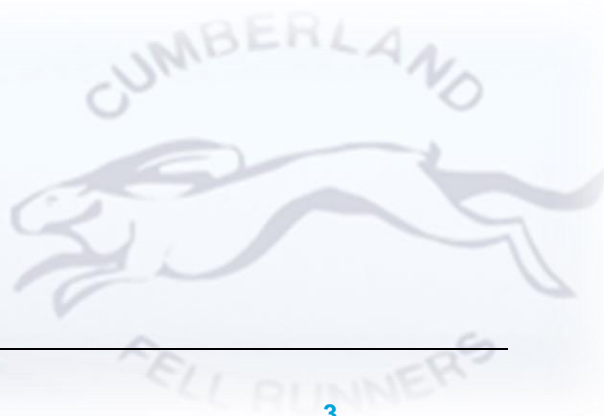

Cumberland Fell Runners

Newsletter
November 2022



Luke Davidson (U13) getting a great start at the Cockermouth XC in October. Photo: Richard Jewell



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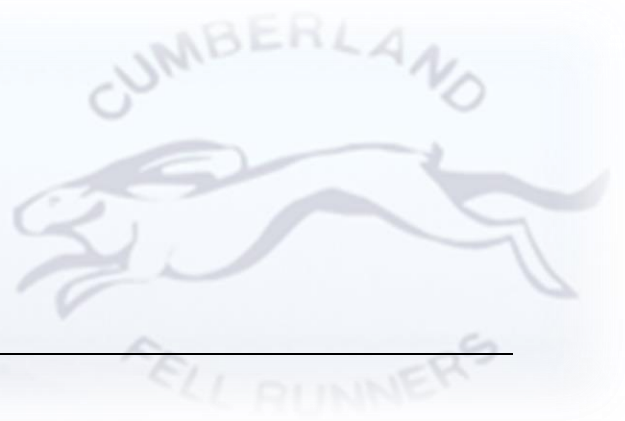
Editor's note

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 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.

Enjoy!

Jack



The Committee

Your wonderful club is brought to you by:



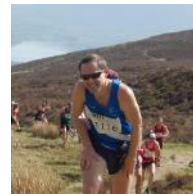
Chairman Paul Jennings



Treasurer Ann Cummings



Vice Chairman Ryan Crellin



Statistician Darren Parker



Secretary Sophie Likeman



Equipment Officer Jane Mottram



Membership Secretary Adam Cresswell



Race selection Committee TBC



Press Officer Charlotte Barker



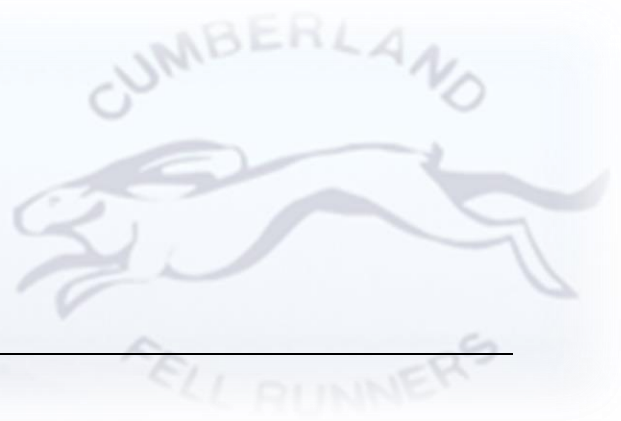
Website Administrators Mario Yeomans, Darren Parker, Adam Cresswell



Team Captain Andrew Bradley



Newsletter Editor Jack Gilbert



Club matters

New members

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

Oscar Frankham (J)

Charlotte Mathieson (J)

Helen Milner

Jonny Frankham (J)

Myrtle Ashworth (J)

Phil Johnson

James Maclaughlin

Lee Dixon

Medhi Ahmedzada

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 Adam at a1cresswell@googlemail.com.

Next members meeting

The date of the next members' meeting will be the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday 10th December 2022, 1300, Shepherds Arms, Ennerdale and will be communicated by SiEntries and posted on Facebook as well. There'll be chips and it is immediately after the micro classic handicap Crag Fell race. This is a super friendly race with one of the best descents in the west and a bring-prize-to-win-a-prize prizing structure!

Members' meeting 11th October 2022

Shepherd Arms, Ennerdale

A great turn out on Tuesday's members' meeting - thank you to everyone who attended. Minutes are below (and hopefully also in the SiEntries email).

Attendees: Sophie Likeman, Charlotte Barker, Ryan Crellin, Sian Spencer, Isabel Mancebo, Tony Jewell, Darren Parker, Ian Grimshaw, Sam Holding, Steve Davison, Andy Bradley, Ruth Stanley, Ellen Irlam, Paul Jennings, Kath Farkas, Dan Worsell, Rob White, Jennie Chatterley, Jack Gilbert, Medhi Ahmdzadeh, Jenny Jennings.

Apologies: Mario Yeomans, Adam Cresswell,

Presentation Night

26th November after Sale Fell: Options are Ennerdale Brewery and Gilcrux VH. Sophie will look into this and Sam will ask Ennerdale Brewery. We need to confirm the capacities for each venue and check the expected numbers. Possibly have set number of tickets and first come first served basis.

AGM

10th December Crag Fell race. Book Shepherds Arms for AGM (This is provisionally booked and will confirm numbers for food nearer to the time.)

Winter League

Seven races, four to count from:

Two Riggs 19/11/22

Sale fell 26/11/22

Crag fell 10/12/22

Whinlatter park run -throughout January

King of the Castle 08/01/23

SOB 14/01/23

Clough Head 4/2/23



Charlotte to arrange Kong voucher prizes. Addition of possible “Cumberland cup” equivalent for person with highest attendance – to be discussed further.

AGM

Roles to be filled:

Welfare Officer

Team Captain for club and for relays. Ladies and mens captain. Andy to support whoever takes on that role.

Vice Chairman

Interested parties to speak with Paul and to be decided at AGM.

Generic England Athletics club role descriptions are available [here](#).

Junior committee

Steven Davison proposed to merge junior committee with seniors due to a lot of duplication in work and bring two entities of the club together. Further discussion required to maintain strong links with Juniors such as a representative committee member such as Junior Coordinator.

Junior Commst

Juniors have moved onto new form of communication (one of the apps we looked at a couple of years ago). Will await feedback on its success and discuss at later date as to whether it could be used for seniors.

Female participation in racing

There are a high number of female participants in the club but a low number of women racing. It was proposed to bring back informal group to arrange race route recces and support women getting into racing – Charlotte to discuss further with Jennie. Ladies team captain role may help to increase confidence and awareness within the club.

CFR Cotton T-shirts

Ryan will get prices for new kit.

Constitution

Needs updating. Small group needed to go through and update. Charlotte, Paul, Steve, Jack and Ryan. Changes to be proposed and voted in at the AGM.

AOB

Trophies, Darren will collect them from folk soon!

2023 Club champs race selection – need volunteers to select races.

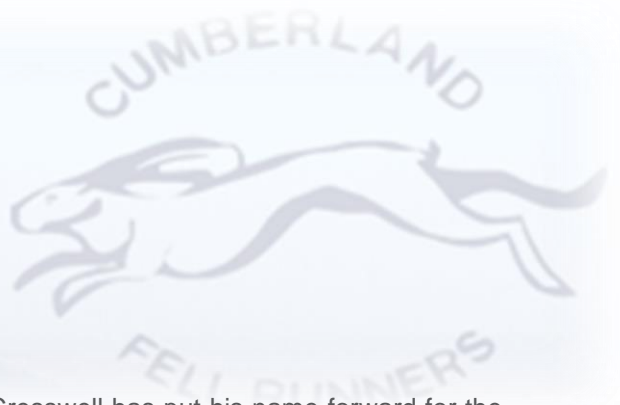
Summer social 24th September 2022

Many thanks to Charlotte for organising an excellent summer social at Loweswater Village Hall. Much sharing of food and merriment was had with a bring-a-board structure. Charlotte has said:

Thank you to everybody that was a part of the social last night. It was a great night with lots of interesting and delicious boards of food.

It showed how generous our club is as there was plenty of food and drink for everybody and lots of help to clean up at the end!

Cheers!



Members' meeting 12th July 2022

Membership secretary

John Fletcher is standing down due to moving out of area, Adam Cresswell has put his name forward for the position, this was accepted by the meeting.

Summer social

A brief discussion was held, one suggestion put forward was to use the Loweswater village hall as a venue with a run up Mellbreak and Hen Combe beforehand. Charlotte Barker has offered to organise.

Club runs

The chair asked for any feedback following the club run newsletter, none has been received yet and there has been no visible change in the attendees at the club runs. It is hoped that clarification of the expectations at a club run may help encourage more to attend.

Relays

Just a heads up that we will most likely be offered 3 teams in the Ian Hodgsons, with 8 people per team. To keep three teams going forward it is very important we fill all three each year.

DHMR

A surplus of around £900 is forecast pending final invoice from SiEntries. It was proposed to donate £100 to the village hall and donate £750 to the Cockermouth mountain rescue.

Club run at the Crab fair

Since we cannot put the race up Dent due to forestry works, we have been approached to put on a club run 'to keep the date in the diary'. It was felt that this wouldn't be possible due to the liability of having an unknown number of potentially inexperienced runners joining. Discussions were held on alternatives, but we didn't feel that a true fell run could be created which would make it difficult with insurance.

AOB

After the club run up Robinson (and maybe Hindscarth) on 26th July we will be going to the Bridge Inn in Buttermere. Please let Adam Cresswell know asap if you plan on attending the meal.



Annual General Meeting

Saturday 10th December 2022

1pm Shepherds' Arms, Ennerdale

After Crag Fell Handicap race

All Members are welcome

Chips & sandwiches are provided before the meeting

Agenda

1. Apologises
2. Approval of minutes from AGM held on 11th December 2021
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Membership Secretary's Report
6. Junior Chairman's Report
7. Special Resolutions
8. Proposed integration of Senior and Junior committees
9. Modifications to Constitution
10. Election of committee members and officers
11. Election of race selection sub-committee
12. London Marathon place allocation

Depending on the outcome of the changes to the constitution the following positions are expected to be vacant

- Vice Chair
- Team manager (2 positions)
- Welfare officer (2 positions)
- Secretary

Note that we have already had a nomination for both team manager positions, and one welfare officer position. This does not prevent anyone from putting their name forward, but it will then require a vote if we have more nominations than positions.

An email will be sent to all members, via SiEntries, within 21 days of the AGM detailing all of the special resolutions and descriptions of the vacancies (or links to the information). If any member cannot make the meeting but would like to vote on any resolution or put their name forward for a vacancy, then they can do so by emailing the club secretary at secretary@c-f-r.org.uk no later than 1 week before the AGM.



Junior Racing

Richard Jewell

Ennerdale Show – 31st August 2022

The sun was out for the young fell runners that came to the first full event at Kirkland Leaps since the COVID-19 pandemic struck. First up to race was the super keen U9's. This race is run over a 1km out and back course from the show field. Thomas Tacon (CFR) came back 1st to win the race followed by Arthur Prosser-George (CFR) in 2nd. Megan Connor (CFR) was 3rd placed girl finishing 9th overall.

Next up was the combined U11 and U13 race. Measuring just over 1km, this is a more challenging course. The young runners tackle the 1st steep climb the senior runners ascend. The coaching sessions at Kirkland Leaps have paid dividends as the first 4 back in this race were CFR runners. The U13's race was won by Luke Davison, followed by 1st girl Evie Youngman and Charlie Tully in 3rd. The fourth runner back and winner of the U11 race was Ruben Prosser-George.

The senior race is a tough, short course, approx. 3km. This allows U15 and U17 runners to test themselves against the seniors. CFR were represented in this race by U15 Jack Hufton who had a great run to finish 34th overall and 3rd in age category. Mylo Jewell flew the flag for the U17's, he had an amazing race to finish 2nd overall.



Loweswater Show – 4th September 2022

It was quite overcast in Lorton for the Loweswater Show, this didn't deter a healthy number of young runners, including a few novices, from entering the show fell races. Arthur Prosser-George (CFR) went one better than Ennerdale Show by taking 1st place in the U9's race. Jess Ferries was 2nd finisher and 1st U9 girl.

The U11 and U13 race were once again combined. The U11 race was won by fantastic runner Jack Thwaites, who at the time was unattached. The good news is that Jack is now attending CFR coaching sessions. Hopefully we will have CFR next to his name in future results. It was another member of CFR and another member of the Prosser-George family finishing 2nd, Reuban had a great run for the blue rosette.

The winner of the U13 race was Ambleside runner, Thomas Iveson. Maisie Booth (KAC) had a great run to finish 1st U13 girl.





Eskdale Show – 24th September 2022

The decision to allow U17 runners to compete in the senior race at Eskdale Show was justified. Mylo Jewell was the lone runner in the age category on the day. The course measures 6.9km, with 900ft of climbing. It was tough first race back after a 2-week layoff due to an ankle injury picked up near the end of the Ennerdale Show race. Mylo had a solid run, finishing 17th overall in a strong field.



English Schools Fell Running Championships – 1st October 2022

CFR were represented at the English Schools Fell Running Championships at Giggleswick by Whitehaven Academy and Cockermouth School pupils, Evie Youngman, Y7, Luke Davison Y8 and Mylo Jewell Y10. Each of the courses includes terrain similar to cross country, including a water crossing, open fell and technical sections. Evie had an amazing run (and swim) to finish 9th Y7 girl. Luke had a great run in the Y8/9 race to finish 68th. Mylo had a solid run in the Y10/11 race to finish 28th. Both Luke and Mylo will get another chance to race over the same courses next year as they will move to the top of their respective age group races.



Cumbria Cross Country Series – Race 1 – Cockermouth – 8th October 2022

The weather leading up to the first event of the series suggested runners may be faced with mud bath conditions. When we arrived at the Hay Fields on race day, it was a pleasant surprise that the bin bags etc that parents were advised to bring for muddy clothes were not going to be required. The organisers reported a large turnout, 168 runners, double that of the previous year. CFR were well represented on the day by 16 junior runners, 8 in the U9's race alone. The U9 boys ran a fantastic race, CFR taking the team prize.

The first CFR runner was 2nd placed Arthur Prosser-George, Charlotte Mathieson finished 2nd girl (1st CFR).

Other U9 finishers:

Oscar King - 5th

Freddie King - 6th

Sullivan Vickers - 8th

Jonny Frankham - 10th

Austin Ellis - 13th

Leah Hazlewood – 9th Girl (2nd CFR)

Three U11 CFR boys joined a large competitive field for the next race. Reuban Prosser-George was best placed CFR runner finishing 8th. Oscar Frankham wasn't far behind finishing 10th. Samuel Youngman, with his trademark smile, finished in 18th place.



Luke Davison finished the challenging U13 race in 9th place, 1st CFR. Hot on the heels of Luke was the in-form Evie Youngman who followed up last weeks fantastic run at Giggleswick by winning the girls race by just over a minute. Ethan Hughes – Rudd had a solid run and showed amazing progress to finish 11th boy.

Mylo Jewell and new recruit Fin Richardson flew the flag for CFR in the U15's race. Mylo had a great start to the series finishing in 3rd place. Fin who has experience in school events and this years

Ambleside Sports Guides Race finished in 13th place, not fazed by the numbers of experienced runners he was up against. Fin potential has been noted, hopefully this can be developed over the next few months with some consistent training.



Junior Coaching Details

CFR have been well represented this summer in show races and we have seen some excellent running.

The numbers attending the Saturday morning coached sessions have swelled, 20+ per session, since the summer shows. A few of the novice runners at Loweswater Show took contact details and are now coming along on Saturday mornings. The aim is to keep the momentum and interest going right through the cross-country season. Hopefully we will have some county representation in the new year.

Sessions are held on Saturday mornings at 10am, alternating between Sale Fell and Kirkland Leaps. The sessions are planned around age, ability and the development of each runner. Typical activities include warm up before moving onto agility, balance and co-ordination drills and some short hill reps. There are plenty of opportunities to get a drink and have a breather.

For coaching information contact Tony Jewell on jewelltony@yahoo.co.uk

For other any other issues please contact Stephen Davison on cfr-jnrs@gmail.com

Upcoming Races:

Cumbria Cross Country League 2022

23rd October – Buttermere Shepherds Meets (Junior race for 13's and under – U15's and U17's run with seniors) – Details on CFR website.

29th October – Penrith Cross Country

12th November – Carlisle Cross Country

26th November – Sale Fell Race (U17's Only) – Details on CFR website.

3rd December – Workington Cross Country

17th December – Keswick Cross Country

Cross Country - All events U9 – U17 races – www.race-results.co.uk or links posted on Facebook (CFRJ – Public)

7th January 2023 – Cumbria Cross Country Championships – Keswick

Entries not yet open for this event – Details will be posted on Facebook



CFR Winter League 2022

*Best four
to count!*

1. Two Riggs 19/11/22

2. Sale Fell - 26/11/22

3. Crag fell - 10/12/22

4. Whinlatter parkrun - throughout January

5. King of the Castle 08/01/23

6. SOB - 14/01/23

7. Clough Head - 04/02/23

Crag Fell Handicap
2021. Photo Anita
Barker

Prizes available!

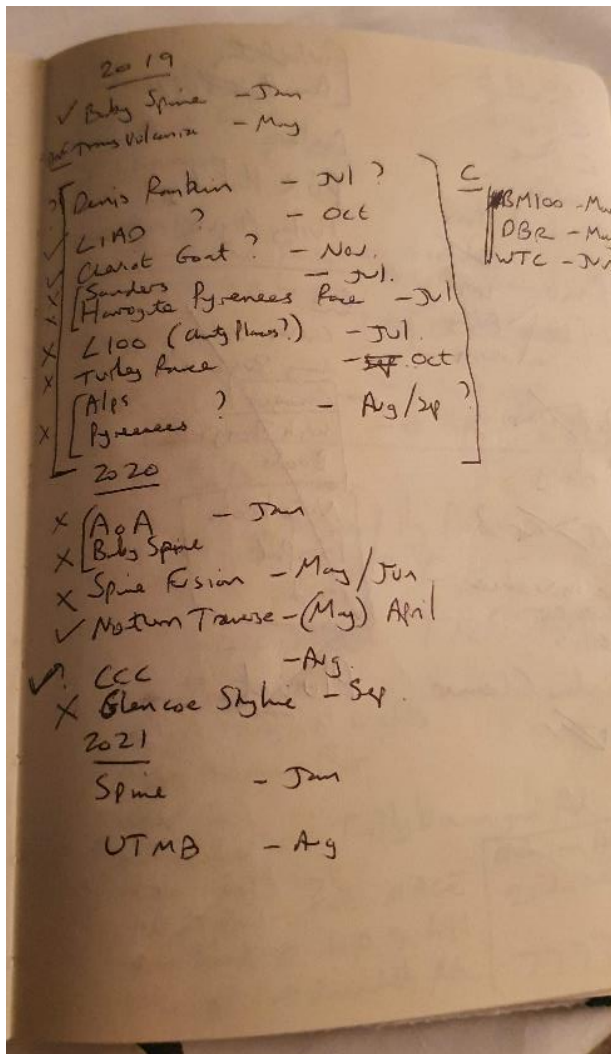


2022 UTMB-CCC Race

Simon Franklin

Back in the Autumn of 2018, I naively believed that years of certainty stretched ahead and I got out my Little Book of Adventures to map out my running plans. I thought my bucket list should include the UTMB and the Spine Race but wanted to make sure before I signed up to either.

For the Spine decided to test out my ability and motivation by entering the 2019 Spine Challenger (aka the Baby Spine) and the 2020 Northern Traverse (190 miles from Cumbrian Coast to Yorkshire Coast) to see if I liked the winter running and the nonstop nature and then I'd do the 2021 Full Spine. Simple.



For the UTMB I'd just run the 2020 CCC, the 100km race that covers the last part of the 160km UTMB

route in the Alps and then see if I felt the need to go back for the UTMB in 2021.

What could go wrong?

One global pandemic later, I'd somehow got through some of my plan, albeit delayed by 2 years. The 2019 Baby Spine and delayed 2022 Northern Traverse had been enjoyable but I felt ambivalent towards doing the Full Spine and it remained in pencil in the Little Book. The CCC had shifted away from me each year, but finally in 2022 it felt like it wouldn't be quite as irresponsible to pack into a crowded metal tube to fly out to France to give it a go.

Carol and I flew out a few days before the start and spent a fun few days meeting up with friends and eating hugely expensive croissants. She was injured but in any case had agreed to provide support at the last three checkpoints as payback for the work I'd put in on her Barkley Marathons and Wainwright Round adventures earlier in the year. Spoiler alert: her support was pivotal in my race.

Early on Friday morning after a chaotic coach journey I found myself dumped in a sleeping Courmayeur. The CCC route is a linear course, starting on the south side of the Mont Blanc Massif in Italy before heading east to Switzerland, and then back west into France to finish back in Chamonix.

The race started in an over the top, continental flurry of noise and music at 9am, the complete opposite of the last race I'd done before the CCC, a run up Seat Sandal with about 50 other people from a field by the A592 on a sunny Wednesday.

After a too-fast run through the streets of the town we headed to the first (and biggest) climb of the day up of 4,700ft up to the Tete de la Tronche and the Refuge Bertone.

Obviously a climb of this kind of duration and height suggests a need to do the same as all the other runners in the race and to use poles. I had mine in my hand from the start and as the ascent started I stepped to one side to put them up. And found the spring to keep them extended was stuck. I spent a long 30 or 40 seconds fighting them then gave up as I watched all the people I'd jogged past in the town overtake me again. Part of me (the blindly optimistic part) thought not using poles would make the race a



pur challenge and after that I stopped worrying about them.

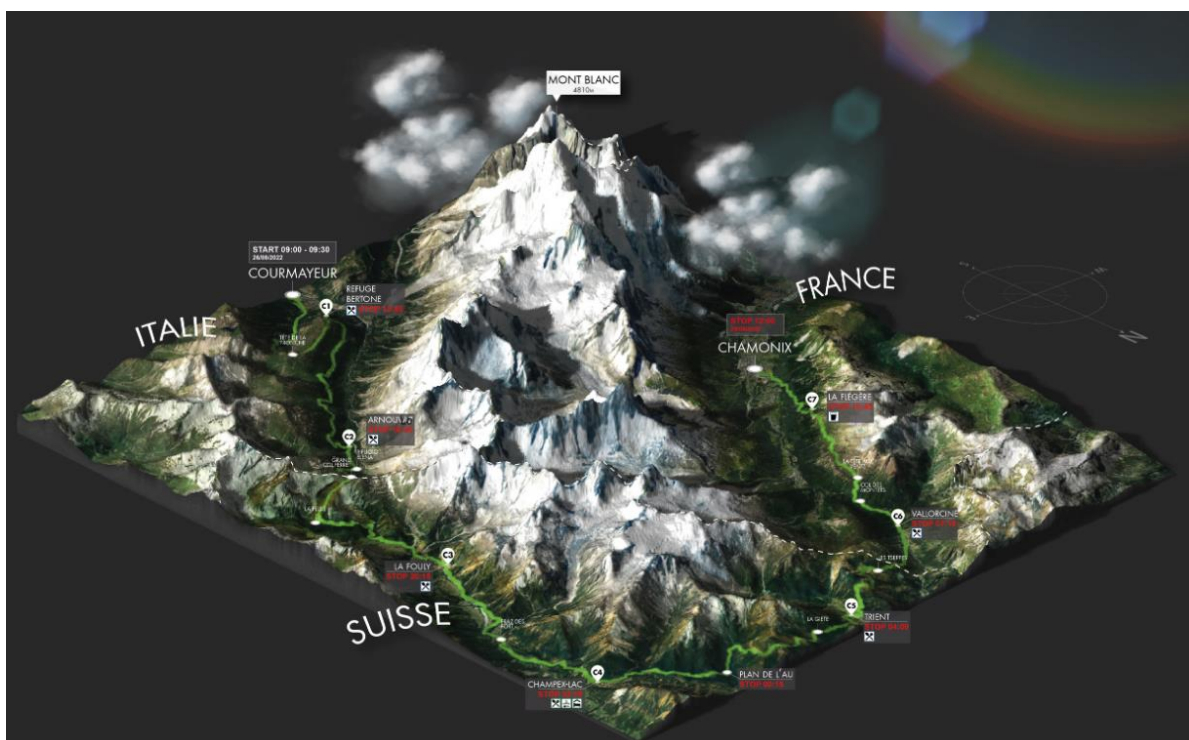
We climbed in a long queue up into the rainclouds above in single file for two and a half hours. I had been worried I would find this frustrating but apart from the odd idiot trying to overtake and then having to cut into non existent gaps, it was a very good humoured, multinational snake, even laughing at the rumbles of thunder around us.

On reaching the top, the terrain changed to be more fell like and I enjoyed the next few hours of gentle descending on good paths with stunning views towards Mont Blanc which hid in the clouds.



Despite the rain on this section it was still very warm and I tried to make sure I was still eating and drinking. When we reached the valley I had my first taste of the renowned salty “soup”, which looked like old dish water but tasted great.

Another long poleless ascent followed, this time up to Grand Col Ferret, the pass that





marks the border between Italy and Switzerland. As we reached the top and peeked down into the new country, the sun came out and, with a long descent ahead, everything seemed rosy.



Another checkpoint arrived soon at La Fouly, a pretty town with a spectacular waterfall between two mountains filling the view to our left.

Heading from here towards evening, I finally started feeling a bit queasy. Despite running quite a few long races over the years, I've still not perfected a method to avoid this. The route now followed the valley through impossibly beautiful chocolate box Swiss villages, but I was starting to worry. I was around the half way point and my legs were feeling strong but my stomach was on the edge of rebellion. Finally, on the sharp climb to the major checkpoint at Champex Lac, the gastrointestinal coup d'état was unleashed. I had several stops bent double and dry retching by the side of the trail and tens of people overtook. Up until this point I had been on track for my most optimistic finish time, but I knew I would be starting to lose this buffer now.

I stomped into the checkpoint marquee to meet Carol for the first time. In my head I was calculating that to finish I probably had at least 10 hours of feeling this bad and it was hard to get motivated to leave. I could see outside it had started to rain again and the dusk had finally changed into darkness. I felt like I needed a sympathetic ear to tell me it was OK to stop and to put their arm

round me and take me home. However, as I threw up in a wheely bin, Carol said "It's not doing you any good being in here. It's time to go. Put your coat and headtorch on and I'll see you out the front".

So 5 minutes later I was jogging disconsolately along the track by the lake wondering what had happened and why I was still out in the cruel night and not on a warm bus. Within an hour, jogging through dark forest, I was resigned to the fact I would not be DNFing as the next checkpoint was much too close to the finish to have any good excuse to stop. This made things easier. Just keep going at whatever

pace I could.

The next section is called Bovine and, ironically, is a pig of a climb. To the right though there were fantastic high level views down over Swiss towns in a flat bottomed valley, and around me in the black I could hear cow bells from the cattle grazing on the high slopes.

The rest of the night repeated this pattern three times. Checkpoint, big climb, big descent, checkpoint. I still felt sick and had occasional stops, but the end was getting closer. Finally, as the sun was just starting to show itself, I reached the top of the last big climb, the Col Des Montets. Assessing my condition I found my legs were still strong and although it was hard to find anything I wanted to eat, I was still getting down the jelly fizzy coke bottles I'd bought in a hellish last minute shopping expedition in Chamonix. These were certainly better than the



cashews I'd got at the same time that inexplicably smelled of beef.

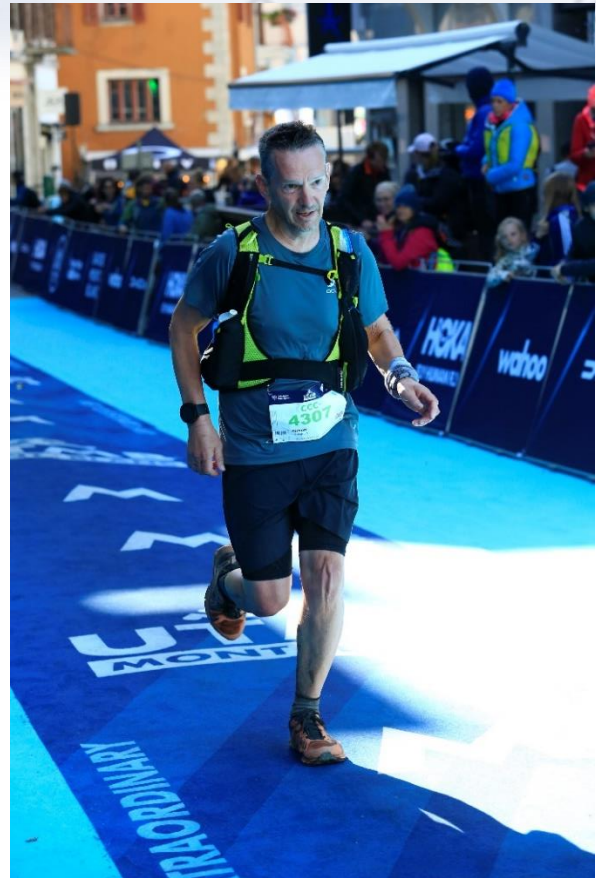
At the final checkpoint of La Flegere, high on the mountain side above Chamonix, I suddenly felt great. With a remote possibility of getting in under 24 hours I started running as if I were in a fell race on the 5 miles descent to the valley. I imagine this really annoyed the people making their way sensibly down with their poles flailing, especially as they had probably all overtaken me at some point the previous day, but I was really enjoying it.

Arriving down on the outskirts of the town I kept up the running and showboated past the breakfasting crowds. This was a big advantage of missing my planned target time, as it was now 9:15am and the town was alive.

I crossed the finish line in 24 hours and 1 minute. The last hour of fun had made me forget the down patch I had on the middle of the race and I was on a high as I sat eating breakfast and drinking Fanta by the finish with Carol and a load of friends.

Over the next couple of days I recuperated with big meals out and beers and watched the UTMB race itself come to its conclusion. Watching people struggle in the heat that had been mostly missing on the CCC made me come to the realisation that the CCC was enough for me. I enjoyed the big race atmosphere and some of the route was great but I don't feel the motivation to come out here again for the big race.

So it's back to my Little Book of Adventures to start making new plans for the next couple of years.



Annual Presentation Evening

Saturday 26th November

Gilcrux Village Hall

6.30pm arrival, for food served around 7pm

Menu

Mains choices

Beef or Vegetable Lasagne, served with salad & Garlic bread slice

Chicken or Vegetable Curry, served with Rice & Naan bread

Cumberland Sausage Curl, served with Creamed potatoes, peas, Yorkshire pudding & onion gravy

Dessert choices

Chocolate Profiteroles

Sticky Toffee Pudding

Both served with fresh cream

Gluten free & Vegan options - Veg Curry is GF/Vegan. Cumberland Sausage also GF. Dessert option for GF/Vegan is Chocolate pudding.

Logistics

£15.00 per head

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 SIEntries website only, no cash or cheques sorry!

https://www.sientries.co.uk/event.php?event_id=10652



Championship Results 2022

Darren Parker

Main Championship

Open	1. Sam Holding 2. Howard Seal 3. Daniel Worsell 4. Peter Crompton 5. Mike Harrison
MSen	1. Sam Holding 2. Daniel Worsell 3. Ross Coles
MV40	1. Chris Draper
MV45	1. Howard Seal 2. John Skelton
MV50	1. Mike Harrison 2. Les Barker 3. Steve Breeze
MV55	1. Andrew Bradley 2. Paul Jennings
MV60	1. Mark Wise 2. Nick Moore
MV65	1. Peter Crompton

Ladies	1. Jennie Chatterley 2. Ruth Stanley 3. Amanda Graham 4. Ann Cummings 5. Lindsay Buck
LSen	1. Ruth Stanley
LV40	
LV45	1. Ange Jackson
LV50	1. Jennie Chatterley 2. Amanda Graham
LV55	1. Alison Wright
LV60	1. Ann Cummings 2. Lindsay Buck
LV65	1. Dot Patton 2. Jane Mottram



Cumberland Cup, M	1. Steve Breeze 2. Mark Wise 3. Daniel Worsell
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Cumberland Cup, L	1. Jennie Chatterley 2. Lindsay Buck 3. Amanda Graham
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Handicap	1. John Skelton 2. Steve Breeze 3. Daniel Worsell 4. Nick Moore 5. Howard Seal
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Show Series

Show Series, M	1. Nick Moore
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Show Series, L	1. Sian Spencer 2. Dot Patton 3. Jane Mottram
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English and British Fell Championship

Sam Holding

Note of encouragement, or coercion, whichever you prefer...

Many in the club will have taken part in the Hodgson and/or British Relays recently, or in previous years, and will no doubt have come away with the warm glow and fond memories that invariably accompany those great events. The sense of team spirit and, especially with the British, running on lesser visited or entirely new hills significantly contributes to the experience.

The English and British Fell Championship series, I sincerely think, carry much of the same allure. Having a purpose to visit and run on many new hills that I otherwise wouldn't is a cause for great excitement when I see the new race calendar announced for the upcoming season.

As with any fell race, all abilities are represented. The list of categories between age and gender are extensive. Once you've done a couple, you also start to recognise those who you're often crossing the line not too far from, building many new friendships. And, based on experience and talks with others, you will most likely place higher than whatever your current estimate might be for yourself.

We've grown the club in many positive ways over the years. I am obviously biased, since it's the aspect of the sport that I pursue most keenly, but it would be fantastic to get men's and women's CFR teams travelling to the national races and sharing in that same team warmth that we enjoy so much at the relays each year.

Yes, they're busy. I just tell myself that the crowding and jostling of the start line will only last for a couple of minutes till everyone spreads out, which is a very small price to pay. They're no busier than the Coledale in recent years anyway.

Logistics and/or arriving at these events for the first time and not knowing what to expect may seem like a barrier but, get in touch; there will almost always be at least one of us going already, likely with past experience, who can make that process much easier.

With winter training just getting started, it's the perfect time to pencil some races onto the calendar and begin working towards them.

If you have any inclination towards racing and feel like you might like to give either of the national series a go at some point, you may have already gathered than I encourage you to give it a shot. See if you don't get hooked.

The races (from the FRA website)

The English Senior Fell Running Championships [2023] are organised by the Fell Runners Association and sponsored by Pete Bland Sports and Inov-8.

- February 11th - Long Mynd Valleys - AM 18.5km/11.5miles; 1372m/4501'. Church Stretton, Shropshire.
- May 13th - Fairfield Horseshoe - AM 14.5km/9 miles; 914m/1999'. Rydal Hall, Cumbria.
- June 3rd - Duddon Valley - AL 29km/18 miles; 1830m/6004'. Newfield Inn, Seathwaite, Cumbria.
- July 23rd - Chapelfell Top - AS 7km/4.4 miles; 400m/1312' - St. John's Chapel, Weardale.
- 20th August - Sedbergh Hills - AL 22.5k/14miles; 1830m/6004' - Sedbergh, Cumbria (British Counter)
- 23rd September - John Hewitt Shelf Moor - AS 9.1km/5.7miles; 457m/1499' - Old Glossop, Derbyshire.

The British Hill and Fell Running Championships [2023] is organised on behalf of British Athletics by the Mountain Running Advisory Group Sub-Committee for domestic Fell Running Championships under UK Athletics Rules. It is sponsored by Pete Bland Sports.

- March 25th - Mourne Maurauder AM 16.0km/10 miles; 1200m/3940' - Newcastle, Co. Down.
- July 1st - Meall an t-Suide Graham Brooks Memorial - AS 5.6km/3.5 miles; 460m/1510' - Fort William.
- 5th August - Maesgwm Detour AM 18.9km/11.7 miles 1060m/3480' - Llanberis, Gwynedd.
- 20th August - Sedbergh Hills - AL 22.5k/14 miles; 1830m/6004' - Sedbergh, Cumbria.



Sam's Calendar

	Wed	Sat	Sun	Wed	Sat	Sun	Wed	Sat	Sun	Wed	Sat	Sun	Wed	Sat	Sun
Jan		31	1	4	7	8	11	14	15	18	21	22	25	28	29
Feb	1	4	5	8	11	12	15	18	19	22	25	26			
Mar	1	4	5	8	11	12	15	18	19	22	25	26	29		
Apr		1	2	5	8	9	12	15	16	19	22	23	26	29	30
May				3	6	7	10	13	14	17	20	21	24	27	28
Jun	31	Blencathra (I)	4	7	10	11	14	17	18	21	24	25	28		
Jul		1	2	5	8	9	12	15	16	19	22	23	26	29	30
Aug	2	5	6	9	12	13	16	19	20	23	26	27	30		
Sep		2	3	6	9	10	13	16	17	20	23	24	27	30	
Oct			1	4	7	8	11	14	15	18	21	22	25	28	29
Nov	1	4	5	8	11	12	15	18	19	22	25	26	29		
Dec		2	3	6	9	10	13	16	17	20	23	24	27	30	31
	Lakeland	British Champs	English Champs	Personal	Club Champs	Of Interest	Relays	Winter Series	Awareness						



Taking to the fells

Vic Wilson

I started running off road just over two years ago to challenge myself by trying something different from what I would normally do – road running. Before that, when I got asked if I wanted to go for a trail or fell run, I would point blank refuse to go, but with the help of Ryan Crellin and a 'gentle' push from Dan (my husband), I'm so glad I gave it ago. Initially with a recce of the Jarratt's Jaunt route, which actually got cancelled due to the weather, and then Loopy Latrigg as my first race. Fell running has given me many wonderful adventures, plenty of memories, some good, some bad (Kirk fell) but overall a great sense of achievement, in particular ticking off the Wainwright fells.

Since I enjoyed being out on the fells, I decided that it would be good to join CFR to learn new routes, meet new people who share the love for going off road and to gain tips on fell racing. I joined the club in December last year but due to other commitments, sadly only made it out on the odd Tuesday night club run but have attended quite a few Sunday Social runs. Each time the runs have been enjoyable but tough, but then again nothing is easy when it comes to fell running.

The past couple of months ended up being quite a busy one for me with regards to racing, representing CFR and Cumberland AC. It all started with a 10-mile road race at Lancaster. I had panicked about this race as I'd only remembered that I had entered the race two weeks before and not done much in the way of 'road' miles, just Parkrun distance as I'd spent most of my spare time on the fells. Luckily the strength in my legs from being on the fells was enough to get me round. The next race I had entered was a trail race, around Shipley Park in Derbyshire, called Double or Quit. This race had the option of just running the 5 miles or continuing with a second lap to do 10 miles. As it was a lovely evening (if not a bit on the warm side for running) I decided to crack on to run the 10 miles. Fell running 'training' had certainly helped with this race as it was quite undulating and I'd managed to knock almost 8 minutes off from a previous attempt (about 5 years ago).

I was pleased how the double or quit race went so I decided to change the distance of the next race I had lined up the following week (Keswick Lakeland Trail). I was due to run 10km but was able to switch the distance to 15km. In the run up to the race, the

weather had been dry and I heard about the 'bottomless bogs of Glenderaterra' so thought it might have dried up and I would get away with relatively dry feet. Sadly, this was not the case, I dread to think how bad it would be on a day with poor weather conditions. But it's all part of the experience and still finished with a smile on my face.



Next up on my race calendar was the new trail event at Grasmere, organised by Maverick. I was a bit hesitant about entering this race as it was the first time this event has ran and after hearing disastrous stories of a previous 'new' trail race that happened in May, I wasn't sure how it would go. They were an experienced race provider and it was sponsored by Terrex so I thought it should be ok. The event had four distances (13km, 24km, 44km or 52km) to choose from. I decided to enter the 24km race which by the end worked out to be over 25km. The route was pretty tough (I thought), starting out from Grasmere sports field heading through the town up to Easdale Tarn, then skirted along Stickle Tarn and down to Sticklebarn. From there we headed across to Chapel Stile/Elterwater and Skelwith Bridge, then



up and over Loughrigg Fell to the woods at Rydal back to Grasmere. It was nice to get a cheer from someone in DAC who was marshalling on the course and saw the CFR vest. The event was set up well but the only down side was the Lap trail race was going on at the same time so around Loughrigg Fell, there were arrows pointing in different directions, not exactly what you need if you were doing the Ultra distance. My husband (Dan) was unable to take part in the event but decided to meet me at the summit of Loughrigg to run back in with me. We weren't sure how long it would take me to get to that point so he ended up arriving over an hour before I got there so he inadvertently ended up being a marshal, directing runners for the two events (Maverick trails and The Lap). The weather turned out to be decent so it was lovely to sit out and soak up the atmosphere with the free beers that were being handed out at the end of the race. The best part of that race has to be running through the woods at Rydal and spotting a red squirrel scurrying around on the trees.

I thought the weekend after the Maverick race was going to be quiet one as I had no races planned in for then but over the course of the week I got talking to friends who mentioned the Yorkshire 3 peaks, which piqued my interest. I wasn't sure what it was, how far or the elevation so I looked it up and spotted that there was a fell race for it and to me it sounded quite good. The only issue with it was the cut off times, I thought it was a bit tight and was unsure if I'd actually make it. I guess the only way of knowing is to go and do a recce of it. So it was a last minute decision to head down. We didn't actually end up running the race route so it's still unknown if I would make the 2nd cut off time. We got round the 24.5-mile route in 5hr48min, just enough time to grab some cake and a can of coke from the local tea room before it closed.



My legs weren't feeling too bad after the Yorkshire 3 peaks, which I was lucky because I had another race coming up – The RAF Spadeadam trail half marathon on the Sunday of that week. I was aware that there was the Lakeland Four Passes race on the Saturday which I also thought sounded great. As the week went on, the forecast for the Saturday was looking good, so I made a last minute entry into the Lakeland Four Passes. When there are sunny days in the lakes, I think you've got to make the most of it. Towards the end of the race, I was slightly confused by the route instructions, my head was 'fried' luckily a kind lady from Keswick AC helped guide me back to the finish. It was lovely to see a fellow CFR member, Jenny Jennings, taking part too. Afterwards I was quite tired, had a difficult drive home due to traffic and needed to be up early the next day for my next race at Spadeadam so unfortunately missed out on the CFR summer social.

Setting off on the RAF Spadeadam route wasn't too bad but after 5 miles, my legs were starting to feel like lead, but I got round with red cola from the water stations to keep me going. The route ended up being over 14 miles which wasn't ideal after the four passes.

After completing two races in a weekend, I thought that was it... no more races, I could rest up. That idea was short lived when an email went round the Cumberland AC members from the Workington Town Council with a request for someone to be able to run a marathon out in France at short notice. The request was made due to Workington being twinned with a town in France, Val de Reuil, which hosts a popular marathon Seine – Eure. Val de Reuil is also twinned with a town in Poland and Germany who were bringing runners from their respective towns, so runners from Workington were needed. I thought it was a great opportunity to do something different, an international race, so Dan and I put our names forward. The organisation of it was slightly chaotic but managed to get a bit more information about the race as the week went on. The plan was for the



delegates to enter an International team in the Ekiden, which is a 6-person relay with the marathon distance split into 3 x 5km, 2 x 10km and 7.2km. Because Dan had planned on running Chester marathon, he opted to run in the Ekiden – which he got given the last leg (7.2km) and I was going to be running the marathon. The marathon was due to take place 10 days after the email had been sent out.

With the marathon coming up and not much 'road' miles in my legs, I decided to enter the Chester Metric Marathon (26.2km) which was the week before the Seine – Eure race. I was already going to be there anyway as Dan was running Chester Marathon, which he did extremely well. I got round but totally forgot how to pace myself, setting off too quick early on which resulted in me having some company from a 'Race Angel' to get me up a relatively small hill. The Race Angels were a lovely idea, giving encouragement to those that needed it.



Lessons learnt from the Metric Marathon, I was set for the Seine – Eure marathon. The marathon route

was flat, something I've not been used to of late so it quite hard to judge pace wise. I was running quite well and felt comfortable until the dreaded cramp in my calf made an appearance after mile 16, so it was starting to become quite a struggle coming back in, but I made it to the finish line and only finished slightly behind Dan (he over took me at mile 26). It was a great atmosphere and the weather turned out to be great but not great for running. I did experience massive temperature swing throughout the marathon – starting in the mist at 4°C to finishing in glorious sunshine at ~20°C which was a bit bizarre. All in all, a good experience and was nice to be representing Workington. Next race... I guess will be Sale Fell.



It takes two to tandem

Andy Beaty



Last July Kate was having a good year on the bike and was on track to clock up around 8000 miles before the end of December when she was in a collision with a car whilst out on a local ride.

I was contacted by the car driver and when I got to the scene about 5 miles from home there were 2 police cars, an ambulance and a helicopter in attendance.

Off Kate went to A and E (not in the helicopter) and I followed after gathering what was left of the bike up.

The staff at the hospital were mainly concerned about concussion as she had briefly been knocked out and couldn't remember what had happened so

the relevant scans were carried out to check for damage. Thankfully these proved to be okay however she was suffering from double vision which they said would probably go shortly and an appointment was made to attend the eye clinic.

The other problem was a sore shoulder which nearly got overlooked. This turned out to be a broken collarbone that required surgery and a plate a week later.

Leap forward a year and at the present time Kate still has double vision (it's worse when looking down) and has Specs with prisms in to help this and has just been added to a waiting list for surgery to try and correct her vision.

During this time Kate has been unable to drive and cannot ride a solo bike.

At the beginning of March we were thinking about holidays and the year ahead as we usually head down to France for a bit of cycling and walking, (something that we were unable to do for the previous 2 years) and whilst diddling about on the computer I spotted a photo of a tandem which got me thinking.

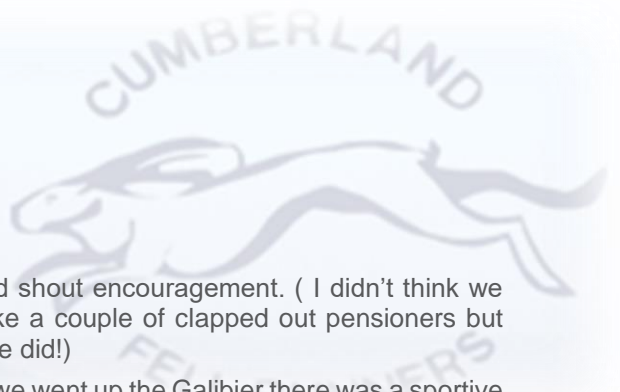
After a conversation and a bit of research we ended up in a specialist tandem shop near Skipton. They were brilliant and helpful. The shop had all manner of wonderful machines that they mostly build themselves to pair up riders of all shapes and sizes. After a short course of instruction they waved us off for a test ride with a map and suggested routes with cafts and told us to take our time.

The start was always going to be strange but we managed quite well and only fell off once.

That was it we decided to take the plunge and a week later we went back to collect our new tandem.

Our first rides were a learning curve. There is a certain way of getting on and off the bike and setting off and stopping. The bloke at the shop said that the "Captain" (me) had to issue the instructions about when I was changing gears and when to set off and the "Stoker" (Kate) had to follow said instructions. This is obviously after 41 years of marriage not the usual way things happen!

Gradually everything gelled and we work well as a team. Stuff like which leg is straight down when freewheeling and how to stop and balance in traffic



and road ends has become second nature and we seem to know each others moves.

The main differences between a tandem and a solo are that they are a bit slower up the hills and you have to change down the gears before you normally would. Comfort was also an issue at first because you sit down all the time and get a sore bum otherwise as long as you anticipate things a bit more and realise the brakes are not as sharp you soon get the hang of it.

So France it was.

We cycled up and down most of the big Cols quite happily. The picture above is going up the Col du Telegraph and Galibier 34km bottom to top. We found that other cyclists were very supportive and encouraging with great comments of Bon Courage and the like. Occasionally cars would even slow

down and shout encouragement. (I didn't think we looked like a couple of clapped out pensioners but maybe we did!)

The day we went up the Galibier there was a sportive on and the commentator on the mike at the top spotted us coming up for the final kilometer. Somehow he guessed we were English and we had full commentary to the top and a great clap and cheer from the crowd.

The tandem is a great head turner and people are always curious and willing to talk when we pull up somewhere. Most say that they would fall out with each other if they were on it but for us it got us back to normality and I don't think it will be put in the back of the shed if / when Kates sight improves.

If you get a chance, give it a go.



Swiss Peaks 2022

Duncan Potts

Impressions of a crazy, slightly psychedelic and truly epic 170km journey across the Swiss Alps.

1st to 3rd September 2022. 11,500m of ascent and 13,260m descent (so technically a downhill race!)

Legs 1 and 2 Grand Dixence to Le Plampro (22km)

2000 metres up to a dam in a coach at 7.30am on a road designed for a smart car. Memories of the ending to the Italian job strike fear into me at every bend. It is a relief to finally get to the brutalist hotel under Grand Dixence. Surprisingly plush interiors lend themselves well to the final preparations for a 170km race across some of the most amazing scenery Switzerland has to offer and eventually, hopefully, down to La Bouvert at Lake Geneva.

'Encore une fois' reverberates the inflatable arch as a smoke machine pumps out dramatic clouds and we are off at a pace unrepresentative of the distance ahead. The lead pack turn left up the hill towards the start of the 360km race before manically turning back when realising their error, as if 30 seconds will make a difference in a race over this distance.



The start at Grand Dixence with Rich Ellis. A minor "rave" was in progress.

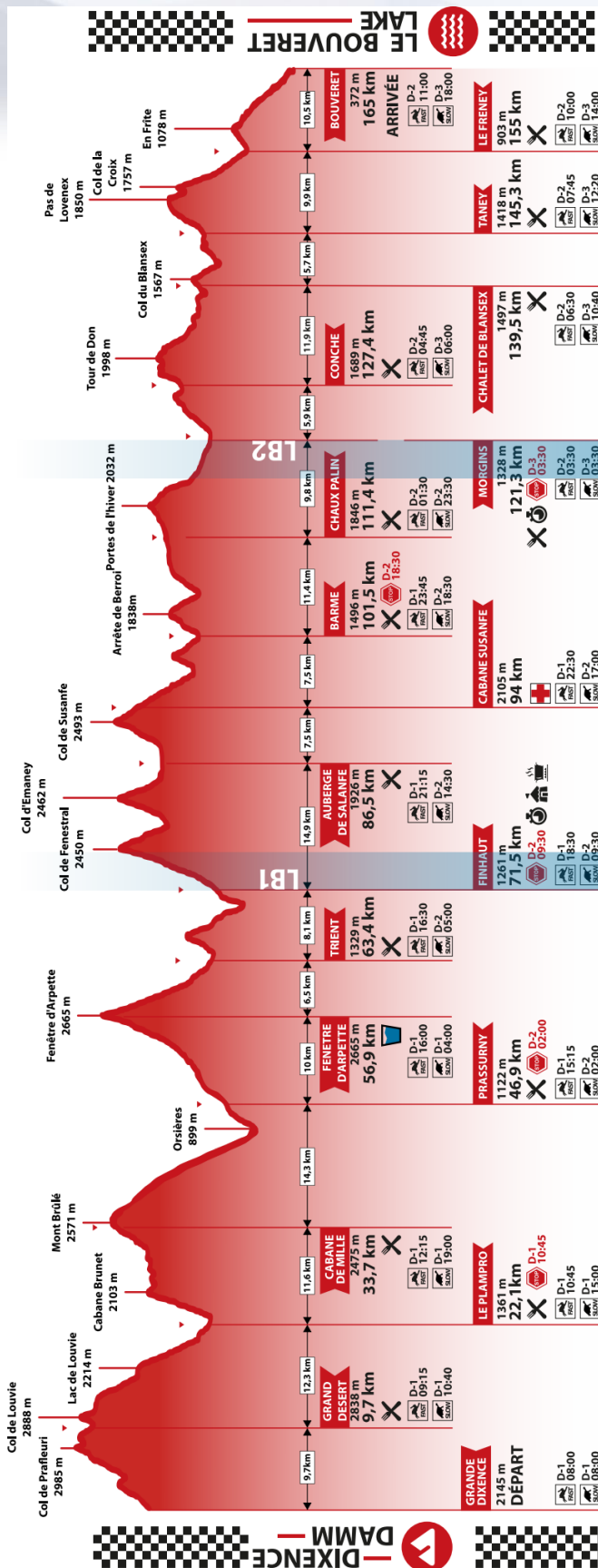
A buzzy drone stalks us up over the Grand Desert which is so ice free that crampons have been dropped from the kit list. It is so different from anywhere I have ever been: lunar with hints of tundra. The man in front sports a climbing helmet... does he know something we don't? As we catch up with him he asks us to run fast past a camera to

create an energetic elitism we don't really have. He is very funny and full of energy. We do it and feel lifted.

We descend to Lake de Louvie on small threads of paths disproportionate to the vast valley. They leap around over stubborn rocks before slackening like hammocks. For several hours the route is only down as snow capped peaks rise ahead and my thighs burn with the effort and the sun. Richard Ellis recognises this is too much on too little training, especially with so much more to come and encourages me to push on. We hug and separate, both moving down at different paces to Le Pampro where a group of smiley, elderly volunteers feed and water us. The race is 4 hours old and already it feels we have seen so much.



Crossing the Grand Desert (taken by another runner; we are in the middle. Rich has the yellow rucksack)



SWISSPEAKS 2022: Legs 3 and 4 Le Plampro to Prassunry (48km)

Scottish Sarah was held together with blue knee tape and ready to register early. We met her at the end in La Bouvert (where official stuff was done the day before) and she was eager but apprehensive, possibly older than us and excited about the challenge. She'd taken on tough routes around Monte Rosa but never this long and as we ate Pizza with her the day before she talked of enjoying it and seeing if she could finish. We all ate as if this would be the last sit down meal for a while.

At the top of Mont Brule she looked strong. Certainly a lot stronger than I felt. The climb from Le Plampro to Cabane Brunet had been a deceptive monster. An easy fall down a smooth road had lead to a steep trail cloaked in trees rising endlessly in the midday heat. In fact without water from Cabane Brunet I would have struggled to get much further. A road acted as a balcony route offered some respite, but the course to the top through bell laden clanging cows seemed unexpectedly long. Most people seemed to find it pretty tough as offers I made to let people pass largely fell on deaf ears. At the top I drank glass after glass of water with gas whilst popping painkillers to ease the forthcoming extended descent. The checkpoint support crew looked in my eyes and asked if I was OK with meaning. I said yes. I think I meant it. Thankfully experience has taught me it takes a few big climbs and descents for the body to adapt on runs like this and I believed I'd feel better later if not now. Sarah looked to have adapted already and for the first time I saw a steel in her eyes, probably from years of orienteering that made me think she'd go far. Maybe all the way. The question was would I? A 1700 metre drop might help me find out.

So down towards Orsières along ridges, around field edges, down forestry roads and finally steeply on dust tracks to local roads winding around farms and villages. We passed through the least official but most enthusiastic checkpoint on the whole route ran by 6 local children promoting sausages, juice and the best tasting nectarines I've ever had. The UTMB beauty spot of Champex Lac came into view on the other side of the valley, blue blue waters sitting in a hanging valley, just as the shadows of the day started to grow long. A tour of Orsières, with bottles dipped frequently in water foundations, arched us upwards to the launch pad of Prassunry to get ready for an assault on the Fentre d'Areptte. A narrow street in an Alpine hamlet hosted the checkpoint providing soup with enormous croutons and salty cheese. A friend, Scot had said the next section was a real highlight with a brutal climb and a never-



ending descent to Trient but he'd done it in the day as a walk earlier in the summer and I was now 48km in and reaching into my bag for my head torch.

Ironically in a very strange twist one of Scott's friends was close behind me... none other than Scottish Sarah who knew his family knew through orienteering circles. What are the chances of a person you meet in the Swiss mountains being friends with someone who works in the next room to you at school? As the coke took time to settle in my stomach I marched upwards for a 3 hour climb, alone on the trail but never in spirit.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Legs 5 and 6 Prassunry to Trient (64km)

The Thursday night steep road stomp immediately induced cramp on the way to Champex Lac and I'd not thought this one through. Nothing massively salty on board so I'm into chocolate and coke supplies quickly to try anything to feel better. It actually works but then I'm worried about enough liquids and take a risk on filling up from a fast following mineral full alpine river. I've done this before admittedly from a much slower, dirtier stream and spent days in bed enthusiastically evacuating. I do have a filter but don't think to swap it on to the other bottle in the moment and then spend 4 hours wondering if rumblings are coming.

Sometimes the harder sections are more motivating. I leave Prassunry at 630pm and aim to reach the Fentre d'Areppte at 930pm recognising that according to the map the gradient is similar to a BMX half pipe; steep then steeper, then steepest. The terrain equally becomes more rugged culminating in a full on vertical rock scramble lit my luminous flags and spray paint. However this all seems darkly exciting. After all as I keep telling myself when will I be here again? I could be anywhere else but what might I miss out on?

The man in front suggests it might not be quite as romantic as I think saying at one point "I'm afraid you've got my arse to look at for the next 2 1/2 hours. This actually ends up being true as the field really does settle down and there is no overtaking all the way to the top. A night runner bounces down in the other direction full of praise and encouragement. "Just 15 minutes to go. 20 max". The top is craggy and wild and feels like a significant moment. There is unexpectedly no water but a feisty path that slows everyone whose trainers have minimal grip but for me it feels fantastic to be going down with different muscles suddenly being called upon. I start to overtake people and move steadily on what I have been told is a section that "goes on a on".

It does. Gloriously so. For the first time there are tiny streams high up flowing enough to fill up bottles. There are wooden steps bolted in the cliff with ropes and chains to hold are to. There is an ominous sound to the left like a jet engine firing for mile after mile; presumably a river rampaging downwards just out of sight. Race officials move up the path with anxious faces checking my number the moving on as if someone is in trouble behind me. Eventually after over 4 miles the path levels with information posters every few under metres about what looks like charity work around the world offering a hint that we are almost back to civilisation. I feel strong and keep moving at a good pace looking forward to what I mistakenly thought would be the Lifebase. Instead I enter a small marquee around 11.15pm in Trient and joyfully eat Raclette with potatoes, onions and gherkins. I make a mental note that after nearly 5 hours between checkpoints that nutrition and hydration are going to be crucial in this race. With that in mind I create a little pouch in my pack for Swiss chocolate, fill it up and head off under the stars and into day 2.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 7 Trient to Finhaut (72km)

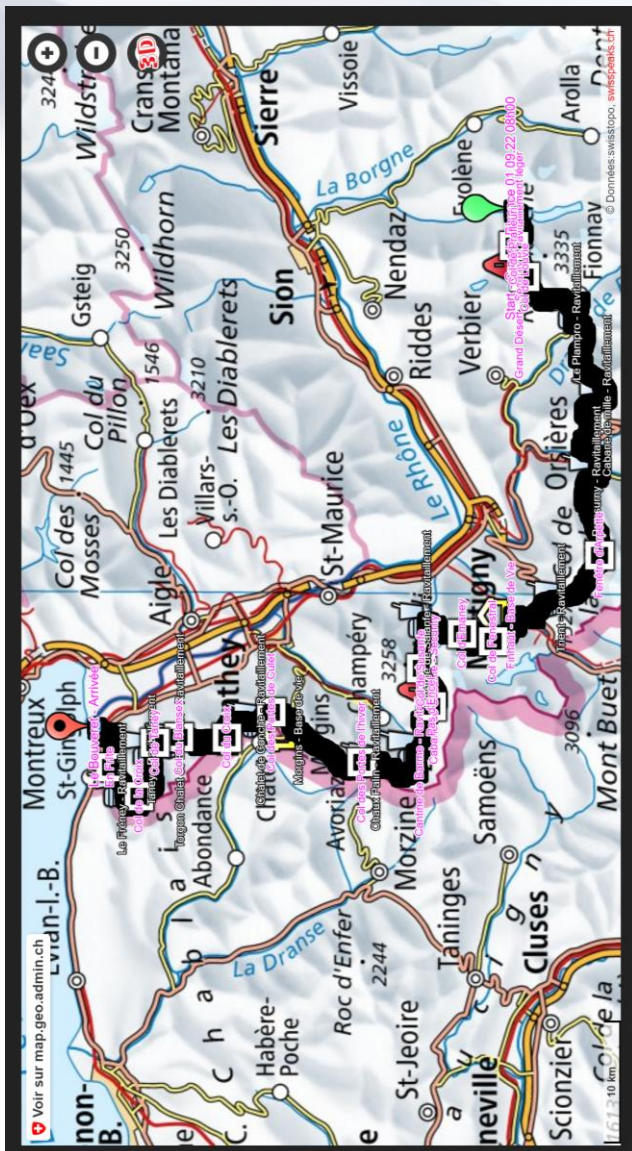
An interlude.

Not much to see here surely? A bump then a dip to life base 1. Easy easy easy!

Instead we get a intriguing incredibly knotty forest path in the pitch black leading to a view across to Finhaut checkpoint probably a mile away. So far so good... Then at a veteran from previous years who has done the full 360km race (yes I'm doing the half distance!) casually says "not far now only down to the canyon then up again... less than an hour maybe?". I suddenly think what kind of mile takes an hour?

It turns out a mile with a near vertical fractured staircase up a cliff with steps that match no kind of normal cadence. Dirt and roots are set to sabotage every step and go up and up so far I'm glad it's dark. If you look closely at the profile this is the steepest part of the route. A definite stairway to hell. My sticks creek, my calves burn and I can feel blisters forming.

The veteran then drops the bombshell... "remember the Fentre d'Areppte? You haven't seen nothing yet! The next section is a brutal climb where it is hard to see the path followed by the most technical descent ever followed by a similar size climb". It is too much to take in... I should be excited but I'm a little intimidated. One slow step at a time!



SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 8 Finhaut to the Auberge Salanfe (87km)

So on to the section I've been warned about. I definitely get a sick thrill thinking about what is to come. Knowing it might be too much takes the pressure off in a funny kind of way.

A zig zag shrouded in foliage starts steep and stays steep. There is a moment about 30 minutes in where the stars above appear to be moving erratically in the night sky. They dart left then right way above with alarming synchrony. Realising they are runners perhaps a mile ahead takes my breath away. I don't think I have seen something appear so far above. It looks gloriously endless. I take a moment, take a gel and vomit. Strangely I feel better for it, especially compared to those crouched or asleep at the side of the path. It stays a hard trek but doesn't get harder.

The descent is my favourite run ever. Luminous boulders marked with flags and spray arrows take a ridiculous route across the moon. To me it is like coming off rockier parts of Scafell Pike and I feel at home. I take at least 15 positions quickly whilst others inch along; a slip here could be fatal admittedly... but my trainers feel grippy and bouncy. I am so pleased it is not wet. It is great fun.

The last 3 hours have been so intense it has felt like a full day out in the hills but the second climb is almost as exciting: A diagonal scar cutting up to the col d'Emaney that looks epic. I meet an apologetic man wedged into the path half way up. In perfunctory English he simply say "sleep" and pointing at his phone, "alarm to wake 15 minutes". I check he is OK and strafe around him. The col surprisingly comes up in under an hour where two men stand on top staring and frozen. I assume they are taking in the panorama but instead they indicate towards a small detail just in front of them. Two baby ibex sit looking out at the same view pretending to command the landscape and look completely unbothered by us. We are passing through their world. Far below the dam at the edge of Lac Salanfe leads to the next checkpoint beckoning us on. This leg will be hard to beat but next leg will have a really good go at doing just that.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 9 Auberge Salanfe to Barm (102km)

The steps come slowly now. The morning is ageing and warming. A path rises from Lac Salanfe but a route to the next valley never emerges. The path dissolves into shattered, at times vertical rock linked with chains and ropes than swirl upwards. It is thrilling and nerve racking. A runner skips by and then I realise it is actually a race photographer looking for the most outrageously dramatic shots. The Col de Susanfe eventually arrives and is completely barren, almost volcanic in appearance but serves as a relief to the end of a truly technical section. No one could have run up to here.



Up to the Col de Susanfe (taken from the Swiss Peaks Website)



A gentler runnable descent to the Cabine Susanfe is massively frustrating. My legs are trashed and no end of talking to them makes a difference. I once called my left leg "do do" and my right leg "ron ron" but even chanting each would make no difference at this point. When you are having a temporary sense of humour failure "do do ron ron, do do ron ron" wouldn't be funny. The only strange thing is that I am still overtaking people; it seems their legs are even more far gone than mine.

The map tells me the next section across the Pas d'Encl is very dangerous which is the last thing you want on numbed legs. It is fenced off on one side, consists of small ridges moving along with the path which feel highly polished and even has a Marshall sat near it to check you are safe. In total it is no more than 100 metres but it is all thriller no filler. A wonderful view to Champéry makes it even harder to concentrate. Again no-one overtakes during this section.

An unexpected (by me!) climb over to Barme brings past the first of the 100km runners. They are skipping along rapidly and it is an honour to see such athletes. At the checkpoint their food is laid out by a crew with every option ready to go quickly for a fast get away. I on the other hand sit gratefully and watch as a storm lifts both marquees into the air. 8 people hold onto the poles grimly attempting to keep everything in place as we try and work out if the race has been postponed which we were told it would be in the event of a bad weather. For the first time I feel cold and thoughts momentarily snake through my mind that this is too much and a more comfortable world is out there. In the indecision an English runner next to me simply turns to staff and says "I quit, how to I get back?". This has the impact of galvanising me and fully waterproofed, slightly shivery I squeak out into the wind and rain.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 10 and 11 Barme to Morgins (123 km)

Charlie from Belgium has a handlebar moustache and teaches me French swear words whilst pulverising my legs. The fact he's brave enough to touch me and my associated smell never mind massage me says a lot about him. I am at life base 2 in Morgins at 7pm (35 hours into the race) and being remade. I've new kit, a full meal and perhaps belatedly anti-chaffing cream. More importantly I sing "It's Friday again!" to Gemma back home via the free WiFi, get a complimentary massage and successfully visit the toilet. I'm happier, lighter, cleaner and my legs are mine once more. On leaving the checkpoint to run across a football field I thank one of the checkpoint staff so enthusiastically we

embrace like brothers. For the first time I feel this is possible. The only thing I neglect to have is any sleep which might make things interesting later on.

So back to the storm at Barme over 20km earlier. The rain had been so torrential and cold as to force me to wear waterproof trousers for the second time ever in a race. Thankfully within 10 minutes it passed and I felt so hot everything could come off again. Note to self: find a way to buy a breathable waterproof jacket to avoid becoming a boil in the bag I'm well insulated enough. From here the race became a bog standard trail run for several hours with hills rather than mountains, even sections of minor road and for the first time progress was relatively rapid. At times mud and damp rocks slowed things a little but the Kilometres ticked by quickly and the views whilst not as dramatic opened up a little.

A tremendous bacon and cheese toasted butty marked the start of what should have been a really quick section over past the col des portes d'Hiver and down a river for about 6km to Morgins. However my legs had no bounce left and lots of people passed by (mainly 100km runners but not exclusively) and I was left playing mental games: run for a minute walk for a minute but just keep moving forward. On even slightly fresher legs I could have made up lots of time here and normally these kind of prolonged descents are a strength of mine but for 45 minutes I looked like I was riding a horse that wasn't there. I just kept thinking back to my race mantras: 1) Be patient any progress is good! 2) Enjoy it! and crucially at this moment 3) It doesn't always get more painful; legs have a weird way of coming back to life. Thankfully I persevered and Charlie from Belgium was just around the corner waiting to resurrect my quadriceps in advance of the final third. The other main motivator of course was looking forward to what was to come and especially the first sighting of Lake Geneva indicating the start of the end which would surely appear overnight.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 12 and 13 Morgins to Chalet Blansex (141 km)

A winding road rose up from Morgins then became a track and then a road and then a track and it never got too hard. It just became a little fuzzy. The night was creeping in and the world was making less sense.

I'd last been to bed on Wednesday night and Saturday was closing in and my personal software was glitching. Small things were taking on slightly different shapes than they actually were and rocks were appearing to move ever so slightly for no reason. Headlamps of other runners came from



nowhere and cast shadows that didn't seem to match their sources. It was all mildly amusing but a sign of stranger things to come.

At conche a lady just cackled and said the next checkpoint is a long way away and up there, pointing at an apparent string of fairy lights (actually runners) stretching steeply up. The climb was almost without a path, as if scrub land had been ploughed by an enormous tractor leaving half trails all the way up. It was also much quicker than it looked and lead to several other peaks more like medium sized Lakeland fells than Swiss Peaks that were all over and done with in 10 or 15 minute blocks but still carried a feeling of danger. Lights from the valley to the right side heavily hinted at a civilisation leading onwards towards Lake Geneva both increasingly close yet still indistinct in the far distance.

Lightening lit up the sky to the left and rain jackets went on and as the route became both orienteering and disorientating: moving with no real pattern and creating a feeling of deja vu. I thought I was lost but I wasn't. Helping a French lady made me realise I did know where I was. The rain caused paths to slide and careering around a hill became more of a challenge for the right foot than the left as a result, with poles becoming essential to anchor everything down. The next checkpoint seemed refused to appear and in the meantime things got weird.

Very small families hid in bushes. Repeatedly they hid and sometimes stood in front of rocks appearing half camouflaged and demented. Stones smiled and laughed like craggy emojis underfoot. Eventually a giant Tyrannosaurus Rex arched over the road. It had to be a tree so need to worry. Then it leaned out further... those arms are branches so no sweat. Then it's mouth opened and widened as if to consume the runner in front. I moved forward and prepared to shout out a warning and suddenly I saw it really was a tree. I chuckled and realised I would have to be careful as I was no longer running in just the physical world. My brain was providing intriguing entertainment. Agiant purple head just below the Col du Blansex guided me to the next checkpoint and much needed coca cola. Rich had kindly driven out to meet me here but missed me by 10 minutes due to an erratic tracker. I'm not sure I would have recognised him. I talked to anyone to bring things back to reality.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 14 Chalet Blansex to Taney (147 km)

There was a suspiciously small and easy climb to the Col du Blansex and then a long, reasonable trail descent before we went back up a smiliar amount.

And that's all I've got. No elaborate descriptions, no fascinating conversations just blackness.

It's not that the memories have faded with time, it's that it was around 1am and I'd retreated inwards. To fight the hallucinations I'd employed my big motivators. Time thinking about family members and friends no longer here, one's that would love to be doing this but couldn't and about how each one inspires me. At other times I delved into a pick of mix of their best qualities: my mums drive, my dad's calmness under pressure, Anne's way of thinking a problem through until it's sorted, my brothers positivity, my wife's competitive fire, Jude and Olivia's energy and all the grandparents, aunties, uncles, cousins magical qualities. A few minutes with each in tow and I was further on and a little brighter. The answers are usually out there if you look hard enough. I had a team working with me.

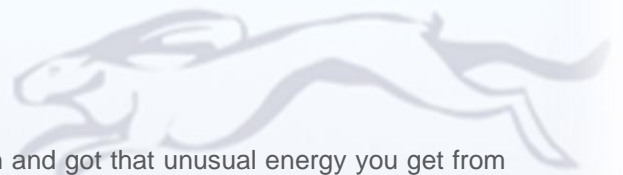
The dawn was still far off and the hallucinations still occasionally flickered but generally abated. A big climb was coming to the Pas de Lovenex and the Col de la Croix with a technical 800 metre descent to follow and a storm was brewing as sat feeling the chill in the air at Taney.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 15 Taney to Le Freney (157 km)

The penultimate leg. I'd been misinformed or misheard (who knows?) that the last leg provided a sting in the tail. It turns they or I was wrong and this was the sting, which was nice to find out when I did get to the final checkpoint but at the time made me question what else could be trickier than this. I found myself concentrating more in this 4 hour block than at any point in the race.

The rain was wrapped around us now and sounds dominated. The click of running poles scratching against rock, cow bells always somewhere else in another valley and the thrashing of relentless rain on plastic. As we climbed higher roads appeared at unexpected heights, perhaps 1700 metres up and the back night sky hinted that at some point the day would follow. Two cols passed in quick succession, the Pas de Lovenex and the Col de la Croix as bright yellow toads speckled the path presumably drawn by the moisture. By now we all ran in fits and starts: 5 minutes of feeling like our old selves then a few minutes of trudge. There was lots of mutual encouragement mixed with see you in a few minutes.

Coming of the Col de la Croix down to le Freney would have been a cracking descent, certainly on fresh legs, definitely in the day but even a few hours earlier before the rain. The path darted back and forth across patches of scree via muddy chutes that



curved left and right but were now the consistency of gravy. Every corner pulled legs in directions they didn't want to go, threatened to break poles and tested patience. After each bend there would be a tip toe across small slippery stones before another corner that felt like walking on ice. Everyone slowed to a new style of running, particularly at precipitous edges where we knew the mud might take us down towards the checkpoint with rapid finality. Feet forward and flat, small steps and for the most part and poles away, we stuck to the middle of the track and plodded on as confidently as possible. It felt like we had invented a new form of movement. Time slowed and the sun rose and with each step the mountain threats diminished and our bodies woke again with unusual freshness for our third day en route.

At Le Freney others ran on knowing the finish was relatively close whilst I sat for 15 minutes thinking there was one more challenge ahead and so ate undercooked rice and fish, drank coffee and talked to the congratulatory checkpoint crew. They told me I'd done it now and would be in La Bouvert for second breakfast in less than a couple of hours. Unsure if to fully believe them or I felt a little giddy and allowed myself a little chuckle before kissing my Skiddaw shaped wedding ring and setting off for one last time.

SWISSPEAKS 2022: Leg 16 Le Freney to La Bouvert (170 km)

A chattathon ensued. I chatted non-stop to the runner next to me. He was a top bloke but I would have talked to a scone. I was caffeinated and excited. Over that there hill (and for once it was a hill) was a buddy, a beer and a big burger for breakfast. Plus a big pontoon in the middle of glorious Lake Geneva with an red inflatable finishing arch.

I convinced myself there was another summit which I looked for for several miles but there wasn't just a small col called en frite. The path occasionally looked like smeared lipstick dripping slowly off the hill, the mud trying to suck me downwards, but for the most part it was soft and runnable and weirdly I ran. And ran and ran. As if the previous 8 hours had never happened. As if my quads had never been numb. It really doesn't always get worse... my legs simply came back to life. I passed other runners bent over inching along in discomfort and offered encouragement. Some took it. Others didn't. But onwards... The lake pulled us all towards it whilst the trail tried to savour what was left of the race by moving us slowly down in a lingering zig zag, but by this stage it was all good.

I hit town and got that unusual energy you get from a small but passionate crowd. Past the station, across the park, around the registration tent and along the pontoon whilst French Swiss locals and other runners clapped us on whilst sipping coffee and eating croissants. I felt like Usain Bolt but I looked like a death zombie one at least with a little bit of final spark left in him. A group of older ladies applauded enthusiastically as I said non-sensically I only did it for the beer and they laughed sympathetically. I ran out of land and through the finish.

It was all very understated. A timing chip was cut off and there was a rudimentary glance to see I was healthy. No well dones, no high fives. Then it hit me the finish was nothing. This had been a epic journey, a truly fantastic adventure and by crossing every peak, dropping down every valley and rolling alongside every river we had received all the rewards we would every need. The whole route was now etched into my psyche and one day soon I'd be compelled to write it all down and relive it and share it so then I could experience it all over again.



Beer and Satisfaction. Quickly followed by a burger and sleep. At around 10am.



23 before Tea

Adrian Thomas

The record for the 23 before Tea fell-running challenge here at Elterwater has been smashed – by the man who got close only a month ago.

Pete Faulkner knocked 70 minutes off his own best time, completing the 39 mile, 23 summits route, with some 16000 ft of climbing, in 11 hours and 23 minutes. That's 55 minutes off the previous record set this summer by Richard Bolton.



The circuit, taking in 23 Wainwright peaks in a continuous loop from Elterwater, was originally conceived by us here at Elterwater Hostel as a shorter, possibly more achievable, homage to Paul Tierney's record-breaking Wainwright round in 2019. We used the map of Paul's Wainwrights' route (devised by Steve Birkinshaw, the previous record holder), placing the hostel at the centre, to find a circular route which could be done in a day, and be back in time for tea.

Pete made his first attempt last month after coming back from injury which had put him out of action for most of the summer. It was his first long run after the injury. And he did say at the time that now he knew what was expected, he'd be back for another go. But we were surprised he turned up again so soon, especially at the end of a week of very poor, wet weather here in the Lakes.

Pete, who lives in Cockermouth and is a member of Cumberland Fell Runners, says he has been working towards the 23 before Tea round for a year. "At first it was motivation to explore new areas of the Lake District and tick off some different Wainwrights, but as my recces progressed I felt I could challenge for the record, and possibly even break the 12-hour

benchmark that was the original intention of the challenge.

"After a summer off running due to a lower leg injury sustained during my latest solo Bob Graham attempt in June, I finally felt I was fit enough to attempt 23 before Tea in September. Perfect summer conditions meant the going was good, but sourcing and filtering water after such a dry spell cost me a lot of time and, ultimately, I missed the record by 15min.

"Running the route in its entirety highlighted some developments that could be made and some streamlining that could be done, and I was confident the record was achievable – if I could get another round in before winter."



After a week of biblical rain, Saturday October 8 dried a little but the weather was still changeable, and ground conditions were exceptionally slippery under foot. "But I wanted to take the chance before the weather really turned. So I set out in the dark just after 6am armed with a more streamlined route (including swapping out the Wainwrights of Black Crag and Lingmoor for Grey Friar and High Raise, reducing the route by 2.4miles and 800ft of ascent/descent).

"I kept a careful eye on my splits throughout, taking extra caution when the ground conditions were particularly treacherous but pushing where they allowed, and ultimately came in in 11hrs 23minutes: 55minutes under the previous record."

Pete said that the best part of the day was enjoying tea and flapjack at the Elterwater Hostel afterwards "while talking to some lovely ladies about our days in the hills!"



He added: “ I’d like to thank you for conceiving and endorsing such a wonderful challenge – it’s a fantastic motivation to explore one of the nicest areas of the Lake District, all supported by the wonderful hospitality of the Elterwater Hostel. It’s things like this that really help develop and strengthen the outdoor community, and it a truly wonderful thing to be a part of.

“I’m really pleased to have got it in before winter, although it was very slippery out there after all the rain this week, so I reckon I might have to revisit it again next summer.”

The first to complete the round was Little Dave Cummins, in a time of 14 hours and 50 minutes, before Paul Wilson (chairman of the Bob Graham Club) took a whopping 2 hours and 9 minutes off the time last year.

Strava link: [petef 23Before Tea 08/10/22](https://www.strava.com/activities/23before-tea-08-10-22)

You can read the history of the challenge here:

<https://www.elterwaterhostel.co.uk/23before-tea-a-new-challenge-for-runners-in-the-lakes/>

If you want to have a go, please contact us here at the hostel. You can stay here the night before and

after. And if you want to split the route into two or three more manageable days, we think that’s a pretty good effort too!



	Previous Record (Richard Bolton)	PeteF 14/09/22	Difference		PeteF 08/10/22	Diff (record)	Diff (14/09/22)
Black Crag	0:38	0:31	-00:07				
Holme Fell	1:21	1:15	-00:06		0:47	-00:33	-00:28
Wetherlam	2:30	2:18	-00:12		1:51	-00:39	-00:27
Swirl How	2:52	2:42	-00:10		2:16	-00:36	-00:26
				Grey Friar	2:28		
Great Carrs	2:56	2:47	-00:09		2:41	-00:15	-00:06
Cold Pike	3:42	3:35	-00:07		3:30	-00:12	-00:05
Pike O'Blisco	4:04	3:56	-00:08		3:52	-00:12	-00:04
Lingmoor	4:56	4:52	-00:04				
Loft Crag	6:19	6:26	+00:07		5:17	-01:02	-00:51
Pike O'Stickle	6:24	6:33	+00:09		5:24	-01:00	-00:51
Harrison Stickle	6:40	6:50	+00:10		5:42	-00:58	-01:08
Pavey Ark	6:51	7:04	+00:13		5:58	-00:53	-01:06
Thunacar Knott	6:58	7:09	+00:11		6:04	-00:54	-01:05
				High Raise	6:20		
Sergeant Man	7:14	7:26	+00:12		6:27	-00:47	-00:59
Blea Rigg	7:34	7:35	+00:01		6:52	-00:42	-00:43
Silver How	8:07	8:23	+00:16		7:28	-00:39	-00:55
Seat Sandal	9:31	9:48	+00:17		8:45	-00:46	-00:57
Fairfield	10:00	10:22	+00:22		9:16	-00:44	-01:06
Great Rigg	10:12	10:30	+00:18		9:27	-00:45	-01:03
Stone Arthur	10:25	10:41	+00:16		9:42	-00:43	-00:59
Heron Pike	10:56	11:15	+00:19		10:11	-00:45	-01:04
Nab Scar	11:05	11:24	+00:19		10:24	-00:41	-01:00
Loughrigg	11:58	12:11	+00:13		11:04	-00:54	-01:07
Elterwater Hostel	12:18	12:33	+00:15		11:23	-00:55	-01:10



The Northern Fells

Tim Cook

I originally wrote this article for a work blog during a health and wellbeing challenge in the summer, where I wrote about my round of the Northern Fells in a day. So I've stripped out a lot of the stuff that fellrunners will know (and probably pick me up on for errors 😊) and kept it focussed on the stuff I think you'll be more interested in!

I moved to West Cumbria 9 years ago, I'd done a bit of fell running before having lived adjacent to Ilkley Moor, including an OMM or three (my first was the ill-fated one in Borrowdale in 2008...). I didn't start properly tracking my progress through the Wainwright books until 3 or 4 years ago, when I also started logging how my two boys were getting on too. As of today I've recorded 166 and most of the ones 'yet to do' are in the Southern, Central and Eastern books. The total hides some big variances and if you follow me on Strava you'll see that like many CFR members I've been to our local favourites like Blake, Gavel, Burnbank from pretty much every conceivable angle and in every weather condition.

I knew I'd reached the point that I knew Blake better than the back of my hand when I abandoned a summer wild camping trip in 2021 on the summit with Felix (10 at the time), at around 11.30pm when the wind had got up and the cloud had come in. I navigated him off the summit and back to the car in the dark, with visibility at about 2 metres, without once having to refer to a map. A sharp contrast to getting lost in the clag on Burnbank with Toby Woodhead during the Blakes Heaven race in 2018...

I joined CFR when Rebecca Crellin who I work with, signed me up. Within the club there is an elite group of 'Book Club' members. To join the CFR book club you need to complete all the peaks in a single book, in a single continuous run/activity. Only one CFR club member (Darren Parker) has completed all seven books in this way.

I had previously completed all 36 of the Far Eastern Fells (FEF) in 2021 in one go with my good friend Andy whom I've climbed and run mountain marathons with since 2005. Because there are so many of the FEF, so well spread out, we did it 'mountain marathon style', carrying our tents, sleeping stuff and food, started on a Friday evening and finishing on Sunday afternoon. The overnight stops, camping wild on the fells, meant my circuit of

the FEF didn't count for membership of the CFR Book Club - damn!

Andy and I had been eyeing up the Northern Fells as our next 'book' for a while, and being more compact than most other books, they definitely leant themselves to doing in one day, with no plans to stop other than to fill up with water on route. I normally like to plan such outings well in advance, I have a deep aversion to being physically 'unprepared'! We were both in the Pyrenees in late May with another friend, off the back of climbing the highest peak (Aneto, 3,404m) Andy talked me into attempting the Northern Fells with just three weeks notice... gulp!

So, I definitely didn't have time to physically prepare, albeit I was feeling generally good, having been training for the Lakes Traverse ultra in April which I had to withdraw my entry for after finally contracting COVID a week or so before. I had done all of the Northern Fells before, so I was able to do some detailed route planning using some of the brilliant tools available these days without time to go and do specific recces.

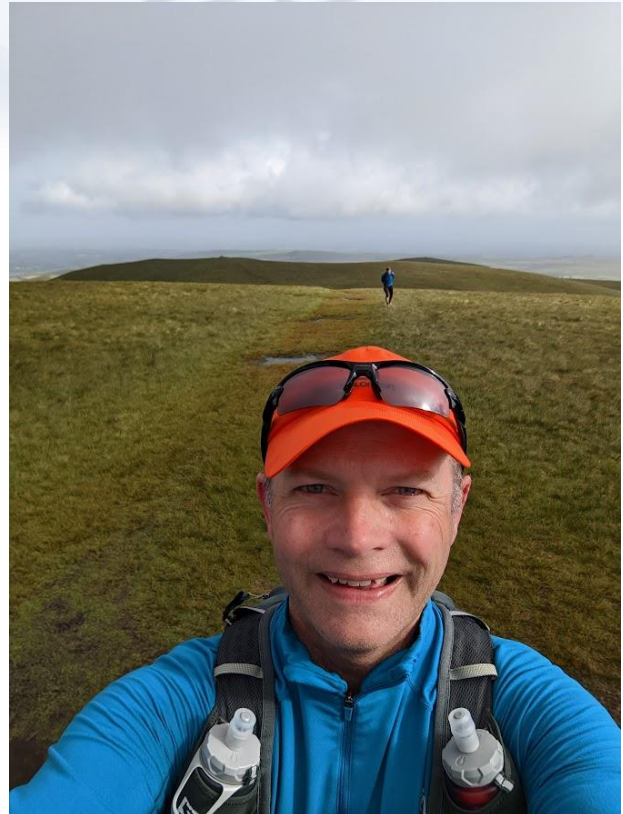
The issue I find with plotting a good single route for many of the books, isn't so much the large fells that tend to be grouped with other subsidiaries, as more the small outlying ones that require 'out and back' routes and lose lots of height. In the Northern Fells this includes Binsey, Souther, Dodd and Latrigg. In the end I picked a route that started at Binsey and finished at Latrigg. Little did I know that I'd chosen the one used by other CFR members before, just in reverse. Using previous runs as a benchmark I estimated a twelve hour total time, from leaving the first car at the start (Binsey), to getting back to the car at the end (Latrigg). This was just a guide, to help us monitor our progress and hopefully mean we could meet up with Harry Yarrow later in the day.

We had an early start up Binsey, setting off at 0602hrs on the morning of Saturday 18 June. Whilst my picture makes it *look* like an amazing day, and most of England was basking in a heat wave, all day it was mostly overcast, often blowing a strong westerly and well below 10C on the tops. That at least meant we weren't going to be needing to drink huge amounts of water!



Andy on the summit of Binsey at 0617hrs. We'd left our bags in the car for the first summit, to collect on the way back down, hence not carrying anything!

All morning we were well ahead of our estimated time, as our route took us over the mainly grassy, easier running of the northern half of the book, and we were fresh. This next photo shows the terrain quite well. You can also see my two 500ml soft water bottles, that's all I carried for water all day - the bottle on the right has an in-built filter, which takes out all the nasties and means you can fill up at any stream with total confidence. I would always use the filter to decant into the other bottle first and then refill the filter bottle. I do consider myself a big drinker (when it comes to running or cycling...) and this day was typical in that I probably drank over 5 litres but was never carrying more than 1litre at any time.



The grassy slopes of Great Sca Fell (summit no. 6)

As the day wore on and our bodies started to feel the effects of the cumulative miles, and the climbing ramped up and terrain got rockier, we started to edge back to more like our original estimate. I have a general weakness in my left hip, helped a lot by strength and conditioning work, but I never do as much of that as I should. So by about half way round I was starting to use my running poles quite regularly, these do a good job of alleviating pressure on my hips on the ascents and knees on the descents. I was starting to see why some people prefer doing this route the other way round...

About 3/4 of the way round we met up with Harry Yarrow on the peculiarly named Bakestall, as planned. It was great to have some company for the final push, and he did an amazing job of steering us on the best lines (our weary brains weren't capable of this any more) and generally cheering us along. He also got some excellent pictures, like this one of me on Longside Edge!



Heading towards Ullock Pike (summit no.19) on Longside Edge, with just 6 summits to go. Top right you can see Binsey (summit no.1!).



We finally reached the summit of Latrigg at 1934hrs. It was a huge relief not to have to go up or down any more... I was clearly far more relieved than Andy!

Our total time from car to car was 13 hours and 43 mins, we covered 39 miles, 4,200m of ascent and 24 summits. This time my application for Book Club membership was accepted, I even got a certificate!

I know there are few people in the club thinking about completing a book, and I'd thoroughly recommend it, particularly the Northern Fells. I expected more club members to have done books so was surprised when I saw the list of successful completions was relatively modest (but nonetheless very impressive!). For me, it's something significant but feels more achievable than a Bob Graham Round. I also have even greater admiration of the achievements of those who've done all 214 in one go, it really is quite something.

Andy and I are currently considering which book to complete next, and I now know that Darren keeps a great set of maps and guides about the optimum routes to help with planning - the Central or North Western books are vying for our attention... watch this space next summer!



Becoming No.23 – Running the Lakes, Meres and Waters

Matt Le Voi

'F**K!* I shouted at the top of my voice. I think all of West Cumbria probably would have heard me as I bent double and put my hands on my knees. 'I didn't touch Wastwater!'. 'On this bloody run all I have to do is one bloody thing! Arrrrrrghhhh'. Before I knew it I was retracing my steps back down the hill to dip my fingers in the water...

Here's my 105 mile tale of completing the Lakes, Meres and Waters...



With the family at Derwent Water - 2 to go.



At Loweswater, excited and probably overwhelmed.

On Saturday 6th August at 4:55am I was stood aside Loweswater. The moment had finally come for me to attempt the longest and hardest run (and challenge) of my life. The minutes ticked on by slowly, almost taunting me, encouraging me to just walk away before I got going. 5am, time to go.

My support for this first leg was Bill Williamson and Adam Anderson. We ran and chatted our way along the easy trails that follow the shore of Crummock Water and onto Buttermere. From Buttermere the first main climb presents itself - Red Pike! At this point in time I didn't feel great. Despite a 2 week taper, I had knee niggles presenting themselves - 'how am I meant to run 105 miles if I hurt now!?!'. I've climbed Red Pike enough times to know that if you just keep it steady the summit soon comes. I think so many get daunted by the steepness and try and push their way through it. We left the misty summit plateau and made our way day to the shores of Ennerdale Water. Adam broke off here, and myself and Bill then took the route to run the 6km up the valley to exit via Black Sail Pass, as opposed to the route over near Haycock. I had done a recce of this route, and a nice run out, I was glad I took the easier trails on this attempt.

On our way up Black Sail I started to pull away from Bill. He's a very experienced runner and has supported countless rounds, and so I thought he was playing a blinder of a placebo move here by letting me pull away. I arrived at the top of Black Sail, sat by a cairn and just took it all in. I had about 3-4 minutes of silence, time I savoured as stopping to sit on my Bob Graham Round was something I really didn't have the privilege to do. Bill arrived with laboured walk, and it actually transpired he had severe foot cramps. As we descended towards Wasdale it was clear he was in agony, especially when it spread to his calf. As we neared the valley bottom I pulled ahead to get set at the checkpoint, and gladly about 10 minutes after Bill arrived.



Climbing up Red Pike. Saying bye to Adam at Ennerdale Water.

Kev, my support driver for the first third of the challenge was probably surprised to hear me feeling so negative about how I felt to this point. You wouldn't expect someone to get to the checkpoint saying they felt rubbish at this point, but he got me going and off I went onto Leg 2 with my new support runner, Sarah Wild. We trotted out of the National Trust car park and things were starting to feel a bit better with the legs. We made good progress up the easy slopes towards Burnmoor Tarn, and just as Wastwater was about to disappear out of sight it dawned on me - I never touched the water! Quite simply I'd been distracted, and it wasn't long into my run back down the hill that my anger of wasting time and energy was overcome by the fact that I was glad I had actually realised there and then. Can you imagine if I was another 10 miles in and I realised!? It's fair to say, any water at another checkpoint was touched before going to the road support!



Chewing up miles with Sarah

We got through Eskdale and up to Devoke Water in good time, and then just stuck to the road down to Seathwaite. Again, I'd recce'd Joss' line across the side of Green Crag, but I opted for the slightly longer, but easier under foot option. We got into Seathwaite and it was time for my first Pot Noodle - a food that worked wonders for me on my BG. By this point I was also starting to feel much better in myself. The niggles had gone and the cloud in my mind had dissipated. With this being the longest run I'll have attempted, I think I was just so overwhelmed by the distance and time I couldn't start to relax until I had got some of the opening legs done.

I was now heading for Coniston, a leg that is not only super fun thanks to some nice lines to run, but also suits my strength - climbing mountains! I was joined on this leg by Matt Handley, Tori Miller and later on Jonny Wren. These guys were full of banter, and had bags and bags of awesome treats for me to chow down on. The timing of their inclusion on the challenge could not have worked better. We made light work of the Walna Scar Road and then traversed over to Goats Water. There were a few options for routes to Low Water here, and after a recent recce Matt had proposed we just go up and over the Old Man of Coniston. I was game for anything, especially after my route that traverses wasn't absolutely bomb proof. We tackled the steep slopes and before long we were dropping to Low Water weaving through all the hikers. The line from Low Water to Levers Water is a brilliant grassy terrace, almost designed for this route. Levers Water was dipped and we dropped down to Coniston.



Coniston Funtimes with Matt, Jonny and Tori

It would now have been about 5pm ish and it was time to swap my support crew once more. Kev was swapping with Sara on road, and then I had Sharon Bianchi, Charlotte & Scott Logie joining me for the run to Ambleside. We followed my gpx up random trails and roads to Esthwaite Water for starters, and then it was a chunk of road miles to head into Elterwater. Shortly after, we were dipping in Grasmere and then Rydal Water. The quick

succession of waters really helped make me feel like I was getting somewhere, and I was, I think I was now over half way! Good friend James Gibson joined us at Rydal and we all jogged into Ambleside.



My Super support for Leg 4. Toe Tappin'. Bending over to touch Grasmere



Windermere - just over half way

The Ambleside checkpoint was perfect. Friends had come to support (and bring talc!) and I was feeling



my most positive of the run. I think I'd started to believe I could do this, and was feeling a bit less daunted. But now, we had the night leg, a time where I think the wheels can fall off for so many runners on events like this. When I ran my Bob Graham Round I had to dedicate some of the success to my support runner Matt Stapley. Well, here he was again, my secret weapon, being deployed when I most needed someone of his skill and ability. And so, myself, Matt and James set off up and out of Ambleside to Troutbeck and then up and over into Kentmere.



By now it was dark and it was time to get the head down for what was for me the crux of the route - Skeggles Water to Brothers Water. Skeggles Water feels like a long way out, but I kept telling myself it's all mileage! I had always been torn as to whether to do Kentmere Reservoir as it isn't in the 26 required. My hand was sort of forced when I asked Open Tracking (who provided the tracker) if they can remove the checkpoint from the map if I opt not to.

They said no, and so I thought it'd be best to go! The running to the Reservoir is easy, and Matt and James kept me fed and hydrated as we went - a job all my support were so very good at throughout despite my lack of desire to eat much apart from ready salted crisps. We got up and over Nan Bield, dipped Small Water and dropped to Haweswater. I had 15 minutes in a sleeping bag here to help straighten my head out, and despite not sleeping it

really worked. James tagged out here, and myself and Matt ventured on and up into the night. I had two big climbs remaining, the one up and over High Street, and then the one over Sticks Pass...this was actually starting to look like this could happen.

The hours to Brothers Water passed through, with us tagging Blea Water and Hayeswater as we passed. We didn't dwell long at this checkpoint, and soon enough we were back on the road heading for Glenridding. We were just a few minutes up the road where my optimism of getting this done was hit with a sledgehammer - something had gone in my leg! I suspected my ITB, but that was a guess. It made running painful, and walking really painful. My shuffle became a hobble, but I was still moving forward. We dipped Ullswater and climbed up towards Sticks Pass. My leg felt OK when ascending, but the flat was agony - of which there was about a marathon left to go. I had a quick google as to how you would tape an ITB injury and pictures came up of these straps that go under the knee. All I had was my buff, so I put it on my leg and pulled it up. 'No way!' I said to Matt, 'It's worked!!'. The difference was amazing and I actually get back into my shuffle run rather than the laboured tin man walk I'd had to adopt.



The top of Sticks Pass, with most of the climbing behind me and probably just over 24 hours on the go.

The top of Sticks Pass was a great moment. I'd done all the hard climbs, I just had to get the miles done, but I could probably walk that. I hobbled on down to Thirlmere where the legendary Matt could tap out (and take a bow for getting me through). Scott & Charlotte were back in the support seat, and this time with Bacon sandwiches too! My nutrition to this point had been pretty poor, I just hadn't fancied much of the food I'd brought along, and so the bacon sandwich was the perfect remedy.



Sara: What do you want to eat?/ Me: Nothing, I'm not hungry/ Charlotte: I've got you that Bacon Sandwich here/ Me: Yep!

It was onto Thirlmere, and then easy road / pavement miles to Derwent Water. As I dropped to Derwent Water I saw my family for the first time which was really uplifting, plus there was a crew of friends there to clap me in. Becca of North Lakes Sports Therapy was also on hand to help make some sense of my leg issue, and whatever she did to that injury certainly helped! I was now feeling quite jubilant, although to be honest I also still wasn't allowing myself the opportunity to believe it was going to happen. Naomi took over the support car role, and Sara who had done the night shift was now running with us all which was lovely.



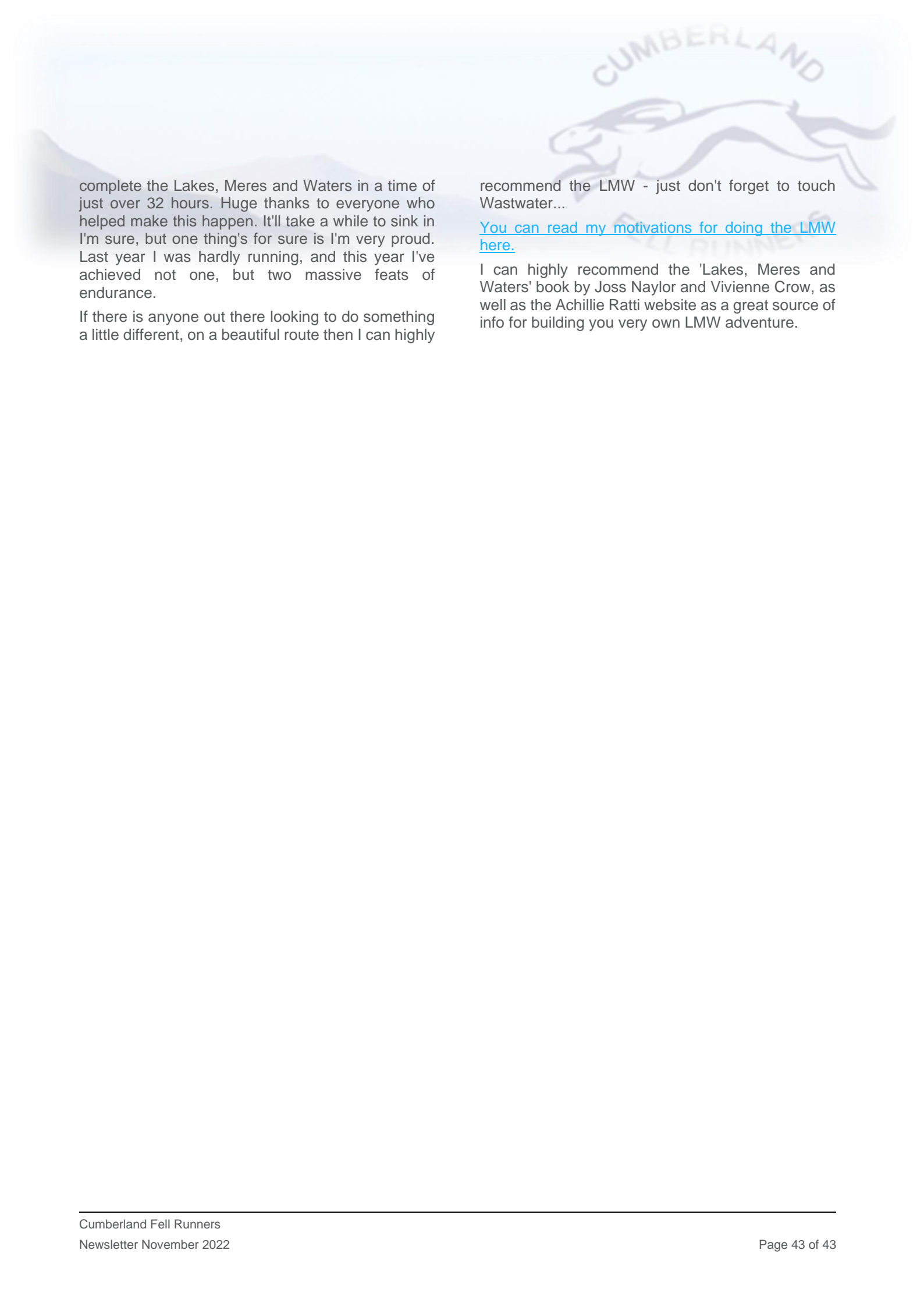
Through the fields we went towards Dodd Wood, and then it was a bit of car dodging on the A591 before we could get off at Mirehouse. We dipped Bassenthwaite by the church - one to go! I hadn't really paid much attention to this section and was going to rely on the gpx. Fellow Cumberland Fell Runners member Les had come out to say hi and on his bike he led us through Bassenthwaite and then towards Overwater. The miles felt long, and it was only when I saw my friends and family at the end of the road near the entrance to the water that I finally smiled. I'd done it! Unbelievably!



The end of my 105 mile journey.

It's funny how at the end of these things you lose concept of the time taken. It all just becomes about miles or kilometres and keeping one foot moving in front of the other. This was the hardest thing I've ever set myself up for, and it was odd that I just wasn't allowing myself to believe I was actually going to complete until right at the end. Maybe it was another bout of imposter syndrome like I had after my BG, maybe I couldn't quite believe that I could complete 105 miles on a route only 22 other people had pitted themselves against before.

Well, with the epic support of my friends and family, I've managed to become the 23rd person to



complete the Lakes, Meres and Waters in a time of just over 32 hours. Huge thanks to everyone who helped make this happen. It'll take a while to sink in I'm sure, but one thing's for sure is I'm very proud. Last year I was hardly running, and this year I've achieved not one, but two massive feats of endurance.

If there is anyone out there looking to do something a little different, on a beautiful route then I can highly

recommend the LMW - just don't forget to touch Wastwater...

[You can read my motivations for doing the LMW here.](#)

I can highly recommend the 'Lakes, Meres and Waters' book by Joss Naylor and Vivienne Crow, as well as the Achillie Ratti website as a great source of info for building you very own LMW adventure.

