

Black Combe Runners
newsie

January 2019



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Just a quick note from me...



English Champs write up - Cawtley



British Fell Relays



James Harris



This is me (Jess)

Wow, it's been a busy few months since the last newsie...

Thanks very much for all of your contributions — some fantastic reads I hope you all enjoy. And to Mike Hartley for the front cover! For those who didn't come to the Caw downhill race in December, it captures the atmosphere and costumes perfectly.

Here are some of the highlights over the last few months...

- BCR "Punching above their weight!" — Men come 9th in the English Championship... and the ladies 3rd! GO BLACK COMBE!
- BCR ladies won bronze at the British Fell Running Relays in October, plus a fantastic overall turnout for BCR — 5 teams!
- Great results at the Hodgson Brothers Mountain Relays. 15th for the men and 5th for the ladies
- James Harris came 6th in the 2018 Lakeland Classics Trophy League — great work Pup!
- Too many other OUTSTANDING results at races to name them all
- ...a brilliant Christmas do!

Cheers

Jess



A few highlights from the Law DH race 😊





Captain's Farewell

Becca Rooke

It seems a long time ago that I was sat next to John Millen in the Old Friends when he asked if I wanted to take over as captain from him. I distinctly remember saying no then and on several other occasions but no one listened... Now after two years it's time to give someone else a chance to captain the green and black ship to seas new. Two small children keep me more than busy enough!

One of my aims as captain was to try and increase participation in the fell and road club champs, especially from women. After winning LFROTY (Ladies fell runner of the year) for 2016 I was happy as I'd been targeting it as a first step to getting back to fitness after having Hattie but it was also a hollow victory as no other girls had completed the necessary races.

For 2018 I picked some easier short and medium races, against some opposition from purists, but struggled to find easy long races that didn't clash with other things. For 2019 I've controversially included a CL race (A being the hilliest classification and C the least hilly) with the hope of improving the number of people who complete a long, a medium, a short, and 2 others. But it's up to the new captain whether they want to keep this race in the club champs. I've also put several trail races in the road champs, just enough so that people not keen on running on road, through old injuries or other reasons (e.g. it's boring!), can still have a go.

But where I've had the most success and what I'm most proud of is getting teams out to English Championship races. It's something that hadn't been done before even though there was so much potential to do well.



Turner Landscape 2018. (Top pic: Dunnerdale 2018).

The girls' 2nd place team for 2017 was a dream come true. Thank you to my team mates for getting on board with this. I hardly dared hope we'd manage to medal again in 2018 as injuries or illness could so easily spoil our chances. I went to 5 out of the 6 races with clipboard in hand working out our team position at the finish to distract me from the frustration at not being able to run myself (being pregnant with Cecily). I was delighted the girls got 3rd team for the year and it's been good to see the boys starting to get their act together and getting 9th male team. They can definitely improve on this if they want to.

We had an amazing 5 teams out for the British Fell Relays with it being conveniently in Grasmere. While being a little stressful to organise at times it was all worth it in the end. Thank you to my team captains Josh Hartley, Alice Forster, Pete and Hazel Tayler. And massive congratulations to the girls for their 3rd place!

I've had a great 2 years being captain but I'm looking forward to not having to face my fear of public speaking again anytime soon! Good luck to the new captain. Please give them your support by getting yourselves along to the club championship races.

Dates for your diary

Sunday 6th October – Hodgson Brothers Mountain Relay, Patterdale

Saturday 19th October – British Fell Relays, Peak District

English and British Championship Races

| Date | Country | Category | Race |
|----------|---------|----------|--------------------------|
| 17-03-19 | E | AS | Stretton Hills |
| 06-04-19 | E | AL | Howgills race |
| 27-04-19 | B | AM | Mourne Highline, Ireland |
| 25-05-19 | B | AM | Ras Y Meolwyn, Wales |
| 15-06-19 | B&E | AL | Great Lakes Race |
| 06-07-19 | E | AM | Black Fell |
| 03-08-19 | B | AS | Creag Dhubh, Scotland |
| 07-09-19 | E | AM | Grisedale Horseshoe |
| 22-09-19 | E | AS | Ilam |

Andy's Southern Lakeland Fells

Rob McKeever

Last September I did a challenge that is a must for all Black Combe runners!

It's on our doorstep and we cover all these fells (except one or two) on our social runs. No reccie needed. It was completed on a lovely sunny day. Nice of Pete and Hazel to join me from Walna Scar to Grey Friar by then I needed a pick-me-up!

Best part was on the summit of Dow Crag it seemed to take an eternity to there from Grey Friar. It was twilight and very still, I hadn't seen anyone on the fells since Coniston Old Man. It was a great ambience and allowed me to collect a few cherished thoughts of Andy.

When I was ready to go I had energy shot that Pete had given me and it seemed to give me a new lease of life as I ran all the way to the Blacksmiths just in time to meet Karen for a celebration drink. I hope to get this put on the Gofar site.

The facts:

Challenge name: Andy's Southern Lakeland Fells

Date completed: 5th September 2018

Distance: 37 miles

Ascent: 10,000 ft

Time taken: 13 hours 56 minutes

Summary:

A run completed on 5th September 2018 in memory of our late son Andrew who used to run with me occasionally in the fells. It comprises of 30 Southern Fells in the Lake District.

Notes:

A scenic run, the first part being on lesser known fells. The route is classed as informal/self sufficient with some navigational skills required. The going is good with indistinct/no paths in some parts during the first half of the challenge. Having said that virtually all the fells are visible from the preceding ones.

Water availability:

Stream outlet west side of Devoke Water; Stepping Stones (GR 976226 below Grassguards); Walna Scar Road; Seathwaite Tarn.

Road Crossings:

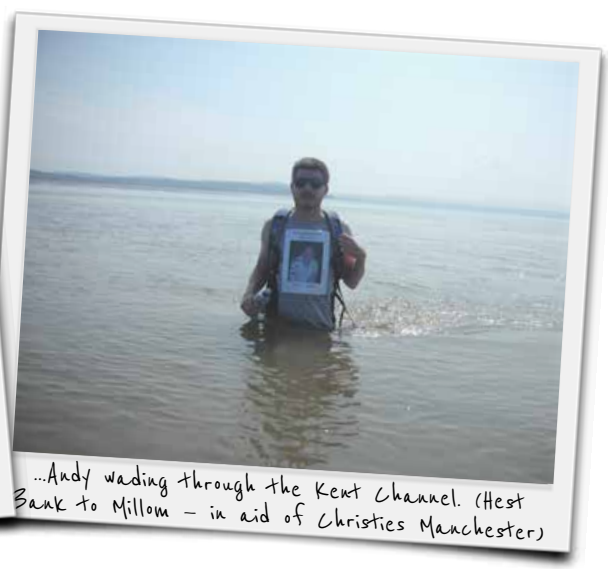
Corney Fell summit; Birker Fell; above stepping stones; Walna Scar Road

Route:

From Whicham Church take the road to the fell –**Black Combe** (descend to the col take the path to the left follow the path (indistinct in places) to a small heap of stones **Stoupdale Crag**—**Stoneside Hill** (no path straddle the fence and take a straight line)—
Corney Fell road summit—**Great Paddy Crag**—**Buck Barrow** (25m rock scramble to the summit decent to the north and pick up the path to the right)—**Burnmoor** –**Whit Fell**—**Stainton Pike**—**Yodcastle**—**Woodend Height**—**White Pike**—**The Knott** (descend to the eastern end of Devoke Water—**Water Crag**—**Rough Crag**—**Seat How** (no path) —Birker Fell Road—**Great Worm Crag** (via Rough Crag is the best option; bog if you take a straight line) —**White How**—**Green Crag**—**Great Windscales**—**Kepple Crag** (no path, cross to pick up the forest trail (GR991211) at the base of Harter Fell follow for half a mile until the gap in trees to the right, where a good path leads to **Grassguards**. From Grassguards cross the wooden bridge and take the path through the trees to the right, down to the stepping stones. From the stepping stones take the path to the left. Cross the road and follow the path to the right, circle the bog clockwise (an SSSI) on the boards. At **Walna Scar** go through the gate follow the track to Seathwaite tarn)—**Grey Friar**—**Great Carrs**—**Swirl How**—**Great How**—**Brim Fell**—**Coniston Old Man**—**Dow Crag**—**Buck Pike**—**Brown Pike**—**White Pike** (descend to Stephenson Ground via the Lickle Valley take the road to Broughton Mills (and the pub)... Hope all this makes sense!



Andy at the start of his 3 estuaries on one tide run...



...Andy wading through the Kent Channel. (Hest Bank to Millom - in aid of Christies Manchester)

Jon's first Bull to Bull

Jon Bailey



The Bull to Bull

The Bull to Bull began life in the imagination of BCR member John Nixon. He wanted to re-enact Hannibal's crossing of the Alps, with the Coniston and Corney Fells playing the part of the Alps and himself playing the part of the elephants. He also wanted to raise money for a children's hospital.

So, at 10.30 on 12th June 1988 John set off from the Black Bull in Coniston. His route took him via Coniston Old Man, Dow Crag, White Pike, Kiln Bank Cross, Stickle Pike, Ulpha Post Office, Bigertmire, Whitfell, Buckbarrow and Black Combe to the John Bull at Silecroft. The journey took 6 hours 13 minutes 28 seconds, approximately 1 minute for each hour that Hannibal took for his journey. John was supported along the way by a number of other runners, including Ged Naylor, who completed the whole route himself later that year. A trophy was created, which is usually held by the last person to complete the challenge.

Over the years, the challenge has been completed by quite a few people & can be done in the opposite direction.

There have been discussions of the potential to do a Sub-4 Hour B2B & has even been a 2B2B (there & back!).

Pre B2B

As you may know, the Bull to Bull has been an aim of mine since 2016, when I first became aware of this 'challenge'.

Initially, I was not even sure if it would be possible; though having improved my level of fitness to a standard enabling me partake in proper fell racing, this appeared to be the next appropriate step.

My original aim was to attempt the Bull to Bull prior to 12/06/18, as I believe that this was first completed 12/06/1988. A number of optional dates were identified, taking into account the various Races & Training that I was looking to complete.

Bootle to Millom via the fells became a reasonably regular after-work training route. If you are dropped off half way home; you have no option but to do the miles. Similarly, once word gets round; you find that people are quite willing to drop you off in random places on their way home, the most frequent question asked by these car-schools was "why?" or if it's a Barrovian car-school "Eh?". So I did not manage to achieve my B2B prior to its Pearl Anniversary; the next suitable dates would have to be after August.

B2B Day

27/09/18 looks suitable & 28/09/18 looked ideal. Having agreed with myself, that I was to do it on the first suitable day; Thursday it was to be. 08:15 dropped off at the School; where my sister now works Wed-Fri. Tops looked a little cloudier than hoped, but it was due to lift.

Map number 1

At 08:33 I set off from the Black Bull. As I passed Low Water the wind was beginning to become noticeable & the cloud looked to be shifting, but unfortunately it was shifting downwardly.

At around 700m I was in the mist, but the path is well defined & one I'm familiar with. Once at the Old Man, before commencing on part of the Turner Landscape route; I took my first ever 'Selfie', not something I feel I shall be repeating as frequently as those half my age.

Making my way round to Dow Crag, I was glad of

the lesson learned one morning on the Combe; “always have my map on a lanyard”; the wind was noticeable. Visibly was now poor at best, maybe 20 paces?

First test of navigation occurred at Goats Hawse, having ended up at a Tee and not the anticipated Cross junction. If I’m not where I thought I was, where am I, and therefore where to next? A bit of map & compass work resulted in a plan; that way for 128 paces should verify if I’m on route, if not, return & re-think. Reassured, it was onwards & upwards towards Dow Crag. Parts of the Buck Pike to White Pike route make enjoyable running. In the cloud all the way to crossing the Walna Scar road, cloud base was at around 620m.

Onto Map number 2

I would think that White Pike to Kiln Back Crossing was my favourite part of the run, a bit of Short Duddon but in the opposite direction, onto the Park Head Road (path); which I have never had the pleasure of running before. No issue with finding a route up to Stickle Pike (Dunnerdale fell race), Stickle Tarn is a Tarn again (I think it had more or less dried up in summer). I missed the path on the way down & across towards Ulpha so opted to re-group from the cattle grid, knowing there is marked & defined path that joins the path I wanted. Out of the cloud & in direct sunlight; it was actually quite warm. Uplha Post office for a Lucozade, Crunchie & a short rest in the sun (just realised that I didn’t eat the Crunchie; that’s super sorted). Checked in; Phone Boxes are now 60p!

Onto Map number 3

Rainsbarrow Wood was pleasant enough & uneventful. The steep road up to Bigertmire was used to have a Peperami (salt) & banana (aren’t bananas just the bees-knees). Now, I know the way to Bigertmire is left & up, but the sign looked like it shows Down. Why despite knowing something was wrong; did I not check on the map & just blindly follow the sign for 0.5km; thus wasting 1km of effort? Back on-track, up though Bigertmire & on towards Whitfell. I didn’t get the perfect racing line & accidentally contoured towards a lower Gate, rather than up to the correct Gate (this is despite running this section more than once in preparation). Found a trod from Whitfell to Burnmoor & round to Buck Barrow. Really enjoyed Buck Barrow - Stoneside Hill.

Last map

Stoneside Hill up the Swinside/Grassoms swamplands towards the Black/White Combe path; you can’t run else you’ll sink deeper; you can’t be too slow else you’ll sink deeper still. Cloud from 500m, windy & damp. Just dig in, finish off the fluids & engage auto pilot until you’re at the Combe’s Trig. What is there to say about the route from the Top down to the Bull? The cloud now down below 400m on this side, dog in the house by the gate still barks, sheep in the bottom fields. Completed three minutes under 8 hours; not quick, but learning has been gained & it gives me a target to beat for next time. I can remember having a few ales when the John Bull was open, but don’t think I actually had a legal drink there; did it close before or after 1993?

What’s next?

Definitely there will be another B2B, it would be great to run the route on a clear day & there is value to be gained by doing it in the opposite direction.

I don’t think I have a sub 24hr Bob Graham in me; a few BG completers think that it could be done, but I’m unsure if they know that I am still quite a novice. Whilst BG discussions have been underway, the BCR Stopwatch Challenge was highlighted. Having been made aware of the BCR “Stoppie”; research & training has now commenced, though I this is a long-ish term target (Mid-September 2020).

My aim will be for some significant reconnaissance runs to be done 2018/2019 & this ties in well with a goal to ‘place’ in the “2019 The Lakeland Classics” list.



Not ANOTHER Bull to Bull write up?!

Yes, yes, it's another write up of a Bull to Bull attempt, but this time with added Wintriness...!

Reading Tim's write up of the Team Ripper B2B in the 2015 newsie, he summarised, thus:

"So apparently the idea of the Bull to Bull is to complete it as close to the annual BCR Christmas Party, right...? Well, if that's the case, then clearly the best option is a night run, the evening before the party. Unless of course you want to turn up at the party still in your running kit (go on, I challenge you!)."

Well I didn't quite take that exact challenge on, but having got the idea in my head to have a dart at the B2B as a 'nice training run', it seemed indecent not to try and do it as close to the Christmas do as possible. Which clearly means doing it in secret on the day of the do itself – if not quite styling it out at the Xmas bash in my stinky running clobber.

After much checking of the official club archive (extensive forum-reading – essential reading for new members like me), it still didn't seem like everyone 100% agreed on the exact route or even which lumpy bits needed going over. Never the best start. The general consensus seemed to be 'No' to Caw, 'probably' to Dow, and definitely no cutting out the woods at Ulpha. Who wants to run on roads anyway, bleurgh?

In preparing for the 'big day', two bits of bad news emerged...

1. It was to be a solo effort.

I'd hoodwinked John Evason into joining my sneaky scheme (largely so I didn't get lost), but he acquired some mystery illness and bailed...

2. The weather.

December is clearly going to be a lucky dip weather-wise, but as D-day approached, the forecast just got worse and worse. The arrival of Storm Diana was not welcome news... I remember the night before, the weather forecasters announcing with glee the 'rare' and 'dangerous' arrival of freezing rain: rain so gnarly that it sticks to you and forms ice. Oh, and it was going to be

a bit 'galey'. And remember all that rain we'd had in December – it had all frozen, so every trail had turned to sheet ice. Great.

In the interest of generating the maximum (any) sympathy, actual proof is shown below:



On the morning itself, it actually wasn't that bad. Yet... enthusiasm to get going and general hubris resulted in me missing the Coppermines turn out of Coniston; heading up Walna Scar instead. Cue some shame-faced skulking back to the Black Bull for Round 2...

A steady start, turned into a slithery mince up the correct path as the tracks were covered in frozen ice. Good footwear choice on the Inov8 Arctic Claw thingies at least :)

The Old Man was a bit of a grind in all the layers but as soon as I hit the top, I was hit by a huge gust that ripped my hood off. Epic... at least at this stage it was only wind and fog, but there was no chance of any piccies (sorry readers), as you couldn't actually see anything.

A quick-ish slither around to Dow was greeted with some proper hood-snapping sidewind, which made it entertaining to stay vertical. A quick dash to the top and down to find the racing line across to the fun bit over to White Pike. In fairness, it was windy as hell, but still pretty runnable across to the Pike and down across to Caw (with a sneaky check of the lines for the fancy dress race the next day!)

I'd had a sneaky Strava-stalk of various other B2B attempts, so I was hoping my good memory would make up for my appalling general nav

ability. The difficulty in actually getting a map out in 50 mph+ winds made these ultra-important! Check my route map below for suspect-looking wiggles to see where I 'maybe' went a bit wrong in the perma-clag!



All was going well over Stickle Pike and down to Ulpha and through Rainsbarrow Wood, but the weather was starting to go majorly downhill. Looking over to Whitfell, it was looking very ominous. By the time I got there the clag was properly down and was accompanied by some lovely hail. I realised I was shutting down a little and to be perfectly honest if there was any phone signal, and the fact that I wasn't absolutely nowhere near a road, I would probably have called it quits. Trying to grab some food, I realised it had pretty much frozen and my water would barely come out of the flasks either. This was now getting a bit serious and a bit less fun.

I'd arranged to get picked up by Mrs H at the finish & I'd casually suggested I should be done in 5 hours. Horribly behind any kind of pace I tried to text Di to tell her I'd be late to the finish but I couldn't work the phone as my hands were too cold. So now I was late, cold and in domestic bother.

I managed to find Buck Barrow in the mist, and started the run over to Corney road crossing. Well I was...but I managed to convince myself I was heading in the wrong direction, and went in a big old loop before coming right back to where I started. Good fellcraft Daniel. Thankfully I'd done a sneaky recce of this next bit the day before so had the confidence that I vaguely knew the right way on the bleak and tussocky Corney side of the Combe. Good job too, as you couldn't see anything.

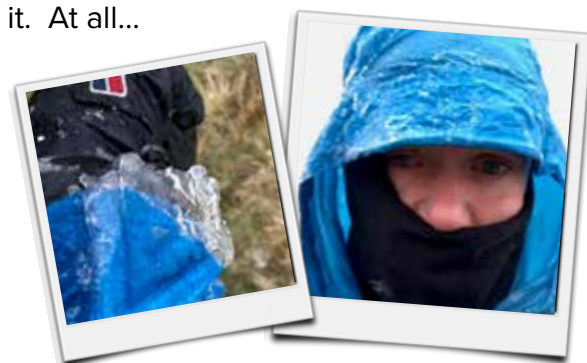
There is a bit of trod up there if you look hard

enough but not much, and at this stage you couldn't see more than 10 yards ahead, so I was just trying to trust my compass – which just about worked until I realised I was starting to drop down the zigzags to Rallis. A 'quick' loop back, and again trusting my judgement (blind luck), managed to find the path for the grind into the wind up to the shelter. This seemed to take an absolute age, because it probably did. At this point I just wanted to start descending again, and I was so happy to finally see the shelter appear out of the gloom before the joy of finally descending again with bits of ice flying off my coat all the way down! It was a fun descent towards the finish, home, a hot bath and the BC Xmas bash. How wrong I was...

Upon arriving into Silecroft, the rain was belting down and it was getting gloomy. I nipped past the car and up to the finish line before scooting back to begin my apologising. The issue was, the car wouldn't start, so I was freezing cold, drenched and stuck on the wrong side of the Duddon. Agony. I have to thank John for saving our bacon and coming and picking me up and taking me to get the car for Coniston, Di waited for the RAC. Arriving at the Xmas bash, word had started to get around about my little jaunt and the commentary was a straight mix between 'nutcase' and 'idiot'.

I was a bit weary by this point to be honest and humbled to receive an amazing and unexpected (and probably my only ever BC) trophy. It's not every day you get to be the custodian of a pair of pot bulls on a plinth. I know Di was equally pleased at this momentous honour, with a super-enthusiastic 'what the F@+# is that', when I got home :)

So, all in all a very un-speedy 5:45 – absolutely no great shakes, but not too shabby considering the conditions I guess. Strangely I didn't see a soul all day! I'll definitely be going back to have a go at a faster time when the weather is better. It's probably a really lovely route – I just didn't get to see any of it. At all...



Cartmel Santa Dash

Sunday 2nd December, the day of the Ulverston Charter 10km.

Becca and I aren't into road racing so opted for the inaugural Santa Dash, in aid of Cartmel Primary School PTA, at Cartmel Racecourse instead which was a 5km trail race with obligatory fancy dress (no excuse, the £5 entry fee included a Father Christmas hat). Chris Roberts also fancied it and invested in a bag of a dozen Christmas outfits off eBay for about £3.99. We were therefore properly kitted out.

To start was a Santa warm-up: A chap with a boombox booming out cheesy Christmas tunes gave instructions to excited children (star jumps, high knees etc.) I went for a proper warm up run. There was then the 2 km Santa Sprint. This was aimed at the younger children but we opted to run it anyway. I won (though I was concerned for the first 30 seconds when I was chasing a bunch of 10 year olds) in 7:04 followed by Becca. We graciously allowed the prizes to go to the first juniors. Hattie ran this race with Auntie Sophie Roberts who was recovering from a knee injury sustained at Allithwaite 8. Hattie had set off fast but fell about half way so Sophie had to carry her the rest of the way. Thanks Soph!

Next was the proper 5km Santa Dash. At to the start there were a couple of people who looked like they could give me a race. I set off fast (as usual) and then had a visiting Australian 50 yards behind me for the first half which was a loop on vehicle tracks through fields and woodland.

The course then went into an uphill muddy path in the woods where I increased the gap. After that the course went through some fields, along a short stretch of road, through a ford and a track to finish (20:12). I was very happy to win a race.

Becca finished 4th and first lady so double sticky toffee puddings for us.

It was an excellent route for a short trail race, followed by drinks and great homemade cakes from the PTA in the cricket pavilion. If this becomes an annual event I highly recommend it.



Post race with our prizes



Wonder Women - Christmas wellies!

Running Up That Hill

Beth Ripper

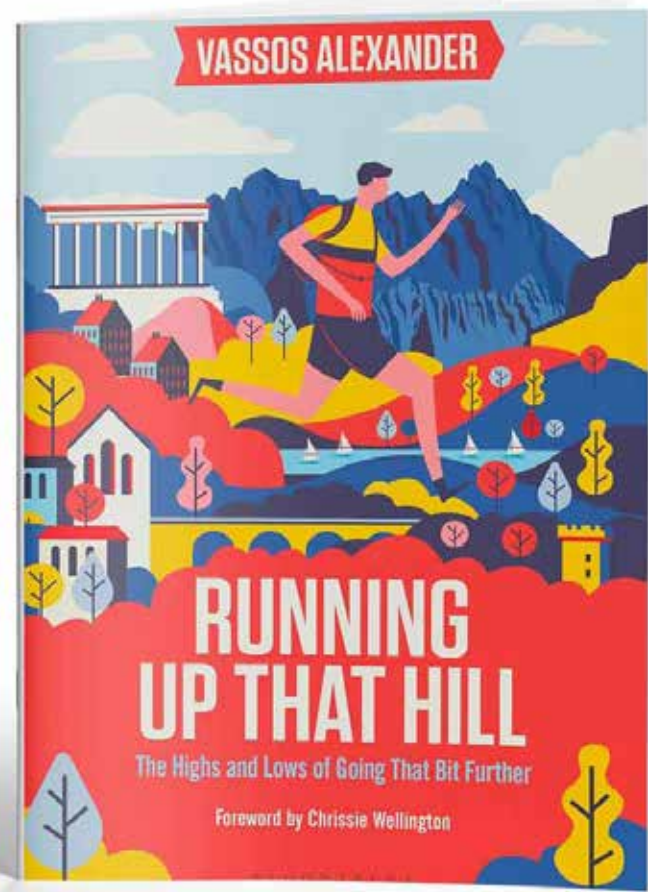
I recently found myself browsing the bookshelves in search of some armchair adventures that would distract me from the brutal ravages of childbirth...cuppa in one hand and paracetamol in the other, I settled down on a (very) comfy sofa to read Vassos Alexander's latest book 'Running Up That Hill'.

The Radio 2 sports presenter is quite into his ultra running it seems, and he's no slouch at shorter distances either, having bagged himself a very respectable sub 3 hour marathon time (if you're into that sort of thing). The book traces his personal experience of training

for and competing in the Spartathlon, a 150 mile race in Greece, from Athens to Sparta. A myriad of bite-sized interviews with the great and the good of the ultra running community are weaved into the tale; there are lots of names you'll recognise here, including Scott Jurek, Jasmin Paris and Kilian Jornet.

The book is written in an easy-going, chatty style and the differing voices of the interviewees are captured really well. Vassos highlights the universal good nature of ultra runners (so true, why is this?) and his story-telling is inclusive and encouraging for the average runner like me! I have to say that Vassos does come across as quite 'London' at times (running around in a fluster trying to find a charger for his fancy GPS watch - I couldn't help but roll my eyes!) and I was also going to poke fun at his nav skills, which leave much to be desired...but those in glass houses and all (...ahem...Kirkbymoore...ahem)...

Overall I enjoyed the read and after closing the book I felt inspired to set myself another ambitious challenge for 2019. It's hard to know what that will be yet, as I'm still in a bit of a vulnerable spot with my running. In the meantime, I'll entertain myself with Kate Bush videos on YouTube and stuff myself with mince pies for Christmas. Top class training methinks.



A Challenge Accomplished at Random

Jon Bailey

The "Stamina Challenge"

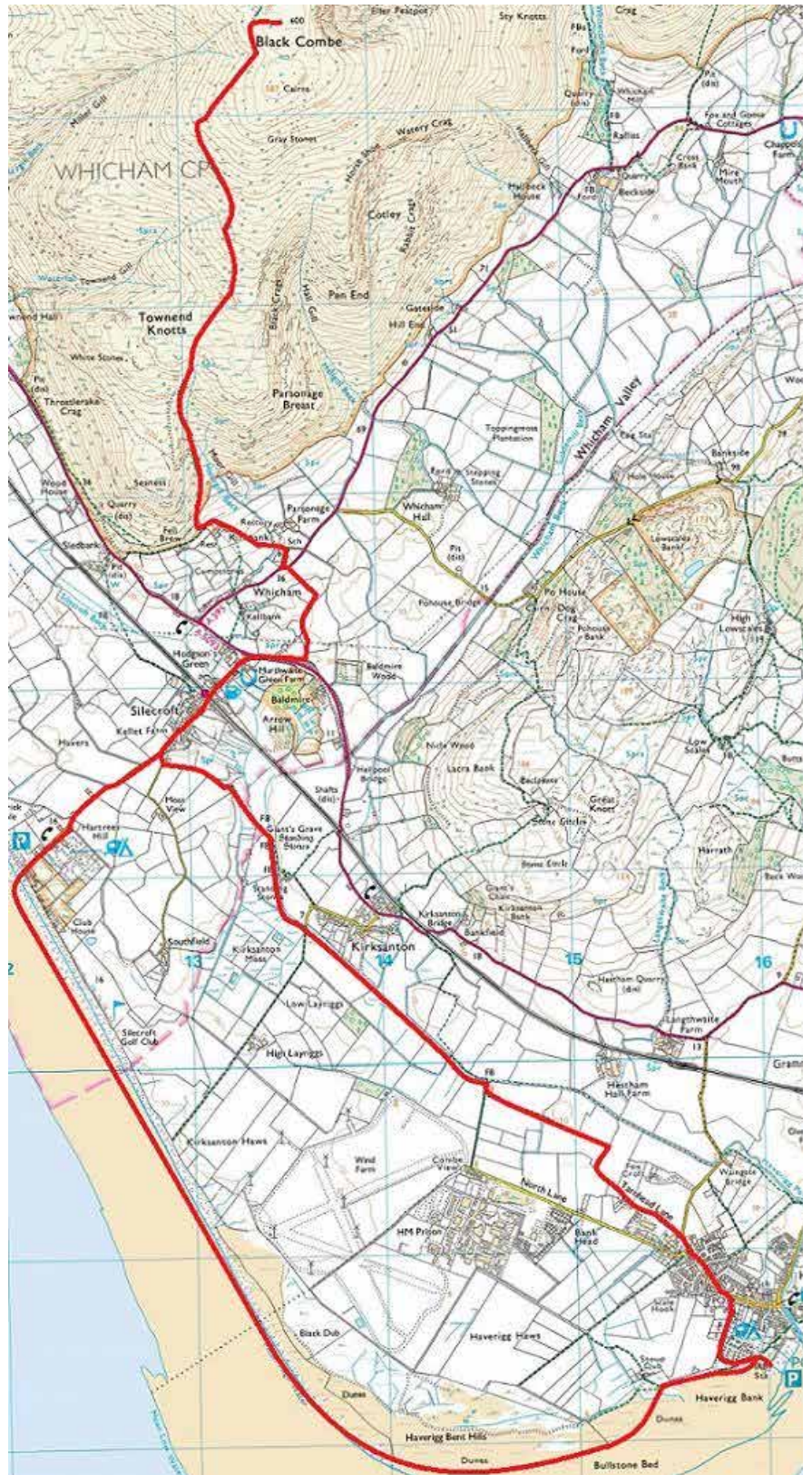
Following on from the successful B2B, Pete Grayson kindly pointed out the Stoppie; which hopefully shall be an article I can pen for a 2020 Newsie?

The Start/End of the Stoppie is from the Ramp at Haverigg Lifeboat Station & one route takes in the top of the Combe.

With this in mind, I plotted an interesting route from Haverigg, up the Combe & back.

Sunday 28th October could not be refused; a clear evening had setup one of the first ground-frost of the year, the weather was ideal & I had many-a-task to avoid.

To warm up I opted to jog down to Haverigg.



To be sure I would be Stoppie starting at the correct point; I walked a few meters off the ramp & towards the low tide.

With a random pile of stones erected to return to later; I was off, through the lane, past the post office, left & along Main Street.

Turing left onto the track that leads to Kirksanton; Surprisingly, there were no birds of prey today, but there was a Crane checking out the clear running River Lazy (apparently also

known as Haverigg Pool) for his breakfast.

Due to the shade, the top inch of mud was frozen & good progress was made.

Between Kirksanton & Silcroft, the fields were too saturated for a ground frost, although my toes were of the opinion that the water was freezing.

A right turn at the Silcroft Junction for about 100m along the A5093 bring you to an infrequently used right-of-way leading to Whicham Church, the lower field is a bit boggy, but I think it makes a change from the Race-Route path.

The Combe was quite busy, as the weather was going to make for good views at the top.

No issue when jogging upto the top & only stopped to view the hills; the B2B route could be seen & what I think is the Stoppie Route (though it will be the future reccy's that verify this).

On the way down I passed two chaps pushing bikes up the one of the steeper bits, followed by one stubborn chap still peddling away (kudos was issued to BCR's Josh Hartley for not getting off the bike, did he know I was watching?).

Once back down it was just a case of putting in some flat Km's towards the beach & assisted by a tail wind; along the high time

line back to Haverigg. Beach Café was open & I was able to refuel prior to a warmdown jog back to Millom.

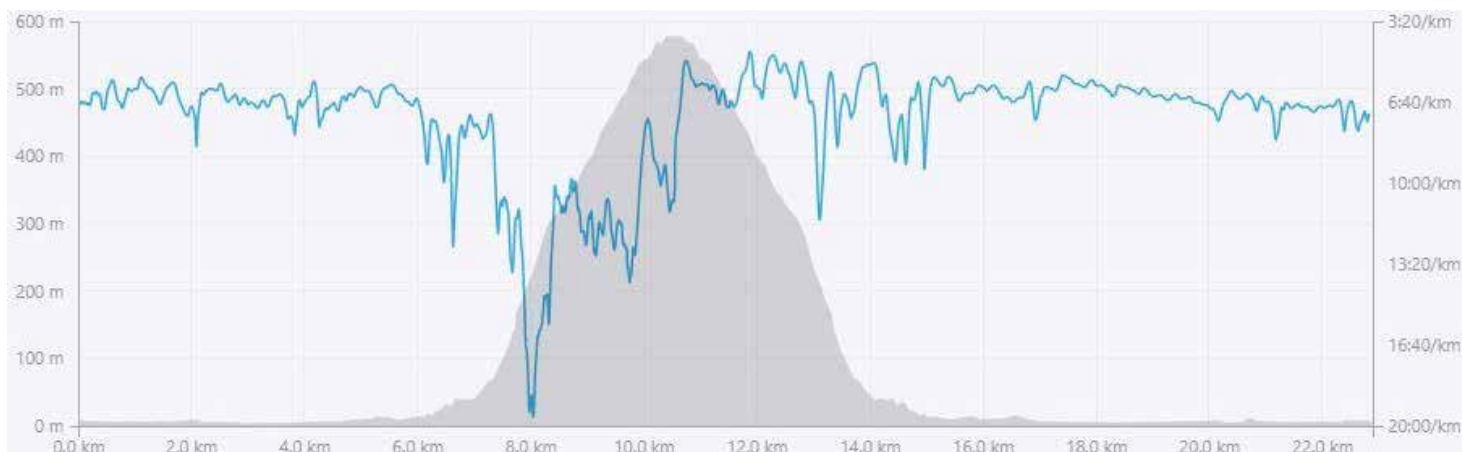
A few weeks later, whilst undertaking further research for the Stoppie, I came upon evidence that I suggests I had stumbled into undertaking an old BCR Challenge the "Stamina Challenge";

<https://forum.bcrunners.org.uk/index.php?p=/discussion/2006/stopwatch-challenge>

"Another challenge we haven't done for a long time is the stamina challenge.

This was popular in the early days of BCR and is roughly half marathon distance, again starting and finishing at Haverigg, but taking any choice of route to the summit of Black Combe and back in the quickest time."

A lovely run out on a clear day, I wonder if any historic times can be found & posted in the next newsie?





Chris Roberts

My Joss Naylor Challenge

The challenge set by fell running legend Joss Naylor is for more mature (i.e. over 50) runners and involves a traverse of the Lakeland fells from Pooley Bridge in the East to Greendale Bridge in the West. The distance is usually quoted as 48 miles with something between 16,000 and 17,000 feet of ascent, with a time limit of between 12 hours and 24 hours depending on age.

In 2016 I “supported” Ian Roberts, a member of Bowland FR and a stalwart supporter of many Bob Graham and Joss attempts, on his JNLC. We covered the first leg in the dark in around five hours, and Ian went on to complete within his target time. This was my first brush with the challenge and I gradually came to think that perhaps I could do it myself.

Preparations faltered in 2017 because of various injury setbacks, although I did manage a recce of the second leg. At the start of 2018 I began to include some longer runs in my training and entered the Ingleborough marathon and Lyke Wake Challenge as part of my build up. I made a point of running as a “pacer” for three other runners’ JNLC, twice on leg two and once on leg one.

This was leaving me under-recce on the second half of the challenge so I had a grand day out running from Dunmail to Borrowdale via leg three, and returning by two buses. Unfortunately a fall in Borrowdale gave me a knee injury which hampered my attempt to recce leg 4 a week or so later, and was still niggling when I started out on the challenge attempt on August

Bank Holiday Saturday.

I won’t bore people with a step by step description of the route but I thought a few words about the friends that helped me complete my Joss Naylor Lakeland Challenge in August 2018 might be of interest.

I had chosen the late August bank holiday weekend with the following weekend as fall back and had received a great response from potential helpers and pacers, not all of which were available on all the dates. However I had confidence that I had enough people available to go on any day.

The weather looked OK for the first Saturday and I took Pete Tayler’s advice to choose a day and just go. Decision made and then my plans started to falter. My leg one crew was looking thin on the ground due to injury and other commitments but then Josie Greenhalgh stepped in. Mark Sammon, who was down as navigator, decided he could push his injury rather than let me down, and Ed Gleadowe responded to a late plea and was also ready to go at 4am on the bridge at Pooley!

My valiant road crew of Sophie and Sarah had made sure I was there too. Their day started at 2am and didn’t finish until after midnight the next night!

So leg one went pretty much according to plan. Starting with torches and maintaining my schedule until the Kirkstone pass car park hove into view. I had chosen a 16:45 schedule so had 75

minutes for contingencies. Mark had navigated well from out in front, Josie and Ed had kept my spirits up and things looked good. The sun rose and the clouds started to lift and part.

Tom Barkas had set up his “pop-up café” on the car park and was ready with hot drinks. Sarah had baked many cakes for the support crew and these were going down well too.

After only a few minutes it was off with a new team, climbing towards where the sun was by now shining on Red Screens. John Millen was now in charge of navigation (!) with John Evason and Dan Hartley carrying my kit and generally scurrying to and fro. I always think of the second leg as being by far the easiest and it went well apart from a little shoe trouble. I found my in-soles were riding up and digging into my heels, slowing me down. I swapped shoes at Dunmail Raise and had no further problems of that kind. Coming over Seat Sandal close to the end of the leg I was greeted by Matt Rooke who had run up from Dunmail. The rest of the family: Becca, Hattie and six day old Cecily were waiting with Sarah and Sophie and the leg three team. Josie had also come along to wish me well. This was my rice pudding and peaches stop, and I departed more or less still on schedule with Josh Hartley, Simon Austin and James Goffe. Josh was taking over the navigation from here to Sty Head. My leg two pacers decided to run back to Kirkstone to get their full money’s worth.

It was turning into a fantastic day with good visibility and I really should have been enjoying it. On the slog up to High Raise I was flagging and started to get worse by the time we were ascending Bow Fell. Josh was practically force feeding me as I was clearly suffering from insufficient fuel. Looking back I realise that I had covered the first two legs feeling fine but not eating enough, and was now paying for that mistake.

As a result my schedule started to slip but I still had time in hand to complete within the allotted 18 hours for 60-64 year olds. I enjoyed a sunny picnic at Sty Head (which Sophie had brought up for me) and bade

farewell to Josh, James and Simon after spending rather longer with them than expected! It was good to see a few more supporters (Jess Lawrence, Elaine Sutton and Iain Embrey, plus members of Iain’s family) and my four leg four pacers all enjoying the late afternoon sunshine.

Somewhat later than planned I see off up Great Gable along with Darren Baker (navigation), Rob McKeever and Sue and Zoe Harding. After the first climb I was entering new territory for me so had the benefit of novelty to add to the impressive scenery. I was starting to buck up from having eaten better but was still dropping minutes here and there. Zoe, who was in charge of recording times on this leg, did a good job of concealing exactly how much time I was losing and assured me that we were well on target. Darren lead the way confidently and Zoe gave me regular updates on the amount of climb left on each ascent. I was enjoying things again now and really appreciated the company of my pacers. The time was passing but so was the distance. We ran into a little low cloud and then darkness began to fall. Luckily I had reminded everyone to bring headtorches just in case I was later than planned, and these were needed from Seatallan onwards. The descent from Middle Fell seemed to take an age despite running hard all the way. Darren made sure I took the correct paths and Zoe paced me to arrive to cheers from my road crew and Mark Edwards and Elaine Sutton who were also in support. Finally I was standing on Greendale Bridge and shaking Joss’s hand. A mere 17 hours and 56 minutes after leaving Pooley Bridge.

Many thanks to all the helpers I have named, and the others who I know would have been there for me if I had chosen a different day. I was under-prepared but my friends brought me through.



Josh Hartley

Embracing the concept of self-sacrifice

As a youngster watching the Tour de France I was intrigued by the endeavours of the domestique and how they would dedicate themselves to the team leader, completing sacrificing themselves, you just don't see this in many sports. I never thought I would ever do such a thing until I was asked to support the efforts of Hazel and Chris on leg 3 of the Joss Naylor Challenge and the efforts of Tom Gibbs (boo hiss Ambleside runner) on leg 3 of his Winter Bob Graham round. Ok

so it's not the Tour but you know what I mean...

Here are my lessons learnt:

Finding myself low on energy on Tom's 'Bob' at Pike o Stickle wasn't ideal, perhaps an early start and a lack of breakfast had something to do with it. To refuel I shoved down a handful of fudge and cereal bar while pushing a flapjack into my pocket. The flapjack fell out of my pocket somewhere on the way to Esk Pike, but thankfully some emergency Jelly Babies did the trick when floundering on the way up to Foxes Tarn. Once Tom left Wasdale I ate everything (not vital to remaining legs) in sight. You're so focused on keeping the main runner fed and watered you forget to fuel yourself. Next time out I'll eat shed loads before I set off!

Distracting the runner with a random story or bizarre anecdote seems to keep the miles ticking on by. I told some pretty terrible jokes, made some dreadful puns and quoted some marginally inspirational quotes along Chris's and Hazels Joss



Chris Roberts - Joss - Aug 18

(I think the one when waiting for Chris at Dunmail was the worst, sorry Sophie!).

Even talking about the route ahead worked. Play mind games and keep them talking, but for god's sake I need to find some better jokes to tell.

Sometimes you need a front runner 'scout', to be the one to find the trod you were miles off, to point out "I think that's the summit over there" and most importantly to sacrifice themselves to the bogs. I went waist deep in a 'mantrap' bog on Martcrag Moor (much to Tom's amusement), meandered through the clag up Bow Fell (much to Tom's frustrations) and dropped off Great End via an 'alternative' route shouting back to Chris "Yeah



Tom Gibbs - Bob 6 - Jan 19

undertakings, to have been but a small part of their extraordinary day. I'm sure those reading this can relate to some of the lessons I have learnt, fuel your inner idiot and develop your mountain goat ability, If you fall behind don't look back, don't panic, just run faster.

So, who's going for something big this year?



Hazel Tayler - Joss - June 18

it's ok" when clearly it was a bit sketchy. Finally sending someone on ahead to the transition is a belting idea,"get them some Vaseline, peanut butter is going down well, you need to force feed them...". Then keel over and eat. Sacrifice for the greater good.

What a privilege it is to be asked to support these guys on such epic



Chris Roberts - Joss - Aug 18

Jess Lawrence



Euphoria!

Saturday 20th October 2018. An absolutely cracking turn out of Black Combers at the British Fell Running Relays.

As ever before any kind of fell race inside I was incredibly nervous. Following the Hodgeson Brother Relays a few weeks earlier at least I had a bit of an idea of what I was letting myself in for!

It was a drizzly day with the clag very low. I'd been out a week earlier to reccy leg two but since a reshuffling of the team I was placed on leg four. I had some comfort that I knew parts of the route but also secretly pleased it was flagged — especially since the last descent had been changed on the day!

Anyone that knows me, knows I'm least confident at descending. So when the guy over the tannoy described the new part of the route as a "very steep classic Lakeland descent" I just decided to blank the information from my mind and deal with it when it came to it!

It was incredibly exciting watching all of the teams come and go.

For us leg four runners there was a fair few hours of waiting around. One great source of amusement was spectating in the area where all legs all came together on a particularly slippery, slick grassy descent before

the finishing field.

Throughout the day there were more and more interesting lines being taken and techniques being used (some of the quickest went down on their backsides!), plus more and more people watching. In my head thinking, ah pants I'm going to be in their shoes veryyy soon.

Finally it was time for me to enter waiting area. The first Female open team came through: Helm Hill absolutely storming it — inspiring!

In a day dream (not expecting two black and green vests to be next — nothing against the rest of the teams performance!) Anna and Hollie came flying through in **SECOND** place!

"Oh crumbs I'm going to have to run as fast as my legs can possibly go to try a limit the damage I can do to our **AWESOME** position!".



As expected the first climb was tough going. But still no women passed me, although surely it was only a matter of time. The leg was only just over 4 miles. Just give it everything.

I won't bore you with every detail as I can remember every moment vividly. But there were a few key bits that stick in my mind:

1. **PANIC!**

I got to the top of Heron Pike and continued along the ridge where I was mingling with many leg three orienteering couples looking fairly confused. Then it dawned on me, I hadn't seen a flag for a while. Bugger. I was panicking so much that I stopped and looked back to see if I could see a flag on the left that I was expecting. Tentatively I continued forward. Phewww another flag!

2. **Long legs**

It seemed a bit too good to be true that I was over half way through my leg and I was yet to see another lady. Just keep running, just keeping running. Then out of nowhere some seriously long tanned legs and a yellow vest zoomed past. Hannah Horsburgh. Fair play!

3. **Then there was that decent**

As it turned out I was so desperate to hold onto the position that I didn't have time to worry and the loose steep decent. I just tried my damned to get to the bottom as fast as I possibly could and not fall over.

4. **The feeling crossing the line!**

Euphoria! BLACK COMBE LADIES WON BRONZE. Really quite emotional. I was so happy we did it. There wasn't a single conversation (that I was involved in), that even considered it would be possible we'd come away with a medal. Absolutely over the moon. Thank you so much for having me as part of the team. BCR <3



Chris Roberts

On the beer trail

<http://www.wcoc.co.uk/event/beer-trail-2018-continues-end-january>

I found out quite recently that West Cumberland Orienteering Club (WCOC) lay on a beer trail each December/January somewhere on the Lakeland fells. This is a navigational challenge with a tangible reward for accurate navigation!

This winter the trail started at a grid referenced location which turned out to be on Threlkeld Knotts at a spot that anyone running the Clough Head race would recognise. My orienteering buddy Mark Edwards proposed that we have a go and we duly ventured to St John's in the Vale in early January. This is an extract from the WCOC website entry:

Beer Trail 2018:

Opens Saturday 22nd December, closes end of January 2019. Usual format – go to the first checkpoint (see below) where you'll find a stake with the next grid reference. Carry on until you get to the beer & chocolate. There's a visitor book in the cache to sign and comment when you have found it.

MAPS:

You're recommended to download the specially prepared Orienteering maps (1:12500 - click here for North and South maps) but if you do, then take the full OS map as well, for emergency routes off.

There are some very steep slopes and big crags on the west side, not shown on the O map.

Both the Long and Short courses need both the North and South sheets of the map.

Otherwise, It's all on the OS 1:25,000 NE sheet - or take a map that is bounded by grid lines 31 (W), 36 (E), 27 (N), and 18 (S).

We had downloaded and printed the special maps and were carrying the OS as well, as recommended. It would have been possible to complete using just the OS map but the extra detail of the orienteering maps certainly helped. I would normally describe the route choices we made at this point but WCOC ask that the cache location is not revealed so you will have to follow the trail yourself! It's open until the end of January so there's a chance you might read this in time.

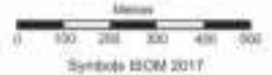
It was a very cold day so despite having set off intending on doing the long version we dropped down to short at the point that the two routes diverged. We still ended up covering over 15 km so I don't feel too bad about that! The beer was well-chilled and someone had already eaten all the chocolate.

A great idea as the challenge is there for an extended period and is a good way to practise navigation without the pressure of a race. A couple of friends even did it in the dark for night nav. practice.



Clough Head

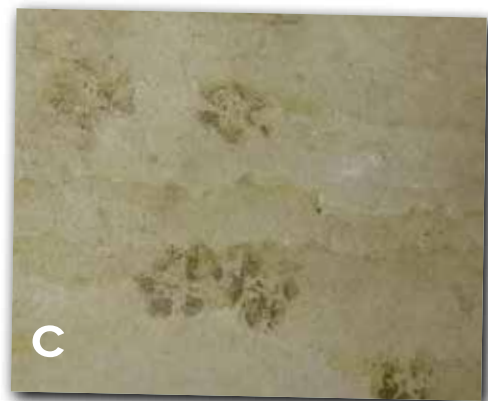
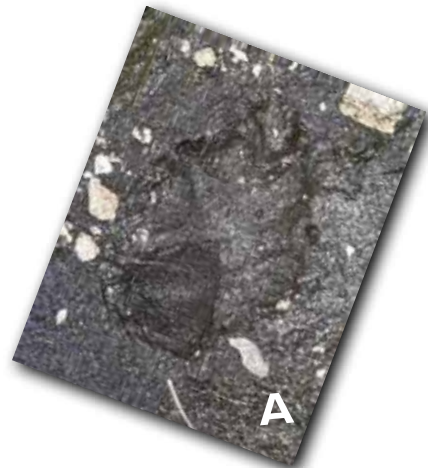
BEER TRAIL 2018 North Sheet
Scale 1:12500 when printed at A4
Contours 5m



Green grid lines are
50m grid lines with
200m intervals
Black grid lines are
100m grid lines

BCR Doggos!

Some of the most regular and committed members of Black Combe Runners are the dogs! So I thought it'd be fun to see how well you know a selection of them... simply match the paw print with the dog (Beth has already pointed out that this is impossible!). To check your answers, see the bottom of the page!



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

