

Black Combe Runners

newsie

September 2019



Just a quick note from me...

What a fantastic few months it's been on and off the hills since the last newsie! Hollie has put together a fab summary on the next page. Thanks to everyone who has contributed some really interesting reads, and to Mike H for providing yet again another brilliant front cover for the newsie (I'll buy a pint for the first person who can tell me who and what the event is on the front/back cover!). 😊

Jess

BCR Summer Challenge ~~Completed~~

Total success!

I think everyone who took part in the Old County Tops summer challenge on the 28th July would agree it was a brilliant day! Despite a complete mixed bag of weather (torrential rain, clag and blistering sunshine), everyone got stuck into making it a super day. All topped off with a pint, BBQ and more puddings than you could shake a stick at back at Julian and Kath's — massive thanks again!

Here's how it happened...

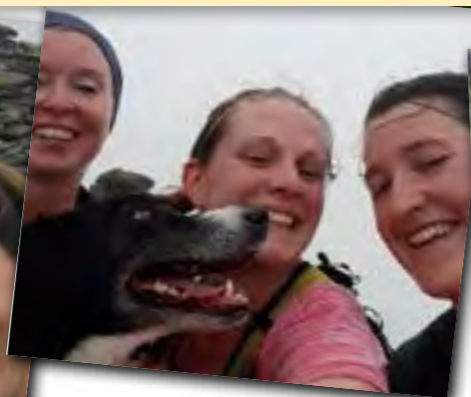
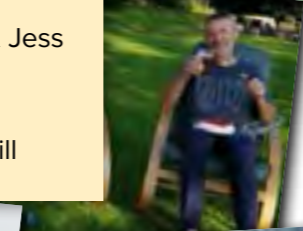
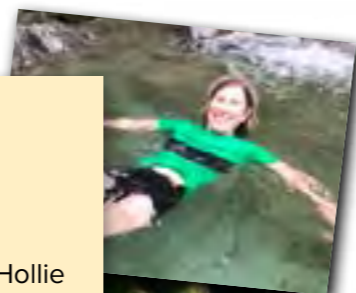
Leg 1 — Coniston > Three Shires Stone — Rob and Helen

Leg 2 — CYCLE — Three Shire Stone > Travellers Rest (Grasmere) — Kath, Julian & Hollie

Leg 3 — Travellers Rest > Hellvelyn > Steel End Car Park (Thirlmere) — Hollie, Sue & Jess

Leg 4 — Steel End CP > Sca Fell (etc!) > Cockley Beck — Matt, Tim & Josh

Leg 5 — Cockley Beck > Grey Friar > Coniston — Beth, Pete, Hazel, Pat, James & Will



Hello from the Captain!

Hello and welcome to another fabulous Newsie, thanks to Jess for all the effort putting it together and everyone else for contributing. The first half of the year has been a memorable one with a number of notable achievements.

Firstly though I would like to welcome our newest members Alia Browne and Noah Lord, very soon we will have a fine crop of junior pattering over the fells.

There have been so many highlights this year so far that to touch on them all would only delay you reading about them in the pages to come. However I think special mentions go to; 'Tim's epic day(s) out', Matthew's success-

ful Bob, winning the team prize at OCT's, Dan and Johns podium at the Lakeland 50, a very successful summer challenge and everyone else who has been out racing in the green and black.

There is still plenty more to come including the relays, some top club races, Bootle, Dunnerdale, Kirby Moor, the FRA dinner (which we as a club are organising) and our own Christmas do. I will let you get to the juicy bits, keep enjoying the fells come rain or shine.

Hollie



FRA do!

On behalf of the FRA I am delighted that Black Combe Runners have agreed to host the 2019 FRA "Do" to be held at the [Netherwood Hotel in Grange-over-Sands on 2nd November](#).

To partner the presentation dinner dance, the **Dunnerdale race has been brought forward by one week** so that visiting fellrunners can experience one of the best races in the FRA calendar.

A dedicated website is being developed (thanks Will) and tickets will be going on sale very soon. The hotel have offered us special rates for a three course meal at £25, accommodation if required and a special rate of £15 for the Thermal Experience in their spa.

Dancing, after the presentation, will be to Kendal band OTT (formerly Nine Lives) and this is a great opportunity to showcase the Green and Black.

I am looking forward to it immensely.

Charmian

I'd like to thank Charmian for encouraging the club to take on the role of hosting the FRA 'do' and for providing tremendous support for us the whole way, from booking the hotel and the band to thinking about table decorations!

The whole event has been developed and organised by a great team including Charmian, Steve Wathall, Will, Hollie, Jess, Pete Tayler, Anna, Mark Roberts, John Bailey, Matt Rooke.

I would encourage everyone to buy a ticket, wear something green and black and support Black Combe at the most important celebration of the fell running calendar.

Hazel

Denis Rankin Round Report

Come on in No. 41

After two years of thinking, planning and three recce trips, I have finally completed the Denis Rankin round (or DRR to the locals). The Denis Rankin Round is in the Mourne Mountains just south of Belfast and is the Northern Irish equivalent of the BG. The whole round consists of a very scenic 90km with 6500 metres of climb in five sections. The running is a mixture of rock, tussocks and bog but not too much bog in a dry year.

The start and finish is under the archway to the car park at Donard Park in Newcastle which is where the Irish counter in the British Championships usually starts or finishes. This is where I found myself just before 3am with a sense of déjà vu, watching the boy racers scooting around the car park. I say déjà vu because just five days earlier I was in the same spot, watching the same boy racers, before setting off on attempt number 1. That day the forecast said go but up on the hill it was very different story with wind, very poor visibility and rain. I managed to complete the first two sections to Deer Meadow, nearly running into some of the tors on the tops before I saw them.

So almost a week later, at 3am, with one or two cheers and whistles from the boy racers, I set off from the archway, through the car park and into the wood where it suddenly got dark and quiet. The climb to the first top, Donard is the highest on the Round but with a good path by the

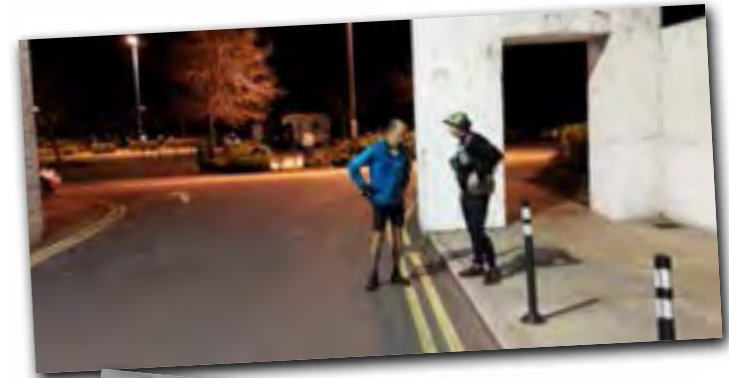
Glen River and then left by the Mourne Wall, I was on top in just over an hour. To digress, the Mourne Wall is some 22 miles long and passes over the tops of fifteen mountains. Crafted from natural granite, it averages around 1.5m high and around 850mm wide, built between 1904 and 1922 to isolate the catchment area for the Silent Valley reservoir from cattle and sheep. It now forms a very good handrail for Mourne runners.

At the top of Donard, I could see a faint orange glow on the horizon and pushed onwards to the next top of Chimney Rock Mountain (these hills have some wonderful names). By now the orange glow had turned to semi-light as I headed to the next top of Rocky Mountain. Then it was a cut back to the wall to pick up the Brandy Pad, a popular route through the Mourne Mountains and, as the name suggests, it was the route popular for smuggling in the eighteen hundreds. The story was that it was used to smuggle items from the coast; coffee, tea, silk and brandy! It is said that the smugglers would have made their way into the mountains via the Bloody Bridge area, and apparently there is a cave along the coast that was used to bring the contraband to shore. Then they would have used the Brandy Pad to cross the top of the two valleys until, upon reaching the Hare's Gap, smaller groups would have dispersed in different directions to get out of the mountains and into the surrounding lands.

The DRR then heads generally south west towards the end of Leg 1 at Silent Valley, a nice ridge run over Slieve Beg, Cove Mountain, Slivelamagan, Binnian North Tor, Slieve Binnian and Wee Binnian. All the way to Binnian I had blue skies, clear views and the mountains to myself. I dropped down over Wee Binnian to find Charmian manning a stile loaded with my food station. At just after 8am the Valley was closed but Charmian had walked in with a flask of tea and various goodies.

With a full belly I ran over the dam to climb Slievenagloch. After the rocks of the first section the terrain was beginning to have more grass and bog. I have found the way to the next tops Doan and Ben Crom to be a bit tedious but head down and get on with it and I was soon heading back towards the Mourne Wall via a mixture of paths and heather bashing underneath Slieve Loughshannagh which is peak 33 on Leg 5. I headed left along the wall to Carn Mountain and Slieve Muck before dropping down to Deer Meadow where I had stopped a week earlier but now two hours ahead of that attempt. It was great to be greeted on Slieve Muck by Stevie who we had helped with his successful BG in 2017. Stevie raced me down the hill to the road where Charmian and Ricky were waiting with beans on toast and more tea.

Suitably nourished, I set off again up Pigeon Rock Mountain on my lonesome with cheers of encouragement from my three supporters. Once again I was on the wall and I followed it over Pigeon Rock, Slievemoughanmore (followed by a little out and back to it's baby Wee Slievemoughan), then back to the wall and on to Eagle Mountain. The only decision to make on the last four tops was which side of the wall was sheltered from the slight cold breeze. After Eagle Mtn that choice is taken away as the



wall is left at Shanlieve to go to Finlieve. The descent off Finlieve was grassy and good running and on a good day there are great views over Rostrefor and Warren Point. At the bottom I skirted around the Rostrefor Forest and headed for the radio mast picking the least boggy trod before the out and back to Slievemeel which is the most southerly point of the round, so every step from here is a step nearer home.

I knew that Charmian would have walked up through the forest to the col between Slievemeel and Slievemartin with more nourishment. Also waiting were good friends Dale and Denise Mathers and Dale offered to accompany me on the next leg. So leaving Charmian and Denise to wash up, Dale and I set off. Twelve hours had elapsed but the good news was that I still had twelve hours left. Dale led me over the confusing ground around Slievemartin and Cranville, with the benefit of his local knowledge. We were soon at the base of Slievemeel where I followed Dale's advice to leave my bag whilst we bagged the summit. With some nifty navigation through the woods we emerged to climb the next top of Tiedockaragh. A right and left turn followed to approach Pierce's Castle which is where Dale left me to head down to the car park. Pierce's Castle is covered in tors and is obvious from miles around. So up I went and there was Denise who had walked up to meet us. Denise accompanied me to Rocky Mountain, pointed me in the right direction and then headed down to find Dale. With a little back-tracking and use of the Mourne Way, I was soon climbing Cock Mountain!! (there is also a Hen Mountain). From the top I could see Spelga Dam where Charmian was waiting and so I headed over Slievenamiskin to be greeted by Charmian with pizza and chips and Mark who offered to

accompany me through to the Finish.

With my legs were starting to protest and Mark for company, we set off over the next two tops, Spaltha and Slievenamuck without our bags which was a little light relief but short lived as Charmian was at the road crossing ready to load us up again. After the next top Ott Mountain, I knew we would be back with our faithful guide, the Mourne Wall. Had I been on my own I would have stuck to it like glue to the last top but Mark seemed to know all the best trods away from the rocks by the wall and which was much better underfoot. The going was back to seriously rocky with seriously steep climbs and a lot of heavy breathing! The final leg goes over Slieve Loughshannagh, Slieve Meelbeg, Slieve Meelmore, Slieve Bearnagh, Slievenagloch, Slieve Corragh and so to the final top of Slieve Commedagh. Reaching the final top on a clear cloudless night, looking down over Newcastle and away to sea, with words of congratulation from Mark was so worth the tired legs and aching feet. With Mark leading the way we descended to the forest and back into Donard Park where the finish was in sight. Through the car park with the same boy racers and back to the archway in a total time of 20 hours and 21 minutes.

It had been a good but tiring day out and I want to thank everybody who made it possible.

Steve Walston



Pete 'n Haze's Wainwright Bonzana!

In 2015, in order to find something to occupy all those midweek days that had now become free, we set ourselves the challenge of completing all the Wainwrights in a calendar year. It started quite well. But then things like races and holidays got in the way and it stagnated a little. To the extent that it took us just over 4 years to complete.



The Wainwrights in numbers

- 214** Number of Wainwrights in the 7 books (but then you all knew that didn't you?)
- 1482** Number of days for completion
- 1475.5** Number of days longer than it took Steve Birkenshaw
- 54** Number of tops that Hazel had never been on before
- 47** Number of tops that I'd never been on before
- 128** Number of repeats of the same mountain again that Hazel did in the 1482 days
- 185** Number of repeats that I did in the same time
- 21** Most repeats on one hill – the Old Man
- 27** Maximum number in one calendar day (though all repeats – it was Hazel's Joss Naylor day)
- 10** Most peaks in a day out with no repeats
- 62** Number of days out
- 3.5** Average tops bagged per day out
- 1** Tops completed in the whole of 2018
- 0** Tops completed during any of the four Octobers and four Novembers
- 69** Tops completed in the five Januarys, it's a good winter occupation
- 6** Number of minutes to get from Meal Fell to Longlands Fell
- 0** No of times we plan to go up Armbboth Fell again during our lives



Our vests are green, but how green are we?

Environmental Issues in Fell Running

Keswick AC recently published an environmental policy for their races. It got me thinking about the environmental impact of fell running and what we as individuals and as a club can do. This isn't meant to be a standard that must be followed but aims to prompt thought, consideration and potential action. Where suggestions are given they aim to be simple, straightforward and not controversial.

Remember the waste hierarchy: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

The Runner

What can you do as a fell runner?

1. Transport

A simple one. Most vehicles depend on burning fossil fuels unless you have an electric car and an exclusively renewable energy supplier. Even then you release brake and tyre particles as you drive. Share transport to runs and races. Want more training? Take a leaf from Pup's book and cycle to your race and back.

2. Nutrition

Energy bars and gels are plastic wrapped. Of course all BCRs will carry their waste back to the finish and dispose of it properly but it's not going to degrade. Try making your own. This peanut no-bake flapjack worked well for me at Great Lakes:

Ingredients:

200 g oats
200 g peanut butter
150 g total of golden syrup, and molasses or treacle
75 g total of extras (e.g. raisins, chopped nuts, seeds)

Method:

1. Mix the oats and extras in a bowl.
2. Mix the wet ingredients in a pan and heat gently to combine.
3. Add the dry ingredients and stir well.
4. Press into a baking tray.
5. Set in the fridge.

It freezes really well. Take it straight from the freezer and it will be ready to eat in a couple of hours.

I'm finding real food (peanut butter and jam sandwiches, fruit and nuts) is working better for me on long runs than fast burn gels and bars but if you really like them you can also make your own sports drink and gels (I've not tried this <https://www.ilovebicycling.com/how-to-make-your-own-homemade-energy-gel>). At least buy powder in bulk in recyclable tubs.

Take your own plate/bowl and cutlery for the post race meal.



Plastic wrapped made in a lab vs ingredients sold in loose/no containers

3. Water

How many single use cups get used by races? Reduce your contribution by carrying a small reusable cup to water stations. This is becoming the norm on the continent and the water points don't have cups. Leave a bottle at the finish, and if there are post-race hot drinks go to your car and bring back your reusable mug.

4. Kit

Take your own pins to races. Runners must go through a lot. Reuse them till they are rusty then recycle. You could use a Euro style number belt.

Doing an expensive trail race? Write to the organiser and ask them to offer a reduced entry fee if you decline the merchandise e.g. medal and t-shirt. If enough people do this it might become the standard.

5. Erosion

In a race you are going to take the racing line. When training maybe stick to those annoying rock slabs. You could also join a Fix the Fells (<https://www.fixthefells.co.uk>) work-party to repair some paths.

6. Rubbish

I don't think any BCR would litter, but you could do a running litter pick when training. Lindsay Buck highlighted her work on Facebook as the #wasdalewomble recently. Share on social media. Take a look at www.runnersagainstrubbish.org

The Organiser

What can you do as an organiser?

1. Transport

Encourage car sharing with reduced parking fees for multiple occupancy, and extortionate ones for single occupancy. Make sure public transport options are advertised and time race start to suit public transport if it is a viable option.

2. Water

Have water at the finish but no cups. Tell people to leave their own before they start or pop back to their car. If you have water points then have a cup as mandatory kit so you don't need to provide any.

3. Kit

The organiser of the Clough Head champs race last year was charging £1 per four safety pins after he worked out how many thousand pins get used each year by fell races. Expect competitors to bring their own or charge a lot.

If using electronic timing reduce the waste by using reusable chips e.g. SportIdent or Fabian4 not the single use tags on the back of numbers. Insist SI provide finger loops or reusable wrist straps not Tyvek bands. Don't print individual results slips at download and display results on a screen.

4. Promotion

Make sure runners know in advance what to expect and what to bring.

The Club

What can the club do?

1. Kit

Buy some rope for finish funnels so our organisers don't use loads of barrier tape.

Buy some high quality markers so tape isn't used for route flagging.

Don't buy more plastic cups, cutlery, plates etc.

Invest in reusable numbers that will be collected and washed after our races ready for the next one.

Consider whether club clothing can be more environmentally friendly. For example there is a company making running vests from recycled water bottles. More research needed.

2. Promotion

Have an environmental policy and ensure runners coming to our races know what to expect.

Encourage and support the FRA in establishing an environmental policy across the sport. The FRA has the objective "to encourage and promote fell running and allied mountain races having due regard to the environmental and other impacts of the sport.

Matt Rooke

An interview Nigel Hetherington...

Nigel Hetherington was one of the earliest members of Black Combe Runners and in 1987 became the first club member to complete a Bob Graham Round. Since then he has embarked on a rich and varied career in coaching and is now a National Trainer for UK Anti-Doping (UKAD). It was an immense privilege to catch up with Nigel, whose enthusiasm and passion for his work is completely infectious...!

Nigel – I have to ask this question...did any of your experiences at BCR influence your decision to become a coach?!

My concept of a coach back then was a posh bus! Mostly we simply ran as we felt, picked up a few tips from clubmates, raced as we fancied and had a laugh. However, we also got a lot wrong! We had little genuine understanding of training principles, training program structure or motivational goal-setting and even less was truly known or applied around physiology, diet, psychology, rest and recovery, injury management, rehabilitation plus a host of other key factors. As a result, despite several high-achieving athletes, I would argue that few achieved their potential despite the strong club spirit, work ethic and passion for competition that pervaded. In hindsight, many who ran at the highest level were marvellous examples of where true talent meets good fortune.

From a personal perspective it took a long and candid retrospective review of my own journey from 1982-86 for me to appreciate I may just have been missing something! The facts were obvious: I had progressed from not being a runner in 1982 to posting an 81-minute 10-mile time that year, to running 62-minutes within two-years. Between Oct 1983 and June 1985 I lowered my marathon best by just over an hour from 4:16 in Windermere to 3:15



in Manchester – where, incidentally, I reached 25 miles in sub-2:50 before a severe cramp had me poleaxed on the pavement for 10 minutes before hobbling to the finish feeling utterly frustrated. That was the fish that got away! In some ways, even completing the Bob Graham Round was a victory for determination and stubbornness, good knowledge and navigation skills over almost everything else!

What was I missing? Who could help me develop my performance? How could I better support my passion and desire for personal achievement through challenge and competition? It can't all be about luck!

In reality it was 1993, two house moves and two career steps later, that a chance advert I saw for coach recruitment led me innocently down the coaching pathway I have so relished now for over 26 years!

You've worked on a wide variety of projects with athletes at a local and national level - could you give us an insight into the work you do and how you got involved in this?

After qualifying as a coach in 1993, openings

quickly appeared - I've always been one to explore things and grab opportunities! I moved through a raft of roles including UK Coach Educator and Assessor, National Coordinator (Wales), National Coach (sprints and relays - Wales) through to Head Coach (Scotland) while serving as full-time Performance Manager (2005-09). I do love grassroots development, but I quickly found myself in a high-performance environment managing performance programs and coordinating athlete support staff – sports scientists and medics, physios and nutritionists, strength conditionists, performance analysts and psychologists to name a few. Today I work freelance and a substantial part of my work is as a National Trainer with UK Anti-Doping where I have the total privilege of working to support our UK national teams across all sports; home country teams and TeamGB and ParalympicsGB athletes. I still remain very involved with local and regional sport with various projects on the go! It's been a fabulous journey and I feel I'm riding the crest right now!

You're currently working with Team GB across all sports (athletes and staff) supporting and educating them in all things anti-doping - no small task! Could you explain a little more about what this involves?

I work as a National Trainer for UKAD. I am honoured to have been supported to evolve a very wide-ranging role. The 'Major Games Policy' in the UK sets out to ensure all of our Home Country and Team GB level athletes who compete in relevant Global and Area Games and Championships undergo a progressive and on-going education program so as to best protect themselves in all things anti-doping. I love the interactive nature of this role and working directly with our elite and their support teams.

The topic of doping has recently started to creep into the top levels of mountain running. What are your views on this, and do you think this will affect fell running in future?

All athletes, in all sports, at all levels have a responsibility through 'strict liability' to know the potential doping and health risks they may face – whether that be a medication they take or a nutritional supplement they consume. The anti-doing rules apply to everyone because everyone wants to compete on a level playing field. Fell and trail running are no exceptions. And it's not just world level athletes trying to make an honest living from their craft – it's everyone! We owe it to our sport, our competitors, our families and sponsors, but mostly to ourselves to ensure we compete clean – and that includes inadvertent doping!

How would you describe your coaching style?

Potential releasing. Supportive. Understanding and Empathetic. Creative. Honest. Engaged. Flexible. Relational. Positive. Realistic. Believing. Knowledgeable. Skilled. Experienced. Reinforcing. Critical. Goal-oriented. Process driven. Motivation-based. Approachable. Friendly. BOTH Exhaustive and Simplistic!

You recently developed an annual training plan for a club in Scotland with a focus on mountain and trail running. How did you adapt your approach to meet their specific needs?

This was an interesting challenge – how to make an annual training plan relevant and motivational to a group of dedicated competitive athletes in these disciplines and yet also directly applicable to each individually so that personal challenge and progression remained at the heart? The outcome is undoubtedly a compromise, but embodies sufficient detail and options to ensure athletes can evolve a personal training plan against the backdrop of the club plan. I've focused on making more structured use of existing training environments but am always happy to let the athlete / group call the shots on the day. I've worked to be creative and yet also to integrate training to match the (club championship) competition

Nigel Hetherington Interview continued...

So, a series of progressive intervals, hill reps of various durations and inclines including downhills and consecutive climbs - always being mindful of how complex the natural terrain may be in races and trying to match those demands with the training focus. I'm also a strong advocate of technical training so every session has a number of technical or physical focus points to maximise the learning and development opportunity in that moment. I also understand the importance of enjoyment and variety in training, so included intermittent paarlauf, fartlek, mob match, relay and shuttle sessions and time trials to totally destroy any notion that our sport has to be serious (all the time!). Finally, group dynamics and ability levels must also play a part to ensure motivation and buy-in are maximised. This is the first year so I'm looking forward to seeing how it evolves, responding to the feedback and developing the approach going forward. It's a great challenge!!

Every job has its difficulties! What has been your most challenging coaching experience and how did you overcome it?

Now this feels like a job interview! I've faced so many challenges!! But here goes!

The scene: After the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games a Paralympian asked if I would coach them? The initial feeling: Irrational panic! I don't know you, I don't understand your 'disability' and I wouldn't know how to coach you. I can't offer you anything? What if I mess up?

The reflection: I need to get to know you, I need to understand the nature of your disability (and how it affects your event). I'm a national coach, maybe I do know something of value here. If I don't mess-up how will we know we've got it right?

The action: Agree a 3-month two-way trial – can we work together? Walk away with pride intact if not. Learn about the nature of the 'disability' and spend coaching time exploring the reality and the opportunity. Be open to mistakes – review often and fully engage with the athlete and other professionals.

The outcome: Coached the athlete for several years. Fastest 100m time in the world in 2001, WR in the shot putt in 2004, now 5-time Paralympian and medallist, multiple world championship medallist, two-time Commonwealth athlete (and medallist). Happy athlete, proud coach J. You see, no need to have panicked after all!

What is your favourite way to challenge your students?

Ask questions! e.g. Do you know what you're doing and why? If you were to design this session what would you do differently? What do you think you should do next? What is it you are trying to achieve? Why do you run / race?

Pull, don't push - sometimes it takes longer but the learning is greater and the growth is unlimited and self-driven.

What things should people look for in a coach? How do you think amateur runners can maximise the benefit they get from having a coach?

What to look for: The first thing they should do is find out about you as a person – your motivation and inspiration, your strengths, your goals, your doubts and fears but mostly your dreams!! No bullshit, keep it simple, know their stuff (it matters) and be able to communicate. Dependable and honest.

How to benefit: As an athlete, be prepared to take that leap of faith and let someone in to your running bubble – you just never know where it might take you! Create an honest and appropriate working relationship with your coach – you know you best, and they need to know what you know (well some of it!). A good coach will help you explore your motivations and work toward your potential.

At BCR we have a wide range of runners of all ages and abilities. What tips would you give us for setting personal goals?

Ideally all goals should be self-determined as well as being 'SMART'. Have a club night where you allow individuals / pairs / teams to explore and share personal goals and write them down (ensure they're SMART). Think performance, think outcome and think process as the nature of the goal dictates the action required. Share examples of how more experienced athletes have identified, set, worked towards and achieved a personal outcome or performance – applied examples are so much more tangible and inspirational. Would love to run such a session for the club!

You've helped to develop a number of coaches who have gone on to work at GB level. What advice would you give to somebody who is considering becoming a coach?

Do it! You'll never look back! But be mindful it is likely to be a long-term commitment. Ask yourself why you might want to be a coach – know your philosophy. Stay open-minded – a parachute works best when it's open – and be willing to acknowledge that you'll never know everything and never coach perfectly but that shouldn't stop you trying! Coaching is both an art and a science, there are no exact answers, no GPS data to lead you on your path but, if you remain athlete-centred, while looking after yourself and your own motivations, you can derive huge personal value from your coaching journey.

What is your proudest coaching moment?

Actually, writing this!! - because it has brought back a billion wonderful memories; hundreds of smiling athlete, coach and parent faces; dozens of peacock-like, strutting proud coach moments, and echoed times of failure (we all fail) from which I learnt and rebounded stronger than before. It would be a travesty to define myself from one coaching moment.

And finally, how has being a coach helped you to re-evaluate your own running aspirations? Has it affected your personal outlook at all?

Jeeez – in such a huge way! Reflecting on my early BCR days (and I have no regrets) I can't help wonder how far my running passion and moderate ability might have taken me if only I'd had a coach! Today, I am better able to define life's challenges and opportunities and set and review goals with such clarity and understanding. I'm my own best critical friend – supportive and yet discerning and better able to make informed intelligent decisions. Professionally, throughout my career, being a coach has played a massive part in enabling me. Being a coach allows you to be able to make a positive difference in your own life and those of others.

Beth Ripper



Montane Lakeland 50

I would have to say trying to enter the Lakeland 50 is just as hard as doing the actual race! Having spent far longer than I care to admit looking at a spinning cog on my laptop waiting to see if I get to the page on SiEntries saying I had got an entry, that message came up! At that moment, SiEntries crashed from the amount of people trying to enter.

Fortunately I was able to pay for my entry, and breathe a sigh of relief! I could then turn to a training plan to prepare for the race...

Or so I thought! Picking up an ankle injury at the start of January, and (foolishly) continuing to run on it, ended up with me on crutches for over 3 weeks, and not being able to run for nearly 4 months! Word of advice, don't run on an injury, bad things happen! 'Training' began at the start of May doing a few runs at or around marathon distance. I had good endurance, and one recce run from Pooley Bridge to Ambleside clocking in at under 7 hours 30 mins, and having no pain in my ankle at the end of it, I knew I could get round in a decent time... if I go into the race with a good plan under my belt for race day.

So come race day. I see Dan and John before the race starts and they are in good spirits. I knew they would have a good chance of winning the pairs category, so I gave them my best wishes at the start, as I would not be seeing them again. At 11:30am, we are off, just as the heavens open on us all! I was glad this happened, as I didn't fancy running in scorching temperatures.

Doing the 4 mile loop round Dalemain estate, I put my race plan into motion. I was more than happy to sit towards the back of the field for the first few hours and take it all in, and save myself for later on in the day. The first checkpoint, Howtown, came round in a little over 2 hours, so took my time here to stock up on food and drink. I knew the next section over to Mardale Head would be crucial.

Heading out of the checkpoint, the next climb up Fusedale was staring me down. This is a

climb that doesn't seem to end, and with the heavens well and truly open by now, it would prove to be a tricky climb. Going steady up here really paid off, as I felt really good once I hit the summit. The next part of my race plan came into motion here. I began working my way forward through the line of runners, moving along well and comfortably. After a while, I dropped down to Haweswater and ended up in a line of people behind a Lakeland 100 competitor. This was actually good, as I could take it easy along to the next checkpoint. Arriving at the checkpoint, I took on rather a lot of food and drink, and headed off to the next checkpoint, which would be Kentmere.

Climbing out of Haweswater, I was still feeling strong. I continued to pick off runners down Gatesgarth Pass and into Sadgill Wood, and was very happy with my performance up to this point. The support from other runners is great, no matter who you come across, everyone passes on their best wishes. There are even lots of people still smiling at this point. One pair I came across were going through the alphabet in order going off other competitors names. They were up to K when I passed them, they still had a bit to go until they got to S... I roll into Kentmere after a little over 7 hours and take on lots more food. Preparations for the fell race the next day are in the field by the checkpoint, something which I would not be competing in!



The next section along to Ambleside isn't too bad of a leg. I had ended up in a small group of other 50 runners, and we all urged each other long. We had lots of chat about how we were all feeling, and how preparations had gone in the lead up to the race. I got a few laughs when I said my training went terrible with being injured, but was still enjoying the day. Troutbeck came and went, and upon coming to a farm not far from Ambleside, I see a familiar figure at a gate. It was no other than Matt Allen! We both talked about how I was getting on, how I was feeling, and how Dan and John were doing (they were in the final 3 miles of the race at this point, and would go on to take 2nd place in the pairs category). Matt commented on how strong I still looked running, and followed me down into Ambleside, to many cheers from people out spectating.

I made one mistake at Ambleside, which was spending too long at the checkpoint (nearly 30 minutes). Leaving the checkpoint, I was shivering, and had to get a move on. Matt shuffled with me heading over Loughrigg, where I warm up again quite quickly. We both jogged into Elterwater, and Matt, who was parked here, said his goodbyes to me and wished me well for the rest of the race. Headtorch now on by this point, I shuffled round into Chapel Stile checkpoint. At this point, I'm over 65km into the race, which is by far the longest run I have done. Still feeling mostly ok, I was very happy with my performance.

Heading out to the final checkpoint at Tilberthwaite, my legs really started to tire out. I was down to running and mostly walking, and I must say, the climb out of the valley to Blea Tarn is a bit of a bugger! The group I had ended up in came up with an appropriate name for me, which was running man! We ended up saying that if I ran, then everyone else had to run too! This was very fun and kept our spirits up. Having done this route both in the light and the dark as training runs, I knew the route very well, and continued to shuffle long until I came to Tilberthwaite, the final checkpoint.

Giving my watch a quick charge up (I did not want to lose this run. After all, if it's not on Strava it didn't happen!) and paying my £1 for

Jacobs ladder, I set off the for final 3 miles of the race. Jacobs ladder, which is the name for the steps out of the checkpoint onto the fell, felt like climbing a mountain! My legs were very tired, so I just got my head down and kept shuffling over the final climb. I reached the top, and could see the lights down towards Coniston. I knew now I had pretty much done the race, and just 3km of downhill remained. Coming down into Coniston, there were lots of cheers from other people supporting, and I crossed the line, feeling very happy with myself.

My time was 14 hours 22 minutes, far quicker than I was expecting to run (my main goal was 18 hours or less). So coming back that much quicker was a huge boost. I was then ushered through to the marquee to cheers from other people in there, as one of the helpers exclaimed "here's a Lakeland 50 legend!". One medal later, I sit down and reflect on the run I have just done. I still felt pretty good even after 50 miles, and I know I have felt far, far worse after other 35 mile ultra marathons.

Upon reflection, I think getting the injury was a blessing in disguise. It meant I went into the race with no goal, just wanting to get round and enjoy the day. I easily achieved all that, so the whole day was one big win for me. Going from 535th place at Howtown, to 395th place by the end, highlighted how important nutrition and pacing is on a long run.

It does make me think though. I would have another 25 and a half hours to do another 55 miles, perhaps the Lakeland 100 next year is something to think about...

Simon Austin

Psst, BCR's Dan H and John E were the 2nd male pair to finish! (Just 9:05 mins behind the leaders!)



The Conti Thunder Run

The Conti Thunder Run is a 24 Hour race around a 10km Off-Road Trail. There are a number of options to enter; Solo, Duo (M, F, Mixed), Teams of 3-5 (M, F, Mixed), Teams of 6-8 (M, F, Mixed). Acre Street is a Club based around Huddersfield Area and is the Club that my mates Bob & Suzy run with.

Bob started running a month after me, and Suzy took the plunge soon after that. I was part of one of Acre Streets three Mixed Teams of 5. We all arrived on Friday, said hello and pitched our tents. I was trying out a Backpacking style tent, everyone else had opted to be comfortable. A number of the group had competed before and they gave the rest of us a guided tour of the change-over area.

The rules are fairly simple, One Baton (snap-on whist band), every one has a Timing Tag, each Team Member has to do at least one lap. On Friday evening we were treated to some home made vegetarian Indian food, kindly prepared by one of the couples.

Saturday Morning saw a mass exodus as runners made their way to flash-mob the (pre-warned, expectant & prepared) local Park Runs. The Race then commenced at Midday, with Bob taking the 1st leg. The first three Hours/Laps were relatively dry, but this did not last. For the next two Hours/Laps, the rain was quite relentless & this significantly changed the terrain underfoot.

My first lap was ran wearing a pair of Salomon Trail shoes, these were soon put to one side in favour of a pair Walsh PB's. A few Innov-8 were noted, but my Walsh's were completely in their element. On a couple of the muddiest descents; I suspect that even the Marshals did not understand how I could remain upright.

With the Sun now beating down, the texture & consistency of the mud changed lap after lap. From 20:30 through to 06:00, glistening Head

Torches could be seen illuminating the forest canopy & slopes. I was lucky enough to witness the sunrise part-way through one of my laps.

On my third lap, my calf was feeling quite odd, I presumed that this was cramp and made sure I took on some salt. 9km into my fourth lap however, I had the oddest electrical stabbing pain in my calf and came to a bit of a stop. On completing this lap, I passed the baton on and hobbled to suss out what was up. After an hour, my half was quite swollen & warm to the touch.

I discussed my predicament with the team and we reshuffled the order, in the hope that I may be able to undertake the last lap. To be honest, I think we knew at this point that lap four was my last and this was confirmed shortly after.

We managed a respectable 23 Laps in the 24 hours. 24 hours of eating, running, eating again, discussing Strava & running again. An event well worth considering if you ever get chance.

Jon Bailey



The Lighthouse Races

The Lighthouse Race events started last year, as a way to raise money for local charities. Following last year's successful first running of the Lighthouse 10k, BCR chose to support the event by listing within the Road Champs. The second year of these events has seen two additional races being developed. The **Lighthouse 5km** was ran early in January & amongst other things; served as friendly/informal introduction to racing for the people that had been taking up running via the "Couch to 5k".

The weather wasn't too kind, but this didn't dampen the spirits of those taking part in their 1st race of 2019, or their 1st race ever. April saw the introduction of their first Officially Measured & England Athletics acknowledged run.

The **Silly Hilly Half** is a road race that starts & ends at Haverigg Ski-Bar & takes in some of the terrain many BCR Members may have trodden in the past on the 1st January Po-House Race. The Chip Timed race features an undulating course; with enough varied views to keep those (of us) that are less keen on road running happy. 3km in finds "The Knot"; a noticeable climb, followed by a descent that I suspect to be steep & challenging enough for the likes of enough for Josh & Holly to enjoy. 6km include my favourite section of the run & includes the final quarter of the old Po House race. Personally; I am not a confident road runner & had quite a bit of apprehension that part of the route ran along the Valley Road, but 8km into the run; I can admit being reassured at the professionalism, visibility & presence of the Marshals.

The last 8km of the loop consisted of a combination of attempts to catch up & attempts to hold-on having just overcooked it slightly. Crossing the line found me in 2nd place, with a new Half PB and enough time to get to the bar & back for the next runners crossed the line. Shortly after, I was able to tell from the cheering; that Karl was completing his run, running strong & sporting his Um-Bongo Vest & Union Jack hat. As a comparison; if you like the Coniston 14, I think you might like this one.

The 2019 **Lighthouse 10k** chosen charity for this year's race was "Shine for Autism", so it was good to know that donning the green & black vest was supporting this valued local cause. 2019 saw a number of upgrades, with the race now being Officially Measured, England Athletics acknowledged & featuring Chip Timing.

The 100+ starters included BCR's Gavin Lloyd, Karl Furse, James Goffe, Jonathan Bailey & John Shevelan. The finishing order for James, Jon & John was hard to guess; following a few close races during the last year.

Shortly into the race, a number of groups had formed, towards the front found Gavin having to judge his own race. Not so far behind; James, Jon & John traded positions with themselves & local runner Daniel King. The incline of the Knott looked to suit these four runners & once this had been conquered, it was a case of holding on. A few groups of people had formed to cheer the Racers on; with BCR's Rob Sanders popping up at more than one location to offer some encouragement.

Gavin secured a hard earned podium. James, Jon & John placed 11th-13th. Karl finished within the top half of a strong field, knocking a minute off his 2018 time. It's great to see how well these "Lighthouse Race" events are developing & growing and how the local charities are benefiting from this.

Jon Bailey





Duddon Skyline

As the idea of new running challenges continues in the club, I thought I'd put on paper one I ran in 2012 as training for my Joss Naylor Challenge.

It's a variation on something I believe people in the club have run in the past and it loosely follows the Duddon skyline. The big advantage in this route is that it's very easy to access as start and finish is at Duddon Bridge and is not an excessively long day at about 32 miles and something like 10000 feet of ascent.

I took 8 hrs 45 to do this, I understand Mike V. has also completed this as part of his Paddy Buckley preparation.

The day I tried it was a weekday off work and was spent most of the way completely alone in cloud and light drizzle, though there was thankfully little wind. I hadn't found a particularly good way to start so ran up the road for the first mile and a half.

After that you can either be completely on your own or you could be supported at the roads at Kiln Bank Cross, Wrynose, Hardnott, Birker Fell and on Corney Fell. The east side is pretty much home ground for us, but there are some more obscure peaks on the west - a highlight to look forward to is the tussocky drag up the barren, featureless Hesk Fell.

Enjoy it!!

The waymarks to hit along the way are:

- Great Stickle
- Stickle Pike
- Caw
- White Pike
- White Maiden
- Brown Pike
- Buck Pike
- Dow
- Brim Fell
- Swirl How
- Great Carrs/Little Carrs
- Three Shire Stone
- Cold Pike
- Little Stand
- Col at head of Mosedale GR 237040
- Hardknott
- Hardknott Pass
- Harter Fell
- Green Crag
- White How
- Great Worm Crag
- Birker Fell GR 188953
- Hesk Fell
- Whitfell
- Buckbarrow
- Barrow

Pete Tayler



© Mike Hartley



Sunday 9th March

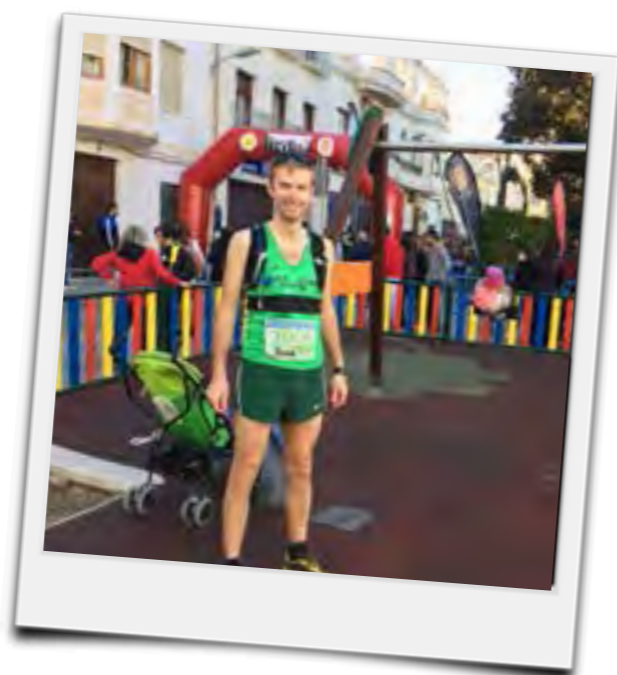
Rocks, heat, more rocks, more heat. That pretty much sums up my memory of this half marathon on the trails around the town of Benissa on the Spanish Costa Blanca.

Benissa is a small town about 10 miles inland and a 20 minute drive from where we were staying on the edge of Calpe. In addition to my race there was a full marathon and an ultra. They went on some proper mountains but my race stuck to the foothills though included some steep climbs with a total ascent of 750 m.

The race had an early start at 09:00 so I'd collected my number and swag bag (T-shirt, mug, crackers and cured sausage) the night before and arrived at Benissa for 08:15 for a gentle jog to the main square where the race began. It was unusually quiet for a Euro race but my worries were soon allayed when a techno version of Auld Lang Syne started on the PA. I'm sure the local residents loved that. Becca and the girls arrived at the start in good time and made use of the playground.

At 08:50 I made my way through kit check (foil blanket – I don't think hypo-

hypothermia would have been a problem) and into the start pen to find a good position amidst the arm warmers and visors. The Spanish race brief began so I listened for the tres-dos-uno and then was off. The first 3 km was on road or gravel track and it was fast. A bit too fast. I was averaging 4 min/km but I felt good. After crossing (under, through a 4ft diameter concrete pipe) a dual-carriageway the route got more interesting and the hills started. The first half was on decent tracks and nothing too steep and I'd got to the village on Senija at halfway in 55 minutes. On target for 2 hours I thought. What a contrast the second half was.



The next 7 km were on the rockiest singletrack I have ever run on with no opportunity to build up any momentum on the downhill. Every step was a jump to the next rock, and the trail kept changing direction as it wound down the hill. When the race got back on good trails my feet were so sore. I averaged about 6 min/km for the last 5 km. Finish time of 2:37:04 (59th place). The winner only managed 1:57:31 so my 2 hour hope was a bit optimistic!

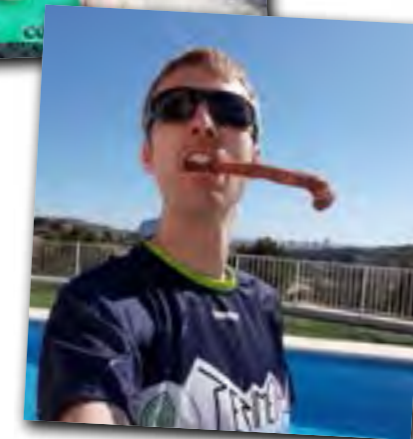
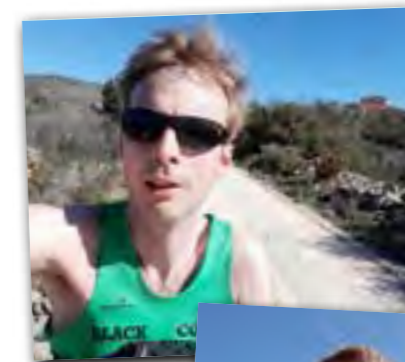
Did I enjoy it? I enjoyed running the first half. I enjoyed finishing. I enjoyed the experience of the unusual terrain in the middle, but I can't say I enjoyed running on it! I did enjoy getting back to our villa and dunking my legs in the ice-cold swimming pool.

Would I recommend it? I wouldn't recommend travelling to Spain for this race, but if it conveniently fits into your family holiday as it did with me then why not. The 42 km and 70 km went onto the higher land through woodland and didn't spend the entire race on exposed scrub. They might have been better. It was good value though at €17 which included the swag, post race barbecue, and two feed stations.

I do recommend the Costa Blanca as a destination though. The race was at the weekend in the middle of the holiday. The rest of the time we spent walking in the mountains or on the empty beaches. Sunny skies and 20°C made a very pleasant week, and even better when we heard we were escaping a wet and cold week in England.

Facebook @perimetralbenissa
Entries via www.mychip.es

Matt Rooke



It's all in your head...

London Marathon 2019

What a massive privilege it was to run 26.2 miles around London in a slightly worse for wear Black Combe vest, following in the footsteps of so many Black Combe legends.

I listened to the advice of the 'legends' of the marathon who amongst other things said I should put down a quick 'predicted time' so as to ensure a good spot near the front. Based on my vast experience of just the one last minute Trail Marathon (where I made Bambi look in control on the ice), I deduced a predicted time of 2 hours 55 factored in enough 'Sue Ross' optimism to ensure a reasonable start position and give me enough motivation to do a few longer training runs.

Turns out London is much like Tesco's, I bumped into my sister's boyfriend at the tube station on his way to buy a moped and a chap from Hoad Hill sat down next to me on the Tube and we then bumped into another chap called Mark who ran for Black Combe in the British Fell relays in Snowdonia. Once summoned I headed into our '2:50-255hr' start pen and quickly realised I was so close to the front I could see Mo's mega eyebrows. I looked around at the crazy number of lycra clad runners, then up to the huge screens showing the vast crowds lining the streets, and thought 'this is just bonkers'. Not only that but I knew I had to finish and run a respectable race as friends and family were tracking me every mile of the blooming thing via an 'app', great idea but it didn't half feel like eyes were burning through the back of your head.

Back to the matter in hand, I was a few minutes from the start, wearing a bin bag for warmth (another 'legends' tip) 'I think I need a wee. Do I really? Or am I just imagining it?! What if I pee myself halfway round?!'.

Too late for that, we were off, and after an exciting start where many elbows were well and truly 'out'. I settled into a nice rhythm, and it stayed rather uneventfully much that way until about 15 miles in where there was one minor event, I still needed that pee...a pee would waste 30 seconds stood having a wee and besides there wasn't exactly a discrete bush to hide behind amongst the wall of spectators, so I needed a plan! After some debate on how to do it, I settled on utilising the practice of pouring bottles of water down yourself after feed stations (located every mile or so) to cool down. It was quite simple, wait until you can grab two bottles of water, slow down a bit and time it so you pee and pour simultaneously and it all gets washed away onto the notoriously clean streets of London.



The atmosphere was amazing, I was carried on a wave of noise for mile upon mile, which was just such a thrill, but I'm blooming glad I listened to another 'legend' tip of don't wear your name or a big distinctive club name...boy did I feel for those poor souls. I was pretty much spent by mile 20, those tracking me on the app witnessed the numbers reflecting me hitting the wall as I pushed on ever slowing, I dug deep, but there was nowhere to hide. I had paced it very well if it was a 20 mile race, but it wasn't, and I was regretting it with every stride. Jess and the rest of my family who had so passionately cheered me on were doing their best to lift my spirits but I had already reached the point where the laptop battery drops below 10% and you need to plug it in 'low power mode'. The last mile was very bad indeed. George who crossed the line a few minutes after me bore witness in my inability to move or function.

The pain lasted a few days, but the satisfaction and sense of achievement lasted long after the legs recovered.

Josh Hartley

On a separate note... Kudos to Steve W for completing the Bootle Show Fell Race then a few hours later doing the BCW Woodlands hill climb!



Just a nice picture I couldn't squeeze in anywhere else! Caw social!



Black Combe is the most southern and western fell in the Lake District and Black Combe Runners is a small friendly fell running club based in that area. We come from around Ulverston, Broughton, Barrow and Millom and we run all over the South Lakes.

Check out www.bcrunners.org.uk