt.

Chin: Endure 24 solo, UTS 165. I don't know... I'm off peak fitness and behind on my training schedule so... oh well!

Sam: Well all I'm planning for the rest of this year is everything that was postponed from last! So we've got Endure 24 coming up, and towards the end of the year I will have to start training for a couple of marathons that have been postponed from last year and of course we have our club races to look forward to as well. I can honestly say I don't think I'll ever top LCW in a day and I don't think I want to!

Jo, Sam, Chin and Jason join Glen Johnson (twice), Helen Fenton, Tillie Clark, Stuart

Gall and Dan Grant as STAC's who have done the Leeds Country Way in one day. So who will be next?

Though one person it won't be...

Jo: My daughter said very seriously "I hope people are not going to be thinking like mother, like daughter 'cos I'm not doing anything like that!"

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Runs 225 Distance 1,466.6km Time

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St Theresas AC

Today   **May 2022**   Pr

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
25	26	27	28	29	30	1 May
		20:00				
		20:00				

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
					09:00		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
		19:00			09:00	10:30	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	19:30				09:00	09:00	
30	31	1 Jun	2	3	4	5	
		20:00			09:00		
		20:00					

Events shown in time zone: United

