

Black Combe Runners Newsie



January 2009: the where am I? issue

Editor's note: Things Charlie has Eaten

...that he wasn't supposed to. Some items not wholly consumed, just shredded thinly

- One windowsill
- Three sausage sandwiches belonging to the bloke I was supposed to pace on his Bob Graham that night.
- Three bills from James (but none from anyone else)
- Pete's measuring string
- 12 socks (mostly hilly monoskins)
- Two square feet of thick woolly rug
- 3lb of butter
- 16 till receipts
- Two rolls of electrical tape
- One Greggs bag that turned out to contain a whole pie
- 11 Greggs bags that might have contained pies but didn't
- Three DVD boxes
- 120g of dry bulgur wheat (spread on the floor first)
- One dead crab he found on the beach
- One hemp yoga bag
- Four unripe pears
- 2 vetbeds (one insulated)
- One tartan rug (MacDonald, though)
- One quilted bedspread (shredded and partially consumed)
- One Petzl Myo XP head torch, batteries included
- Three race numbers (tyvek)
- One velvet curtain 4 feet square
- All my cheque stubs from 2006-7
- Two rolls of gaffer tape
- Two remote controls

- One indestructible dog bed for the back of the car
- 1 square foot of kitchen carpet (other people's)
- 2kg of cat food (other people's)
- Several things he found that I don't want to think about
- Six frisbees
- One balloon in the shape of a pig
- Two power cables (unplugged)
- Three dog toys guaranteed indestructible for life
- One rubber chicken
- Quite a lot of gravel
- Six yards of crepe paper
- One book of first class stamps, self-adhesive
- One Father Christmas hat
- One cape previously worn by St George
- Three cushions (not consumed but thoroughly exploded)
- Three quarters of a rosemary bush
- One church candle
- One Inov8 Race Pro 4 bumbag that had dog biscuits in it
- The November 2008 Newsletter



Winterleague so far

Three down, three to go, best four count. It's still open but Dave W looks hard to catch

	Po House			Ulverston			Appletreeworth			
Dave Binks				46:38	61:38	6				Dave Binks
Tracey Binks	51:30	57:45	8	59:59	65:44	13				Tracey Binks
Cynthia Crawshaw				64:56	57:56	1				Cynthia Crawshaw
Karl Fursey	50:20	50:20	1	55:32	63:52	10	59:05	68:55	10	Karl Fursey
Val Gill	55:40	55:40	2	61:12	64:12	11				Val Gill
Andy Gittins							60:15	68:30	9	Andy Gittins
James Goffe				50:12	63:22	8	62:45	79:45	12	James Goffe
Peter Grayson	46:35	56:50	5							Peter Grayson
Dave Hobbins	54:20	58:30	9							Dave Hobbins
Sue Hodgkinson	42:55	57:05	7							Sue Hodgkinson
Ken Lindley				55:31	60:41	4				Ken Lindley
Sue Lomas	58:40	58:40	10	63:29	63:29	9	65:25	66:40	3	Sue Lomas
Penny Moreton				66:35	65:05	12	69:07	69:07	11	Penny Moreton
Phil Newton	47:45	55:55	3							Phil Newton
Gill O'Connell							65:15	65:45	1	Gill O'Connell
Dave Parminter	44:10	56:15	4	49:40	61:40	7	51:52	67:42	8	Dave Parminter
John Parminter							49:05	67:33	6	John Parminter
Will Ross	41:58	57:02	6				49:35	67:30	5	Will Ross
Rob Saunders	49:15	59:30	11				56:20	67:15	4	Rob Saunders
Hazel Tayler				57:00	60:30	3	63:30	67:35	7	Hazel Tayler
Claire Watson				60:47	60:47	5				Claire Watson
Dave Watson				48:54	59:39	2	52:45	66:05	2	Dave Watson

Still to come

Broughton Cross Country 1 February at 10am. Meet in the Square in Broughton. The course is flagged. And muddy.

Black Combe 8 February at 10am. Starts at Whicham Church and runs straight to the top and back.

Millom 10k 22 February at 10am. Meet at the rugby club in Haverigg. Route is signposted and has a nice big climb in it.

With any luck we'll all be able to go to the cafe on Haverigg beach again after the Millom 10k.

NB. The final prize calculations separate the mens' and womens' lists, which will (for example) move Dave Watson up to first place in both Ulverston and Appletreeworth, and Val up to first at Po House.

Contacts: race results to Mike (716772 or results@bcrunners.org.uk). Official-type proposals for discussion to Andy, Our Chair, on a Tuesday or to chairman@bcrunners.org.uk. Photographs, ads, announcements, reviews, complaints and newsletter stories to Will on newsie@bcrunners.org.uk. Relevant announcements to all@bcrunners.org.uk, and almost anything is welcome at the forum on www.bcrunners.org.uk.

Cover picture taken by Rich or Hannah on Great Cockup, early on day 2 of the Rab MM.

2008 Championship results

Ok, so Pete and Sue could have left the trophies at home, but it looks like next year they're going to have to work a bit harder...

Road	Keswick to Buttermere	Haweswater Half Marathon	Coniston 14	Dalton 10k	Windermere Marathon	Gosforth 10m	Hawkshead 10k	Ulverston 10k	Ulverston 5k	Carlisle Half	Brampton to Carlisle 10	Best 5
	L	M	L	S	L	M	S	S	S	M	M	
Hannah Appleton							60 68	62 71				
Mike Berry	67 78		72 83									
John Chattaway			63 68									
Darren Foote		68 68	56 56									
Jo Francis-Nichols			53 65									
Karl Fursey	62 62	55 55		67 67	61 61	67 67	59 59	68 68			63 63	327 327
David George										73 ??		
Neil Gibbison				79 91		78 90			75 87		73 85	
Andy Gittins			66 71				71 76					
James Goffe	2 68 73	75 81	71 78				75 81	77 84			73 80	371 404
Peter Grayson				73 84		76 88	73 84	75 86				
Michelle Griffiths										54 ??		
Kevin Hodgson							71 71					
Sue Hodgkinson		78 88	73 83				77 87	79 90				
Mike Jewell	3					74 82	75 83	74 82		73 81		358 397
Mac Knowles				76 85					75 84			
Penny Moreton	1 56 70		49 61	56 70	55 69		59 74			60 75	63 79	299 374
Phil Newton		68 77	66 75	74 84		74 85	72 82					354 403
Will Ross			71 71				72 72	76 76				
Hazel Tayler			63 78						64 80			
Peter Tayler	1		80 85				83 88	85 90	81 87		81 86	410 437
Claire Watson	2	59 73	56 69	62 77			59 74	61 77				297 370
Dave Watson		71 78	66 73				71 79	71 78				

Captain's Official Encouragement

Following on from the increased number of people completing a winter league series in 2008, I'm really pleased we had 17 completed fell/road championship series - three times the number of last year. The new scoring system generated some close rivalries (like James beating Phil by a point in the road handicap) and we had a suitable amount of mutual abuse and post-race beer along the way. We've tried to keep some favourites in the series' for 2009, as well as including some new races, so let's hope we can continue the fun and the interest and have even more people competing.

Pete Tayler

Fell

		Loughrigg S	Coniston M	Ennerdale L	Skiddaw M	Blisco S	Sedbergh L	Grasmere S	Grizedale M	Three Shirees L	Langdale L	Dunnerdale S	Best 5
Hannah Appleton	2	60 68	59 67		58 66		58 65	47 54					282 320
Chris Fellows												79 81	
Darren Foote			62 62		58 58	66 66		57 57					
Karl Fursey			62 62		58 58	58 58			54 54	59 59		59 59	296 296
Neil Gibbison		69 79										68 79	
Val Gill												56 72	
Andy Gittins		71 76	61 65	60 64						63 68	56 60	66 70	321 343
James Goffe			70 76		68 74			56 61		70 76	55 60		319 347
Bob Grieve												58 66	
Dave Hobbins												56 72	
Kevin Hodgson			66 66							68 68			
Sue Hodgkinson	1	75 85	70 79	69 78	66 75	69 78	71 80	59 66		67 75	61 69	68 77	354 400
Mike Jewell			65 72					66 73				72 80	
Mac Knowles									71 80	75 83	71 80	75 84	
Pat McIver					71 75					69 73		72 74	
Rob McKeever												60 71	
Phil Newton												62 71	
Gill O'Connell												41 46	
Dave Parminter												69 79	
John Parminter												69 71	
Will Ross	3	77 77	74 74	70 70			72 72	66 66	71 71	72 72	70 70	68 68	366 366
Dave Scott-Max						68 71				62 64		64 67	
Robin Smithurst										47 52			
Hazel Tayler	3	60 74	57 71				57 71	48 61		54 68			276 345
Peter Tayler	1	86 91	84 89		78 83	82 87	83 88	72 77	74 79	81 87		81 87	416 442
Dave Watson		66 73					51 57			57 64		61 68	301 335
Richard Wilkes	2				77 77		76 76	73 73	82 82		82 82		390 390

How the scoring works

Your best five races count: ie you must do at least 5 races to qualify, including at least one in each distance category. The black figures show scratch scores relative to the race winner's time: if you went at 68% of the winner's speed, you score 68 points. Handicap scores are in green: women get a 13% allowance and all runners between 40 and 60 get a 1% per year allowance to allow for age: eg a 40 yr old's scratch score is multiplied by 1.01 and a 48 yr old's by 1.09. In your 60s a 2% per year allowance is made, in your early 70s 3% per year, late 70s 4% per year etc.

Mike Berry

Mountain Marathons: any good?

Sue Hodkinson gets her titanium spork stuck into the 2009 Rab Mountain Marathon

Half of me has wanted to do a MM for a long time, but the other half thought they were probably awful. It wasn't the thought of running 40 miles with a pack that was putting me off, it was the uncomfortable night in a doll sized tent eating plastic food and then using the wrapper as your sleep mat. I think it was a chat about communal trench latrines one night in the Blacksmiths (to the horror of other diners) that finally convinced me MMs were not for me.

However, curiosity got the better of me, and the Rab seemed like a nice beginners' event. There were just two flaws in my plan – firstly my navigation, and secondly Will's navigation. I'd never really tested my navigation properly, and when Will tested his he found it had an intermittent fault. It's not very easy to practice for a MM either – except by doing one – so we decided to take the "oh, it'll be alright" approach.

After weeks of careful non-preparation, the day of the event arrived. We sat on the frozen grass, unfolded a huge flappy map of possibly the most featureless part of the Lakes – Back o'Skiddaw – and immediately picked out the most ridiculous checkpoint in a death ravine over the other side of Blencathra. It was the furthest control from where we were, but it was worth 50 points and looked exciting, so we thought we'd go for that and maybe pick up some others on the way.

Four hours later, we emerged slightly scratched and battered from the death ravine to find that we had arrived in Keswick. The campsite was about 9 miles away to the north. Having had a nice time all day, and the occasional

sit down for a cheese butty and a chat, we now had to get round to the other side of Blencathra and sprint up the Cumbria Way for two hours if we were to get back to the campsite in time.

We arrived only three minutes late, and how we managed that I do not know. It was exhausting and fraught, and we barged past about twenty people shouting "sorry, bit late", but in the end we had done reasonably well and with hardly any tears shed at all.

The campsite was in a pretty clearing in a wood, all very picturesque with its sock trees and helly trees, and people washing their feet in the stream while less fortunate people lower down collected their drinking water. The only problem was the lack of anything to do. The only thing you can do is visit other people, but they don't even offer you a chair or a brew or anything, so the visits tend to be short before you have to sit stooped in your tent again, and play 'what shall we eat now?'

After 12 hours of turning over every 10 minutes and frequently inhaling the lining of my tent, we rose to another clear cold day. I always imagined that day 2 would be awful – depleted reserves and sore muscles, but it really wasn't so bad at all, and the hours passed quickly. Far too quickly. We had a traumatic failure to find a control that we had detoured for and in the end had to give up on it, so day 2 was not quite as successful, but our first MM attempt was still fairly respectable.

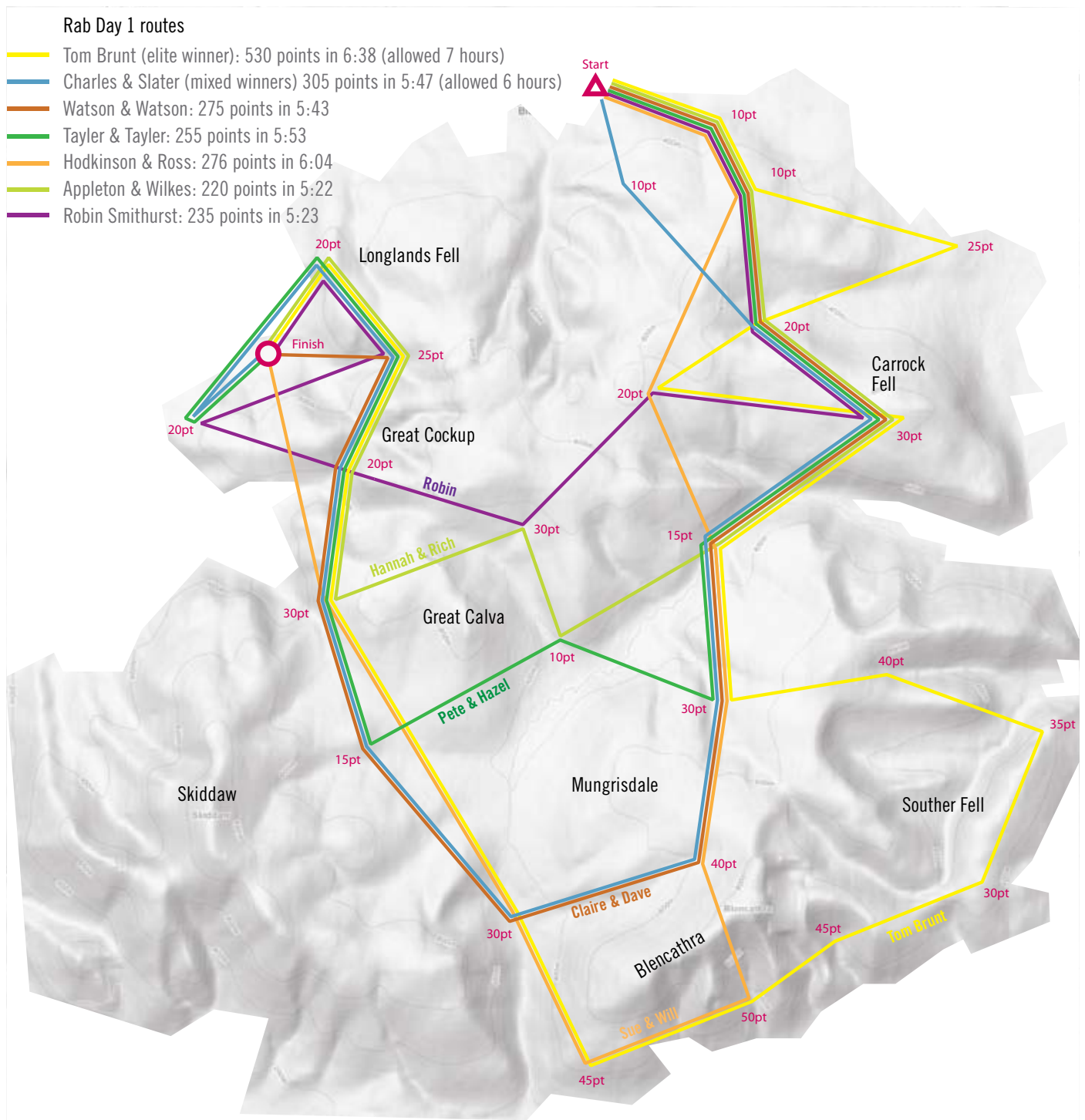
So, are they any good? The score course element was my favourite part of the event, as it required a great deal



Next time, take a pen that works



and a big ziploc bag for collecting water. And get there before Dave.



of thought. Being skilled at that proved to be far more important than the ability to haul a pack up Blencathra. Overall our navigation, in what is a bit of a bland area, was better than I thought it would be. We made a few basic mistakes and our route choice was not the best, but there were no howling disasters, and the route debates were very enjoyable.

The feeling of self-sufficiency was also strangely liberating and meant that the pack never bothered me at all. The overnight camp wasn't as bad as I thought it would be either, but by all accounts we were very very lucky with the weather and the setting. Had it been raining we would have been tent bound for around 18 hours, and when your tent

is the size of a coffin, that's not very pleasant, especially with no book and no bottles of ale. In fact, I think if it had been wet the whole thing could have been a wholly different experience.

MMs require you to think carefully about your needs – the need to be lightweight vs. the need to be comfortable. Next time I think I would sacrifice lightweight for a bit more comfort – a better sleep mat, and if it were raining, even a different tent. A bar gazebo and a jacuzzi tent at the overnight camp (provided by the organiser of course) would also be very well received. Or a live band, or a ceilidh, just something that didn't involve listening to six scousers talk about blisters for nine hours.

Ain't life strange?

Dave Watson on his and Claire's first mountain marathon prize

Claire and I entered the RAB in the Spring in Good Spirits .. we like these kind of events ... 2 days in the hills and an overnight camp (usually with some friends around) .. and nothing else to think about .. but the summer training hadn't gone well .. I couldn't train properly (at least I couldn't run properly) .. and Claire was busy in the shop .. and when we turned up at Fellside Farm on that fine cool Saturday morning in September .. it was with a sense of 'this is going to be a struggle !' ..

Sure .. we had planned meticulously ... getting (we thought) just the right balance of what we needed vs. weight .. and we were experimenting with some weight savings ideas we hadn't tried before .. and we'd got the packs down to the lightest ever .. and we were even going to drink from streams (with iodine treatment!) en-route .. saving a couple of litres of water .. all these ideas were an attempt to compensate for what we felt was lack of preparation ... we'd tuned our individual pack weights to be the same ratio as our respective body weights (we thought this the fairest way to do it)

And so we started ... we like the 'Back o'Skiddaw' .. we'd been there ages ago on an Orienteering Event .. a Capricorn I think it was .. so we were looking forward to the area ...

We had 6 hours on Day 1 and 5 on Day 2 to maximise our points score .. we used the 'length of string' trick .. aiming for 18 & 15 miles respectively .. strung the string out on the map trying to maximise the points .. wondered if we would

be able to cover all that ground ... and re-planned allowing ourselves escape routes in case we ran out of time\energy\ will to live ! .. and off we jolly went ..

As ever I set off way too quick .. Claire not even trying to keep up .. we were both used to this happening .. and I used the time to fine tune route choices etc .. Claire gets a second wind .. and suddenly we are well matched for speed across the ground .. some fast people go past us including Pete & Hazel .. they had either gone wrong or taken a bad route choice we thought because they started in front and we were sure we had the 'optimum' route up to that point so we keep chugging along ..

We get into camp with 17 minutes to spare .. it takes us 1 minute after we'd crossed the line to realize we'd missed a 20 pointer close to the camp that we could have got in the time .. my fault I'd folded the map over hiding it from view ! .. Bugger .. never mind ..

We find the other guys (Will, Sue, Rob, Pete, Hazel, Rich, Hannah) and set up camp in close proximity next to the river .. everybody's tired ... somebody barks at me for being too cheerful (I didn't feel it .. but must have felt better than they did !) .. results start to appear .. someone takes the piss tells me we are 2nd in Mixed Vets ... I don't believe that ... and wander over to see for myself .. Crikey !.. 275 points .. 24 behind leaders (thinks .. would have been only 4 points if we'd got that control) ... amazingly we are ahead of everyone that matters ! (all the other BCR's !)



The morning of day 2, in which our heroes discover that dew is the coldest substance known to man and that coffee bags are rubbish.



This is a different one: Hannah and Rich on the way to winning their class in the 2008 Mourné MM.

Claire can't believe it either .. she's encouraged now .. likes being on the leaderboard .. wants me to 'eat good' ... 'sleep good' tonight .. 'don't drink the whisky' .. so I can 'plan good' and 'run good' tomorrow .. without much more encouragement needed I tuck in to rations we'd brought with gusto .. and turn in for 12 hours sleep ...

Great Sleep !! .. Up in the morning ... Fresh if smelly (:-) .. ready to go .. it's damn cold .. looking at a stream of 'runners' going straight up Great Cockup .. 500m climb straight off ! ... Claire floundering behind now as usually .. no problem with that ... me doing my string juggling thing (this time ~ 15 miles) whilst going up hill (too cold to stop and plan properly!) .. I find what I think is a great route .. Claire gets in gear at top .. and off we go .. she warmed up quick today .. just after control 2 I have a 'route revelation' .. spot a brilliant route .. change the whole plan .. add 2 extra controls and a big climb still 15 miles I convince Claire we can do it and encourage her to run as hard as she can and we'll make it ! .. she responds magnificently ... I mess-up my feeding and feel knackered running along the Cumbria Way .. Claire pulling away from me now ... I nosh a bar and a gel down .. feel sick for a while .. but the legs pick up and we're running properly again .. we get a control that's nearly off the map .. then climb a SOD of a slope up to Carrock Fell for 30 points .. can we get in in-time ?? ... no escape route on this route plan .. no easy way back ... just gotta get to the finish on time via 2 more controls .. we make a cock-up coming off Carrock Fell .. distracted by fast moving Mixed Vet

couple who came past us ... realise just in time to save it and charge down good track to Carrock Beck .. struggle up West Fell for 20 points (we're never gonna make it surely we only got 35 minutes left) .. we get the run into the last control just right .. but we really are struggling now ... final couple of km back to the finish .. and we've made it with 4 minutes to spare .. we can't believe it .. 4 minutes spare .. why did we push ourselves so hard on the run in? .. we're in bits trying to recover before downloading .. Will tells us to get a grip (actually he tells me to get a grip ! .. I think Claire was operating reasonably normally at this point) .. we download and wander back to the assembly area ..

We wait for results to come in .. people keep getting more than us .. bugger .. oh well we tried hard .. then there are no more results and we're 5th on Day 2 .. only 15 points behind Day 2 winner ..

Combined Results go up .. and we are 2nd on time count back .. we can't believe it.

We win a Prize .. we've never won a prize before so this IS a strange feeling ! .. and we can't believe it ! And we get more points than all the BCR's .. and we can't believe that either ! And somehow .. off all the terrible preparation .. we run 33 miles in 2 days .. and we can't believe that either ! Best of All ... apart from the suffering we didn't need to do in the last 2 km ... we really enjoyed it !

Finally .. it might only be 2nd place .. but it feels great ! .. we are Mountain Marathoners ! .. and we can scarcely believe it !



Day 1 finishes at 3pm, leaving only 6 hours to talk about routes, weather, blisters, cake and whether your dry socks have got wet yet



Dave and Claire celebrate a well-earned second in the mixed vets, in a generous Rab prize-giving that only made their outfits more matching.

Feet in the Clwyds

A collection of insults and unwarranted personal attacks from [Pat McIver](#), loosely organised around the 2009 British Fell and Hill Running Relay Championships

This year's FRA Relays were staged from Llangynhafal in the Clwydian hills. The terrain is undulating and generally very runnable with an extensive path network, but also provides some savagely steep climbs in the valleys to the South.

Sunday's 19th October's weather forecast had prophesied the arrival, just after mid-day, of The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Well, they were late, and the Black Combe Runners Relay Team had a lovely day out in Llangynhafal: we finished a creditable 71st place in the club's first (?) entry to the British Fell and Hill Running Relays.

The lead-up to the event was the usual tale of a lack of training or preparation, genuine injuries (mine) and feigned ones (Will's). This led to a last minute reformulation of the team pairings which would result in an eyeballs-out effort from some and a sub-optimal performance from others.

The team managed a clinically precise simultaneous arrival at the event field despite our best effort to arrive late and avoid the event altogether. We experienced a "Sat Nav" incident which guided the car into a hill farm on the wrong side of the Clwydian hills. We relocated after reverting to traditional navigational techniques when the "Sat Nav" spat her dummy out and chucked the map at the back seat drivers.

There was a buzz in the air and plenty of banter on arrival in the assembly area and at 10.30 the later leg runners were able to enjoy the spectacle of the massed first leg solo competitors making the steep grassy run onto the fell to complete 5.9m and 2000' climb. Rob Hope returned first for Pudsey & Bramley in 38.53. Carrying the dibber for BCR, Pete Tayler brought us in just over 10 minutes later, at 49.40 in 48th place.

After waiting patiently in the exceedingly small holding pen, like animals to the slaughter, Sue Hodgkinson and Chris Fellows took up the dibber from Pete for the tough leg B (pairs 9m/2900'). Andrew Peace and Matt Whitfield of Bradford & Bingley stole, what was to become, the winning lead from P&B to return in first place. Sue and Chris returned in a very respectable 1.39.27.

After a thorough "marigolds" style kit check, Will and I were allowed into the holding pen. We had been matched up due to lameness: lameness of excuses for not running the tough leg that is.



Pat shepherds Will around the back of some Welsh hill or other. When Pat says 'direct route choice', by the way, he means a straight line through a mile and half of thigh-deep heather.

Fooling nobody but himself, Will had donned around 3 metres of tubi-grip to cover the embarrassment he was expecting to suffer on returning to the finish line somewhere around last place. We actually managed to pick up a couple of places with direct route choices on the navigational leg C (pairs 6m/2400'). I could put our 74th position at this stage down to control 1 being on the wrong cairn, on the wrong hill and behind the wrong wall, but in reality it cost us, and everybody else, about 30 seconds. I found myself forced to adopt a somewhat unorthodox "hill shepherd" running style. "Like the legendary Jos Naylor?" you are thinking. Well, yes and no. Not a bit like him running wise, but I was doing the shepherding bit as

the truth of Will's "injury" became apparent. Being the navigator in our pairing, and possessing the only map, I was forced to whistle and shout instructions from a distance as Will was considerably faster than me on the downhill bits, whereas on the uphill, his injury also allowed him to be considerably faster than me.

We came close to losing the hard fought places when a gap opened up on the final run in. No longer able to hear my instructions above the noise of the spectators, Will veered off hard right, apparently oblivious to the canes, the tape and the tannoy-like instructions from the finish lane gatekeeper, Will appeared to be making for the portaloos as we approached the finish.

I was looking forward to the dibber change as we made the final descent, when, at the head of a long snake of leg D runners (solo 5.5m/1800'), Rich Wilkes appeared. Fed up waiting for our return, the organisers released the remaining runners from the holding pen in a masse start. As 35th fastest leg D runner, Rich improved the team result to 71st overall and suggested a show of manliness which had been doubted by Hannah in the pre-race banter on the club forum. Having witnessed Rich's descent into the assembly field I now know what she means.

We didn't hang around for prize-giving, opting instead a liquid reward in Llangynhafal: the Clayton team did though and with the onset of the storm saw their club tent spirited into the sky and wrapped around power lines above the assembly area!

So now we have a target to beat, with the gauntlet laid down at 71st place, and with next year's event on our doorstep, the competition for team places and glory could be fierce. If you have views on selection criteria, why not air them at the next club social?



Sue and Chris were craftily manoeuvred into taking the long leg



while Rich has a go at the old 'running in a glass box' routine



A cheering crowd applauds wildly

Grasmere Senior Guides

Were we ever this sunny and relaxed? Will reminisces about 1.6 miles of mayhem

You get there early, caravans permitting, and spend a happy hour or two wandering around a sunny showfield. You watch the wrestlers and dog shows, and amble round the bouncy castles, doughnut shops and people who make things out of tree stumps, but your eye is always drawn back to two tiny flags fluttering on the hilltops. The Guides Race is dead simple: up there, lad, across there, down there.

After a while the junior races start and you settle down with tea and doughnuts to watch small children run all the way up to the flag and down again. They streak across the field and you think it really doesn't look too bad. It's not Gable, is it? Just run up and down that hill. Like the kids. Well you're wrong.

Soon you're all lined up in the arena in your shorts, jiggling about nervously. Ten thousand people look on with interested bemusement, a man in a white coat bangs a proper starting pistol and like that you're all legging it madly across the field, over the road and up the sudden slope on the other side. It is here that you first go "oh". It starts perfectly runnable, then gets a bit steeper. Then it keeps getting a bit steeper until everyone has to converge on a little gap in the fell wall. The why-not-have-a-goes in surf shorts are here, doubled up against the wall trying to get their lungs back in, and the pack is all elbows and jostle as it spills over a high step into the bracken.

From here it's a fast queue. Everything depends on how far up the field you can push yourself in that first sprint, and whether you can hold it together when you get there. You can't really overtake more than a handful of people on the rest of the climb: there's no room, it's too steep and anyway, you forget to think about anything except keeping up with the shorts in front of you.

You're at the top before you know it and stumble round the flag to head along the ridge to the second bump. There's a bit more space here and if you have any breath at all you can open out and start to enjoy yourself, then moments later you're at the second flag. Here's where it really starts.

For the leaders, I'm guessing, there's a nice grassy path through the bracken. For the rest of us it's a mudchute. Arms and legs everywhere, jump over anything you don't understand, and don't even think about slowing down. Like the climb, the top half is singletrack and the bottom half a wide open tussocky field. In between, to liven things up, there's a gap in the wall with a rickety wooden barrier that you will have to climb, leap or smash through.

The best thing we did was to wander up the course beforehand and try out different ways of getting over that barrier. There is a knack to it – grab here, foot on that rock, fling yourself over – but you'd never find it on the run.

The downhill field seemed wide and open during that inspection but when you land on the other side of the wall it's full of runners and families and photographers and giant tree roots and you're ducking and weaving and lurching over tussocks and whoops, that was a ditch, and then you're back in the lower field and you can see the funnel and a brass band is playing and thousands of people are facing towards you and shouting and you realise with horror that you're going to have to come up with a final sprint, and you do, and they shout more, and it feels great.

It's a fantastic race. There's nothing like it for atmosphere or sheer abandonment. There's a corner on the way down that I can't remember at all. I needed to overtake the bloke in front of me if I was to have enough elbow room to clear the barrier, so I just did. No idea how. In memory the whole race only took a few seconds and it's entirely possible that I was shouting the whole way round.

In the real race Rob Jebb crossed the line before I'd reached the second flag. At 12:38 he was only a few seconds outside the record, but Pete Bland somehow got to keep his money again. Our Rich managed a very impressive 27th,



Chaaaaarge!

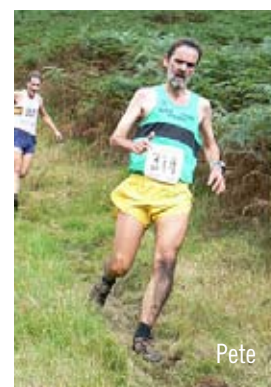


Mike 'where's he gone?' Jewell was impossible to catch either uphill or down, despite stopping to pose for photographers.

Picture by TG&BB via flickr.



Rich



Pete



Hannah



Hazel

in 17:19. Pete was at 17:41 in possibly his first defeat of the year. Mike Jewell cruised round in 19:11 and I couldn't quite catch him but was very pleased with 19:17. Sue chased Wendy Dodds down the hill shortly afterwards and Darren, James, Dave W, Hazel and Hannah all had good runs, followed by a happy mass collapse in the finish field.

There are only two problems: firstly, the fell race clashes with the tug of war, so we couldn't enter that. Perhaps it's just as well, given that collectively we weighed the same as any one of the other competitors. And secondly, the race is

right at the end of the day. This means you get to sunbathe and eat doughnuts beforehand, but it also means there's a very real risk that the beer tent will shut before you get there. I think some of us sprinted out of the arena faster than we had into it, but we got to the tent just as they tried to close and it was a very nice pint indeed. I think it was Hannah's first experience of racing ale and she hasn't been seen holding a non-alcoholic drink since.

Grasmere is back in the list next year and I'd recommend it to anyone. I look forward to seeing you all there in the sun.

Going Mental

Positive thinking by [Penny Moreton](#)

I would like to share with you a few thoughts of how to improve your running without having to do my coaching sessions; only joking these thoughts will compliment the training and most certainly your racing..

We all want to improve at our favourite activity, whether that means to complete a run without walking, to run that just out of reach personal best or to maybe achieve a major goal like the qualification for a major race. For me, it is to qualify for the Boston Marathon, more about that at the end of this article.

I want to share with you a firm belief I hold that to achieve your potential, it is important to train mentally as well as physically. Too often we set reasonable racing goals only to fall short. When we stand on the start line and the gun goes off our bodies produce a response to that stimulus, we start to perspire, our heart rate speeds up, muscles tighten, breathing becomes more shallow, our stomach churns and adrenaline rushes through our veins. That is where we are similar after that it is how we respond that makes us all very different.

I'm a firm believer that the strength of our beliefs helps us to perform better. Self image is foremost, how often do we think?

"I'm not as fast as so and so"

"I'll never keep up with the fast boys"

I have fallen foul of these feelings and I frequently hear them muttered before we go out the door at the club.

Feeling worthwhile as an athlete does not come easily. Constantly, reinforce your self image. **THINK YOURSELF AS AN ATHLETE.** Yes you and you! Whether you run a 5 minute mile or over 10 minutes for a mile. Feel proud of yourself as a runner. When I was teaching I had a promising young athlete on the fringe of the school xc team, but she was always telling me she felt she wasn't good enough. I had seen her times improve and knew she was determined but felt she didn't improve because she didn't believe she could. I gave her a challenging time goal but a realistic racing pace – which I asked her to mentally practice as she trained. She still challenged me, so I told her that it wasn't a case of thinking she wouldn't do it, but a case of knowing she could do it. She kept practising and qualified for the team and subsequently held her own at the All England Schools XC Champs. How? Because she was talented, trained hard but also because she had the belief.



Penny telling herself she is an athlete

If you have the confidence to do something and you keep reinforcing that belief the body will respond. Achieving goals – long training runs, consistent mileages, and faster times at speed sessions – all builds confidence. Build on these successes as you go to race and during the race to keep your confidence strong.

I needed to remember all these things when at the London Marathon, I had trained the hardest I had since the 2006 race, setting two ambitious targets, sub 3.55 to qualify for London 2009, and 4.05 to qualify for Boston my ultimate dream. It certainly caused varying degrees of stress prior and during the race. For weeks as I worked physically towards my goals with p.b's in the bag I constantly reminded myself I could hold 8.55's for the first target and sub 9.20's for the second goal. All went well till the 22nd mile when rain and cramp set in. Finish time 4.06.55. Having reflected on the near misses since, both races were not bad considering I'd 'gone mental' in striving to achieve my dreams, sure they were both daunting but without that inner conviction they would have been a lot harder.

Remember most of your runs are 80% mental and 20% physical, so think you can and you will but think you can't and you won't – GOOD LUCK !



QUIZ PART 1:
Name those feet.

Reviews

Send in your reviews! And whatever else you like. We'll print almost anything...

Helly Hansen thermal shirt, Mark 1

reviewed (and modelled) by [Pete Tayler](#)

Polypropylene has perfect qualities for thermal clothing. Best of all is that it doesn't rot, so clothes go on for ever. The one pictured here started its life in 1978. The early version of the material has a pleasant roughness like sandpaper bringing a self-harm type satisfaction to certain areas of the chest, guaranteed to drive you on to the finish line. In addition, this one in deep blue with a classic pink double stripe lends itself to many different colour coordinations and uses. Unfortunately they are hard to come by, though I did see someone wearing one in the 2007 Dunnerdale race, and his was even older and tatterier than mine.

Inov-8 X-Talon 212

reviewed by [Sue Hodgkinson](#)

New out this winter, the X-talon (pronounced cross talon) is the first totally new shoe inov-8 has innovated in a while.

Made from spider webs, cheese wire and paper, the X-talons really are super-lightweight. The sole, which has been designed to shed mud, is very stable and flexible and a lot more grippy than it looks. The heel is narrow and soft (best inov-8 heel yet) meaning it moves with your foot so there's no heel-lift or blister inducing slippage, but the forefoot is actually quite broad.

The lacing system means that you can't get them as tight as other inov-8s, and as a result I find them too big in the forefoot and get lateral movement when contouring.

I also find that they're not as supportive as my mudclaws - in fact they feel a bit like I've got no shoes on at all. For that reason there are some races where I just wouldn't wear them - rocky traverse races like Langdale for instance. On Kirkby Moor however, they were excellent. Apart from failing to prevent a Parmanoeuvre on Bank House Moor, that is.



Does anyone else in the whole world own (and wear) five garments that match less well than these?



QUIZ PART 2:
What are these people doing?



QUIZ PART 3:
Is it a good idea to run downhill with a sword?

Championships calendar

Road and fell race dates for 2009, and a few others that might be useful.

15th Feb	Keswick to Buttermere Fitz Park, Keswick, 11am. RL	4-5th July	Saunders Mountain Marathon ■ somewhere
1st March	Haweswater Half ■ Bampton Village, 11.30am. RM	11th July	Wasdale ■ Wasdale Head, 11am
1st April	Loughrigg Fell Race Millans Park, Ambleside, 7pm. AS	15th July	Blisco Dash ODG, 7pm, AS
28th March	Coniston 14 ■ John Ruskin School, Coniston. 11am. RL	19th July	Kentmere Horseshoe Fell Race ■ Kentmere Village Hall, 1.00pm. AM
10th April	Calder Vale Country 10 ■ Caldervale, Nr Garstang, PR3 1SJ. 1pm. RM	25th July	Lingmell Dash Wasdale Head Inn, GR187088, 2pm. AS
11th April	Anniversary Waltz ■ Stair Village Hall, Newlands 11.30am	31st July	Lakeland 100 (aka UTLD) ■ Coniston, 7.30pm.
26th April	London Marathon ■ Blackheath or Greenwich, 9am.	1st August	Borrowdale ■ Rosthwaite, 11am
3rd May	Dalton 10k Dalton Cricket Club, 7.15pm. RS	8th August	Broughton Mills Fell Race Blacksmiths, 4ish
2nd May	Coniston Fell Race ■ Coniston Sports Club, 12pm. AM	12th August	Ulverston Summer 10k Glaxo Sports Centre. 7.15pm. RS
7th May	Caw Fell Race Blacksmiths, 7pm	16th August	Lakeland Country Fair Torver, 2.30pm. AS
16th May	Old Counties Tops ■ NDG, Langdale, 8am. Pairs.	23rd August	Grasmere Senior Guides Sports Field, Grasmere, 4pm. AS
17th May	Windermere Marathon ■ Brathay Hall, Clappersgate. 10am. RL	6th Sept	Ulverston Charter 5k Coronation Hall, Ulverston. 2pm. RS
23rd May	Isle of Jura Fell Race ■ Craighouse Distillery, Jura. 10.30am. AL	13th Sept	Lake District Mountain Trial ■ somewhere
30th May	Duddon Valley Fell Races ■ Newfield Inn, Seathwaite. 11am AL or AM	19th Sept	Three Shires Fell Race Three Shires Inn, Little Langdale. 11am. AL
3rd June	Blencathra Fell Race Fell Gate, Mungrisdale. NY363302, 7pm. AM	26-27th Sept	RAB Mountain Marathon ■ somewhere
6th June	Ennerdale Horseshoe ■ Ennerdale Scout Camp, 11am. AL	4th Oct	Ian Hodgson Relay Sykeside campsite, Patterdale. 10am
6th June	Garburn Trail Race ■ Outside Wilf's, Staveley. 12.30am. RL	10th Oct	Langdale Horseshoe ■ Great Langdale, 11am. GR 286062. AL
6-7th June	LAMM ■ somewhere	18th Oct	UKA British Relay Championships Kirkland Leaps, Ennerdale. GR 087184. Details tbc
10th June	Gosforth 10m ■ Wellington, Gosforth. RM	18th Oct	Cumbria Half Marathon Sands Centre, Carlisle. 11.30am. RM
20th June	Great Lakes Fell Race Stool End Farm, Gt Langdale. GR276057. 11am. AL	14th Nov	Dunnerdale Fell Race Blacksmiths, Broughton Mills. 12pm. AS
24th June	Hawkshead 10k ■ Hawkshead Market Hall, 7.30pm. RS	28th Nov	Kirkby Moor Fell Race Beckside Village Hall, 11am. BM

■ pre-entry advisable ■ pre-entry required

Fell races are green. Road races are black. Other useful dates are grey. To qualify for either championship you must complete five of its 12 races, including at least one each of short, medium and long. Your best 5 results count.