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GOYT VALLEY STRIDERS



NEWSLETTER October 2008

INTRODUCTION

Here is your latest edition of the Goyt Valley Striders newsletter. As always there has been lots going on over the past few months, much of which you can read about on the following pages. Thank you to those that have written articles for this edition; once again they are an excellent read and I am amazed at the feats that some of you get up to.

I would like to see more of you contributing articles in the future though. We now have 90 members in the club and it would be nice to have a few lines from one or two new writers. How about an article from a Stroller which details how they are progressing and what their ambitions are? Just a thought!

Look out for details of Terry's race in the newsletter. I'm hoping we can get a record entry this year and perhaps even a few Strollers too. Meanwhile, enjoy the run up to Christmas and keep that Striders flag flying high.

Mark

Application Form

If you want to join The Striders or know anybody who wishes to join then complete the attached form and send it to the secretary.

GOYT VALLEY STRIDERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

SURNAME															SEX	
FIRST NAME										DATE OF BIRTH						
POSTAL ADDRESS																
TOWN																
COUNTY										POSTAL CODE ESSENTIAL						
DAYTIME TELEPHONE (STD ESSENTIAL)										HOME TELEPHONE (STD ESSENTIAL)						

I fully understand that I shall train and race with Goyt Valley Striders running club entirely at my own risk, and that the organisers of Goyt Valley Striders running club are in no way responsible for any injury, illness or loss that I may suffer or any injury that I may cause during any activity connected with the club.

SIGNED:

DATED:

If under 16, signature of parent or guardian

Goyt Valley Race Series

Congratulations to Andy Pead who followed up last years Bullock Smithy win and Hayfield Fell Race series win with the Goyt Valley Series.

The GVS series covers 3 races. The Road To Ruin Goyt Moss Fell Race (6 miles), The Shining Tor Fell Race (6 Miles) and the Windgather Fell Race (13½ Miles).

Andy's results for this year were:

Goyt Moss	6 th /140	48.22
Shining Tor	4 th /168	45:07
Windgather	1 st /127	1:39:59

Next year the series will include our very own Whaley Waltz Fell Race, so there will be 4 races to go at.

How does Andy do it? You can find out by joining him and his fellow organiser Shaun Coram on Saturday afternoons for the Bad Lads Army sessions. These are for all members who want to improve their speed and hill work. Be warned though, you'll be put through your paces.

More information on the website or give me a ring

The Secretary

Terry's Race

This will be the 8th year that Terry's race has been run. Terry was a respected and well-liked member of the club, who unfortunately died prematurely in 2000. The race is unusual in that **anybody who takes part has a chance of winning**. The course details are below. You will set off at 5-minute intervals wearing **NO watch**. Having guessed your time for the distance the nearest person to their guessed time will win.

The race will take place on Sunday November 16th, starting at 9:00am from the Taxal Lay-by (bottom of Long Hill).

A reminder of the course: (Clockwise this year!)

The course starts at the lay-by on Long Hill – down the track – left onto track through woods – across fields – right cross bridge – track and fields passing Knipe Farm – up towards Oldfield Farm – onto Hoo Moor – Road to Pym Chair – Track adjacent to road leading to Windgather – Onto track and through trees onto Taxal Moor – Descend Taxal Moor (passing the tree planted by the rambling club in memory of Terry) – 100 yards on road then down through fields to Taxal – pass Church and back to start

Maps will be available for those who require one. Please make every effort to attend; this is one of the most respective events in the clubs calendar. Notification in advance would be appreciated.

AGM and Prize Giving

This is advanced notification of the AGM and prize giving. It will be held at the Navigation Inn, Buxsworth on Friday 30th January 2009.

One idea that has been put forward is to have a buffet this year as opposed to the bar snack option. I would be interested to hear your thoughts before any decision is made early in the New Year.

Clear the date in your diary and watch out for further information early in the new year.

Xmas Drinks

A bit early I know, but, Friday 19th December, 8:00pm at the Navigation Inn, Buxsworth. Be there or be square, be youlish or be foolish!

London Marathon

The club will get one or two guaranteed places in next year London Marathon and these are up for grabs by club members. Normal rules apply, whereby those who have entered the ballot for a place and have been rejected will be given preference. If there are more applicants than tickets then peoples names will go in the hat. So if you fancy running the London Marathon next April and want a club place just drop me a note.

Open Team

Leg	Name	Time	Position	Overall Position
Leg 1	Mike Hudson	00:54:10	84 th	84 th
Leg 2	Peter Davis Dave Bowen	01:42:32	100 th	95 th
Leg 3	Steve Hennessey Peter Hill	01:48:02	112 th	110 th
Leg 4	Phil Smith	01:13:29	115 th	111 th
Overall Time		05:38:13		



Andy Pead and
Dave Ardern

British Fell and Hill Running Relay Championships 2008

Congratulations to our two teams that took part in this year's British Fell and Hill Running Relay Championships 2008. The race was held in the Clydwian Hills, North Wales.

We had a Vets team and an Open team. The Vets team was the stronger of the two and aimed to finish ahead of last years position of 39th place. The open team was made up of a number of '1st timers' and was all about taking part and learning from the experience.

How did they do then? Well, fantastic as it happens. The Vets team were 32nd overall and the Open team 111th. There were 119 teams in the race. Not bad for a small club like The Striders.

Here are the results in full:

Vets Team

Leg	Name	Time	Position	Overall Position
Leg 1	Mark Richards	00:46:44	31 st	31 st
Leg 2	Andy Pead Dave Ardern	01:18:12	21 st	22 nd
Leg 3	Alistair Fitzgerald Dave McCann	01:19:29	62 nd	33 rd
Leg 4	Jon Robinson	00:51:41	34 th	32 nd
Overall Time		04:16:06		

Bob Graham Round 20-21 June 2008. Clare Griffin

Last September, as we limped into Hazel Grove at the end of the Bullock Smithy Hike, some foolhardy soul (ok it was Paul) said 'that was fun, how about a Bob Graham next year?' I remember thinking 'haha no way' so was a bit surprised nine months later to find myself in front of Keswick's Moot Hall with 24 hours of pain awaiting me.

The months in between had (mostly!) been great fun. Our first recce (Skiddaw, Great Calva and Blencathra) was on a rainy day in November. On Skiddaw's summit in horizontal rain, trying to read the map while preventing it being blown back to Keswick, I felt awed by the enormity of the challenge. As the months went on we improved our 'fell 'ardness' and route knowledge and the dream began to look more realistic. We had some beautiful days out, in particular a snowy day on the Helvellyn range with Nik and Moses eating snow (just Moses, not Nik). We also had plenty of wet days stumbling around summits in low cloud (we once saw a Brocken Spectre in the Langdales). Along the way we learned a lot about our individual strengths and weaknesses: each of us had days when it felt hard and days when it seemed to come effortlessly.

The likelihood of finishing a Bob Graham Round is not high. Only one attempt in three will be a success and we knew that, by trying to go round as a threesome instead of concentrating on individual attempts, we were stacking the odds against ourselves further. We had lots of offers of support from club members but we also needed expert help.

Luckily Al had the answer to our problem and contacted our sister clubs; Macclesfield Harriers and Buxton AC. With only a few weeks to go before the attempt they marshalled a huge number of people to help us: some of whom we'd met before, most we hadn't. All three of us were really touched by this: it was amazing to find that so many people were willing to give up their weekend to help some plodders they didn't even know complete what is, to be honest, a fairly arbitrary challenge.

The big day.

Leg 1: Keswick to Threlkeld.

We set off at 18:30 on a beautiful midsummer's eve to applause from the drinkers enjoying the sunshine outside the pub. The climb up Skiddaw seemed to pass quickly as we chatted and we touched our first summit at 19:48, a few minutes ahead of schedule. Julian, who had kindly agreed to be our navigator for the first two sections, knew a good line across the boggy ground around Hare Crag so we reached the next peak, Great Calva, with dry feet (something we'd never managed in our recces). That didn't last long however as the next step was to cross the river Caldew. Julian led us to a wide stony meander where the water was only ankle-deep and not the Speedos and goggles job it had been a few other times. The sun was setting as we climbed Blencathra, descending via Hall's Fell Ridge to a welcome cup of tea.

Leg 2: Threlkeld-Dunmail Raise.

The five minute break at Threlkeld turned into seven and still passed too quickly: just time to change socks, frantically rummage through bags and have a quick drink then we were off along the road toward Clough Head.

Finally, on the category 5 3000m Mons en Pevele sector I found myself completely on my own and steeled myself for riding the final 50km on my own and pushing as hard as I could to make the nine hours mark. With a headwind now blowing I settled on the drops and into time trial mode. The field was really strung out now and I was able to attack the cobbles. Each sector took a little more out of me than the previous but, with 222km in my legs, the number of sectors left was finally in single figures. This gave me a real boost and, keen to maintain my momentum, I limited my time at the final feed to an absolute minimum.

With just 27km to go I had fifty minutes to get under nine hours. Seven sectors of cobbles stood in my way including the infamous 2120m of the category five Carrefour de L'Arbre. Hitting it, I gave it everything I had and tried to forget that this was the sector that had destroyed Jez's handlebars. I was right on my limit, my thighs on fire and rapidly losing power. The line of cars parked ahead finally heralded a "real road" and, as I rolled onto the joyously smooth tarmac, knew that I was going to make it. The final three sectors of cobbles were relatively tame and, with five minutes to spare to nine hours, I sprinted round my lap of the iconic Roubaix velodrome. After a celebratory plate of chips and ice cold beer I collected my souvenir cobble trophy. Although much smaller than the one the pro's winner triumphantly raises aloft never has lump of rock been so gratefully received and will have pride of place back home.

Nik Cook

The next seven sectors were mercifully mud free and broken up by the second feed at 117km in the town of Solesmes. Even at this early stage my forearms and wrists were in tatters but so far my legs were holding up. Coming into Arenberg at 157km, and the third feed, we were all in reasonable shape. However, now the cobbled sectors came thick and fast, starting with the category 5 and notorious Forest of Arenberg. 2400m long, arrow straight and flanked by ancient trees it is often here that the pro race is won and lost. The riding surface is horrendous and threatened to destroy our already battered and mud-caked bikes. After a couple of hundreds meters of seismic juddering we all took the “easy option” of the parallel dirt track. The pro’s don’t have this bail-out, being hemmed in by thousands of baying fans and forced to run the gauntlet of the stones.

Beuvry-La-Foret hosted the fourth feed and, at 188km into the ride, was 8km further than I’d ever ridden before. By now I was down to one functioning gear and was hugely relieved to find a mechanic’s stand. Without fuss, having just re-built another riders rear wheel, he straightened my hanger and completely re-indexed my gears. The whole procedure took him less than 15 minutes and was free of charge. Leaving the feed, having gears again felt great and, glancing at my computer, I reckoned that a riding time of under nine hours might just be do-able. I felt strong and found that on each stretch of cobbles I was putting more distance into the others. Chris was going through a bit of a rough patch and Jez, with brotherly compassion, was sticking by him.

This leg passed fairly uneventfully, trotting along in the dark ticking off summits. In the early stages we gained a few more minutes on the schedule but then ran into some low cloud coming off Helvellyn which necessitated getting the compass out. This didn’t cost us any appreciable time however, thanks to Julian and Mark Richards’ excellent navigation. By the time we dropped down to Grisedale Tarn (with Julian demonstrating his rapid ‘flat on his back’ descending technique) the cloud had cleared. As we laboured up Fairfield we could see the line of lights that represented the large group from Dark Peak who had set off 15 minutes behind us (it was a busy night on the fells!). The birds began to sing as we came down from Seat Sandal, although it still looked dark to us. We descended the stone steps of the path by the beck which brought us perfectly to our supporters at Dunmail Raise on the Keswick-Ambleside road.

Leg 3: Dunmail-Wasdale.

Phil Cheek of Macclesfield Harriers took over navigational duties from Dunmail and led us, stuffing our faces with food, up Steel Fell into a beautiful dawn. We saw baby clouds trapped in the valleys below by a temperature inversion. We all became a little tired around this time and struggled to eat enough to keep our energy up. I had an attack of the ‘can’t be bothereds’ and said as much to Phil. He asked ‘do you think anyone feels good at 3am after running for nine hours?’ A good point!

Earlier in the round we'd seen people bivvying on Blencathra and Helvellyn but Scafell Pike was the busiest summit so far, with ten or fifteen people seeing in the longest day. We had decided during our recces to give the Broad Stand route up Scafell a miss. Wainwright said "It is an infuriating place, making a man angry with himself for his inability to climb the thirty feet of rock that bar his way to the simple rising slope beyond" but adding that his continuing disappointment at failing to climb it "is amply compensated by the pleasure of going on living". Instead we ascended via Lord's Rake without incident and trotted down to Wasdale where we found breakfast, a HUGE gang of smiling new supporters and a foot spa, lovely! (Although the girls did have to draw the line at Will's feet, saying something about not being farriers.)

Leg 4: Wasdale-Honister.

Thanks to Phil's fantastic navigation we left Wasdale twenty minutes up on our schedule, which was useful as things did not go according to plan on this leg. Paul was feeling unwell with stomach cramps and was not able to eat anything. As we ascended Red Pike he had to make several pit stops and was losing time relative to Will and me. The weather also changed for the worse with strong winds quickly bringing in low clouds and rain. We began to feel cold and put on waterproofs, hats and gloves. After Steeple, Chris Cripps, our new expert navigator, and Joe Webb suggested we split the party and reluctantly we agreed. It went a bit further awry after that: I was freezing my ass off so put on a bit of a spurt to warm up which meant that Will and I got separated too. We were only a few minutes apart but that was enough to be out of sight in the low cloud.

The jarring through the handlebars was unbelievable and it was like trying to hold on to an out of control pneumatic drill. All around bottles were flying out of cages, tyres puncturing and riders coming off. Overtaking was a nightmare as it meant leaving the relative good cobbles of the crown and dropping down into the worn and broken tracks on either side. I was suddenly glad of having spent so much time riding mountain bikes and of being a bigger than average rider. It's no coincidence that Paris-Roubaix is usually won by the big strong rouleurs and sprinters of the Peloton and that the featherweight climbers avoid it like the plague. You need a bit of ballast on the cobbles. If you're too light, you'll be even more violently bucked, and struggle to maintain any forward drive. Chris, being more of a climber's build, was finding this out the hard way. Coming to the end of the 2200m sector I sat up and waited for the other guys. Despite the battering our bikes had all survived. We all had mad mud flecked grins on our faces. One sector down, 27 to go, it was going to be a long day in hell but it was going to be a lot of fun.

My day almost came to an abrupt end on the second sector though when, trying to overtake Chris, my back wheel slipped away and I came down heavily on my right side. Lying in the mud, all I could do was laugh but, looking down, blood covered my lower leg. Fortunately, it was only a small cut but, getting back on the bike, my gears were all over the place as, in the crash, I'd bent my mech hanger. Luckily, as the route is pretty flat, my three functioning gears were enough but I knew I'd had a lucky escape and had to show the cobbles a bit more respect.

.The cobbles are the size of a baby's head, many are missing leaving wheel swallowing holes and there is a foot height difference between the crown in the middle and the worn down tracks either side.

Adding to the fun the weeks rain had left the first sector thick with a foul smelling mixture a mud and cow muck. Known affectionately as Belgium Toothpaste it's another incentive not to be following a wheel. As I've already said speed is the secret to surviving the cobbles. If you're going quick enough your momentum will carry you through, lose your speed and the broken surface will bring you to a juddering halt requiring a massive effort to get moving again. Every sector is a sprint. Not so bad for the first few but, after a couple of dozen sectors and with well over 200km in your legs, finding that speed gets harder and harder. You have to be in the big chain-ring to avoid dropping your chain and hands either have to be secure on the tops or the drops. Try to ride them on the hoods and you'll soon be getting a face full of cobbles. The best line is right on the top of the crown of the road. Although very bumpy, the cobbles will be less worn and irregular and hopefully should be relatively dry and mud free. There is the chance of a smoother ride in the gutter at the edge of the road but puddles of unknown depth and tyre slashing flints make it a false refuge.

The adrenaline rush of hitting the cobbles was instantaneous. Down on the drops, big gear and pushing hard my back wheel skittered and slid. This was no time from worrying about niceties such as fluid spinning and high cadence, mashing a big gear was the way forward.

I'd run off with the navigator but Will's group had most of the snacks so it balanced out I suppose (Will is a much better navigator than me but I have a greater jelly babies per mile need (or greed) than him).

As I approached Kirk Fell a lanky figure loomed out of the mist. It turned out to be Julian, who'd obviously not had quite enough of a run navigating the first two legs. We chatted as Chris guided me effortlessly through the clag, finding a lovely grassy route down off Great Gable and shouting cheerful comments into the wind.

The other two were also making progress: Will had convinced himself he was behind schedule but luckily Julie Fletcher was able to convince him of the truth: he was doing fine. After the girls turned back at Gable to retrieve their cars, Will and Alistair (who, with several others, had been with us all the way from Dunmail) continued on together to Honister. Will has said that he's especially grateful to Al for his support during that time. Apparently they experienced a special moment which has bound them together forever. They have sworn never to speak of it.

Paul had a bit of an adventure coming off Gable when he was blown headlong onto rocks by the wind. He arrived in Honister at 3:03pm a little battered and bruised but, crucially, still slightly ahead of schedule.

The final leg: Honister-Keswick.

The car park at Honister was full of walkers loading sodden waterproofs into their cars and heading home but our supporters were ready with hot tea and smiles –

a very welcome sight. There was no time for a tour of the slate quarry so I settled for shovelling yet more biscuits into my mouth and digging in. The last three summits passed quickly: it wasn't the most magical few hours I've ever spent on the hills; I just had a strong desire to finish a long hard job. Dave Guy, who, with my husband Rik, had provided fantastic road support all the way around, joined me at Newlands to run the final road section. The balls of my feet were a bit sore now but the lads were tempting me with thoughts of getting back in under 23 hours so we kept trogging on. Colin Wilshaw suggested a cheeky sub 40-minute 10k finish but the only way that was going to happen was if we caught a bus. I finally scampered through the shoppers to touch the Moot Hall at 17:22, just sneaking under the 23-hour mark to my delight.

Will, helped by Rick Haughton and bullied by drill sergeant Mark Fitzgerald, enjoyed skidding on his backside past crag-bound ramblers on Robinsons' water chute before he finished at 18:06 after a semi 'bonk-out' on the final road leg (nothing a bit of chocolate couldn't rectify).

The road crew allowed Paul 5 minutes of rest before sending him up Dale Head with a dry fleece, encouraging him to eat and drink on the way up. As we'd all got split up we were short of dry, non-knackered navigators by this point so Chris's partner Polly Lander cheerfully volunteered to accompany Paul. This was an incredibly brave act by her as, apart from the weather being the sort you wouldn't put a cat out in, she was in between courses of chemotherapy for leukaemia! Julian decided he might as well do a bit more too (by my count he ran 4 of the 5 legs, carrying luggage).

The opening 82km to the first feed at Bohain-En-Vermandois are rolling but mercifully cobble free. Working in the group we managed to save a lot of energy but still cover the distance in a little over two hours. At the feed we got our route cards stamped and fuelled up on the plethora of food available. Waffles, cake and coffee all went down very well. The only black mark being the "mouthwash-esque" mint flavoured squash that I mistakenly sampled and almost embarrassingly spat back out over the table.

Rolling out from the feed, we knew we'd be hitting the cobbles in less than 20km and there was a tangible edge to the group we were in. Riders checked and double checked their bottles were secure and kit safely stashed in pockets. As the roads got smaller and more agricultural the pace quickened as everyone vied to be near the front. Speed, momentum and avoiding changes in direction are the keys to riding cobbles so hitting them with no one in front of you is the ideal. Unfortunately, in a ride attracting riders in there thousands, a clear run can't be guaranteed.

There are 28 sectors of cobbles in total ranging in length from a mere 300m to a tooth loosening 3700m. However, many sectors come back-to-back meaning you are sometimes riding over 5km of cobbles at a stretch. Also, the sectors are graded from 1-5 depending on their length and severity. A category 1 sector will be similar to the sort of cobblestones you'd find in a northern market town in the UK, if the local council weren't too fussed about road maintenance. A category 5 sector though can be likened to a badly made rockery.

used every day by the cars, and kept up, and stuff like that. The other one - it's completely different . . . The best I could do would be to describe it like this - they plowed a dirt road, flew over it with a helicopter, and then just dropped a bunch of rocks out of the helicopter! That's Paris-Roubaix. It's that bad - it's ridiculous."

I'd joined a group organised by Sports Tours International Ltd www.sportstoursinternational.co.uk and speaking to veterans of previous rides didn't do much to calm my nerves. Most were riding tough winter training bikes or even modified cyclo-cross steeds. My thoughts turned to my beautiful, lightweight all-carbon Trek Madone 5.2. Currently safely nestled in a bike bag the poor thing had no idea of the fate that awaited it and the abuse I was going to inflict on it. Making a conscious choice now to avoid the battle scarred veterans I fell in with a group of guys from London who were also Paris-Roubaix virgins. The cobble horror stories did not end though. Two brothers from London, Chris and Jez, related how a recce trip earlier in the year had resulted in a set of handlebars snapping clean in half. Unsurprisingly I didn't get a whole lot of sleep the night before the ride and, rising at 0400 to force breakfast down and tape my hands up, I felt sick with nerves.

Chris, Jez and I had agreed that we'd try and stick together for as much as the ride as possible and, as we rolled away from the start, good humoured banter helped relax any remaining nerves. We obviously relaxed a little too much as we missed the first yellow arrow on the road signing the route. Not the best start but, after an embarrassing u-turn, we joined a group of 20-30 riders and settled into the ride.

It took Paul 53 minutes to reach the summit of Dale Head and he dropped 20 minutes on the schedule despite constant encouragement from Polly and Julian. He made slow but sure progress into the teeth of the gale across to Hindsgarth and Robinson. After the final summit the pace increased markedly and he reached the shoe change with an hour left on the clock. Steady jogging on the downhill and flat sections of the road brought Paul (in the face of colonic adversity) to the finish at 18:22 to a huge cheer from the Moot Hall crowd. I must say, I think Paul's round is the most impressive of the three of us: there's no way I would have carried on if I'd been as ill as he was. He has left his mark on the mountains: a small biodegradable cairn on nearly every summit of the second half.

We owe a massive debt of thanks to all the people who helped: Alison Brind, Julian Brown, Phil Cheek, Mandy Clarke, Richard Clarke, Chris Cripps, Alistair Fitzgerald, Mark Fitzgerald, Julie Fletcher, Rik Griffin, Dave Guy, Chris Holt, Richard Houghton, Mike Hudson, Polly Lander, Mrs Meredith and her friend Julie, Andy Pead, Mark Richards, Jon Robinson, Kath Turner, Mike Vernon, Joe Webb and Colin Wilshaw.

It was very a memorable 24 hours but I think the most precious memories for all of us are of Polly at Honister: so cheerful and full of encouraging words. Polly passed away on September 10th. She made such an impression on everyone who met her with her positive attitude and bravery: she will be fondly remembered and very sadly missed by all her many friends.

Clare Griffin

Club Championship

Too big to print the full table so I have provided the following summary. There's a few races left for those that want to make a late charge.

Pos	Name	Race Completed	Total Points
1	P Hunt	10	238
2	P Smith	9	204
3	M Hudson	6	169
4	J Miles	7	169
5	J Brown	6	157
6	K Smith	7	156
7	J Robinson	5	145
8	G Lawton	5	136
9	J Hull	5	134
10	S Berry	7	131
11	C Griffin	5	119
12	A Pead	4	119
13	P Davis	4	112
14	E Glen	4	89
15	R Glen	4	86
16	A Butler	3	84
17	C Kemper	4	80
18	P Hill	4	74
19	T Potts	3	77
20	D Guy	3	76
21	S Coram	3	74
22	R Clark	4	68
23	K Day	2	60

Paris-Roubaix Cycloportive

In spring the Hard-men of the pro Peloton congregate in Northern France and Belgium to contest the Cobbled Classics. Both Gent-Wevelgem and the Tour of Flanders test the riders' mettle, combining stretches of cobbled roads with atrocious weather and road conditions. The Queen of the Classics though is Paris-Roubaix and is probably the toughest days work in the pro cycling calendar. Known as the Hell of the North its winds its way through the battlefields of the First World War. A win in the race is as prized as a win in the Tour de France and will set a rider up for life. Standing in the way of glory however are 255km including 50km of muddy, rutted and cobbled farm tracks.

Every 2 years in June amateur enthusiasts get the chance to follow in the tyre tracks of their heroes as the Velo Club Roubaix organise a sportive style ride. With options to ride 120km, 190km or the full monty 255km and finishing with the traditional lap of Roubaix velodrome it's a must have tick for any keen cycling fan. For me, the full route was the only option. Although it'd be 75km further than I'd ever covered in a day before, I rationalised that is was pretty much pancake flat and I'd coped fine with cobbles when I'd ridden the Tour of Flanders sportive a couple of years ago. Doubts were sown in my mind though when I came across a quote from ex-pro Chris Horner.

" Let me tell you, though - there's a huge difference between Flanders and Paris-Roubaix. They're not even close to the same. In one, the cobbles are

with the time-keeper he was confident I wouldn't drop outside of the top ten and wouldn't gain any places if I could get another lap done. Only whole completed laps counted and I wasn't convinced I'd be able to drag my abused bike and body round another in the dark in an hour. I decided to call it a day and, with feelings of exhaustion and quiet satisfaction, rolled down the track to where Lissa was waiting. Forcing some food down me I peeled off my filthy kit, collapsed into the back of our van and slept the whole way home. I was delighted with my final pacing of 8th/97 solo male riders and am considering taking on a 24 hour race next year.

For details of next years Hit the North go to www.hitthenorth.net

Nik Cook



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www.runningbear.co.uk

24	T Vernon	3	60
25	M Whelan	2	55
26	J Webb	2	54
27	L Cook	3	53
28	A Fitzgerald	2	53
29	R Burton	2	44
30	S Sanders	2	42
31	J Harbord	2	42
32	M Richards	1	30
33	A Whyte	2	30
34	N Cook	1	29
35	W Meredith	1	27
36	M Vernon	1	26
37	M Watts	1	21
38	A M-Kemper	1	21
39	I Lee	1	19
40	H Parry	1	14

Remaining Races

SUN.OCT 26. PASSING CLOUDS (R). BM. 11.00 a.m.
9m/1800' from Winking Man pub on A53 Buxton to Leek road (GR SK026637). £4. Teams (3) free. LK/NS/PM.
Over 18. Records: 65.12 D. Neil 1997; f. 84.12 T. Greenway 2002. Details: John Amies, Home Farm, Hulme Walfield, Congleton, CW12 2JJ. Tel: 01260 277472. Email: jhamies@gmail.com Website: congleton-harriers.co.uk

LANGLEY 7 Saturday NOVEMBER 1st 2008 at 2.30pm.
Langley Methodist Church, Main Road, Langley SK11 0BU
Entry fee £7 with a £2 reduction for EA affiliated club
runners (Minimum age for main race is 17 yrs on race day)
Closing date for postal entry is Sat 25th October 2008 Entries
on the day + £2 ~ registration will be open from 1.00pm to
2.15pm (prompt)

SUN. NOV 9. ROACHES (R). BL. 10.30 a.m. 15m/3700' from
the Village Hall, Meerbrook, nr Leek (GR 987608). £3.50.
Teams free. ER/PM. Over 18. Records: 1.50.10 J. Taylor
1991; f. 2.20.40 K. Parker 1992. Parking and toilets at
Tittesworth Reservoir, 15 mins walk to start. Details: Andrew
Addis, 10 Woolliscroft Avenue, Newcastle under Lyme, ST5
0NR. Tel: 01782 612838. Email: andrew_addis@lineone.net

Stockport 10 Road Race SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2008 at
10:15am Woodbank Stadium, Woodbank Park, Turncroft
Lane, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1
£11:00 Club Runners • £13:00 Unattached • £2:00 extra on
the day • Race Limit: 800

Summer Fell Championship

This was new for this year. The placings were as follows:

1 st Jon Robinson	146pts
2 nd Mike Hudson	137pts
3 rd Julian Brown	109pts.

Congratulations Jon. The new trophy will be presented at the
AGM and Prize Giving in January.

something without the accompanying mud. Although the
stops lost me a bit of time they kept me fuelled and
provided a real carrot on each lap. Best of all was putting
on a new base layer as I was starting to get really resentful
of the relay riders in their clean kit.

As eight hours ticked by I'd done seven laps and knew I'd
be able to get another three in to give me a round ten.
While I set off for number eight I sent Lissa off to find out
where I stood. My body was holding up pretty well and I
seemed to be overtaking a lot of people on the "running"
sections. However, my bike was really suffering. The pond
stops had kept the gears just about functioning but my rear
brake pads were completely worn through. The pads had
been brand new before the enduro and I hadn't expected to
toast them so didn't have any spares. I had to nurse my
bike down the steeper sections on the front brake and had
some sketchy front wheel slides. I managed to get it round
the lap though and was delighted when Lissa told me in
was in the top ten.

Lap nine, lack of front brake aside, went well and I rode
one of my quickest laps of the race. Clipping my head-torch
on for lap ten I pushed hard knowing that potentially it could
be my last. I honestly don't think the bike had another lap in
it and didn't fancy some of the sections in real darkness. I
made a deal with myself that I'd call it a day after ten laps if
the time-keeper could confirm that by stopping I wouldn't
jeopardize my top ten place.

I rode another cracking lap and crossed the finish line with
just under eleven hours elapsed. Checking

wash and I took advantage of the “facilities” on every lap. A boarded section that would have been fun in the dry was a slippery nightmare and all steep descents soon became rutted and treacherous. Many of the climbs were already impossible to ride and on some, where riding was just possible, running with the bike ended up being quicker. It looked as if Hit the North was going to turn into a 12-hour cyclocross race! In just under an hour though, the first lap came to an end and while the pairs and relay teams swapped riders the solo competitors just ploughed on.

The second lap began with the bomb-hole section we’d missed on the first and the steep, muddy and off camber slopes made riding a nightmare. The actual bomb-hole looked like an absolute death trap and with barely a second thought I opted for the easy “Chicken Run”. Even this less lethal option claimed it’s victims, as I slithered past a rider laid out on a stretcher and being attended to by medics. Climbing out of the section was an absolute nightmare. Trying to hoist a bike covered in heavy mud onto your shoulder and then negotiate a near vertical mud face is always a challenge.

The next five hours all blurred into a succession of gels, bars, falling off, running, bike washing and even a little bit of riding. Lissa was doing a great job of handing me bottles and snacks and seeing her at the end of every lap gave me a real boost. My ride almost came to an abrupt end when I stupidly decided to attempt the bomb-hole and spectacularly face planted into a tree. By now I was taking a couple of minutes at the end of each lap to get some sugary tea down and to be able to eat

Ladies Championship

Like the men’s championship there are four races to go.

Pos	Name	Race Completed	Total Points
1	P Smith	9	257
2	J Miles	7	206
3	C Griffin	5	150
4	C Kemper	4	111
5	E Glen	4	110
6	R Glen	4	110
7	R Clark	4	107
8	T Potts	3	89
9	L Cook	3	78
10	T Vernon	3	78
11	R Burton	2	56
12	A Whyte	2	51
13	M Watts	1	26
14	H Parry	1	24

Running Vests and T-Shirts

Just to let you know that a new batch are on order. These include zips in the T-Shirts; slits in the side of the ladies vests and junior sized vests also. I’ll let you know when they’re available and how much they will cost.

By the way, I think they would make a great Christmas present for any Stroller or Strider!

England Athletics Registration

You should have received your new membership card from England Athletics in the post. This contains your membership number and also doubles up as a discount card for the Sweatshop. Let me know if yours hasn’t arrived and I will chase up.

The Lakeland 100

The race organisers aimed to stage a British equivalent of the Ultra Tour du Mont Blanc (UTMB), and August 2008 saw the inaugural race. Like the UTMB there was a shorter race too - the 100 mile race started and finished in Coniston, with the 50 mile race starting at the midway checkpoint just outside Dockray. Our accommodation was provided in a field next to the Coniston Sports and Social Club – the command centre for the race – as on Friday from lunchtime onwards we turned up and pitched our tents in the warm sunshine. The continental razzmatazz of Chamonix town square was replaced by the understated atmosphere of Coniston – you'd have to look hard in the town to realise that this event was happening – as a mere 31 of us lined up to start, rather than the 2500 entries of the UTMB.

My main thoughts at the start were avoiding getting lost (I was going to have to rely on the road book, map and compass since I'd recced only the first 25 miles) and (like all of us) making the most of the calm night-time before the heavy rain forecast to break at dawn and last all day. So at 7.30 in the evening, at the word Go we broke into a controlled walk until someone bravely moved to the front and started to jog - we were underway finally. Quite a few moved off quickly, and I soon found myself at a comfortable pace, but a long way behind the leaders; behind me I guessed were those who'd be happy to cover the route at a walking pace.

There was enough daylight to get me most the way to the first checkpoint; then I expected about 8

relishing the prospect of spending 12 hours in a muddy field either. I began to make deals with myself saying that six hours would be an acceptable effort given the conditions.

Setting Lissa up by the side of the course with a schedule of what to feed me and when I made my way to the race briefing armed with an umbrella. Jokes as to why maybe this was the reason for not having an enduro in the North West and warnings as to the state of the bomb-hole did little to improve my mood. A downpour as we rolled away at 1000 was almost the final nail in the coffin but, I had my kit on and had come this far so I figured I might as well do a couple of laps. The first lap avoided the bomb-hole sector to prevent congestion and a mass pile up but soon, as we left the re-assuring firmness of tarmac, the state of the trail became obvious. Within minutes I was coated in gloop and, as I moved up through the field, trying to sit on a wheel was punished with lung fulls of mud. Resisting the temptation to ride hard was almost impossible as riders from pairs and teams went blasting off safe in the knowledge that after giving their all for a lap or two they could smugly sit down for a rest, hot cuppa and some clean kit. My plan was to try and take it steady and not to waste any energy trying to muscle up any climbs when walking or running might be a more efficient option. Part of the kudos system of normal mountain biking is to try and ride everything but, for the solo enduro rider, long term survival has to trump macho vanity. By halfway round the first lap my super light carbon Gary Fisher Hi-Fi had doubled in weight with mud and the gears were misfiring. Fortunately a pond en route provided an ideal opportunity for a quick bike

Hit the North

What's covered in mud and goes round and round in circles for 12 hours? Enduro Mountain Bikers are a pretty twisted bunch who find pleasure in finding a gruelling, technically demanding and ideally dangerous loop and seeing who can ride around it the most times. The less insane can enter in relay pairs or teams of three but the truly tapped in the head take on the events solo.

The idea for Hit the North was devised by the MNG's (Moaning Northern Gits) who, over a pint and a pie, were bemoaning the lack of an enduro event in the North West. The 19th July was set as a date and a course devised centred on the Giant's Seat Scout Campsite to the north west of Manchester. The 8.4 mile loop included swooping singletrack, leg-breaking climbs, a fearful bomb-hole and even a Paris-Roubaix-esque sector of cobbles. Unfortunately, a week of almost continuous heavy rain, had reduced much of the course to a quagmire before almost three hundred riders had had a chance to churn it up.

Hit the North was going to be my first ever Enduro and should have been ideal preparation for the Trans-Wales 7 day mountain bike race that I'll be taking on in August. I'd been feeling pretty chipper about it and with rides such as the Fred Whitton and Paris-Roubaix in my legs confident in my fitness. However, driving to the start in the early hours, yet another downpour of biblical proportions and my desire to ride for 12 hours was severely waning. My wife Lissa did her best to keep me buoyed up but I could sense she wasn't exactly

hours of darkness before dawn and the arrival of the rain; from there it would be a long drag out to Pooley Bridge then back through Ambleside to (hopefully) finish before dark.

The first section had good running and after 45 mins I caught up with a group of three who were moving at about my pace; ahead of us there were 4 others who were moving along at a pace that I knew I could not sustain. The front man was Steve Birkenshaw, and he led the race the whole way, on his own, reports from the checkpoints as we passed through showed that he was steadily extending his lead the whole way around. Steve's report can be found on web <http://northumberlandfellrunners.co.uk> by scrolling down to 12/8/08.

Like me, several of the other runners were UTMB veterans, with the inevitable comparison between the races. Although the distances are almost exactly the same, the UTMB has much more height gain, and much longer (though fewer) climbs; also I was fitter and more experienced than 2 years ago, so I'd reckoned that the Lakeland should be quicker, and I estimated my time would be about 24 hours. However, long before the finish I realised that this race was much harder than the UTMB. For a start most the surfaces at the UTMB are very runnable, whereas now I found that loose rocks covered a large proportion of the Lakeland tracks. Also in UTMB you are always in a crowd, and there are twice as many checkpoints. The route in the UTMB is waymarked and also has yellow arrows on the ground and fluorescent markers every 100 metres, whereas in the Lakeland100 I saw only about 3 direction arrows, and they were all in Coniston.

Checkpoint one was reached ahead of schedule, and was left as rapidly as possible - my checkpoint routine was to refill water bottles, drink hot tea and/or soup, and get some solid food in, in as little time as possible; later on in the race our pitstops grew longer especially when they were situated in the village hall at Kentmere and the Lakes Runner shop in Ambleside. We were joined briefly by Andy, who then ran past us, and moved into second place for a good part of the night section, although he was to suffer for this later on. We were now a group of five, which really helped in the dark, that stayed together for the next few hours through CP2 (Boot) and CP3 (Wasdale). Our group was moving well, though the pace had slowed a bit as it got dark, and we did more walking. It was definitely a good idea to walk the climbs, but by including even the slightest incline the pace dropped and I could see by now that my 24 hour schedule was not looking good.

Through Wasdale after midnight the night was calm and cool – great running conditions needing only a tee-shirt and shorts. Soon one of the group dropped back as we started the long climb up Sail Pass and the scene of my second fall. The first one had been a few hours earlier on some slippery rocks while crossing a 10 foot stream – just some grazing on the leg, but it shows what a second's loss of concentration could have resulted in. But now there was the 20 foot torrent of Gatherstone Beck to cross, on steep ground, over wet boulders. Despite concentrating hard on my balance, I slipped landing on my left shoulder in the water; instantly I felt the force of the water pulling me sideways and downstream off the flattish crossing area and towards a steep gully.

Pete's Annual Orienteering Event

Peter Hill is organising an Orienteering type event on the 4th of January 2009 from a secret location in the Dark Peak; but not too far from home. The full details have yet to be worked out but there will be 2 courses 1 of about 3 miles suitable for anyone from Walkers to Strollers to the Elite

Course 2 would be the most challenging at about 7 miles. This will be over rough ground and will require the use of a compass.

A Dark Peak map will be needed for both courses and waterproofs must be worn or carried because of the time of year

It will be run to raise money for Blythe House Hospice in Chapel-en-le-Frith so there will be a small entry fee. It will only be open to club members and possibly friends as parking is limited.

Unlike last time it will start indoors, so no freezing your whatsits off in a car park! Who knows there may even be tea, coffee and a few cakes as well.

Full details yet to be agreed but watch this space for further details or contact Pete for more information.

This may become part of the Strollers annual fixture event list along with some of the other local races we are now attending in our Second Year.

More of the Strollers have entered and achieved their first times at running 10K races. I am not going to list them as I am bound to miss out a name! However we have all been very impressed with Cindy finishing her first ever 10K at Gawsworth in 65 mins. She has only recently come into running and her original goal was to see if she could build up to managing a 5K race. Cindy like many of the Strollers has got the running bug which is absolutely fantastic. Lets hope our bodies can keep up with our young at heart minds!

We also welcome a few new members from Disley...the Disley Dawdlers!

We have had groups of Strollers running Tatton Park, at the New Mills Fun Run and Gawsworth. We looked a smart bunch in our Club Shirts at Gawsworth and we hope to see more of us wearing our club tops for future events.

One of the next events in the Stroller Calendar which we also entered last year was the Xmas Pud Race. It is also a good opportunity to take our Junior Family members with us around the course.

Last, an amazing well done to young Steph (aged 12) for finishing the 56 mile Bullock Smithy with her dad in about 15 hrs.

Keep up the running everyone.

Gail Hull

I managed to wriggle over, up and out to safety. My left side was soaked, but I was not too cold. Surprisingly, my main observation when I entered the water was that my headtorch continued without interruption despite the battery (in my left hip pocket) being submerged. It was an interesting diversion, but a good warning to stay alert.

I regained the others quickly. Oz and Phil were running the whole way together - Phil knew the area really well and was a very experienced ultra runner – Richard was a triathlete, but had never run more than the marathon distance before, so this was now unknown territory for him. Over Black Sail Pass and the first tough descent. Phil and Oz knew the route and descended well so Richard and I had to raise our pace to keep up. This track down and the next descent after Scarth Gap to Buttermere were very rocky in places, and by the time we reached CP4 (Buttermere) my feet were starting to ache. I was wearing Inov-8 Flyrocs (as I'd done for the whole of the UTMB), but now I was looking forward to changing into cushioned road shoes at the half way stop. We had a long climb and long runnable descent, and just as the sky was getting lighter we arrived at CP5 at the village hall in the middle of Braithwaite for a longer rest which involved learning that the front 4 were moving steadily away from us, and Steve Birkenshaw was about 2 ½ hours in front. Here we had pasta and rice pudding (so good I had seconds). I was now a long way off my 24 hour pace, but preferred the company and easy travelling rather than rushing on – perhaps see how it was going and pick up some pace after halfway?

We moved on after 10 mins, and as we got towards a sleeping Keswick the dawn was still calm with no sign of the forecast rain.

From Keswick it was familiar ground along the Cumbria Way, rising up above the town and remembering a few weeks earlier when I'd been with Claire, Paul and Will on the first legs of their Bob Graham. But we soon turned off and followed a roundabout way to Threlkeld, taking in a lot of disused railway line till we picked up a bit more of the BG route up to Clough Head. It was here that it became obvious that the weather was worsening with the first spots of rain and clouds being driven low from the south. From here it was a long damp pull on the Old Coach Road to the midpoint about ½ mile before Dockray – 50 miles completed was a good excuse for waiting 30 minutes inside the marquee until the rain had passed and we'd regained some warmth from hot food and dry clothes; but best of all was the cushioned soles bliss of fresh road shoes. All the checkpoints marshals were very helpful, and here was no exception as we got waited on with pasta and tea. It was great to feel that we'd got halfway round and still in good shape, though many of those behind us chose this place to call it a day when it became obvious that the second half of the race would be run in awful conditions. It was also the start of the 50 mile race about 2 ½ hours after we left, and I wondered how long it would be before these faster runners would catch us up.

It was a real effort to get going again, and although my feet were now in luxury running on flat road for the first km, my legs just didn't want to know until after a very painful descent into Dockray.

One of the Coniston locals at the club asked me what sort of race was going on – he was genuinely surprised when I told him that I'd just run 100 miles, and prompted told all his mates, none of whom either had the slightest idea of what was going on. One benefit of a long day out is that I slept soundly throughout the rest of the night as my tent got battered by the gales and hammered by the rain.

My reflections on the race: I've never been so wet for so long, I think that it's harder (physically and mentally) than the UTMB, I am in the debt of Phil and Oz for providing navigation and company for about 24 hours, and I'm glad I did it.

Next year's race starts on July 31st.

Mark Richards

Goyt Valley Strollers

September has been a very busy time for the Strollers. We have seen several new faces out to try the runs on the Saturdays and most of them have come back the following week so it must have been bearable!

Hopefully many of these will become members of our ever-increasing club and maybe it will be a 'Stroller' who could be our 100th member.

We celebrated our first anniversary in style having a run followed by a Spa at the Moorside. The cold plunge seemed to have been part of the initiation process. But some order was restored by having coffee and cake in the lounge along with Luton Football Club! Several of the Moorside members asked if we were a Hen Party.... And one lady in the Sauna has since joined the Club!

I stuck with the fast guys up the final climb towards Coniston; things seemed to happen quickly – getting past Andy and exchanging a few encouraging comments (but I knew how bad he must have felt), seeing regular lightening flashes ahead of us, the rain starting up again, reaching the gap high above Coniston, and picking our way down quite a difficult descent made trickier in the dark rain and clag, and eventually reaching the miner's road and route to the town. Found the right shortcut through the town and finish at 3 minutes past midnight – 28hrs33mins after starting – on the verandah outside the Coniston Sports & Social Club. I was the fourth of only 11 to finish, Steve had won in 23:40, followed by a pair team (90 mins ahead of me) of Nick Gracie and Warren Bates – both of whom are sponsored adventure racers; by this stage most of the rest of the runners had retired, taken their tents down and gone home. There was a band playing inside, and that meant there could be beer later – seemed like a good idea, but there were more important things to do first.

First thoughts were get into something dry – so my finisher's T shirt went straight on. Then hot food – straight out of the pan. Then shower – I must have spent 20 mins rewarming in the shower; while drying off I inspected my feet – my left little toe had turned to mush, and I had a couple of blisters around my heels, but the thing that really impressed me was the soles of my feet – it took a couple of days before the skin returned to normal, but now the effects of over 12 hours of soaked feet had turned the skin into something resembling white pickled walnuts. When dry and warm I rejoined the finish marshals to welcome in Phil (who promptly collapsed) and Oz just over an hour after me.

We soon turned offroad and the flexibility returned, but with it came the rain, and the pattern continued throughout the rest of the day of on-off pelts of rain. Soon feet were soaked through again and all benefit of warm dry kit was lost. We were making reasonable progress, but I was having to recalculate my ETA to over 26 hours – and since this would enable a finish still at twilight I opted to keep a small light torch and leave behind new Silva LX torch to save 420g.

At 20.5km this section was the longest and took us through Pooley Bridge in the late morning, and around the other side of Ullswater to the next checkpoint at Howtown in the early afternoon. Here the weather got very bad: the two marshals were huddling in a collapsed gazebo that was now acting as a windbreak, and this was the first stop that we all got full waterproofs on as quickly as possible. With minimal delay we were off into the teeth of the gale, hoods down, and the climb up the valley was not pleasant. Just after the top, and before the descent to Haweswater, Richard dropped off the pace. To his credit he didn't fall back too far and arrived at the next checkpoint at Mardale Head, after a very tricky track above the lake shore, just as Phil, Oz and I were leaving; he kept going, on his own, and eventually finished 1 ½ hours behind me. Mardale Head was also good for morale – it was about 2/3 of the distance and there were only 4 more checkpoints before the finish with no more than 10km between each – I could now start to count down to the finish. Generally I was in good shape, as were Phil and Oz, no major problems with my feet, just a bit of rubbing around the ankles and left little toe.

I'd been eating and drinking at all the checkpoints, and having some hill food (but not as much as I'd planned) in between with no stomach problems. I remembered my collapse on the Ridgeway last year, and made sure I was keeping energy levels up with gels. I'd been peeing regularly, so was fully hydrated – from that point of view, life was good.

Except that after the trudge up the Gatescarth Pass we descended onto a path that should have been a straightforward gentle descent but turned into the nightmare track from hell. It was walled and covered with loose stones and rocks from fist to football size making it impossible to run in a direct line. So we jumped, leapt, dodged, and zigzagged, and criss-crossed the track in search of sheep trods or grass wherever possible. I was glad to get off that one down at Sadgill and find shelter in Kentmere village hall; after the Garburn Road (yet more loose rocks underfoot) Ambleside was the next checkpoint, and I was feeling a lot perkier now and looking forward to the home run.

Things got interesting at Ambleside. The rain started up again just as we entered the village, and we hurried to get along to CP11 at Lakes Runner. It was now early evening and only a half marathon to go. Inside the shop we had welcome soup, tea, and sports drink, and learned that Steve had looked in a bad way when he passed through a few hours earlier (in fact he'd probably already finished by now); we also learnt that Andy was suffering very badly and had spent a long time resting here before moving on.

Despite feeling for Andy, I thought here was an opportunity to gain a place before the finish, so as we moved slowly through Ambleside I started to feel I was capable of pressing on now. Oz was now going through a bad patch, and though we still stayed together I was itching to raise the pace. I didn't want to leave them as the unfamiliar route in the dark could cost me dearly in navigation errors, and also my small headtorch would illuminate only a short distance ahead, increasing the likelihood of errors. By the time we'd reached Elterwater the rain was like a monsoon, and getting harder; at least it wasn't too cold, but I could only stay warm by keeping on the move, and I was now at a pace much slower than I was happy with. I'd moved ahead and as I waited for Phil and Oz around a corner came the first two runners from the 50 – they were storming along – and I reckoned I should hitch a lift. When Oz and Phil caught up I said I'd try to catch the fast runners and see how long I could tag along. They too were unfamiliar with the route, but at least had a GPS, and I had my map and directions, so between us from then on we pretty much stayed on track. By now (after 85 miles) I was into my second wind, and it felt good to be running fast now, using these guys like a slingshot, and finishing a little sooner.

We were making good progress, but with the difficult route from Blea Tarn it still took over 2 hours to reach the final checkpoint at Tilberthwaite. We didn't hang about there, with less than 6 miles to go, and also with the knowledge that we'd gained rapidly on Andy, who'd left the checkpoint only 7 mins before us.