

Black Combe Runners Newsie



Spring 2007: the oh no what have I done issue.

Captain's joggings

Happy New Year! Seems a while ago now but already we've been into February, March and now April has sprung (*all right, all right. Ed*) and what sunsets we've witnessed on our joggles back out on the fells. Coming back into exercise after an enforced medical break the great ball of orange descending as I did off Raven Crag was really special, it certainly took my mind off my pounding lungs.

It was great to see so many folk join the club towards the end of the year and Darren and Ann since January. Already I am looking forward to resuming my joggles along with most of you on a Tuesday evening and having fun. I am sure; as we get more ambitious the joggles will become runs with many memories.

We have a new Newsie Editor – welcome Will, I am quite sure we will be able to keep him on his toes with articles throughout the year, so don't be shy, tell us about your latest trip across the fells, the go faster recipe that keeps you topped up when reserves are running low, in fact I'm sure there are many things could be penned. I shall look forward to reading these literary gems as they come to press.

Do dust off your Walshes and sleek roadrunners and take part in the Club Champs this year. The races are in the main nearer home this time. Already 3 races have been run and James is not going to get it all his way as it was fantastic to see 13 of us enjoy beautiful if not maybe too hot conditions at Coniston. The girls are coming out too,

Send in your stories

If you don't want the next issue to contain nothing but Will's poetry - and you don't you really don't - then send in some stuff. Running stories are good. Thoughts about running are good. Thoughts about not running, for those of you currently limping, are also good. Recipes, fashion tips, how you make your hair look so nice: we'll print anything, so please write something and send it in. The next issue will appear in the summer and include lots of race reports, combining personal experience with useful tips and the odd map. That is, if I can persuade you to write them. Expect to be pestered after races.

Advertise here

Want to reach maybe even dozens of people? Adverts in the Newsie are free for BCR members. Send artwork or text and a picture to Will. There will be some kind of noticeboard too, if anyone wants to put a notice on it.

good to see new members Jo and Claire enjoying themselves despite the hills and Sue is on fire;

must be the extra carbo loading diet I've spotted. I'm quite excited because it looks as though my work rota might not interfere too much this season. I'm aiming to joggle around some fell races for a change and get those fell shoes I won in a raffle at Pete Bland's before Christmas a chance to get muddy. Rumour has it there may be even enough girls in the club now to tackle the Iain Hodgson relay later in the year as a team in their own right; I'm sure someone will correct me but I don't think that's happened before.

There is still time to enter the Windermere Marathon in May. It has an entry limit of 1750, Kara and I are going to do it as a run/walk marathon, Karl also has an entry. We have a good history of success in this race. In the past Jackie Casey (now with Barrow Striders) has won it a couple of times, 20 years ago she clocked 2 hours 57 minutes – wow! Ian Huddleston also breasted the tape and gained an international call up as a result. So why not come out and support us on the 20th May remember to bring your jelly babies with you.

So till the next little ditty whether you decide to focus on distance, speed or just having a good time with your mates joggle on....

[Penny Moreton, April 2007](#)

Contacts

Race results to Penny (771202, pennu@aol.com) or Mike (716772, mpberry@hotmail.com).

Official-type proposals for discussion to Andy, Our Leader, on a Tuesday or gittins.andrewj@virgin.net.

Photographs, ads, announcements and newsletter stories to Will on will@spanner.org, or on a Tuesday night.

General hot air and chatter that somehow doesn't get spent at the Blacksmiths can be taken to www.bcrunners.org, where you will find a 'forum' link and lots of continuing discussion.



Winterleague results

And the winner is... Ken! Followed distantly by James and Dave, and where were the rest of you? Must try harder.

This was Ken's final summary before handing over to Val for next year: "Fifteen members took part in the Winter Training League Series, but only three have done the minimum four races to qualify. It is most embarrassing and unfortunate that the handicapper finished first!

"Karl was the favourite but alas only managed to complete three races due to his busy schedule. Dave has had a bad year and James was only average. The ladies were poorly represented: two ladies, two races, and no lady to win the ladies trophy."

Other notable results include Pete's storming win on Black Combe - good luck with the handicap next year! - Will securing last place at Appletreeworth by going round twice, and a fine race by James at the Millom 10k.

Since the turnout was a bit feeble, it's worth mentioning that if we were counting the top three results, not four,



Karl gives it some stick on the way up Black Combe

then Karl would indeed have taken the trophy from Ken and the Parminters would be tied for third place.

Thanks again to Jill and John for refreshments and of course to Ken for holding it all together while winning.

	Askam	Po House	Appletreeworth	Cross country	Black Combe	Millom 10k	points from best four	final ranking	
Mike Berry	1 1				3 6			7	Mike Berry
Jackie Casey				3 1	7 7				Jackie Casey
Darren Foote			5 6			5 6		5	Darren Foote
Karl Fursey		3 1			4 3	4 1		4	Karl Fursey
James Goffe	2 2		2 3		2 4	1 4	7 13	3	James Goffe
Peter Grayson		5 7						15	Peter Grayson
Dave Hobbins		6 3						14	Dave Hobbins
Sue Hodgkinson					5 5			10	Sue Hodgkinson
Ken Lindley	4 3		4 2		6 2	6 2	20 9	1	Ken Lindley
Rob McKeever			4 4		8 8			12	Rob McKeever
Penny Moreton				4 4				9	Penny Moreton
Keith Nixon		7 6	6 5					13	Keith Nixon
David Parminter	3 4	2 4	3 2	2 3		3 3	10 12	2	David Parminter
John Parminter		1 5	1 1	1 2				11	John Parminter
Will Ross			7 7			2 5		6	Will Ross
Peter Tayler					1 1			8	Peter Tayler

Figures in grey are the actual who-came-first results. In black, the results after handicaps are applied. If none of this makes any sense, try having a couple of drinks and/or squinting until the numbers are all blurry. Works for me.

2007 Championships

After much discussion and lots of work from Penny, here is the official list of 2007 races.

This year I have again tried to spread the races across the entire year using the Winter Training League dates as a prelude to the first race in the middle of February.

I have decided to include one race - the Dunnerdale - where we are usually involved as organisers. So that more of us are available to take part, if you decide to race please find a marshal to take your place. Similarly I have tried to include more races away from Sundays where possible because I realize some of us need this day to be kept special. Obviously it is going to be impossible to please all parties, especially those of us who like to race more frequently than most; if you are one of those folk – good luck and I apologise for the lack of recovery time between some of the longer events.

Should any races not take place due to unforeseen circumstances the Committee reserve the right to add a substitution and this will be relayed to members as soon as details are known.

18th Feb	Buttermere Round Fitz Park, Keswick, 11am. RL	15th July	Kentmere Horseshoe Kentmere Village Hall, 1pm. AM
4th Mar	Haweswater Half Bampton Village, 11.30am. RL	18th July	Blisco Dash Old Dungeon Ghyll, Langdale. AS
10th Mar	Dent 14.3 Dent C of E Primary School, 1pm. RL	4th Aug	Borrowdale Fell Race Scafell Hotel, Rosthwaite. 11am. AL
24th Mar	Coniston 14 John Ruskin School, 11am. RL	11th Aug	Broughton Mills Fell Race Blacksmiths, Broughton Mills. 4pm. AS
4th Apr	Loughrigg Fell Race Millans Park, Ambleside, 7pm. AS	15th Aug	Ulverston Summer 10k Glaxo Sports Centre, Ulverston. 7.15pm. RS
5th May	Coniston Fell Race Coniston Sports Club, 12.30pm. AM	19th Aug	Lakeland Country Fair Torver, 2.30pm. GR 286938. AM
11th May	Dalton 10K Dalton Cricket Club, 7.15pm. RS	9th Sept	Ulverston Charter 5k Coronation Hall, Ulverston. 2pm. RS
19th May	Fairfield Horseshoe GR 365064, 2pm. AM	15th Sept	Three Shires Fell Race Three Shires Inn, Little Langdale. 11am. AL
20th May	Windermere Marathon Brathay Hall, Clappersgate. 10am. RL	13th Oct	Langdale Horseshoe Great Langdale, 11am. GR 286062. AL
9th June	Ennerdale Horseshoe Ennerdale Scout Camp, 11am. AL	14th Oct	Cumbria Half Marathon Sands Centre, Carlisle. 11.30am. RM
10th June	Grasmere Gallop Grasmere Garden Centre, 10.45am. RM	3rd Nov	Dunnerdale Fell Race Blacksmiths, Broughton Mills. 12pm. AS
27th June	Hawkshead 10K Hawkshead Market Hall, 7.30pm. RS	4th Nov	Derwentwater 10 RM Keswick School, 12pm.

Fell races are green (or more likely grey). Road races are black. In both competitions at least two long, two medium and two short are required to qualify. Full details and results so far are on the website.

Fell race categories are standard (and all are class A): AS – Under 6 miles/9.6km and averaging not less than 250 foot/76 metres per mile. AM – 6 miles/9.6km and over but under 12 miles/19.3km. AL – 12 miles/19.3km or over. Road race categories are as follows: RS: up to 10k (6.2 miles). RM: over 10 k (6.2 miles) up to 13.1 miles (21 km). RL: over Half Marathon 13.1 miles (21 km) to full marathon distance 26.2 miles (42km)

Any race results should be emailed or phoned through to Penny and Mike Berry as soon as possible after the race – thank you. Penny : 771202 / pennu@aol.com. Mike : 716772 / mpberry@hotmail.com



This photograph - ©The Evening Mail, probably - was taken just after the Black Combe race. The photographer was trying to make us all cheer, or at least look athletic, but nobody could think about anything but the cup of tea that we hadn't had yet. L-R: Andy Gittins, James Goffe, Sue Hodkinson, Will Ross, Pete Talyer. Pete won the club race in an impressive 1:28:43, mostly due to his race number being more aerodynamic than anyone else's.

Championships so far

After four road races, there are nine men and five women in competition and the leaders are Sue and James by some way. We've only had one fell race, as I write, and while the handicapping hasn't been worked out yet it's safe to say that Pete is in the lead.

Hobbling to Glory

With two championship trophies on his mantelpiece and the marathon to look forward to, James looks back at the 2006 season and asks, “where did it all go so right?”

Five years without a trophy but this year I am determined to give it my best shot. I am also helped this year by Nicky's injury problems which leaves me free to do many more races than in previous years. The season starts with the winter training league and this is one where, because it is on a handicap basis, provided you can improve on the previous year everyone has a chance. I give it my best shot with some new PB's but Phil with Sergei Bubka like expertise also manages sufficient marginal improvements to take another series victory.

My next effort will be the fell championships. I can not seriously expect to win this one. Mike is too far ahead of me and John Parminter, from the winter training league races he did, looked like he might run Mike closer this year. I had never actually completed the requisite number of races in previous years and so my objective was at least to do this.

While Mike was concentrating on the London Marathon I managed to get a couple of victories under my belt, Jarrets Jaunt and Causey Pike. Next up was Fairfield Horseshoe which was going fine until I and a few other runners missed a right turn in the fog, descended a hill and had to climb up again to rejoin the race near the back. I managed to pass Karl but could not catch Andrew Gittins or Rob Smithurst.

I made up for this lapse with a win at Coledale Horseshoe and with another win in the Lingmell Dash I had achieved four ones and now only needed to finish a long event to

qualify. When Mike did not do the Grizedale Horseshoe, the last remaining medium the championship looked mine for the taking. All that was required was a reasonable finish in one of the long races and I could not be caught.

First up was The Three Shires. It was a hot day and there was a good turnout by BCR. I started with John Parminter but he soon pulled away going up Wetherlam and it also took some time to catch Kath Sibbald who had achieved a good time in this race before running the Great North Run the next day and so could be a danger. I was going fine when as I descended the steep drop towards the Three Shires Stone my foot went through the surface crust into a sort of manhole and I came tumbling down with a badly wrenched leg. I finally got up and walked, took the opportunity to drink and then steadily got back into something like race pace. When I descended from Pike O Blisco I saw Karl and Andrew coming up but no sign of Kath and I assumed she must have passed me when I had fallen. I now felt recovered from my fall as I began the long descent before the last fell, Lingmoor. However, when I climbed over the stile into the woods my leg cramped up and I was troubled by it for the rest of the race. It tried to cramp up particularly on the ascent up Lingmoor and I had to pull myself up using the wire on the top of the wall on the left hand side of the ascent but I eventually made it. Somewhat surprisingly none of the other BCR runners had passed me during this difficult time and I was almost down

the hill when I heard the distinctive breathing of Karl. Karl was actually very nice as he caught me, asking if I was OK before running on ahead. I could do nothing more than a slow jog as my leg kept trying to cramp up again but there was now only a few hundred yards to go so I made it to the finish. My time was three hours and ten minutes, some twenty five minutes slower than last time.

I found that John had finished first BCR by a country mile, that Karl had finished second and I amazingly was third. It seems some of the other BCR's had suffered in the heat and Kath had not gone past as I imagined. Therefore with four ones from my previous efforts I had effectively won the championship.

A few weeks later I did the Derwent Water 10 in a time of 74 minutes which was quite reasonable for such an undulating course. I had previously



2007 Winterleague Black Combe.



2006 Ian Hodgson relay

done my longs, the Coniston 14 in a new PB of 1.45 and the Keswick/Buttermere 22, had a second in the Dalton 10k after a great battle with Andrew Gittins and got over a disappointing Hawkshead 10k by being first BCR at the Ulverston 10k. I had completed my six races and, as again Mike had not done sufficient races I thought this was enough for the championship but I then gathered that the road champs were slightly different from the fell champs and you needed two of each. This left the Brampton Carlisle 10. I thought about going on the Hoad Hill bus but John Chatterway said he was going and should be able to give me a lift but his family then decided to make it a family shopping day and I thought that Nicky and Michael could do likewise with me. However Nicky could no longer make it. I hadn't managed to get hold of Mike the previous evening so phoned him up on the day of the race to plan the arrangements. I thought it would have been easier if I had decided to go on the Hoad Hill's bus but I had not

booked so I would need to find my own way there. Mike though said that he was sure there would be room on the bus and they would be quite happy to let on an additional fare. I said OK I was on my way, but by the time I got myself ready I had 20 minutes to get to Ulverston from Ulpha. I did the journey as quickly as I could and was driving down the road to Glaxo when a bus came to pass me going the other way. I thought this must be the Hoad Hill bus and flashed it but when I looked at the passengers in the front they did not look like runners and only as I had virtually passed the bus did I see the runners and then it was too late. I would just have to find my own way to Carlisle and try and spot signs or ask somewhere for the Sands Centre because I had not had time to do any research. I therefore turned round to begin my journey to Carlisle only to find the Bus had pulled over to give me a chance to join them.

After the initial stress of nearly missing the bus it was a relaxing leisurely trip up to Carlisle with a stop at Shap services. It was fun also to chat to Mike and the Hoad Hill runners but Karl seemed rather stropky. Hoad Hill ran a sweepstake. You had to guess your own time and the nearest official time to their guess would win. This sounded a bit dodgy to me and I thought you could manipulate it by suggesting a slightly slower time and then carefully slow your finish to match the clock. Mike advised that this was a much faster course than the Derwent Water so I guessed 72 minutes for myself but I hoped I might get under 72 mins for a new PB. Karl's despondent mood continued and he predicted a ridiculous 2 hours 15 for himself, about an hour more than he should be able to achieve.

I felt good in the race and I was running ahead of some of the runners I

had been running with at Derwent Water. I got through 10k in 43 minutes and thought that if I really applied myself I could get close to 70 minutes but, just after 7 miles my calves cramped up and for a mile or two I was running at half pace before things eased up towards the end and I thought that I could not allow Karl to pass me in my final championship race again. I finished in 74 minutes. Mike had finished in 66 minutes, over three minutes quicker than Derwent Water. I also noted that those runners I had been with until I got cramp were around the 71 minute mark. John Chatterway came in about a minute or so after me. I waited a little while longer for Karl but there was no sign. It seems he decided to go off the route and even visited Asda before finishing next to last. On the journey back we got the results of the sweepstake and Karl had predicted his time almost to the second!

Anyway, for me, although I had finished rather lame it did not cost me any places in the club result, and it sealed a comfortable win in the road championship where Karl was the only other qualifier. It appears also that I was responsible for Karl's black mood because he had convinced himself that I would not be running and so the championship would be his!

So that is how I achieved this unlikely double. I am sure that I will find it hard to defend my titles because there better and potentially better runners than me and it would be nice to see more competitors in both championships. I must improve my fitness which was found wanting in those final races where perhaps I had become complacent. I was fortunate enough to get the club London Marathon place and lets hope this will provide the motivation for me to move on to the next level.

James Goffe, January 2007

Reviews

This part of the newsie is for you to go on about whatever you like. All reviews are gratefully accepted. Relevance to running is a bonus.

Inov-8 Mudclaw 330 shoes reviewed by Will, because I forgot to ask Mike to do it

They're great. What can I say? If they're the right shape for your feet, and for mine they are, then they're light, grippy and comfortable. If they're not the right shape, you have strange flat paddle feet and need Walshes.

With these on you can run down grassy slopes at daft speeds, corner in mud, survive wet rocks and leap over obstacles confident of your landing.

Some people find that the teeth break off, others that they wear down. Either

way, you only get about a year or maybe 1000 miles before you need a new pair, but they won't let you down on the way.

Inov-8 mistlite 210 jacket reviewed by Will

Hard to recommend this one, which is annoying because it's a very good running anorak: simple and warm, keeps the weather out, doesn't cost all that much. When it gets cold and you start to wish you'd stayed at home, this is a good coat.

Its main selling point is that the anorak stuffs into its own pocket and straps round your waist, so it's a reasonable bumbag



too: simpler and lighter than the usual Pete Bland, with enough space for your map - if you've cut it out - a compass and some fruit and nut. If your trousers pack down very small, they'll fit in. Not much else.

There's one major flaw: when you want it to stop being a bumbag and start being a coat, you have to turn the pocket inside out as you pull the coat out of it. That means that your map, compass, chocolate, trousers, keys, malt loaf and dog biscuits have to go on the floor while you unpack the coat, then back into the newly reversed pocket. If you take it off again, same thing but with extra stuffing time. No problem on a recce, but on a race it's a disaster.

So it's a good anorak, and a reasonable bumbag, but not really both unless you've got time to spare. A separate bumbag with an anorak in it will be much better if you might actually need to put the coat on, and this one can only be recommended for races where you have to carry a coat but definitely won't need it.

Helly Freeze reviewed by Will too

I love this top. It keeps you really warm in the snow and makes you look like spiderman. I think it's meant as a base layer for skiers, but it's snug and flexible and works well by itself for running.

It's made of two layers stitched together at the seams: underneath there's



the usual plasticated warming and wicking stuff, then over that there's a layer of merino wool. This could have made it both scratchy and sniffy, but it's very comfy, very warm and slow to get smelly. I've often been out in ice and snow in just this and shorts with no trouble.

The problem with the extra layer is it doesn't dry as quickly as the normal Helly tops: it's thicker and not right next to your skin, so it holds water. When you stop you cool down very quickly, and soon need something on top. If you're going far, more separate layers might be better.

Overall, highly recommended. It's expensive (mine was £40 at rock and run) but it's probably in the sale at the moment and it's all you need for several winters.



Garmin Forerunner 205

reviewed by Dave Hobbins

At least four BCR members had a new toy for Christmas; a wristwatch GPS device specifically designed for physical outdoor activity where the use of a handheld receiver is difficult or inconvenient. For those of you thinking of joining the gadgeteers this is what I've found so far.

Firstly, the machine does what it says on the box. You put it on your wrist, switch it on (giving it time to find some satellites) and it tells you how fast you're going, how far you've gone and how long you've been running. It can even navigate you back to your start. Some people might want to leave it at that but, of course, like all modern electronic gadgets there's so much more to it – especially when you connect it to your PC.

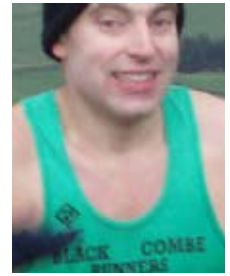
The first time that connection is made causes the Forerunner to dump its history (it can hold up to 2 years!) onto your computer. Now your runs can be viewed in some detail using the software that comes with the machine. You can also go to the MotionBased website and store/share your activities together with all kinds of data like the weather at the time (retrieved from your nearest met. office station) and map data from Google maps.

For BCR members the bad news is that the Forerunner's ability to interface with our version of Anquet maps is very limited. Garmin promote Anquet's competitor Memory Map, which I'm sure, is very easy to use. I'm still struggling with various conversion programmes to get tracks out of the machine onto Anquet. Getting waypoints from Anquet to the Forerunner is easier but still not that intuitive – this is work in progress.

This machine can do a whole lot more than can be covered in a short review, so go to the Garmin website for more.

Karl's Korner

Greetings to all, Hope your 2007 is going well for you so far, we've already had 4 road races in the club's champs counters and just before Easter the club fell race champs got under way. Half a dozen of you went out in the glorious spring sunshine to give the Loughrigg race at Ambleside a try out. Well done whatever time you got, as you helped the race get a record 136 runners who all finished, with everyone back inside 50 mins.



As some of you may not already know, at the AGM in late January, I got the honour of being the press and publicity person for BCR. Basically, it involves sending reports of our champs races and other running related material to the local papers. They are the Evening Mail, Whitehaven News and, to a lesser extent, - The Kendal based Westmorland Gazette. The same report that goes to the Mail is also sent to the other two, and its up to those papers' editors to decide how much goes into the sports pages. So far, the Whitehaven News has been the best, printing (edited in parts) all three of my last reports, whilst the Gazette hasn't bothered at all, though my first report on the Buttermere round race was relegated to its freebie equivalent of our Advertiser- without a word on BCR, as an Eden female runner was first, which was in that report. The Mail are swines for excessive editing with hardly anything on my most recent article, sometimes combined with reports sent by the Hoadies and Striders. The Whitehaven News is available in Millom, and those who don't get it can always log onto its website.

James is in his final week of training before he takes to our capital to run the FLM, and yours truly here, having done London 4 times since taking up running in early 2002, will instead this year use London weekend to do the Anniversary Waltz fell race. Though not a champs counter its worth doing next year (entries now closed) as this race covers 11.5 miles with 3600ft ascent around the Newlands Valley, near Keswick, and visits Robinson, Hindscarth, Dalehead, High Spy and Catbells (via Maiden Moor).

We've had at least 16 new members join in the last 6 months or so, which is very encouraging to see, and already many of them have taken part in local road and fell races. Keep up the good work and lets make 2007 the best year so far this millennium in terms of BCRs getting to races (Don't forget your club vests!), and even our weekly social runs have had a good increase in turnout.

This summer there'll be many opportunities to take part in club orientated events as well as races. Its hoped the stamina challenge is resurrected (I last did it on 04/12/04 and today the stopwatch used for it still shows my time: 2hrs 01mins 51secs, as it lies dormant in the bedroom). For clarification its from Haverigg IRB to the top of Black Combe and back by whatever route you wish to. Best person to see would be Ken. Also, the summer challenge is a relay, this year likely to be the 72 mile Cumbria Way. For an idea on how it works log onto the website and look at last year's Shap to Silecroft relay still on.

Until the next Korner, as we're out of space here, happy running and enjoy the lighter nights, and warmer weather.

Karl Fursey, April 2007

Being part of a community (and loving it)

Reflections on marathon training from Penny as she prepares for Berlin and Windermere

There are still times when I prefer to run alone, when the rhythm of my heart beating and my shoes pounding is the only thing that brings me serenity. One of my rave solitary runs is from Cockley Beck along the entirety of the Duddon Valley early on a winter's morning. Hoar frost on the ground and surrounding fells, the only fog the one that leaves my nose as I absorb the clear sharp air. Hills crisp in early low sun and the occasional screech from an encircling buzzard-bliss, sheer bliss.

But I know now that it isn't the miles but the people who are the most important thing in the training to the ultimate goal of a marathon. These are the times when to share the joy of running, with a single individual or a group, is necessary to complete myself.

Too often we run only within the solitude of our own world. We believe that to be within the confines of our own world is enough. However, when we share our joy we feel when we run with others is when we break free and we take running to another level.

I found this when training last year for Berlin and as I am now preparing for Windermere in May. Every time a marathon is entered. Every time that race number is ceremoniously threaded to our race vest we are no longer a club runner but we are one of hundreds or in the case of Berlin one of tens of thousands.

To share the training with friends and ultimately stand on the start line is special. Berlin is now a whole city still with its reminders of it's poignant past horrors of over sixty years ago. As I stood on that start line last September under the already extremely warm sun I was with thousands all together and yet each of us alone in our quest to reach the Brandenburg Gate some 42 kilometres down the road.

Mike had already set off at 9.00am. I followed about six minutes later down towards the Golden Angel looking down from its 286 feet. The star of the show Haile Gebrselassie aimed to beat the world record held by Paul Tergat of 2.04.55 set in 2003. That would be 4.45/4.30 pace for each of the 26.2 miles. Simply too bewildering to contemplate. In the end he only missed by 51 seconds.

Considering it was only in August Mike ran the Tour to Mont Blanc ultra, he finished in fine form in just over 3 hours. I took a more leisurely saunter around the city, soaking up the atmosphere of the thousands of spectators lining the entire route. It had been a hot marathon of about 24

– 28 degrees so every water station I filled my cap to douse my head and consumed my gels to keep the body ticking over. Passing the Fernsehturm, Blaukirsche, Potsdamer and finally very emotionally through the Brandenburg Tor I finished in 4.26.55.

On that particular day, the challenge for me had been to finish intact and unhurt after the disappointment experienced in London in April. A quiet confidence washed over me knowing that I had survived the heat of the day. The Berlin marathon had not been a question of winning or losing but having the resolve to know my inner depths to complete the challenge.

So now I prepare for the Windermere marathon along with many friends also on the same journey. For some it will be the first time they will have really trained and sacrificed to take on the challenge. To take that first journey is incredibly humbling and exciting. There will be times when they will think as I did seven years ago that they don't know that they can run a marathon. But then they will also realize there was the opportunity of knowing that they could and have run a marathon. So to Kara, Jackie, Di, Sue, Nicola enjoy the journey and remember...

"It is not the miracle that you will finish. The miracle is that you had the courage to start".

Abridged from John Bingham.

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