



SheepSheet

September 2013



*Jo Buckley - Winning at the Wharfedale Off Road
Marathon*

Editor's Notes

Hello everybody and welcome to the latest edition of The Sheepsheet. Ideally it would have been out a little sooner but we've had the rare pleasure of a decent summer, which I'm sure we've all taken the chance to run and race that bit more than in recent damp years. Despair not though, we have another excellent edition in front of us which I hope you all enjoy.

Thanks as always to the people who have willingly contributed. It's been said before and I'll say it again, without you the members contributing and taking the time to write copy, there simply is no Sheepsheet. It's your magazine and you make it what it is, so a huge thank you to those who have written stuff for this month.

The last few months have seen some astonishing feats from all types of runners within the club and yet again, the club has shown what a fantastic stable of talent it has got. Be it the elite, high speed men and women at the top of the club wiping the floor with the oppo time after time; be it the juniors who seem to be multiplying in number and quality every time I write; be it the 'normal' club members who chalk off event after event and knock off personal goals by the bucket load; or be it the ultra-warhorses who devour the big stuff with almost messianic zeal, everywhere you turn in the club there is excellence and achievement. In short, we have a very strong club!

I salute every one of you for your efforts and achievements since May. There isn't time to acknowledge you all here in this edition, but all race reports (full length) are up on the web site at www.cvfr.co.uk

Now that the nights are coming in and we've all got a bit more time on our hands can I encourage you to put pen to paper and write something down for the mag? Tell us about your experiences, your hopes and fears, your ups and downs, why you love fell running, why you suffer for your sport.

We need as much variety as possible to make things interesting, I don't want it just to become another club mag cataloguing members' Paddy Buckley and Bob Graham attempts and what line they took off Blencathra etc etc (as notable and worthy as they may be)

You just write it and send it over, it doesn't have to be Pulitzer Prize winning stuff, just tell us what you've been up to and I'll knock it into shape. So come on folks, let's make the next issue, which will be a collectors edition Christmas Special, a real corker.

Thanks as always got to Woodentops for liberal use of their excellent photos.

CVFR Cover Star.

A massive cheer for Jo Buckley who is this month's winner by a country mile. Her 14% (fourteen) improvement ratio at the Wharfedale off road marathon is a figure that club wizard Bill Johnson reckons will *never* be beaten (praise indeed Jo!) I'm sure Jo was delighted with her emphatic win at this event and the subsequent call up for England that it cemented, but I'm sure you'll find even greater pleasure Jo at becoming this month's cover girl. An England vest and the cover picture all in the space of a few months – marvellous!

After Barbara Lonsdale last month, yet again the women put the men to shame and are currently ahead 2-0 in the cover photo stakes. Come on fellas, who is going to win it next time and give the girls a run for their dinero? Let's pull our fingers out.

With Jo's brilliant win, what better place to start this month's articles than Jo herself. Apart from her stunning win at Wharfedale where she annihilated the field, she also broke the course record at Coiners with a consummate win. Not only is she in possession of the club's flattest stomach, but she also now owns an England vest for the World Mountain Running champs. Over to you Jo...

Why I Like Fell Running by Jo Buckley

Jim asked me to write something for the Sheep Sheet, as I get the impression CVFR has almost a totally new membership since I used to get down every Tuesday. Oooh, I miss those shandies in the pub and Sowerby chips on the way home....

I am now 37. Whilst at Uni in Sheffield I did a lot of orienteering and fell running with Dark Peak. I got really really good at hill climbs mainly because I weighed about 3 stone. This was not sustainable! I then did my house jobs (Dr) and got fatter and better at drinking beer.

I returned from Fort William to Halifax and was saved from going mad in hospital accommodation by Thirza's motley crew on a Tuesday night. I did almost all fell racing and hardly any other types of running.

About eight years seemed to pass by, and I was married to Alan Buckley. Alan is a cross country international and keen track runner who just can't take fell running seriously...(neither can we Alan, that's the whole point Alan!) He is also brother to mad keen mountain runner Anne "where is the most scenic race I can possibly find to do?"

So having had 2 small children, fitting in work and not ignoring my family means fell races are pretty tricky...so I basically took up cross country and road running again, back to my school



Jo en route to victory and the course record at Coiners

days when I ran for Rowntree's Athletics Club. I use a really simple structure to my week that I know gets me fit. It got me right for selection for Jungfrau last year, although my bum let me down in the last 1/4 of the race!

I struggled to get fit for London marathon after flu in January this year then stupidly set off at 2.41 pace, wondering why the wheels came off with 9 miles to go. I then used this fitness (and not much more training as I knackered my back trying to do the high jump....mmmh.) to do the Wharfedale marathon which was being used as a selection race for England and Scotland.

Lucky for me few people turned up to challenge me...there is a lot more to come off that record I hope! So that has gained me my dream again - an England vest for the World Mountain Running Championships...aaargh. Just found out it is a really rough and rocky course. Help!!

So the most important things I have learnt over the last 3-4 years are work out what works for me and don't get tempted into things that just don't help. Changing from running after work to getting up an hour early and getting it done so I can collapse when I get in after 10-11 hours at work was an amazing discovery. I respond well to sustained hard pack runs in the winter, but not every week as I break down. I also do well off a mixed set of hills ideally once a week but just seem to have not managed it for months until 3 weeks ago - very useful for changing from plodder to racer. One day at least of the week to rest is vital.

I would love to learn how to descend like Helen and then I could really find an excuse to embrace fell running, but I feel so frustrated with charging up hills only to pansy down them and lose all my places....my heart is in the hills, and hopefully with the purchase of a lovely camper van last week me and my family will also be in the hills a bit more and my girls will learn to descend better than their mum!

Old Counties Tops by Paul Biddulph

Those of you thinking that you haven't seen much of Paul Biddulph this year, may I provide you with an explanation, for he has been off doing other things. Paul has had quite a 2013 so far and set himself some rather challenging goals to chalk off. As part of his Bob Graham training he undertook the formidable Old Counties Tops race once more and his illuminating report is here. Paul described the race as being so wet, and himself being so drenched, he could have easily changed his name to Marti Pellow.....:)

www.achille-ratti-climbing-club.co.uk

Paul duly completed his BG in July in 23hrs 22 mins, in similarly foul weather and on a day where six other attemptees failed; so congratulations from all the club Paul in joining the illustrious club. But perhaps his biggest achievement was persuading club panther, Jo Waites to accept his proposal of marriage, delivered I'm told outside Moot Hall in Keswick, just as he concluded his BG attempt – a slick move Marti Pellow would have been proud of himself. Who said romance is dead?! Congratulations to you both.

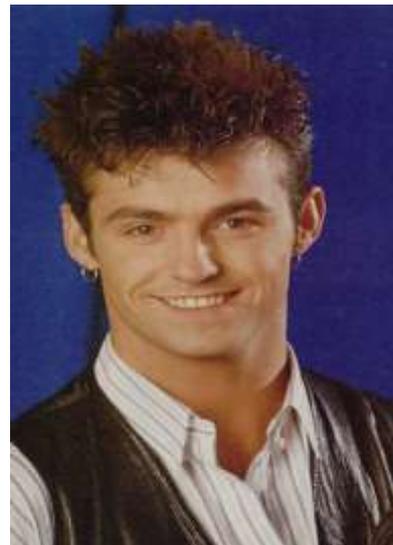
It's a long day out the Old Counties Tops whichever way you look at it. If you're quick it's at least 7 hours 'ish' and if you are middle of the pack its between 8 and 9 hours regardless of the conditions.

For the un initiated, the O C T takes in a 37 mile route,10,000 feet of climbing and the tops of Helvellyn, Scafell and Coniston Old man as well as a few bits in between.

Setting off from the new Dungeon Ghyll at 8.00 am on a rain soaked morning with no prospect of a let up in the deluge is shall we say....character building.

All the usual suspects were there, those hardy souls who enjoy nothing better than a long day in the hills seeing just how far they can push themselves. You see, for the ultra's it's not always about who is the fastest runner but who navigates the vest, who eats and drinks the best and just as importantly who paces the whole effort the best. Just because you're faster doesn't mean you are necessarily going to be quicker to the finish!

The chuckle brothers were there aka Kevin Hoult and Martin Huddleston, long distance specialists and men of hidden depths and indeed comedy. Ben Abdelnorr, looking pretty sharp it has to be said and of course our own long distance machine Linda Murgatroyd. For Linda, running an ultra is now akin to hanging the washing out in the back garden. She seems to have no limits or indeed no fear.



Paul in his younger days

This was my third O C T adventure previously running with Ian Wood. This year I opted to trade in the man machine that is Ian Wood, ultra man, Iron Man and general cycling demon for a more specific Irish/ Welsh model.

Enter the dragon...enter Jonny Moor, former club member, professional shuffler and a pure man of steel. Fresh from a successful Paddy Buckley late last year and a variety of great results in the Welsh fell running calendar. Surely this was my year to go sub 9 hours. Jonny is in fact the only man I know to run a sub 3 hour marathon without barely lifting his feet off the tarmac!!

So off we trotted, under leaden rain soaked skies all with a strange sense of anticipation of what he day would bring.

The first section from Langdale climbs over to Grasmere and then up the back of Dolly Wagon and onto the ridge leading up to Helvellyn. Surely we all thought, there would be no other people mad enough to be up there today...in fact why you would choose to be up there today at all given the conditions. Cold, wet, windy and generally grim!

How wrong could we all have been! As we crested the ridge, we were met by an army of sponsored walkers coming in the opposite direction wearing a selection of trainers, boots, high quality waterproofs and certainly a few pac a macs and peter Storm Kagool's as well. We looked at them, they looked at us and we all trotted off on our merry way questioning each other sanity I am sure.

So, as we hit the top of Helvellyn I was interested to hear a certain lady who does hold the ladies record (mentioning no names) asking us if we knew the best way off!?!? Needless to say we kept our own council and legged it! We didn't see them again until we were coming off Coniston.

It's a strange race, because you would hope that every year you pick a biter line based on mistakes from the previous year and indeed this should be the case. However, the conditions can vary that much that at times you are seriously just hanging onto a group or indeed your partner for grim death.

The line off was good I felt and we made good time although I did take a tumble in the woods and not until much later realised I had in fact bruised a couple of ribs. However, being a man of steel and having hidden depths of pain management this was merely a flesh wound!! Jonny as ever shuffled off the hill as an extreme pace and was at the bottom practicing his welsh phrases whilst I picked my way down like a ballet dancer with a sprained ankle!

So, onwards and upwards we trotted. After a quick cuppa and a few slices of cake at Wythburn car park off we went into what is arguably the hardest section of the route. Ahead to Greenup Edge, High Raise and then onwards to Angle Tarn. Now I think it is fair to say that there was not a lot of banter on this section. Conversation was certainly limited and for some it may have been some of the worst conditions they had experienced during a fell race. You could say the rain was fat, indeed at some points it was very fat indeed. I commented to Jonny, (who by this point was not talking very much at all) that I was getting a bit 'moist' inside. He commented that he was actually crying on the inside! We just kept on moving savouring what can only be described as a true moment of wet and windy bonding!!

As we hit the next river crossing we decided that falling in would not be good. As we gingerly worked our way across the torrent, some weekend warrior with a sweat band on and telescopic walking poles decided he would virtually dive in and swim across in a Bear Grylls-esque moment of madness. Jonny just scoffed, muttered something in welsh and we just pushed on. I think it was along the lines of 'what a foolish chap, he will have got his shorts wet now!'

However, after this we crested High raise and did make good time up to Angle Tarn. It is fair to say that it was head down and just push on at this point. Scafell was beckoning and we were cold, wet but strangely I am sure we were actually having a good time!

So onto Scafell and a bit of slipping and a sliding and general rock dancing. Don't get me wrong, I don't mind a bit of rock, but when it is soaking wet and your shoes just don't stick very well to it the fun does start to ebb away somewhat. As we headed up to the top and the swarming refuge (it's always swarming) we encountered the chuckle brother's fresh from a bout of minor mountain surgery! Kevin had slipped and dislocated his little finger. Luckily he managed to avoid breaking his nail or it may have meant a call out for the mountain rescue!

It seems that Martin aka 'Dr Kildare medicine man' took great delight in shall we say 'cracking it back into place' for his mountain goat of a friend.

However, as soon as I realised how close we were to them it gave me a definite spring in my step as I thought we must be going pretty well.

We opted to track back off Scafell and go down the gulley as the more direct route just did not feel right. This I did feel was a better option although on a couple of occasions we struggled to see the trod. Had I mentioned that by this point the rain had actually stopped. However we were still wet through and cold but you guessed it, having a jolly old time!

As we arrived at the foot of Scafell we hit the marshy flood plain that takes you along Mosedale all the way to the next checkpoint at Cockley Beck. It is fair to say that this is a fair old hike and we were not entirely sure at this point where we were heading given the fact it was thick clag. However, luckily for Jonny my natural sat nav kicked in and we were off as I used an old Native American Indian trick of siting two Achille Ratti runners ahead of us who clearly knew the route better than they knew their own back gardens!

So we trudged on over another river crossing along the foot of little stand and onwards to the delights of Cockley Beck and a nice cup of tea and a slice of cake. This is a lays a great checkpoint with plenty of banter and the realisation that the back has well and truly been broken of the route.

After some tea some delicious egg sandwiches as well as my Muller Rice (food of champions), we were soon on our way ascending up the back of Grey Friar. After 25 miles, this is a killer climb and so we took it steady. We took a great line courtesy of Ian Barnes who we ended up having a chat with (between gasping air in). However, as soon as we hit the top we had the legs to shoot off and certainly seemed to have some good running still in our legs.

As ever, getting to Coniston has never been an issue to me. However the first year I did It I swear that the weather up there was so extreme in terms of wind and rain that even the jelly babies had full body cover on!

This year was much better but Anglo Welsh/Northern Irish relations were tested as we took a slightly choice line of which nearly resulted in the call 'TAXI !!'

However , after a short exchange we did get a good line although I do concede that Jonny may have had a better idea than me to go higher we did eventually get down to the top of the pass at Three Shires and the last checkpoint. It must be said that Jonny was not amused as he felt

we wasted time messing about. I actually enjoyed being at one with the mountain and just wanted to stay up there a bit longer !!

So head down, and a dash for the finish drop down the road around Blea Tarn and then round the bottom of Blisco to the finish at the New Dungeon Ghyll. In previous years I have been shovelling whatever sugar I can get down my neck as I hit the tarn. This year was certainly different as I ran well all the way back, Jonny alongside me. I just felt that given the conditions we had done pretty well.

So how disappointed would I be to come in on 9 hours and 2 minutes, 20th pair overall. Jonny was not amused as we were on for 8.45. Coniston or rather the line of has become my nemesis. Next year will be a different story ...fact !!

So my quest for a sub 9 hour time continues. However at least I didn't have third degree burns!

Martin Huddlestone aka Dr Kildare medicine man of chuckle brother's fame had suffered really bad chaffing from his bum bah on his mid riff.

Apparently this is all good fun! As we lamented our excursion out in the hills (and the drive home) over fish and chips we did both have a smile that although some people might think we are all a bit mad, at least we had fun and some memories for the scrap book. I also learnt some Welsh. Pont, it means bridge....they could do with building a few of them in the lakes I can tell you !!

Meet Your Team Mate

Name: Max Wharton

Age: 16

From originally? Born in Hong Kong and moved to Hebden Bridge when I was 18 months old.

Lives now? Heptonstall

Occupation: student, just finished first year of Sixth form.

Why did you join Calder Valley and when?

I joined Calder Valley when I was about 9 years old as I ran at the local cross countries for my school and really enjoyed them and found I was quite good! Me and my sister, Issy, went along to the Tuesday nights at Calder valley to give fell running a go and really enjoyed it.

How did you get into fell running?

As I've said, myself and my sister joined CVFR after taking place in a few cross countries for school, we saw there was a local fell running club and thought we should give it ago and I've never looked back! There were only around 7 juniors when I started but there are hundreds now. I only really began training properly and taking it seriously about 3 years ago. My dad also joined at around the same time so he races as well.

Highlights of your fell running career so far? Running for Great Britain in the European Mountain Running Championships in Turkey, It was an incredible experience. I've also just managed to get on the team again this year so will be going to Bulgaria this time for the uphill only European championships. Also my first international outing when I ran for England and came second in the British and Irish home international in 2011.

Favourite race(s) and why? Wicken Hill Whizz is a special one because it's where I won my first senior fell race at the age of 15, it's also a great descent and I enjoy up and down races. I also love doing the bunny runs over in Haworth on a Tuesday night, it's a great quick blast around the moors and usually come home with about 30 Easter eggs from Dave Woodhead's crazy prize giving.

Least favourite race and why? I love every race....

Preferred sort of distance and why? As I'm not 18 yet I'm not allowed to do anything over 6 miles, so anything that is fairly short really. I especially like up and down races as they normally have a great descent. I also do a bit of track and the 1500m is my favourite distance, however, I do find it rather boring, even though I've run a good time this year. When I turn 18



Max Power - Max storming to victory over a top field at Wicken Hill Whizz

I'd like to have a go at some longer races but I don't want to over-do it so I'll probably wait until I'm a little older to have a go at some of the 20+ mile races.

Breakfast & routine on race-mornings? I usually eat Weetabix before my race and if the race is fairly long I like to have an energy gel around 30 minutes before for an extra little boost of energy. I've had stomach problems in quite a lot of races and tend to get a lot of stitches so what I eat and when I eat before the race is vital for me. I always listen to music before the race and during my warm up as it helps me to get in the zone.

What fell shoe(s) do you wear and why? Inov8 X-Talons as they are light and comfortable.

Fave piece of kit and why? My inov8 lightweight coat as I wear it before races and when it's raining, it's very light weight so I can train in it. I also like using my Dad's Garmin so I can see how fast I've gone and exactly how long I've run for. I think I need to invest in one myself, a bit of money and maybe a job would help!

What race essentials do you carry in your bum bag? I don't carry a bum bag as I don't take part in long races so don't tend to need to carry one.

Favourite local fell race boozier and why? Not quite old enough for that yet...I'll tell you in a few years!

Most feared/ respected opponent? I've got quite a rivalry with James Hall of Wharfedale; we've been racing against each other for a long time now and it's always nice beating him, even though we are friends. He tends to have me on shorter flat races but I think I have the upper hand at hillier courses. Also my good friend and fellow CVFR runner Brad Traviss, he's rubbish though....

Clubmate you most admire and why? Karl Gray, he's a machine!

Do you have any tips for anyone setting out into Fell Running? Don't be scared of the downhills! Just go for it, if you hurt yourself than oh well! It's all part of the fun of fell running. Also on a more serious note I think fell runners should do more speed based sessions as it is important to have that speed base. My coach Mark Goldie runs a session on a Tuesday night from MCC which is a great speed session that I've been doing for a few years, but mainly just enjoy it and you'll get better.

Who do you most admire in fell running? Ian Holmes is someone I look up to as he has been winning races for so long and achieved pretty much everything you can, also he is still winning races at the age of 47. It was nice to beat him at the bunny runs in April, at last!

Things you like most about fell running? I love most things about fell running, there's nothing better than flying down a hill at full pelt or the feeling when you've just conquered a huge hill or mountain. I like the atmosphere at fell races more than at track and cross country races as well, it's more relaxed. Mainly it's always different and there's a huge variation in races, regarding distance, terrain etc. which makes it a lot more fun.

One thing would you change? The age restriction so I can do some longer races maybe, but not much really.

When not fell running, what do you like to do? I like to have a laugh with my mates when not running and also go to watch my team Huddersfield play. I also like to play football and go out on my road bike a bit, play a bit of FIFA and listen to music as well.

Tell us something(s) of interest about you? I was born in Hong Kong (as mentioned before) and lived there till I was 18 months old so unfortunately I can't remember anything.

I was Yorkshire speed bounce champion at under 13s and went to the UK final for indoor athletics.

Goals for next 12 months:

top 15 at the European Mountain Running Championships

get on the GB team for the World Champs

win the British and Irish Mountain Running championships

Get some fast track times (3.56 for 1500m, 8.40 for 3000m and 1.56 800m)

Mainly just try and be consistent and injury free and keep on improving.

Max Wharton (by Max Wharton!)

Man of the moment (or late teen at least) Max Wharton has had a brilliant few months, winning at Wicken Hill Whizz, beating Ian Holmes for the first time, an astonishing PB in the 1500m and generally doing superbly in every race he's entered. Under the expert guidance of Mark Goldie, Max is developing into a prospect of national standard. With a view to providing a younger angle to some of the articles and giving our younger members something to inspire them further, I asked Max to pen some words and tell us all a bit more about himself...

I started running for Calder Valley at around the age of 9 as I had done a few local cross countries and thought fell running looked fun so I went along with my sister Issy to see what it was like, I loved it!

I started off going every Tuesday at 5.45 mainly just for fun and competing in a few local races and also the FRA English junior championships, however, I was nearer the back than the front. At under 14s I started taking it more seriously and won 5 out of 6 of the FRA English junior championship races, thus, winning the overall championships. I then joined Halifax Harriers and started running in cross country races and track races and a year later I was Yorkshire cross country champion.

Last year was a big disappointment overall and very frustrating. In the cross country season I got injured (plantar fasciitis), so had a bit of a disastrous season. Summer started better as I won the Yorkshire 1500m championship and also managed to get on the Great Britain team for the European championships which I was delighted and very surprised with as I didn't go to the race with any real aim of getting on the team, however, after that it all went a bit downhill and I couldn't maintain any kind of consistency. It's given me more determination for this season and has started well so far.



*Catch Me If You Can - Max sets off at breakneck pace at Bunny Run 3
(check out Ian Holmes way back)*

I've won the 2 English championship races I've competed in, one by a minute and a half, won the British inter counties and also gained my second Great Britain vest for the European mountain running uphill championships in Bulgaria, along with my friend and fellow CVFR runner Brad Traviss, which means half the junior men's team is Calder Valley! I was a little disappointed with the way I ran but happy to get the vest which was my aim, I know now I need to put some bigger hill reps in and myself and coach Mark Goldie are working on this so I can do myself and my country proud in Bulgaria.

This year is the first time I've really had any sort of coach that I've worked closely with and it helps me as I have more of an idea of what training I need to do, so far I've run well this season

which I think is partly because of the guidance from Mark and being more structured in what I am doing. I still want to improve though and also want to run fast on the track, which will help me on the fells as well, last night I ran a massive PB of 3.58 in the 1500m and also won my race, this means I am second fastest under 20 in Yorkshire, which includes 19 year olds!

My training is a little varied at the moment and I try not to do too much, my training has increased this year though as I'm 17 soon and can cope with larger mileage. In a typical week my training usually consists of Mark's speed session on Tuesday which is either flat speed training (for example the last session was 5x1km on Brearley fields) , or a hill rep session. I also do a track session with Brian Burgin at Halifax Harriers on a Thursday, which are usually shorter reps. I like to do Joe Washington's circuit session at back 2 fitness on a Wednesday, however, I've taken a break from it as I'm racing most weekends. It's a great session to do and very tough! I usually do some core work and might go on the road bike or do a hilly run, usually quite steady on a Wednesday. I usually rest on Friday and sometimes Monday, or just a steady 3 mile run. If there's no race at the weekend I usually do a tempo run on sat, around 5 miles, however because of the uphill Euro champs I am starting to do some bigger hills reps on the sat. On Sunday I do a longer steady run, usually around 8 miles.

I love fell running and it is a big part of my life, as you can see by the amount of training I do. However, I still don't think I do as much as other people my age that I race. I love all types of running, however, fell running is by far my favourite. It's a lot more fun than the other types as fell races have a bit of everything in, up hills, down hills, flats, different terrains, fell races can also vary a lot, some short and fast with not a lot of hill, some up and down with a very steep hill and some that are over 50 miles which I will probably have a go at when I am older. It also has given me the chance to go and race abroad, which is amazing!

Fell running means I get to go on a regular basis to places like the Lake District, which is awesome. When I am older I'd like to be British Fell running champion, which has been something I've wanted since the age of 13. I would also like to be a regular international mountain runner so I can go abroad and race. I'd love to do some sky races as well, they look amazing.

My short term goals are mainly just to carry on improving, staying injury free and mainly just enjoying it! This is the most important thing at the end of the day. I'd like to run well at the European championships and a top 15 would be great as I've still got 2 more years after this one in the junior men's category. In the next few years I'd love to be competing with the front runners and the best in the world.

I'd also like to say I have a very supportive family which really helps me; my dad tends to act as a taxi service! He does race as well though so if there is a senior race the same day he runs and when there is a senior fell race we both run.

The Three Rings of Shap (or The Tortoise and the Hare) by Martin Huddleston

No edition of the Sheepsheet is complete without an ultra-feature or two. These crack Jedi fellsmen who operate at the fringes of normality, and stretch the realms of comprehension of normal physical endurance for us mere runners. Vying for the title of toughest bad-ass of them all is Martin Huddleston, who continues to gorge himself on mile after mile after mile of gruelling challenge. Clive James' TV show used to feature a Japanese network show called 'Endurance', where young Japanese men put themselves through all sorts of eye watering capers and crazy stunts, each one more painful and excruciating than the last. None of those Jap dudes have anything on Martin. Here Martin tells us how a jumbo Spag Bol and umpteen Breakaways can help you win the monolithic (Three) Rings of Shap race...

www.ldwa.org.uk/Cumbria/W/26/three-rings-of-shap.html

There was some debate about the fifth race of the club's ultra-championship and after Bill sent out an email poll to select the final race the Three Rings of Shap emerged as the favourite. The event involves running/walking three circular loops from the town hall located centrally in Shap.

Considering we were training for the Lakeland 100 it appeared to be ideal preparation falling 6 weeks before the big event. Myself and Kevin had already completed the Fellsman earlier in the year with improved times from our first attempt and were not unduly daunted by the distance, however I was seriously only considering entering two of the rings to limit the distance to approximately 40 odd miles and to preserve my legs a little. However Kevin told me that 2 rings would not really cut it and it should be the full distance or nothing!

On undertaking any long run for the first time the ritual of figuring out the route and marking up the maps is usually undertaken a week or so before the event. This involves translating the organisers written instructions onto an OS map. The difficulty is that the usual verbose instructions often don't make a great deal of sense until you are actually on the course and identifying the features. As usual I left my maps until the last minute and had to call a crisis meeting in a pub to iron out a few route choices with my fellow competitors Michael and Kevin (Hoult).

My pre-race mega portion of spaghetti bolognese was devoured and a goody bag containing gels (3no.), shot bloks (5no.), Snickers (3no.), Bananas (4no.), Muller Rice Puddings (3no.), Crisps (6 packets beef), Nuun tablets, Breakaways (16no.) – I know sounds a lot but it is 64 miles and I wanted to ensure I was fully covered for all eventualities! I also assembled a bit of kit and had a further



Martin (right) with Kevin Hoult at the recent Yorkshireman

quick check over my maps and instructions.

So a 4:30 alarm call followed by my usual pre-race breakfast of Frosties, and off to pick up Kevin and Michael. We arrived at race HQ in Shap in good time and registered for the race, followed by a second breakfast! Ian Symington was already there and we enjoyed a bit of pre event banter. The race rules stated that competitors could start at any time between 8 and 9am. This resulted in us deciding that an 8:30 start would suit us and allow the first check point to open before Kevin and Ian went whizzing through. The additional 30mins fiddling with your kit soon passed and we started together at 8:35am, immediately going the wrong way around the library opposite the start and becoming trapped in a rear courtyard. A few choice remarks regarding map reading were aired and I thought it could be a long 60 miles if route choices of this calibre were maintained.

Kevin and Ian soon left myself and Michael, as we all slowly caught and passed the early starter hikers. The first 18 mile loop took in the Wainwright summits of Branstree and Selside Pike. I had the normal bit of fun, sliding on my rear, on the descent of Selside in my Hokas. I cursed my lack of forethought as I could have run the first loop in my Mudclaws and changed to my comfort shoes at race HQ at the end of the first loop. How many races allow you to change kit and shoes as you go along?? The navigating was working reasonably well with Michael on the written instructions and myself on the map, and the attractive route passed at a fairly leisurely pace as we both knew we still had a further 40 odd miles to go. We arrived back at the start again after 3hrs 17min and spotted on the results that we were already 20mins behind Ian and Kevin.

A few egg butties and cups of tea were consumed, water bottles re-filled and we headed out again on the second loop. This was based to the north of Shap and was a primarily low level route following the banks of the Lyvennet, Leith and Lowther with only a small amount of climb. The route meandered through numerous rolling fields and crossed multiple stiles and gates. In addition we were both convinced that the route was approximately 2 miles longer than the printed millage resulting in 25.5 tough miles. Energy levels were distinctly dropping as we struggled through the last 5 miles back to Shap, in an overall time of 8hrs 15mins.

As we entered the Hall we were surprised to see Kevin and Ian both changed and sat relaxing at a table. I immediately thought that one or both had suffered an injury, Michael thought that they had already finished the third loop! It finally transpired that they were both suffering a bit from two loops at full speed (they were over an hour ahead of us at this point!) and had made a joint decision to retire!

They tried to seduce us to call it a day also with thoughts of a quick pint and a curry over the road. However our resolve held strong (just!), and we headed out into the early evening after 15mins refuelling. Leaving Kevin with a few hours to kill in Shap!

The running and route were far better on this final third loop out to the east of Shap, initially running along Wainwrights coast to coast route and then exploring the National Nature Reserve at Great Asby Scar. The last loop involved 20 miles and we were pleased to note that the millage was accurate to the route navigation. We were still catching an occasional early starter and this kept our spirits up as the miles ticked by. We eventually turned for home with the last 10miles still to complete. It is strange how your mind starts to view distance, at one stage when I first started running 10 miles appeared to be a massive distance now after already

running 53 miles the last 10 miles seemed a relatively short distance with only injury between us and a DNF.

The clouds were building at the halfway point and the downpour eventually arrived making the last hour very wet, and with a slight climb 5 miles from the end energy and pace fell through the floor and a good bit of walking ensued. However with 2 miles to go and re-joining our outward route energy levels returned from somewhere and we managed a fairly respectable pace to the finish, just about avoiding having to get the head torches out! The last leg had taken 4hrs 30mins giving a cumulative time of 12hrs 45mins since we had headed out in the morning.

We saw a number of fellow competitors just heading out on the last loop as we were nearing the cover of the finish. Much respect to these competitors as they were in for a long and wet night, some would not finish until after 9am the next morning!

On finishing Kevin thought that we had won the event, and the race organisers commented that we had run well, which was enough for us. There is very little fan-fare on these LDWA events! I was suffering a little at the finish and struggled to eat for a while eventually forcing down a slice of hot chicken pie with copious cups of tea. After inspecting the floor of the hall and the surrounding commotion we decided to keep the sleeping bags in the car and opt for a steady drive home. The Best of Paul Weller kept us going all the way back to Yorkshire, at last hitting the pillow at 2am, making it a very full day out.

I would recommend this event to anyone with a number of varied options available to all entrants, and would like to thank the organisers and marshals for manning the check points to the early hours. Oh and by the way Kevin I did check and my badge does have three gold rings, you might have to make a return journey to complete yours!

My Borrowdale Race (or If at First You Don't Succeed) by Manhar Patel

Club stalwart Manhar Patel is renowned for his resilience and doggedness, qualities he needed to draw deeply upon recently at Borrowdale. Manhar's CV is mightily impressive and definitely worth chatting to him about when you get chance. His ongoing quest to complete all the classic Cat A races of note is taking shape nicely, as is his collection of t-shirts....

www.borrowdale-fell-runners.org/borrowdale-fell-race.html

Yesterday (03/08/13) was my 4th attempt at the Borrowdale fell race. A long fell race covering some of the roughest terrain & highest fells in the Lake District & hence England.

My 1st attempt was in 2006 when I was very much a rookie when it came to ascending such big hills & the slog up Gable did for me. Forward a few years to 2011 & I was running well. However embarrassingly this was the event for which I managed to win the navigational cock up of the year award & frankly I've no desire to discuss this race further (!) Last year I let my heart overrule my brain in being on the start line when I wasn't running well/ fit enough to get round and retired on the top of Gable.

So it was with some trepidation I stood on the start line & was immediately at the back of the field from the off. Indeed on the way to the climb of Bessy Boot there appeared to be just a handful of runners in front & the thought did cross my mind that a Borrowdale completion for me just wasn't meant to be. Having memorised the split times to reach the various checkpoints my spirits received a fillip in reaching the top a few minutes in advance of the scheduled split. I managed to maintain this time margin to the next check point – Esk Hause even though I and the group around me seemed to be doing more walking than running on this runnable section.



Manhar at Chew Valley

Past Esk Hause, on the way to the summit of England the terrain changes distinctly going from grass / boggy stretches to rock & large boulder hopping which needs to be taken with care. Approaching the summit alongside another runner, I did enquire if he was going to take the fabled scree route at the start of the descent however the summit area was enveloped in mist so we both decided to back track to the Broad Crag Col, much to my relief & pick up the corridor route.

Having conserved, or not used as much energy earlier in the race I was now able to run the descent to Styhead in an effortless and relaxed style and then managed to keep moving with purpose to the top of Great Gable. I looked at my watch at the checkpoint – I had 40 mins to

get to Honister and dared to dream that I would make the Honister checkpoint inside the time out of 4.5 hrs into the race.

Scrambling down of the rock on Gable to Windy gap (Is there a better line to take people?) and contouring around Green Gable, Brandreth & Grey Knotts - where the café / mine building came into view. I relayed to the runner behind that we had 12 mins to get there & assured him that we would make it but again we may not have taken the best line. However it was all downhill so I decided to put my foot down & despite having to scramble down 1 or 2 drops I made the cut off with 3 or 4 mins to spare with the declaration to Andrew Schofield (more commonly known as Scoffer) that my legs were still working.

There is a special kind of camaraderie between fell runners & none more so than that found amongst the back markers in a race so it was between a small group of four of us moving steadily to the summit of Dalehead, knowing we had made the cut off & were on the final leg.

From the summit I inched (you may say minced) my way down to the tarn, drank from the tarn's outflow before going over the stile through the quarry. I was overtaken by a fast finished female runner, who must have motored up Dalehead & mentioned as such to her. She in turn mentioned how I sounded so cheerful to which I replied that this was my 4th attempt & today I was going to get to the finish. Consequently I took the final descent steadily & again stayed on the stony path when I perhaps should have gone onto the grassy trod before reaching the final flagged section.

Going straight through the water, rather than using the stepping stones I finally made it into the finishing field with the presentation in progress. This meant for 1 brief moment I did think all the applause was for me before reality kicked in - oh well but I had the satisfaction & not to say glory of knowing I had just got round the Borrowdale race & have the T shirt and that will do for me.

Do I Still Like Fell Running? by Hannah Dobson

Club Chairlady Hannah Dobson has found time in her hectic schedule to wrestle with the question of if it is all worth it; one I'm sure we've all asked ourselves on occasion when struck down by seemingly endless injuries. This excellent article is one I hope can become the first of many similar, more thought provoking pieces that we run in the Sheepsheet. Contributions welcome folks.....

With injury causing me to spend more time performing Chairlady-only administrative duties than running on the fells, I have been tempted to question whether it's all worth it. Running slowly, once a week or so. Never racing. Cutting short the slow Tuesday night trot to get back to a Committee meeting. Begging for helpers for this race and that. Planting the kids in front of the TV in order to prepare an agenda and read my emails. Why. Am. I. Bothering?

Dark clouds of bad moods gather at the edges of my mind and I'm tempted just to say sod it. Leave the running to people who are good at it. People who can put their socks on without physical effort. Maybe I should find something else to do with my time. There's a flourishing Women's Institute in Hebden Bridge, and something similar called the Marmaladies in Mytholmroyd which clashes with Tuesday night club runs but might prove to be an amusing night out if I was to be free to go to it.

Surely, I'm tempted to think, in these days of social media and social networking, if people want to get together and do something, they will. They don't need people to sit with agendas and minutes to organise things for them. United by shared interests, they don't need club colours and team morale to bind them together. Monitored and tracked by GPS watches and smart phones, with results loaded onto Strava for all to analyse and see, they don't need a cold finish line marshal with a clipboard and stopwatch to pass slips of paper to another marshal armed with a board and sticky labels. Or do they?

Do you?

As with many an injured runner (and now it seems, most of Yorkshire), I have found myself turning to two wheels and tarmac. In search of endorphins and in an effort to retain sufficient fitness to prevent my weekly trot becoming a walk, I've been out on my bike (well, Rob's bike with my saddle. If this were a cycling club, I could write you an article on the effects of uncomfortable saddles. But then I think the men might find it a little off putting). As well as the inevitable purchases of lycra, obsessive hunting for coverage of cycle races on the internet via obscure foreign TV channels, and a permanent chain ring oil tattoo on my right calf, I've also been doing a bit of cycle based reading. In Ned Boulting's 'On the Road Bike', I came across David Millar's mum talking about the races that she used to take Millar to as a child:

"I think there was a time when we were truly blessed. There is something really wonderful about that. People would do it come hail, rain or shine, for no glory and no prizes, because they absolutely loved it. The sheer visceral joy. What I think I saw, and I hope it still exists, is a complete love in the turning of your feet. In the pedals. On your bike. On Sunday. On a club run. I don't think that's gone."

Now maybe I'd just had one G&T too many while I was reading that, but it struck me that, save for the pedals, this quote could easily apply to fell running. Save for the Brownlee brothers, can anyone else claim to have launched a financially viable career as an athlete having started out as a fell runner? With no prospect of riches, surely then the only reason for taking part, is because you love it.

'Well then,' bay the black dogs of my mind 'do you still love it?'

Do I? Still? Or I do I love a memory of it? An idea of how fell running can (but doesn't) feel? It's been two years since I've truly been able to enjoy the sensation of hurtling down a descent faster than my conscious mind can process the terrain in front of me. And let's face it, it takes a special sort of masochist to enjoy the ascents. I can't run fast or far enough to generate enough endorphins to get that post exercise rush. So do I still love it?

Well, actually, it turns out, yes. The crazy, beautiful, wild, seemingly epic run up to Stoodley Pike in the snow made me suspect that, away from being fast and fit, there is still something to love in fell running. And then the recent 'Introduction to fell running', where for seven weeks people appeared from up and down the Calder Valley, to explore the moors with us. I couldn't believe the number of people who turned up the first week. I took them up Wicken Hill. I thought most of them wouldn't come back. But then they did, only this time there were more of them. They'd told their friends, and then they told their friends. We were still getting people turning up for the first time at week seven.

Some of these people were already runners, they just wanted to see the moors instead of the roads. Others ran alone, but wanted the group activity to push them harder, or keep them going through the winter. Others had never run before. But, I'm pretty sure, everyone enjoyed it. And guess what? I enjoyed it too.

To all those who helped out with the taster sessions, thank you. Can I venture to suggest that this is an example of where a club can do what a social network cannot? And to those who turned out to the taster sessions and joined us on the fells for the first time this summer, thank you. It's been great. Some of you kept apologising for being slow, others even apologised for getting injured. Please, make no apologies, just keep coming along.

It's been a pleasure to see so many people out on the moors enjoying themselves. It's been an even greater pleasure to be reminded that it's not the racing, or the fitness that matters. It's just being out there: the smell of the heather in the sun; the cool of the bog under your feet; and the sound of the skylark in the sky. Even the sting of hail on exposed flesh. If you're not there, you miss it.

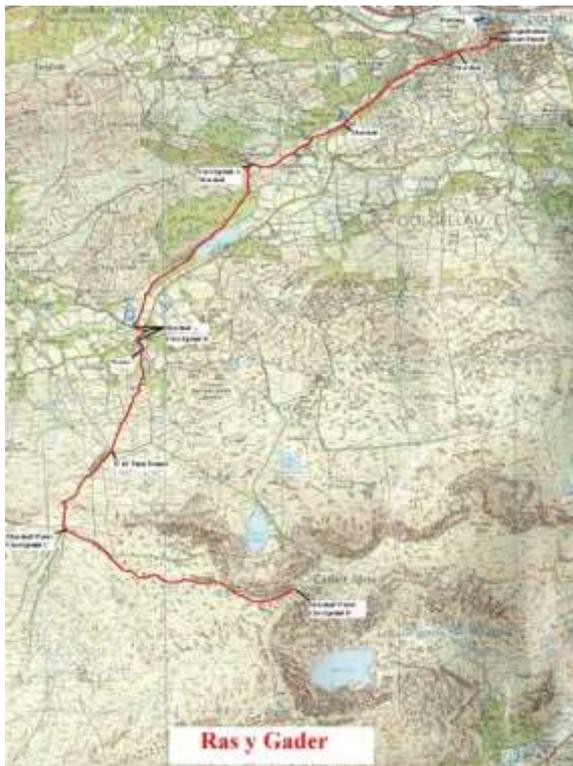
So, it is with crocked legs but a spring in my step that I shall head to the next committee meeting. I hope you've all found something to inspire you this year. It's only just over half way through. Still plenty of time to marshal that race or volunteer for committee duties at the AGM ☺.

Cader Idris Fell Race by Jim Mosley

www.cader-race.co.uk

As part of club member Richard 'Bert' Ingram's trilogy of stag do's for his recent wedding, a few of us went down to Dolgellau for the Cader Idris fell race. The weekend was the brainchild of his best man, Ben Frechette, who having run the race last year and enjoyed it so much, hatched the ingenious plan of dragging a group of Calder lads, some runners and some not, down to this stunning part of Wales for a good lash up and stopover. Oh yes, plus the small matter of a ten mile, 3,000ft, Category 'A' fell race to negotiate first.

The party met bright-eyed and giddy at MCC car park, early doors Saturday morning. With eight of us going down, two cars sufficed and off we went on the two hour plus schlep down to north Wales. The banter and wise-cracking was in full flow - as you'd expect from a group of frisky stag-do-goers - and with a services stop at Flint under our belt for the mandatory Lucozade sports, scotch eggs, Haribos and jelly babies, we headed over the border and into Wales.



However it was evident that the banter and leg-pulling was primarily there to cover up a lot of nervous apprehension (i.e mild terror) for as we sped through Mold and on the home stretch toward Dolgellau, both cars suddenly became rather silent. For into view had loomed the brooding lump of Welsh glory that is Cader Idris, and as we each computed the sobering fact that within about an hour or so, we were all committed to be running up and then back down this thing, the idea of doing a Cat A fell race on a stag-do suddenly didn't seem such a clever one after all. Frechette junior certainly wasn't a popular man at this point.

Once we'd registered and headed back to the car park to get our gear on, the nerves and apprehension continued to be in evidence with plenty of "What shoes you wearing? What you taking in your bum bag? What do you reckon a good time is? Are there enough first aiders on

the course etc etc? There was also the usual banter with fellow competitors from adjacent cars, many of whom weren't adding to the apprehension by telling us, "Ooh yes, it's much tougher than Snowdon". Plus on an away day such as this, there were all the alien vests whom you don't normally see: the green and red of Eryri, whose wiry and whippet-like members I'm convinced all live under rocks and exist on a diet of mosses and lichens. But as the time counted down and with rampant male ego barring anybody's possible exit strategy, there was no backing out now. Into the main square for the mass start and a few token handshakes and good licks, and then the starter got us underway.

One of the many beauties of this race is the way it lulls you into a false sense of wellbeing. Despite the steepish start up the tarmac road, the race soon opens out onto some delightful trail terrain and you weave your way through some lovely woods and copses, lined with eye-catching pines and ferns. Of course, you know the climb is coming soon, but for several blissful minutes, you somehow allow yourself to forget this and wonder what all the prophecies of impending doom in the car park were all about.



But then it starts. Rather like somebody rudely cranking up the incline on an indoor jogging machine, you feel your calves tense, your posture stoop, your chest tighten and the pace drop dramatically. Those in any doubt are reminded by the 'Welcome to Hell' and 'Go Hard or Go Home' banners strategically planted to your left. Any chat between runners now eerily (or should that be Eryri-ly?!) stops as the impending ascent bears its teeth. On and on it goes, grating

on your soul like Kenny G CD. A mixture of slippery grass, uneven paving, jagged rocks and moorland tussocks saps energy from all limbs as the incline ratchets up further.

As you near the summit you have to contend with the front runners coming back down towards you like human shells, as they hurl themselves toward the finish at high speed. There is no hiding place, only a realisation that you need to get out of their way sharpish before a simple physics lesson of gravity, velocity and collision is learnt, and not to your own advantage. Despite the cold and mist, the summit offers some respite and chance for a split second's pause of satisfaction, before you realise that coming back down is perhaps even harder. It's not long before gravity now takes hold of you yourself, and catapults you and your ordinary descending technique downhill once more, across a minefield of treacherous rocks and scree. The only consolation being that you surely cannot look as bad or jiggered as some of the backmarkers you are now passing going back down.



As your ankles and quads groan under the strain, you plummet earthwards towards Checkpoint B for the second time, which is where the steepest part of the descent ends, only to feel your legs totally pack-in and cramp as they are unaccustomed to such level ground. The sponginess of the grass also combines to turn this section into something akin to the steeplechase on 'It's a Knockout', as the usually linear form of a fell race is abandoned and runners scramble across turf in anyway which they can; the scene resembling a giant bouncy castle.

Virtually spent, you pass Checkpoint A for the second time and return to the road back down into Dolgellau, which kids you into thinking you are nearly home. But two more miles of knackered and slappy tarmac running remain as you begin to rue the lack of cushioning in your shoes, and your knees and hips now add to the catalogue of aching body parts. But salvation is at hand, as the encouragement from the umpteen locals who come out of their homes to wish you well gives you a magnificent lift, and the knowledge that it will all be over soon takes hold. As you hear the cheers ahead, and bend round the last corner into the main square to see the London marathon style digital clock above the finish line, you suddenly feel a wave of euphoria and for once in your life feel like a pro athlete. With the MC bellowing your name and your club details over the tannoy, and the hundreds of onlookers cheering you on Mo Farah-style, you somehow find that mythical sprint finish you once read about in a Dean Karnazes book and think yes, they are all cheering for me, I'm on fire, this is amazing.....!!!!

And then you collapse in a heap just next to the chip shop, along with the vast majority of the other competitors, frantically scouring through your bum bag for any Tangfastics or cola bottles that you may somehow not have consumed on the way up. Your Lucozade bottle has long run dry and you can't neck the water being handed to you fast enough by the numerous locals who make the event so marvellous.

You look round for your pals only to see best man Ben Frechette expiring rapidly. His scintillating 24th place has taken too much out of him and his legendary, manly disdain of anything remotely assistive such as energy drinks, jelly babies or gels is returning to haunt him. He begins to shiver and fade to a Man City blue as a combination of de-hydration, exhaustion and a mild fever each combine to send him under. For once, he doesn't look good. The dear old ladies in First Aid, armed with nothing more scientific than a pot of tea and a tray of Rich Teas & Bourbons, will have their work cut out here. They can do nothing to arrest his decline, and he is promptly carted off in an ambulance to the local hospital, much to the mirth of his fellow stag-doers.

For those of you who haven't done this race, I would urge you to do so next year. It really is a fantastic event with Dolgellau town throwing their full community spirit behind it. There are spot prizes galore of real quality such as the Montane windproof I was given, which let's face it, is not a bad prize for coming 94th. We stayed over in some excellent local bunk houses and did go on to get monumentally pissed that night, sung some dreadful karaoke, and shared some marvellous anecdotes from the day with fellow runners who had also made a weekend of it.

As for poor Ben, after Dolgellau hospital wanted a second opinion, he had to be whisked off to Wrexham A&E, over an hour away, and spent the night there, far away from the revelling that he had done so much to organise. Even worse, due to a shortage of beds thanks to Wrexham town centre's usual Saturday night casualties, they threw him out at 2am and he had to sleep in the foyer with only the local tramp for company. Rest assured Ben, we had more than a few in your name and we'll all be back next year!

Results:

1: Ifan Richards	1:31:02
24: Ben Frechette	1:44:46
35: Mark O'Connor	1:49:12
86: Richard Ingram	2:02:53
94: Jim Mosley	2:04:46
106: Nathan Kennaugh	2:07:10
163: Vinny Samuels	2:29:13

(first ever fell race)

(Adam Watts & Chris Reeves drinking only)



Not quite what Ben had in mind for the weekend



NHS staff cuts are being felt hard in Wales