

Black Combe Runners

newsie

August 2018



Just a quick note from the person who wanted to read the BCR stories first...



Isle of Man!



Baby Charlotte!



Baby Cecily!



Julian and Kath!

When Beth put it out there if anyone fancied stepping in to help put the BCR Newsie together I was more than happy to lend a hand — especially since the Winter Newsie 2018 was such a good read :)

Having only been part of the club for just under a year it's amazing how something can become such a huge (great) part of your life!

Although it's been a brilliant and busy year in general my absolute BCR highlight has to be our road trip to the Isle of Man to run the English Champs uphill race to the top of Snaefell — up hill race (my fav), great company, a lot of laughs, beautiful place and sunshine!

A few important shout outs...

A HUGE congratulations to Tim and Beth on the birth of beautiful little Charlotte Rose back in April.

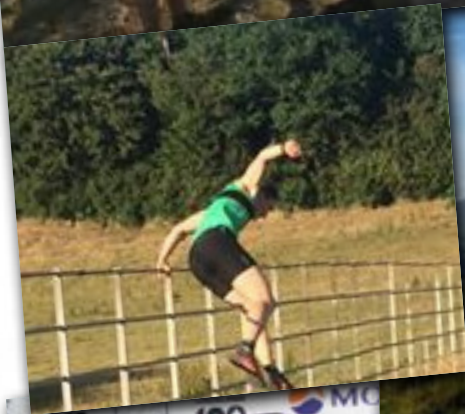
AND to Matt and Becca on the birth of little stunner Cecily Beatrice Rooke in August!

PLUS a huge congrats to Julian and Kath who have tied the knot. Hurrah!

Anyway, thanks to everyone for your contributions and I hope you all enjoy.

Jess

A few good'uns from the last 6 months 😊



Captain's Corner

I may not have been able to run any fell races yet this year but I've had some great days out spectating and supporting my club mates.

I keep thinking how great it is being in a relatively small club as everyone knows everyone else and we all gather together post run for a chat and with any luck cake eating is involved too. Ed is definitely reigning champion at the cake eating after Buttermere Horseshoe 😊. Anyway here is my round up of the latest news.

English Championships

Another year and another English Championships to get excited about.

By the time you read this the penultimate race (Turner Landscape) will have happened. The girls team is in 3rd place with a medal within their reach!

The men are in 10th place and it will be interesting to see where our top men can finish individually if they get enough races in. James Harris is currently in joint 50th, Ed Gleadow in 54th and Josh Harter in 68th (to name a few). Steve Wathall is currently in 17th place for Men's V60.

In the girls Hollie Orr is in 7th, Anna Lupton is in 8th and Alice Forster is joint 15th!



One of the delights of watching the races is seeing Alice eating a tin of cold baked beans as a post race snack!



Ed & Josh catching some rays in the IOM



The ladies team at the end of Clough Head

Relays!

If they're not there already get these dates for your diary. They're a great club day out whether you're running or not.

Hodgson Brothers Mountain Relay – Sunday 7th October

British Fell Relays – Saturday 20th October

I've been in contact with people who have requested a run. If you haven't had an email from me but do want to run let me know.

Club Championships

Fell Champs

The top three in the fell champs are currently Lord Harvey, James Harris and Matt Rooke but there are plenty of races to go to change things. There has been a definite lack of girl participation so far. Get yourself along to the remaining races! See the website for details — <http://bcrunners.org.uk/cal/champs/2018>

Road Champs

It's a completely different top three in the road champs at the moment: Simon Austin, Ian Verber and Sophie Roberts. Remaining races include the Fell Foot and Barrow park runs which you can do at any time and Allithwait 8 (3rd November/Medium), Ulverston 10k (2nd December/Medium).

CHRISTMAST PARTY!!!

Ford Park café, Ulverston – Saturday **15th December 7pm**

Fancy finger buffet followed by tea, coffee, and cake for £20/head. Me and Sophie will start taking names and payment from the start of October.



In other news Julian fell in a lake while trying to get out of a rowing boat...

Hazel's Joss

The Joss Naylor is a crossing of the Lake District from roughly north-east to south-west. It is specifically for people aged 50 plus and the time allocated to the individual varies according to sex and age.

I turned 60 in April this year and decided that I needed to challenge myself to do the 'Joss'. I'd never attempted really long distance before, my longest race being 26 miles in Gran Canaria. Could I do it? Would my body hold up? Could I keep focussed or even awake for the 18 hours which I'm allocated for the distance at my age!

I have been influenced and inspired by the many people I have helped on their Bob Graham attempts. Beth, in particular, has been a great inspiration to me. After Beth's successful Bob last year, I thought, 'I can do this too'.

I started to build up my distance last Autumn with a view to an attempt in June 2018. Pete and I concentrated at first on completing our Wainwrights together which is fun, gives you purpose and builds climbing strength. I also planned some milestones to build distance

Time Allowances:

Age 50-54 M12/W14 hours
Men 55-59 M15/W16 hours
Men 60-64 M18/W18 hours
Men 65+ M24/W24 hours
(M=Men W=Women)

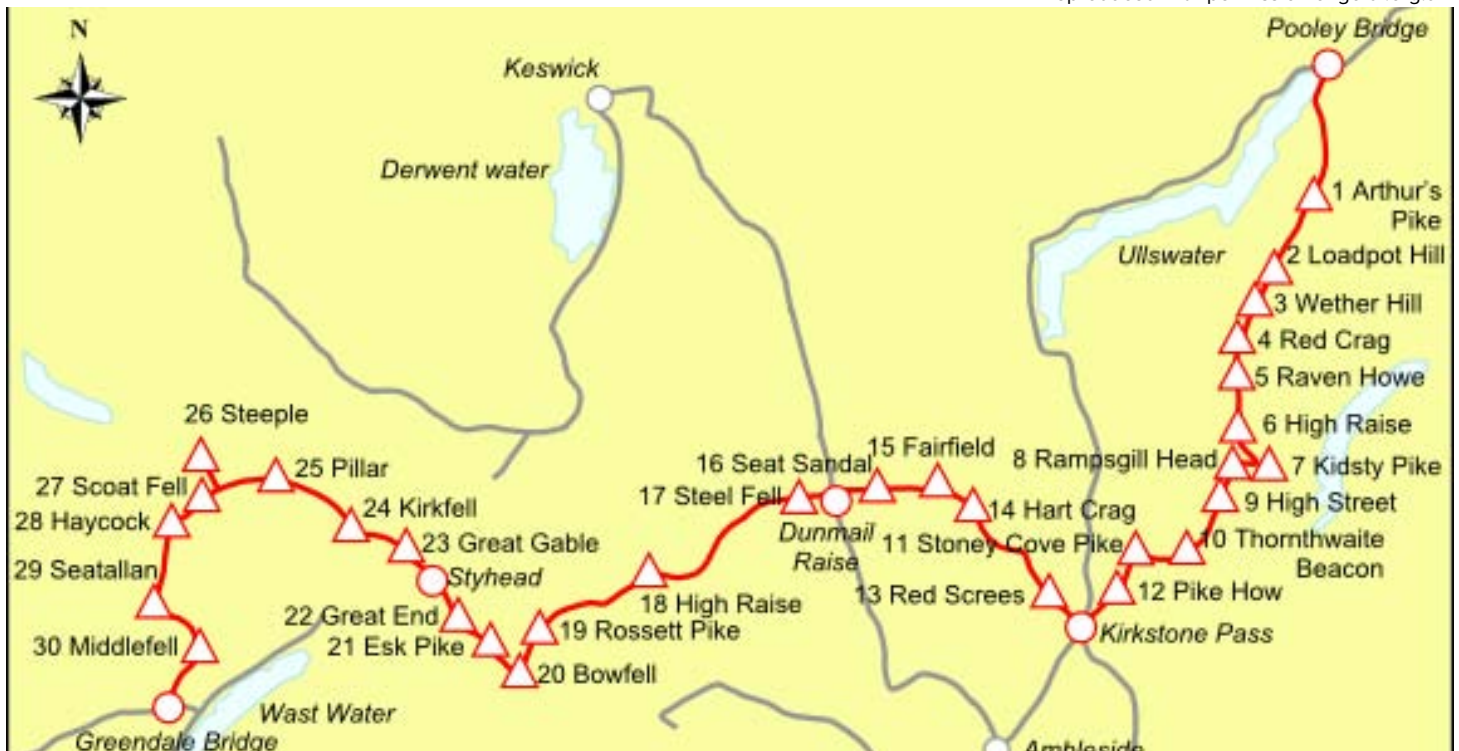


stamina including a 40 miler in Gran Canaria in Feb and perhaps a Bull to Bull or Caw to Caw. Unfortunately, none of this happened due to a hard winter, infections and a good dose of flu!

So, training started in earnest in April with lots of long runs in the Lakes and back to back days. I aimed to achieve at least 10,000 ft of climbing each week. I did my first leg reccies towards the end of April.

For me though, the most effective preparation was 2.5 weeks in Scotland exploring Munros every day. The climbing, distances and rough, sometimes trackless terrain is much more demanding than the Lake District. It's a good way to toughen up! I did have 10 easy days before my attempt though!!

I had the most perfect weather for my Joss and it proved a brilliant day out with friends - it was quite a party at Sty Head! My thanks go to all my pacers and support crew for looking after me so well, keeping me fed,



watered and entertained! A special thank to Pete who accompanied me on every step of my training and supported me on the day.

As for the run itself, well mainly it was a walk! I am pleased to say that yes I kept awake and focussed and my stamina held up well. I have lots of memorable moments to remember, including a beautiful dawn over Ullswater and acres of cotton grass, herds of deer on High Street and a lovely sunset and full moonrise at the end of the day.

Life wasn't without its challenges though. I developed pain around my knee after Gable, just on the descents which subsequently got a lot slower. I'd like to say that I flew down Middle Fell to the finish whereas, in reality, I limped down! Perhaps I might have been stronger if I hadn't missed vital training runs earlier in the year. Still, once at Greendale Bridge none of that mattered. I had done it in **17.5 hours** and Joss Naylor together with Pete and friends were there to celebrate with me. I must mention that Simon Rodger was as pleased as myself to meet Joss Naylor - it was worth running 48 miles and 17,000 ft of ascent so he could have his photo taken with Joss too!

Leg 1 Pooley Bridge to Kirkstone

Pacers - Harvey and Simon Austin (Rob Browne and Floyd at the end).

Leg 2 Kirkstone to Dunmail Raise

Pacers - Sue, Anna, Mark Roberts, Chris Roberts, James Goffe, Rob Browne (part way).

Leg 3 Dunmail Raise to Sty Head

Pacers - Pete, Holly, Josh, Jess and Polly, Simon Austin (part way). James Harris (just before Sty Head).

Leg 4 Sty Head to Greendale Bridge

Pacers - Tim, Will, Simon Rodger, James Harris, Pip and Mae. Steve Whathall at Beck Head. Pete, Julian and Kath to Kirkfell.

Road and fell support: Helen Walker and Pete Tayler. And thanks to Charmian and Steve for bringing Joss to Greendale Bridge and then the pub.

Part of the Joss Naylor is to raise money for a charity, I chose the Alzheimer's Society. Huge thanks to all who contributed, it is very much appreciated - I raised about £800.

Haze Tayler

Memories from Hazel's Joss...

Lord Harv

Sunrise. Still and clear morning - sun burning the mist off Ullswater. Hazel climbing well. I question whether she is actually 60? Laughter. Red deer disappearing down into Martindale. Larks.

Pete

Overall a brilliant, uplifting day, just what we both needed after a couple of hard months. And Haze ran the legs off me, despite going twice as far. I couldn't be more proud.

Chris

Seeing Hazel setting off on leg 3. Then the thought of all those miles, ascent and descent still to go. An incredible achievement!

Anna

There are very few things in life that would get me out of bed at 6am the day after racing Buttermere horseshoe, but supporting Hazel on her Joss is one of them. I fact, I was chuffed to bits to share a bit of her special day.

Mark

Hazel happily chatting constantly for the whole of leg 2 (and probably the whole round) 😊

John

After I struggled up The Struggle on my bike it was all worth it to see you glide into Kirkstone and float up Red Screens.

Charmian and Steve

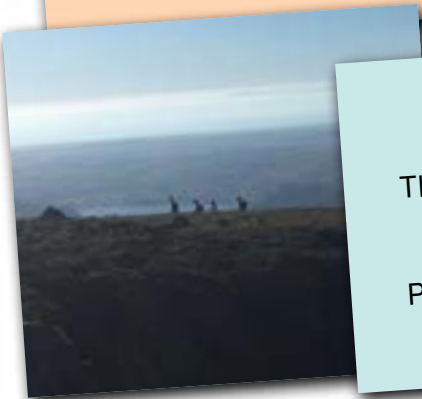
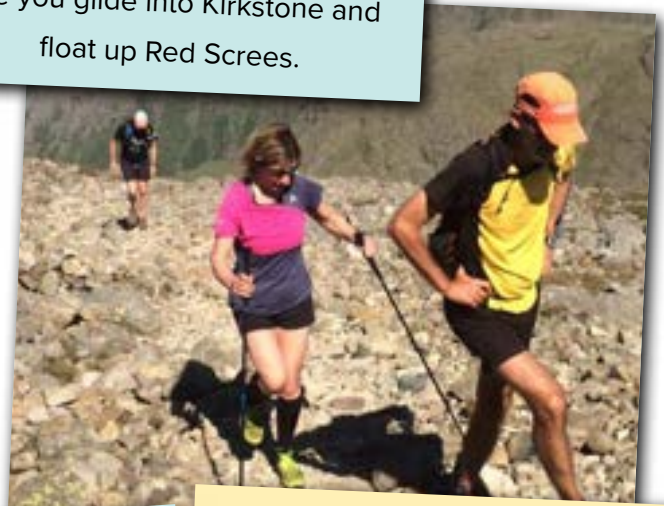
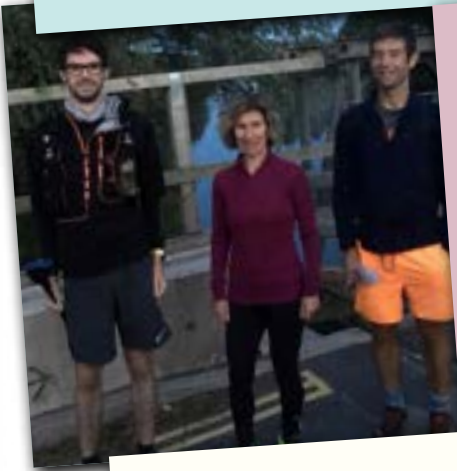
As formal JNC "meet and greet", Steve intercepted the Hazel train between Gable and Kirk Fell going strong. Then we were delighted to witness her hug off the great man himself at Greendale.

Jess

That's the way to complete the Joss! Hazel you inspiration. Positive throughout and driven until the end.

Hollie

Down Great End: my legs are screaming, Josh has been grimacing for the last hour, Jess is trying to look anywhere but down, Hazel bounds down ahead like a Gazelle.





Rob B

Early morning antics with amazing weather for her Joss Naylor. Hazel still light on her feet could smell the cup 'o' tea oh so sweet. Kirkstone bound nearly 15 minutes up!



Sue

Being out with friends on a beautiful day!

Tim

I had a good pace climbing Seatallan, so thought I'd better stop, take a picture, wait for Hazel. But 38 miles in, she was right behind me powering up the climb!

Josh

Hazel's ability to remain calm, maintain a measured effort and keep smiling with so much already ran and so far still to go was truly inspiring. Clearly well prepared!

James H

Here's my one overriding memory:
Marmite and lettuce sarnies!!! WTF?!

Beth

There was a young lass Hazel Tayler,
Who fancied a run by Joss Naylor,
She paced like a pro,
Ran peaks and plateaus,
A massive success not a failure!



BCR Club Members who've done the Joss...

007 John Peel M65 1995
009 Ken Lindley M50 1995
040 Mike Berry M50 2003
042 Peter Cockshott M65 2004
139 Pete Tayler M50 2012
160 Peter Grayson M60 2014
197 Rob McKeever M65 2016

(Club number - Name - Age Group - Date Completed)



l'AlpsMan Xperience

Dimanche 10th Juin 2018, Lac d'Annecy, France

Our summer holiday this year was to Lake Annecy in the French “pre-alps”. It wasn't booked to fit a race but I thought I'd be able to find something to do. Initial searches were unfruitful: it seemed like everything was the weekend before and after we were there. With some widening of my search criteria I found the AlpsMan Xtreme triathlon. An Ironman with a swim in the lake, a ride over several mountain passes and a run up to finish at the top of Semnoz (1699 m). I didn't do that.

Fortunately for me the day after the triathlon there was the Xperience where you could enter one of the three disciplines and race over the same route, or at least part of it. The Ironman marathon was 25.5 km on the flat by the lake then 16.5 km up the mountain. The Xperience was just the 16.5 km part (the fun bit!) with 1300 m climb.

The start area for my race was the esplanade in Saint-Jorioz at 443 m right on the lakeshore. After the usual Euro rigmarole involving a pre-race safety briefing in French (no idea what they said), lots of cheering and a very excited start official we were off to the ringing of a very large bell. It was a race of three parts with the first 3 km being on pretty flat roads and then the next 7 km on undulating forest tracks to reach 1000m.

The odd bit of downhill was a relief and I dashed past some mincing Europeans each time but they often overtook me again. The third part was the steep climb which was hard work with lots of switchbacks to eventually break clear of the forest for a final 3 km steady push to the summit. I seemed to suddenly come strong here and managed to improve my position by a few places. I finished in 30th place of 152 in 2:03:19 (winner 1:36:19). I had been expecting about 2 hours so was happy enough with my time and particularly how I finished strongly.

At the summit I tucked into the cured sausage, dried fruit and local ripe cheese and





admired the view across the Alps which was the best it had been all holiday but I still couldn't quite see Mont Blanc which had been eluding us all week. Shortly after I finished the first Xperience cyclist reached the col at 1660 m (a previous Tour de France stage finish). I was happy to beat him, but I did have a 1 hour head start and he'd gone 13 km further. There was now the problem of getting back to the start to meet Becca and Hattie.

I could have bought a bus ticket but thought I'd save €5 and enjoy a run back down. I hadn't factored in that I'd just paced myself for 16.5 km not 33 km, and also the descent would be on limestone paths with a thin layer of mud (it had rained overnight every day for the past week). It was hard work and

I was sore by the end. Fortunately reaching the start meant there was a cool lake to swim in and soothe my feet. The run down did give me time to take note of the views from the forest clearings.

Becca and Hattie had enjoyed their mornings of ice-cream, swimming and playgrounds and now wanted to go up a hill to see the good view. The most convenient hill? Semnoz. Back up we went but in a car this time. It would be nice if Becca could drive!

This was my first mountain race in the Alps. It was definitely an experience but perhaps not typical of races in the central Alps with so much of it in woodland. It was quite intimidating at the start since you could see the entire Semnoz mountain and knew all you had to do was run uphill for 16 km. Lake Annecy is a stunning place with its beautiful blue water, backdrop of mountains and often a squadron of paragliders in the air. There is no shortage of races. While we were there we saw two triathlons based at the lake and a running race in Annecy itself, and numerous fliers for mountain and trail races in the area. Definitely a destination I recommend.

Matt Rooke



David takes on the Fort William Marathon

Kilts, midge spray and downhill mountain bikers in full body armour. It's not what you'd expect to see on a marathon start line, but it's the scene that greeted me on the morning of the inaugural Fort William marathon.

Unusually it was a bright & gently breezy day for my first Fort William marathon, with just 478 runners (the race is capped at 1000 due to restrictions on the route) this was a small race. The atmosphere was very relaxing at the start with runners from all over the country chatting whilst local radio was entertaining the crowd.



The first six miles were stunning, along undulating fire roads, with Ben Nevis etched against the skyline, while summer wildflowers nodded their heads below as I ran through the dark pine trees of Leanachan Forest.

Chatting to others as I ran, there was a Japanese man living in London who was running his 100th marathon and found a race to fit the date. 'It means my family and I get the chance to visit Scotland too,' he said.



With a well sign posted route and cheerful marshals, I never had to worry I'd miss a turn while chatting. Just as well, as otherwise I may have thought I'd taken a wrong turn as we ran down an overgrown single-track section.

After following a disused railway track through a flower strewn valley, the route veered towards the Commando Memorial, dedicated to men who fought in the Second World War for the British Commando Forces at mile 11, before hitting a quiet country road with a welcome downhill.

Over the Tolkien sounding Bridge of Mucomir, and past a few clapboard houses which would not have looked out of place in a Coloradan meadow, we hit the Caledonian Canal for the next seven miles.

I started to slow off my pace as I'd been sticking to 10 min/miles and was starting to cramp up in my calves so changed strategy to a run/walk. There was nothing to break the dreamy monotony except the wake of canoeists and boats that rippled the watery reflections, along with the occasional walker or cyclist who cheered their support.

I don't like crowded marathons (to the point that London Marathon overwhelms me) but I couldn't help wishing there was a bit more fanfare to keep me going along this stretch.

Instead, I had to content myself with chatting to the runners I passed.

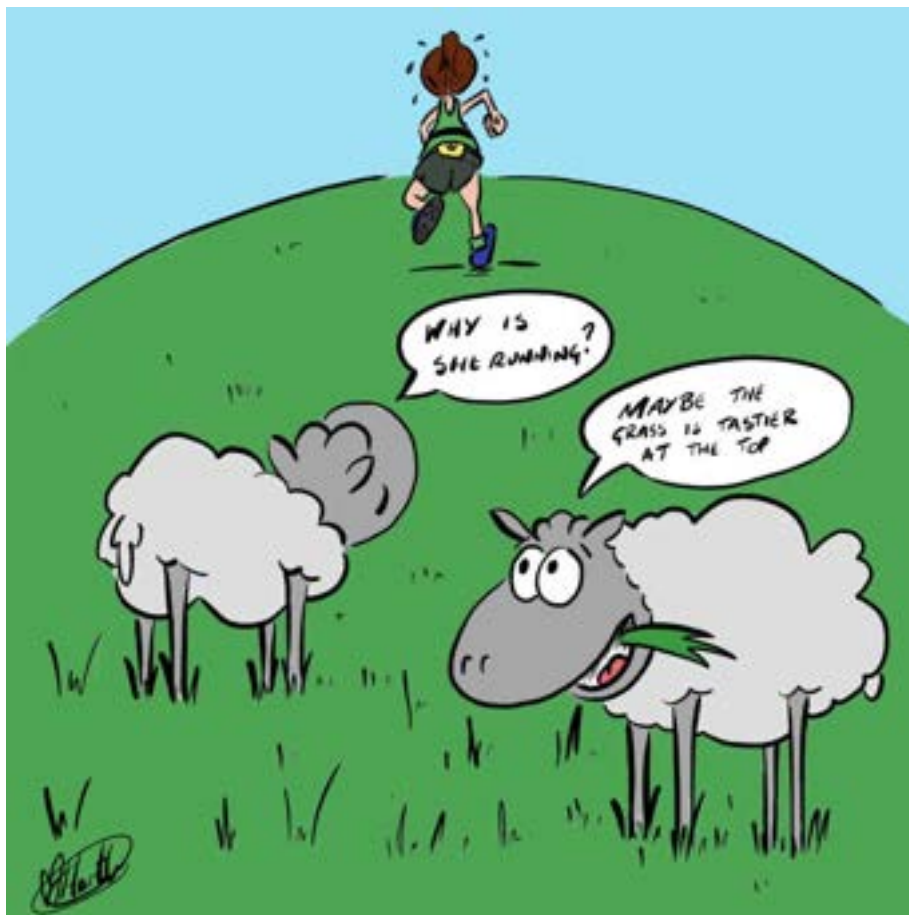
Finally, we left the canal, followed a main road before turning back into the forest back to the finish, a punishing final few miles, ascending by about 300 feet along rock strewn paths that saw many runners slow to a walk.

As I ran under the high wires just near the Ben Nevis car park, I could hear the loud speakers hailing the finish. Expecting a left turn through the car park, I was horrified to discover the final 500 metres went up and a long a piece of single track MTB trail (thanks to the man on the corner who told me exactly how far was left of this track).

To practically sprint towards the finish line in 4 hours 53 minutes was a relief especially after suffering with cramp from mile 16 onwards.

The medal was nice with the goody bag throwing up some random items. I'd thoroughly recommend this mixed terrain marathon in such a scenic setting.

David Marr



By Mike Hartley 😊

My first ultra — laying a demon to rest



Being quite old my relationship to the Great Outdoors goes back a long way. In October 1983, having stumbled across reference to the Lyke Wake Walk and having read Bill Cowley's book on the subject, I made an unsuccessful unsupported solo attempt on the challenge walk. I then tended to keep to the nearer to home areas of Lakes, Dales and Pennines until this year when I completed the route as a competitor in the Lyke Wake Challenge, an annual race organised by the Quakers' Running Club.

The LWW began as a challenge walk in 1955 with the aforementioned Bill Cowley being the principle instigator. The classic route starts near Osmotherley and finishes 40 miles later on the East coast at Ravenscar, having traversed the North York Moors. Start and finish points have been adjusted over the years and parts of the route have changed but it remains a similar challenge to cross the moors and bogs in less than 24 hours. Crossings can be completed in either direction and records also exist for double and triple (and more!) crossings. Joss Naylor took the record to 4.53 in 1979 and Mark Rigby's 1984 time of 4.41 is the current record.

A few months ago I was casting around looking for a race around 40 miles to test the effects of the training I had been doing and The Lyke Wake Challenge seemed the obvious one to go for. Never having raced further than marathon distance it is a fair step up and at the same time would allow me to redress the balance by actually finishing the challenge!

I left entering until almost the closing day but then fell and injured my knee the next day. This

set back my training and meant I arrived at the start line at 5.50 on 14th July less well prepared than I had hoped. Incidentally start times are handicapped based on previous performance or your own estimate of expected lapsed time. I suggested nine and a half hours based on nothing more than my roughly six hours on the Ingleborough marathon.

With me on the start line were four other runners. Three local lads who stuck together throughout and another chap who turned out to be a veteran of many crossings. The first part of the route takes you along the road from Cod Beck Reservoir but soon joins the Cleveland Way route through some woods and then onto the first decent climb. Conditions were already warm with little breeze but the views from the escarpment were good as early mists evaporated. I was feeling good and the knee was behaving so I more or less kept pace with the others who had started with me. I was a bit slow on the steep descent of Carlton Bank into the first checkpoint but spent little time there and pressed on for Clay Bank. This section is mainly good paths and tracks and we were making good time. I noticed at 6.4km (one tenth of the way) I had taken 48 minutes. If I could keep this up that would be an 8 hour crossing! As I was approaching checkpoint 2 I was delighted to see that Sophie had come up the hill to meet me and chase me in. At the checkpoint Sarah was also waiting for me with everything I might need. I am so grateful for my support team who had a long day and some interesting roads to drive along to keep me fully supplied. To be fair the checkpoints were all well stocked with food and drink and very cheery marshals as well.

Leaving Clay Bank there is another climb as we headed towards the highest point on the course. I had covered about 15km with another 14 to the next checkpoint. The path was still good as it shares the route with the Cleveland Way until Bloworth Crossing, where the Way turns north and the Lyke Wake makes use of an old railway line. Along this section I began to slow down although it is fairly flat and smooth. I was beginning to have aching quads which is unusual for me so early in a run, but was a result I think of straining them in a DIY related incident earlier that week. The view down into Farndale was some compensation but the heat was beginning to become oppressive. This was the section that did for me back in 1983 so I was glad to keep moving and arrive at the Lion Inn where Sarah and Sophie were once again in support. What a treat to get rice pudding and tinned peaches from the checkpoint team! I had a bit longer here while I stocked up on food and rubbed some ibuprofen gel into my legs. I took a couple of paracetamol for good measure too.

Leaving the Lion Inn there is a couple of miles of road before striking off into the wilderness which is the infamous bog section. Normally you can expect to sink into deep bogs along here but with the extremely dry conditions following weeks of drought it was mainly dry all the way. Indeed some parts were as hard as concrete, with other bits nice springy peat. I had left the three lads back on the railway line but they passed me along here and stayed ahead all the way. Still, I racked up the first 32 km in around 4.38 so felt on schedule. The reality was that I was slowing down and later splits confirmed this.

Running down into Hamer checkpoint I had covered 38.5 km in 5.37. It felt like late afternoon but was not yet even midday! I had another longish stop here to check my feet. This involved re-applying tape where I would expect a chance of blisters, but none were apparent yet. I had agreed that Sarah and Sophie would skip the next checkpoint as the road distances make it difficult to get there and to the next ahead of the runners. This wasn't so bad as the legs are only 6 & 5 km. However I was now slowing even more, as the path became very rocky after Blue Man i' th' Moss (a standing stone). I wasted no time at checkpoint 5 but pressed on, down to Wheeldale Beck and back up and over Simon Howe to the NYMR railway line and so to Eller Beck, cp6. With the next and last checkpoint close to the finish this was to be my last prolonged pit stop so I refuelled and



and set off again at an even slower pace!

The next bit I found it harder to follow the path but I got back on it and took my phone out for the first time for a selfie at the cross on Lilla Howe. I was now crossing Fylingdales Moor and was out of the “bog” section, but was finding the stony track hard going. My right foot was sore if I hit any rocks so I walked much of this part. There was a drop down into the valley of Jugger Howe Beck then a climb out to the final checkpoint. Pausing only to guzzle a goodly quantity of electrolyte I pushed on, keen to beat 11 hours. It was already 4 o'clock but the last leg is only 3 miles. A nice grassy path leads up to the radio mast which I had first spotted long ago. Once there I opted to take the road route for the last mile or so to the finish at the Raven Hall Hotel. I was able to run all this part and even managed a sprint across the line, where I collected my most hard earned t-shirt ever! Total time 10.52, distance 65.26 km, height gain only 1215 m. (Footnote. Wake is the watching over a corpse and Lyke is the corpse itself).

Chris Roberts



A fine summer in Finland

looked at the course at all and I was only hoping it will be one lap, but of course it wasn't. Three times 5km, my worst fear! I always get disappointed when doing the same route many times. The first lap went well, second was ok too, but the third lap was torture. I forgot to take my gin gins (chewy ginger sweets) with me! My left ankle felt very heavy and mentally I had already finished the race, somehow I managed to crawl to the end in 1.22h. I was a little sad about the time, but in the end it was a beautiful day, a very nice route in the forest and along fields of flowers so why not to be happy :)

Two weeks ago I finally took a train to Tampere to run my 50th Parkrun. A few other people from the UK had found their way there too which was very nice. The route went along Pyhäjärvi Lake in Ratinniemi Park. Tampere started Parkruns in Finland last October and hopefully Helsinki will have its own Parkrun this Autumn.

I will see how much more running I can do now that school has started, but will return to UK to do Buttermere Triathlon on the 8th of September.

Riika Grohn



The moose in Porkkala!

I moved to Finland for the summer to escape the heat but it has been as hot here as it has been in England. June went quickly, I live close to Sipoo National Park where there are fantastic paths for running. We are lacking fells in Southern Finland, but our trails are fantastic, usually from 2km to 20km and you can always improvise and cut across the forests. I bought INOV-X 8 Talon 190 shoes — I'm really happy with them, they're very light weight and have good grip.

One of my trips headed to Porkkala Bay, it's a nice rocky coast line Southwest of Finland, with a few kilometres of trails to explore. It was Saturday evening, no breeze at all, shops were closed and we were running low on water after cycling there. I think it was the hottest day of the summer and I don't think I have ever sweated so much!

We had a quick evening stroll along the coast before putting our hammocks up and stayed the night there. The biggest surprise was huge moose right next to the road, less than two meters from me. I haven't come across one in England.

At the end of June I had signed up for Helsinki Central Park Run 15km. I had not



Only a hill

From an early age, the solitary peak of Black Combe has captured my attention. Standing proud against the skyline and isolated from all other Lakeland fells, this modest peak still holds a wonder for me even today, and not only for nostalgic reasons. The hill is far less travelled than other Lakeland fells, for its isolated stature grants it one very important advantage - freedom from the popularity of many tourists.

Black Combe sits tucked away, on the tip of the most southern peninsula in the Lake District, affording it some of the greatest views which even its largest brethren may struggle to boast. From its summit, though only on the clearest of days, a lucky walker (or the more elusive fell runner) may be granted unobstructed views which can take their breath away (if the climb has not already achieved that). To the north sprawl the Cumbrian Mountains in all their glory and, beyond, the Solway Firth; to the west, across the Irish Sea, sits the Isle of Mann and the eastern shores of Ireland – an exceptionally clear day may grant a view of the Mourne Mountains! As your gaze shifts to the south, you'll see the shipbuilding town of Barrow-in-Furness with the headlands of Wales lying much further across the sea; and finally, look to the east, and you'll see the Furness Fells with the Yorkshire Dales beyond. For a hill so unappreciated and undervalued, this modest peak surely affords some of the best views England has to offer.

I remember, as a boy, we used to look at the rising mass of Black Combe from where we would play, as children do, in the sand dunes of Roanhead. When visiting my parents, I still walk the dogs along that very beach, marvelling at what is still a spectacular view. Once, when I was ten years old, my dad took me and my little sister (Steph was seven at the time) to climb Black Combe. It was to be my first real mountain and, although it falls short of that magic threshold of two thousand feet, albeit by a meagre amount, it was and always will be my first real mountain. Besides, I was ten years old, and small for my age. Black Combe was bigger to me then than the Pikes of Scafell are to me now.

My dad lured both me and Steph up there with the promise of chocolate and that we would get a view of our hometown. To be fair to Dad, had the hill not been wearing its usual cap of cloud, we would have had the view, but not today – today we could see little further than twenty feet ahead of us and the mist brought with it a fine dampness which soaked us to the bone. It was a very real introduction to the Lakeland fells.

We arrived back at Whicham church somewhat damper than we had been when we'd started out and, if I'm honest, nothing ever really changes. Even now, a good two decades after that first outing, my dad still has a fantastic ability to find the one fell shrouded in mist and follow the wettest most boggy path to its summit – a trait I'm assured by my wife that I've inherited. There's a standing joke that when fell walking with either me or dad, it's prudent to take wellies and in some cases, a canoe.

Black Combe may only be a hill, but it is the hill which ignited the fire that I've carried within me ever since. It is the hill which began what will be a lifetime of adventuring into Lakeland, whether that be running, walking, rock climbing or just generally getting lost (something that I'm no stranger to – who needs a sense of direction when you have a sense of adventure?). It is, and will always be, the hill that made me who I am and gave me so many incredible friends and happy memories.

In the immortal words of Geoffrey Winthrop-Young:

“Only a hill; but all of life to me, up there, between the sunset and the sea.”

Mike Hartley



A photograph of two runners on a grassy hillside. The runner in the foreground is wearing a bright yellow-green shirt and dark shorts, with a red backpack. He is leaning forward, looking down at his feet. The runner in the background is wearing a green shirt and black shorts, with a black backpack. They are running on a grassy path. In the background, there are rolling hills and a body of water under a cloudy sky.

A Road Runner's Guide to the Isle of Jura Fell Race

Having trained quite hard for my first ever road race, the Zaragoza Marathon, it was frustrating to find that the event had been cancelled because the river spilled over into the park. Bloody health and safety. Never mind; I had a place in the Isle of Jura Fell race and I'm sure I have another sub 5 hour run in me yet so perhaps this, my 9th go at it would be the one. On three road runs a week and some cross training – yeah right.

But there's no accommodation to be had on Jura on race weekend and Islay is nearly as bad with the Whisky Festival happening over the same Bank Holiday, so we hired a camper van. What better way to tour South West Scotland and at the same time figure out how best to convert our own van, now that we don't have so much building work going on. And where better to try it out for the first time than Castle Douglas, famous site of the most Southerly Branch of Travis Perkins in Scotland. It was a very pleasant car park and the pub was excellent for those who like their beer smooth and the company smoother. Apparently, golfing is big around there.

We had a lovely bike ride down to the coast the day before our second night as camper vanners – well lovely for 35 miles that is, until Kath, showing off her no hands skills in front of the toilet block hit a cunningly disguised speed bump and flew over the bars to land stunned and bleeding in the path of an oncoming boy racer. The couple from Northern Ireland in the

next van, having spent the morning contentedly fiddling with their lighting board, allowed Kath to select from a large carrier bag of prescription and over the counter drugs, so she soon felt better. Luckily, the bike was fine.

Off the next day in the general direction of Kennacraig, we found a rather nice camp site on the Cowal Peninsula with a hill just behind, perfect for a warm up run. Apart from the blueberry incident when the fridge door popped open on a roundabout I think we were really getting the hang of this now. But do we really have to cook a meal on a tiny gas stove in cramped space and anyway, she's good, but even Kath was at a bit of a loss as to what to do with some stale bread, slightly off milk and half a punnet of dusty fruit. It was getting late and the pub was miles away down a tortuous single-track road, so we set off in haste, forgetting that the roof was popped up and the bike rack was hanging off the back. We realised our mistake by the time we reached the road, pursued by a middle-aged man from Stoke who hadn't run that far in two decades and a posh lady on a quad bike. Nice meal though – Otter Ferry – highly recommended.

Getting closer to the big day now, Portavadie to Tarbert, buy some more milk and bread to go off and stale, then Kennacraig to Islay and finally Islay to Jura. We stopped just on the Jura side to put the previously cast-off bike rack back on the outside of the van and picked up a couple of hitch-hiking fell runners so I could regale them

with accounts of my former glories (missing out on a whisky tumbler by less than half an hour) and generally indulge in fell running banter. We found the field with the portaloos, parked, got eaten alive then shut the door and retired for the night.

Race day didn't look too bad early on, with some high cloud to block out the direct sun but not low enough to spoil the visibility. We cycled in to the village with my Walshies hanging over the handlebars, got kit checked and did all the usual stuff and it was great to have a chat with Harvey, Rob and Lizzie who were all there to spectate and offer support.

It wasn't too bad over the first three hills, apart from falling waist deep in a bog – and I was the lucky one – I had to help one guy out who was spluttering around in a ditch up to his neck. I was still going strong up the first of the Paps but on the way down, on the badly eroded scree, I went base over apex and crashed to the floor. I got up and continued limpingly over the next three hills, going backwards through the field in the rising heat. The only thing I had to spur me on at that point was the thought that Kath would be waiting on Corra Bheinn with some jelly babies and a bottle of water. Eventually, on the run back down to the road, with Kath trotting behind in walking boots until she too succumbed to the terrain, I was overtaken by Wendy Dodds. I had left some road shoes on the roadside near the camper van, about three miles from the finish but when I tried to put them on my legs were so cramped that I couldn't reach my feet. No matter. I'm a road runner now, even with the Walshies on. I caught Wendy with about a mile to go, ran with her for a while then, like the true gent that I am, burned her off in the last half a mile.

After that I put myself in the recovery position on the grass verge but when that didn't work I just lay on my back in the sunshine for about an hour before moving again! Kath made it back from Corra Bheinn, cycling from the Three Arch Bridge and better even than the jelly babies and water, she had money for beer and scampi. And more beer. There's a ceilidh at 9 o'clock but really, after that day, you're having a laugh, so we cycled back to the homely surroundings of our white Volkswagen and hit the sack. And

it could literally have been a sack, I wouldn't have cared. Even if I had had to sleep on a hard board, in a cramped, over heated and midge infested... wait a minute. But sleep I did, until day broke at about four the next morning.

Driving across Islay on the way home, life as a traveller felt good. Knowing that I could have a full day off running and eat whatever I liked felt even better. Once we reached Port Ellen we spent an hour on the quayside happily chatting away with a few other Camper Van Enthusiasts about how, for less than the price of a house in Burnley, you can fit out your VW with an outside shower and an actual gas oven. I can't wait to get home, get a wi-fi signal and start looking for the fixtures and fittings which, I am assured, are all to be had on Ebay.

Four Ferries later we are in Rothesay on the Isle of Bute. The camper van is parked in front of a hotel and I am lying on a big soft bed whilst Kath is getting ready to go out for tea (or dinner if you like). "How much is this costing us?" I asked, "And you can buy a house in Burnley for what, £50,000?" Next day a bike ride and a pleasant walk, then off to the Steam Packet Inn on the Isle of Whithorn. Ok so we did get a comedy bed in that hotel and the curtains didn't quite meet in the middle but then neither did the ones in the camper van so you can't get me on that.

I've finished my van conversion now. I got an old armchair off my mum and bungeed it in the back. And oh yes – The Isle of Jura Fell Race, a Road Runner's Guide – well there are about three miles of it you might like. If you're still moving by the time you reach them.

Julian Donnelly



Millen's Marathon



Build up.

Way back in In 2010 I had secured a Good for Age (GFA) time which guaranteed a place in the London Marathon. I'd signed up and registered for the race in London the day before race day but sadly, due to a family death, I travelled North rather than South and was unable to do the race.

Since then I had moved North, ditched the roads and passed myself off as a very average fell runner. The London Marathon was always on the back of my mind as a bucket race list which I had to do and finally bring an end to my road running journey which included the Great North Run way back in 1985 age 11 (1h:35 if you're asking..).

In 2016 I entered the London Marathon ballot and got rejected. I then thought the best way to get a place would be to get a GFA as I didn't want to take a fellow club runner's place if I was able to secure a GFA. I ran Manchester in 2017 and managed a sub-3 hour time and therefore secured a place in London 2018.

Training started after Christmas and was going well. I was mixing road and fell and my last long run was going to be the Edale Skyline, an English Champs race which involved lots of running for a fell race. The race went well and my confidence was sky-high for an estimated 2:50 London time. The week after I raced in Ireland on a flat half marathon course near my in-laws. I wasn't fully recovered from Edale and the -6 wind chill on the flat canal path led to my calf tearing. I was 3 weeks from London and couldn't run.

By this time I'd paid for the train tickets, booked the hotel, arranged to meet our friends and had a family weekend all planned out.

I couldn't miss out again so to on to London we went. I registered on the Saturday and potted around the nearby Parkrun to test the leg. This confirmed I was struggling but stupidly I persisted.

Race Day.

We stayed in Greenwich and I wandered up the race start. With GFA entry you get your own little paddock (with a few thousand others), exclusive start area, toilets and baggage collection away from the masses. Nice! I spotted some pals from Tring RC in the field and we had a good chat comparing injuries, fell running and also talking about the weather. It was heating up. This was going to be the hottest London Marathon on record.

The race started and I cruised down towards the Thames. My leg started to feel tight after 3 miles then really tight after 6. I spotted Owen and Katy in Charlton then Rob Browne in the crowd at Greenwich and it was there the 3 hour pacer overtook me and then the 3:15 hour pacer soon followed by.

I was told that Tower Bridge at 11ish miles was a deafening wall of noise and it was. The atmosphere was incredible but it made me appreciate being out on the fells even more. After Tower

Bridge you go back East into Docklands where the leading Kenyans and Mo Farah passed by on the other side of the road. Passing me on my side of the road were World Record fancy dress attempts. A Bumble Bee was probably the best one. My sorry spirits were lifted as I spotted Katy and Owen and I stopped for a sweaty family hug. I was the sweaty one...

As you turn back West towards the City we passed through the Run Dem Crew zone which is an East End running club. They had a huge sound system which was playing something with so much bass my fillings were rattling. It helped pick up my ever decreasing pace for at least one minute. The runners around me were also suffering. As it was the first warm day of the year and after you have trained all year in a crappy British winter then it is more the lack of adaptation to the heat than the heat which was impacting people. There were bodies swaying this way and that and collapsed runners holding on to the railings. I was thinking 'come on legs get me out of here.'

I finally made it to The Mall and was doddering

in at a 9min/mile pace. I was determined to get in before the 3:30 pacer. My legs were dying on me.

After crossing the line I hopped (shuffled) on to a tube and met my family on the train home. I couldn't drive from the station back home and crawled on all fours up to bed. A week later I was on crutches with a badly torn soleus.

The Aftermath.

If you get the chance then do run the London Marathon. I enjoyed both the weekend and the experience. I would have probably enjoyed the run if it wasn't so painful and London will always be an amazing world city. It has changed since I lived there and is a great place to live and explore.

I think my very average marathon career has now come to an end so back to the fells. Should you run injured? No. It's bloody stupid and costs you a season of fell running.

John Millen



The good, the bad and the ugly!



This year I decided to have a go at the English champs, in doing so I learnt that I needed to do at least one 'Long' to count. Now, I've never been one for a long run, in fact the furthest I ran or raced prior to 2018 was 15 miles, and true to form on the finish line I swore never to run that far again. It was horrendous.

Nevertheless my training regime began in earnest, tuning to my totally non-scientific technique of racing myself fit. So, I turned up at Long Duddon (18 miles, 6000ft) off the back of just one long hot run over the Coniston skyline a few weeks earlier... from the outset I knew it was going to be an interesting affair. Arriving at the car park I was greeted by midges, thick clag on the tops and much talk of 'line choice' (places to go wrong).

This was to be my first proper 'Long', it started well, a very runnable climb up onto Harter left me just in sight of James Harris, as we were now in the clag and with only a vague idea of what line to take I pushed on to get onto his heels. Excellent move. Somehow we ended up with the lead group heading up on Little Stand and James pushed on to have a chat with Rob Jebb about food... jelly babies I think.

This is where things started to go wrong, I was spat out the back (I had clearly gone out too fast) and although made mostly sound navigational judgements on the way to Swirl How, my legs were empty. Shortly after passing a confused looking Carl (running

the short course), I reached Dow Crag but promptly dropped lower than the trod and ended up a distance down the Walna Sca Road. Bugger. The next bit across to Caw was a good old combination of dehydration, cramps, walking, falling over, staggering around and laughing at myself. I made the checkpoint and ambled down to finish, where I promptly lay down for a while and was eaten by midges. I didn't care, I'd just finished Long Duddon. A good run out, lots learned (or so I thought).

Next up, Ennerdale (23 miles, 7500ft) and it was rather warm. I had no idea what I had got myself into with this one! Again setting off a little quick and holding the heels of James Harris, once on the tops I was greeted by some truly fantastic running. However, I may have gone a bit quick and not drank





Buttermere - the start

Hollie - Long Duddon - CLAG!

Buttermere - somehow smiling!?

Polly & Jess - support station!

enough water... again. On reaching Wainwrights ashes I managed a cheeky refuel of flat coke and jelly babies from Jess and promptly set off up what on reflection was a real bad patch to Brandreth Head. The flat coke kicked in and I was able to get round to Kirk Fell where I miraculously dropped down the 'quick' gully and appeared alongside James Harris, who had picked the 'slow' gully. It was brief hello as James promptly ran off again and put in a very impressive result. I on the other hand had some fun up Pillar (bad line), and then promptly hit the wall. I had no water, one gel and a hell of a run to go, and to add to the fun all the water sources had dried up. It was a character building run/walk across to Crag Fell, but the decent was something else, my body just said no. The fire road climb (it was probably flat but it felt like a climb) to the lake shore and the finish was rather painful but soon over. I turned on the spot at the finish line and waded into Ennerdale like a hot saucepan under the tap (a now favoured post-race pastime).

With my two 'Long' training races out of the way I arrived at the English Champs counter Buttermere (22 miles, 8200ft) full of dread, and I was right to be concerned. This one got ugly, the climbs were steep (especially the one up the waterfall, madness!) and descents treacherous, I thought I paced it well but was way back in the field, but I made round to Honister. Approximately halfway, I was required to engage 'survival mode' and

made it to Jess and food/water top up again close to Wainwrights ashes (getting weird now Jess), the trouble was I just didn't have the legs to keep going. I caught Harvey but couldn't hold on to the man in form after Red Pike, in fact I went positively backwards, anyone passing me would have witnessed an ugly sight. Hollie passed me like I was stood still, so I ended up lying in a stream for a few minutes to gather myself, before getting tangled up in bracken and eventually reaching Melbreak. The steam did its job and I made the top and drifted down the backside and round the finish. I think Baldrick (Blackadder) summarises my Buttermere experience rather well; "it started off badly, it tailed off a little in the middle and the less said about the end the better! But apart from that, excellent!".

Next year I'll have another go.

Josh Hartley



Long Duddon - FINISH!

Fat Combe Runner — My first year running on the fells

Yep, I have been “running” since the setup of Millom Parkrun, which was 17/12/2016. My first proper parkrun time was the following week & was 31:20.

Whilst in the pub one evening, my mate recalled a tale of a young chap running down the Combe and asking if he knew “where the John Bull” was and that he was finishing a run from the Black Bull in Coniston.

Clearly this must have planted in seed in my head, as I found myself wondering if I could become fit enough to do a fell race?

With a fair bit of effort & a bit of research, I opted to aim for the Black Combe Fell Race.

Fortunately I already had navigational skills, so I was able to focus on “running”.

My first few attempts Start - Seanness - Trig did not make the 50min cut-off, but a couple of weeks prior to the race, I had managed to get there in under 51 minutes, so it was close enough not to embarrass myself.

The week before the race, during my 1st “full” reccy, I actually met a few BCR (I now realise that they were doing their final Winter League race).

Whilst on this reccy, I didn’t actually do the final climb, believing that my navigation must be out as “no one in their right mind could run up that”.

Come race day, I am pleased to say that I made the check-points, confirmed that fell

runners are not in their right mind, messed up my final descent and finished last. To date, I feel that this is my best achievement.

2018 marks my first full season and I now know what Walsh’s are along with the many other trainers that live on my stairs and the spare pairs in the van etc.

My parkrun time has reduced to the point that I am trying for a sub 23, and I actually act as a pace-runner for other new runners.

I have spent the last 3 months running without a back support and am aiming/hoping to achieve the “Bull to Bull” for myself before the year is out.

My thanks to all that have given any advice, guidance and encouragement over the last year.

Jon Bailey



Here's what else Jon has been up to in the last year (and a bit!)... wow!

11/03/17	The Back Combe Fell Race 13.6km / 1100m
17/05/17	Caw AS 9.3 km / 550m
24/05/17	Latterbarrow Loop 4km / 250m
03/06/17	Short Duddon 14.5km / 1200m
14/06/17	Gosforth 10 mile road race
04/07/17	BCR Summer Race 13.5km / 1000m
16/07/17	Kentmire Horseshoe 19.8km / 1000m
28/08/17	Black Combe Country Fair – Bootle 12.8km / 625m
05/09/17	Gosforth 10K road race
12/09/17	Crab Fair Fell Race 14.5km / 440m
11/11/17	Dunnerdale 8km / 550m
25/11/17	Kirkby Moor 11.4km / 460m
03/12/17	Hoad Hill Harriers Xmas Pudding 10km road race
01/01/18	BCR Winter League Po House
07/01/18	North Lakes ½ Marathon
14/01/18	BCR Winter League Giant's Grave
28/01/18	BCR Winter League Birkrigg Common
25/02/18	Netherhall 10 mile road race
04/03/18	BCR Winter League Black Combe (BCR WINTER LEAGUE WINNER!)
10/03/18	The Back Combe Fell Race 13.6km / 1100m
11/03/18	Muncaster Luck BM 15km / 620m
24/03/18	Coniston 14 mile road race
14/04/18	Eskdale Elevation AL 20.2km / 1455m
12/05/18	Coniston to Barrow 34km
16/05/18	Caw AS 9.3 km / 550m
20/05/18	ASICS Windermere Marathon
02/06/18	Short Duddon 14.5km / 1200m
10/06/18	Howtown AL 21.4km / 1400m
20/06/18	Hawkshead 10k road race
01/07/18	Lighthouse 10k
05/07/18	Hoad Hill fellrace 2.8km / 150m
10/07/18	BCR Summer Race 13.5km / 1000m
14/07/18	Holme Valley 10k Ale-Athon
22/07/18	Coniston Country Fair AS 9.7km / 732m
11/08/18	Turner Landscape AM 17km / 910m

Upcoming races....

August	Lancaster Half Marathon, Black Combe Country Fair
September	Could this be the month for my go at the Bull to Bull?
October	Ramping up the km's in readiness for the Tripple
November	Dunnerdale, Kirkby Moor
December	Frosty Triple (3x half marathons Fri, Sat & Sun)



Outlying Fell Adventures — The Ripperbean arrival challenge!

“So, err...I think this is the summit?”. This was definitely my most uttered phrase whilst ticking off the 116 Wainwright Outlying Fells of Lakeland...

I'd completed the 'proper' Wainwrights in summer '17 and, now expecting a baby and facing the winter, I knew it was more important than ever to keep active and in good shape. I needed a new challenge - something stretching but also something manageable, as I really didn't know what my body would

be able to cope with. This is when I found myself checking out Wainwright's guide to the 'lesser fells' of Lakeland (written primarily for old age pensioners and others who can no longer climb the high fells). “Perfect!” I thought...and so began my Outlying fell adventures, starting with Caw on 26th August. The race was on to complete the challenge before the arrival of our Ripperbean in spring!

After many days of trekking across the lower lakeland fells, I can confirm that my second most uttered phrase was slightly more colourful (and can't be printed here). This was usually grunted as I picked myself out of a bog, tripped over tussocks, pulled bramble/gorse/holly/other spiky vegetation from my shins, slipped over pine stumps or waded through fermenting bovine slurries. Alfred, what were you thinking?! And what pensioners do you hang out with? They're certainly more hardcore than me!



Cold Fell

With a sense of achievement (and relief!) I summited Gummer's How on 10th February and completed the challenge, well ahead of my mid-April deadline.

Looking back, here are a few observations, highs and lows...

1. Outlying fell summit cairns - leave everything to be desired.
2. Livestock - everywhere on the lower fells. Mainly troublesome when you're attached to two excitable dogs.
3. Vegetation - man eating. Takes no prisoners.
4. Terrain - Rough as!
5. Route planning - no smooth lines! The summits aren't designed to be linked in any way (unless you fancy hurdles across ankle breaking tussocks or wading through heathery death traps).
6. Most pointless - Clints Crag. Even the sheep were wondering what I was doing there.
7. Most surprising (in a good way) - Heughscar Hill. Ran this one alone one



8. Most 'Get off my land' - High Knott (Williamson's Monument). We tried to summit from three different directions, got to within 100m of the top but all routes blocked with very aggressive signage. Some people trespass under cover of dark or clag to bag this one, but I like to keep the peace, so didn't.

9. Most homely - Our very own Black Combe, gotta love it. Still a mystery why this one isn't a 'proper' Waino.

10. Most remote and wildlifelife - the fells in East Lakes. There are some gorgeous horseshoes out there, with ground nesting owls and herds of deer. Certainly worth a visit.

Would I recommend the Outlying fells? Umm, well, I'm glad I did them, but I would suggest sticking to the higher fells if you had the choice. It wouldn't be fair to say that the Outlying fells are all entirely rubbish... but a lot of them are. I think Rob McKeever summed them up well when he said, "Oh yes, the Wainwright Outlying fells, there are some nice ones over in East Lakes that I'll never do again".

Beth Ripper



The Outlying Assault Course

Seems I was beaten to a Wainwrights Outliers write up by Beth. To be fair, she also beat me to completion of the summits too.

I began late 2017 and made a decent start before an injury put me out of action for a few months until some serious acupuncture finally fixed me and I got finished late July 2018.

I'd like to give an alternative perspective based on my experience of completing this random assembly of summits but to be honest, Beth has it spot on so I'm tempted to say "what Beth said" and leave it at that (except I wasn't pregnant).

I do disagree with Beth about the best of the bunch though, the view from Knipe Scar is outstanding.



If I had to summarise, I'd say, nice horseshoes in the East, loads of owls, deer, tussocks, ticks, more tussocks, flies, more tussocks, swearing, questioning of Alfred's sanity.

If you like solitude give it a go. I had very few encounters with people - roughly one per ten summits I reckon - but then I'd probably steer clear of a shouty, sweaty, swearsy, arm-waving lunatic if I found myself in their company on a remote (tussocky) hillside.

My highlight was finishing with a run out to Orrest Head (twelfth run of the weekend). It wasn't the sense of achievement or the smug self-satisfaction of bagging this eclectic mix of Lake District "summits" that made Orrest Head memorable, it was the realisation that I could stop thrashing around, assault course style, every weekend and return to the high fells.

Would I recommend this challenge? Well, it depends who is asking, but yes, especially if you have ever offended me.

Pat McIver

The shiny new Lighthouse 10K!

2018 saw a new run/race setup in the local area. The Lighthouse 10k Run was organised by a couple from Haverigg, with a view to raising money for charity. This year's chosen charity was the British Heart Foundation.

The route was very well martialled, with suitably placed & enthusiastically manned water stations.

Starting at the Ski Bar, the predominantly road-route made its way through the Main Street of Haverigg & towards the "two barns" before a right turn toward the Knott.

The Knott Climb starts shortly after 3km into the race, ending at around 4km & is probably the toughest section of the route.

From there, the route returns & heads through Millom.

The final 2km are on gravel terrain, over paths frequently covered during 1st place runners David Fulford's training.

Black Combe Runners Gavin Lloyd, Karl Fursey and I took part — with Gavin securing a well-earned 2nd place, I finished 9th and Karl getting a 10km Season best.

Things are looking positive that this is to become an annual event & although it is unlikely to be a PB Course, it is varied & interesting, so well worth considering.

Jon Bailey



Irene's Eulogy

Daniel Turner



The words I keep hearing about my mum since her passing are 'lovely and kind'. I'm sure that comes as no surprise to anyone in this room today. Her warm nature meant that she wanted to be everyone's friend, and was always willing to lend a hand to anyone that needed something.

Irene was dearly loved by her children, Michael and me, as well as her brother Colin, and their extended families. She had a vast circle of friends, and would never get far down the street on her daily travels without stopping to chat with people she met.

Irene was born in Carlisle on the 25th May 1945 to her parents Donald and Clarice Ross. She joined her brother Colin, and lived in Millom nearly all her life. Donald, or 'Pop' as he was often referred to, loved walking around Millom and its surrounding area, and this stayed with Irene, who would get out every day, often walking places, and always wanting to take the scenic route. Irene told me of the family holidays she used to love in Blackpool every year, visiting the shows and the Park. Something she continued with her own family. When her dad suffered from illness later in his life, she made sure he moved into her home and looked after him.

She always spoke with happiness about her childhood on Lonsdale Road, where she would play in the backstreet, and met friends who would remain

close to her for her entire life. She often told us of the first time she met her great friend Sandra, and they had their photo taken together sitting on the windowsill of a house in their street. Even right up until a few months ago, she was still walking out to Haverigg on a regular basis to visit Sandra. She was very proud to have attended Millom Grammar School from 1956.

She met and fell in love with her husband Ralph in her teens, and they were married in Millom at The Baptist Church in 1966. They bought a house just one street away from where Irene has been brought up, on Lonsdale Terrace, and they soon had their first son Michael in 1970. He was joined 3 years later by me. They spent 20 happy years in the family home, with cat, Pansy.

Mum always wanted things to be done correctly, and didn't like to take short-cuts, and made sure the family home ran as smoothly as possible. As with any home, things would get messy and cluttered over time though, so before any family gatherings she would launch into a mad cleaning spree, where books and various items would be shoved into cupboards or upstairs out of sight. We used to ask "Is the Queen coming?" as she polished every surface in sight!

Although she spent time looking after the home and children, mum was always keen to be in the work environment, and her first job was as Office Clerk at Sellafield. After having children she spent many years working part-time in Scurrah's Newsagent, The Barbeque Chip Shop and as a Cleaner and a Wages Clerk for Clive Proctor. Later in life she worked in Barrow for a local trade firm W. M. O'Brien too. She loved to be kept occupied with these jobs, enjoying the challenge of day-to-day work, and also the interaction with work colleagues and customers.

As her children grew up, she found a love of running, which would continue for many years. Originally starting by jogging further and further down The Banking, she soon moved on to longer distances and joined one of her best friends, Kath, in the Black Combe Runners club. This tied in with her love of being out in the fresh air, and she made many friends during this time, and would regularly compete in local races, always finishing high up the order.



One of her crowning glories was her entry, and completion, of the Wolverhampton Marathon, in which she sped past the finishing line in an amazing 3 hours 44 minutes! Not content with that feat though, she then entered the Keswick 2 Barrow, and ran the entire 40+ mile distance finishing as the Female Veteran Winner. She also did the K2B again another year, proudly competing with son Michael, both of them hugging at the finish line. Even later in life when she no longer ran, she would volunteer to help marshal races.

Mam drove for many years, and few who were passengers with her would forget the experience in a hurry! She took 6 attempts to pass, and was thrilled when she did, but the stone walls surrounding Millom's roads were never to be the same again! One time, late for an interview in Barrow, she set speeding off in one of Ralph's favourite rapid cars, overtaking another car, losing control and taking out many sections of Shepherds Farm wall! Thankfully she was never injured in any of these numerous accidents but her passengers became less accepting of lifts as time went on!

Once the children had grown up and she had achieved so much with her running, she set herself a new challenge by going to Lancaster University. Proving that she was still as dedicated and clever as ever, she successfully completed her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English plus Health Studies. We proudly looked on as she collected her Degree one day in Preston, and you can see by the photo of her, here at the front, how delighted she was with this superb accomplishment.



She was intensely proud of living in Millom, always eager to talk about and show the sights to any of her many visiting out of town friends, whom she often kept in touch with from a distance, making sure to send Christmas cards and make phone calls to them when she could.

Linked to this, she was very dedicated to the town, and spent much of her time attending local functions, supporting events where she could, and generally helping the town thrive. She was Secretary of the Millom Economic Development Group, completing Minutes and paperwork for a period of time, always eager to see Millom improve.

Irene was also famed with her friends and family for her tendency of being late. Although there was never any malice, she would generally leave setting off to the last moment, and often be late for things, frequently leaping on trains as the doors were shutting. Memorably Irene was even late for her son Michael's wedding, and Mike also remembers her being over 2 hours late after agreeing a meeting time in Barrow, as she'd got enthralled looking round the shops!

Related to this she was known widely for her charity work. A look at her bank statement recently showed she was giving money to Deaf Children, Amnesty International, British Red Cross and Guide Dogs, despite not having much money herself.

She was keenly religious, and attended the Baptist Church regularly for a number of years, making sure her children visited Sunday School as well. Later in life she was an attendee at the Spiritualist Church too.

Irene was incredibly loyal to her friends like Marilyn, who she'd known since they were 9, keeping in touch with them as often as she could, and forging friendships that would last all her life. She was forgiving, and even if annoyed, would always reach back out to regain companionship.

She leaves behind a huge line of friends and family who wish she was still with us, and will miss her deeply. A great many people, and animals, lives have been enriched by her and the virtues she gave to her children will live on and be continued for years to come.

For those who didn't know Irene...

...she was an active club member from the mid 1980s to the 90s, a current social member and was a regular helper at Black Combe Races. Irene was a pioneering fell runner in the 1980s when few women were involved in the sport. In 1988 she was the first Lady Vet in the Keswick to Barrow, ironically she would have been first lady had she not missed the first check point and turned back to retrace her footsteps for approximately 1 and half miles back to the check point! Thus she completed an extra 3 miles. We will all have our individual memories of Irene, to me she was a lovely person who always had time for a chat and the interest of the club at heart. Irene RIP. By Rob McKeever.

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

