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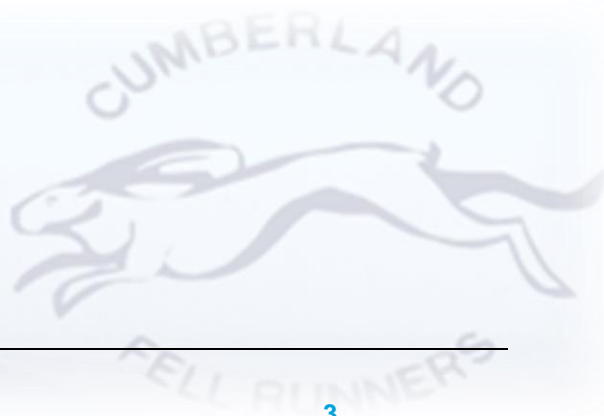
# Cumberland Fell Runners

Newsletter  
October 2021



Buttermere Shepherd's Meet. Photo: Pip Conlon

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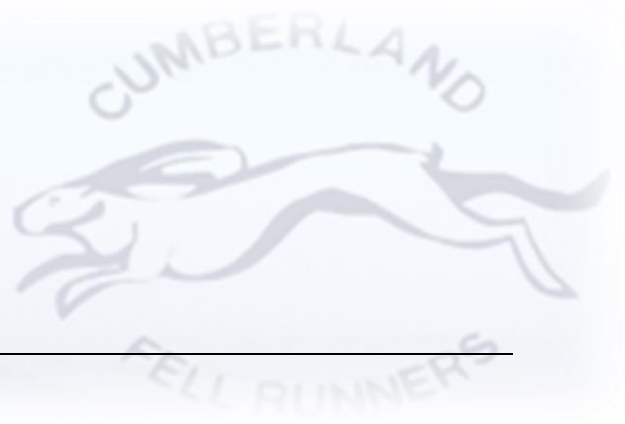
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## Editor's note

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter! Many thanks to all that have contributed, including photos on Facebook for me to collect.

If you've articles ready for the next issue, or have comments and corrections, don't hesitate to email me at [jackgilbert89@gmail.com](mailto:jackgilbert89@gmail.com).

Jack



# Club Matters

## Committee

Your wonderful club is brought to you by:



**Chairman**

Paul  
Jennings



**Treasurer**

Ann  
Cummings



**Vice Chairman**

Ryan  
Crellin



**Statistician**

Darren  
Parker



**Secretary**

Sophie  
Likeman



**Equipment  
Officer**

Jane  
Mottram



**Membership  
Secretary**

Rob Stein



**Championship  
Show Series**

Dot Patton  
Ryan  
Crellin  
Sam  
Holding



**Press Officer**

Charlotte  
Harle



**Website  
Administrators**

Mario  
Yeomans  
Paul  
Jennings



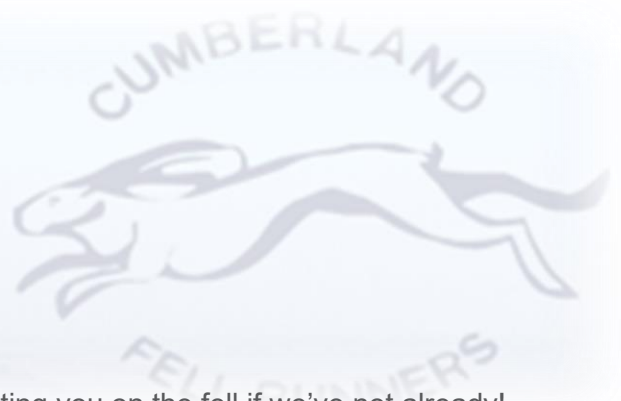
**Team Captain**

Andrew  
Bradley



Newsletter  
Editor

Jack  
Gilbert



## New members

A big welcome to our new members! We look forward to meeting you on the fell if we've not already!

Daniel Worsell  
Jack Bingham  
Gerald Connor  
Tammy Connor

Lauren Kenwright  
Heather-Catherine Marshall  
Ross Coles  
Nida Batchelder

Dan Habershon-Butcher  
Jimmy Walsh  
Patrik Gruba

New club members now are given a 'CFR Club welcome pack'! This includes information as well as freebies: buff, water bottle, car sticker, race card etc. If you are a new member and haven't got yours yet contact Jane Mottram on [janemottram@outlook.com](mailto:janemottram@outlook.com).

## Next members meeting

The next members meeting will be the AGM 11 December at the Shepherd's Arms in Ennerdale Bridge, complete with chips and sandwiches, after the Crag Fell race. It'll be communicated by SiEntries and posed on Facebook as well.



# Club meeting summaries

Paul Jennings

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## Members' meeting minutes – 26 October 2021

### Club Social/Presentation night (27th November)

Don't forget to book your place via SiEntries, Paul to put a reminder on Facebook.

Options for entertainment were discussed (e.g. Ceilidh), but it was felt that after the meal and presentations it would be better to just leave plenty of time to have a good chat!

A call out to everyone with a trophy will soon be put out to ensure we get them all back for the presentation.

### Winter League

The races have been selected and approved by the committee starting with the Sale Fell race during the day before the presentation night. The races will be publicised shortly.

### AGM

Confirmed as 11th December (after the Crag Fell race) at 1pm

Sophie to book with Shepherds' Arms in Ennerdale Bridge (including sandwiches & chips)

All members are welcome.

### Website administration

Mario is stepping down from the administration of the website, and Darren Parker, Adam Cresswell and Howard Seal offered to take on the management of the site between them.

### First aid kits

The age & content of the 1st aid kits was discussed, and it was agreed that those attending the wilderness 1st aid course this weekend would discuss this with the tutor.

### Newsletter

A reminder that articles for the newsletter are (always!) due now.

### Club winter races

Sale fell - FRA application made, arrangements made or are in progress. A call out for marshals will be made nearer the time.

Crag Fell - Agreement with Forestry commission made, application for FRA in place.

Christmas Pudding race - Due to the timescales for the application to the Forestry commission it was felt that this did not allow sufficient time to organise the Christmas Pudding race. [Post meeting note – Sian has proposed using the Hay O route, depending on discussion with DAC and the landowners]

Blake Fell - Currently planned for 15th January (but could change), starting at the Leaps & over a new route, details to follow.

### Forestry commission

In advance of a nationwide FRA agreement, Andrew has come to a local agreement with the FC which will be £75 per application, with a 10-20% fee on top of the race cost. This year the agreement will





just cover the Crag Fell race, for next year we will be looking at putting all of our races that cross FC land within the one application.

### Juniors

New venues have just been announced (Alternating Sale Fell & the Leaps - it will soon be on the website), coached by Tony Jewel. There is an opportunity to undertake junior (under 12) coaching free of charge at Ambleside on 7th & 8th November.

Black Combe Runners are putting on one of the Junior Championship races next year and have asked CFR for any help either as part of the organising committee or on the day. Please contact me if you are available to help with the committee, a call will put out nearly the time for help on the day.

### Next Members' meeting

18th January either at Ennerdale Brewery or Shepherds' Arms (8pm) after a club run, probably up Blake or Gavel.

## Notes from the Committee – 14 September 2021

There was lots to talk about and it was fantastic to hold this again in person, I felt the discussion was much more productive. I did mention perhaps doing some more on Zoom to make it easier for other members (especially from the southern part of the club) to attend. Driving home I also thought that we could just move the meeting further south - say Ennerdale brewery after a run on Blake? Any thoughts - I'm obviously biased on this!

Anyway, the minutes (updates in square brackets)

### Relays

3 teams at the Hodgsons, 7 at the British. We didn't have the price to hand in the meeting, it is actually £120/team at the Hodgsons (£12/person + £3 subsidy/person) and £140/team at the British we agreed to charge £20/person for this and subsidise the other £20/team.

### Main Championship

A brief discussion on the criteria for over 60s/65s but no change proposed.

### Show series - not going ahead

### Winter league

Jane is standing down from organising this (thank you Jane) Charlotte & Sian offered to organise

### Club social/presentation night

Agreed that 27th November is the best night (13th is too early) [date to avoid Kendal film festival clash]. I fed back Sophie's progress with sorting this out, but there was a lot of concern that 40-50 is not enough for the size of the club now. Ideas were put forward mostly around village halls (Loweswater/Embleton/Gilcrux) using a caterer for the food. I have asked Sophie to follow up on these.

### Communications

Charlotte provided feedback on all of her discussions & trials with other apps. Final decision was to stay with Website/SiEntries email & Facebook as our key communications routes. I agreed to put some article for the newsletter to clarify all of the club communications channels such as the random runs groups, and what things fall outside of the club but are of relevance (e.g. Barry's WhatsApp).



### Crag Fell/AGM

Agreed to put Crag Fell on and hold the AGM on the same day - 11th December selected [date changed to avoid Kong race clash]. Andrew has proposed that Crag Fell is registered as a race with the FRA.

### Christmas Pudding race & Sale Fell race

Jane/Jim are standing down from organising this (thank you again Jane & Jim), Charlotte & Sian offered to take these races on with support from Jane & other race organisers in the club.

Tony Jewell has offered to organise a race on Blake fell - this was very enthusiastically received.

FYI - Tony has also offered to run junior training sessions from Sale fell and the Leaps. Stephen Davison (Junior Chair) is liaising with Tony to arrange how this fits with the current training.

### FRA 1st aid course,

Charmian Heaton from Black Combe Runners has just sent out the doodle poll for the FRA 1st aid course, which the club is subsidising up to £1,000 in total (at £85/member this means that if 12 or more go on the course there will be a cost to the attendees, otherwise the club will pay for all course costs). [1st course going ahead on 30th/31st October]

### AOB

Charlotte suggested that we hold a list of all members who have a Mountain Leadership, Coaching or First aid qualification. I agreed to put an email out requesting for this information if people are OK to let us know.

### Post meeting note:

Black Combe Runners are putting on next year's junior championships and Charmian Heaton has asked if CFR would be able to assist them. I've just asked Stephen Davison and will put something on Facebook. I think it would be great if we can get involved - it is looking like early Spring.

Any comments or thoughts please contact me or comment on Facebook (I'll repost this email on it when it's up & working again)

## Members' meeting minutes - 13 July 2021

Sorry it's taken a while to get these out. Please let me know if I've missed/incorrectly remembered anything. Thanks

### Members' meeting

A brief discussion was held on whether to return to the Swan (Cockermouth) for the members' meetings. It was decided that the intention will be to hold the next meeting in the Swan with the potential to hold virtual meetings sometimes in the future to allow members who can't make the journey to Cockermouth to still be involved. Watch this space!

### Club runs

We are currently putting on two runs on Tuesdays and one on Sundays. One of the Tuesday runs covers the northern reaches of our club (Cold Fell northwards), and the other more southern area (Wasdale/Eskdale).

Adam will take on co-ordination of the northern Tuesday runs (which are being moved to 18:30) and liaise directly with Mario to put onto the website. Ava is co-ordinating the southern Tuesday runs and Jenny will continue to co-ordinate Sunday runs. All club runs are open to all members.



### Championship races

Currently we have 2 races complete (one long + one medium), 3 confirmed (2 medium + 1 long). Two other medium races look OK, plus about 2 or 3 short races. We discussed options for short races and agreed to put in 'Not around Latrigg' and discussed putting on our own races. We may need to include virtual races to complete the series, but we are hoping to avoid that.

I am still hopeful that we can make a full series this year, but it will require members to keep a close eye on Facebook and the SiEntries email as notice may be shorter than I'd like to give people.

Communications group

No progress has been made due to other commitments from the group. Charlotte agreed to pick this up.

### Relay teams

Not covered, although it is intended to request 3 teams for the Hodgson's, and hopefully we'll manage a large turnout for the UKA Fell & Hill relays.

### Club Social

Sophie will investigate options for a November social/prize giving evening.

### Darren Holloway Memorial Race

All going well at the moment, a request for Cakes/savoury food was put out (and now covered by a request on Facebook as well).



*This year, a real Sale Fell Race!*





# CFR Championship

Darren Parker

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Update 29 October 2021

The penultimate Main Championship results are up on our website:

<https://c-f-r.org.uk/pages/seniors.html>.

They include the results from the Wasdale Show/Kirk Fell race and from the Buttermere SM/Robinson race (the latter only affects those in the older age categories).

The next and final race in the Main Championship 2021 is:

Dunnerdale (AS), Sat 13th Nov, 12:00. Start is in Broughton Mills, south Lakes. Pre-entry only via SiEntries. 26 CFR members have entered so far.

[https://www.sientries.co.uk/event.php?elid=Y&event\\_id=8515](https://www.sientries.co.uk/event.php?elid=Y&event_id=8515)

The MV45 category will be decided at Dunnerdale between Steven Breeze and Nick Downes.

Congratulations to Brian Thompson for winning the MV55 category.

Alison Wright is currently leading the Ladies but could be pipped at the post at Dunnerdale by Jennie Chatterley.

Sian Louise has entered Dunnerdale and if she completes it the FV40 title is hers. Let's hope she makes it.

Completing Dunnerdale will see Jennie Chatterley take the FV50 title.

Lindsay Buck has a full house of 600 points in the FV60 category but this can be equalled by Ann Cummings at Dunnerdale.

Jane Mottram and Dot Patton are fighting their own battle in the FV65 category which will be decided at Dunnerdale.

Congratulations to Brian Thompson who has won the Cumberland Cup (Men's) and Alison Wright (Ladies'). Both have unbeatable leads going into Dunnerdale.

The Handicap competition will be decided at Dunnerdale and will be a close finish between Sam Holding and Sian Louise.

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The CFR Main Championship is up and running! The results after Ennerdale are on our website (in Seniors/Senior Championships 2021).

The next race is Skiddaw (AM), Sun 4th July at 12:30. Entry is via SiEntries but unfortunately the race is already full. (12 CFR members have entered.)

Not all of the races chosen for the Championship have been confirmed and one AS race has yet to be decided, so changes may have to be made during the year.

A reminder of the categories and rules.

## Age categories

The age categories are:

- Open – All members
- Ladies – All female members
- Senior Men (aged less than 40), Men's Vet 40 (aged 40-44), Men's Vet 45 (aged 45-49), etc.



- Senior Ladies (aged less than 40), Ladies' Vet 40 (aged 40-44), Ladies' Vet 45 (aged 45-49), etc.

Anyone whose birthday during the year would put them into the next higher age category has a choice of either staying in the lower age category all year, or only having races from their birthday onwards count in the higher age category. The default position is you will be in the age category of your first race. If you wish to move into the higher age category you need to tell me asap. (Have a look at the dates of the races and bear in mind you need at least 6 races to be eligible for a prize, so if you do wish to move to the higher category make sure there are enough races after your birthday.)

## Scoring

Within each category the scoring is as follows:

- 100 points for first place, 99 points for second, 98 points for third, etc.
- No more than 4 races in any one distance category (short, medium, long) can count (except for the 60 and over ladies categories and the 70 and over men categories, for which there is no restriction and races from the Show Series can also count).
- To be eligible to win the trophy or a prize in a category you must have completed at least 6 counting races in that category.

## Trophies and prizes

- In each category, the member with the largest total from their 6 highest counting races will be the winner and receive a trophy. In the event of a tie the trophy will be shared.
- In the Open category prizes are awarded to the first 3
- In the Ladies category prizes are awarded to the first 3
- All members who complete six counting races in their age category will receive a prize.
- The Cumberland Cup is awarded to the runner who completes the most Main Championship races. In the event of a tie the member with the most points (over all of their races) will win. There are separate cups for men and ladies.

## Handicap competition

An award is given to the member that improves the most compared to the previous year based upon a handicap system. The handicap values have been carried over from 2019 and for those without a handicap value, one is assigned after your first Championship race.

To be eligible to win the trophy or a prize in the Handicap Competition you must have completed at least 6 races but there is no restriction on the number of races from each distance category. The member with the largest total from their 6 highest scoring races will be the winner and receive the trophy. In the event of a tie the trophy will be shared.



# CFR Winter League

Charlotte Harle and Sian Louise

Best 4 races count...

1. Sale Fell - 27/11/21

2. Stybarrow Dodd or Middle Fell - 04/12/21

3. Crag fell - 11/12/21

4. Christmas pudding race - 19/12/21

5. Whinlatter parkrun - throughout January

6. Clough Head - 29/01/22

7. Loopy Latrigg - 19/02/22

8. Jarrett's Jaunt – date tbc

May the best tinsel dressed mince pie eating fell runner win!!



Stybarrow Dodd, 2019. Photo Lindsay Buck



# Where Everyone Knows Your Name

## Nick Downs

This was the London Marathon that shouldn't have been. I hadn't entered the ballot and so, despite being a member of two running clubs I couldn't enter either club's London Marathon place draw. Or so I thought – until the Paul's note that the place was going spare with no names in the hat. "Paul, put my name in the hat, please!"

Superb, after a few years of ballot failures I had a place and was happily making arrangements – choosing a training plan, my wife arranging accommodation with her cousin a mile from the start – when congratulations turned to discussion of "The Curse". Or should that be curses, as there seemed to be different stories: that CFR runners were hot by accident or injury in the run up to the marathon or that runners were never seen again.

I stuck to my plan closely – 5 runs a week: a mix of easy, steady, intervals and long slow runs plus Barry Johnson's fitness sessions. A few switches were needed to suit Cumberland AC and CFR club championships races (10 mile Skiddaw Fell Race is a good swap for 1 hour 45 minutes easy run, right?). Challenge Cup Final weekend in London meant swapping a rest day for a rest half day to bring my long run forward 24 hours – but what a long run, Tower Bridge to Deptford and then about-turn and follow the marathon route to Canary Wharf and back to Tower Bridge. A recce of the end of the race is standard road running advice – the 10 miles including the Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf was the bit I wasn't looking forward to. August bank holiday weekend was the next challenge – marathon preparations meant that I couldn't pick and choose CFR club championship races (I didn't run any in September) and the English Championship Black Coombe Dash was one race that I couldn't miss. But my training plan included a 20mile long run the day after – and there's no way that would be successful.

Another rest half-day and a roll of the dice – long run on the Friday, race on the Saturday with an extended rest Sunday and Monday. Friday went well. We were on holiday in the Lakes, so I was running from Pooley Bridge to Howtown and back, twice, plus a bit. I got a nasty surprise at Howtown – a putrid, stinking and rotting badger on a narrow wall-lined road on a warm day. I almost spewed and diverted my return via some nearby footpaths. The rest of the run was unspectacular – the last 3 miles a struggle but I made it, including running the first couple of miles of JNC the wrong way round. The next day the

race went well – I was feeling surprisingly strong, climbed well but on the descent a twisted ankle (not the curse?!) lost me a few places, including one to Chris Cripps, but the ankle wasn't too bad and I got back within a few seconds of Chris, but my fast finish came too late. The gamble had paid off.



The training plan worked well. It was clearly developed to teach you to run and push on tired legs, but with good rests built in – both rest days and well-timed easy days. I used 4 and 5 mile loops or out-and-backs on my long runs, returning to my car to collect drinks and food – for food read "jelly babies", I was planning for what would be available on race day (although I ended up carrying my own jelly babies).

Soon week 5, 6, 7 became week 15, 16, 17 – race week. A Friday train meant no queues at registration at London's Excel exhibition centre. COVID arrangements meant bag drop was at registration – somehow my bag seemed to include twice as much stuff as everyone else's. I'd posted a question on Facebook "what do I put in my bag?" and got lots of sensible suggestions plus one from Paul Johnson: "a bottle of local beer and your phone to take a finish line picture of a CFR vest and a pint of Cumbrian beer".



Race day started with a 6am alarm, breakfast finished by 7am – 3 hours before race start. I somehow managed to leave the house late, but only by a few minutes. 50 yards up the road and I meet the main race route – I cross the road to an encouraging “good luck Nick” from a marathon volunteer. 200 yards and I’m interviewed for News at Ten – well, interviewed by a 10 year old on his mobile phone.



I’m soon on Blackheath Common and no longer the lone runner – there are thousands of us. Many penned in like a scene from a dystopian film.

Balls! I was supposed to eat something light at 9am but I’d forgotten it. Spare jelly babies to the rescue – a plan is a plan, after all.

As my allotted start time approached, I remembered my standard advice to others – “be bold, set off cold”. I remove my base layer and stuff it in my bumbag, along with a bottle of Lucozade and a bag of jelly babies. As my start wave leave Greenwich Park, I’m hit by a cool breeze that makes me wonder whether my undressing was wise. I’m at the back of my wave – it’s a marathon, not a sprint.

The start line approaches. Watch pressed, start running. Slow down! I set into my pace and am feeling good. And then it starts: “good running Nick”, “looking good Nick”, “you’ve got this Nick”, “looking strong Nick”. I have my own fan club – every one of London’s 9 million people are shouting encouragement in my direction.

A mile in and I see my real supporters – my wife, her cousin and my son. People who know me know that I have 2 sons – only one came to support me. I’m not going to name names, except to the solicitor drafting my revised will.



Blackheath becomes Charlton and... ...there’s that dump of a pub I stopped in for a wedding in 1997. It still looks like the type of place Hans Solo would avoid. As Charlton becomes Greenwich the crowds increase and amongst my 9 million supporters I hear a Cumbrian “Daaaadddd” – the family have hot-footed it down the hill from Blackheath.

I realise that I’m being followed by Neil. I don’t know Neil; I don’t know what Neil looks like. But “looking good Nick” has become “looking good Nick, looking good Neil”, time after time.

The crowds thin around Surrey Quays – and I try to recollect where my friends lived in the late 90s. Blank. I’m soon in Deptford and it reminds me of growing up – run down, passed its best with people who look like they’ve had a hard live. I never saw dreadlocks growing up in Thatto Heath, but a bloke with grey dreads just won the prize for the most chilled “go on Nick” of the day.

I recognise this road. I’m at the start of my Challenge Cup Final weekend run. That means Tower Bridge is round the corner – that means I can start ticking off places I remember. I pause at Tower Bridge to



take a selfie – a 3 year old would have done a better job.

I cross the noise inferno that is Tower Bridge, more “go on Nick” shouts than ever and then extra load cheers, and cheerleaders with pom poms, as I pass the British Heart Foundation area – my BHF vest was helping now as the letters ironed onto it were helping the rest of the time.



As I head towards Canary Wharf, the faster runners are coming the other way – I run near the central barrier looking trying to spot friends but didn't see them. I'm now having to dodge walkers – 13 miles is a long way if you're not ready for it.

Near Limehouse Basin I have tears in my eyes – not the marathon emotion that people report. I've just read an “I'm running for...” card on the back of a runner in front – a child too young to be on a “I'm running for...” card.

I'm past half-way now and almost 5 million people have shouted personal encouragement to me and Neil (he's still nearby). Near Canary Wharf I walk for the only time – because I'm drinking Lucozade from a cardboard cup and have no desire to run 12 miles with a sticky Lucozade beard. Cup binned, I set off running again before realising that not everyone drank their Lucozade. My feet are sticking to the road – think Gallaghers night club, Whitehaven, the night before a late 90s Happy Friday. For a few hundred

meters the most miniscule extra effort feels like the bog between Barf and Lords Seat.

The first negative thoughts enter my head. It's time for the training to kick in. A slight incline becomes a steep hill – in my mind at least. And a hill has to be attacked, my mind trick works and I'm back on pace while others were struggling. I take the sharp turn north towards Canary Wharf. That means I'm heading in the right direction – well past half distance and running towards the finish (minds games were a key strategy).

Entering Canary Wharf I spot the family again – more waves and photos. Then then my fastest splits occur. A 3 minute kilometre, then a 4 minute kilometre – either I'm running the race of my life or my watch is struggling to triangulate its position around the tall buildings. The family have cut the corner on the race and are on the side of the road again – I stop briefly, hugs all round and then I'm off again.

“Shut up legs”, I try Jens Voigt's mantra. My legs are trying to get me to stop but I'm still on for a big PB and 4:30 might just be achievable. My brain works just well enough to remember that tired legs probably mean I'm low on fuel – extra jelly babies, a gel from a feed station and an extra drink. A few minutes later and I feel back on pace – but every leg muscle is suffering, my hamstrings and glutes are tightening up.

Then I remember Barry Johnson's instruction: “At 20 miles, straighten your vest and go for it.” I do my best and put in a fast mile to recover time but need to revert to my planned pace – if I'm going to get back on track for 4:30 I'll have to do it in the last 5k, the target for now is not losing more time.

With 5km to go I push again; walkers are becoming a real problem – they keep changing direction without warning. My whole body is screaming at me to stop and walk but I just keep focussing on a distant point and pushing. The “looking good Nick” became “great focus Nick”. I passed the family on Embankment but had no idea – I'm in the zone, or is that the pain cave.

A mile to go and 4:30 is almost out of reach. I push on, hard. Near Parliament there's a wall of noise and then suddenly silence – no spectators, no “looking strong Nick”. Ahead, I see a “600m to go” sign – some quick maths and I know that 4:30 is gone but I push on. Run hard until The Mall and then try to sprint – that's the plan. I hug the kerb to take the shortest line onto The Mall and run past the grandstand “well done Nick”, “great running Nick”. I approach the finish line with fists clenched in celebration before crossing the line.





Stopping my watch, I struggle to move on – I hobble towards to bag collection area sharing my remaining jelly babies with fellow runners and volunteers. The heavens opened and I now regret turning down the foil blanket – suddenly my legs find some energy to keep going towards my bag of warm dry clothes and my special reward.



I collect my bag, don my medal and head under a tree out of the rain. A little rummaging in the bag and I have a bottle of Coniston Bluebird beer and a bottle opener in hand – isotonic drink par excellence. Not quite the finish line beer drinking photo that was requested but I'm still on The Mall. I spot some empty seats and finish my beer outside the St John Ambulance tent.

I struggle back to my feet and head off down The Mall, medal around my neck, and onto Horse Guards Parade to meet my family at the cenotaph. In the middle of Horse Guards Parade the emotion hits me – I'm stood in tears for a minute.

I've been texted my official time and it's a 24 minute PB compared to Manchester 2019.

4:31:16 and I'm happy. Happy with my training, happy with my preparation and happy with my execution. A lot of hard work and some good fortune.

Thanks to everyone who donated to my fundraising effort raising over £1300. My fundraising page will stay open until the end of November.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nickdownes>

2022 Ballot? Of course, I'm in it.

Time for a rest? Well, it would be if I hadn't entered the 2020 OMM, now being run 30-31 October 2021.



*Postscript: I've just spotted Neal, not Neil, in one of my photos.*



# Annual Presentation Evening

**Saturday 27th November**

**Gilcrux Village Hall**

**6.30pm arrival, for food served around 7pm**

## Menu

Cumberland Sausage / Vegetarian sausage (please select when booking) with mashed potatoes,  
onion gravy, peas, Yorkshire pudding  
Pavlova

## Logistics

Parking is fairly limited at the village hall, please park sensibly if parking in the village.  
Overnight parking is permitted in the village hall car park for campervans IF you are self-sufficient  
i.e. there are no toilet/water facilities.

Booking via [website](#) only, no cash or cheques sorry!

More info, contact Sophie Likeman



# The South Downs Way

Dot Patton (and Jane)



Another year another long run. This is no epic adventure pushing our bodies to the limit but a chance to enjoy long days out running in the countryside, 16+ miles a day is still challenging for our ageing joints. We used a different format this year due to Covid restrictions, visiting the route on 3 separate occasions and running a few days each time, which meant 3 little holidays!

The SDW is about 100 miles long from Eastbourne to Winchester and we took 7 days in total. It's a lovely gentle route over rolling grassy hills, farm land and through ancient woods. The views of the calm sea, blue sky and open green country side bring a sense of vast space and tranquility, very different from our dramatic high views of mountain ranges and lakes.

We started by climbing up Beachy Head and followed the white cliffs along the coast

over the 'ups and downs' of The Seven Sisters. We then descended to the beautiful Cuckmere valley with its meandering river and shingle

beach. From then on the route drifts into a mixture of green hills, arable land, (guess the crop), lots of flowers (name that flower) and leafy woods, many sadly hit by the ash dieback. We dipped into traditional villages and finally finished at majestic Winchester Cathedral, oh, and we saw birds of prey and lots of horses on the way.



Luckily our weather was mostly sunny and calm (one advantage of southern England), underfoot was mostly grass except for sliding about on claggy chalk paths. As always Mike and Jim were excellent drivers and support, discovering the many pop up coffee vans and country pubs.

So plans are afoot for next year's trip, watch this space to see where we end up!











# The Yorkshire Three Peaks

Darren Parker

Sat 9th Oct 2021: 66<sup>th</sup> Yorkshire 3 Peaks Race, 38 km, 1580 m.

I'd never done the Yorkshire 3 Peaks Race before and decided to enter last year because the race has been held for several decades and is run over an iconic route. Many folks commented it wasn't a 'proper' fell race but I thought it's worth doing at least once in my life. Last year's race was cancelled because of Covid and entries were carried over into this year. The race is usually held in April but because of the slow relaxation of restrictions at the beginning of the year it was postponed till October.



A ludicrously early start was required – I had to get up at 5:30am. We met at Cockermouth school and Paul Jennings very kindly drove Mike Harrison, Ann Cummings and me in his spacious camper van. (Mark Wise, Peter Walmsley, Rod Welford and Paul Johnston completed the CFR contingent). The journey to Horton-in-Ribblesdale took just under two hours. We parked on a grassy sports field with the party tent and start line in an adjacent one. 821 people entered the race but only 467 turned up, but even then after adding on marshals and

supporters it made for quite a crowd. Registration was swift and we had an hour to kill before departure. At a little before 10, after a briefing by the RO, we gathered at the start line, distributed according to our estimated finish time. Having not done it before and not being a typical race for me I couldn't arrive at a decent estimate. So I applied my usual tactic of being nearer the front than justified, because I set off faster than most and in case of any imminent bottlenecks. Even so, I was surprised how slowly people set off when the time came, so I weaved my way even closer to the front. After 100m, I was mostly going backwards for the next 40 minutes. Even though we were running along a wide track, I was cut up 3 times (where an overtaking runner immediately cuts in front after having overtaken) and I was sorely tempted to tap the foot of one of them. On another occasion, a guy came up alongside and then gobbed in front of me! As the path steepened the leaders began passing us on their return from the summit of Pen-y-Ghent.

After dishing at the summit I began the descent and started overtaking people, then it plummeted more steeply over rough ground – hurrah, that's more like it. Back on the wide sandy path I continued overtaking. The descent from the summit is a Strava



Photo Andy Jackson

segment which took me 11.5 minutes and, despite



chatting a little with Peter on the way past, I was half-a-minute quicker than Mike, who's much faster than me.

Unfortunately the steep ground was followed by nearly an hour of purgatory – gently undulating ground all the way to Ribblehead.

I cannot run continuously for so long and I lost all my gains from the steep descent. In fact I lost 20 places from Pen-y-Ghent summit to Ribblehead, although 17 of these were because I

dived into the Portaloo just before dibbing. I was only in there for 41 seconds, demonstrating just how closely spaced runners are in this event. Interestingly, the event rules state that "Everyone must use these toilet facilities at all times," which would make for quite difficult running!



Photo Andy Jackson



Photo Andy Jackson

Whilst in the Portaloo I was overtaken by Paul and Mark. I then overtook them whilst they were retrieving their drinks. We then ran very closely together on ascent of Whernside. The gradient was surprisingly gentle and I even ran several 30m-odd sections.

Also surprising was overtaking people, although this was a painful process! Going off the trod onto rougher ground and moving marginally faster for 10 seconds was enough to set my quads burning for the next couple of minutes. The cloud was down at the

summit which meant no views, which was a pity, but at least I couldn't see how far it was to Ingleborough. I gained 37 places on the ascent. The descent began on a wide path at a runnable gradient. On this section was the only time I had trouble with walkers. A group of a dozen were spread across a 3m wide path, which necessitated weaving amongst them, and then one of them fired up a ghetto blaster. I've come across this a few times – young folk incapable of listening to peace and quiet for several hours and simply enjoying the outdoors for what it is. The path turned left and descended steeply over large slabs. They appeared to be slate but despite being wet provided enough grip. I overtook many other runners, including Peter who I failed to notice, presumably because I was concentrating on foot placement – I was constantly worried about tripping and falling onto a hard slab of rock. After 10 minutes the fun was over and was followed by another 10 minutes of tedious road running almost on the level

I stopped at the check point to fill up my water bottle and departed for the ascent of the final summit – Ingleborough. I gained 26 places on the descent.

The ascent of Ingleborough began with almost 2km of level running, which I was now too tired to accomplish without walking occasionally. Even when the ascent proper started, the gradient was often shallow enough to run. After another kilometre the slope finally reared up steeply and it was not long before I reached the summit. I gained 13 places on the ascent. The descent began by retracing our steps for 350m and I passed Mark, Paul and Peter still on the ascent and I wondered if I could hold them



off to the finish. The path dropped off to the right and headed directly for Horton. It was a descent of 450m over 7km and I'd imagined a nice runnable descent, but the path was rocky and after a couple of kilometres the gradient was so slight it hardly felt like we were descending at all. For over a kilometre the path consisted of limestone rock interspersed with wet, slippery mud. By this point, my legs weren't working properly and it took all my concentration not to trip or slip. I kept walking short sections and fully expected Paul or Mark to appear alongside. I reached the road in Horton with only 400m to go to the finish. Half-way there I glanced over my shoulder in case I needed to sprint, but fortunately there was nobody in sight; cramp was so near it might have resulted in a complete lock-up. I gained 18 places on the descent.

I crossed the line in 204<sup>th</sup> place out of 467 starters (of which only 416 would eventually finish) in a time of 4:37:35. A minute later, Mark finished and incredibly we were never more than 75s apart at any of the check points. The descent from Ingleborough had taken almost 50 minutes and our times differed by only 2 seconds. Paul and Peter came in 12 minutes later. Paul had lost his legs on the ascent of Ingleborough and never found them again until an hour after he'd finished. Upon finishing my legs also felt very strange – it may have been caused by electrolyte deficiencies affecting nerve impulses to the muscles. Whatever the cause, within 5 minutes I couldn't stand up any longer and had to lie down on the damp grass.

We returned to the van and got changed into dry clothes, which we did at a very slow rate indeed, before visiting the party tent for much needed food and tea. During the race I drank 1.5 litres of water into which I dissolved High5 energy powder but ate nothing else. My stomach was complaining bitterly up and down Ingleborough but chewing and breathing is difficult when moving quickly and I often feel sick if I eat anything. I was also curious if I could run such a long race without eating any solid food. After watching some of the presentation we returned to the van and began the long journey home.



It is true that the Yorkshire 3 Peaks Race cannot justifiably be classified as a fell race. The gradients, both up and down, are far too shallow, the underfoot conditions too good, and the route is fixed (you are required to follow the traditional walker's 3 peaks route for the most part). It could be argued that in many fell races the route is also effectively fixed but what fell races offer are opportunities for going the wrong way even if we try not to take them. The race was well organised with many friendly marshals out on the hill and is definitely worth doing once. I'm happy with my time and have little motivation to do it again, but you never know, sometimes doing these races can become a tradition.





## Three in October

Jack Gilbert

It started with a happy coincidence of friends visiting and them keen to experience a Lakeland tradition; the shepherds meet, and one none less, in the best valley in the world. The reputation of racing up and then down Kirkfell (i.e. the DOMS) was as intimidating as the mountain is steep. 3.8 km. 700 m. Sometimes you just have to do things which you think you're a bit scared of, and so I found myself on the line, in a vest, staring down an impossible summit; Lakeland October delivering on grey and threatening rain in abundance...Crap, I hadn't raced since last year!



Me going up. The chap behind came from Colorado! Photo Lindsay Buck /Mr Buck

I found a rhythm and worked up the line of runners on the basically 1 in 2 gradient, thankful for the dampness holding the soil together and maybe keeping me from overheating. I just about kept contact to follow the leaders over the summit, 5<sup>th</sup>, to my surprise. I found myself on a different line going down, slightly to the left on scree, clunking my way down until Dark Peak's Mike Robinson, amongst others, truly showed me how it was done and flew by several times faster than me. I didn't see him until

the finish.... I skimmed over with a bit more speed and slightly more of a smile, in awe of Mike as much as anything!

Soon, I was finding myself thanking John Fletcher for a fine pair of Inov8 Mudclaws on the horrendously steep grassy bracken sections, but I was soon finding bum sliding almost as practical and as fast as my clunky cadence; inspired by Les on a Sale & Ling Fell club run long ago. By now I was 10<sup>th</sup>, but managed to get past a lad who looked like he was having a not so fun time; now 9<sup>th</sup>. I flew past my friends and Les Barker (arrive earlier next time, Les!) on a brief col, buoyed by encouragement thinking 'wow this is going alright!'. I held position over the stile and, for the first time in the race, actually *ran*, and it felt amazing.

Good fun alongside a few other CFR's braving it, maybe swayed for the points in the Championship series.

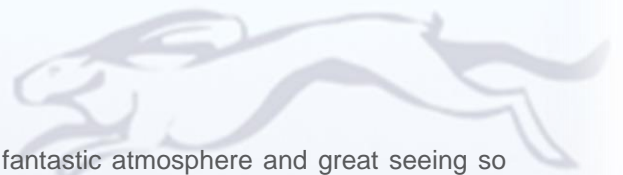
It wasn't long before that result was out in the public and Andy Bradley was wondering what my excuse was for not running in the Relays!... damn. Friday came around and my DOMS and limping were just about tapering off. I was paired with Mario, on Leg 3. Exciting...pain incoming... Arrival was uneventful, apparently only one competitor rolled their ankle on the 45 minute walk in from the car park to event HQ, and there were plenty of toilets. Soon Joe Dugdale was off on Leg 1 and came 4<sup>th</sup> – amazing! Off went pro navigators Phil Archer and Ben Breeze on Leg 2; now holding 27<sup>th</sup>. Final few preparations and in the holding pen we go to warm up. Was it vest weather? Oh and where was Huw for Leg 4?



Leg 1 set off. Photo: Darren Parker

It was Definity vest weather. 10 km. 940 m. Although Mario had (generously) mused about whether he could keep up toe-tapping as I used my longer legs





to stride up the steep stuff it was soon apparent that was totally irrelevant and I was gasping for a drop in pace. At checkpoints, he could graciously sprint ahead to dib whilst I caught up, went past and then behind again. We were treated to some brilliant views and running over great rompy terrain. But now down; flash backs from Krikfell, but this was harder trying to keep with Mario! Mario investigated bum-sliding and advised against. At the bottom, I drank from the river, and splashed my face to cool off. Within seconds I was dry again, working hard up another really steep hill, I was starting to feel it a bit now... barely halfway.

More nice running terrain followed, kind-of; it wasn't that enjoyable since I was pushing myself and struggling to keep my legs moving fast enough, feeling like I could tear torso from hip if I wasn't coordinated. Mario said, 'Only one more hill to go!' I looked at the distance on my watch and struggled to remember the elevation profile – 'Really, another hill?!'. Another stream and Mario was told to wait whilst I caught, and again splashed my face and drank - it felt so nice, that fleeting moment of being stationary. But now it was the final hill time. By now my heart rate was not going as high as before and I was moving slower; neurological umph to push draining fast. Somehow, Mario distracted me with breakfast chat. I do like breakfast, so that was good.

The final descent again saw me gasping for balance and control like before and thankful again for the Mudclaws. On the flat, home stretch, I said something foolish like 'I'm with you' to Mario and he sped up. This lasted about 10 seconds before I realised 4.5 minute mile pace was somewhat unsustainable.. It felt like forever, but we crossed the line and handed over to Tim Reid for Leg 4, nearly collapsing trying to fist bump Tim. 'Huh, Tim?' I thought. Turns out Huw had misread the mass start Leg 3 or 4 timing. So he did turn up but was now in the second Men's team! Tim ran well and we managed a respectable 25<sup>th</sup> overall!



Chaos. Photo: Darren Parker

It was a fantastic atmosphere and great seeing so many people try hard, get exhausted, and I mused about the sanity of grown adults running and bum-sliding down 45 degree grass and mud slopes. Needless to say, no one took the original 45 walk back, the road being much more appealing than a mile of contouring on wet grass banks. There was also much limping, and folk, such as our Daryl, waiting pick up! Pain over, I was now ready to thank Andy for the chance to run, and for organising. We had seven teams, which I think is damn impressive. Well done to everyone and to the organiser!

My DOMS was not quite as bad as Wasdale (adapting?), but it was a hard week on other fronts. So, a welcome distraction was The Buttermere Shepherd's meet and its show race on Sunday. I'd managed each year since moving up. My first go I came 3<sup>rd</sup> as U/A putting me on Andy's/CFR's radar. The following year, older, heavier and running less, scraping 8<sup>th</sup> but in a CFR vest.

2021's was shaping up to be exciting, with heavy rain and wind forecast, and a new, longer course. Nerves grew watching the rain pound the fells from the Gatesgarth cow shed. Was Andy bribing folk with such a good CFR turn out? Or an indirect entry of appreciation for masochistic organisation of successfully herding us in the Relays.



There's a fell somewhere. Photo: Dot Patton

Andy briefed us indicating it would be a surprise whether we summited Robinson or came back from a stile before: it was marshal Jim's call on how much weather he wanted him and us to tolerate.

Once on the fell, the field soon fractured, with folk picking various lines in various directions. I was just keeping visibility of leaders Mario and Dark Peak's Rhys Findlay-Robinson in maybe 5<sup>th</sup> place, then following their noses across open fellsides and numerous cols. I benefitted from cutting corners off



their lines. By the time I was on the fence line heading north east, the mist was down, and I was basically alone. My head was freezing in the searing wind and lashing rain but I think my burning muscles liked the cool. Buff went on.

I didn't want to mess up now and (embarrassingly) got the map out, just to be safe! I found the stile, along with a chap who started descending prior to summit...he was now at the mercy of my navigation and 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>. We headed north deeper into mist but soon our line was confirmed by Mario and Rhys flying back. To the summit for a fist bum with Jim.

Going down was OK, sticking to bracken more than the loose earth. But I'm not great at descending and nor was my line when I saw Mike Robinson cruise to finishing field now ahead of me! Game on....

I picked up pace, nearly collapsing on a dodgy ankle in the process. But fuelled by adrenaline, just a tens of meters before the finish line, I overtook that demon descender Mike to a cheer of 'Bastard!' and helped myself to 4<sup>th</sup> place. I thank the spectators who kept my stealth approach to the last meter! But, well done to Mario for winning; by the look of him, he'd improved bum-sliding to chest sliding.

What a race. It summed up so much of the fun of fell running and racing. A low key event; vests in all weather; no paths and unknown trod; clag; trusting compasses, and inter-club comradery. And all within a show meet up-down 5 km race. With free tea and

some cracking(!) flapjack and cake from Mel Bradley. Best £5 ever. And of course, thanks to the marshals willing to sit out and count us in in horrendous weather.

On that front, it was soon apparent we'd lost a runner. Brief deliberation followed before Andy called Mountain Rescue. There was little we could do safely. A little time passed and sat in my car wondering. But then I saw the lost pink top run across to the cow shed, for a hug with Andy! Phew!

I didn't see anything local to round off with a fourth October race, but with a dodgy ankle, and a still slightly sore coccyx, and flood risk rain, I thought OK for a weekend off. Lessons? Racing is always going to feel hard. But that's the point. It would be easy if it wasn't hard, and there's some fun eventually, made all the better from joint suffering with fellow club members and runners.



Sprint Finish, me and Mike. Photo: Pip Conlon