
Cumberland Fell Runners

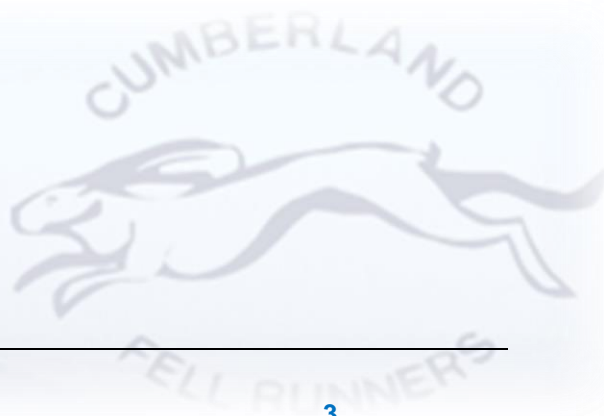
Newsletter

November 2023



Our club person of the year, Adam, Sale Fell 2023.

Photo Stephen Wilson <https://www.granddayoutphotography.co.uk>



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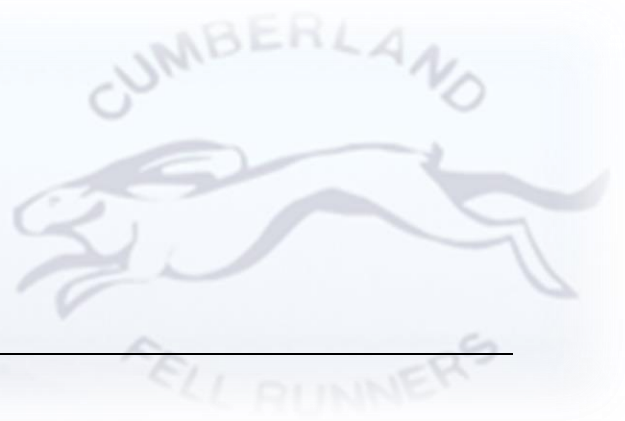
Editor's note

Welcome to the November 2023 newsletter and many thanks to all that have contributed!

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



Statistician

Darren
Parker



Secretary

Charlotte
Barker



**Equipment
Officer**

Jane
Mottram



**Membership
Secretary**

Adam
Cresswell



**Race
Organiser
Coordinator**

Andrew
Bradley



Team Captains

Sam
Holding,
[Ladies
Vacancy]



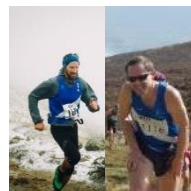
**Race selection
Committee**

TBC



**Lead Junior
Coach**

Tony
Jewell



**Website
Administrators**

Darren
Parker,
Adam
Cresswell



**Lead Senior
Coach**

Barry
Johnston



**Newsletter
Editor**

Jack Gilbert



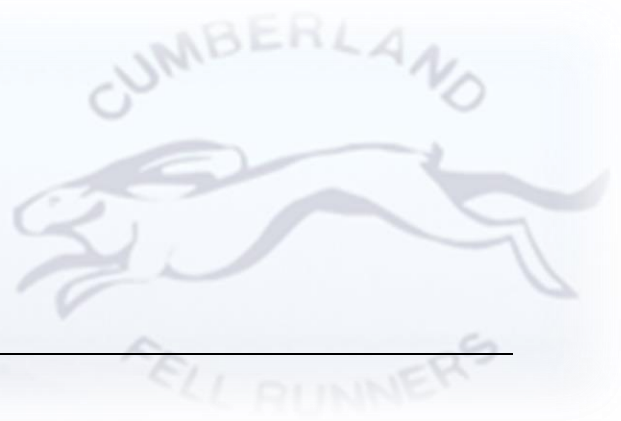
Treasurer

Ann
Cummings



**Welfare
Officers**

Sian
Spencer,
Isabel
Mancebo



Club matters

Stop Press - London Marathon!

We found out today that we've been given one place at next year's London Marathon on 21 April 2024. Please contact Charlotte charleakam@gmail.com if interested and would like to be added to our ballot. You'll need to say if you've already applied and been rejected, as this is part of the scoring system. Please get in touch before 2nd January 2024.

New members

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

Mark Blackwell	Oisin O'Mahony	Daniel Austin
Alessandro Lallo	Leeann Barber	Stuart Walker
Richard Thompson	Ray Charig	Mark Cowperthwaite
Chloe Moore	Jessica Spears	Karen Cowperthwaite

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 (and social things!)

The date of the next members' meeting will be communicated by SiEntries and posted on Facebook as well.

- AGM Saturday 1300 9th December 2023 at the Shepherds Arms, Ennerdale Bridge (following the Crag Fell Race)
- Pagan's Breakfast 0700 23rd December 2023: 1 x lap of the Coledale Horseshoe, from Braithwaite school

Members' meeting 26th September 2023

Paul Jennings, Charlotte Barker, Jack Gilbert, Sam Holding, Dan Worsell, Ann Cummings, Jennie Chatterley, Juliet Fulwood, Adam Creswell, James McLaughlin and Sam McLaughlin (11)

Apologies received from: Sophie Likeman, Sian Spencer and Isabel Mancebo.

Hodgsons & British relays

Sam H explained that everything was nearly sorted. Due to a last minute not able to attend there will be 1 reserve for the Hodgsons and 1 between 2 teams for the British relays.

Callum and Les are driving. The club is very grateful and would like to thank them for their volunteering to do this. Discussions held about whether there is to be a monetary gift for this such as a voucher.

Requesting subs for the entry fees as Hodgsons is approximately £22 per runner. Agreed that would be £12 per runner from the club funds to reduce the costs.

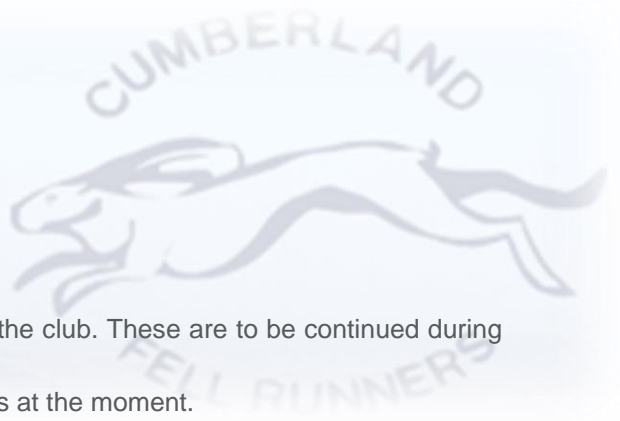
Meeting at Cockermouth school for 7.30am.

There is also a request for a sub for the British as the costs are £30 per runner.

Sam H to discuss this with Ann to finalise the funds to be provided by the club.

Request to be made as the tent held is bigger than the guidance provided.

Discussions held after being raised by Jennie C as to whether there is a need for the women's team to have a more competitive focus? Is this to be a team captain (Sophie) or club decision. It is agreed that Sophie is to make this decision. Juliet is added to the women's team list during the discussions.



Training sessions

Navigation sessions than been really helpful and a useful extra for the club. These are to be continued during the spring/summer.

Barry is arranging more sessions, but these are in discussion stages at the moment.

Winter Championship races 2023/24

- Dunnerdale – 11th November 2023
- Sale fell – 25th November 2023
- Crag fell – 9th December 2023
- Nine Standard Rigg – 1st January 2024
- King of the castle – 7th January 2024
- Blake fell – 20th January 2024
- Whinlatter parkrun -16th December 2023 to 10th February 2023 (amended following meeting)
- BB Kong – 17th February 2024

Best four to count. Discussions held as Charlotte provided a list with 3 further races to allow for a selection to take place. Thank you to Charlotte for organising this.

Presentation evening

Charlotte provides a summary that the arrangements are being made with Workington golf club and details will be coming out. Sam H explains that he has some thoughts but will provide these to Paul Jennings.

2024 Membership

Opens 1.10.23 and does not automatically renew.

Discussions held about separate membership to English Athletics as the club now has a small number of members holding EA membership.

Charlotte highlights from the FRA handbook that the English and British Championship races require FRA and/or EA membership.

AGM

Booked at the Shepherds arms for 1pm on 9th December (after Crag fell)

Committee roles:

Welfare officer

Chairman/chairwoman

Publicity officer/social media

Women's team captain (amended following meeting)

Require an audit to be carried out of the accounts.

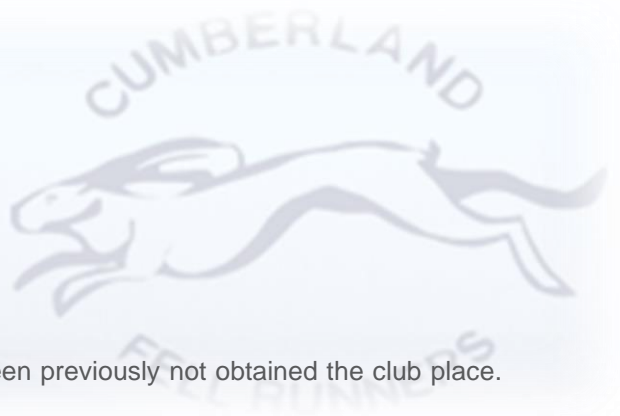
Funding available to members

Discussions were held that a clearer agreement/policy is required for this.

Sam H raised as to whether able to meet the fees for entry or travel costs?

Pay for a mini bus? Discussions about available drivers due to driving licences held by members due to ages.

Discussions were started by Charlotte about whether could assist with members racing abroad such as towards race entry fees. This could assist with the world masters as we always have a good number attend from the club. Could also assist with anybody hoping to race any of the UTMB world series events. Whilst these are not fell racing, they are big events that the members enter. Further discussions are to be held.



London marathon place

No longer guaranteed a place and now have a 50% chance.

It is discussed that need to take in to account people who have been previously not obtained the club place. Any individuals put forward must hold valid membership to the club.

Race age category prizes

A summary is provided about recent discussions and it is agreed that the club's approach is to leave the decisions for individual races to the race organiser of the race.

AOB

Members meetings

Discussions held as to whether alternating approach is held of Tuesday nights and Sunday mornings along with in person and via zoom. The matter is to be considered by the new chair following the AGM.

Next meeting

AGM Saturday 9th December 2023 at 1pm at the Shepherds Arms, Ennerdale Bridge.

Frog Graham round

James McLaughlin

August 15th 2023



Since I first read about the Frog in the pages of Fellrunner I have been intrigued and fascinated. As a lapsed triathlete and wannabee fell runner living in Oxfordshire I wondered if I was ever going to be up to the challenge because although I was running more than ever, I had let the swimming lapse and my navigation was far from good enough. To address the latter, I undertook a navigation for Runners course with Joe Faulkner and the team at Nav 4 which was great although sadly it was the weekend before lockdown #1 in March 2020 so the chance to properly practice soon disappeared.

As soon as things started to get back to normal Michelle and I decided it was the time for our much-wanted relocation to Cumbria, so our house went on the market and in January 2022 we were settling into our new home. Suddenly swims in the Lakes became a weekly occurrence and I started to get out in the fells more often than the infrequent trips up the M6 had allowed in the past. In some ways the confidence started to rise as I became fitter and got to know the fells better and I started to think maybe.... But at other times all it did was make me realise what I didn't know and how big a challenge it really was.

Joining Cumberland Fell Runners was a definite turning point as I started to run regularly with people who had done this and other similar challenges and realised they were "normal." I began openly talking about the Round on club runs or driving to races and everyone was very encouraging and supportive. I also realised though that I wanted to do it in as minimal a way as I thought possible at my level. My initial plan was to try and do it entirely solo and unsupported, but I quickly realised after a few recces than I would struggle without at least some support

at certain points to provide fluids, food and perhaps wetsuit changes. Luckily, I have an incredibly supportive wife Michelle who wanted to be involved and who agreed to help when I was ready.

In July I completed my 3rd Lakeland 100 in a best time of 28:50 which gave me a real boost to my confidence, and I started to seriously think when rather than if.

While walking the week prior Michelle asked me what I was waiting for and apart from a good weather day I didn't really have an answer so when the forecast for Wednesday 15th was dry with little wind and not too hot, I finally committed and started packing gear etc.

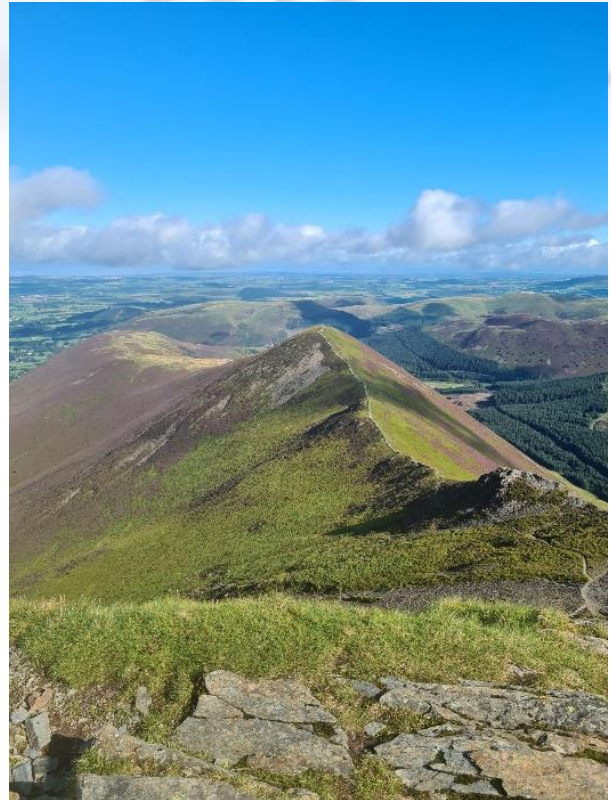


On Wednesday morning, after a disrupted sleep I ate my porridge before driving to Keswick. I had planned to start at 4.30 but stood at the door of the Moot Hall buzzing with pent up energy at 4.24 I set off towards Skiddaw in the dark. As I started the climb up from Latrigg the first light of what promised to be a stunning day appeared while behind me there was a thick mist over Derwent Water. I started praying that Bassenthwaite wouldn't be foggy as without support on the water I might struggle.



Skiddaw came and went without drama and before I knew it, I was meeting Michelle at Dodd carpark to put my wetsuit on then running via the Church (remembering to touch the wall!) and on to the Lake for Swim #1. There was mist on the water but if I lifted my head, I could see the vehicle lights on A66 to sight on until I was about halfway, at which point I could see the buoy near Beck Wythop and aimed for the exit. It was a beautiful swim in the early morning sunshine.

Michelle was waiting to top up water bottles and take my wetsuit home as I would be using a different suit for the other swims for biosecurity reasons. Soon I was off towards Barf. I have mixed memories of Barf having gone the craggy route with my dogs by mistake on one occasion resulting in much swearing and sweating. This time it was relatively straightforward, and I was soon off towards Lord's Seat and Whinlatter. The climb up Grisedale Pike felt like it went on forever, but the views were stunning, and I still hadn't seen another soul apart from Michelle since setting off.



I know the next fells reasonably well and enjoyed a jog across to Rannerdale trying to remember to keep eating and drinking (I must learn to concentrate while eating though as the few minor nav errors I made in the day were all while munching food.) Rannerdale was busy with walkers which felt a bit of a culture shock and I was glad to meet Michelle with our dog Danny and more food and wetsuit. Michelle hasn't crewed for me before and I think she was horrified to see how quickly I could eat pizza slices, chocolate and custard all washed down with loads of Coke.



The swim across Crummock Water was a refreshing change from the warmth of the day's running although looking back at the Strava trace I think my straight-line swimming needs some work. I half expected to see the fighter pilots overhead but the

closest I got was someone flying a drone from Low Ling Crag.

I had been dreading Mellbreak after recceing it a while back and struggling through the bracken. I decided to just get up whatever way I could and not get too stressed. I was also worrying about not tagging the South Summit properly so I tagged every point I could just in case.

I enjoyed the relative shade up along Scale Beck where I also washed out my wetsuit and kit to prevent any spread from Crummock into Buttermere. I was glad of the cold water to cool down and top up my water supplies as by now it was warmer than it had been for weeks, and this Irish bloke doesn't do brilliantly in the sun. Before too long (time is relative, isn't it?) I was heading down towards Horse Close woods and Buttermere. A lady who had just been swimming asked me what I was up to and when I explained my day so far and what lay ahead, she said "Oh, you still have a long way to go!" which made me hope she isn't a motivational speaker by profession.

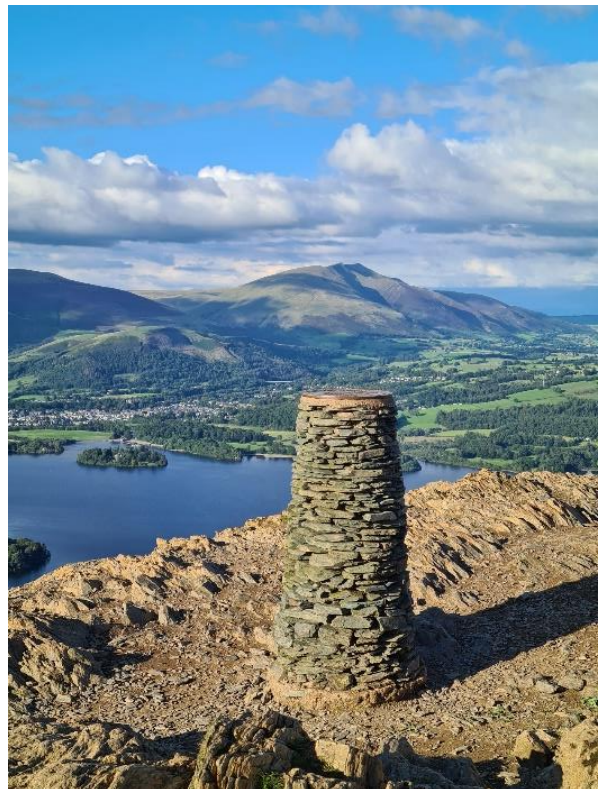


I absolutely loved the clear, cool swim across Buttermere and almost didn't want to get out, but Michelle was waiting with food and drink supplies. My calves cramped badly getting out of my wetsuit resulting in some blue air on the beach before more greedy gorging on pizza, custard and coke to fuel up for the next "run".

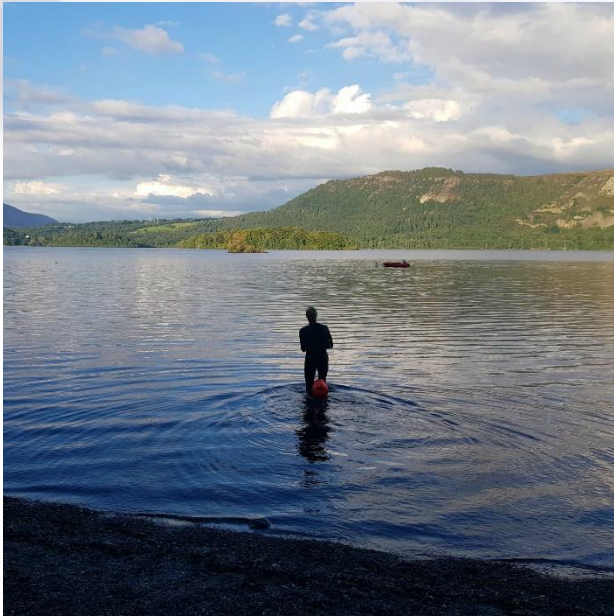
There were some boy racers driving along the road by the Lake and I was glad to get back up into the

fells and to see the familiar summits of Robinson, Dale Head and then High Spy.

I walked a lot, ran when I could and gradually started thinking maybe I was going to do this, if a bit slower than I might have hoped for. By now all I wanted was to be across Derwent Water before dark and soon I was looking down on the water and dreaming of finishing.



Michelle helped me get changed at Otterfield Bay and then she drove around to town to meet me as I headed for the intimidating gulls of Otterfield Island (I was very pleased they took off as I walked out of the water although I am sure they were dive bombing me after!) The lake was calm although choppy than the other 3 swims and before long I had passed the campers on St Herbert's Island



and the paddleboarders on Rampsholme Island and stepped ashore at Calf Close Bay. I wanted to waste no more time, so I rolled the wetsuit top down and began to run towards the Moot Hall. I am sure it must have been moved as it never seemed so far in the past.

I charged past the people enjoying a drink at the pubs and touched the wall at the Moot Hall 15hours and 59 minutes after I started.



I was exhausted but exhilarated and am so glad I had a go and got around. I would recommend it to anyone but couldn't have done it without Michelle's help. I was very careful to follow all biosecurity advice and hope my round was within the spirit of the FGR Club.

[Frog Graham Round](#) 🐸🐸🐸🏠🚶🏠🏠🏠 | [Run | Strava](#)



Frog_Graham_Round_gpx



Do and Fail, Don't Fail to Do

Dan Worsell

3rd of November 1455, sat on the bench in front of the Moot Hall talking to my dad about the upcoming challenge and receiving brilliant advice and a hug from Alison. Several weeks of planning had gone into this BGR attempt and now sat on the precipice I felt uncertain, determined, and moderately prepared in equal measure.

Little did I know sat on that bench that I was about to set off on a learning opportunity, not a successful round on what turned out to be a beautiful 24-hour weather window for early November. Fast forward to roughly 9pm that evening, sat on the side of Dolly waggon Pike collecting my thoughts after deciding to halt proceedings after a mere 23 miles of movement. The reflection began there, and has continued in the background ever since, popping into my thoughts every now and again. Until Jack asked me to maybe write a small article. I decided this would provide a perfect opportunity to air some laundry and put my thoughts (or excuses!) down in front of me and underline the learning.



I will simply download what sits in my brain and see how it sounds. In all the honesty, the first error on my part was that the round attempt was more of a cherry on top of the season than a focus. Divided loyalties

in a sense. A 34-race season (at time of time of the attempt) took precedence in my mind, I think. The idea was essentially to allow me to peak ready for a long-distance race. I am unsure on reflection, that I paid the attempt the full respect that it is due. With a lot of effort put into the planning (which all worked perfectly I might add), but the full implication of running alone at night was something that I just assumed I could still do from my previous experience. Having given it some thought, the running alone was not the factor that weighed heavy, it was the self-induced pressure of falling behind schedule and having nobody to bounce off. All the BGR's I assisted this year fell behind schedule at some point. In that situation, I can recall being the one who reassured the runner that for example, six minutes behind is easily recoverable, not a showstopper whatsoever. When I attempt again, I will have to come to terms with that.

This leads into the second major reason that I chose to curtail. Dithering. I would never profess to be anything more than an average navigator; navigation is a perishable skill and must be kept on top of to be competent. On a BGR this can be mitigated with recce, but the core requirement will remain. A key to navigating out in the hills in my opinion is clarity. In a normal situation I would identify where I was going, set a mental backstop, a point that I would hit where I would know I had gone beyond my point of aim, and move towards that point of aim. Moving between known points allowing me to course correct if the backstop is hit. What I found in the dark on the Dodd's, was that I began to dither and second guess. Pressure? Quite possibly. Tiredness? I will leave it out there for older heads possibly to tell me.

Starting too fast will have played a part. When I met Simon, who had graciously said he would come out and spend his evening accompanying me to the bottom of the Clough Head climb, told me I was on 20-hour pace when I hit Threlkeld. This was not in the plan. This appears to be a difficulty in moving from racing to a long-distance effort, learn to pace yourself Dan!

The final reason I have left until the end, because frankly I don't enjoy saying it. However, for full clarity I shall. Because there is a lesson (and the title) in it. During the two final days in the lead up to the attempt. I became marginally poorly, resting HR jumped up my 8-10 beats above average and felt generally out of sorts. Was this enough to cause me to fail, personally I doubt it, but it was certainly enough to live rent free in the back of my mind. It contributed to an overall feeling of uneasiness during



the attempt, and conspired with the other stated reasons, all mental.

However, I am forever telling my eldest daughter that is important to try things. There is no better teacher in life than your own mistakes. This is a fact that I wish I knew earlier on in life, but one that I live by now. For that reason, I did not let anything stop me being on the start line, what is the harm in setting off and finding out.

Leading me finally to the main piece of positive reflection to come out of my attempt, mountain craft. I have moved in the hills all my life, then coming across traditional climbing, which led me to fell running. Both sports require assured mountain craft to be essential. I am a big advocate of this in fact being the foundation of outdoor sports. A key facet

of mountain craft is decision making, especially when moving in the hills alone at night. In the age of Strava, Facebook, and Instagram it can be easy to allow outside forces to drive choices made in the hills, especially when it comes to personal sporting achievements. Choices must be made based on the facts that you see in front of you on the hill. The toughest choice is to effectively choose to fail. So, I am happy that I was able to do that.

Moving forward, continue to race. Maybe do some shorter rounds and focus on work in darkness. I remain unsure about whether I would prefer some support or not, I will continue to think it through. The joy of living in Cumbria is that the Bob Graham Round is right there on the doorstep, and it isn't going anywhere.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 9th December 2023
1pm Shepherds' Arms, Ennerdale

After Crag Fell Handicap race

All Members are welcome
Chips & sandwiches are provided before the meeting

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of minutes from AGM held on 10th December 2022
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Proposed fees.
5. Membership Secretary's Report
6. Junior Chairman's Report
7. Special Resolutions
 - a. Contributing to travel expenses for members representing the club/Cumbria/England out of area.
 - b. Modifications to rules on London Marathon allocation.
8. Election of committee members and officers
 - a. Welfare officer
 - b. Chairman/chairwoman
 - c. Publicity officer/social media
 - d. Women's team captain
9. Election of race selection sub-committee





Juniors

Jack Gilbert

The CFR Junior contingent enjoyed a full summer of racing with loads of members engaging in the Championship series, as well as the show series. A summary of results is provided below (Thanks to Richard):

U9B	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Freddie King	100	x	100	x	100	100	x	100	500
Jonny Frankham	99	x	99	x	99	99	100	99	496

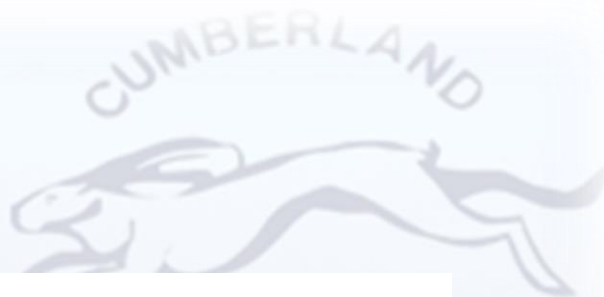
U9G	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Charlotte Mathieson	100	100	100	100	100	x	x	X	500
Anna Giddings	*99	99	99	99	99	x	x	100	496
Mieke Van Shelven	99	x	98	x	98	x	100	99	494

U11B	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Jack Thwaite	100	x	99	99	100	100	100	100	500
Wesley Van Shelven	96	x	97	x	96	x	99	98	486
Samuel Youngman	95	99	94	97	x	x	x	97	482

U11G	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Alice Maddams	100	x	100	x	100	x	100	100	500
Megan Connor	99	100	99	x	99	100	99**	x	497

U13B	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Charlie Tulley	100	100	100	100	100	100	x	100	500
Callum Taylor	99	x	98	99	98	98	x	99	+493
Joseph Giddings	98	99	97	98	97	97	x	98	493

*Callum takes 2nd place by winning more head to head races against Joseph.



U13G	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Alice Hardy	x	100	100	100	x	100	100	100	500

U15B	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Luke Davison	x	x	99	x	100	100	100	100	499
Ethan Hughes Rudd	100	x	100	x	99	99	99**	x	497

U15G	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Evie Youngman	100	100	100	100	x	x	x	100	500

U17B	Grisedale Grind	Duddon Dash	Lords Seat	Todd Crag	Two Tops	Latt Loop	Neth 10k	Enn Show	Total
Mylo Jewell	100	100	x	100	x	100	100 ***	100	500

*Average to be awarded on completion of 4 or more races due to registration error.

** Netherhall results show wrong age group

*** No U17 race

Several also competed in the FRA English Junior Championships:

Alice Hardy U13G - 11th

Joseph Giddings U13B - 22nd

Evie Youngman U15G - 22nd

Mylo Jewell U17B - 17th

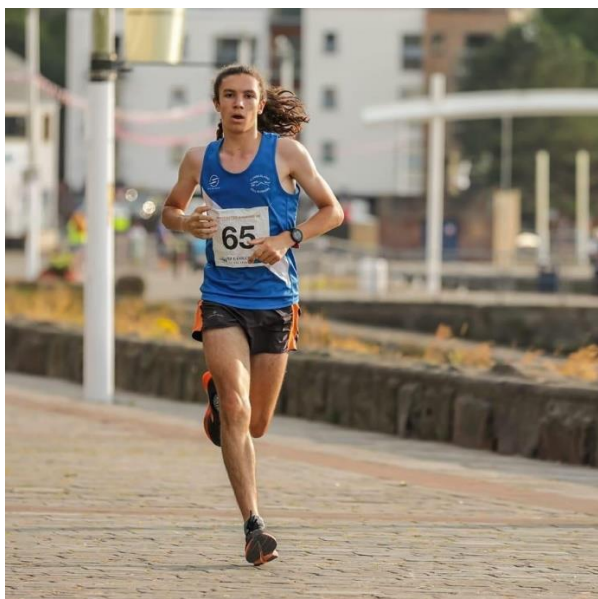
Here's a few photos from the Cumberland Fell Runners – Junior Runners page:



CFR at the Workington Festival of Running, 6th August 2023. Photos Tom Kay.



Charlotte after her win at Eskdale Show, photo Tony Jewell. Runners line up at the Buttermere Shepherd's meet, photo Leeann Barber



Mylo Jewell gets gold in 5k Harbour Race, [The Whitehaven News](#)



A Short Guide to Walking the GR20, Corsica

Darren Parker



The GR20 (GR = Grande Randonnée = long trek) on the island of Corsica is one of just over 100 GRs across western Europe and is often referred to as the toughest of the GRs. The majority of Corsica is mountainous – mostly composed of granite/volcanic rock and rises to a maximum height of 2706m (at a point only 24km from the sea). There is a low-lying, fertile plain in the east. The area of Corsica is about 30% larger than Cumbria but with a population about 30% lower. The route of the GR20 almost goes sea to sea, starting 7km inland at a small town in the north called Calenzana (close to Calvi) and finishing 6km from the sea in the south at a town called Conca (close to Porto-Vecchio). The route follows the high mountains of the island covering approximately 200km and ascending 12-16000m. It doesn't follow the watershed but weaves an intricate route to one side, then the other. (The Corsican name for the GR20 is the *Fra li Monti*, which translates as 'through the mountains'.) The route is well marked with the standard GR symbol of a white line above a red one painted onto rocks and trees, although, because the route doesn't always go the obvious way, it is possible to lose it if day-dreaming! I often thought, "It can't possibly go that way," only to discover it did! The landscape is spectacular, with gargantuan amounts of rock (which would take several lifetimes to explore), pine forests, pastures, plunge pools and far-reaching views. I'd never done such a long trek before but there was no day without interest or that felt like filler. The rest of the island is also worth exploring, with many more mountains, walled medieval towns perched on cliff tops, hillside villages, churches, waterfalls, beautiful beaches and rugged coastline.



How hard is it?

In the UK, my usual philosophy is stick to the ridges – don't traverse on to their sides because you'll end up on steep loose ground; despite the exposure, the ridges are safer (and more fun). On Corsica, it is often the other way round. The ridges are impassable, composed of multiple vertiginous towers and pinnacles; the only option is to traverse along their flanks, ascend steeply to attain the ridge beyond the difficulties, from where you may follow the ridge or more often than not, simply cross over to follow the opposite flank. There are numerous occasions spent crossing sloping, granite slabs, ascending/descending loose gullies or paths and short easy scrambles. None of it is technically difficult (the hardest parts are of a similar difficulty to Striding Edge and Hall's Fell) but, as in the Lake District, there are places you wouldn't want to fall or take a tumble.



What makes the route 'tough' is carrying a heavy sack, the rough ground and the long days, thus requiring an immense amount of concentration. You have to carefully consider every step to avoid a slip and lessen the stress on your body and it's hard if you're faced with a tricky section at the end of a long day; you can't risk switching off. Most folk wear trail shoes so even a small slip could result in injury - a chap from a group of 11 British lads broke a couple of toes on the second day and had to retire. Some short sections are protected by chains or metal steps, although I preferred not to use them. If you travel N-S, then days two and three are a quite a shock to the system. From then on, the landscape becomes more varied with long, rounded ridges (similar to those you find in Scotland), green pastures and delightful pine forests.





How long does it take?



The GR20 is split into 16 stages, each designed to be a day's walking. Several of the easier stages can be doubled-up, although, if you have the time, I would recommend taking the full 16 days. Alternatively, the route is notionally divided into two halves, north and south, at Vizzavone, where a road and the train line from Ajaccio to Ponte Lecchia cross; some choose to complete each half in separate trips. Some of the stages have higher/harder options ('variants') and there are several major summits over 2000m which can be taken in (Monte Corona, Monte Cinto (the highest point on Corsica), Paglia Orba, Monte Rotondo, Monte D'Oro, Monte Rinosu and Monte Alcùdina).



I followed all bar one of the variants and ascended 29 named summits and 12 unnamed ones, from just a few metres off the route of the GR20 up to a 4 hour round trip. I took the opportunity to ditch my sack and run/walk with only a bum-bag and would take in a scramble if I could. The landscape and opportunities for fun make the route far too good to rush.



Where to stay – the refuges

Wild camping is strongly discouraged (i.e. banned) on Corsica and the GR20 is provided with huts (refuges) at regular intervals. These are mostly administered by the PNRC (Parc Naturel Régional de Corse) but there also several privately owned huts (known as bergeries – originally the summer quarters of shepherds). (Note, in translation from French, 'refuge' becomes 'shelter' and 'bergerie' becomes 'sheepfold', which threw me for a while!)

Your sleeping options at a hut are:

- stay in the hut (using your own sleeping bag)
- rent one of the pre-erected tents
- use your own tent (€9)



Whichever option you choose, you have to book the PNRC facilities at least 2 days in advance through the official site of the PNRC (pnr-resa.corsica). (Unfortunately, I can't get the prices because reservations are closed for the year.) If you don't book, you won't be turned away but will be penalised by paying double the tariff! You can pay by card on the website but the huts only take cash. Bergeries must be booked directly, although I didn't bother.

You're eating options when staying at a hut are:

- at the hut (dinner (€20), breakfast (€8), packed lunch (€9))
- cook using the gas burners and utensils provided (usually outside)
- use your own cooking equipment



Most of the huts have well-stocked shops where as a minimum you can buy pasta and sauce. Your choice of sleeping and eating options is a trade-off between expense and weight – the more money you're prepared to spend, the lighter your sack will be. After a few days bleeding money by having a beer or a coke upon arrival at a hut and eating the hut's evening meal, I changed to carrying a bag of pasta (which lasted about 3 meals), buying a tomato-based sauce at the hut's shop and using the cooking area.

The huts also provide toilets (but NO toilet paper!), showers (sometimes cold!) and rubbish disposal. In addition to food, the shops at the huts also stock essentials such as toilet roll and Compeed – they know what walkers need. The facilities at bergeries are sometimes less than those at the huts – for example, there may be no cooking area. Upon arriving at a hut the first thing a walker looks for is a charging point for their mobile phone! Usually in a prominent position is an overload outlet with multiple extensions. If you don't like the idea of leaving your phone unattended you could take a power bank as an intermediate power source. If you can bear the weight penalty, a solar panel can be useful, although it's probably unnecessary unless travelling at a busy time of year.





Travel

The airports on Corsica are Calvi (N), Bastia (NE), Ajaccio (W), Figari (S). There are direct flights from Gatwick to Bastia with EasyJet. Alternatively, you can travel to the south of France or north-western Italy and take a ferry. Transport on Corsica is by train (only 2 lines), bus (provided by several private operators; a kind chap gathers all the information together at www.corsicabus.org) or taxi (which can often be shared with fellow walkers).

Time of year to go

The mountains are snow-covered during the winter, so, assuming you wish to walk rather than ski, the earliest you can go is probably late May when most of the snow should have melted and the huts begin to open. During July and August it is extremely hot and storms may break out in the afternoon. Water sources may dry up by the end of August, necessitating more water to be carried from the huts. It is also very busy during the August holiday season. The weather becomes more showery during September and the PNRC huts close at the beginning of October. Out of season, some of the huts have sections left open.

Websites/Facebook groups

There are many sites dedicated to the GR20 but these are the ones I found most useful:

gr20-infos.com – a great site covering all aspects of doing the GR20, including travel, accommodation and itineraries for completing the GR20 from 16 to 5 days.

www.facebook.com/groups/168748967008955 - GR20

www.facebook.com/groups/155744115282987 - La Folie du GR20

Corsican history and culture

“Corsica boasts a long, eventful and troubled history. Rarely has it ruled itself, and often has it been fought over. The many powers that conquered Corsica ruled it without particular regard for its people or its prosperity. It has frequently been neglected, considered a Mediterranean backwater and treated with indifference. Its varied, multifaceted history has, however, left it with a wealth of treasures, including megalithic archaeological sites, impregnable fortresses, picturesque towns, gastronomic delights and rich cultural identity. Its inhabitants are proud of where they’ve come from, at ease with who they are and fiercely protective of their unique island home.”

Max Lane, thethinkingtraveller.com

The Corsicans briefly ruled themselves from 1755 until they were defeated by the French in 1769. Their elected leader was Pasquale Paoli who was exiled to London after the defeat. He was reinstated in 1794 for a couple of years with support from the British but when this support was withdrawn, he returned to London and the French retook the island. (Paoli had an interesting relationship with Napoleon Bonaparte, who was also Corsican.) Paoli is venerated by Corsican nationalists who desire independence from France. Riots erupted in 2022 when one of their modern heroes (Yvan Colonna) was murdered in prison. There is an armed wing to the movement (FLNC/GCC) which has murdered in the past, although rarely, preferring instead to cause damage to property. (When I was on the island, bombs went off in several cities, shortly after a visit by the French president.)





There are many churches on the island, even in the smallest of villages, but these are often in a poor state of repair. This could also be said of many of the buildings, in the largest city to the smallest village.



Most churches employ trompe de l'oeil, although I couldn't decide if this was a clever way of making the interior more interesting or a way of compensating for not having enough money to build the real thing. Ultimately, I preferred the simplicity of a church in Zonza which didn't employ such trickery.

One piece of Corsican culture I wish I'd experienced is polyphonic singing. This is usually performed by a male choir in a church and I'm sure would sound spectacular. I saw several posters advertising concerts but I was never in the right place at the right time. To make up for it, I've become rather obsessed with the singing of a group named Voce Ventu.

This song www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyNvKafN48Q is an imagined letter written by Napoleon Bonaparte to (General) Paoli.



You'll see these fellas from sea level to the highest mountains. (Tyrrhenian wall lizard, up to 20cm.)



...but you won't see one of these unless it rains. (Corsican fire salamander, up to 30cm.)



Lindsay's Racing 2023

Lindsay Buck

As ever my racing year has been more quantity than quality but a huge amount of enjoyment to be had in competition.

Hoping some of the highlights might appeal for CFR runners next year!

January

Whinlatter park run, a winter league favourite.

King of the Castle, handicap uphill only, great event.

SOB, Kong adventure put on a winter series, really useful training out of normal season.

Blake, we runners had an easier job than marshals on a baltic winter day.

Resolution 10km, good way of seeing old road running friends.

February

Clough head, Kong classic followed next day by cross border 10km. Haverfordwest west park run during a family visit to west Wales.

March

Black Combe, for the 19th time & getting slower but at least kind of know the route.

Muncaster luck, wonderful venue, deserves support, castle finish is special.

Workington park run ahead of Jarret's Jaunt, never run well there but doesn't matter.

April

New Dungeon Ghyll, low key Harrison Stickle, stayed in Langdale, a treat.

Fell off bike, broke right collar bone + diagnosed much later, my left hand which put racing on hold.

Helped Jim marshal Caw in sleet - often easier to run.

May

Day after fracture clinic, Sedburgh, first BOFRA champ race, bit ring rusty.

Hay o trail, next day Latterbarrow, enjoyed both though not really fit enough.

Coniston Gullies, very short & rugged, main aim not falling on injured sides (both).

June

Kettlewell, beautiful Yorkshire Dales BOFRA race.

Lowgill sports, BOFRA event ahead of Vienna holiday where knees hated flat terrain, amazing art & architecture though.

Buckden Pike, stayed in the Buck Inn, tradition galore with brass band, dog show etc.

Next day low key BOFRA race at Hawswick, seeing the youngsters is always a highlight.



Hawswick

Langstrath, glorious .

Snowdon Twilight uphill only shortened due to appalling conditions.

Next day Kirby Gala, epic cake.

M sport 5km, running round the test track - also nose to glass looking at exotic cars.

July

Lambfoot leap, I'm too lazy to train hard- would much rather do a race.

Alva - highland games, a highlight of the BOFRA season, 3 reccy's, 1 race, weekend in Stirling.

Bessyboot, mini evening adventure in Borrowdale.

Swirrel Grind, uphill only on Helvellyn, shortened due to appalling weather.

Cracoe, BOFRA race to war memorial on a hill & back.

Ambleside sports, BOFRA short gives time for Armit museum & meandering.

August

Netherhall 10km, vague attempt at lack of speed training effort.

Farleton Knott - the flagged BOFRA version.

Gave blood 3 days before 3 events in a day.

Fell foot park run, Littendale 4 mile road race, short BOFRA Arncliffe gala race, felt fine.

Teifi marshes park run followed by later in the day Ras Becca, family visit to west Wales.

Arnison horseshoe from Patterdale dog day, terrific day out & stay in Near Sawrey ahead of Grasmere sports next day, love the atmosphere & mix of participants.

Ennerdale show, a real local favourite on a stunning day.



Showing how it's done at Grasmere sports

September

Burnsall, Yorkshire BOFRA race in a pretty village next to the river Wharfe.

Muker show in Swaledale followed enroute home by the revived Gategill race - ace.

Scafell Pike, great to see Joe Dugdale win & delighted to finish 3rd on my fav fell.

Masters Madeira, our holiday, reccy twice, race V60 ladies & open, good CFR contingent & truly inspirational to see so many veteran's still healthy & competitive, time for culture too.



Master's Maderia

Muncaster Park Pun, organised by the Frost Pennington family at their extremely impressive home, warm up for Eskdale show race in torrential rain.

October

Muncaster Park Run as warm up for the cracking Kirkfell race at our local Wasdale show, last BOFRA race of the season & fitting finale.

Screees, clashed with relays but still sad to see only 7 runners, we enjoyed it though .

Buttermere shepherds meet, love the race up Robinson & weather was glorious.

November

Stybarrow Dodd, back to Kong Series, short, sharp, steep.

Dunnerdale, always popular & glorious sunshine.

Middle fell, an old CFR favourite, twin of Screees so nice to see 28 out, only a fiver, entry on the day.

Scafell Pike often accessed by bike is my preferred training & don't do much else.

Everyone enjoys the fells in different ways but getting older has given me more appreciation of short events which allow for more of a day out & less mileage required.

Happy winter training, recovery & see you at a race soon...

Lindsay



Winter league 23/24



As we all know the weather is quickly changing and the headtorches are being dusted off.

Here are the details for this year's winter league:

1. Dunnerdale 11th November 2023 (entries close 8/11)
2. Sale fell 25th November 2023 (pre-entry only)
3. Crag fell 9th December 2023 (handicapped race so need to be prepared to get a place)
4. Whinlatter parkrun 16th December 2023 to 10th February 2023
5. Nine Standards Rigg 1st January 2023 (entries close 28/12)
6. King of the castle 7th January 2023
7. Blake 20th January 2023
8. BB Kong 17/2 (entries close 16/2)

Best 4 races count so that can be the best of 4 or the best 4 of 5-8 races.

The above were agreed at the member's meeting.

Enjoy the winter racing!

Battle royale!

Peter Taylor

Fierce competition on Old Crown Round

This may sound like a list of regrets and missed opportunities. But it isn't. Despite eventually losing to my nemesis, the 2023 Old Crown Round ranks as one of my racing highlights. John Skelton and I have been tussling in the MV45 championship all year. It's been close, often a handful of seconds either way. This epic race over the northern fells was no exception.

A select field stood in dreich, unyielding weather. I felt strong on the wet road from Hesket Newmarket and after a kilometre ditched my plan to stick on John's shoulder, preferring to make hay while the sun shone, metaphorically. Unusually for me, I got away on a climb and was 30 seconds up at Carrock Fell summit. John caught me on the descent, selecting a better line, and we were both surprised to catch Adam Cresswell in the valley. With Adam as hare, I stretch out, enjoying good running along the valley track. John caught me again on the soggy slopes of Mungrisdale Common. The gradient suited me and I sustained a steady trot to ease ahead, defending a small advantage on the out-and-back to Blencathra, decent to Skiddaw House and up the next climb. Had I broken him? Against all expectations, the sun now burned (my neck and shoulders) intensity.

Next came a choice: the BGR route from Skiddaw to Great Calva or via Bakestall Edge to Dash Falls. I'm familiar with the BGR route, but judged the alternative to be faster. Not knowing the details, I ran over Bakestall only to arrive in the valley with John on my heels. Another runner had led him onto a time-saving trod. I cursed my luck for being isolated and not making time to recce the route. The return of clag and drizzle seemed fitting. But it wasn't all bad. I was still slightly ahead up Dry Gill. Then I cramped lifting tried legs in deep heather. After rolling about on my back for 30 seconds, I clawed my way back to John and another runner as we climbed Knott. Again I got a slight lead on the run to High Pike.

Down, down... but too far left! I corrected, slotting behind John who was in full flight, looking effortless to me (although I'm sure he was suffering too). Stick with him. Stick with him. I repeated the mantra and was pleased to be within 15 seconds as we hit the farm gate and final kilometre and a half of asphalt. I still believed! But John has been getting faster all season and took another 20 seconds to finish 35 ahead.

We recovered, exhausted but buzzing in the heavy rain (me sporting a white vest-shape delineated by pink shoulders and neck), drinking multiple cups of tea and eating several slices of delicious cake (thank you Norther Fell Runners).

Could I have pushed harder to make up those 15 seconds on the road? What if I'd avoided the deep, cramp-inducing heather? If only I'd known about the Bakestall-bypass trod or better line off Carrock Fell. What if I'd stuck to my shadow-John plan? There were so many what-ifs and exchanges of lead. However, despite losing, I have never enjoyed a race, or racing season, so much.

John has the good grace to be two months older than me and took his inaugural MV50 prize, leaving second MV40 for me. Indeed, Ruthie Stanley and other Cumberland Fell Runners got prizes too, although not poor Adam who was a brilliant fourth, but too young to win anything!

Editor's note: Thanks for Darren for another map!

CFR Presentation Night

Jack Gilbert/ Darren Parker

Loads of us convened at the Workington Golf Club for the annual presentation night on 25th November following a thoroughly excellent blast on the Sale Fell Race – yet another fun crips day! Thanks to Charlotte and all the marshals.

The evening was a great celebration of club activities, races, adventures, and a chance to get to

know some of our members more, whilst not wearing shorts.

Thanks to Charlotte for organising, Darren for managing the trophies and statistics, and Paul, Sam, Andy for presenting.



Barry cruising over Sale Fell.



Presentation night



Main Championship



Open	1. Adam Cresswell 2. John Skelton 3. Peter Taylor 4. Daniel Worsell 5. Peter Crompton
MSen	1. Adam Cresswell 2. Daniel Worsell 3. Calum Fraser
MV40	
MV45	1. John Skelton 2. Peter Taylor
MV50	1. James McLaughlin 2. Steve Breeze
MV55	1. Andrew Bradley 2. Paul Jennings 3. Darren Parker
MV60	1. Mark Wise 2. Nick Moore
MV65	1. Peter Crompton
Cumberland Cup, M	1. Darren Parker 2. John Skelton 3. Peter Taylor
Handicap	1= Alison Wright 1= John Skelton 3. Ruth Stanley 4. Adam Cresswell 5. James McLaughlin

Ladies	1. Ruth Stanley 2. Juliet Fullwood 3. Jennie Chatterley 4. Alison Wright 5. Ann Cummings
LSen	1. Ruth Stanley 2. Juliet Fullwood
LV40	
LV45	
LV50	1. Jennie Chatterley
LV55	1. Alison Wright
LV60	1. Lindsay Buck 2. Ann Cummings
LV65	1= Dot Patton 1= Jane Mottram
Cumberland Cup, L	1. Ruth Stanley 2. Jennie Chatterley 3. Juliet Fullwood
Joss Naylor Long Distance Award	Darren Parker

Show Series

Show Series, M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mylo Jewell 2. Daniel Worsell 3. Peter Taylor 4. Peter Crompton 5. David Atkinson 	Show Series, L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lindsay Buck 2. Evie Rose Youngman 3. Ann Cummings 4. Dot Patton 5. Jane Mottram
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Strava

Distance  <p>2017 HANNAH BRADLEY 2231 km 2018 BEN OPIE 3407 km 2019 Mario Yeomans 3502 km 2021 Sam Holding 3221 km 2022 Sam Holding 3797 km 2023 Sam Holding 3308 km</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sam Holding 3308000 m 2. James McLaughlin 3000000 m 3. Peter Faulkner 2924983 m 4. Duncan Potts 2423000 m 5. Adam Cresswell 2278000 m 	Ascent  <p>2017 Bill Williamson 106 km 2018 Bill Williamson 123 km 2019 SOPHIE NOON 128 km Darren Parker Mario Yeomans 2021 Lindsay Buck 225 km 2022 Lindsay Buck 243 km 2023 Peter Faulkner 144 km</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peter Faulkner 144075 m 2. Duncan Potts 93860 m 3. Sophie Likeman 93307 m 4. James McLaughlin 90000 m 5. Darren Parker 89486 m
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The Strava award celebrated the many hard hours of training and effort that is put in by our members.

There is a Cumberland Fell Runners Strava Group which is just a collection of past and present runners. Does anyone know how this can be of further use?

[Want to join this Strava club?](#)

Les Barker

Newcomer of the year

James McLaughlin, for throwing himself into myriad club activities, races, relays and solo adventures! Well done James!

Club person of the year

Adam Cresswell, for his commitment to various matters from club runs, membership and website support whilst having a superb year of racing, amongst much more! Well done Adam!

Pictures of our winners and champions are on our Facebook page – thanks to Jenny Jennings!