

THE "JAMIE BRUNNING" NEWSLETTER

4th March – 1st April 2015

Days Run **169** **KM Run** **7062** **Money raised** **c. 10,000**

PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#) TO VISIT MY FACEBOOK PAGE AND "LIKE" IT – IT HELPS WITH SPONSORS!

Find PHOTOS from the expedition [HERE](#)

Find lots of VIDEOS from the expedition [HERE](#)



The road leading out of Mexico and into Guatemala

Well this has been an exciting month. I started in Mexico and have run across the entire length of Guatemala and am now in El Salvador. Up till this point each country has been a matter of months and now they seem to be flying by. While every day is exciting, things have now got that little bit more so. New countries mean new everything and having to adapt to new ways of doing things, learning about each country's differences etc. I loved Mexico so much but running through Guatemala was amazing. I may not have taken the most scenic route I did get to see so many different parts of this amazing little country. The big thing that sticks with me from Guatemala is the smiles. Everywhere you looked people were smiling and not just out of politeness but because they wanted to.

Smiling has become such a big part of my expedition as it is the most useful tool I have. No matter where you are or what situation you are in a smile can bridge almost any gap. The smile is especially important if you are in a pickle and there is a language barrier. By flashing a big smile people seem to soften and become more willing to forgive any communication breakdown. If you need help people will rush to your aid if you are smiling while they might be more wary if you wear a frown.

Smiling is also a universal sign of happiness and enjoying yourself and when this is your "job" then it is hard not to smile every day. In my old life I worked in an office and the focus was on budgets, targets and share prices and happiness was normally the sacrifice you made to achieve these. I completely accept that that was a real job (and they have been amazingly understanding by giving me a two year sabbatical to achieve my dreams) and this expedition may not quite qualify as a job as it costs me money! But maybe what we can take out of this is that in the pursuit of happiness people are willing to go that extra mile – literally in my case! Might be worth some managers taking that into consideration when trying to motivate people.



We can't forget the Forrest Gump connection

Because smiling is so important I thought I would look up some facts about smiling. Firstly, and quite obviously, people feel better when they are truly smiling and it releases endorphins that relieve stress. Smiling is contagious. If you are a lady it will make you more attractive to men. Strangely it will make men less attractive to women. If you smile while on the phone it will make you sound friendlier. Those who smile apparently live longer. New born babies start smiling in their sleep as soon as they are born. If you smile you are thought to be more confident and sociable and therefore more likely to be promoted. There are apparently 19 different types of smiles and a smile uses between 5 and 53 facial muscles!

ANY FINANCIAL SPONSORS OUT THERE????

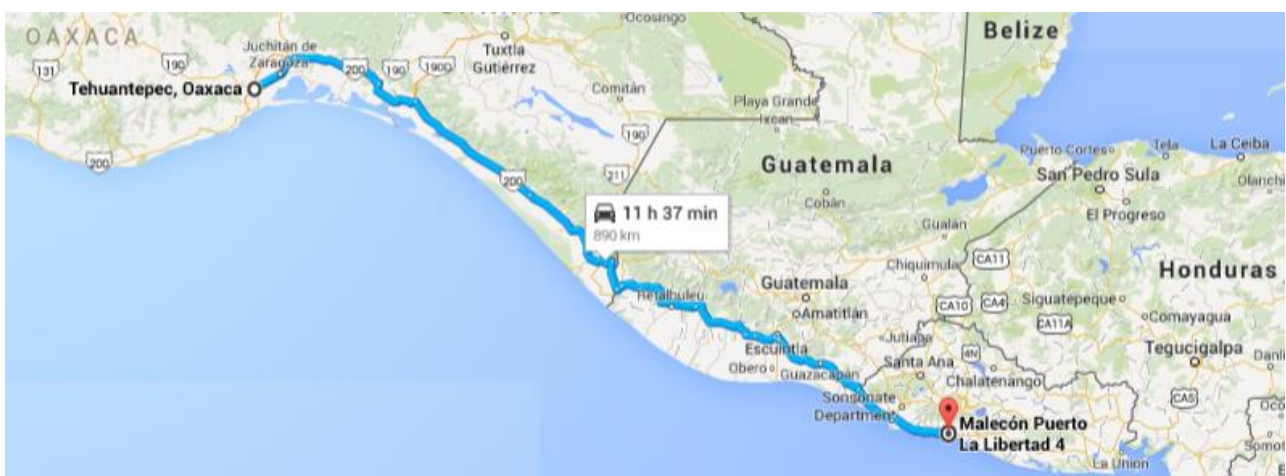
"How am you financing this expedition" is a question I get a lot. I have been very fortunate to have some amazing kit providers who have supplied the most amazing equipment but when it comes down to everyday costs it is mostly coming from my savings and they are by no means limitless!!!

In June, I will be getting five fresh running shirts all with a nice space on the front for anyone who would like to sponsor a shirt. I will need to get them printed before June so there is a three month window!! If you know anyone that might be interested in financially supporting my expedition please let me know...

If you would like to donate a few pennies to the costs I would also be hugely appreciative! This can be done by clicking [here](#)

The Route:

Well this is exciting... I started in Tehautepec in **Mexico**, have run clean across **Guatemala** passing through Coatepeque, Manzatenango, Escuintla and am now in **El Salvador**. That's three countries in one month! For me this is a dream coming true as I can now say with confidence that I run countries – just not in a political way!



A Few Stats:

- Distance run in this 27 day period edition: 890km
- Total distance covered in 169 day running period: 7062km
- Longest day: 70km
- Daily average: 41.8km (excluding days off)
- Shoes worn out – I am on my 7th and 8th pair of running shoes... These were kindly supported by Nike

Some media coverage:

The East Lothian Courier – Click [here](#)

Prensa Libre (Guatemala) – Click [here](#)

A few events from along the route

There are literally so many different events and scenarios that would qualify for inclusion but I have to be selective and pick just a few, so here goes.

Event 1: A day visit to Antigua Guatemala: I really don't get to see as much of the countries, towns and villages as I would like to. I am like a migrating bird and need to keep pressing south to make sure I am in the right country at the right time but occasionally I let myself have a day off and do some exploring. When I was in Escuintla, Guatemala, I took the bus to Antigua Guatemala as I had heard so many wonderful things about the place. I am glad to say that everything I had heard was true and you can probably tell that by the number of photos included in this newsletter. Rather than just amble around the town snapping photos I decided to get a guide. While it was a little on the expensive side it did make the trip a whole lot more fulfilling. Louis, my guide, was patient, spoke good English and seemed to genuinely love the town he was showing me. We visited churches, statues, places of prayer (both catholic and Mayan) and renovated colonial houses. Louis didn't just focus on the physical but tried to educate me about the people and their beliefs. There is a curious blend between Christianity and Mayan beliefs which is intriguing. During the day the town is tourist central but at night that changes. While stumbling back to the bus stop in the middle of night I got to see another side of Antigua and it is not as glossy. There are numerous people seeking refuge in doorways and ATM cubicles and the queues for the free hospital are round the block. It really brought home that while Guatemala may be beautiful there are a lot of people who living in poverty and this needs to be addressed somehow.



The beautiful architecture in Antigua Guatemala

Event 2: Getting local press coverage: While in Guatemala I had the great fortune of being interviewed by a newspaper and television station. This had such an amazing effect on my short time in this great country and for a couple of seconds I felt like a Z list celebrity. Rather than people just staring at me in disbelief they knew what I was doing and wanted to interact with me. Not a day went passed when a car wouldn't pull over and a family jump out and take a photo with me. While this may sound egotistical (and not surprise some of you) it also had such a huge effect on my running. It gave me that extra motivation to keep going. The tooting horns and waves from strangers added extra power to my muscles and allowed me to power on to the next destination. It's strange that British newspapers don't seem at all interested in my story but in Central America they love the positivity of it all.



The Guat Vision camera crew who filmed and interviewed me on the side of the road

Event 3: Taking the less touristy route: I have made a few remarks about not being able to enjoy as much of the tourist sites and activities as I would like there is a flip side. My route is not determined by what I should see or where I should visit but purely what is the shortest route from A to B. This has meant that I have ended up in towns where tourists just don't go and in many occasions there are good reasons for that. But it does mean is that I get to see a side of the countries I visit untainted by tourism. It doesn't always make it a comfortable trip but it does make it a real experience. In one town I slept in an unmarked hotel above a funeral parlour. There were no restaurants just street food stands selling very basic (and unhealthy) snacks. The shopkeepers were protected by metal bars and you had to request what you wanted and pay before you got your goods. Everything was alien but that makes it exciting. The market in Mazatenango was another great experience as it was there to supply the locals with what they needs not tourists with junk they really don't. For me it adds to the sense of adventure and makes it more exhilarating!



A shop in Siguintala, Guatemala

Focus on sponsor – [Powertraveller](#) – Never a moment without power



The SolarGorilla and PowerGorilla in Baja California

In today's world we all need power to run our gadgets and this is especially relevant to a gadget freak like me. So when you are on the road all the time and more often than not away from power sockets this can become a problem especially when you rely on things like cameras, phones and MP3 players to help navigate your journey, record your experiences and keep sanity! Before I left I had thought about this but only got to the point where I had a small solar charger and thought I could muddle on with that. Luckily a friend suggested I contact Powertraveller. When they heard what I was doing they were incredibly generous and supplied me with a PowerGorilla, SolarGorilla and SpiderMonkey. All three pieces of equipment are completely compatible, can cover all my power needs and are as rugged as hell.

The PowerGorilla is a portable battery that is about the size of two DVD boxes but packs enough power to recharge my computer a few times over as well as take care of my phones, speakers etc. I can either recharge the battery by hooking it up to a mains socket or if in the middle of nowhere I can plug it into my SolarGorilla.

The SolarGorilla is about the size of an A4 piece of paper and opens up like a landscape book. As soon as the sun hits the panel it starts generating power. You can either direct the power to the battery or plug in individual devices by the USB output. If you are lucky enough to have a SpiderMonkey you can then attach that and charge a few things at the same time – depending on the strength of the sun.

The SpiderMonkey is a life saver. It is small, compact and allows you to charge 4 different USB devices at the same time. This can be used directly with the PowerGorilla or SolarGorilla or from a power socket.

I have been on the road for nearly 8 months, run 7000km and have not run out of power on a single occasion. Thank you Powertraveller....

Find out more about the [SpiderMonkey](#) – COMPACT ALUMINIUM FOUR WAY USB HUB

Find out more about the [PowerGorilla](#) – POWERFUL RUGGED HIGH-TECH 5V TO 24V CHARGER

Find out more about the [SolarGorilla](#) - RUGGED WATER RESISTANT 5V & 20V SOLAR PANEL

Scenery:



Southern Mexico



Guatemala



Southern Mexico (I think)



Southern Mexico



Guatemala

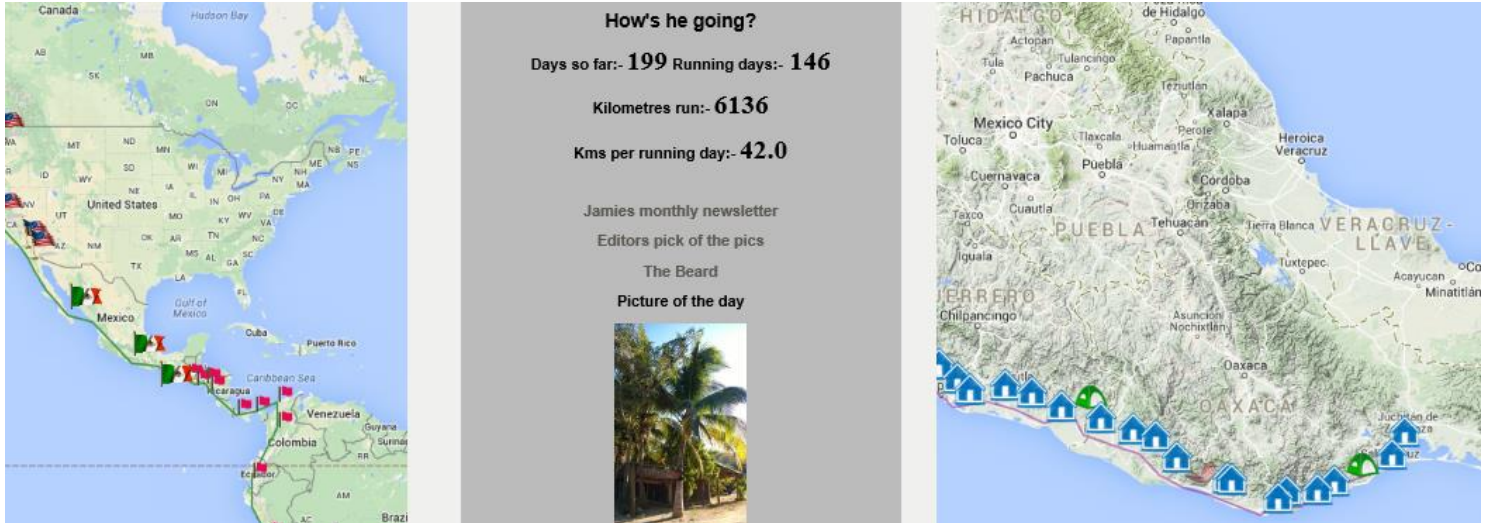
A Quick Beard Update:

As many of you know I am trying not to cut my beard while on this expedition. Actually sometimes it seems that people are more interested in the beard than the run itself so here is the latest on its progress:



Reminder about dad's webpage:

Please check it out by clicking [HERE](#). It really is awesome and is the best place to find out where I am and find every collated on a day by day basis. It is also my go to for the stats of how I am progressing!!



Acts of kindness:

The thing that has been the most amazing part of this trip is the number of people who have gone out of their way to make my life that little bit easier. These include, and this is by no means definitive:

- Lily Richardson – Thank you for letting me stay in the rooms about your amazing JetSet Restaurant in Escuintla and for providing Charlie the bear with some new friends!
- Rodrigo and family – Thank you for letting me stay at your house which is so well equipped for cyclists and runners making the mad dash through Mexico. Also thank you for acting as my post box and receiving all my packages. A complete life saver.
- Thank you to the lovely lady who gave me \$10 when I entered El Salvador with no money!
- Thank you to the lovely girls who stopped and gave me water in Guatemala.
- Thank you **BE AT ONE** Cocktail bars for donating a whopping £1800 to my charities – biggest sponsor so far!



Caption

Charities:

There is obviously a serious aspect to this trip and that is to raise money and awareness for the charities I have chosen. So far we have together raised about **£10,000** for all the charities. While this may not all show up on the VirginGiving page it is sitting in a paypal account or I am waiting for cheques. As stated on my website a small proportion of monies may be used to help fund the cost of the expedition. I am pleased to say that at this time it is looking increasingly likely that very little will be used for this and will all go to charity. Thank you for all your donations so far. Hopefully by the end of the expedition we will have got closer to the £20,000 I would like to raise.

Click on the logos for a reminder of the charities:



To donate please click [here](#)

Thank you to my sponsors:

I'd also like to thank all those who are making my trip possible by providing equipment and support. Thank you for your patience in dealing with my requests. Your involvement is key to me getting through each day.

[Rollei](#) – For the amazing video cameras that help me capture this expedition. I've just received the [7s](#) and really excited about using it

[Powertraveller](#) – For providing me with all the power I could possibly use through my [SolarGorilla](#), [PowerGorilla](#) and [SpiderMonkey](#)

[OverBoard](#) – For keeping everything I have dry all the time.

Microsoft/Nokia – For my [Lumia 1020](#). All my photos have been taken with this phone...

[Force Ten](#) – I love my [tent](#) and my [sleeping bag](#). I spend so much time in both that to have the best is very important. I want one of their new [rucksacks](#) that are released this year. They look awesome!!!

[Trangia](#) – We all lovingly remember the [Trangia stove](#) and no matter what new cooking set ups come along nothing beats one of these!

[Rudy Project Sunglasses](#) – I think this was the first bit of kit I received and despite being an idiot and scratching them on day one I still wear them every day – even when it's raining (but as a hairband!)

Where you can follow:

- I am trying to update my blog as often as possible: www.jamieisrunning.com
- Photos can be found [here](#)
- Video can be found at www.youtube.com/jamieisrunning
- GPS tracking can be found [here](#)
- I am on [Twitter](#), Instagram and [Facebook](#) with the name jamieisrunning

Some photos from the road:



My Hotel in Tonalá



A Restaurant in Pijijiapan



A statue in Arriaga



A golden tree in El Salvador



The main square in Antigua Guatemala



The town hall in Antigua Guatemala



A door decoration in Antigua Guatemala



A statue in Guatemala



A delicious treat on a day off



Breakfast in bed!



A communal washing station in Guatemala



Spices in Mazatenango, Guatemala

To see more visit my Microsoft OneDrive photo page by clicking [here](#)

THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

And sorry for typos and grammatical errors – I am always very tired when I write this and my blog!