

PACEMAKER

The newsletter of Keswick Athletic Club
Spring 2005

New Captains Do the Biz

With the first English Fell Championship race at Fiendsdale over, the respective team captains can be proud of the turn out of members. The men had at least 10 on the start line and the ladies 5. True to form the ladies got the better team result with a first position on equal points with Ilkley but taking it on the position of the 3rd counter, however amid strong opposition the men's team were 8th. The mens V50's were 5th.

Everyone took home a kilo of peat stuck to their legs and various other parts of their bodies, Pat had to have 2 fingers strapped together and Dunc got a gash on the kneecap. Newish member Ian Butler and back again Pippa Jackson did remarkably well on a sole destroying course. I can't believe that I could only average 10 min miles, so it just proves that every training run I do is speedwork. Traditionally the early races get the biggest entries, so the best way to score well must be to turn out consistently. I hope you will continue to back our two enthusiastic captains. Organisation was fine except having to wait till Tuesday for results--- it somehow defeats the object of having the sportident system. Two weeks before, I did the Black Combe race and they couldn't handle the high tech system either. However at Causey Pike you would see your sticky label in position on the results board before you had time to get your breath back---- that's called the Keswick high technology system.

MID-LANCS LEAGUE CROSS COUNTRY EVENT AT KESWICK - 12 MARCH 2005

Many thanks to everyone who helped with the Mid-Lancs Cross Country event in Fitz Park.

We had over 350 runners from 14 categories competing in 7 separate races around the Park in lovely sunny, if chilly, conditions, perfect for running. There were some good performances from Keswick runners, and you can view the results on the internet at: <http://www.geocities.com/midlancs/xcframe.htm>

Well over 30 Club members (and some non-members) pitched in to help as marshals, stewards, officials, and to bake cakes for the Refreshment Bar, which was busy for the whole day. It would be impossible to run a big event such as this without that fantastic level of support, so a really big Thank You to all those helpers.

Dunc Overton

The Refreshment bar raised a healthy lump of cash for Club Funds:

Wow, what a great day for the fund-raising never mind the running! Thanks to all those who supplied the lovely cakes, there was a fantastic display and they went like hot, well, cakes! The visitors were very impressed, and several said it was the best they had seen at these league events. Many thanks also to those who came along and helped run the Refreshment Bar on the day. Refreshment Bar Profit: £190.00.

Trish Overton

Ed. Not least a big thank you to Trish and Dunc for their considerable and efficient input!!

Premiership Leaders

Are you a Chelsea fan or do you read Athletics Weekly? If not you may not know that our member Bryan English has had a transfer of sports, from chief Medical Officer of UK Athletics to Club Doctor at Chelsea. Congratulations Bryan. I note that you still want to maintain contact with athletics and hope that includes your membership of Keswick AC. I'm expecting a call anyday as I hear they need a newsletter editor. My CV suggests I can handle difficult chairmen and secretaries, a workload of up to two days every 3 months providing there is time for 2 runs a day and an afternoon nap. Well they certainly don't need any more footballers!!

Inter counties x country

Our Mark had a good run and was easily picked out at the start on the TV-- managing 86th position is no mean achievement and first counter for Cumbria. Well done Mark.

Publicity Co-ordinator

Could this be you? The club currently seeks someone for this non committee position; duties to include gathering information as soon as possible after events, writing it down in a manner suitable for publication and distributing it to the local press. Help will be given by Pete Richards on areas you are not familiar with. An enthusiastic person would need to be prepared to make phone calls as people are very slow at offering information. Make yourself known to Pete if you want to have a go.

Ladies Activities

The ladies have had an excellent start to the fell racing season. After complications with the results, we have just learned that the team have been awarded first place at Fiendsdale, the first English Championship counter. Well done ladies. On the roads, well done to Catherine Brennan, winning the ladies race at Netherhall 10 and also to Rose Gittins, competing in her first half marathon at Haweswater in a time of 1.40. The ladies have continued to meet Thursday evenings throughout the winter months with a few turning up on Tuesdays to take part in Mark's sessions. With the clocks going forward Easter weekend and the milder weather, we can look forward to running off road Thursday evenings. All ladies welcome, 6.15pm Rawnsley Pavilion.

Pat R

Subs for 2005

These are long overdue, but Tony tells me that 30 -40 have not sent in their £9 -- I have spoken to one or two and they had genuinely forgotten. Please send your £9 to Tony Brand Barker, 8 Caldecote Avenue, Cockermouth CA13 9EQ. That way you will continue to receive these priceless newsletters and be able to enter races as a Keswick AC member. Membership cards will be sent out in May to all paid up members. A highlighter mark on your label indicates that you have forgotten.

Club Logo

I am told by the designer, Alan Rithie, that 21 years have passed since it was produced. Alan was on the committee at the time and he had been asked to try and design something. After submitting the ,later to be adopted one, Alan went to the next meeting to see Jon Broxap sporting a Tee shirt with the logo on. Democracy had taken it's course!! I am making an effort to try and use for the heading on the newsletter--if it's not there, my IT is not up to it.

Year so far – from MDS or is it CDS?

Seems hard to believe we are a quarter way through 2005. Ideally our base/endurance training should be out the way, with a few sharpeners as the racing season commences. That's the theory – though in practice other agendas/injury etc will crop up. Important thing is to enjoy what we do, have a good craic, and get amongst the Borrowdale lads!

Eng/British Fell Championships:

Excellent turn-out at Fiensdale – good result by all. 3 teams in total out. Thanks to those who drove and no apologies for the early start – we weren't too far from the start. Half-six does come round twice on a Saturday!

We have a decent squad for Ireland already – hopefully we can fill Dave's passion-wagon with some extra counters.

Moelwn Peaks – Apparently a rocky course so it should suit those technical specialists – give me a shout if you fancy it. Don't worry if you feel that a championship race is not for you – all counters are welcomed and appreciated. Recce anyone? I booked half a day to get to Stranraer so the other half can be a recce to Wales?

Buttermere – organiser told me he has a strict limit which will be adhered to, he will not be taking entries on the day. Please enter ASAP – form previously circulated, or look on CFRs website.

Wasdale – similar applies here – limit of 250. We'll get round and recce this but no immediate urgency.

Road:

Dave Troman has had a strong start to the club champs – 2 wins out of 2 so far. A few shorter ones to come which will be interesting – also possibilities of someone sliding a sneaky marathon in right at the back-end purely out of badness! (club trip – Benidorm mid November?)

Cross Country:

Not everyone's cup of tea but very enjoyable – good standard in the mid lincs and the inter-counties was an eye-opener. This new Cumbria league will hopefully be taking off next season.

Once again let me know if you would like to come to any of the championships – I'll co-ordinate transport maps etc. An excellent start to the season.

Captain Demon-Smith.

Secretaries Musings

Well that's the first 3 months of the year gone and no doubt many of you have followed the usual pattern for this time, under trained, over weight and race rusty!. Having said that, the club has done rather well so far. New club member Catherine Brennan won the Netherhall 10 and both the men and the ladies had good turn outs at the first English Championship fell race at Fiensdale. The ladies team which included Pippa Jackson who has recently returned to the club, came a close second. Hopefully this is a sign of things to come.

The club has been part of The Mid-Lincs X-country League for many years and although few members take part in the events it has been there for those who wanted it. This year we agreed to stage an event which thanks mainly to the excellent work of Duncan and Trish Overton was a great success with over 350 runners taking part. I have just received a letter from Dawn Lock, the league's secretary thanking the club for a great day of races, 7 in all!!

The New Balance shop in Bank Street, Keswick. has a new manager, Debbie and along with her assistant Rob recently invited club members along to an open evening. 31 members turned up which was not bad for a cold wet evening. I know now where to hold this year's A.G.M.!! Those attended were given vouchers to exchange for 10% discount cards but if you didn't make it, just call in the shop and you can get one. New Balance have also agreed to sponsor both the 'Round The Houses' and 'Swinside 6' races this year.

In the last newsletter I requested a member to take over the role of Publicity Officer, ever the eternal optimist!!. As no one came forward it was agreed at the last committee meeting that I would temporarily do it, note the word 'temporary'!!. To make this task as easy as possible for me , I am asking our race organisers to do their own reports and members to send in their own reports of races done. Not just the results but also details of the event, winners etc. Hopefully this can all be done by e-mail (press-reports@keswick-ac.org.uk) which I can then forward to the 3 local papers.

The internet has changed the way the club is run, hopefully for the better. It is a great way to communicate and share information (I don't always think that when I am faced with a deluge of e-mails some days!!). However you can't beat meeting and chatting with fellow runners and I look forward to seeing many of you at races, training and social events during the coming year.

Pete.

Training Second Quarter 2005

Summer is here at last – hopefully a bit dryer than last year’s effort. At the time of writing the first championship race has been and gone, with races coming thick and fast from here in. Where possible I have scheduled a short race in lieu of a structured session – this will provide a far better work-out than anything I can provide. If feeling tired etc just treat them as fast runs or even tempo runs.

Training runs will kick off from 6.30, not 6.15. A few have mentioned that the 6.15 is a bit tight to make on occasion.

5th April 05 – Easy run over Walla crag from Pavilion. Post Spelga we will still be recovering. I won’t be there as we are away – I’ll organise someone to open the shed.

12th April 05 – Time Trial over the Keswick Masters Long Course. I’ll handicap it so we all finish together and all get a good run out. Meet at the Rawsley hut – we’ll jog out to the pavilion and start from there.

19th April 05 – Derwent AC are hosting a 5.5 mile race on the road – Lamfoot Loop – starting at 7 PM. Registration at Derwent AC club house in Kirkgate in Cockermouth. Molewyn peaks is on Saturday so give it a miss/take it steady if required.

26th April 05 - Easy run around/over latrigger as the gridale grind is on the following Wednesday. We’ll use one of the Junior circuits that Steve Organised.

Thursday 28th – Buttermere recce. Make sure we all know where we are going – meet Buttermere 6.30 by roadside near Church for a jog round – all welcome.

3rd May 05 – 12 x 90 second efforts towards Walla Crag. Note that Buttermere is on the Sunday – counter for English, Club.

10th May 05 – 1 Hour tempo run – hard towards Skiddaw then turn back after 60 minutes – collect and gather up as we descend.

17th May 05 – Moorclose 10K – club road counter. Workington at the Moorclose sports centre. Get there early as the event can fill up.

24th May 05 – 2 Riggs. Not a counter this year but a good run out. Those not running no doubt Alan would appreciate a hand.

31st May 05 – 12 x 90 second efforts – towards Jenkin Hill.

7th June 05. Club Fell Counter – Coledale Horseshoe race. Edale is on the 12th – British and Eng Short counter

14th June 05 – We’ll have another go at the Keswick Masters route. As its Bob Graham Season times might be down!

21st June 05 – Easy run around Latrigger terrace – Langstrath is on the Wednesday. Culter Fell (British Counter) is on the Saturday

28th June 05 – Easy run Walla/Bleaberry. Hawkshead 10K – club road counter – is on the following Wednesday.

Everyone’s personal agenda is different – mine is the English and British Championship counters and I have structured my year accordingly – however if the above does not tie in with your objectives than take the session easier. Please fell free to shout out if there is anything you would like to see included – or you don’t like the above etc.

MDS

Forthcoming Road Races

Bendrigg 10K

Sat 11th June, 10k race & 2mile fun run. 2pm. £4 (£5 unatt). Closing date 30 May. Held in conjunction with activities day - archery,adventure course, tube slide, stalls & refreshments. Proceeds to Bendrigg Lodge (Outdoor Trust for disabled & disadvantaged).

Entries to Bendrigg 10k, Bendrigg Lodge, Old Hutton, Kendal. LA8 0NR 01539 72366

Essentially it's close to Killington services so leave M6 at Sedbergh junction & then take back roads past Killington.

See the Christmas/New Year newsletter for guide dates for other road races throughout the year.

Forthcoming Fell Races

I don't wish to replicate the FRA calendar which has a comprehensive entry of races. I will point out a few of the more local ones. If you are new to the Fell Running scene you would be well advised to join the FRA. This will provide you with a calendar of all the year's races in England and a few others from over the borders in the rest of the UK. You would also be able to familiarise yourself with the rules and regulations. Pete Bland is the membership secretary, and a call to his shop or visit www.fellrunner.org.uk will get you signed up.

April 9th Sat Middlefell from The Screes Hotel Nether Wasdale £4.50 on day 2.30pm 6.6 miles 1700 ft a long out and back across fields with a technical climb in the middle!

April 16th Sat Glaramara Fell Race from Glaramara Guest House Seatoller £3 on day 2.00pm 5 miles 2100 ft short outrun then straight into the technical stuff. Route knowledge an advantage. Rock climbing at the top!

April 23rd Sat Anniversary Waltz from Stair Village Hall £5 pre entry to Wynn & Steve Cliff, Paddock View, Frolesworth Rd, Leire, Leicester LE17 5HJ by 10th April 11.75 miles 3600ft an extremely long outrun, then a short grass friendly terrain style fast run. Descent off Dale Head a bit technical then full steam ahead to Catbells and down to the finish.

April 27th Wed Grisedale Grind from Whinlatter visitor centre £3 on day 7.00pm 3 miles 1600 ft Angela and Tony Brand Barker are organisers [sorry Chris [son] I know you do most of the work]. A bit of a downhill dash on the road to start, forest track and then into one of my favourites-- tough straight climb and descend the same way. 30 min lung buster!

May 8th Sun Buttermere Sail beck £5 pre entry by 30th April to Jack King 4 Mayo Street Cockermouth CA13 0BY 1.00pm start from Buttermere 9.4 miles 4650 ft Eng Championship and club counter. Steep road climb out of village then its fell all the way. You need some strength left towards the end or you suffer. I always get blisters.

May 18th Wed Dockray-Hartside from Dockray Village £3 on night 7.00pm 6 miles 1800ft.

May 22nd Sun Helvellyn £4 on day 12 noon 11 miles 4500 ft from Bram Crag Farm St John's in the Vale. A tough one and not to be put down as your first fell race.

May 24th Tues Two Riggs £3 on night 7.15pm venue as Helvellyn 6.5 miles 1350 ft apart from a rough congested start this could be your first fell race, but there is no such thing as an easy race!

June 7th Tues Coledale Horseshoe from Braithwaite Camp Site £3 on night 6.45pm 9 mile 3000 ft a belter, big climbs, fast running, technical stuff, a bit of everything with road at the start and finish. Frostbite is not out of the question! Midges!

June 22nd Wed Langstrath 7.15 pm £3 on night 4.5 miles 1400ft from Langstrath Hotel. Good venue. Bottleneck at early stile. Rocky paths a bit frustrating, if you run fast enough the midges might get the slower runners behind you. Buy a drink and help keep Donna & Gary in the lifestyle they are accustomed to! Leave the altimeter at home. Like all Lyn Thompson promotions there will be lots of prizes.

July 3rd Sun Skiddaw 12.30pm £4.50 on day from Fitz Park Pavilion 9 miles 2700ft Self explanatory route and if you haven't been up Skiddaw you should check conditions of membership! [apologies to French enclave].

July 9th Sat Wasdale from NT car park Wasdale Head £6 pre entry to Richard Eastman, 2 Maudsyke, Station Road, Drigg, Holmrook, Cumbria CA19 1XQ by 25th June but limit of 250 entries. 21 miles 9000ft of torture. First half temptingly fast followed by difficult navigation and boulder fields galore. If you have never walked downhill, test your ability here!! Eng/British counter so for your club's sake enter and get some mega long runs in before

HANDY HINTS FOR ROAD RUNNERS

Don't you wish you had insight into how to be a better runner, a better competitor, for the benefit of yourself, those around you and those poor unthanked race organisers. Well, you can; read on.

- 1, If you are a slower runner, then start at the front. You will be able to greet all your friends as they pass you in the first mile.
- 2, Wear your race number on your back. This is particularly useful for race officials who do not know you personally. They can copy your number down once you have passed them.
- 3, Pin your number on your vest making sure you pin right through to the back of the vest. On attempting to put it on five minutes before the start your adrenaline level will climb rapidly, thus assuring you of a fast race time.
- 4, If you use a number obtained by a friend, it is best to use one from a much older friend, hopefully a woman, then you have a much better chance of getting a prize.
- 5, When nerves build up at the start of a race relieve yourself behind the hedge of a garden near the start line. This ensures a lively input from the spectators (they live there). It also creates variety in the race route, as the event will probably not start at that spot next year.
- 6, If you feel ill always run anyway, this maybe your only opportunity to meet the St John's Ambulance people, and see inside their ambulance.
- 7, If you must clear your nostrils, be careful not to hit your own knees. Those runners immediately to your right and left will welcome the opportunity of a cooling spray.
- 8, If you find a race full, just run with four safety pins on your vest. Most race organisers have never come across this wheeze.
- 9, When you find those race entry forms under your windscreen wipers throw them away. Race organisers prefer you to enter on the day, as they can then meet you face to face.
- 10, When applying Vaseline to your nether regions always do it very provocatively, women find it very attractive in a man.

By Paul Titley [ed. Paul is a new member, but an old hand by the sound of it!!]

>> **Richard Askwith's book, "Feet in the Clouds: a Tale of Fellrunning and Obsession"**, will be available in paperback from late April for £7.99. The book, in which Keswick features prominently, was shortlisted for both the Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature and the William Hill Sports Book of the Year Prize but sadly didn't win either. It is also on the shortlist for the National Sporting Club Book Awards, which are awarded at the end of this month.

There Follows an article from our Celebrated Author about a recent experience in France. You may see a more embellished version in the Fellrunner Magazine later in the year.

C'EST MAGNIFIQUE, MAIS CE N'EST PAS SKIDDAW

Richard Askwith goes fell-running in France

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FOR REASONS too complicated to go into, I recently found myself spending a few months living in France. Naturally, the first thing I did was to look for a fell-race.

Actually, that's not true. The first thing I did was lose all interest in fell-racing. Our little Languedoc village is in the middle of a gently rolling plateau, covered with vineyards and a kind of scrubby, rocky moorland known as garrigue. Dramatic mountains ring the horizon, which seems a good place for them. Who needs steep, rocky, painful ascents and descents when you can get all the rough running you need on the soft, undulating paths on your doorstep, with more wild flowers, wild animals and wild mountain views than you'd get in a month of Sunday runs in the English fells?

Eventually, however, duty prevailed, and I made enquiries. Everyone thought I was mad. "*Dans les montagnes? Pourquoi?*" I know that some serious mountain-running goes on in the French Alps, but they're hundreds of miles from us, and, in any case, I'm not that keen on all that high-speed, marked-track, uphill-only Grand Prix stuff. That's athletics. Fell-running, to me, means scrambling around in the mist and mud, sharing a few laughs in the early stages, and trying to make up for your lack of speed through careful navigation and reckless descending. There doesn't seem to be much of that in the Alps. Or, for that matter, in the Languedoc.

Or so I thought. Then, just as I was dismissing the French as a bunch of cheese-eating, flat-track surrender-monkeys, I discovered that there was an annual race more or less on my doorstep. The mountains in question were about half an hour's drive away, a spectacular ring of 2,000-footers around the ancient village of St Guilhem-le-Desert. No fell-runner could look at these hills without wondering what it would be like to run in them. They're green, precipitous and very rocky, with steep slopes of thick woodland punctuated by sharp cliffs and giant scree slopes. Part of the ring is called the "circle of hell", and you can see why.

The race has the added attraction of starting and finishing in a cobbled medieval square, complete with 1,200-year-old church and a 300-year-old plane tree. In summer, the place is packed with tourists. In early March, it was deserted – apart from 400 French runners, their supporters, a huge contingent of paramedics, and me. I had handed in my medical certificate of fitness (required by law), signed a fistful of disclaimers absolving the organisers from all responsibility for anything ever, and stuffed my bumbag with essentials for surviving 48 hours on a freezing mountainside (this was early March, and the temperature at the start was zero). I had even – although no one else did – studied the map of the route. Now it was just a matter of waiting for the crowd to listen to the organisers' repeated pleas for order so that we could start the race. Some hope. For 15 minutes, the chattering grew louder and the milling more chaotic. Scarcely 20 of us heeded – or even heard – the instruction to get behind the starting line. It was beginning to feel like a riot, and when someone fired a gun in the air I assumed it was an attempt to restore order. Everyone else took it as the signal to start, and the jostling crowd began to fight its way through the narrow cobbled streets.

It soon became clear that, while there were some seriously good runners in the field, there were also many – perhaps several hundred – who were neither good nor serious. This was irritating for those of us at the back, especially when the narrow streets gave way to an even narrower mountain path. The great difference between French mountains and ours is that the French ones tend to have trees on. The 26km of this race – known as the Sauta Roc – winds almost entirely through forest: low, gnarled evergreens (deciduous as well as coniferous), with thick, exotically scented undergrowth and roots and branches dangling treacherously into the narrow, stony path. This is fine for running on your own but hazardous if you're trying to work your way about 100 places further up a slow-moving field.

Still, the mountain was undeniably mountainous; in fact, the ascent, which was all runnable, seemed to continue for an impossibly long time. The total ascent and descent in the race – 1,150 metres – is relatively slight by English standards, but nearly all of it is concentrated at the beginning and the end, and this first climb was a long, hard slog. Every now and then, I'd spot half a gap and leap past someone; the rest of the time, I consoled myself by looking at the scenery. The sky was clear and the early morning chill had rapidly turned into blazing mid-morning sunshine, whose heat was redoubled by the undergrowth. There was no sign of a stream, and I realised, too late, that I should have carried less emergency kit and a lot more water.

Eventually, after about 45 minutes of winding ascent, the field and the forest thinned out. We were mostly still running, but from time to time were forced to scramble. At one point, a line of marshals appeared to shepherd us away from a horrifying sheer drop. Behind them was the sort of view that makes you forget all about paths and, if you're unlucky, swerve straight off the cliff. Hundreds of miles of mountainous France stretched below us in a sea of hazy greens and blues. Somewhere on the horizon were... well, for all I know they may have been the Alps or they may have been the Pyrenees, because I hadn't been

looking at either map or compass and had rather lost my sense of direction. The path had been clearly marked throughout, and, even if it hadn't been, there weren't any other paths to go on. So much for careful navigation skills.

The long ascent finally yielded our first peak, which was followed by a scenic but increasingly weary hour or so of moderate ups and downs. I was well past the plodders by now and could concentrate simply on keep going, vying occasionally for position with people of my own pace. Overtaking – and being overtaken – remained hazardous but was at least infrequent. Thirst, on the other hand, was continuous and severe. I was also getting footsore. Those damned stones were unremittingly sharp, and my feet felt as though they were turning into two giant bruises. Most people, I realised, were wearing trainers, whereas I'd stuck to my trusty Walsh boots. My feet were paying the price; on the other hand, my ankles remained intact, which was more than could be said for those of at least five other runners. Think of the "path" that runs along the very top of Skiddaw and you'll get a pretty good sense of the hard going; the difference being that this was generally steep – and continued for 26km. Still, at least it was bone-dry.

The final five miles were the toughest of all, with the longest, craggiest ascent yet, followed by a 1,400ft drop in the final mile and a bit. They were also the most satisfying. The path broadened a little, replacing a slight sense of being hemmed in by trees with that hard-to-define feeling you get of being on top of a high mountain, with the sky slightly closer than usual and a different kind of freshness in the sweet-smelling air. For the first time, you could actually run alongside people, exchanging more than the odd "*Excusez moi*" and "*Oo-la-la, pardonez-moi*"; or, rather, you could if your throat wasn't too dry. There were more breathtaking views, too, especially on the final summit, from which you could see St Guilhem nestling on the hillside like a fairytale baron's mountain stronghold. And while the final descent was a bastard – imagine the path on the lower half of Ben Nevis, but with too much impenetrable vegetation to cut off the zigzags – it was as challenging as any anti-athletic English fellrunner could ask for. I was alarmed at the number of injured athletes I passed, but heartened too by the growing number of tourists walking up from the village, shouting "*Bravo!*" and "*Allez! Allez!*"

Best of all, when we finally reached the bottom we were faced, not with an agonising mile of undulating road (as you get at Ben Nevis) but with just a few hundred yards of gently sloping downhill street. I sprinted into the square with the broadest of smiles and was only marginally disappointed to hear that, if I'd been a few seconds faster, I could have beaten the first veteran woman.

My place – 63rd out of 412 finishers (26th vet) – was at least 50 places better than I'd expect at an English fellrace of equivalent size, which I take to be an indication that English standards are higher. Or, rather, there's a stronger tradition of fellrunning in England. As far as I could gather, most of today's field were road-runners out for an adventure, many of whom acquitted themselves impressively. You can get away with such a large number of first-timers when the climate is good and the route is unmistakable. Even so, I hope the bloodied crowds in the first aid tent at the end had all signed the necessary disclaimers.

Meanwhile, other traditions are unquestionably stronger in France. I'd been looking forward to the "*buffet campagnard*" promised for the end, and was mildly disappointed to find only a table lightly scattered with plates of cake, biscuit, energy bars and dried fruit. Quite welcome, of course, but somehow not the gastronomic adventure I'd been imagining during the more gruelling stretches of the race. Half an hour later, I realised that those were only the pre-buffet appetisers. The buffet proper, which emerged just before the prize-giving, involved a whole line of tables, groaning under the weight of meats, cheeses, salads, baguettes and wine. Even the victims in the first aid tent seemed to agree that it made all the pain worthwhile.

The winner – who beat me by more than half-an-hour – was from Amsterdam, which was intriguing. (As the organiser observed: "Isn't it a bit flat there?") But by that stage the details of the race were ceasing to seem important. Rather, I was drinking in the atmosphere and the wine, with the warm sunshine, bright views, fine food and languid conversation adding spice to the usual post-race sense of relief and achievement. It might not be fellrunning as we know it, but it's still a great way to spend a spring Sunday. And it's a lot warmer than Keswick.

Junior Newsletter [produced by Stephen Fletcher]

We had our first quarterly review and planning meeting recently. The idea of the meeting is to review what we've been up to over the last few months - what's worked well, what hasn't, where can we improve - and plan the activities for the next three months. The meetings are open to all: juniors, coaches, parents and helpers. It's important that the opinions of the juniors are taken in to account so please either come to the meeting or let me know what you'd like discussed. One of the things we decided on was the need for Junior Captains.

JUNIOR SECTION CAPTAINS

It seems like it's time to sort out a Junior Boys' Captain and a Junior Girls' Captain. The Captains will be elected by the Juniors and will hold their post for one year. The year will run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 (the first year will run from May 1 2005 to Dec. 31 2005). The Captains aren't simply meant to be the highest achieving or most popular runners in the Club. It's hoped they'll take an active part in running the Junior Section. They'll help with things like writing race reports, choosing the new kit, organising the prize giving, planning training sessions, team selection, etc. In effect they'll be responsible for ensuring the views of the Juniors are properly taken into account so they'll also be encouraged to attend the quarterly review and planning meetings and if they can't make it ensure some Juniors do attend.

There will be a secret vote to elect the Captains at training on Saturday April 30. If you can't make it that day don't worry you can email, post or hand me your vote before then. However, I will need to know who's given me their vote if you send it to me. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE A CAPTAIN.

CUMBRIA TRACK & FIELD LEAGUE

We've joined the Cumbria Track & Field League. The League stage four low key meetings each year with the intention of providing young athletes with an introduction to competition and an opportunity to try different events in a friendly, relaxed environment. For example, if you fancy a go at the discus it doesn't matter if you've never picked one up before they'll help you have a go. You can take part in three events plus a relay at each meeting but if you want to qualify for medals you need to compete in that event at three meetings.

Over the next few weeks Pete Robinson and Christian Mandale will be working on sprint starts and general sprint technique and on relay baton changes. However, we won't put a relay team out until the second meeting (May 29) so that we've had time to do some proper work on change-overs.

The first meeting is at the Dumfries synthetic track on Sunday April 10.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO TO THE FIRST MEETING. WE ALSO NEED TO ENSURE WE HAVE SOME ADULT HELPERS AVAILABLE TO HELP AT THE MEETING RAKING LONG JUMP PITS, COLLECTING SHOTS, ETC.

DON'T FORGET - RACE FOR LIFE

There's a Race For Life at Carlisle Racecourse on Sunday July 24. It's a 5k women only fun run to celebrate life and friendship, remember those who've been sadly taken from us by cancer in particular and raise money for Cancer Research UK. You don't have to race hard you can jog, walk, cartwheel, ... Ann Yates is organising a team. If you'd like to be part of it give Ann a call on 017687 80926. Details can be found at:

www.raceforlife.org

See you soon, Steve

P.S. We will be in the Sportshall until Sat. May 7.

IS THIS RACE SAFE ?

Probably not, but then who amongst us will argue with that ! Perhaps the more relevant question is : is it safe to organise this race in the first place, let alone run in it. The most immediate risk is that I will have too much to say on this one; so for now I will refer race organisers, devoted career marshals, and anyone else vaguely interested in the potential extinction of our sport to the articles on pages 9/10 and 65/66 of the February edition of The Fellrunner magazine.

Doubtless we are all aware of the ridiculous claims culture which besets our everyday existence, and therefore we may be too inclined to switch off to "that old chestnut". However what has been said, and probably rubbish, many times before, is now being expressed widely and openly. I consider the debate to be legitimate and entirely worthy of our serious attention. I am also relieved to see that some effort is at last being made to turn the political tide and would encourage everyone to write to their MP, or climb precariously onto a balcony at Buckingham palace dressed as a running super-hero in lycra, to demand the revival of personal responsibility.

In the meantime, it is all a matter of insurance. There have been, and will be incidents in club races. We are naturally concerned for the person involved, but we are particularly concerned that our insurance cover is valid, and our race organiser protected.

So what as a club should we be doing about events that we stage (I am talking fell races for this article, not withstanding the fact that some road races appear to me to present far greater risk of incident than many fell races).

Most importantly race organisers must fully comply with the **Rules and Safety Requirements for fell races as set out in the FRA Handbook**. In my opinion that remains our single most important defence against a claim of negligence, and should ensure that our insurance cover is not compromised. Proof of compliance is an issue, and I am aware that risk assessments may help to provide that proof. However, I do think they create some problems and I consider it more prudent to follow the lead of our governing body. When, they say "assess risk," then that's what we will have to do. Whilst on that note, will organisers please remember to use the new disclaimer on their entry forms this year, again as directed in the handbook.

Helpers and Marshalls should also be aware of the requirements in the FRA handbook, and recognise that they are sharing the responsibility of delivering a well managed event. To take a rucksack, containing FRA stipulated safety equipment, should not be regarded as an annoying bit of extra weight. Under the auspices of the race organiser, the team of helpers should have "control" of the event, be pro-active and ready to handle problems. It is not that people have been irresponsible in the past, but familiarity can make us complacent, and " this is the way we have always done it, and we have not had a problem " **is no defence!**

I propose to return to this subject in future articles, and will address a number of issues in more detail. I would hope to keep this high on the agenda this year, at the risk of being a nuisance, but ultimately I believe it is to everyone's advantage. It may seem that we don't have much to gain by applying extra effort in this area, but we potentially have a lot to lose! In this brave new world, I wonder whether I really want the title "safety officer".

Stephen Kemp

Nervous Safety Officer

Get Well Soon

It's now over a week since Ian Charlton underwent major surgery at Newcastle. We send you our best wishes Ian and look forward to seeing you at Borrowdale for the twenty something time. Alex [Ian's son] says he has challenged you to a race up Lattrigg, but I'm sure you will overcome that hurdle in a very short time.

News from the Baby Factory

Congratulations to Mady and Neil Thompson on the arrival of Harris Benjamin on the 26th March 2005. Neil says he has big feet and will interfere with his training . [ed. He might just change the rest of your life!]

CLUB STANDARD AWARDS, 2005

NAME	CAT	10K	10M	1/2 MAR	MAR	AWARD
R. Burchett	MV65				3.46.20	
D. Hutchinson	MV45		1.17.11	1.44.58		
P. Bullen	MV40	36.56		1.21.52		
M. Scott	M	39.21				
D. Harrison	MV55	41.12				
P. Roffey	M	42.59				
J. Moore	L	49.4				
J. Beedham	L	52.43				
K. Owen	MV45	53.43				
C. Nixon	MV65	56.07				
R. Unwin	MV50		68.14	1.31.27		
C. Brennan	L		69.07			
D. Troman	M			1.17.58		
D. Overton	MV55			1.22.36		
K. Hill	M			1.24.07		
D. Owens	MV45			1.26.38		
P. Gilchrist	MV55			1.39.32		
R. Gittins	L			1.40.54		
D. Robins	MV40			1.44.26		
I. Addison	MV70			1.53.50		
S. Hawker	L			2.14.36		
S. Denham-Smith	L			2.20.34		

NINE STANDARDS (again)

1	J. Symonds	Kendal		55.19
3	M. Denham-Smith	Keswick		57.37
22	D. Owens	Keswick	MV40	1.07.29
24	R. Unwin	Keswick	MV50	1.08.08
45	C. Valentine	Keswick	MV40	1.17.86
64	H. Blenkinsop	Keswick	MV60	1.51.05

LOUGHRIGG SILVER HOWE, 26/02/05

1	I. Holmes	Bingley		62.45
6	M. Roberts	Borrowdale	1stMV40	66.13
20	D. Spedding	Keswick	1stMV50	76.08
23	L. Roberts	Keswick	1stL	76.35
27	C. Valentine	Keswick	MV40	78.13
55	D. Thompson	Keswick	LV40	93.33

SOME CROSS COUNTRY RESULTS**Inter-counties, Nottingham**

1	G. Tromans	Warks.		38.46
86	M. Denham-Smith	Cumbria		43.06

Mid-Lancs - Hyndburn

1	N. Tattersall			37.40
6	M. Denham-Smith	Keswick		39.04
52	D. Overton	Keswick	MV55	44.09
67	D. Owens	Keswick	MV45	46.16

	A. Brand-Barker	Keswick		
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County Championships

1	C. Windward			35.23
2	M. Denham-Smith	Keswick		35.25
9	D. Troman	Keswick		37.44
	D. Overton	Keswick	2ndMV50	39.18

	A. Brand-Barker	Keswick		
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CAUSEY PIKE, 26/03/05

1	G. Bland	Borrowdale		32.51
10	W. Procter	Helm Hill	1stMV45	36.07
13	D. Troman	Keswick		37.08
15	B. Thompson	CFR	1stMV40	37.28
23	J. Winn	CFR	1stMV50	39.38
31	J. Walker	Keswick	1stU18	42.04
33	N. White	Holmfirth	1stL	42.08
37	D. Owens	Keswick	MV45	42.55
39	M. Mikkelsen-Ba	Keswick		42.59
40	R. Unwin	Keswick	MV50	43.01
41	D. Milligan	Solway	1stMV55	43.11
42	K. Hill	Keswick		43.19
50	R. Scott	Keswick	MV40	44.41
56	R. Cooper	Keswick	MV40	45.21
68	P. Roffey	Keswick		46.57
78	N. Lawler	Keswick		48.44
81	J. Horne	Keswick	MV40	49.58
84	C. Knox	Keswick	MV50	51.15
95	A. Jones	Keswick	MV45	52.18
96	P. Gilchrist	Keswick	MV55	52.23
97	R. Johnson	CFR	1stMV60	52.44
100	M. Jagon	EPOC	1stLV50	53.48
103	D. Harrison	Keswick	MV60	54.16
105	D. Porter	Keswick	MV45	54.20
106	C. Colam	Keswick	LV50	54.31
113	M. Bridge	Keswick	LV50	55.14
115	J. Moore	Keswick	LV50	55.51
118	D. Rigg	CFR	1stMV70	56.46
121	P. Bibby	Keswick	LV40	57.54
131	H. Blenkinsop	Keswick	MV60	66.32
132	P. Titley	Keswick	MV50	67.16
133	J. Rutter	Keswick	MV60	68.34

The Tail End (Backside or Backend for those of us into toilet humour)

The Fell Runners Association is 35 years old on the 4th of April 2005, 'Happy Birthday' from all of us, I'm sure I hear you all singing!

I've no idea how many of us reading this are members of the FRA, but after reading Richard Askwith's 'Feet in the Clouds', a few grey cells were stirred back into functional mode, so I thought I'd put a few notes down to share.

The FRA was formed by a small group of active fell runners mainly to gather, share and circulate details of races. By 1971 a newsletter of sorts was printed and circulated to all 180 members and in 1972 the first 'Fell Runner of the Year' Championship, based on ALL the listed FRA races, took place. Before the end of the decade ladies were allowed to enter the long races, there was a proper printed, but black and white, A5 magazine going out to around 900 members. The next decade saw some very heated AGM's, eventual permission to run with professionals, a reduced number of races selected for the (now British) Championship and a new English Championship. Now we have a colour A4 magazine out three times a year, over 5000 members and AGM's with only a few more attending than we get at our AGM.

Apathy rules – who cares?

Anyway the FRA is, and always was a club, with members that still – despite changes in our governing body (BAF, BIF, BOF, UKA) – do the work, organise the races and run.

One of the things to come out of the last 35 years was and is a great respect for the terrain we run in, its fragility, beauty and its often harsh conditions. Its in this respect that I thought a timely reminder may help. As competitors we are the responsibility of the race organiser who in turn is responsible for following FRA rules of competition for insurance purposes. So it is a good idea to take to every race a bum bag, windproof jacket and trousers, map, whistle and compass and emergency food. Its like a spare tyre, you hope you never need it but it often is a must to carry and not a personal choice.

Chris Knox