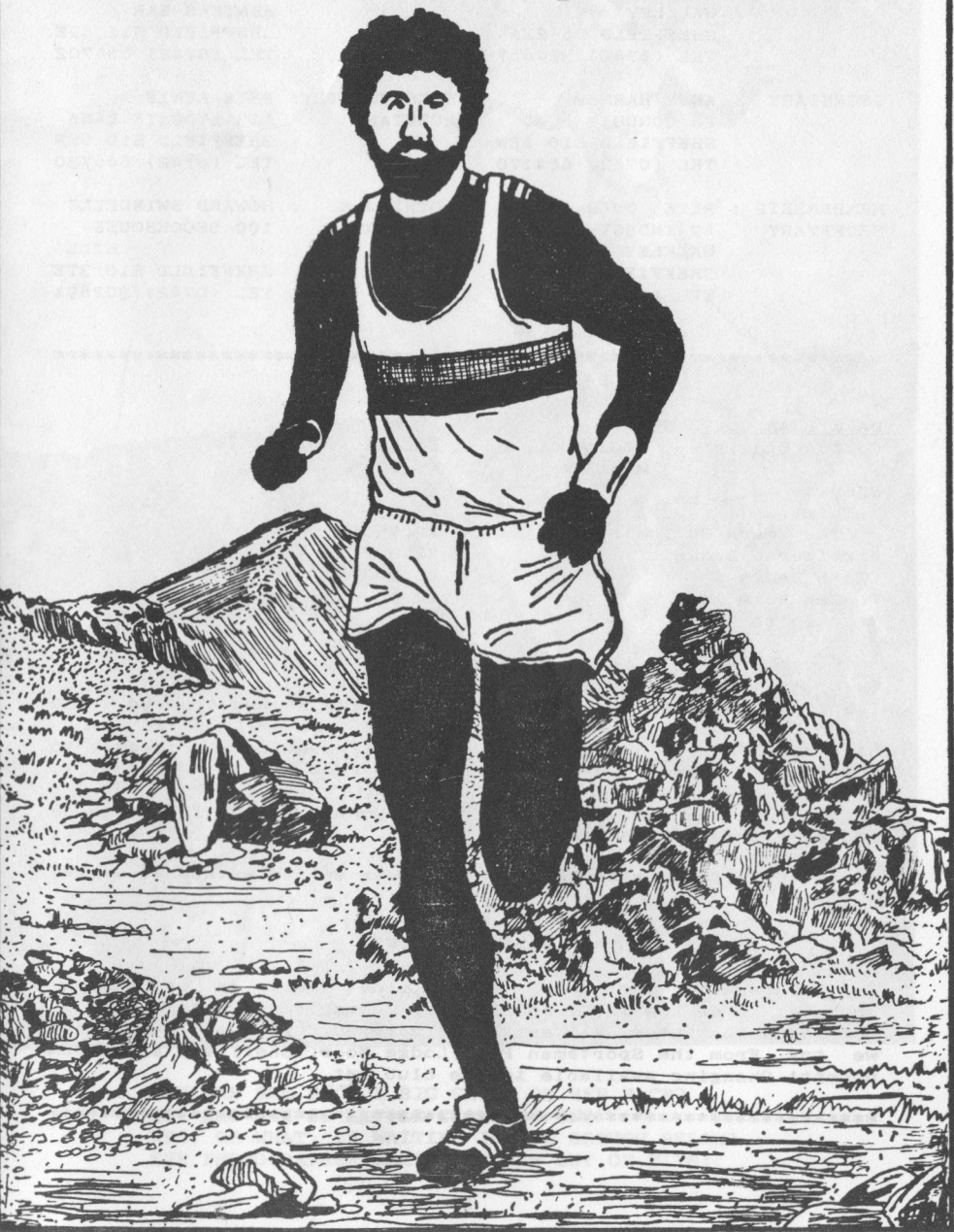


DARK PEAK NEWS

april '86





WHY HAS SHE SUCH A BIG SMILE ON HER FACE?
WHY HAS SHE SO LITTLE CLOTHING ON?
WHO, OR WHAT, IS WAITING IN THE GROUGH BELOW?
THE PHOTOGRAPHER CLAIMS HE RAN OUT OF FILM!

PAGE THREE!

EDITORIAL

Once again it's time for another newsletter. "Not too soon" most of you will be saying. This one was originally planned for christmas, then with the previous one being delayed until early December. I re-scheduled this one for February, and once again it's late - Sorry, I've been busy. Even with the help of my secretary, Christine (she won't like me calling her that) with the typing, it has still been difficult finding the time to put together this newsletter. Still, keep the articles coming in. Now that the fell running season is underway I'm sure your all dying to put pen to paper. The next newsletters should be on time as I'm about to buy a computer; it's much easier to have one at hand at any time rather than at the University, which is only available until 9pm, and, as we all know, we go training in the evening.

What about our page three girl! What do the ladies think about it? What does the 'lady' in question think about it? (perhaps 'lady' doesn't apply to someone who goes to these extremes to get a better time) Personally, I prefer the picture of her bum, (withheld for a later issue). Seriously folks, this is only lighthearted entertainment and together with the centre spread, is just a display of what we are now able to do, ie get good quality copies from photographs (colour or b/w). So, if there are any David Bailey's out there with suitable material for the newsletter, send it in. This could lead to a caption competition for the newsletter, if we could offer a suitable prize! I hope to be able to include pictures as a regular feature, so I'm hoping you'll support it.

Dark Peak's big organisational commitment, the Skyline, has been and gone with no hiccups, being won easily. I'm told, by Billy Bland, with Andy Harmer coming a creditable 6th and Malcolm 11th, only finishing for the beer he said. Perhaps Mam Nick ought to be renamed 'Patterson's Wall'. Well done all of you who finished, and a special thanks from the committee to all those who helped on the day, without whose help the race couldn't take place. I'm sure Neil Goldsmith is looking for help for the Kinder Downfall and Pete Griffies for the Glossop, not to mention the other races organised by Dark Peak members.

And now for the more mundane stuff - Subs are now due! There should be a membership renewal form enclosed within this newsletter, if not your the lucky one. Please return it as soon as possible and make sure to fill it ALL in, ie post codes and telephone numbers. If you have already paid could you return the form anyway with an appropriate note. Also, if you have moved, or are going to at any time, let us know.

Eddie Tor

FIXTURES

The first Truncheon was on Easter Monday, the 2nd will be on April 21st, the 3rd on May 12th, and then every three weeks, I think.

Dark Peak, well myself and Malcolm, are again organising the Damflask Road Relays, the Bradfield Beast (1 mile uphill, suitable for fell sprinters) and the Speedy Mile (downhill mile). We would appreciate all the help and participation we can get. All the races start at around 7-7.20pm. The relay consists of 3x3.5 miles with a nice hill, around Damflask reservoir, Bradfield, and is the first of the races on May 15th. It also includes a straight 3.5 mile race for ladies. Entries to the editor by May 9th please, with 2 9x4 SAE's. Details of the other races will appear in the next newsletter, or can be obtained from Malcolm or myself.

ROAD RACES

- 5.6 Bradfield Beast. 1m/590' (29.5)
- 12.6 Speedy Mile. 1m/325' descent! (5.6)

FELL RACES

- 20.4 AS Blisco Dash. 5m/2000' (EOD)
- 3.5 AL Trans-Fan Race. 20m/8000' (23.4)
- 5.5 BS Penistone Hill Race. 6.5m/1055' (EOD)
- 7.5 AS Shining Tor. 5m/1450' (EOD)
- 11.5 AM Buttermere Sail Beck. 9.5m/3700' (EOD)
- 11.5 BM Darwen Moors Race. 11m/1800' (EOD)
- 18.5 O Reebok Mountain Trial, Wales. (12.5/EOD)
- 18.5 AM Fairfield. 9m/3000' (EOD)
- 21.5 AS Blackstone Edge. 3.5m/1200' (EOD)
- 24.5 AL Bens of Jura. 16m/7500' (10.5/EOD)
- 1.6 AS Saddleworth Races. 3m/950' (EOD)
- 7.6 AL Welsh 1000m's. 20m/9000' (28.5)
- 7.6 BM Ravenstone Brow. 10m/1250' (EOD)
- 14.6 AL Ennerdale. 23m/7500' (EOD)
- 15.6 BL Kinder Trog. 16m/3000' (EOD)
- 21.6 AS Buckden Pike. 5m/1500' (EOD)

10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Notes on special meeting 16.10.85

Item 1 : Do we wish to celebrate our 10th anniversary. The unanimous consensus was Yes.

Item 2 : Proposals :

A Celebratory Book : Graham Berry and Dave Sant considered compiling a book that would contain articles, results, epic training runs etc, etc, to span these 10 years. This was received with great support. The two editors now await active support in its construction. The special meeting agreed to subsidise this venture should it be necessary.

Mob Match : Tony Farnell proposed a match against the many Pennine clubs, ie Holmfirth, Rossendale, Glossopdale, Saddleworth etc. Starting at Edale probably on a summers evening with a large number to count as in pre-war cross country, ie 30/40 to score. Possibly smaller for smaller clubs. Social after. Course around Grindslow, Ringing Roger area. This was again welcomed on mass, or on mob.

Special Celebration Race : Andy Harmer, Will McLewin (both in Marjory Hill area) considered a race, possibly a one off of sufficient difficulty to warrant a Cat.A Long, perhaps taking in the land to the NE of the Peak, Marjory etc. This was debated at some length; problems of marshalling, open competition, time of season, diffs with Skyline and Glossop-organisation etc. The feeling was that an event like the Marjory as run in Feb '85 could start the year off, but as a closed club event; perhaps combined in the evening with a celeidh. (STOP PRESS - cancelled due to most club members being wimps or head-cases in the weather that prevailed in February.)

Pennine Way Attempt : Tony Trowbridge. Tony wasn't initially present but had voiced the idea in June '85. There were very few who were interested in this proposal. One or two could see it as an event, rather than a record attempt which would be selective towards the faster runners. The restrictive element, combined with the major logistics of organising it deterred many. There was essentially no support for this venture and it was voted out.

Beating the Bounds : See following article. Many club members got lost somewhere at the edge of the map. Will's territorial impulses may yet see this idea reach some sort of fruition.

The 15 Trigs : Andy Harmer. Using the Karrimor map and visiting the 15 trigs on the map. Since mooted the idea in June, Bob Segrove, Alan Yates, and Dave Jones have been around in about 15 hours (see August? mag for report). Could this be run as a one day attack or a two-day assault with overnight camp at Hayfield, for Sheffielder's or Lodge Moor for the Western contingent. In view of the need to accomodate as many club members as possible in the celebrations some doubt was thrown on this proposal.

Daylight Watershed : Over the years, Mike Hays, Alan Yates and Pete Lewis have claimed records and a fair number have done the tour. Andy wondered if a formal race with separate starts i.e. 7 a.m., 9 a.m. could be on. Again as only a number would attack this, it was not felt suitable.

N.B. the present record is 6.58 says Mike Hayes?

Perhaps this may be on sometime in some form?

Sheffield Hills Race : Dave Holmes : taking in Sheaf, Porter, Rivelin, Loxley, Ewden, Don etc. Start Ecclesall Woods, finish Oughtibridge Park. Approx. 20/30 miles of paths, many varied terrain : some interest was shown but uncertain of the linking up - avoiding hilltop areas. The idea was felt to be interesting if not directly fell running. Dave agreed to mull over and consider specific ideas.

Sheffield Way : Dave Holmes : take on the 43 miles of the City boundary. Nice run but questions raised re. fell running and support of all club. It would be Dark Peak putting its paws on City. No real support at this stage.

Celidh/Barn Dance : Andy Harmer : perhaps starting the year with a social - in the same way we end the year with a social. Interest was shown, possibly combined with the Marjory Hill race in February.

In addition the meeting felt generally that the club would support any ventures as long as they gave opportunity to most members, were not elitist in regard to fitness and did not require great organisation. Consequently, those requiring committment in respect of organisation, money, support need the full backing of the majority of club members.

Next year the British Championship will take off and a new English Championship will develop. Club members will be taking part in these as well as the many excellent calendar events. In addition, the recently introduced races such as the Baffler, Cakes of Bread, Crookstone, Cutthroat, Jacob's Ladder, will add to the club spirit. Possible events from Mike Hayes (the return of the 5 Springs), Tim Tett, Jacky Smith, Colin and Pete will ensure that 1986 provides the opportunity for everyone to enjoy gracing the tops. Have a good year and enjoy yourselves!

N.B. a further meeting to clarify some of these proposals will take place in December or January.

Andy

DARK PEAK TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EVENT

"Beating the Bounds"

Based on the principle that events to mark this historic year should be outstanding in one sense or another, this event aims to qualify by being outstandingly dotty.

The idea is, to run as precisely as possible around (one side, at least) of the O.S. Dark Peak map. This will require precise navigational skills so it should appeal to all the closet orienteers in the club.

The four corners are the points:-

NW 000 060

NE 200 060

SW 000 800

SE ??? ??? (participants have to be able to work this one out for themselves)

So a N to S or S to N side is 26 km and an E to W or W to E side is 20 km. The plan is for eight teams, two at each corner, to leave at a certain time heading, one due N or S the

other due E or W, for the adjacent corner. This could be regarded as four separate races, one along each side between two teams running in opposite directions but I really had in mind 2 - 3 hours on the boundary of the Peak with lots of meetings between different groups of club members. Each team should meet another team at their starting corner of the designated start time, another team about halfway along their side and yet another team at the end of their side. Yet another meeting at one or two pubs would seem to be appropriate. Teams can be of any size. Clothing and equipment requirements will be strict and rigorously enforced as in the Trog. Each team member must wear at least one item of clothing and the team leader must carry an item of equipment.

So that is the plan. Time and date as yet, undecided - unfortunately 28 February and 1 April are a Friday and a Tuesday respectively so I shall aim at a Saturday or Sunday 10.00 a.m. or 3.00 p.m. start, towards the end of April/beginning of May when there is not much else on. (I would welcome advice on this as I've never organised an orienteering event before.) Teams will have to sort out their own transport but I will try to co-ordinate this when the teams have sorted themselves out. The essential requirement is for eight team leaders, who, more or less, make their own arrangements.

N.B. There will be NO air - sea rescue facilities for teams who fall off the edge of the map

Definite date and start time to be announced when the FRA calendar is out and summary details in a newsletter shortly before the event. (These will include allowed deviants where reservoirs, railways etc are involved.)

Potential team leaders choose your own leg e.g. NE to SE and let me know - slightly slower teams choose a horizontal leg.

Very fast teams might wish for two legs or one leg up and down.

It has been suggested that yet another team might like to run round and round in small circles at the eastern end of the Doctor's Gate culvert on the Snake Road which is just about the centre of the map.

Will McLewin

LETTERS

LETTER FROM THE SOUTH

Without experiencing last year's novelty and excitement of the Western States Endurance run, I must content myself with the more mundane, so I hope it is not too late to throw in three races which got away in '85. It goes without saying that participation in these events has influenced my decision to report on them, otherwise I would have delved into even more obscure hybrids of the fell running calendar.

Coombe Hill Race : 01.06.85 : 4.5m : Wendover Carnival.

Nearly 300 runners make for a panicky start along a main road before reaching a narrow gap leading to the fine gradual hill climb with expansive views over the Vale of Aylesbury. There is a dramatic descent down a sunken stony track not far from the back way in to Chequers Estate before the crux is reached at the near vertical ascent of the hill itself with its massive obelisk on the summit. From here, your recovery from

the climb is rapid over very easy flat ground before negotiating some interesting tortuous wooded and sometimes muddy paths plus several awkward stiles. The finish is sudden and unexpected and not, as used to happen, in the car park of the local pub but in the main street itself where there are lots of traffic wardens, police cars, ambulance men and open air running gear boutiques.

RESULTS

1	T.Ross.(Ver)	22.20
2	F.Thomas.	25.04

Record 20.54 by L.Adams 1978.

Goodrich Village Fell Race : 08.06.85

If the Coombe Hill race celebrated my departure from the quasi fell running scene of the Chilterns, the Goodrich Village Fell Race near Symonds Yat, marked my arrival in the Cheltenham Dark Peak catchment area. This was not a race for the dilettante as a quick glance at the results will testify. See, for example, names like A.Pickles and..... the ever recurring F.Thomas (V).

Said to be a distance of four miles and all of 750 feet ascent, there is a punishing early climb (which is nearly all the ascent anyway) leaving you gasping and wondering why all the Gloucester and Stroud runners are not also members of Dark Peak.

There is a distinctly local flavour to this event which, in the space of 8 years, has become something of a classic. On part of the course there is a danger of allowing oneself to amble lazily along the peaceful banks of the River Wye after the one fast and desperate descent. Some people appeared to be doing just that. Perhaps they were only there for the salmon.

RESULTS

1	W.Nock.(H'owen)	17.36
2	A.Darby.(New)	17.59
7	A.Pickles.	18.59
21	F.Thomas.	20.27

Black Mountain Fell race : 30.06.85

Getting even more serious I decided to enter MDC's Black Mountains Fell Race which, being cast in the mold of the Trans Fan and the Brecon Beacons races is thankfully not over organised. (Not on my side either, as I was to discover when I came face to face with Adrian Pickles at the start after independent but parallel journeys from Cheltenham that morning.)

Table looked like the obvious way up, but being out of bounds, all 24 of us headed up to Pen Cerrig Calch by a less direct route. There are some hard and long, but mainly grassy climbs, especially to Pen-y-Gader Fawr, with three major valley descents before ascending the Offas Dyke Path ridge from Llantony and along to Hatterall Hill. This is a lovely race for the connoisseur of the mostly unspoiled accessible hill country of the Marches.

Adrian had a good run to finish equal second with Phil Dixon and I managed to pick off a number of places to end up sixth. In 14th place was Kevin Hagley from deepest Devon who, despite having a lot of trouble with his ankle, manfully completed the race and sometime later got recruited to the ranks of Dark Peak (Southern Belles(?) section). He expects to compete often on the fells this summer.

RESULTS

1	A. Darby.	2.51
2=	A. Pickles.	2.56
6	F. Thomas.	3.17

From time to time the Gloucestershire/Severn triangle has harboured several Dark Peakers, but with the departure from Cheltenham of Adrian (back to Sheffield) and Bob Hamilton (to Christchurch - not NZ) representation here is once again reduced to two - Tim Dennish and myself. Are there any more emigrations in the offering?

Frank Thomas.

I wish to thank most sincerely all Dark Peak members for the encouragement and inspiration afforded to me during the past season, and for the generous reception at the Annual Dinner of my winning the Eric Mitchell Trophy in the 1985 Club Championship. It was the support of so many members which made it possible.

John Edwards.

BOB GRAHAM ROUND

This years club attempt is planned for 21st June (Summer solstice and FULL Moon!)

Human sacrifices so far volunteered are Pete Collingwood and Mark Harvey. Would any other contenders or helpers please contact John Edwards who is organising this years round. Offers of cars and drivers are particularly welcome. More details at the AGM.

John Edwards. (tel 0742 660556)

PUBLICATION OF A TEN YEAR HISTORY OF DARK PEAK

All material for possible inclusion is required by 31st March, or a.s.a.p afterwards due to late publication of this newsletter. Please contact Dave or Graham immediately if it is likely to be late.

Possible sections for the book include: General training, Fell racing, Records, Bob Graham's, Multi-day events (eg Karrimor). Articles needed are long, short, serious humorous, remarks, comments, poems, press cuttings, photographs, etc, etc.

Please Forward to Dave Sant or Graham Berry.

QUOTES * QUOTES * QUOTES * QUOTES * QUOTES * QUOTES * QUOTES

At Grindslow Knoll during the 1985 Skyline:
Dave Sant : "All the women went the right way."
Alan Yates: "That says nothing"

Runner : "Is this the second checkpoint?" - said on his second visit.

Somewhere in the Lakes:
John Edwards runs past, woman says to husband "I didn't know they let handicapped people run."

WHO'S WHO IN DARK PEAK

The following description of this runner is, I'm assured from a reliable source, true. Can you guess who it is?

Has done 200-210 miles per week. (not sure how long it lasted, but supposedly more than one) This week included one day of 6 X 1 hour(7 mile) runs with 30-45 minutes rest between runs, followed by a 12 mile run! (and I thought my interval sessions were hard - Ed).

Once ran from Lodge Moor to Hayfield, had some tea and ran back home. Then went to Dark Peak wednesday run and complained of being tired as he turned around at the Pole and went back.

Clue : He used to weigh 18 stone!

RUMOURS : Previously unpublished in the Fell Runner.

1. Rumour has it that the M6 motorway has a carriageway that heads south from the Lake District.
2. Rumour has it that the Peak District is somewhere south of the Lakes and north of Italy.

RANDOM DOCTOR SERVICE

A new service is being set up for injured or ailing fell runners, climbers and walkers: the random running doctor service.

Following the success of random breath tests, a local fell running doctor with Dark Peak Fell Runners is setting up a random running doctor service. The doctor, who has to remain nameless for ethical reasons (and libel: ed.) explained it this way:

"When I'm out running on the fell I never seem to go the way I want to and I often end up somewhere else. For example, if I'm racing across Kinder, I frequently find myself on Bleaklow. In fact," he confessed shyly "my sense of direction is non-existent and my running is best described as random motion. I spoke to various statisticians about this and they confirmed that, statistically, there is better chance of me happening on someone who is injured than there is for runners or

searchers who are accurately following a set route or indeed rescuers adopting a defined search pattern."

(It appears that there is some basis for this; the American search and rescue organisations have some evidence to support the view that random searches are more effective than pattern searches.)

He continued, "I have, therefore, taken to carrying a full medical kit and emergency surgical equipment, including theatre gown, scalpels etc. with me on my runs on the basis that, for example, on a training run for the Edale Skyline, I may just bump into someone who has fallen whilst training over the Borrowdale course, or a climber injured on Snowdon.

I tried this idea recently on a Dark Peak training run around Sheffield where, equipped for action in a theatre gown, mobile brain surgery kit at the ready and carrying instructions such as - don't follow me, I'm lost - I succeeded in going the wrong way down an escalator and successfully treated several large ladies suffering from fright."

He also explained that he is experimenting with the idea of having a compass implanted in his brain to assist his navigational skills. He wanted to join the local mountain rescue team but they felt he was likely to provide them with enough practice already.

The service is likely to be called the Columbus Service after the explorer who set off for India, not knowing where he was going, didn't know where he was when he got there, didn't know where he had been when he got back and did it all on borrowed money!

TRANSVESTITES IN CHAMPIONSHIP PLOT

Observers have noted secret training by Dave Sant in order to win the women's fell running championship. He has been seen running around Sheffield dressed in short skirt, suspender belt, fishnet stockings (without the fish) and enormous boobs. The boobs are believed to be helium filled to assist uplift. Running up hill caused Dave to make good use of the hockey stick he was carrying, he had to fend off the amorous advances of local rugby supporters.

Dave was accompanied by Graham 'Chesty' Morgan, who, though more conservatively dressed, is believed to be training to win the ladies vets title.

Both are unconcerned about the prospect of suspicions being aroused when bearded ladies win womens races.

STOP PRESS. 'Sant shaves beard off'
also reported to have asked Santa for a ladies Phillishave.

OP,SKIP AND RUN

Are you sitting comfortably? If so, then lend me an ear and I will begin. This particular ploy led to a visit to the Royal Hallamshire Hospital for our new secretary, Elite fell runner and race organiser extraordinaire, Andy Harmer.

As you well know by now and if you didn't, I am going to tell you, Andy has been the subject of much media coverage

recently. He has featured in the centre-fold spread, along with a number of other nine stone weaklings, as Compass Sport Fell Boys of the month doing their thing on Red Pike. This magazine must feel that under all that hair there is a photogenic face trying to get out because he has also been photographed in front of Harry 'Thighs' Walker on the Three Peaks race and winning the Glossop Fell race. Other risque magazines d'homme, such as Long Distance Runner, have felt it necessary to expose him, in the nicest possible way, leading the charge at the start of the Ben Nevis race.

Unfortunately, excessive over-exposure to cameras with a shutter speed of less than 1/50 sec can cause damage to soft tissues. This shutter speed is only necessary when photographing fast runners and explains why nobody else in Dark Peak has had Andy's problem. Anyway, the result of this continual exposure gave our Sec an auricular haematoma (a very big bruise in his ear). After speaking to our Hope fell doctor, Dave Mosley - you remember, the one who recommends warm porridge for thawing out erectile tissue - Andy decided to visit that bastion of the NHS, the Royal Hallamshire. The ear consultant, who started life working for Dyna Rod, decided the best treatment was to drain the ear. Would Mr Harmer be able to present himself in one week for the prescribed operation? This caused the Karrimor Kid some heartache. Firstly the operation would be performed two days before the Marsden to Edale; secondly how would he maintain his 1985 streak of going for a run, at least one, every day.

The Hallamshire Hospital have this strange rule that you enter the ward one day before your operation. This is to make sure that if you are relatively fit and healthy, in a sound mental state, then the sight and sounds of people who are really ill will produce a mental deterioration sufficient to make you think you are also ill and in need of attention. It also allows the young nurses to practise seeing naked men take a bath and the young doctors to feel your stomach, look down your throat and take your blood, even though it's your ear that's the problem.

Andy went for a run at 7.15 a.m. Thursday morning and the entered ward G2, donned his prisoner's apparel with the arrows on and sat down to wait. He waved to John Fisher, who enquired if he was on a social visit! He joined Mike Greaves (Hallamshire Harriers) on his ward round, listened carefully to learn the jargon and then tackled his own consultant. After a little bit of persuasion the doctor said that he may nip home for about one hour on the Thursday evening. Andy saw a chink of light suddenly emerge at the end of the funnel. 'If I could stay at home overnight then get an early morning run in, I can crack Friday, the day of the op. and maintain my streak' he thought. He introduced a bit of jargon to show he knew a thing or two. 'I promise that I will not eat for 24 hours before my G.A.' he said. Impressed that a mere layman should know that a general anaesthetic is called a G.A., the medic gave permission for removal of Andy's ball, chain and inflatable bed pan.

Friday dawned; again a hairy figure could be perceived threading his way along the Rivelin Valley. I called to see him at 4 o'clock on Friday afternoon; no Andy, no bed. 'Mr Harmer is in theatre' a young nurse said. I thought it strange to visit the Crucible in the afternoon, must be a matinee, then realised she meant operating theatre. The operation was successful. On Friday night, not only Andy's ear but his whole face looked

drained. Now the problem, how to maintain the streak. When you are a drug addict, a shot of your own opiate is necessary to maintain any semblance of self-control.

Saturday came; amidst the groans and cries of "Nurse, bring me a bottle - bedpan - painkiller". The resolve of our hero was not dented. Slipping into his Dark Peak leisure wear, he grabbed an official looking paper off the duty desk, adjusted his bandage to look more like a Sikh's turban and found his way to the stairs. Pretending to be a messenger boy of Indian descent he gently trotted up and down the stairs, smiling sweetly at Matron as he passed her for the tenth time. "Ah, sweet high" he murmured as he crawled back into bed, content in the knowledge that the streak had been extended one further day!

Having dismissed with sadness, thoughts of hiring an ambulance to take him to Marsden, Andy decided that fresh air was a necessity on Sunday. Carefully pulling his hair over the offending bandage, he decided to go A.W.O.L. and skipped out of the Hallamshire. Within minutes he was in his beloved Rivelin valley, brown spots of mud staining his Dark Peak apparel. As his spirits soared and the anaesthetic gases left his bloodstream, to be replaced by a more stimulating solute, he projected his mind between Marsden and Edale. "Damn!" he thought, "I was going really well this week. Only a bit of pain from the bad ankle, arthritic knee and the sciatica. Bet I would have broken three hours." Back to the Hallamshire he trotted. As he lay on his bed, exhausted, dreaming of beating Kenny Stuart to the top of Fairfield, he was awakened by a loud voice "Mr Harmer, what are these brown stains on your trousers. Nurse, fetch a bed pan quickly!" Andy did not protest, as he was lifted carefully onto his throne, but smiled sweetly and murmured "This always happens when I run too hard." The nurse returned his smile, pushed a thermometer in his mouth, took his pulse and wrote in his medical notes: Sunday, 9.00am. Hallucinating!

Herein ends the tale of the 1985 Harmer streak continuation. Andy, we are indeed impressed and feel you are now approaching the achievements of the great Ron Hill. He has given us his ramblings. What will you give us? (His socks probably -Ed)

Skip's Master.

CONFESSIONS OF A FELL RUNNER

I'm not sure whether this ought to be called 'First Impressions : A novice fell runner', but most impressions seem to have been made on other people; or 'How not to do it', but that's been done before; or even 'A day in the life of a Wally!' Tim left it untitled. -ED.

It is now just over a year since my introduction to fell running and joining Dark Peak. It therefore seems a fitting time to reflect on some of the more eventful moments and 'Minor' disasters of my first year on the fells and to share some of the initial impressions of a new 'convert' to the sport.

For many road runners, running on the fells carries a

certain 'mystic'. They are hard fell runners as a 'breed' apart - an ecentric bunch of individuals who possess a certain degree of suicidal recklessness and seeming desire for continual self abuse in order to appreciate the rigours of their chosen pastime. Even well respected and highly experienced Bruce Tulloh has helped to perpetrate this distorted view when he wrote recently in "The Complete Runner" - "you will only take up fell running after being bitten by another fell runner, which is not unlikely, as they are all a bunch of animals!"

When I began running in 1984 I shamefully admit that I largely subscribed to this impression of fell running. However a few months of wasting the summer sunshine monotonously pounding Sheffield's city roads soon had me searching for an alternative. It was then that I bumped into Pete Jones and Mick Heaton in the Hallamshire (the pub or the hospital -Ed) one lunchtime and it is they who must share the blame for inflicting on an unsuspecting Dark Peak my dubious fell running talents. So it was that I turned up nervously at the Sportsman one late September evening as my diary recalls - '20.9.84; went out with DP for the first time. Started along crags below Lodge Moor. Not too bad except couldn't look where we were going because if I took my eyes off my feet I fell over. (nobody else seemed to be experiencing the same problem) Got to bottom of Rivelin and they set off up the hill to Stannington Church. Legs went to Lead! To make matters worse I was passed by some old geezer with grey hair and a beard who kept talking to me although I couldn't muster enough breath to answer. I think he got bored as he eventually gave up and shot off up the hill. Shattered by the time we got back to the pub. Going to have to get fit to survive in this game!'

The next milestone was my first venture onto the fells two weeks later... 'Sat 6.10.84; Went over Club Champs course with Chris W. Jeff H. and Pete D. Started from Snake and ran to Kinder Downfall through horrendous peat bogs (called 'gruffs' I think), couldn't see a bloody thing, v.misty, and kept falling over anyway. Just followed the rest and prayed I didn't lose sight of them. Then they all disappeared over this 'precipice' down into Edale shouting "Let's go for a cup of tea." Took me ages to pick my way down the slope in trainers, still falling over. They'd practically finished by the time I staggered in. Must get myself a pair of these 'PB's' they all seem to wear.

Soon came the Club Champs itself and first 'real' fell race....15.11.84; 'Club Champs'- rather daunting at the start as everyone looked very professional and nearly died when I saw the first hill which was bloody nearly vertical. Managed to get up it and follow the rest to the Downfall, but then everyone seemed to disappear down different groughs. Sudden panic! however I managed to shadow a blood-splatted Tony T. by homing in on the barking of his dog!

1984 ended with the infamous Trog...2.12.84; 'The Trog'- I hadn't even rec'd the bit to Bleaklow head so I relied on a sequence of snap decisions following whoever seemed to be going in vaguely the right direction. It didn't do me much good as I overtook Colin Hughes three times! I took dubious advice from Neil Goldsmith about the revitalising effect of Staminade and tried some at the Snake, it nearly finished me off! I recovered only to get totally lost on the top of Kinder. Luckily Colin came by again(!) and took pity on a poor novice, allowing me to follow in wake to the finish.

After Xmas I somehow managed to get into a team for the

Burbage Baffler... 12.1.85; "Burbage Baffler"- God, it certainly baffled me! Instructions were to run over Higger Tor and then turn down to a foot bridge where I was supposed to meet Steve Clayton coming in the opposite direction. I wasn't really sure where Higger Tor was and didn't dare ask, so I decided to keep with everybody else and wait for them to turn down to the bridge. Unfortunately I lost the rest and by the time I saw the Fox House looming up in the distance I realised I must have gone 'a bit too far'! I turned around and finally met Steve back on the top of Higger Tor. He wasn't exactly pleased at having to run an extra 500 metres uphill!

After this show of profound incompetence it didn't take me long to consolidate my reputation.

2.2.85; Marjory Hill race- a very strong wind on top made it very tough but I eventually got to Slippery Stones whereupon I had a terrible thought, "Had I actually been to Marjory Hill?" I decided I hadn't, so I set off back up the hill. Met Pete Dyke coming down "Where the bloody hell are you going?" he enquired. "It's alright; I haven't been to Marjory hill yet" I confidently replied. "Yes you bloody have. I've just seen you there" he exclaimed. Now totally confused, I turned round again and headed back down. No further problems until the descent down Lockerbrook when I foolishly accepted the advice of that wily old campaigner, Alan Yates. His friendly banter as we ran down through the woods completely deceived me and as I tried to surge ahead approaching the road, Alan thoughtfully offered his assistance, "Go right now Tim" he said, which of course, without a moments hesitation, I did. Some two hundred metres later as I proceeded obliviously towards Ladybower, I casually stole a glance behind. To my horror I discovered that Alan was running in the opposite direction, hardly able to control his mirth.

My fortunes changed in the Saunders with Keith Tonkin, although I claim no credit as Keith did all the navigation and I just ran obediently behind. In fact after frequently revealing my total lack of directional sense on the first day, as we started the second Keith told me I might as well put my map and compass in my rucksack, as he couldn't envisage a situation where he would be desperate enough to trust me to use them!

At this point I decided enough was enough and embarked on a crash course of navigation with patient tuition from Graham Sellens around some of the Karrimor checkpoints. I began to feel there was fresh hope but decided to take no chances at the Glossop, supplementing my new found 'knowledge' by following someone of proven ability. As we assembled at the start it was clear that Tony Farnell was such a man so I resolved to try to stick with him. Deliberately using someone else's skill filled me with considerable guilt, so by the time we were on Bleaklow I felt I ought to at least apologise for my obvious tactics. Tony replied "If I navigated like you I'm damn sure I'd follow someone!" He eventually shook me off about a mile from the finish but that still gave me the opportunity to miss the last checkpoint and then nose dive at high speed onto the path into Glossop, so that I arrived bruised and bloody at the finish only to be told that I was disqualified!

While not strictly within my first year I must end this account with my greatest feat of stupidity to date - my exploits in last years Club Champs, which are now legendary. I feel that I must tell the true story of how it happened before it passes into the annals of Dark Peak history (too late it already has Tim - Ed).

Things went wrong from the outset as Dave Holmes and I ambled up from the station car park at 10.40, eagerly anticipating an 11.00 start, only to be greeted by the sight of a few spectators coming back down after watching the start of the race. Despite this minor setback we decided to run and set off. On the crossing to the Snake I twisted my ankle with the result that Dave opened up a sizeable gap by Kinder Downfall, which I hasten to add I found. He was out of sight going up the river as I set my compass to 160 and headed off down the well-trod 2nd grough on the left after the cairn. It seemed an unusually long time, as I religiously followed my bearing, until I came to an 'edge' which I thought must be the south side slightly to the east of Grindslow Knoll. I remember thinking it was odd that I couldn't see anything remotely like Edale in the valley below, but nevertheless decided to head right, anticipating reaching the knoll soon. After about 20 minutes running along the edge I began to panic and I decided to get down as soon as possible to contact the 'Jolly Rambler' as I had now been out two hours. One glance at my compass would have told me that I was starting to descend northwards from somewhere along Blackden Edge; but I didn't and soon things began to look decidedly familiar as I recognised the start of the Crookstone race. The terrible truth dawned on me! As I crossed the road intending to phone from Lockerbrook farm I halfheartedly put my thumb out and to my surprise the first car stopped and offered me a lift to Hope. I decided to at least get most of the way to Edale and got in. From Hope I started to run towards the Cheshire Cheese as I thought there was a phone box nearby. It was then that I was passed by an astonished Billy Wilson who hastily swung his car around to complete my rather extended 'route' back to Edale.

In ending this lighthearted review of a novice fell runner's first year on the fells, I would like to point out that it was irresponsible of me not to have telephoned immediately on reaching the Snake and would like to offer my apologies for any anxiety and inconvenience that this caused.

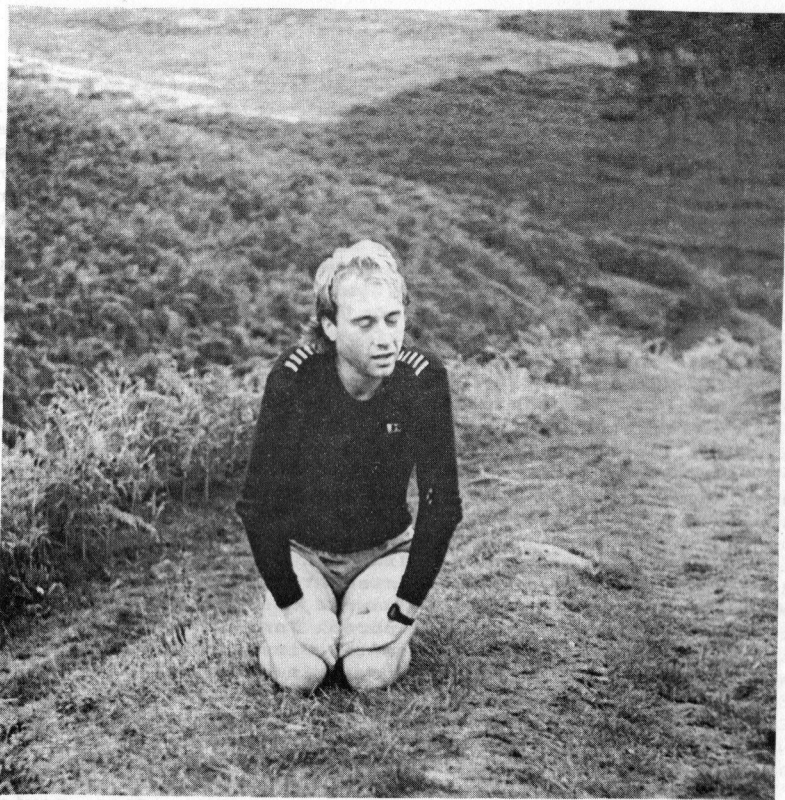
Tim 'don't follow me I'm almost certainly lost' Daniels.

P.S. I am endeavouring to improve my navigational (in)abilities for the future.

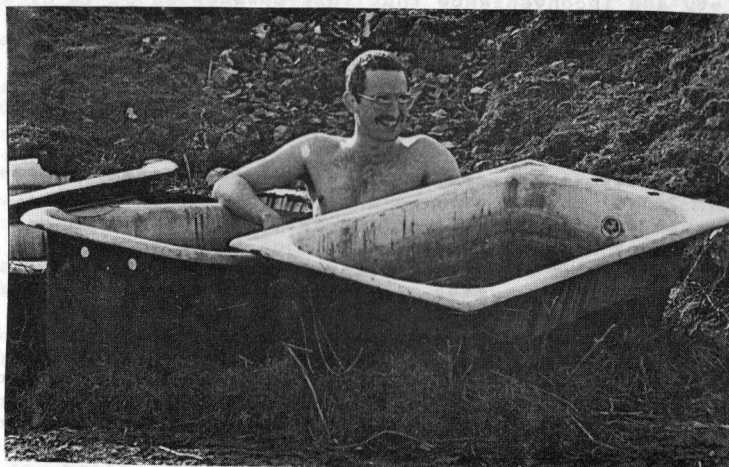
GLOSSOP : 28.7.85

What can you say when you run so well but the competition is missing: Nixon, Styan, and Hall were there, but Oh for some of the England team that day.

I began in average mood, in fact the normal tired complaining state whilst we drove over. At Shelfstones I'd managed to gain a couple of yards and what with being around the previous week the mist didn't deter me and I ploughed on. Over to Wildboar clough I really motored and as I hurtled down to the Mill the gap opened further. Learning of a good lead I worked even harder up Crowden Little Brook and was amazed at seeing Andy Styan all of 4 minutes behind. From there I crashed on dowl Laddow Rocks and ran up the Span. I knew I had it sewn up then



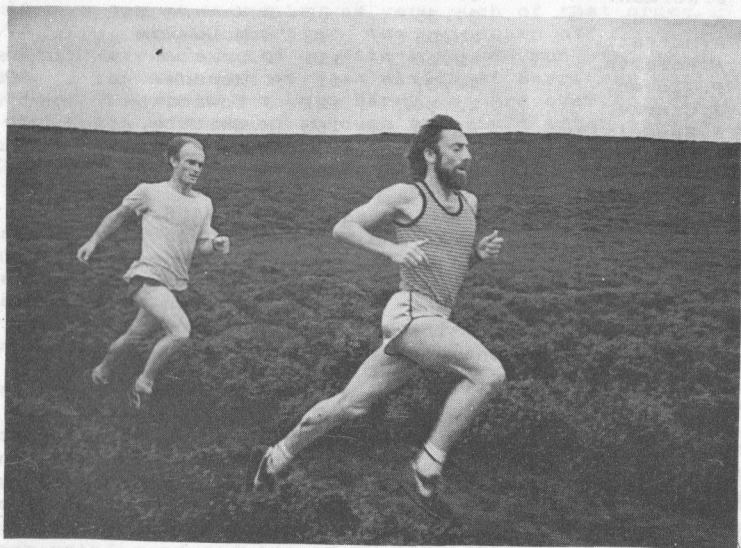
SEEN HERE IN RITUAL POSE, PETE COLLINGWOOD, SUPPOSED LEADER OF THE MYSTERIOUS CULT, THE BOG PEOPLE



COLIN HUGHES, SEEN HERE TRYING OUT THE NEW PEAK NATIONAL PARK'S BATHING FACILITIES.



A BEVY OF BEAUTIES - FIRST THREE LADIES (?) HOME IN THE BURBAGE BAFFLER.



ANDY HARMER. IS THIS MAN DARK PEAK'S ANSWER TO ALF TUPPER, 'THE TOUGH OF THE TRACK'

as I could see nobody as I climbed up Glossop Low.

The time was as good as the previous years Championship race for me, yet in poorer conditions and on my own. That day I would have loved to have taken on the big lads, but it wasn't entirely wasted. What it showed to me amongst other things is the great value of breaking contact with fellow runners and how building up a lead gives one confidence to increase it. I've seen the Lakes lads do it to me; if you loose just ten yards it can be decisive, which happened to me in the Langdale at Angle Tarn, and its not easy to catch up.

Well what a booty returned east over the Snake. Graham won the vets, Jacky, taking it steady with a bad injury, still finished and won the ladies, whilst the team trophy was taken by Graham, Tony, and myself. Four trophies in one car without armed escort.

Andy Harmer.

(I've got this feeling that Andy wrote this when he was hallucinating in the Hallamshire! - Ed)
P.S. Results in the last newsletter.

PENINSTONE : 6.5.85

This ones a bit late but for completeness sake here's the results

1	J.Norman.	38.14	76	J.Harrison.	46.19
6	A.Harmer.	39.35	85	P.Kohn.	46.51
14	A.Moffatt.	40.04	93	W.McLewin.	47.29
32	A.Forsyth.	42.00	111	P.Dyke.	48.44
41	P.Glover.	42.37	113	C.Henson.	49.01
43	J.Clarke.	42.54	121	J.Edwards.	50.25
48	R.Baumeister.	43.36	153	K.Whittle.	56.26
65	H.Swindells.	45.07			

BURNSALL - Two Decades On! : 24.8.85

So I got out my spikes and headed through heavy showers to Wharfedale. The village and seting hasn't changed much in 20 years since I first graced the fell running stage. Winner in 1965, Pete Hall was there and as top veteran was giving no youngsters any leeway. The course has changed a bit to avoid runners climbing over one another on the section between the wall and the crag top, but its still the fastest start I know. False starts are legend.

I went off too fast sprinting with Kenny to the gate, which was regrettable as I then didn't use my climbing ability too well and lost a few yards to the heather. For once I descended well and only Andy Styán in typical mood just edged me out. Spikes are great on the fields but can be a problem on the rocks. So I was 9th and beat a couple runners, but a shade disappointed even though it felt good to be holding ones own after all these years on the fells.

Few other Dark Peakers showed up for this sprint; Jacky had entered but nursing an injured foot ran in the 10 mile road race finishing in 64 mins on a undulating course.

Andy Harmer.

TOUR OF PENDLE : 5.10.85

I was feeling exceptionally jaded as we set off up the track towards Big End, but as Barley is one of the homes of fell running I couldn't plod on as the last half of the race is a bit special. We just had a team, but what stalwarts: young Colin and Barry mere striplings graced the over 50's whilst the fatigued trio of Berry, Farnell and Harmer were sheperded by young Tim Norris.

The long slog to the wall opens up the field and I managed to pull up to 3rd only to drop back to 8th by the 2nd checkpoint after the ankle wrecking gully and the heather. Between here and the halfway point there are two climbs and the notorious peat/bracken descent where more time was lost. By then I was quite resigned to a lower position than expected, but the three big dippers are what this race is all about. They are magnificent, and anyone who hasn't done them should have a look at their delights. No.1 is runnable, No.2 is a scramble up good rocks whilst No.3 is a crawl, and if you are coming apart at the seams then hang onto your stuffing up here. Scenting possibilities I ploughed on relentlessly and pulle on to take the lead on the last climb but I wasn't feeling too great that day and on the top Dave Hall, Pete McWade and I sped off past the trig and I knew that the speed was lacking. The last mile on the track took its toll and I dropped a minute. Despit 3rd I knew I wouldn't run a lot better for a worse position and the next weeks 9th at Langdale was very much of that order.

Tony, still sporting the windburn off Cornish beaches, began his Karrimor build up with a sound run in 17th, whilst Graham 'I can only run at high altitude' Berry ran well to place 39th not far off 3rd vet. Barry got 3rd over 50 prize, whilst Tim and Colin both moved through the field after steady starts. Everyone enjoyed therace and next year it's a Champion's Cup race which should prove interesting.

Andy Harmer.

RESULTS

1	D.Hall.(Kes)	2.18.47	104	B.Thackery.	3.05.00
3	A.Harmer.	2.19.52	120	T.Norris.	3.12.59
17	T.Farnell.	2.28.32	135	C.Henson.	3.17.45
39	G.Berry.	2.39.09			

LANGDALE : 12.10.85

A memorable race in many ways; an enormous field with an exceptionally large number of ladies and a superb day. I am sure many competitors were inspired to heroic feats of speed and endurance. I produced one of my more spectacular personal worsts of 1985 and after an only moderately bad start I was overtaken by enough runners for a complete field in most races.

So what was so outstanding about my performance? Well, in the January 1985 Fell Runner, Angela Soper sought to persuade more ladies to compete by pointing out that life at the back of

the field has its compensations. She suggested as an encouraging measure of performance comparison with a suitably decrepit male, and then bestowed the doubtful honour of choose me as a prime example. Since then, on the fells, I have frequently been chased and beaten by ladies. (some people have all the luck - Ed). At Langdale no less than 20 ladies were finished before I was and I had the pleasure of watching most of them go past. I suggest that few fell runners can say they have given satisfaction to twenty ladies in under three hours twenty minutes!

Will McLewin. (Who else!)

CUTTHROAT RELAY : 19.10.85

A comparatively nice day for the race this year, so records fell thick and fast, no need to battle against horizontal rain and hail.

Kay led a blazing first leg shattering Janes record completing the tough little course in 21.07. John Edwards was 2nd lady(?) and he was so inspired that he even ran another leg as a stalwart. Maybe we should vote him in to the DP ladies section. (He could keep Alan company - Ed)

Both the other records fell quite convincingly to Andy Harmer (17.07) and Bob Toogod (vet) (17.51). Andy managed to get in a non competitive team yet again. Will he ever be able to win legitimately!

RESULTS

1	K. DeMengel.	22.04	4	T. Kohn.	23.56
	B. Toogood.	17.51		A. Moffatt.	17.32
	J. Fisher.	17.42		P. Kohn.	21.34
	P. Collingwood.	18.42		D. Hughes.	20.28
		76.19			83.30
2	K. Whittle.	21.07	5	S. Bradley.	27.10
	M. Hayes.	19.42		C. Worsell.	21.07
	K. Tonkin.	18.15		T. Farnell.	17.55
	D. Bradley.	18.32		M. Harvey.	18.08
		77.36			84.20
3	H. Murray.	23.43	6	M. Sant.	25.00
	B. Wilson.	18.52		J. Harrison.	20.34
	T. Tett.	17.53		D. Sant.	19.16
	J. Clarke.	19.13		H. Biggins.	20.28
		79.41			85.18

DISQ

J. Edwards.	21.50
C. Hughes.	18.41
A. Harmer.	17.07
P. Birkes.	18.20
	75.58

NEW RECORDS : Team : 76.19;
 Women : 21.07 (Kay Whittle);
 Vet : 17.51 (Bob Toogood);
 Ind. : 17.07 (Andy Harmer);

THE TORCHLIGHT TERROR : 13.11.85

To the south of Hayfield is a fascinating and rarely visited area of moorland known as Chinley Churn. By day it provides a magnificent vantage point for views over both Kinder and the Cheshire hills, and even by night has beautiful and spectacular views of the lights of Stockport, Manchester and Hyde.

As my major training ground by both day and night I know it well and it seemed to hold an ideal course for an evening torchlight race. I carefully planned the race to be on the night of the full moon! I consulted my diary and sure enough there on 13th Nov was a solid 'O' (sorry can't fill it in on a computer - Ed) next to the date. Convinced that this meant a full moon I went ahead and organised the race.

It became obvious from an initial recce that to actually flag the course would require about 1000 flags per mile! I therefore opted for a route that went in straight lines, just three of them, with re-assurance flags every hundred yards or so and marshalls at the change of direction. We expected about 20 runners and 24 turned up, which was just about right for the initial event. Unfortunately what didn't turn up was the moon! It was some smarty-pants from Macclesfield who pointed out to me that a 'O' meant a full moon and a solid 'O' meant no moon at all. Oops!

After brief instructions as to the straight line nature of the course, the 24 runners set off up Moorlands Road to much mirth and flashing of torches. The first 1.5 miles is all uphill but after that the course is generally quite fast and probably suits quick runners rather than fell runners. (There are quick fell runners you know - Ed.) At the turn round, reached by everyone without major incident, (apart from Chris Worsell running towards aircraft landing lights thinking they marked the top of the hill and then suddenly confused when they roared overhead like something from Close Encounters.) Phil Burke was ahead. The fast descent allowed him to consolidate his lead until about 1.5 miles from the finish when he decided to abandon the straight line principle and go off on a tangent to New Mills! Dark Peak superstar (now that he's won the race) Mark Harvey carried on in a straight line and came home a clear winner in a course record of 35.49.

The only sur(prize) on offer was for unlucky 13th place and Colin Hughes won the magnificent bottle of 'Chateau de L'Evans 1984'.

In last place was a self-worselled Chris Worsell (accompanied by a sympathetic John Edwards) who had decided to wear spikes in case the ground was icy. The finishing mile of downhill tarmac finished his feet off nicely!

Afterwards a convivial evening was had in The Grouse. Be Warned! The 'Terror' may be repeated next year.

Alan Evans.

RESULTS

1	M. Harvey.	35.49	14	P. Burke.	40.39
2	R. Gregory.	36.21	15	P. Griffies.	41.07
3	A. Huddleston. (P)	36.49	16	P. Cheek. (M.H)	41.08
4	P. Collingwood.	37.08	17	J. McColl. (Pen)	41.14
5	A. Addis. (M.H)	37.15	18	R. Baumeister.	41.39
6	G. Scott. (Pen)	37.48	19	C. Reade. (UA)	42.04
7	P. Nolan. (M.H)	37.58	20	W. McLewin.	42.33
8	B. Linsey. (MMC)	38.37	21	M. Cranmer. (Pen)	46.42
9	A. Howie. (Pen)	39.00	22	G. Goldsmith.	47.18
10	T. Rhodes. (UA)	39.02	23	J. Feist.	50.54
11	T. Hulme. (Pen)	39.09	24	C. Worsell.	53.57
12	N. Goldsmith.	39.12		J. Edwards.	53.57
13	C. Hughes.	39.37			

RAMBO'S MOOR RACE :17.11.85

As I was in the vicinity I thought this 5 mile B race would be worth a try. As it was a superb day so did a record number of other people and the start was somewhat delayed. There were no other Dark Peak vests to be seen, but Alison Wright was there and was still a sight to behold despite wearing a Durham AC vest. It took almost 200 metres for me to realise that my role in this epic was that of an expendable vietcong and that the hard work I had put into the previous days race was going to be paid for. 'Oh well, it's only five miles, just grind on.'

The race itself is not very attractive in my view and wanders back and forth around a miserable bit of moor. Eventually some descents and levels bought a bit of relief and I recovered a place or two and began to feel up to an appropriately kamikaze descent to the finish. About half way down I was pleasantly surprised to find myself only about 100 metres behind Alison, who I had last seen disappearing into the distance shortly after the start. Greater incentive hath no man, but I had left it too late and instead of putting Durham AC in its place I settled for the posterior subtended angle (well, most of us would). However, Alison had other ideas and had saved her party piece until the end. This consisted of diving into the ditch 50 metres from the finish and crawling through it. A cabaret item which was appreciated by more than just myself faced this aquatic drama. Years of training in the art of chivalry by such experts as Yates and Worsell guided my behaviour and I refrained from making use of the footbridge unexpectedly made available. I refrained from jumping down into the water to complete the wetting process. I simply offered congratulations on the quality of the performance while soaring above the sorry, splashing obstacle beneath.

After that the lateness of the hour and a certain lack of interest in such matters, prevented my finding out who had won and how long it took.

Will McLewin

I think anyone who got a PB in the conditions on the day should be damn pleased with him/herself; well done John Edwards and the others that I've forgotten. I hope the wind's blowing the opposite way next year, then the course record ought to go easily. As nobody else wrote anything about this memorable race there's nothing more to add except list the results.

RESULTS

1	T. Tett.	3.05.35	81	G. Desforges.	3.56.24
2	B. Brindle. (Hor)	3.06.19	82	C. Henson.	3.56.52
3	S. Sunter. (Hor)	3.07.10	99	P. Sw-Escott.	4.02.25
4	T. Farnell.	3.12.38	100	J. Smith. (L)	3.02.30
5	K. Taylor. (Ross).	3.14.05	102	B. Hodges.	4.03.03
6	P. Burke.	3.17.08	106	D. Holmes.	4.04.18
9	R. Gregory.	3.23.19	116	K. DeMengel. (L)	4.10.38
14	D. Sant.	3.24.59	118	J. Soper.	4.11.43
23	R. Pearson.	3.32.42	124	J. Edwards.	4.13.43
32	B. Wilson.	3.36.32	128	P. Rodgers.	4.16.44
34	M. Stone.	3.37.47	129	J. Harrison.	4.17.32
35	M. Harvey.	3.37.47	131	T. Norris.	4.18.02
41	T. Daniels.	3.39.44	136	F. Galbraith.	4.18.52
46	A. Jones.	3.41.54	144	P. Harris.	4.21.10
49	P. Griffies.	3.42.46	148	R. Baumeister.	4.22.20
50	R. Sanby.	3.43.06	150	H. Swindells.	4.23.24
52	R. Calvert.	3.45.22	193	W. Mclewin.	4.59.50
55	A. Forsyth.	3.46.55	199	C. Fielding. (L)	5.01.03
58	P. Simpson.	3.47.56	200	P. Brunt.	5.01.07
62	N. Goldsmith.	3.50.22	215	P. Kohn.	5.33.08
63	D. Jones.	3.50.27	216	T. Kohn. (L)	5.33.10
68	M. Meysner.	3.53.14			

HEADSTONE HEADACHE : 21.12.85

Well, what can I say; when you have the honour of wearing the pre-race favourite vest you know you're not going to win. In all previous years the likes of Malcolm Patterson, Chris Hirst and others, all previous winners have never won. However I did my stint at the start and at least gave it a go. It wasn't long before I realised that the jinx had got me and I started to be passed one by one. At the Headstone, in about 8th position I was certain I was to finish out of the top ten. Just before the climb back up the hill to the edge path was where the gods took pity on me, either that or Pearson was afoot somewhere trying to save his face at choosing such a bad favourite, when all those in front barring Gareth, took the slower route. I was seized by a feeling of 'What a lot of Wallies, they've gone the wrong way.' and set off up the ascent by the wall, desperately trying to catch Gareth as it was now a two horse race. But the jinx remained and I had to be content with second. Even the attempt to get all the other runners disqualified for running around the Headstone in the wrong direction failed. I'll never wear that bloody shirt again!

Eddie Torr.

RESULTS

1	G.Morgan.	29.47	52	P.Lewis.	37.01
2	T.Tett.	30.12	53	T.Trowbridge+1	37.13
7	A.Moffatt.	30.37	60	S.Clayton.	37.41
8	P.Burke.	30.49	62	R.Baumeister.	37.46
9	T.Farnell.	31.13	63	C.Worsell.	37.48
12	A.Forsyth.	32.12	64	L.Johnson.	37.51
15	M.Harvey.	32.33	70	A.Sahni.	38.06
22	A.Riley.	33.13	73	B.Hodges.	38.10
23	P.Webster.	33.21	76	P.Sw-Escott.	38.15
26	M.Desforges.	33.43	80	P.Kohn.	38.18
27	D.Sant.	33.47	100	J.Knight.	40.16
28	G.Desforges.	34.27	101	C.Henson.	40.18
29	M.Meysner.	34.35	110	G.Goldsmith.	41.34
30	P.Collingwood.	34.45	117	T.Sayles.	42.18
32	P.Jones.	35.20	125	E.Rybinski.	43.56
34	N.Goldsmith.	35.42	128	T.Kohn.	44.03
36	H.Swindells.	35.49	150	S.Bradley.	46.43
38	I.Wainwright.	35.54	151	R.Hulley+1	46.52
39	D.Bradley.	36.08	170	G.Hulley+1	52.16
41	T.Daniel.	36.11	176	G.Berry+1	53.18
44	A.Yates.	36.17			
45	W.Lightfoot.	36.18	103	P.Dyke.	40.36

CROOKSTONE CRASHOUT : 22.12.85

What a change from last year, no snow, only a mild pleasant morning with the Knoll mirror clear reflected in Ladybower as we drove up the A57. I'd not been well (not again Andy - Ed) and hadn't planned to run, but what a field graced the fell. By the time Mary and Tom set us off, 32 eager souls set off, up what is one of the best climbs in fell running. Malcolm breezed up the hill with Rob and myself a little way back being chased by a strong looking Phil Burke and Tim Tett. The top was nice and greasy and the ceremonial dance round the trig point at Blackden must have resembled some weird clog dance (Bog dance seems more appropriate - Ed) as figures sucked oozing shoes from a filthy looking bog.

Malcolm maintained his lead with Rob and I having a nice jostle for second. Tim made a valiant bid to catch us but the attempted worsells failed to pay off and he tired badly, just managing to hold off a strong finishing Phil Burke. Gareth found Hyde Park a poor preparation for the 900 ft descent, whilst Will McLewin finished in ecstasy, finding the descent wonderful. Rob stared in disbelief at the drop, and was still feeling the after effects a week later, and many others who havn't experienced the plunge before were staggered. Chez broke her record chasing John down the track and Graham took the Vets position.

Many thanks to Mary and Tom for officiating.

Andy.

RESULTS

1	M. Patterson.	30.30	17	D. Ward.	39.28
2	R. Pearson.	31.02	18	T. Daniels.	39.40
3	A. Harmer.	31.08	19	T. Norris.	39.42
4	T. Tett.	32.45	20	S. Wood.	39.58
5	P. Burke.	32.54	21	B. Woodley.	40.12
6	T. Farnell.	33.52	22	D. Longley.	40.28
7	M. Harvey.	34.17	23	B. Hodges.	40.34
8	G. Morgan.	34.47	24	C. Windle.	42.08
9	P. Collingwood.	34.52	25	J. Edwards.	42.39
10	M. Meysner.	34.59	26	C. DeMengel.	42.42
11	D. Sant.	35.13	27	J. Herbert.	43.17
12	G. Morgan.	35.39	28	C. Henson.	44.35
13	A. Moffatt.	36.01	29	N. Christian.	45.21
14	G. Berry.	36.43	30	C. Worsell.	46.28
15	T. Trowbridge.	38.45	31	P. Dyke.	46.34
16	W. McLewin.	38.47	32	A. Sanderson.	47.52

FAMILY FEUDING ON THE FELS

I was given a copy of 'Stud Marks on the Summits' at Christmas, and was struck by the scope for similar titles in a never-ending stream of sequels, full of ephemera and statistical trivia that race reports can produce. The Burbage Baffler provided material for this second title in the series.

We had been challenged by the Knights, and after careful negotiation managed to put together a family team. The rot set in five days before the race, when Luke opted to run in the City cross country championships which were being held at the same time as the Baffler. Accusations of disloyalty and threats of a lifetime ban from the family team (Les Grenouilles Mortes) could not make him change his mind.

The next crisis came on the Saturday morning when we arrived at Burbage. The complete snow cover together with ice and wind started Helen Desforges complaining and threatening not to run. After several arguments we chose to run first to reduce the time available for further mutiny. This leg went reasonably well, and all seemed fine as we encouraged the second pair of our team on the start of their run. It was when Helen realised that she had to run again that the verbal abuse began. The threats to run turned to point-blank refusals to participate in the second leg, which abated to a grudging consent to walk by the time we were due to set off again.

As I ran down Green Drive I assumed I would have to run to the saddle between Higger Tor and Carl Wark. When I arrived there, with horizontal hail stinging my face and no sign of my partner, I felt annoyed. By the time I struggled nearly to the top of Higger Tor, I could see her sheltering in the rocks and I became quite furious. It was the thought that I had to turn around, only a kilometre from the finish, and run all the way back again. If she really had refused to run I would have only had to run a complete circuit instead of nearly two!

I finally arrived back to allow the other pair of our team to start the last leg just before the winners finished. As a final insult we had to leave before our team finished. The shouting lasted for days, with each team member vowing never to

run with the others again.

Martin Desforges.

NB. Written without knowledge or permission of the other team members - Helen Desforges, Ged Desforges and Pete Grayson.

BURBAGE BAFFLER : 12.1 86

RESULTS

		lap 1	lap 2	Team
1	G.Berry + T.Trowbridge. M.Greaves + C.Crofts.	22.25 23.55	22.55 22.55	92.20
2	K.Whittle + K.Tonkin. M.Stone + J.Edwards.	23.25 23.16	23.29 23.05	93.15
3	V.French + M.Pedley. B.Hodges + S.Carey.	25.10 21.05	25.57 22.18	94.30
4	G.Goldsmith + T.Tett. B.Wilson + A.Sahni.	23.55 24.50	24.50 24.15	97.50
5	C.Forwood + M.Wilson. J.Harrison + N.Forwood.	25.06 25.44	25.50 24.55	101.35
6	M.Hayes + R.Plumb. L.Knight + J.Knight.	24.55 28.00	24.20 24.27	101.42
7	A.Moffatt + D.Mead. P.Sweet-Escott + C.Worsell.	25.40 25.20	26.10 25.00	102.10
8	T.Kohn + J.Clark. P.Kohn + M.Harvey.	29.20 22.40	27.30 22.50	102.20
9	W.McLewin + T.Daniels. S.Bradley + T.Farnell.	26.40 25.15	26.25 32.55	111.15
10	H.Desforges + G.Desforges. M.Desforges + P.Grayson.	29.15 25.40	34.05 29.20	118.20
Non-Comp				
	A.Harmer + ?	19.52	20.30	
	G.Evans + P.Collingwood.	23.20	24.18	88.00

THE BLEEDING AND BRUISED 'WARTS : 1.2.86

Running in deep soft snow near Rod Hill I began to realise just how hard the previous day had been. It was clear that the Marjory Hill race was off, but the lunatic fringe turned up for action. It was decided that a winter frolic around the Cakes of Bread course was a feasibility. Malcolm's record of 41.27 was probably safe. Perhaps one should have remembered the frozen icicles hanging from the barbed wire at Moscar, not to mention the frozen trees at Redmires!

So ten stalwarts toed the line facing the 'No Entry' sign. Several had warmed up in the superloo below, by pointing the handwarmer in the loo at various extremities! Bob Berzin set the pace up the first big climb as we struggled through two feet drifts. Realising that this was hard going I took off into the stream gaining some 80 metres scrambling up the ice. The snow at the top was DEEP. A frozen crust on top meant that with each stride severe bruising and bleeding was encountered on removing ones feet from the depths. Alan Yates complained bitterly that the course should not be marked by red substances.

The wind and mist was now creating some difficulties and following in my tracks, as I ground to a crawl, the pack was on me. By now everyone bar John Ed was realising that running in frozen snow was akin to walking through pirana infested waters. Pete Kohn passed me and took off after Bob, looking hell bent on glory. Shortly after a small huddle of arctic fools reached an unspoken consensus that the limit had come. Whistles were drawn but Pete and Bob, only 30 metres ahead, couldn't hear as the wind whistled off Lost Lad. The retreat was on, back through the blood-speckled snow. Tony, Tim, Alan and Dave hacked their way down the hill followed by the rest. Bob and Pete returned shortly after, looking fresh and buoyant, having been to Lost Lad End, some way short still of checkpoint 1. (Roughly one and a half hours after starting, the checkpoint normally reached in 17 minutes, hadn't been reached.)

There seemed to be no complaints; we had gone up to try a flourish on the hills as John stated later in the pub, and the hills had won! All of us had run in deeper snow, or frozen ground, but rarely have so arduous conditions been experienced. However, we seemed happy to have tried, and had called sense to hand when it was necessary. Will McLewin had made it over a blocked Snake Pass to race and like all of us chalked it up as another Dark Peak epic.

Starters

Bob Berzins, Pete Kohn, John Edwards, Will McLewin, Tim Lyons, Dave Sant, Alan Yates, Geoff Harrison, Andy Harmer and Tony Trowbridge + Skip("it was easy").

Bob and Pete were declared prizewinners having reached a further point. The full race will be run when the fixtures allow it. Alas the hares will be not be white by then.

Andy Harmer.

BENSON KNOTT FELL RACE : 2.2.86

Whilst the high fells would have been out of bounds in the snowy weather, Benson Knott remained below the snowline and the race was held in good conditions given the time of year.

The result gave Dark Peak victory in both Male and Female categories - Malcolm Patterson finished several seconds ahead of Sean Livesey to record a relatively slow time of 36.28, with Rossendales G.Wadsworth in third. Wendy Lightfoot was well clear in the ladies race, gaining revenge over Karen Taylor, who beat her in last year's Skyline. Wendy's time was 44.03, with Sue Clark second in 47.28 and Taylor third.

An enjoyable pre-season canter, but not a 'real' fell race with most of the course being on road - actually finishing on

the running track.

No full results, but Martin Stone only just beat Wendy on the flat finish (she says).

Anon.

ROACHES RACE : 16.2 86

Cambridge University may seem an unlikely club to organise a Peak district fell race, but in fact 'The Roaches' is their nearest fell. So full credit to them for being the first club to put this superb area into the calendar.

For those who haven't done it, the Roaches race is a marvellous tour of the Staffordshie Dark Peak and thoroughly deserves attention from club members.

Unfortunately, this year's race was hit by the horrendous February weather, and being unable to get the marshalls out to the various checkpoints, and considering the climatic conditions on the day, they sensibly shortened this years race to 6 miles and 1300 feet.

Most people were disappointed, but agreed with the decision. Taking note of the fact that up until a couple of days before the race, Meerbrook had been completely cut off, a good field of 62 runners set off on the journey to Roche End and back.

You'll probably be aware of the underfoot conditions this winter, and that allied to a very strong, icy cold wind on the day, the conditions seemed truly arctic! Many people thought it was the worst conditions they had ever raced in, (but they didn't do the Kentmere in 1983!).

These conditions must have suited me as I managed one of the rare occasions when I finish in the first ten. Good runs by Rob Sanby and Neil Goldsmith saw Dark Peak just missing third team prize to Pennine F.R. Gerry Goldsmith was the first and only lady.

Al Evans.

RESULTS

1	P. Brownson. (Alt)	50.44	37	R. Long.	63.22
9	A. Evans.	55.55	43	R. Calvert.	65.27
25	R. Sanby.	60.21	48	T. Rogers.	66.58
28	N. Goldsmith.	60.44	51	T. Bancroft.	68.58
30	T. Norris.	61.49	58	G. Goldsmith.	74.31

LADIES SECTION

NEWS REVIEW

Well, the last newsletter took us as far as the Karimoor which was an excellent weekend; now, I'll attempt to bring us up to date. Once again - sorry if I make any omissions or blunders as this is mostly news I just pick up.

We had the Club Champs in November and there was a fine win by Liz Dunn in 1.36.26. Apparently, Liz and Wendy both converged on the finish by different approaches on the final descent - real exciting stuff! I didn't see it as I was busily wallowing in my own private peat bogs, far behind grappling with the monster from the Black Lagoon. Six ladies ran - Liz, Wendy, Kay, Trish, Di and myself; let's hope there's more next year.

After that came the Marsden to Edale or 'Tanky's Trog'. A wild and windy day with a head wind for 19 miles. Still there was a good turn out of women in the race, over 20 in fact. Dark Peak had a fair turn out too, Jacky, Trish, Liz, Alison and myself. Of the three times that I've done this race, I thought that this year's conditions were the most arduous, a battle all the way. For once, the slender willowy, wiry runner didn't have such an advantage for they would be swept away in a gust of wind. What I remember is that, foolishly, I ran the first 300 yards very fast and was exhausted by the time I reached the roundabout! Only 19 miles to go! I think with this race, route choice over Black Hill is very important, as is a big person to run behind and use as a windshield. Jacky came a good second to Stephanie Quirk and Angela Soper, Jack's wife, was first lady vet. and received a lovely bouquet.

The Crookstone Crashout was a vicious little event. Not many ladies in it, in fact, only me; first and last lady!

Wendy, Sarah and Jenny have been racing in the South Yorkshire Cross Country League. Wendy is entering the National Cross Country in February.

A lot of other races over the holiday period - Headstone Headache, the Last Gasp and the Burbage Baffler in January - wet, cold and windy. What about some decent weather Jane? Jenny Pearson had a brilliant run in the Last Gasp and set a new ladies record.

The Round Rotherham run took place over the Chrimbo hols; 40 plus miles - never yet completed by a lady! So next Christmas, if anyone is around, maybe they'll consider it. I do hear that you're plied with mince pies en route.

Our valiant editor, Master Tett, omitted a piece of my news review in the last edition (sorry, but you simply can't get the staff these days - Ed.) which was to congratulate Di Mead on achieving first lady and a time of 3.23 in the Chesterfield Marathon in September. This means it's the second year Dark Peak Ladies have won this event. Well done, Di. Jacky also clocked up a PB of 2 hours 58 mins in the Barnsley Marathon in November and came second lady at Bridlington half marathon with a time of 1.21 which is excellent and means an average of 0.15 minutes per mile. It is unfortunate and inexcusable that the organisers of these races cannot organise the prizes. For the second time, Jacky has been placed and received only the promise of a prize. It's not on. Anyway,

excellent times, Jacky.

There are quite a few races in the offing. Margery Hill on the 1st February, Roaches Race on Sat. 15 February, National XC the same day, S. Yorks X Country Championship on Sun. 23 February. The Roaches race is great - I think - 18 miles, 4500' of ascent, category B, mostly on tracks and footpaths on a marked out course. Let's hope that, if it snows, the flags aren't white or it may be 28 miles! Later on, Kinder Downfall and Mount Famine are both championship events this year.

The next major event on the horizon for some of us is the High Peak Marathon or Derwent Watershed on Friday 28 February. Quite a few Dark Peak ladies are running/wading/swimming: the Gritstone Girls- Gerry, Jacky, Kay and myself and the Gritstone Grannies, an all ladies vets team.- Trish, Chris and two others. Let's hope for a fine night. There are two good things about the Watershed (besides the cups of tea and flapjack) first it's pretty exciting stuff on the night; that is, until you've reached a trance-like state up on Derwent Edge and hope you've switched on to automatic; secondly, last year and this year too, some of the training runs we had over the route were some of the best days out over Bleaklow that I've ever had. To be out at Outer Edge or Swains Head, which seems miles from anywhere (if you ignore the fact that you're only a few miles from the Woodhead road) and the sky is blue and clear and you can see for miles, and everywhere is white and icy, is just brilliant.

Mind you, that spikey, frozen peat

Is a bit painful on the plates of meat.

(Was that supposed to be a poem Chez? - Ed.)

We don't seem to have ladies evenings in the Grindstone anymore. They used to be the first Thursday of the month, although I believe Alan Yates still turns up just in case. Some of Dark Peak are often there on a Sunday though, lateish on.

Also for those who have experienced the Wednesday night training run/race, don't be dismayed if you see the same view as me, a cloud of dust and a band of disappearing figures. That's O.K. if you want that pace but if enough of us turn up, maybe we can sort something out for those who want a slightly lesser pace.

Chez

CROSS COUNTRY

S.Y.L. CLIFTON PARK : 17.11.85

SENOIRS

1	S. Carey. (Univ)	28.58	161	P. Kohn.	36.27
4	M. Patterson.	29.58	177	J. Edwards.	36.54
24	P. Murray.	31.14	190	C. Worsell.	37.30
155	R. Baumeister.	36.19			

LADIES

1	J. Pearson.	23.36	18	C. Crofts.	27.22
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S.Y.L. CAMPSALL : 8.12.85

SENIORS

1	M. Wilson.	34.59	112	T. Trowbridge.	41.18
4	M. Patterson.	35.30	171	L. Johnson.	43.24
5	R. Pearson.	35.34	175	C. Worsell.	43.38
56	G. Morgan.	38.58	198	W. McLewin.	45.27
62	A. Riley.	39.06	201	R. Baumeister.	45.35
80	I. Wainwright.	39.54	202	J. Edwards.	45.35

LADIES

1	J. Clarke. (SAC)	25.39	3	W. Lightfoot.	27.43
2	J. Pearson.	27.06	12	C. Crofts.	30.22

YORKSHIRE TEAM CHAMPS : 25.1.86

SENIORS

1	S. Carey. (Univ)	39.53	173	T. Farnell.	47.14
23	M. Patterson.	42.49	212	?	48.20
38	A. Harmer.	43.14	261	P. Lewis.	49.57
136	A. Riley.	46.20	294	?	51.04

S.Y. CHAMPS : 23.2.86

RESULTS

1	D. Ansell. (SAC)	34.10	11	R. Pearson.	35.37
4	M. Wilson.	34.54	DISQ	M. Patterson.	34.12

VETS

1	D. Grayson. (Sta)	36.54	12	P. Kohn.	42.54
4	T. Trowbridge.	39.17	20	J. Edwards.	44.39

LADIES

1	J. Pearson.	23.24	12	C. Crofts.	27.02
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In the Northern and Nationals we failed to get a team out in either. Some people did run and attained the following:

Northern : 403 I. Wainwright.

DNF T. Tett.

Nationals: 272 T. Tett.

673 A. Riley.

1133 P. Lewis.

DARK PEAK FELL RUNNER OF THE YEAR

Remember this! Well eventually I've collated all the results available. The new races, in addition to those in the August? newsletter are Chew, KinderTrog, Mt Famine, Hope, Penistone, Glosop, Teggs Nose, Up the Nab, Lantern Pike, Eccles Pike and the first few places only for the other Hope Valley races. The final positions are

MEN

A. Harmer.	436	J. Edwards.	92	D. Bradley.	38
T. Farnell.	298	D. Jones.	92	R. Hulley.	36
G. Berry.	275	W. McLewin.	92	B. Harney.	36
D. Sant.	260	H. Swindells.	84	J. Clarke.	36
M. Patterson.	238	R. Pearson.	84	N. Robinson.	33
T. Tett.	219	N. Goldsmith.	83	A. Riley.	33
D. Holmes.	212	C. Worsell.	78	C. Hughes.	31
A. Moffatt.	210	P. Jones.	75	J. Soper.	30
P. Griffies.	180	M. Desforges.	73	P. Murray.	29
G. Sellens.	165	A. Bond.	73	A. Ireland.	28
A. Evans.	160	P. Guerrier.	73	G. Morgan.	28
A. Forsyth.	145	M. Stone.	72	C. Wilson.	28
P. Lewis.	139	M. Spence.	71	A. Holland.	27
T. Daniels.	139	B. Wilson.	70	M. Harvey.	26
B. Berzins.	133	G. Desforges.	65	P. Harris.	26
M. Wilson.	131	P. Webster.	64	E. Mitchell.	25
A. Yates.	126	P. Brunt.	61	A. Sanderson.	24
J. Harrison.	123	A. Jones.	60	S. Clayton.	24
C. Henson.	122	K. Tonkin.	60	S. Dean.	23
J. Cant.	117	T. Sayles.	57	P. Sw-Escott.	22
M. Hayes.	111	B. Segrove.	54	J. Knight.	22
R. Sanby.	111	A. Sahni.	53	T. Dennish.	21
T. Norris.	110	B. Thackery.	51	D. Haworth.	20
R. Baumeister.	108	R. Aucott.	48	L. Outwin.	19
P. Collingwood.	108	J. Abbott.	43	T. Foley.	19
J. Fisher.	106	B. Hodges.	43	E. Rybinski.	17
R. Gregory.	103	B. Toogood.	43	G. Lax.	14
H. Biggins.	100	R. Ansell.	42	R. Moakes.	12
T. Trowbridge.	100	C. Windle.	41	B. Griffiths.	12
P. Dyke.	94	P. Glover.	40	K. Foster.	8
M. Meysner.	93	I. Wainwright.	40	A. Collinson.	7
P. Kohn.	92	T. Rogers.	38	R. Barker.	6

LADIES

K. Whittle.	73	K. DeMengel.	27	W. Trowbridge.	9
J. Smith.	60	M. Sant.	23	C. Crofts.	8
T. Kohn.	34	L. Dunn.	17	C. Fielding.	8
W. Lightfoot.	29	E. Foley.	16	D. Mead.	6
A. Wright.	29	M. Edwards.	13	F. Berry.	6
G. Goldsmith.	28	A. Carson.	10		

This is just a very informal ranking list and favours the most frequent local competitor. Andy has retained his lead convincingly - I wonder how many races he ran last year. Some of us only managed a couple. Alan Evans put in a late bid, even going to the extreme of not telling anyone else he was going to the 'Up the Nab' race - crafty bugger.

We would appreciate any comments on this 'ranking list' - do people think we should have one in the first place; should we adopt a better scoring system, eg. best ten races to count; should vets be counted separately? Should we have some sort of prize at the end of the year? Let us know how you feel.

* AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM * AGM *

FRIDAY 9th MAY at GRINDLEFORD STATION CAFE

Proceedings will start at 7.45 pm and hopefully be over by 10.00 pm, in time for the serious business to begin. There may be a run out there, and back (?), and there may be overnight floorspace. Contact Andy Harmer for further details.

* ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS * ADS *

CROOKSTONE KNOLL RACE

Wednesday, June 25th, 7.00 pm at Rowlee Bridge off Snake Road,
GR 150891

CAKES OF BREAD RACE

Wednesday, July 23rd, 7.00 pm at Fairholmes Car Park, upper Derwent Valley
GR 172894

BACK TOR AND BACK

Monday 28th April, 6.30 pm, Foulstone Delf, Strines,
GR 221909

High Profile — Will McLewin



Let's tell everyone what a good and influential magazine we run. There was that article in *High 8*, for example, which put forward a list of the 75 4000m summits of the Alps to supersede the traditional ones of "Blodig and Dummler". We printed it with the comment that "climbing the 4000m peaks of the Alps by their easiest route has been a long-standing traditional pursuit available to a wide range of climbers of all abilities."

But hang on a minute — a "traditional pursuit" — had any one individual ever actually *done* it? Certainly Eustace Thomas (he of the stretcher fame) had made mostly guided ascents of all the peaks in *Blodig and Dummler* — but our comprehensive list? We sucked our lips and began to suspect that our assertion, with its implicit suggestion of popularity, might be a little premature.

Then along came Will McLewin: "I did my last one — the Aiguilles de Diable Ridge on Mont Blanc de Tacul — this year. Bob Brevitt led me up it..."

This last is entirely typical of the man. He's an East Ender with a nasal twang, a 46-year-old maths lecturer at Manchester University, who comes on like a cross between a self-effacing bover-boy and Norman Tebbit addressing Folkestone grannies on the day before an election. (I put this in deliberately to annoy him — Will's talk is peppered with radical political comment, and all similarity to Mrs Thatcher's human Jolly Roger ends with a slight facial resemblance.)

It turns out that Will McLewin is in fact the first Briton to complete the list, and it would be interesting to know if many continentals had done it either? We talked to him about it:

"It's not difficult — you've got to be sufficiently bloody-minded to keep going at it."

"How did you start?"

"I was a weak, sickly child — a product of the early years of the war..."

"Hang on, Will, I'll get my violin out..."

"OK. — I'll go out to the van and get my French Horn..."

"Your what?"

"My French Horn — I don't climb in the winter, I play the French Horn and grow Christmas Roses."

(I think I'd better precis the ensuing conversation. Will is — or can be — distinctly garrulous, very funny, and prone to darting off in all sorts of bizarre directions.)

So — he started climbing at Reading University (I'll see what that's like!), joined the Oxford Mountaineering Club, began to spend his weekends climbing and boozing at their Pentrefoels Hut, and went to the Alps for the first time in 1963. In 1970, a seasoned alpinist by now, he hit upon Blodig and Dummler's *Die Viertausender der Alpen* in a Saas-Fee bookshop on a rainy day!

"I had a vague notion that it might be a nice thing to do them all, but nothing more than that. I'd done a few already. I absolutely did not think of it as a tick-list."

"What about companions?"

"Mostly I've soloed them — 25 out of the original 59. I love soloing. I don't like kicking around by myself in the valley, but as soon as you're on the route, it's terrific — you talk to the mountain, get closer to it. Other people just get in the way — the communication then's between you and them, and no longer between you and the earth.

And the big advantage is that you can go very fast."

"You travel light?"

"Not particularly — I bivouac, though — can't stand huts, all the sweat and people snoring. I always wake them up. I don't believe they snore without knowing it." (The bover-boy glints through.)

"What about the bivouacs?"

"Nothing like it! They're more important than the routes. Kipping out on a good route on a good night — nectar! I get there in the afternoon, have a good meal, some Scotch, just sit and be aware of where I am."

"Scotch?"

"Oh yeah — I carry half-a-bottle for my summit ritual as well. I raise my arms to the sun, sit down, have a fag and a nip of Scotch."

"So, it's definitely not lightweight?"

"No — it's about the pleasures. I started out thinking light but it's so bloody miserable, so now I take new potatoes and tins of juicy steak. I always move on the principle that if necessary I could stop and survive for three days — enough food, gaz and decent gear."

"Have the developments in gear helped?"

"Not enormously — it all came a bit late. These new stoves with the tubes I like, and plastic boots — they're tremendous, but I think all gear's done is keep me on an even keel as my body's deteriorated."

"Do you keep well on this side of the line between adventure and misadventure?"

"Well, if a cat's got nine lives, I've got four left. I've fallen off a few times, but never very far, fortunately. And once I fell down a crevasse on the Bishorn and landed right on the edge of a snow bridge. I'd spent too much time boozing and had to walk across to the next valley because I didn't have the fare. It was raining, I was crossing this obviously very badly crevassed area, then bang! I was down this hole. "But the dangerous bit, really is driving across France."

"How d'you keep fit in this country?"

"I run, with Dark Peak Fell-Runners in Sheffield. It's the best training for the Alps, though you need as well to be able to move confidently on Hard Severe or VS rock."

"Scotland?"

"Crowds and short, cold days! I went there once..."

"Now the list's complete, what next?"

"Oh, I'll be back next year — there's plenty to do, lots of routes I've seen from other peaks."

What have been the most memorable for you?"

"Whichever one you think about, you can remember, and the best one is the one of the moment."

It came out as fresh and direct as that — the perfect existential answer, from an alpinist who is as good an exemplar of the best, most relaxed and traditional values of our sport as anyone you could ever hope to meet.