



Brilliant CFR representation at Steel Fell.

# CUMBERLAND FELL RUNNERS

## NEWSLETTER- NOVEMBER 2018

[www.c-f-r.org.uk](http://www.c-f-r.org.uk) , Facebook CFR seniors (members & public) and juniors - Instagram #cumberlandfellrunners.

**Editors note-**Definitions of CHALLENGE-‘A test of one’s abilities or resources in a demanding but stimulating undertaking:’. This newsletter is full of members’ challenges. Whether against the terrain, clock, distance, elements, others or oneself it appears we are constantly seeking them and relish in the experiences they give us. Is it something in the makeup of a fell runner or just an excuse to get out on the hills? As I read the numerous articles which drop in my mailbox I realise it’s not just the actual event that is so rewarding but the planning, preparation, reflecting and sharing which bring so much pleasure and enable us to ‘re-live’ the venture..

This edition boasts a report from our international lady runner Sophie Noon, A week of being a CFR junior (very busy!), Favourite Fells, a heartfelt report of Rosie’s Pyrenees crossing, 2 different Abraham Tea Rounds, a lesson in carrying lightweight from Darren Parker and how to do it in style from Dot and Jane. Also the TDS, NCOH, Lakes in a Day, Ring of Steall accounts, race and relay reports and much more! So take your pick and I hope you enjoy them- but you better save this so you can keep returning to it –it may take some time!

**As always a big thank you to all who have contributed .**

Dot Patton

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## Committee

Chair- Paul Jennings  
Vice Chair- Ryan Crellin  
Treasurer- Ann Cummings  
Secretary- Jennie Chatterley  
Membership Secretary- Rob Stein  
Statistician- Andy Bradley  
Press Officer- Charlotte Akam  
Newsletter- Dot Patton  
Junior Chair- Andrew Rigley



*Vests modelled by Rob and Les –Left or right stripe ? join the debate!*

Any new (or old) members wanting kit contact  
Ryan Crellin (vests& T shirts) [ryancrellin@gmail.com](mailto:ryancrellin@gmail.com)  
or Jennie Chatterley (hoodies, fleeces) [jennie.chatterley@gmail.com](mailto:jennie.chatterley@gmail.com)

**Welcome to new members : quite a list - our club is growing!**

Stephanie Shaw  
Ian Swarbrick  
Mark Wise  
Matthias Dombrowsky  
James Todd  
Victoria Wright  
Adam Cresswell  
Izzy Rourke  
Peter Walmsley  
Richard Davey  
Ben Mitchinson  
Mark Blackwell  
Juliet Fullwood  
Jack Gilbert  
Heather-Catherine Marshall

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING –TUESDAY NOV 13<sup>th</sup> 8.00pm**  
**Swan Inn–Cockermouth –after club run on Sale Fell.**

## 2018 CFR PRESENTATION EVE



Ennerdale Brewery  
Chappel Row, Rowrah  
CA26 3XS

### 7.PM

An end of season celebration with a 2 course hot buffet, including GF, vegetarian and vegan options, £18 per person. Payment to be made by **10th November** by bank transfer to Cumberland Fell Runners...

(Details on members facebook event)

Results of the championship and show series are on the website but why not come along and see for yourself- it may be you!

## Diary Dates

### Winter League.

24/11 Sale fell  
1/12 Crag Fell  
16/12 Xmas Pud  
6/01 King of the Castle  
12/01 Clough Head (Kong Adventure)  
02/02 Stybarrow (Kong Adventure)



SAT, DEC 22 AT 7:30 AM

### Pagans Breakfast 2018

[Braithwaite C Of E VA Primary School](#) · Keswick

See CFR facebook for more.



Plus fastest times posted at the Whinlatter Park Run between 24/11 and 26/1. Email your times to Jane Mottram.

Best of three results (in the event of a tie for first place a fourth result will be used).  
Details of all of the races will be posted on the website over the next few weeks.

## TRAINING

CFR now offer 3 training sessions a week! Each one is different and guaranteed to improve your running!  
You also get to meet and socialize with other club members.

**Mondays- Conditioning for runners,**

**Tuesdays- Club fell Runs**

**Thursdays – ‘Serious Stuff’**

See below for more detail.



### **Club Runs-Tuesday Evening 6.30 various venues.**

Tuesday Evening Club runs continue to be very well supported -often up to 22 members attending. See website for venues. [www.c-f-r.org.uk](http://www.c-f-r.org.uk)

### **Conditioning For Runners- by Barry Johnson**



Earlier this year I was approached by Jenny Chatterley and asked if I would be able to put on a weekly fitness training session for CFR. A slot was available at Paddle School on Monday evenings so I agreed that if numbers warranted it we would go ahead. There was a good response so we have embarked on a series of classes.

The intention of the session is to provide appropriate conditioning for runners in a friendly, sociable environment. The exercise routines will be tailored specifically to the needs of runners. I work with athletes from many other disciplines – for example, racing and rally drivers, triathletes, mountain bikers etc. - whose needs are different. I am aware that CFR members race over a wide spectrum of events in terms of length, climb and difficulty of terrain and the classes need to take these into account.

As a class member you can dictate the intensity of the effort you make. There is no pressure to do everything. You can work at your own rate and leave out any exercise you feel is inappropriate for you. We should, however, set realistic objectives to help you improve and I will of course encourage you to achieve your potential in these areas: flexibility and range of movement; strength and endurance; aerobic capacity for pace and speed.

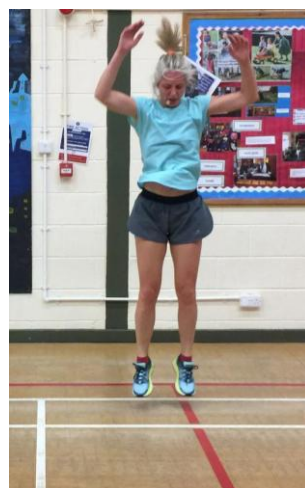


I am a member of the Register of Exercise Professionals and have worked for several decades in the fields of sport and fitness training. I was originally a competitive swimmer and water polo player, then a fell walker, climber, fell runner, cyclist and triathlete.

**The classes are held at Eaglesfield Paddle School on Monday evenings from 19.00 to 20.00 hours. The cost is £5 per session or £25 for a block of six. If you would like to join us, please send me your mobile number and I will include you on a CFR Whatsapp group for ease of communication. My mobile number is 07842419772. Barry**



*Planks!  
It all looks very painful!*



### **STT- Serious Stuff Thursdays- Led by Mario Yeomans & Jennie Chatterley.**

Also '**Serious Stuff**' (Actually they call it serious something else) Training is happening on **Thursday evenings** at different venues posted on the website and facebook.

A gruelling session of hill reps and speed work where everyone works at their own level which improves technique, speed and stamina.





**Congratulations !!**



**To our members who competed in the English Championships this year!**

- Mario Yeomans- 19<sup>th</sup> Open men. An excellent result for Mario who ran 5 of the 6 races.
- Sophie Noon- 12<sup>th</sup> Open Ladies . Another great result for Sophie who completed 3 races and represented England at Snowdon –see report below.
- Jack King -10<sup>h</sup> V65 and 5<sup>th</sup> V70
- David Fell -6<sup>th</sup> V70
- Hannah Bradley -74<sup>th</sup> open ladies
- Lindsay Buck -17<sup>th</sup> V55



**To Lindsay Buck –who completed all 16 BOFRA races this year and came 2<sup>nd</sup> LV50 4<sup>th</sup> Open and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Ladies handicap.**

Pictured here with Lynda Hargreaves of Warfdale who also completed 16 races.

Jim marshalled at all of them too and was thanked at the BOFRA presentation Eve.

Our CFFR juniors had a good season at the BOFRA races too. See later on

**And** ..Lindsay continues to womble on the fells, especially Scafell clearing the litter.



**King of the Castle Fell Race 2018 – Sunday 6th January 2018 1pm**

**By Rhys - Manager of YHA Borrowdale**

The King of the Castle fell race was born from the simple competitiveness of hostel staff and the challenge of who can get to the top of Castle Crag in the most impressive time and earn the bragging rights. It was soon realised that this small but unforgiving peak deserved the prestige of a date on the Fell Running calendar.

The premise remains the same, starting with one hand on the hostel bar and finishing with one hand on the Memorial atop the summit. The event is ran as a time trial with each competitor setting off 15 seconds after the last.

The short distance of 1.6 miles can fool the unaware but this is no easy endeavour with a lung bursting 650ft of climb. The first half trails alongside the river Derwent on a narrow, technical path before it joins the unrelentingly steep slog to the summit.



The first event was held in 2013 and has grown in popularity since, attracting some of the finest fell runners in the country. The Men's record is held by Chris Arthur (2017) in a staggering time of 11 mins 27 secs, taking Ricky Lightfoot's seemingly unbeatable record. The Women's record is set at 13 minutes 58 seconds, a very impressive run by Hannah Horsburgh (2015).

The brutal gradient is all but forgotten upon reaching the summit as views from Castle Crag are sensational. There is also the added excitement of the unpredictable weather; we've seen snow and sunshine during the course of the same race. The one thing that can be predicted though is lots and lots of home-made cakes and a bucket load of tea for all that take part.

Here is the link to enter online - <http://www.fabian4.co.uk/>



### **Phenomenal parkrun –by Howard Seal**

Most of you will know about parkrun: it is a non-profit organisation run at ground level by volunteers who give their time to enable others to run in a free timed weekly 5k. parkrun (yep lower case name...) had its tenth birthday in October this year. The idea was envisaged back in 2004 with the name “parkrun” being established in 2008. In the ten years since, parkrun has grown from 12 events to well over 1,300 in 23 countries and looks like continuing to grow and grow. The aim is to have a parkrun event accessible to everyone anywhere; parkrun would rather have 10 events each with 40 people than one with 400.

The ethos of parkrun is about inclusivity meaning: free and accessible to all. Although it is not a race (it is a timed run) many people try to improve their times whatever their ability. I try to volunteer at least once for every three times I run and I encourage others to help when able.

I first heard about parkrun in 2009, running my first in 2010 on a crisp January morning in Hyde Park Leeds. The whole atmosphere was inspiring: a sense of inclusion and encouragement permeated through everyone there. Chatting with the runners and volunteers after the event was part of it. One guy ran nearly every week juggling the whole way and still managed to clock good times and a lady with a form of lower limb palsy walked it most weeks. This inclusiveness and equality for all is at the heart of the concept; it is one of its main strengths. This got me thinking: where we s my nearest one? At the time it was Newcastle or Glasgow - time for a Cumbrian one!

It took over two years to get the Carlisle one up and running with barrier after barrier being put in our way. Keswick had similar problems, then a change in government policy and a push for healthier lifestyles (amongst other social changes) and the floodgates started to tentatively open. We now have ten parkruns in Cumbria and three junior ones.

In 2016 parkrun faced a real barrier when going completely against the ethos of parkruns Stoke Gifford Parish Council voted to introduce a charge for the Little Stoke parkrun. This resulted in it closing with its final event (event 173) supported by 303 runners, being held on 7th May 2016. As is often the case this negative event seems to have had a positive impact on parkrun with the number of parkruns growing and growing! To have allowed parkrun to be charged for would have completely undermined its core principles and could have lead to the end of the endeavour.

Running has made its way into the nation's psyche, you are much less likely to be looked at as mad for running (unless you do crazy long runs or race in the fells but who would do that?) and more likely to be asked about it - a conversation starter not a conversation killer. The physical, social, psychological and community benefits of running and especially parkrun are overwhelmingly positive with sedentary lifestyles being one of the major factors in the prevalence of many diseases and health condition and not just in the western world but the whole world.

I asked Sonia, the Whinlatter Forest parkrun Race Director about her experiences with setting it up:



*"I thought the forest lent itself beautifully to a parkrun. It fits in with the aims of parkrun UK of having lots of smaller events rather than a few huge events running around the country. I approached Adam Campion as Keswick was our closest event and I didn't want to step on anyone toes, but he and the team were amazing. They were reaching capacity for numbers and they saw Whinlatter as a way to help relieve them a little bit. However, it turns out that's not the case as their numbers are still the same despite our event starting in January. All onsite businesses are behind the event, with Siskins opening an hour earlier than they did, offering the discounted parkrun special too. The Forestry Commission love the event as it's low impact on site and is bringing a new audience to the forest such as tourists who come just to do the run who otherwise may not have visited the site. We are starting to build a friendly little community and I just hope that continues to grow."*

Whinlatter Forest parkrun has been included as part of the CFR winter series just email your fastest time between 24th November and 26th January to Jane Mottram. It is easy to sign up and get your parkrun barcode if you haven't already done so; just go to the parkrun website, register and print out your unique barcode and parkrun number.

*"I'm not a fell runner, in fact I don't describe myself as a runner although I run. If I can do it, anyone can and I'm always blown away by those who get quick time but more so by those who just come to give it a go and do it their way in their own time"*

Whinlatter Forest parkrun RD



## Ian Hodgson Relays .

**CFR make the local press!**

**Cumberland Fell Runners enjoy Successful day at the Hodgson Brothers' Relay** By Andy Bradley

Last Sunday saw the annual Hodgson Brothers' Relay take place at Patterdale. For many this is one of the highlights of the fell running year. Teams of 8 race round the valley in a clockwise direction, taking in many of the summits on the way before the dramatic drop back to Patterdale.

Cumberland Fell Runners had two teams competing. The open male team was perhaps the strongest that CFR have fielded for a good number of years and normally CFR also enters a team in the mixed category, but such is the strength of the ladies that they were able to enter a full Ladies team.

In the men's race, Ben Opie and Mark Fussell provided a solid base on the first leg, finishing in 20th position, handing over to the team's strongest pairing of Joe Dugdale and Mario Yeomans. Joe has had a great year, running for England and Great Britain in Junior Men's races and was fourth at the recent World championships. Mario has competed in the English Fell Running Championships and finished in a very impressive 17th place. They were one of the strongest pairs on this leg which takes the runners over High Street and Stony Cove Pike, passing 14 other teams to bring the team up to sixth. They handed over to Paul Johnson and Mike Harrison who bravely battled over Red Screes and Hart Crag before handing over to Phil Archer and Sam Holding who raced over Fairfield and St Sunday Crag to bring the team back in a final position of 13th in a time of 4 hours and ten minutes. This is the best result that Cumberland have had in many years and reflects the continued growth of the club. The mens race was won by Keswick in a record time of 3 hours and thirty minutes.



The ladies' race was just as successful, following a few last-minute team changes, Rachael Eaton and Renecca Rennie ran the first short leg over Angle Tarn, before handing over to the strongest CFR pairing of Sophie Noon and Rosie Watson. Sophie has represented England earlier this year and is going from strength to strength. They handed over in sixth place at the top of Kirkstone Pass to Ruth Graham and Claire Russell who coped well with the rough ground and handed over to Hannah Bradley and Emily Robinson who brought the team home in a very impressive seventh place, in 5 hours and 23 minutes. The ladies' race was won by Helm Hill in 4 hours and 40 minutes. CFR have seen an increase in the number of lady members recently and this performance has really put the CFR ladies in amongst the very best fell running teams in the country.

*Emily Robinson and Hannah Bradley and*



*The Ladies team.*



CFR in the papers again!!

## **Cumberland Fell Runners enjoy success at the British Championships.** By Andy Bradley

Last Saturday saw the British Fell Relay Championships taking place at Grasmere. Hosted by Ambleside Athletics Club, there was an impressive entry of 250 teams. Teams of six compete in various age classes over four legs. Such is the strength of depth in Cumberland Fell Runners that they were able to send thirty-six runners, making six teams down to race. The weather provided some very challenging conditions, with damp ground, slippery rocks and limited visibility.

The first leg was for individual runners over a short leg over Seat Sandal. The second leg runners ran in pairs and had a longer run over Great Rigg and Fairfield with a challenging drop off Cofa Pike before returning via Grisedale Tarn. The third leg was also a pairs run but was a navigation leg, with runners only finding out their course after they have set off and having to navigate between a series of checkpoints. This was a real test of mountain running with the mist hiding most of the course. This leg is always the undoing of several teams, but all of CFR's navigators returned with good times. The last leg, again for solo runners, took runners up to Heron Pike and Stone Arthur before a spectacular steep descent back into the finish field.

With such a big entry, the standard of running was very high. Teams had travelled from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to compete.

The Male Open race was won by Leeds based Pudsey and Bramley in a time of 3 hours and 43 minutes, taking full advantage of some other teams' navigational difficulties. Cumberland Fell Runners Male Open team finished an impressive 23rd out of the 120 teams in the class, just over half an hour behind the leaders. Joe Dugdale and Mario Yeomans posted the 12th fastest time of the day, on the second leg. Most teams put their best runners on this leg and they have shown





that they can hold their own against the best in the country. There are an increasing number of young male members of CFR and the squad is becoming much stronger, competing with some of the very best teams. *Andy Beaty & Bill Williamson*

CFR team – Sam Holding, Joe Dugdale/Mario Yeomans, Phil Archer/Mark Likeman and Mark Fussell.

In the Female Open race, the ever-improving CFR Ladies team finished 16th out of the 43 teams racing. Again, there have been several new members joining over the last year or two and a strong squad is developing. The stand out performance from this team was from Rosie Watson and Sophie Noon who posted the fourth fastest time on leg two. The race was won by Kendal based Helm Hill in 4 hours 43 minutes, with CFR just over 45 minutes behind. Most possible medical issues could be covered by the ladies' team, which comprises of two doctors, two physios and a midwife. CFR team, Rachel Eaton, Rosie Watson/Sophie Noon, Hannah Bradley/Victoria Wright, Tamsin Cass.

There was an Open class race of 44 teams, made up of various mixed ages of runners. Strong performances throughout the team resulted in the team being placed 14th. CFR team, Ryan Parker, Mark Wise/Neil Sidaway, Ryan Crellin/Ian Grimshaw, Dave Atkinson

Perhaps amongst one of the best CFR performance of the day came from Claire Russell who ran the first leg in the Female Over 40 category. Claire finished an impressive third and the team went on to finish 9th, a good performance especially since several of the team had several years more experience than the minimum age of the class. CFR team, Claire Russell, Kate Beaty/Anita Barker, Mel Bradley/Ann Cummings, Anna Blackburn. They are already looking forward to next year's vet 50 competition.



*Claire Russell.*



*Ann Cummings & Mel Bradley*

CFR sent two veteran Male teams down to race, an over 40's team and an over 50's team. Both gave good accounts of themselves with solid performances throughout. The over 40's finishing 15th out of 43 and the over 50's an impressive 6th out of 16 teams. Both teams benefitted from solid navigation legs and strong last legs from Daryl Tacon and Paul Jennings showing their ability to descend over rough steep ground. CFR over 40 team, Ben Opie, Paul Johnson/Howard Seal, Mike Harrison/Darren Parker, Daryl Tacon. Over 50 team, Paul Mason, Andy Beaty/Bill Williamson, Andy Bradley/Nick Lancaster, Paul Jennings.

## A Week or so in the life of CFR Juniors...

### Saturday

Saturday dawns, sunny for a change and a keen bunch of the juniors are off to the Cumbria Cross Country Series up at Penrith, the course is excellent and it makes a change to have a bit of sun so spirits are high. Mylo Jewell has been laid low with a bug the previous week, so we're missing one of our star performers, he's clearly on the mend now though, playing football with the others prior to the race. Races are split by age groups so it gives chance for loads of team support from those who have raced or are still waiting, even the coaches and some parents are competing so it makes for a great mornings racing.





## Sunday

There's no time to relax this weekend as our dedicated juniors arrive for Sunday's Buttermere Shepherds' Meet fell race! First off up the steep climb are the under 9s & 11s, showing grit and determination, and crossing the finishing line in some very impressive times. Eagerly (and perhaps nervously) waiting are the older juniors who will be setting off with the adults and competing over the same distance. The sun comes out and off they go, cheered on by all. Exhausted, but buzzing, they return to the finish. It's fantastic to see so many of our junior runners placing so highly amongst the adults... definitely some stars of the future!



## Tuesday

After a brief rest and a couple of days of school they're back at it, Tuesday night training. As the nights have drawn in we've retreated from the fells and are now meeting up in Whitehaven, sometimes its Hell on the Harbourside as we race up the Candlestick steps and onto to Haig Pit tops, but tonight after a quick run round town to warm the legs against the chill the kids and a few adults are putting the power down on the endless 'New Road' that runs from Whitehaven old Bus station to the Pelican garage at the top. Coach Brian runs a tight ship and keeps everyone on their toes timing and recording all efforts to monitor progress across the winter season. Anyone fancy 5 full reps up this? Only the Brave!





## Thursday

No sooner is Tuesday out of the legs and its Thursday evening at Whitehaven track which always seems to be the coldest place on earth, even in summer! These sessions are really tough on the legs and lungs, comprising a 4 lap warm up followed by stretches and a structured set with a few laps to warm down. Tonight's session is a flat out 8x400m, consistency is the key here. After running, 30 mins of stretches and conditioning completes the set. Anyone standing outside the training room during these stretching sessions could be forgiven they were outside a comedy club such is the laughter and raucous noises emitted.



## Friday

On this particular Friday there is an opportunity for some to escape from school for half a day to attend the Year 7 Cumbria Schools County Champs today at Penrith. Great running by Jess Autie, Tom Adams and Olivia Swarbrick on a very fast and flat course more suited to track runners than our fell bred bunch. A strong run from Olivia enabled her to gain a position in the Cumbria Team for the Midlands event in early December.

## Saturday

Saturday again and back into the pouring rain, as usual we meet at the top carpark on Dent for an hour of training and hopefully some fun in the woods. Today the weather is so bad we complete our warm-ups and head for the shelter of the trees. Since all the tree-felling that's taken place up there we've lost our usual secret-single-track so this was to be the first visit to a new one that we've created. It went really well taking about a minute to complete and allowing the kids to race in relay teams. Woe betide any one cuts a corner, this is taken more seriously than the Olympics and even the rain fails to dampen spirits!







### Saturday (Contd.)

After the end of the long season it's finally time to celebrate. Time to take off those running shoes and enjoy the BOFRA awards presentation evening, where a few of our juniors got chance to spend some time with, and get a few tips off the CFR Seniors. Here are juniors Beth, Olivia and Emily Swarbrick with Dad Ian and Fayth Bowness along with Jim and Lindsay from the seniors taking home what appears to be most of the Silverware. Now where did we put the CFR trophy cabinet! Well Done to all, and a cracking end to the season!





## My favourite race by Fayth Bowness (CFR Junior)

My favourite race this year was Kirby Gala fell race on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018. It was a well organised race by BOFRA.

The start was from the show field and a lap of the grass field took us to a bottleneck in a wall, it was a mass sprint to this and I remember being stuck in a line of runners, boys and girls. I decided to try and bypass this by jumping over the wall further along. Over the wall and the route was a road section which soon began to climb up through the village towards the fell, at this point I was a starting to settle into my rhythm.

About half a mile on road the route shifted to open fell and a steep climb ensued. I remember it was a very hot day with no wind so I was finding it tough to say the least. There was 2 U14 girls not far ahead of me and my dad was telling me to keep working up the hill and I would catch them as he said those front runners had gone off too fast at the start.

About  $\frac{3}{4}$  up the hill there was a fence to climb over and just past this I moved into 3<sup>rd</sup> girl place. Runners were starting to come down the hill on there return and a boy told me to move out of the way but I told him to go round me if he wanted past haha

On the way down I could see my CFR Junior friend Emily Swarbrick in 2<sup>nd</sup> place having a battle with a Wharfedale Harrier Runner. On the way down a lady sprayed my face with cold water because it was so hot which helped a bit. At the end Emily finished 1<sup>st</sup> and I finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in tough conditions. At the end of the day we had a BBQ with all our fell running friends and played football and games till it got dark. A very enjoyable day with all my fell running buddies!!!



## My Favourite run by -Zoe Brannon

Aged 10 in November and Ive been running just under a year and my favourite run this year was the CFR Junior Halloween run in Lowther Park in 20 October.

The weather was grey and drizzly with lots of mud and great fun! It was really exciting because we had to run a route through the forest to try and get away from the CFR trainers who were very scary hiding in the trees with Halloween masks on. One looked like Donald Trump!. It wasn't really a race just a fun training session but I did get a prize for being the first girl back!



## Favourite Fells by Lindsay Buck

Being lucky enough to have Wasdale on the doorstep it's easy to have lots of favourites. I haven't done all the Wainwrights or Monroes as I lazily return to Kirkfell, Scafell Pike, Buckbarrow and little Ponsonby fell.

Visiting the same places in all weather and seasons usually cycling to them is a privilege. To race on fells that feel like friends gives another perspective, briefly leading in the Scafell Pike race only because the terrain is so beloved and known feels good though this doesn't last a minute till the rightful winner glides past and I'm rightly relegated.

Huge numbers ascend Scafell Pike but Lingmell nose is never busy and whilst wombling back down the main route there are many interesting people to meet from all walks of life. The fells are for everyone (except those who leave gum, bottles, poo tissues etc).



A leader recently had a group who had no access to wild places and their mental health was being helped by a trip up the Pike. A lady celebrated her 70th birthday by booking a guided trip to England's highest point.

The sports relief challengers earlier this year included a young registered blind woman who was an inspiration to all who met her. Jim and I ran the footage down and was rewarded by the chance to rant on BBC telly about litter!

We can socialise on the fells, compete, get lost, be hot, cold, wet, happy or sad. The joy of races is partly that it drags us from our favourite fells to different places and people however it's always a pleasure to return.

To date (22nd oct)

Fell races 49 (no challenge to Darren Fishwick)

Ponsonby Fell 20

Buckbarrow 22

Kirkfells 13.5 (Wasdale Show race shortened)

Scafell Pike 68

These totals make it very obvious that I'm incredibly lucky to be retired and living in the lakes.

Happy running and racing everyone.

## **Running the length of the Pyrenees – attempt Rosie Watson**

The plan was to run the length of the Pyrenees, following the Haute Route, which was the highest and toughest of the trails which follow the Spanish/French border from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. It would involve navigation of 800km+ of rough trail and 42,000m ascent. I'd be going solo, bivvying as much of the way as possible, and carrying all of my stuff (up to 8 days food in places). And for the extra challenge, I had just 31 days in order to get back to Leeds in time for my graduation.



It was going to be incredible! I was going to have an amazing mountain experience, be living the dream, then come back a true mountain goat with legs of steel ready to finish of the fell running season for the rest of the summer. I was even fundraising for the Jack Bloor Fund after the suggestion by Hilary, which I was super excited to do as it felt so good to be giving back to an organisation which had helped fund my trip. I promoted it all over social media and was overwhelmed by the support I had within just a few days.

Unfortunately, it didn't quite go to plan. Day One was forecast for torrential rain the entire day. I set off in good spirits regardless, buzzing to be on Day One of my trip and knowing the forecast was meant to improve each day for the rest of the week. I ran around Hendaye in the pouring rain to find some camping gas, soaked through within minutes. There was no gas to be found, and after 4hrs of searching and half an hour in McDonalds wondering what to do, I set off without, hoping to get some on the way or to rehydrate my cous cous with cold water.

My pack felt ridiculously heavy. I'd done a month's running trip with almost exactly the same kit a year before in New Zealand, but this time my training hadn't been good – I'd been running well a few months before, but had been limited to the roads around Leeds due to final year exams and deadlines – no big mountain days. The month before, when I'd planned to get in the longer runs, I'd been hit by exam-season flu, and had felt exhausted and run down for weeks, and as a consequence had done nothing more than short jogs the weeks before leaving in an attempt to get my energy back. A few days before leaving I finally felt like I was back to my 'normal' self, but I was definitely not physically prepared. By this point there was nothing I could do other than hope that my body would adapt as I went – something which is possible on a long trip.



Moving on from the lack of camping gas, things continued to just not be in my favour. It was like my guardian angel had gone on holiday and been replaced by an evil wizard. In the torrential rain and mist I took a turning which gradually sent me back around the hill I'd just been over, so I ended up back where I started – wasting another 2hrs. My map disintegrated. Over the next week it continued to rain, and there was still no gas – meaning the food I could buy was limited to tortilla wraps and pâté/Nutella, packets of Uncle Ben's semi-cooked rice (they are designed to cook the last bit in the microwave), and cold sardines. Every day the forecast said the weather would improve, and every day it didn't, again saying the next day would be good... There was five days of mist, making navigation difficult – after spending hours lost on a hillside trying to find the road, I realised I was just metres away but the





mist had been too thick to see it. After this (and a few other times being lost in the mist), I followed roads round where possible as the Haute Route isn't a marked trail and is often on very faint paths (and sometimes off-path), so was pretty impossible in bad visibility. This meant long days on hard tarmac in my worn-out trail shoes, which meant more impact on the legs. My 'breaks' were short as it was too cold to stop long, and my legs were cold all day from the rain, warming up once per night usually about 3am when the warmth finally made it down to my toes. It was hard to stay positive through days of just me in the mist, with the only company the endless cows just out of sight with their clanging bells, and every person I met didn't speak English. I felt rude and ignorant for not being able to speak either French or Spanish, and it made the mist even more lonely – something I had been entirely unprepared for as I've never felt lonely in mountains before.

My whole body was hurting but usually, I'd wake up the next day to realise the aches had moved to a different place, so it was just my body adapting, and even within a few days it felt more natural carrying a pack. So, when my feet/ankles started really hurting I presumed (hoped) it was another ache that would move on or disappear. But this didn't happen and within just 5 days I had to have a rest day. My right ankle was double the size, with my left also very painful, with the tendons making creaking sounds when I moved it. I emailed Jim Davies (sports therapist and legendary fell runner) for advice and he warned it didn't sound good, and I may need some serious rest. Where I'd stopped was a soul-destroying ly miserable Col which was apparently right on the mist-line – the guy running the café hadn't seen the sun since November. It wasn't a good place to be, so I decided to set off slowly again, doing very short days – my feet had improved even in just one day of rest so I felt there was hope. And this time, the forecast said sunshine ALL DAY, even for the top of the first 'mountain-peak' of the trip I had the climb.

The next day it rained and was misty – again, all day, the forecast was wrong. By the end of the day I was barely walking and knew I wouldn't be able to make it, and had to find some way of having some serious rest. Both ankles were very sore and swollen, and my right knee now hurt too. I was devastated and couldn't believe after all the planning and support from everyone I had only managed 6 days and wouldn't complete the trip. I limped down to the nearest village the next day and hitched out – and that was the end of my attempt.

Despite what felt like a failure at the time, I believe it was a hugely valuable experience and taught me a lot, and will prove itself to be incredibly useful for future, bigger adventures. Things like keeping the legs warm when running in the wet, not under-estimating the importance of shoes, having enough food – all simple things which everyone knows in theory, but are easy to let slip in reality. Also, more important things like making an effort to learn some of the language in a foreign country – people have different opinions about this but I made myself swear to never neglect this one again as I found it so limiting and lonely, and felt so rude! Making sure training goes well – and changing plan if it doesn't. Allowing enough time to start with shorter days and build up, without the pressure to do big days every day. Taking a book, taking LOTS more snacks, and not ditching the guidebook. There were also some incredible moments which I can remember so vividly – mad even better from the fact that the rest of the time it was one misty blur! A huge eagle swooped across the road out of the mist ahead of me, visible for seconds but so close – it had clearly not heard me as the mist made everything so silent. Another time two shepherd dogs sprinted barking out of the mist – I was immediately worried in case they were guard dogs, but they were so lovely and I stood stroking them for a while – appreciating that language barriers didn't exist with dogs! They then walked with me along the track as I tried to find the tiny path which took me down to the stream. In the end, they were the only reason I found my way - the point they kept pausing at by the track as we walked backwards and forwards marked the start of the path, and when I turned down it they went ahead, basically leading me half an hour down the very steep, rough hillside to the bridge – a 'path' which would have been almost impossible to find on my

It took almost 3 weeks to recover - luckily some old family friends let me stay at their house in the Pyrenees so I spent the time with them, helping out with their gardening work. It was great to spend time with them in their beautiful small French village, and at the end of it I was fit enough to do a 5 day trip in the high-mountains – in good weather, finally with some views! Most of the trip was over 2000m, with the first day climbing up to Pic D'Estats at 3143m which was the best mountain day I've had in my life, and I had the top completely to myself. Lots of big rocky mountains, snow and beautiful lakes.

I'm hugely grateful for the Jack Bloor Fund for supporting this trip, and despite not going to plan it was invaluable in my development and will help future adventures to be more successful.



## **Snowdon Spectacular!!      By Sophie Noon**

On 21st July, a date which seems a long long time ago now, I competed in the Snowdon International Fell Race, as part of a debut England ladies squad. Just getting to the start line wearing an England vest, I must admit, was not even in my dreams when planning my 2018 running season.



Earlier in the year I competed in the GB Mountain Running trail at Sedbergh. For those who don't know, this was a race to select a team to run in the European Up and down hill mountain running championships in Skopje, Macedonia. I finished 9th (out of roughly 15 ladies!) it was incredibly fast and furious, and little did I know that my result was enough to catch the England team selectors eye. Fast forward to a "spring" CFR Tuesday night training, a night which saw us take on the Carrock Fellrace route, in biblical rain, wind, and absolutely no visibility!!! I returned home that night with Mark to find a voicemail on my phone from Mark Croasdale, the England Athletics coach and selector for the Snowdon international race, asking if I would like to represent England on 21st July.... Er YESSSS!

After losing buckets of sweat, training in the intense summer heatwave that we had, countless hill reps of Skiddaw, and approximately 6 weeks later, I found myself on the startline of the 44th Jewson International Snowdon Race. Mark, my partner, was a top coach and supporter, he even ran the race route the evening before, giving me a detailed description of the route to the top of Snowdon.

The race route follows the tourist path from Llanberis up to the summit of Snowdon, 5 miles up, and 5 down. It is an incredibly fast start leading out to the footpath up the mountain, before which there is a painfully steep section of road to climb, I remember running next to Bronwen Jenkinson at this point, (the eventual female winner of the race.) Whilst I felt like I was about to cough up a lung, Bronwen looked effortless! I tried to remain focused and just get up that hill. Onto the tourist path, spectators lined the sides, shouting words of encouragement, shaking cowbells, I was told I was in 2nd place at this point, great I thought, just keep pushing. Soon after this Miranda Grant bounded past me, ok 3rd is still ok for now, I thought. It got busier and busier the closer I got to the summit... where was the summit?! The hill went on for what felt like an eternity, I passed Steve Wilson taking photos, good to see a familiar face, but my legs were screaming at me, how could I keep this pace up?! Crowds now lined the path, and many of the male runners were coming past on their way back down, at a frightening speed, one of them clipped a runner near to me and nearly knocked them over, glad it wasn't me! I reached the summit in 4th, an arms reach away from Caitlin Rice who seemed to disappear downhill into the mist in a flash. Its ok I thought, just run your own race. It was difficult to see coming off the summit due to the mist, my focus was dodging runners on their way up the mountain, and not losing my footing on some of the rough descent. I caught sight of Caitlin again, right, race time, I just kept pushing as hard as I could, I managed to catch her near the bottom of the path where the dreaded road starts. Don't get cramp, don't get cramp, is all I was thinking, I ran as fast as my legs would take me to the finish, crowds were screaming at me, I had no idea how close Caitlin was behind me. All I could think was, don't come 4th, you CAN'T finish 4th!! I managed to hold onto 3rd position by a mere 10 metres, securing me first English lady home, and a podium position.

A podium position at this fantastic event was more than I could have hoped for. I would highly recommend giving it a try. I think I speak for both myself and Mark in saying that we had a fantastic weekend in Wales, the event is very well organised and creates a great "buzz" in Llanberis, feeling very much like an international race does.





## Cumberland Fell Runner's Profile

<p><b>Name</b></p> <p>How long have you been a member of CFR?</p> <p>Which category do you run in ?</p> <p>How did you begin fell running?</p> <p>What is your favourite training route and why?</p>	<p><b>Ann Cummings</b> <i>finishing the 3 peaks</i></p> <p>Since 2013</p> <p>LV55</p> <p>By joining CFR – I have orienteered for a long time so I was already used to running on the fells</p> <p>Running up Blake Fell because it is close to home, runnable and quiet with fantastic views of my favourite fells. Fangs Brow is a close second, for the same reasons, but less fell..</p>	
<p>Which is your favourite Fell race and why?</p>	<p>A difficult one as I am still discovering new ones, but I prefer the longer middle distance ones that are 'circular' rather than up and back. The Anniversary Waltz was a favourite and I like the Buttermere Sailbeck. I'd like to do the Duddon again and Turners Landscape as I enjoyed those too.</p>	
<p>Proudest running moment?</p>	<p>Sub 3:40 (just) in the Edinburgh marathon a couple of years ago where I was also first in my age category.</p>	
<p>Most embarrassing running moment?</p>	<p>Well, if we include orienteering here, there are far too many to choose from.</p>	
<p>Any ambitions?</p>	<p>Do the 3 peaks in 5 hours and/or the Ennerdale in 6.5 hrs (half an hour faster than this year)</p>	
<p>Fell Running Heros / Heroines ?</p>	<p>Joss, although lots of admiration for plenty of the other 'legends' including Wendy Dodds.</p>	
<p>What motivates you most?</p>	<p>Fresh air and exercise and beautiful scenery – you'll all understand what I mean.</p>	
<p>What else do you like to do when not running?</p>	<p>Eat nice food and drink good wine! I enjoy cooking too.</p>	
<p>Can you tell us about your family and work?</p>	<p>I met my husband through orienteering and we have run many miles together. Our daughter Rebecca is now 22 and studying at Glasgow Uni for a PhD. I am an accountant and work at Mitchells as the Company Secretary which I enjoy.</p>	

## TDS 2018 By Duncan Potts



I couldn't take his advice anymore which meant needing to be sick was useful. I left a small but toned American sexagenarian at the counter in McDonalds frowning at my Daim Bar Mcflurry. He'd insisted I needed donuts after such a run and that that was what his body builders ate before training every morning. I had listened but he wouldn't stop talking and after a night without sleep my patience was shot. Involuntarily (I think!) I vomited in the bin outside and immediately started to feel better (until I saw him stripping down and posing by a corner table inside...) and gradually began the process of coming back to normality after an epic adventure.

Gemma commented that it was obvious who had done the TDS (76 miles over 33 hours maximum from Courmayeur anticlockwise back around Mont Blanc): the zombified gait and legs speckled with odd colours of mud marked each one out as an eccentric. Everyone faces their own challenge during UTMB week at the end of August but **the Sur Les Traces**

**Des Ducs De Savoie** (literally in

the footsteps of the Dukes of Savoie) seemed purposefully designed to test the body to its limits. Whereas the UTMB descends gradually from La Flegere before a cruel (concrete underfoot!) victory lap around the centre of Chamonix the TDS involves a similar descent followed by an undulating 5 mile run along the river from Les Houches: in other words a quad battering followed by what should be a speedy run. The morning runners who came towards us from Chamonix to act as cheerleaders must secretly have been laughing at the so called "athletes" bumbling towards them on legs that many no longer had any control of.



In fact it could have been even tougher. The descent to Les Houches from Bellevue had been amended due to concerns about thunder storms and potential mud slides and the sensational ascent to Col de la Forclaz had been bypassed and now involved a longer winding valley section to the right hand side of the mountain. This had made the route a few KM longer and a little quicker (maybe by about an hour) but also a touch more unpredictable leaving me less psychologically prepared that I'd hoped. The absence of the longest climb of about 1500m over 8km from Bourg Saint Maurice really did make the race a different proposition. In my reccy (admittedly on a warmer day with a huge pack) I'd had an steep hour followed by a less steep hour followed by another half hour of tricky rock work to summit a Col that just fell away and down to Cormet de Roseland. On a good day there are sections here of savagely steep rock here that require hands and knees with any slip likely to be fatal but in an electrical storm (even with some ropes) this would have been a very "interesting" proposition. As we navigated around the base of the mountain the ridge above hummed with static as rain lashed it relentlessly and it was easy to feel we were in the better place.

Perhaps the peaks were sucking electricity from the checkpoints as at half way the power failed for a second time, sparing someone the sight of my bare bum as I put on my back up kit. The change of route created a bottleneck and led to an overcrowded festival style tent packed with poles poking out, blisters oozing down benches and bizarre concoctions of food being mashed into pop up bowls. I can't remember any of the smells apart from the 'Cheesy Bolognese' which probably meant it was all so overpowering as to prove paralysing to the nostrils. The damp kit mounted and festered near the exit but I was soon reborn in a new minimal selection of kit as the promise of a cloudy but warm night (compared to the Lakes!) loomed. I sucked sachet after sachet of apple flavoured baby food and worked hard to convince myself that in this new kit I was a new man and this was a new race.



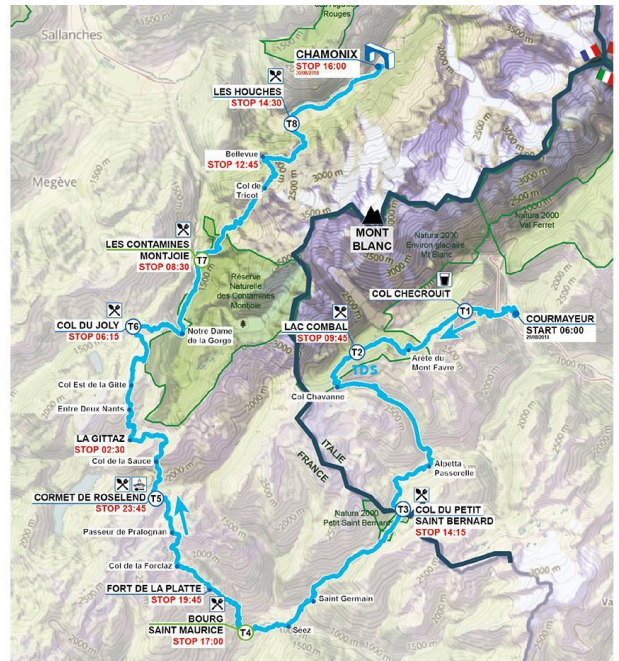
Strangely it worked and I felt myself skipping over rocks once more. During the last 30 miles there was less

overtaking and I started to count down the remaining climbs and even gave myself a chance of finishing. The biggest motivation for me was my fascination in the route. A fire illuminated an ancient path carved into the rock, akin to a cave with a side missing, that lead dramatically down to La Gittaz. Enormous cows appeared during the night in the middle of the path, supposedly passive but certainly in charge of a powerful unsettling presence. A massive moon emblazoned with Heineken rose eerily from the mist at 3am marking a checkpoint right where you wouldn't have expected one by being both high up and inaccessible. A Himalayan bridge slung across a raging flow of water and slowed the runners momentarily as it could take two people at once, but also because it demanded to be photographed and absorbed.

Earlier a never ending conga line had come up from Courmayeur to the Col Chavannes and made it feel as if the race might never get started. On a race of this scale the jostle for positions takes hours to settle and something as small as taking a sip of water or the tying of a shoe lace can have a domino effect on competitor's miles behind. This can be frustrating on the one hand but also helpful in pacing you for the next 24 hours or so before the pack is eventually split and sorted on the runnable 5 mile descent down towards Alpetta. Here I met an experienced runner and friend, Dave Troman from Keswick, smiling and listening to some 80's pop music as at last everyone's feet started to beat out a faster rhythm.

In general terms the TDS is the least runnable run I've ever done. Any rhythm is interrupted by a relentless climb or an illogical descent. Checkpoints are spaced so as to require tactics and preparation: other races have them at more or less regular intervals, say every 2 hours whereas at times on this course they can be 4 hours apart with few places to get water so that you suddenly need to double the number of filled water bottles. Altitude differences are dramatic with people warning me it is the easy sections across the bottom of the valleys were the ones that have caught them out; cool cols suddenly replaced with stifling villages. Not even the UTMB has such big ups and downs and often both within a handful of KM with the final major climb of the Col du Tricot involving about 45 sharp hairpin bends that even the elite struggle to run up. All of this morphs together to create a wildly satisfying journey that somehow lifts your spirits whilst eroding your resolve.

For me it was great to start running at 8am and have the whole day ahead to look forward to rather than starting at 6pm and knowing the night was coming (UTMB, LL100 etc). The toughness made people friendlier and the long climbs gave you time to talk to others; nearly all the Brits talked to each other and gradually we bonded as a supporting group. Crucially it felt like a route that was more exclusive, less trodden and more rewarding than the UTMB. The tracks were rougher underfoot, the wildlife was more diverse (squeaking Marmots always just out of sight) and civilisation only occasionally interfering. It was a race to fall in love with rather than complete as part of a bucket list and the fact that Dave Troman was there for the third time suddenly made sense. Actually in Chamonix's outdoor shops they gave you a respectful nod when they found out which race you were doing and the runners themselves seemed more inward looking and humble. The experience has seared itself on to my psyche creating a permanence lacking from other events I have done; the elements of wilderness, wonder and fear wake me still and embolden me for whatever might come next.



## **No Cure Only Hope –Ultra – Paul Jennings**

You may turn over your paper ... NOW

Q1. Write an event report in the style of your favourite fell race reporter.

Don't you just love exams? No? – it must be me then. Although I do prefer the type with a definite right or wrong answer, it's the mathematician in me. Back in my day we didn't get marking schemes so I didn't have a clue what

they were looking for in the English exams. As for art exams – how on earth can you mark those, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, right?

So, what is worse than exam day? Result day surely. Especially 'A level' results day with the uncertainty of university places looming forefront in the whole family's minds. Today is 'A level' result day, I know since we've had to juggle four people who need to be in six different places at different times throughout the day (now that was a good question – we knew that I got the logistics right when no one was left standing by the roadside wondering where their lift was. Jenny just rolled her eyes when I got animated solving this problem). Yes, results day, Ruth was picking up her results in Keswick at 9am (which includes art 'A' level so we have no idea how she'll do on that one). I was starting my run at 5:30am, where would I be when her results came through? Would I have a signal at that time or would I have to wait until I met up with Jenny? I should have been able to determine this as I took the great glee in planning the assault (sorry run) as if it was a military campaign – including strict pacing at the start to ensure I didn't crash & burn later on (unlike Borrowdale, Fellside, etc ...) What would I feel like if she doesn't get into her university of choice? Would it spoil the run?



5:46am Swinside Inn (OK military precision already looking very dubious) and I set off on the No Cure Always Hope Ultra 39 miles, 14,500 feet of ascent on a 13.5 hour schedule to get back to the Inn just in time for a meal at 7pm (ah – the plan is falling apart already, better get a wiggle on). To keep me on course I put Paul Johnson's No Cure run onto my watch so it would tell me if I started heading off in the wrong direction. That was the plan, but within the first ¼ mile I was to wonder "what on earth did Johnson go that way for" – for the first of many times.

Up to Causey into the mist, Sail, Crag Hill, Wandope, Whiteless Pike and then down one of the best descents in the Lakes, except today it wasn't. A wet dew on top of a firm surface would be great for a skating rink but not a fast grassy descent in shoes with knackered studs. Wham down on my backside, and again and once more, sod it I'll stay here and check on the cumulative damage and have a bit to eat. This also gave me the opportunity to look up & enjoy the blue sky and views across to leg two, it's going to be a beautiful day.

Lashing rain and thick mist greeted me as I climbed up to Red Pike & onto High Stile. Which summit – the highest of course. High Crag then Seat – I don't think I've ever been on Seat summit. Does it have a summit? There's a couple of points that might be higher than the rest of the ground. I'll scramble up to them both just to be sure, don't want to be accused of missing a summit.



Haystack – which is the summit of Haystacks? I'd better go to both just in case. Why can't they have a marshal on these summits so I know when I'm at the right one?? Now I'm on the plod over to Grey Knotts – rain still lashing, I hate the bit on the Ennerdale after Black Beck tarn even when it's good weather. Head down & plod on... Buzz buzz on the watch – text coming through... 'I've got the grades I needed'. Yippee!! I don't need to know what they are – the university place is the prize. All of a sudden it feels like I've just started out afresh. Skipping along making my own path, it feels like I'm going downhill but still gaining height - what's not to like about being out on the fells in a rain storm?

Onto Grey Knotts another one with two tops - so which is the true summit this time? The vague lump with the spot height on the OS map, or the nice outcrop of rock that I think everyone uses on the BG? Better be sure and go to both, no sign of Jenny and this is where I was due to meet her. What do I do if she is late? Should I stay or should I go? Fortunately she appears at the stile just as I get to the top of the crag, apparently her timing leaving Keswick was a little out so it was a mad dash up from Honister. A quick top up on banana & drink, a quick chat about the results and I'm off again. Jenny thought I might call it off with this weather or I'd need a lot of moral support, but still buzzing from Ruth's results I couldn't be more fired up.



Skipping had to cease on the section up to Green Gable as the wind was absolutely wild, I was struggling to keep on my feet and walk in a straight line. The descent down Aaron Slack was horrible, wet slippery boulders or even more slippery grass. This is possibly the only time I thought – “what was Johnson doing over there” followed by “maybe he’s got it right this time” (reading Paul’s report afterwards he doubted his line as well). A few more tops, improving weather and a long descent to the road. A pleasant run through the fields (not the road thank you Paul) and another rendezvous with Jenny in Rosthwaite.

Onto the last section, the one with the killer bracken. “Would sir like electrocution, lethal injection or man-eating bracken?” “Man-eating bracken please!” It was a long slow agonising death – they must save this for the really bad boys. My legs were declared DoA at the top of Maiden moor, but in my mind I’d cracked it, and ultras are all in the mind right? So it was, I arrived back at Swinside Inn 13 hours 10 minutes after leaving (yes 4 minutes early), to be greeted by Philip & Jenny – Ruth was having a night on the town with her class mates, who wants to be with their knackered old man when there is partying to be had? Good on you Ruth – you deserved it!

### **Lakes in a Day. 2018 . By Ian Grimshaw**

13th October..... the same day as Storm Callum.....

Caldbeck to Cartmel : 50 miles, 4000m of ascent

By the time the day of the race arrived, I was beginning to wonder why I had entered. I’d done the race 2 years previously, but this year I felt woefully under prepared. I’d only managed 4 long runs of 30km or more as training, with a long weekend in Glencoe marking the courses for the Skyline series. On top of that,



Storm Callum was due to arrive in full force about 2 hours after the start of the race. So it was with some apprehension that I stood in Caldbeck at 7.50 am waiting for the start of what was going to be a long day. Race organiser James Thurlow gleefully told us that the river Caldew wasn’t too bad, so the temporary bridge wasn’t being put in and that it wasn’t too windy to exclude Halls Fell ridge. Some nervous chatter broke the silence as we waited in the increasingly heavy drizzle. At last the time came and we were off; I was immediately too hot in a base layer and full waterproofs, but thought that up higher I’d be pleased I’d gone for the heavier goretex jacket and trousers.

The run up the road sorted us all into our rough positions in the long snake that would elongate during the day, and as we trudged up High Pike it was obvious the few had gone off too fast. I passed a few, occasionally jogging on the flatter sections and on the descent to the river Caldew charged passed about 20 runners. (a lot of trail runners don’t like rough ground).

At the river, a rope had been put in place as the level had risen to thigh high, and this was followed by a long wet slog over Mungrisedale Common and up Blencathra. I was pleased to finally reach the top and thought I’d overtake a few runners on the technical descent, but it was so crowded and wet, discretion was the order of the day. As the drop off relented I got passed a few and arrived at the Threkeld feed station. I’d already decided not to waste much time at the feed stations; I still had a litre and a half of water, so I grabbed a couple of sandwiches and walked straight though..... at least another 20 places and I munched as I headed towards Clough Head.

I hate Clough Head.... it always seems to go forever. But I seemed to be going well and I found a steady pace up and onto the top. This is where the full force hit me. I'd been sheltered as the wind had increased and it was now a steady 40 mph, with 60mph gusts. The visibility came and went, but I was pleased I just about knew the route across to Helvellyn. I went passed a few runners checking maps and compasses and continued as fast as possible. It was hard going, difficult to run at times in the gusts which were getting



stronger, But I was soon over Helvellyn and heading down to Grisedale Tarn and the dreaded climb up Fairfield. The storm here was at its worse, and I found out later that a lot of runners dropped out here and headed for the road. i was soon back on familiar territory and the descent to Ambleside. Even in the mist I found the quickest trods and overtook a few more runners as they headed for the “bad step” and

began to look forward to dry shoes and socks at Ambleside.

Another quick feed station turnaround : water fill up , 5 slices of pizza and I was soon jogging across the park towards Clappersgate. I was only 30 minutes behind the time I'd done in the better weather 2 years before, and was thinking that I might make that up over the final 22 miles.



At Clappersgate I arrived at the first flooded road. The Police were dealing with 2 flooded cars and a massive traffic snarl up. I waded through; my dry shoes had lasted 10 minutes . I realised that my optimism was a bit too soon and the final 20 miles would be slow going.

The tracks through the woods and alongside Windermere were all either flooded or muddy and I waded and slipped all the way to Finsthwaite, the final feed station. With just 7 miles left, I knew I would finish now, so began to take it a bit easier, thinking of the fell Relays, a week away. But when my watch died I had a 3 mile rush to try to finish before midnight. The cut-ff was 8am the next morning, but I fancied finishing at least on the same day. The final road section had to be run quite fast, but I finally reached the school and finish;

15 hours 51 minutes since the start and 76th.

Panic over and a welcome meal and shower.

There was a 37% drop out rate this year, mainly due to the weather, but it's a route that is certainly within any runners capability as the cutoffs are generous and the feed stations have everything you need. All you need is a lot of determination , a slight capacity for pain and the ability to run very slowly.

Next year the weather has got to be better.





## Race Report – Abraham's Tea Round – Sam Holding

05:00 – Alarm makes it usual declaration. Spend the following 40 seconds imagining various weather scenarios outside, beyond the closed blinds. A murmuring wind stimulates a sense of foreboding. Accept the day has begun; stumble towards the bathroom.

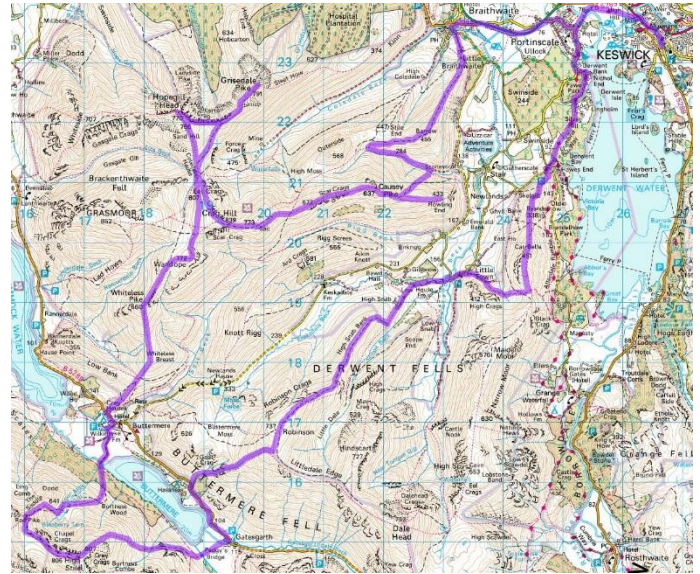
05:03 – Commence Brushing of teeth and catch the whisper of a chill on a slightly damp back of the neck from an overly humid night. Morale remains in question.

06:30 – Arrive at Keswick. Paul Simon and occasional breaks in the cloud during the journey have raised spirits into positive figures. Jog to George Fisher's in a stable and calm state.

06:59 – Prepare the position: left hand touching the door, right hand hovering over GPS watch, watching the countdown, *"I passed bin men collecting in near the Moothall, might I now find them at an unfortunate choke point?"* No time remains to address such concerns.

07:00 – Spring off on the ball of the right foot, *"So it begins"*.

07:03 – Underway. It's now a decidedly pleasant morning in Keswick. Down the main street, trying to assign words to that positive feeling of being somewhere that you're accustomed to being very busy, but you now find perfectly still, failing, then simply enjoying it. Over the bridge and attempt to enter the rugby field rather than the adjacent track, *"We really shouldn't be going wrong already"*. A nice jaunt along the track, into Portinscale, through the woods surrounding Lingholm, *"I ought to come here more often"* (some concern being given to the fact I am sweating profusely... at a slow pace... on the flat).



07:30 – 1/3 of the way up Catbells, *"Oh dear"*, 500ft into 12,000 and I'm cursing my lack of climbing over the previous weeks, *"This was rash, very rash"* I reign in any additional effort I might wish to apply and reach the summit slowly but in a steady and unbroken state.

08:00 – Down the back of Catbells, first taste of downhill, I'm lighter than air, *"I could literally run forever. What did I fear earlier?"* A slightly older self (roughly 2 hours) reflects on this jovial, care-free character with scorn and no small amount of longing, but his time in this tale is not yet.

08:30 – Valley floor, past Little Town and for one of the very rare sections of flat I will find today, the rhythm of my footfall strikes up 'Green Onions' in my head. Morale remains high during the climb up onto the Northern spur of Robinson, followed by an exceedingly pleasant run along said spur. I'm forced to stop and draw a deep draught of the view. A steady trudge up the remainder of Robinson, trying to get the first rice cake down. All is well.

09:30 – Robinson summit. Bit blowy on the top, but nothing substantial. *"Right, let's attack this descent, we'll be at the lakeshore in seconds..."*, begin to pick up the pace... excitement is building (I didn't recce this...) glorious visions of myself hurtling towards the water at 4min/miles, with 45 degree forward lean on, are alive in my mind...

09:34 – Grinding to a halt, *"I need to be over there"*, gets going again, *"This is shoddy ground... maybe it'll be OK after the heather..."*

10:15 – It wasn't. Dreadful going from start to finish, 'lowering myself down by hand' sort of ground. *"This is disastrous, 14 mins/miles downhill is not OK"*. From halfway down Robinson till the end of Barrow I was largely internally numb; notably missing the internal monologue I commonly play out when alone on such runs.

I started to grow concerned about time on that decent as it was taking >2x longer than I'd imagined and reached the valley floor in a slightly rattled state. Time was playing on my mind and my legs were already starting to feel the fatigue (running on the flat rarely requires effort at that pace and I wasn't yet halfway).

I stayed sensible throughout the climb up High Stile (no longer through choice), but it felt like it took a long, long time. No sense of elation accompanied the summit before plodding over to Red Pike to begin another painfully slow descent; no longer having the strength in my legs to attack to the first part, to the tarn, and if you've been that way, you'll know the steps for the remainder do not make for good running.

Valley floor again. Even the egotistical surge that accompanies passing folk had fled the scene and the pace stayed very sedate. I'd been weighing up the idea of stopping at the cafe to buy another Lucozade, I'd been draining the 1L of it and 1.5L of water I'd been carrying at a far greater rate than anticipated, having sweat like a saturated and then slowly squeezed sponge from Lingholm. But, as this would no longer mean an unsupported round (and the queue was out of the door), I binned the idea and pushed on.

Through the woods, up onto Whiteless and the Lesser Spotted Common Cramp Beast alights on my legs, sinking its teeth in for a rare feast. I hobble up Wandope after another excruciatingly time consuming climb and push swiftly on, onto the track and towards Hopegill Head. The worst is now definitely over, spirits are on the rise again, internal commentary is resumed.

A relatively spritely tour of Hopegill and Grisedale Pike precedes an accepted, slow climb up Eel Crag. It starts to rain slightly so I pause to take out the jacket, everything is feeling very slow now, time is almost beyond consideration.

On reflection; had I been taking this as a fairly leisurely day out, I would've been prepared enough (training mileage-wise), but I was really quite far short of the more aggressive pace I had planned. I'm confident of achieving a much more competitive time in 2019.

Onwards; Crag Hill and down the zig-zag path, *"eyesore or friend? I'm musing again, things can't be so bad"*. Causey and down to Rowling End (feeling bitter about this double-back necessity). I'd planned a more direct line across to Barrow, rather than fully descending to the crossing. This was an error, if you do the round, just take the track and save yourself a fight that you really don't need (might be better in winter).

Finally ascending Barrow, last Mars bar unwrapped. And down, slowly, very slowly, before elation at the gate *"Tea Round accomplished... effectively"*. Around 3 miles back from the foot of Barrow and the most effort I've ever put into picking my legs up for a flat 3 miles, willing myself to finish at a decent pace; another departure from how I'd imagined the triumphant run back in (thoughts are weightless, tired legs aren't). Through the crowds, up the main street and to the door, both hands touch the wood before the right searches for the watch; accuracy seems less important than it did at 06:59.

30.5 miles, 12,000ft climb, 7hrs 27min 40secs

### **How Duncan Potts Stole My Thunder –By Mike Harrison**

(Abrahams Tea Room Round 28/10/18)

What a year 2018 has been. Fittest for a long while, no injuries, first run at Ennerdale, and some great racing. Really rolling back the years. So, as summer ran into autumn my thoughts turned to how I might sign off 2018 in style. The weekend of the 27/28 October was looking promising. No events that weekend and I'd be home alone, very much at a loose end.

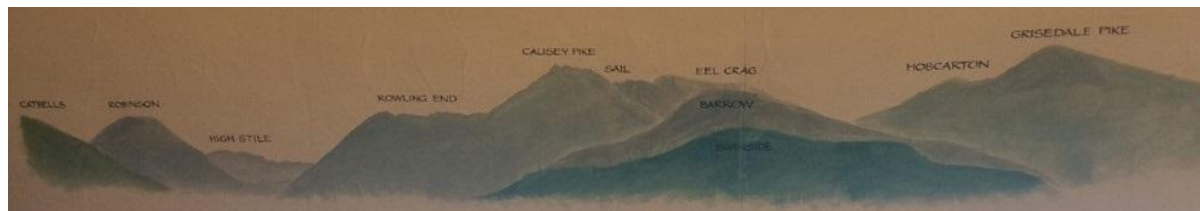
The Abraham's Tea Room Round certainly hadn't been on my bucket list, in fact I'd been a bit disdainful about it, comparing it unfavourably to our Book Club runs. But, it had featured in the recent Fellrunner mag, it was about the right distance (~30 miles, ~12,000 ft ascent), was on familiar territory, do-able in the hours of daylight available, I'd only be the 2<sup>nd</sup> club member to do it (after Sam Holding), and last, but by no means least, had the added incentive of a free cup of tea (in a golden tea cup) and piece of cake for all completers!

So, the plan formed the week before, routes were downloaded, maps printed, timings for the different legs investigated, kit lists prepared, weather forecasts consulted. It was all lining up perfectly. But then, whose grinning face should I see staring at me from my facebook page on the Thursday, sitting in Abrahams, golden tea cup in hand. None other than our ultra-long distance European specialist Duncan Potts. I couldn't believe it. POTTSY HAS STOLEN MY THUNDER!! For him, a mere 9 hr 55 short trot out, whereas for me it would be my 2<sup>nd</sup> ever longest continuous run and everyone would just think I copied him. Then, I was suddenly not home alone for the weekend, and the whole plan looked like it was going to fall apart... Darn those teachers and their half term holidays!



But, after sulking all day Saturday, and having a bit of a kick up the backside from my better half, I decided that anything Pottsy could do, I could do better. So, after a slight misunderstanding with the clocks going back (an extra hour in bed doesn't equate to an extra hour of daylight LOL), I found myself standing outside George Fisher at 8 am on the Sunday morning with a bigger-than-I'm-used-to rucksack on my back, ready for the off.

The Abrahams Tea Room Round is a relatively simple concept starting and finishing at the doors of George Fisher and taking in all the fells visible from the café window (and painted underneath above for those frequent days when they can't be seen). Catbells, Robinson, High Stile, Grisedale Pike, Hobarton/Hopegill Head, Eel Crag, Sail, Rowling End and Barrow. There's no time limit, you can take as long as you want and go any route (although there is a suggested route on the website). Duncan was the 22<sup>nd</sup> finisher (there's also been a couple of team relays) and the record before Sunday for a solo round was 6:46. More of that later...

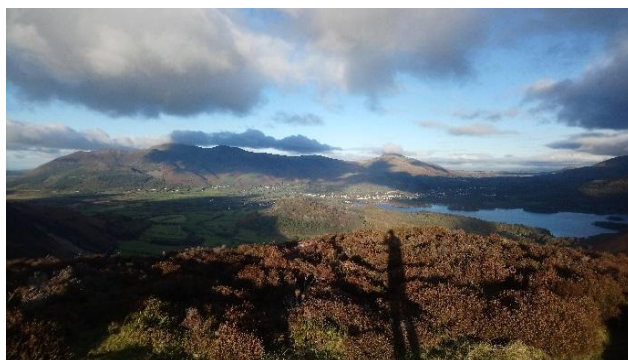


So, off I went at 08:04... I'd noticed that George Fisher closed at 16:30 on a Sunday, so there was an incentive to try and get back for my tea and cake. But, in the cold, dry morning air, ideal for running, I wasn't thinking of targets, just getting out of Keswick and up the first climb to Catbells. Across the footbridge to Portinscale and then through the woods. Pheasants everywhere. A carpet of them. Sooner than expected I was on the summit of Catbells, not the first up there (I'd met some people already coming back down!), but certainly free from the usual hordes. A rapid descent followed into Little Town where I'd arranged to meet Ange for a bit of company up Robinson. 'Leg 1' of the round completed in 65 minutes. Quite fast, I might pay for that later. Chose to go along High Snab Bank as it's a more interesting route, and kept at a more sensible pace. Suddenly we were reeled in and spat out by a young man dressed head to toe in black running up Robinson. Turns out he was on the Tea Room Round as well, and going like a train. It brought to mind the opening line of Stephen King's *The Dark Tower* "The Man in Black fled across the desert and the gunslinger followed". But, no chance of this gunslinger keeping up with him. He was on for a really fast time, so I let him go... Over Robinson, where I left Ange to make her way back to Little Town, and then directly down the fence line, the intimidating NE face of High Stile looming across the valley. A short run along the road brought me to Gatesgarth after 2 hrs 33, making 88 mins for 'Leg 2'.

Now for the big climb up High Stile – the furthest point on the round. I'd seen that Duncan had gone via Scarth Gap, but I thought I'd investigate the direct line via Burtness Combe the steep craggy NE ridge. It's not a route I've ever used to get to High Stile normally going via the main ridge from Red Pike or High Crag. Wainwright described it as "decidedly rough" and to "expect some moments of unhappiness", but it was great. Definitely rough, definitely steep, and the route not 100% obvious. I found a small trod that took me through the crags and up onto the top.... where I was overtaken again by the Man in Black!! Still going like a train, but somehow I'd got back in front of him. Where had he been? Got lost coming off Robinson? Stopped at the van in Gatesgarth for a cuppa? Not to worry, he disappeared off into the distance whilst I took some photos and enjoyed the view, which had really opened up with clearing sunny skies.

From High Stile, it's a quick trot over to Red Pike and then the steep pitched-path descent all the way back down to Buttermere. Only obstacle in my path was the lack of a footbridge! Where was it? Completely missing. I wasn't the only one looking confused, but I was the only one who just jumped into the dubs and waded across. Short run into Buttermere, a quick wave at the CFR folk waiting for the Shepherd's Meet race, and there was Ange again with a ham and Branston sarnie and some more water. 'Leg 3' done in 102 mins and roughly half way after 4 hrs 15. At this stage, the legs felt good, but it was the long slog up to Whiteless Pike and beyond coming next.

And what a slog it was. The flags marking the junior race route soon came and went. Seemed to take ages, and it took a lot out of my legs. 'Leg 4' to the crossing point over Stonycroft Gill is by far the longest, and I was expecting it to take about 3 hours. I



don't think I'd eaten or drunk enough in the first half, and was paying for it now. So, I belatedly tried to get more jelly babies, mini sausages and nutty nougats down as I followed the main path down to Coledale Hause. There's a choice at this point of whether to visit Grisedale Pike or Hopegill Head first; I decided on the former. No particular reason. And, guess who I met coming down? That's right, the Man in Black. He'd opted for the other way (possibly slightly better with hindsight). Brief nod, then continued up to Grisedale Pike, across to Hobcarton Crag and Hopegill Head before returning to Coledale Hause and the clamber up Eel Crag to Crag Hill (the highest point) via the Coledale race route.

With Keswick now definitely in my sights, it was the long run along the ridge next taking in Sail, Scar Crag and finally Causey Pike. Now, in an ideal world, it would be Barrow next, but the artist in the café had decided to add Rowling End, so down I went for the run out through the heather. Good view point though, with the shadows now starting to lengthen. Just one more top to do now, but how best to get across to Barrow? The suggested route indicated retracing back, then cutting down to Stonycroft Gill off the main path. I hoped there was a trod. There wasn't. So, a bit of a traverse through (thankfully) dead bracken to cross the gill just below where the path climbed to Barrow Door. Hard on tired legs, but it minimised the ascent. 'Leg 4' completed in 203 mins, with the elapsed time now at 7 hrs 38. Just 'Leg 5' to go, only about 4.5 miles, but ~50 minutes until Abrahams closed! My tea and cake was looking in real jeopardy...



The final climb up to Barrow followed at walking pace – no running this Strava segment today after ~25 miles. The descent off Barrow is normally fast... but not this time, my legs were decidedly heavy by this stage. Through Braithwaite and the final 2.5 miles along the road back to Keswick. Purgatory. And then I was back at George Fisher. The lights were still on but it was 16:38. Missed the café by a cruel 8 mins! But, Ange was there to meet me, all very low key, just the way I like it. Time for the final leg was 64 mins, finishing in 8 hrs 34. So, Pottsy may have stolen my thunder, and I missed my tea and cake, but it didn't matter in the end - I had a great day and reckon there will be a few more of these long adventures. Bring on the Book Clubs!

And what of the Man in Black? Well, he did get round and he did get the record (6 hrs 43). Turns out it was Brennan Townshend, the current UK Skyrunning Champion (also ridden professionally for Rayleigh and Madison Genesis). Look him up, he has his own website and everything! All very impressive, but he would have got back a few minutes sooner if he'd shown a bit more commitment getting his feet wet fording the missing footbridge!!

## **Ring of Steall Skyrace- Graham Watson**

29km/2500m - I was a bit worried going into this event as it was the week after the Lake District Mountain Trial which usually takes me 7+ hours and wipes me out for the season. However, I was really looking forward to it as I've spent a bit of time in the Mamore mountains over the years - as a teenager backpacking, working at Outward Bound Loch Eil in the late '80s and a few times since as well. The mountains are bigger and steeper with unavoidable rocky sections so I was keen to return.

Learning from past training I spent two weeks in the Pyrenees eating and drinking large amounts of cheese, bread, wine and beer and resting a lot (a few days in the mountains probably helped as well). This seemed to do the trick as despite Quentin Harding's best efforts in planning and my less than best efforts in route choice I managed to get round the Mountain Trial in a fairly normal for me 7h40, and was pleasantly surprised to be feeling OK the next day.

And so to Scotland. Rosie was racing the Mamores Vertical K so we arrived Thursday afternoon in poor weather with runners already setting off at intervals and heading into the clouds. My job was to be near the top to shout at Rosie for that last effort and have warm clothes handy, so I set off at a very slow walk. This interval start VK is a great spectator event as you've got runners passing you all the time, and runners returning from the top to chat too as well, so at times it was quite difficult to make progress! However, higher up the weather was getting a bit grim and clearly Rosie was going to appreciate some warm clothes at the summit finish. At the top it was very strong winds with horizontal



cold rain and some runners were having difficulty trying to put on spare clothes, and as Rosie arrived and was getting sorted we were asked for help from a Hungarian runner, so we helped getting her kitted up complete with Blizzard jacket for its first use (and what a brilliant piece of kit it proved to be). The Race Organiser had plenty of marshals helping runners at the top, they looked to be managing the situation well but even so I think they called MR to help carry off one runner - once you have a runner in a bivi bag in that situation then they're almost certainly not going to get down on their own two feet.

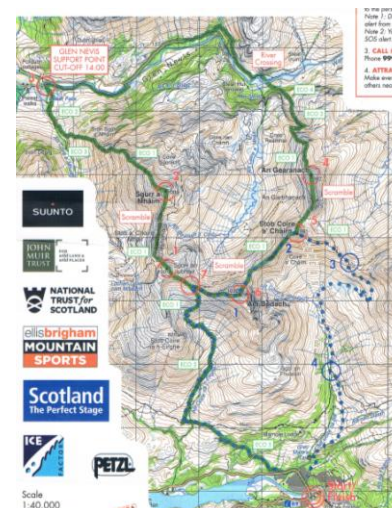


Anyway, bad weather on Friday gave us a day to eat and drink coffee, and to watch the Ben Nevis Ultra runners through Glen Nevis on their shortened route.

And so to Saturday and my big day out. Quite a contrast to the Mountain Trial - 850 runners, fully flagged trail, an aid station, and basically a huge up followed by huge down and then the same again. And lots of razamataz - after all, it was the World Skyrunning Champs and Golden Trail Series and Killian Jornet was on the start line too (somewhere at the front of that sea of runners in front of me)!

And we're off, and everyone's racing along the 1/2 km tarmac either racing to get to the narrow trail first or just in that usual rush of excitement. This is my ideal start as everything soon gets slowed down to a sensible pace for warming up and climbing 1001m to the first top, after which things spread out a bit more, some scrambling slows people down and then a huge 1000m descent to the aid station with loads of sweet stuff and ....potatoes! What a great race food! It's a gentle ascent to start up Glen Nevis so ideal for eating handfuls of potatoes. Then comes Steal Gorge - spectacular with it's waterfall and another huge 800m up, some more up and down, some scrambling, and then another 1000m descent back to Kinlochleven (and the final killer tarmac). It's nothing like any Lake District fell race I've done. Here's why it's different and worth doing:

- spectacular mountains, big with great views
- scrambling sections - not difficult but nice if you like that sort of thing, very difficult to overtake but good for a rest (you'll need it for the next hill!)
- 850 runners - I thought I wouldn't like this but it was a great atmosphere and once through the first climb it thinned out but still with enough people around for company.
- the marshals - yes, I know fell race marshals are all brilliant but these were something else. Every marshal seemed to be cheering you on by name (names on number bibs helps here of course) even after several hours in the mist on the summits, and on the run in at the end. Even if you came on your own you'd feel like you had your own support team here!
- the race seemed to have an almost completely different, younger field of runners. There were a few people from fell running clubs but they were a minority. With no age classes, clearly most people were in it for the challenge of getting round rather than for a placing which seemed to add to the atmosphere.
- pricey to enter - there's a lot of organisation behind this, a top quality 'technical' t-shirt, medal, post-race meal so why not treat yourself. Actually I could do without the medal, the T-shirt is great but the post race food was a big let down especially compared to many fell races (and especially CFR races). Don't let that put you off as, unless it was just me who thought this, I reckon they are the type of race organisers who are looking to improve every year so I wouldn't mind betting it will be better food next time.



So I got round, it was brilliant to be up in the Mamore mountains and I loved it as a race, all topped off with the ultimate accolade from one of my daughters - 'quite a good time (for you)!'

Graham Watson

\* 6h 15m (winner, Killian Jornet, plus 75%. Not the slowest compared to the winner I've been this year!)

## **A Massochist's Guide to the OMM-- by Darren Parker**

The OMM (Original Mountain Marathon (formerly known as the KIMM)) is a 2-day mountain marathon for teams of two held on the last weekend in October. From departing on Saturday morning to returning Sunday afternoon a team is self-sufficient, bar toilets and water at the overnight campsite. Doing the OMM harbours a delicious compromise – the lighter your sack, the faster you'll go, but the more miserable night you'll have (which could diminish your second day performance). The planning for this year's OMM began early. It could be said it began years ago, as each year the previous year's kit list is resurrected and studied. The question's asked, "What can I do to reduce the weight further?" It's an expensive arms race, often buying new gear as lighter models are manufactured. This leads to multiple versions of the same item – I have three lightweight sleeping bags (ziplless, of course), 3 lightweight tents, 2 lightweight rucksacks, several head torches, etc. However, my race partner, Chris, has not bothered doing this; instead, he uses my stuff! As an example of weight reduction



this year, I removed the headband of my Petzl e+lite head torch and replaced it with a piece of elastic cord – this reduced its weight from 25g to 20g. This reduction cost nothing – the cord was saved from a discarded jacket. A more expensive reduction in weight was achieved by purchasing a new waterproof jacket weighing only 148g, for over a £100. I was mortified to discover shortly afterwards that OMM are now making one weighing only 105g – 43g! How did I miss that? After shaving off as much weight as I could (almost literally: I considered sanding my plastic mug), I reduced the starting weight of my sack to 3.6kg (excluding water). This is half the weight compared to when I did the event in 1996 – and that's the only year I did not finish the event.

Besides driving down the weight of the sacks, training is also important! After miserable performances over the past few years because of a lack of training, I decided to put more effort in to training this year. By losing 2 stone over last winter and with the help of Strava, CFR and racing I managed to resurrect my form of 10 years ago. I can even run uphill for the first time!

This year's event was held in the Black Mountains of south Wales. After an overnight stop at my Mum's in Brum, I arrived at the event centre Friday afternoon. It was cold and sunny. I registered and had the dibber attached to my wrist – not to be removed until completion of the event on Sunday afternoon. I was a little perturbed by music blaring out across the fields. It seemed incongruous – the OMM is a weekend of suffering for gnarly old mountain men with beards and long may it remain so. I bumped into Rosie W. and Hannah B who'd just collected their false beards from registration. They both looked raring to go. Chris had sensibly booked us into the Premier Inn in Abergavenny, so after my usual pre-race evening meal of fish and chips, I drove there. It is possible to camp at the event centre, which I've occasionally done, but it's a miserable experience. It's noisy, you need to take yet more gear, it's hard to sort the race gear out... Once Chris arrived, we sorted out the gear. Despite the forecast of low temperatures, I barred Chris from taking his duvet jacket. I'm not spending hundreds of pounds shaving grams off the weight of our gear only for him to have a comfortable night! The weight of both sacks together came to 8.1kg.

Not all the gear used by Chris is mine, but it still seems higher than it should be. Next year, I'll get Chris to measure the weight of every item of his kit – there must be savings to be made.

We awoke at 7am after a reasonably good night's sleep. The first teams would be setting off at 8am, but our start time was a much more leisurely 10:45am. So leisurely in fact that after leaving the Premier Inn, we drove around the corner to Waitrose and had a bacon butty – that's the way every OMM should start! We drove to the event centre and were shocked by how bitterly cold it was, exacerbated by a strong wind. I began thinking, "If it's this cold down here, what's going to be like on the tops?"

Was my "lightest of everything" policy going to backfire? We

walked the short distance to the start line dressed in fleece and waterproofs. After experiencing the horrors of the last-chance Portaloos, we checked in to the starting queue.

There are seven different courses available on the OMM – three "linear" courses, three score courses and one a combination of the two types. We were doing the Medium Score – six hours on day one and five on day two; points are lost for going over time at a rate of 2 per minute. When the "go" command came, we shot off as usual before finding a spot to lay the map on the ground and getting out our piece of string. The string is a crucial piece of kit for Score courses – we mark ours at kilometre intervals and is marked up to 35km, which is how far we can go in six hours on a good day. It very quickly gives us an idea as to what is achievable and what isn't. Plan decided, we continued up the forest track into beautiful weather – the wind dropped, we were in sunshine and the colours of autumn looked wonderful. We quickly warmed up and had to stop to strip down to our usual outfit of base layers and shorts. It was nice to be doing the OMM again and we began pushing hard and overtaking other teams. Many of them would've been on different courses but it still felt good!





When Chris and I do the OMM, our division of labour is that I deal with the logistics and Chris does the route choice and navigation. He is very good at it and I don't want to infect him with my indecisiveness. We hadn't gone far when it became clear that I could run much faster than Chris, so we stopped and transferred gear into my sack. My predicted weight of 3.6kg was now up to 5.6kg, with Chris carrying 2.5kg. I could still go faster than Chris, but at least we were closer in pace – in previous years, Chris has carried the heavier sack. After a couple of hours the cloud increased and it began to snow. At first, I enjoyed the novelty, but after twenty minutes of blizzard conditions I was wishing the shower would come to an end. Fortunately, it did and the sun returned. Visibility was good and we could often see checkpoints from afar. A tricky one was sited at an indistinct stream source, buried in waist high bracken, and approached from above. When Chris shouted to me that he'd found it, it alerted five nearby teams. Better to shout quietly next time. Shortly afterwards Chris had to stop to treat a blister, and then he started to have a wardrobe malfunction – his leggings kept falling down. We wear base layer leggings (rather than actual running leggings) and the elasticated waist had given up the ghost. Fortunately, I had a safety pin handy so we put in a fold and pinned it, which wasn't easy with cold hands (lesson for next year – take a larger safety pin). It lasted a while before a scream from Chris indicated the pin had popped open. We re-pinned it and continued. It failed again and the pin was lost. Exasperated, Chris removed his leggings and put on his over trousers instead. The snow returned which lead to cold feet. As we approached the end of the day I knew we weren't going to achieve a winning performance, given our slow pace and several pauses, but we'd had a reasonably good day. About two kilometres from the finish, Chris did something very unusual – he made a mistake. Lured along a good track to escape the tussocks we dropped into the wrong beck. At its bottom rather than being 700m from the finish we were 1600m. We missed two checkpoints and got back five minutes late. In total, the mistake cost us 40 points and instead of 10<sup>th</sup> we were 38<sup>th</sup>. Rather deflated, we found a level spot and put up the tent.

Our tent weighs only 960g (of course, I leave the bag at home – 21g saved). It's rather small, but you can sit up in it and the bell-end is along the longer side providing ample room for storing stuff and cooking. After putting more clothes on, I collected water (in grip-lock bags) and Chris began cooking our dinner. To cook, we use solid fuel tablets in a home-made holder (13g). Using solid fuel has the advantages that you can take just what you need and there's no container required (an almost empty gas canister still needs to be carried on day two). The downsides are the noxious fumes which fill the tent, they are uncontrollable and very slow (although there's nothing else to do!). We only take food which requires boiling water to be added – we got fed up of bits of pasta in our custard. We sleep on balloon beds – seven modelling balloons inserted into sleeves. They don't seem to be as popular as they used to be. In years gone by, during the evening the sound of balloons popping was a regular occurrence. A balloon pops and Chris screams as if he's been shot – it's more alarming than the pop itself! The sleeping bag I use in a Rab Quantum Top Special – “Top” because it only has insulation in the top half with just a single piece of the outer material continuing underneath and “Special” because it has even less filling than usual. It weighs only 345g.

The night was cold; windy too. I wore two base layer tops, fleece, waterproof top, balaclava, two pairs of base layer leggings, shorts and socks. If I lay perfectly still and there was a lull in the wind, I could lie without any part of my body shivering. I called this being warm. During one episode of wakefulness I did some lying-down “exercises” – I repeatedly tensed and relaxed the muscles in my legs for a minute or so and then repeated this in my chest in an attempt to generate heat. At 2am in the morning Chris asked if I would like a hot chocolate. It was a chance to warm up a little and to pass the time away on what seemed like an endless night. Chris said, “Only two hours to go”, but sounded disappointed when I broke the news that he hadn't put his watch back an hour.



Mercifully the night came to an end and after breaking camp Chris and I were desperate to set off to warm up. The day began with a two kilometre, gently rising path along which we ran, overtaking many teams, until eventually we felt warm, for what seemed like the first time since we'd finished the day before. The rest of the day was spent in sunshine, with a lot of good running and easy navigation. We had a good day but committed the cardinal sin when doing score of finishing early. Our final position was 16<sup>th</sup> out of 249 starters and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Vets category. A curious

feature of the OMM is that not everyone runs; most teams walk and many of those not even briskly.

This was my 21<sup>st</sup> KIMM/OMM and, because my one DNF didn't count, it was upon completion of this year's event that I became a member of the OMM 20 Year Club. Over a hundred people have already completed at least 20 events and several of those have completed the event at least forty times. I started too late to reach that milestone! When Chris reached 20 events several years ago he received a sweatshirt but I was pleasantly surprised to discover that instead I received a £90 voucher towards OMM gear. So I'm now pondering what piece of lightweight gear to buy. Maybe I'll get one of their waterproof jackets – 43g saved! Oh yes!

Chris has been inspired by my recovery of form and promises to train harder next year. We are already discussing improvements to our tactics and honing our gear. Maybe I will make 40!

Need to mention here that Rosie Watson and Hannah Bradley were first Ladies (9<sup>th</sup> overall) on the B course. Well Done!



## The Arran Coastal Way-By Dot Patton

Jane and I had fabulous 5 days in Arran running the coastal path – 'The Way of the Gannet' – 4 days – 69.5 miles – 19 hours – with a total calorie loss of 5245!

Amazing scenery – a miniature Scotland with basking seals too. The terrain was interesting featuring boulder fields, river crossings and hidden stepping stones – very difficult to run on but also sandy beaches, grassy tracks and some road.

We decided to do our long distance run a little earlier this year in the hope of better weather – no such luck – storm Ali decided to join us. Actually it wasn't that bad, it just meant we opted out of Goat Fell (too wet, windy and in mist) and Dippin Head (crashing waves, boulders and a high tide).



This is our fourth long distance run and we've got logistics down to a fine art now – we always have a good base camp ie, comfy cottage with sea views, two bathrooms (for long soaks), soft sofas, large table (for maps) and wifi (for weather and tide time planning). Recovery includes tea and cake on return and G and T before dinner (cooked by each in turn). Final day meal out is a celebratory treat. No tent or bunk house for us – we reckon we deserved our comfort! In contrast to Darren's sandpapered plastic mug we have 2 car loads of supplies (gin taking up the most room!)

Of course we have excellent road support in Mike and Jim. Jim does the early morning drop offs then enjoys a bike ride and Mike joins us for day support with Ella (the chocolate lab) who is supposed to run too but usually preferred to chase her ball in the sea while waiting for us.



Was this a challenge or a good excuse to have 4 days of doing what we love? Of course running 17 miles a day for 4 days is hard and the terrain and weather can be taxing but the pure freedom is just wonderful!

Where to next year?





## Also...



Jane and Dot (sorry us again!) celebrate completing all 214 Wainwrights on Melbreak -with lunch at the Kirkstile of course!

It took us 3 years, but life (family) got in the way and anyway what's the rush? We just loved our Wednesdays out.

**Steel Fell –Great little race  
No entry fee  
No parking fee  
No prizes  
Just turn up and run.**



Four Club members completed the Northern Fells- as in Wainwrights Guide book .

Ryan Crellin and Rob Oliver achieved half certificates- again ,I think.

*Sam Holding, Paul Mason, Paul Jennings and Ben Opie congratulate each other on Binsey summit.*



Four hardy (foolhardy?) members set off on the Langdale race  
In horrendously wet weather. Peter took a while longer than expected- read all about it on fb.

Quote of the year!



*'After an hour, we concluded something had gone wrong and Peter must be injured. We discussed eating his pie that was on the dash board as "it's what he would have wanted". Les*



*Les Barker, Peter Crompton, Sophie Noon and Daryl Tacon.*

THE END ! Get ready for the next Newsletter End of February - Lets hear about your favourite fells or races and why  
—send to [dotpatton123@hotmail.com](mailto:dotpatton123@hotmail.com)