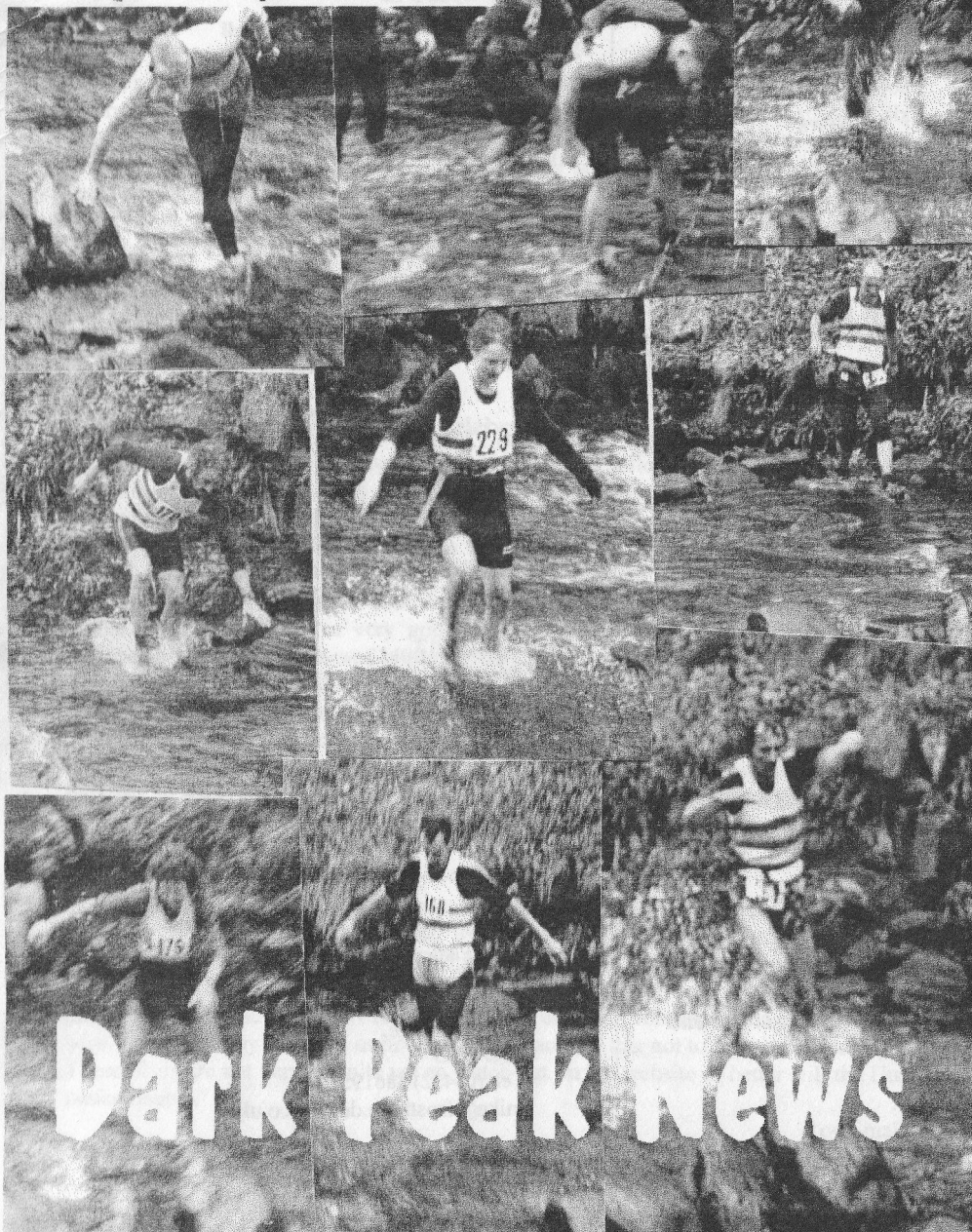


Spring 2000



Dark Peak News

DARK PEAK NEWS

Spring 2000

President: Eric Mitchell

3 News

Chairman

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Club Captain

Vacant

6 Coming Events

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12 Letters

13 Features

- Grand Raid de Reunion
- Mountain Hares
- Hugh's Hut Run

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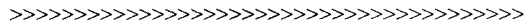
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- Karrimor

Cross Country

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Sheffield S11 7PL
Tel. (0114) 266280

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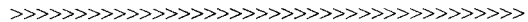


35 In Gear

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News

Club News

Secretary to resign

Paul Sanderson is to resign as secretary at the club's AGM in April. The secretary's job is arguably the most onerous in the club and Paul has done this crucial role for six years. With, among other things, a new job placing more demands on his time Paul felt this was the right time for a change. This last year has been particularly difficult with the discussions on affiliations coupled with internal issues such as the club constitution and club hut. However, thanks to his efforts these issues are well on the way to being resolved and whoever succeeds him should not get a baptism of fire! It's a chance for someone to put something back into a club that gets by on minimal organisation but does still need committed people in its few 'committee' roles. Is that someone you? Nominations to Paul prior to April's AGM (to be held on 19 April at Maynard Arms, Grindelford).

Club Hut Update - celebration "bash" planned

The club hut is back with us for Wednesday evenings following the fund raising and rebuilding work co-ordinated by Roy Small and Hugh Cotton. It reopened for Christmas Carol evening at the Headstone and a celebratory "bash" is now planned for a summer evening. Roy Small sends this update:

"The hut is now very close to completion with just some minor work left to do. The whole exercise has been a very good group response to an urgent problem. The membership has raised almost £2400 primarily by donations from about 100 members. This was our original estimate of the number of regular users of the hut that might share the responsibility that continued use placed upon us, so well done to all for that effort. In addition to money, many people have given time to work upon the hut. The labour to rebuild the place has been almost all voluntary with a small amount of payment to some of our skilled men when they have given up days from their working week to help us keep the momentum up. Thank you to all the helpers you know who you are."

"To celebrate the reincarnation we want to have a Hut Bash. We have suffered enough storms during the work to decide that we shall wait a while. The plan is therefor to have a race followed by a BBQ at the Hut on Sunday the 4th of June. The race to start at 6pm and last about 75 minutes possibly a score event, maybe with a point to point alternative for those who can't read maps. This time and format should allow people who would be away to a race or holiday to get back for this not to be missed occasion. These plans are not very definite yet so watch out on the website or better still the Hut notice boards."

Roy Small

Coming Events

SPRING / SUMMER 2000

Club runs every Wednesday from the Sportsman at 6:30pm or at an "away" venue (start times vary – CHECK BELOW).

Runs are usually aimed at about 1.5 hours sometimes with long/short options. Abilities vary and there is usually a couple of regroupings during the run. On some Wednesdays there are local races but there will also be a venue for a club run for those who do not wish to race.

Mar

Wed	15	18:30	Road run	Sportsman
		18:45	Warts run	Kings Tree, 168939
Sat	18	09:15	Club race	Edale Circle Race (Dave's Skyline Warm-Up); 9.15 am start for slower runners , 9.30 am for the faster. Start at the Odin Mine, bus turning circle at the bottom of Mam Tor (just a typical low - key , no prize happening - details from Dave Tait). To visit ; - Wall at top of Rowland Cote Moor , 133 873 - Grindslow Knoll - Lord's Seat tumulus - Mam Tor
Wed	22	18:30	Club runs	Sportsman
Sun	26	10:30	Club event	Edale Skyline **Offers of help wanted** - see Gavin Williams NOTE - WREKIN POSTPONED TO SUNDAY 2 APRIL
Wed	29	18:30	Road run	Sportsman (Back on the fells together)
		18:45	Warts run	Kings Tree, 168939

Apr

Sun	2		E.Ch.& DPL*	Wrekin **NEW DATE** ; Ercall Wood School, Wellington, Telford	5.5ml/ 1700'
Wed	5	18:30	Club run	Sportsman (including Not the National)	
		19:00	Club race	Not the National; Long Lane, Rivelin.	6ml
Sat	8	10:30	'Local' event	Pennine Fell Runners Navigation Event; Boars Head, Higher Poynton. See below	2.5 hrs score
Wed	12	18:45	Club run	Cutthroat Bridge	
Sat	15	12:00	Brit. Ch.	Clachnaben, Stachan, South Deeside	
Wed	19	18:30	Club run	Grindleford station	
		20:00	AGM	AGM; Maynard Arms, Grindleford	
Wed	26	18:30	Club run	Sportsman	
	29-		MM (3	Great Lakeland Challenge; 3 day solo 75 mile	75ml!
	1		day)	MM event. Details: J. Faulkner, Post Box Cottage, Kirkland, Penrith CA10 1RN	

Sun	30	10:00	ECh& DPL	Three Peaks, Horton (near Settle). ENTIRES CLOSED (though substitution is allowed).	24ml/ 4500'
Sun	30	11:30	Local race	Kinder Downfall; Hayfield village. Entry (£3) by 23/4/00 to W. Harrison, 24 Spinnerbottom, Birch vale, High Peak. SK22 1BL	10ml/ 2500'
May					
Wed	1	15:00	Local race	Penistone Hill race; Penistone Show Ground	7ml/1055
Wed	3	18:45	Club race	Back Tor and Beyond; Foulstone Delf (Strines).	
Sat	6	11:00	Local race	Mount Famine; Scout Hut, Hayfield.	5ml/1700'
Wed	10	18:45	Club run	Some You Win, Twitchill farm rail bridge, Hope. The steepest race in the Peak?	7.5ml/ 3000'
	10- 12		MM/AR	Wester Isles Challenge Adventure race; Barra to Butt of Lewis. Multi sport race for teams of four.	
Sat	13	09:30	Local race	White Peak Bash, Matlock Rugby Club. Teams of 2. Details: Dave Sleath, The Lodge, Wingfield Park, Fritchley, Derbyshire. DE56 2HR	26ml
Sun	14	13:00	E.Ch.& DPL*	Fairfield, Rydal Hall, Ambleside. £3.50 by 5/5/00 on FRA entry form to Tony Walker, 7 The Courtyard, castle Street, Kendal, Cumbria. LA9 7AA	9ml/3000
Wed	17	18:30	Club run	Sportsman	
Wed	17		Local race	Shining Tor; Errwood Sail Club, Goyt Valley	5ml/1500
Sat	20		MM (1 day)	Nuts in May (teams of 2); Grasmoor Sports Centre, Cockermouth. Entry details: Barry Johnson, Grasmoor Sports Centre, Lorton Rd., Cockermouth. CA13 9QT	25ml/ 7850'
Tue	23		Local race	Burbage Fell Race, Fox House. Race revived by DPFRR led by Andy Moore. Modified course. Offers of help to Andy Moore	7ml/800'
Wed	24	18:45	Club run	Bar Dyke (to be confirmed) Stanage Struggle POSTPONED	
Sat	27	14:00	B.Ch.& DPL*	Caeder Idris; Eldon Sq. Dolgellau.	10.5ml/ 3000'
Mon	29	11:00	Local race	Ilam Fete race; Ilam vilage (3 miles from Ashbourne in Dovedale)."Terrific" (terrifying?) final descent back to the fete.	4ml/ 1100'
Tue	30		Local race	Hallam Chase (details to be confirmed)	
Wed	31	18:30	Club run	Sportsman	
Jun					
Thu	1	19:30	Local race	Totley Moor, Cricket Inn	5ml/800'
Sun	4	18:00	Club event	Club Hut Bash; "race" + social; Sportsman.	
Wed	7	18:45	Club run	Birchin clough lay-by, Snake (A57); Kinder Springs run/race?	
Fri	9	19:30	Local race	Castleton, Castleton Playing Fields	6ml/1500
Sat	10	11:00	E.&B.Ch. & DPL*	Ennerdale, Ennerdale Scout Camp. Entry £5 (to CFRA) to Colin Dulson, 5 Sunnyside, Kendal, LA9 7DJ	23ml/ 7500'
Sun	11	11:00	Local race	Edale Country Day Fell Race, Edale car park.	5.25ml

Wed	14		Club run	Sportsman	
Thu	15	19:00	Local race	Grindleford	4ml/550'
	17-18		MM	Lowe Alpine MM; 4 hours (yes, four) drive north of Glasgow! For details see the link on the DPFR home page.	
Wed	21	19:00	Club race	Crookstone Crashout; Rowlee Bridge, Snake	
Thu	22	19:30	Local race	Blackamoor, Cricket Inn, Totley.	6.5ml/1400'
Sun	25	11:00	Local race	Great Bakewell Pud Race; Bakewell Rec.	6ml
Sun	25	11:00	Local race	Kinder Trog, Scout Hut, Hayfield	18ml/3450'
Wed	28	18:45	Club run	Sportsman	
Wed	28	19:45	Local race	Tideswell, Tideswell dale, car park	4.5ml/820'
Jul					
Sun	2	11:30	Local race	Peakers Stroll, Devons.Arms, Peak Forest	25ml/4000'
Mon	3	19:30	Local race	Hathersage, School Field, Hathersage	4.5ml/925'
Wed	5	18:45	Club run	Grindleford café (to be confirmed)	
Wed	5	19:30	Local race	Hope Wakes	4ml/650'
Sun	9	14:30	Local race	Broomhead Chase, Broomhead Hall farm (SE244962)	3.5ml/800'
Wed	12	18:45	Club run	Yorkshire Bridge	
Wed	12	19:30	Local race	Bamford	4.5ml/1000'
Sat	15		Race	Ingleborough (why not do a double bill with Kentmere and camp with other club members overnight at Stainforth?)	7ml/2000'
Sun	16	11:15	Local race	Peak Forest	6ml/650'
Sun	16	13:00	ECh.& DPL*	Kentmere, Kentmere Hall	11.9ml/3300'
Wed	19	18:30	Club run	Sportsman	
Thu	20	19:30	Local race	Sheldon, Cock & Pullet pub, Sheldon	4ml/527'
Wed	26	19:00	Club race	Cakes of Bread; Fairholmes	
Sat	29	14:00	Brit. Ch.	Donard, Donard carpark, Newcastle, N.I	6.5ml/2800'
Aug					
Wed	2		Club run	t.b.a.	
Wed	2	19:30	Local race	Bradwell, New Bath Hotel, Bradwell	4.5ml/600'
Sat	5	10:00	DPL*	Borrowdale, Rosthwaite	17ml/6500'
Sat	5	10:00	Triathlon	Andy Moore's triathlon; Ramsley Res.	
Wed	9	18:45	Club run	Mam Nick	
Wed	9	19:30	Local race	Cracken Edge, Kinder rescue HQ, Hayfield	7ml/1450'
				Dates to be confirmed	
	11-13		Club event	Thornbridge weekend; including:	
Sat	12	11:00	Club race	Ashford race; Ashford village green	
		16:00+		Barbeque	
Wed	16	18:45	Club race	Alport	
Wed	23	18:30	Club run	Sportsman	
Wed	30	18:45	Club run	Longshaw	
Sep					
	2-3		MM	Phoenix Long-O, Individual MM, Cheviots. Entries: A. Nicoll, 47 Holywell Ave, Whitley Bay, NE26 3AQ	
Sun	3	14:00	Local race	Shelf Moor, Shepley St, Old Glossop.	5.9ml/1500'
Wed	6	18:30	Club run	Cutthroat Bridge	

A.G.M

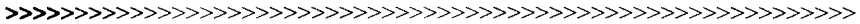
19th April 2000, 8.00pm
Maynard Arms, Grindleford

As in the last 4 years we are again returning to the Maynard Arms in Grindleford for the first club AGM of the new millennium. Although this venue has had its detractors in the past it has served us well over the last few years with decent chip butties, real beer and if last year was anything to go by, some lively debate. It was suggested by some members that we should use the newly restored club hut however even with all the hard work it still isn't that comfortable!

As usual there will be a run beforehand commencing at 6.30pm. Please can you park on the road leading to the station and not use the pub car park until afterward the run. The AGM will start at 8.00pm prompt.

If there are any proposals for discussion or nominations for office (It is my intention not to seek re-election this year!) please can you let me have them by the 12th April.

Paul Sanderson



MORE NEWS

Brightest Full Moon Of The Century - If we had seen it!

The Headstone carols coincided with the brightest full moon of the 20th century - except it was a cloudy night! Why was it so bright? Ron Caves sent in this explanation to make things *clearer!*

"This year will see the first full moon occur on the winter solstice, Dec. 22, commonly called the "first day of winter. Since a full moon on the winter solstice will occur in conjunction with a lunar perigee (point in the moon's orbit that is closest to Earth), the moon will appear about 14% larger than it does at apogee (the point in it's elliptical orbit that is farthest from the Earth). Since the Earth is also several million miles closer to the sun at this time of the year than in the summer, sunlight striking the moon is about 7% stronger making it brighter. Also, this will be the closest perigee of the Moon of the year since the moon's orbit is constantly deforming."

"If the weather is clear and there is a snow cover where you live, it is believed that even car headlights will be superfluous. On December 21st 1866, the Lakota Sioux took advantage of this combination of occurrences and staged a devastating retaliatory ambush on soldiers in the Wyoming Territory. In laymen's terms, it will be a super bright full moon, much brighter than usual AND it hasn't happened this way for 133 years! Our ancestors 133 years ago saw this. Our descendants 100 or so years from now will see this again."



One pub's loss...

The winter "away" run at the Plough near Leadmill Bridge saw a repeat of the highly enjoyable circuit of Bretton Clough under a spectacular starry sky. However, the evening was slightly marred by an objectionable landlord who didn't want the cars in his car park despite the extra trade 40 runners would bring. As a result most people moved to the Scotsmans pack for their post run drink. If you are considering a drink or meal out in Derbyshire in future you might consider taking the Plough OFF your list of possible venues (and tell your friends too).

Letters

Letter from South Africa

Mr. Editor,

I sent Andy Forsyth the address of the Watershed Website. This is his reply which makes interesting reading - particularly on the Registration issue.

Jim Fulton

Hi Jim

Well you really know how to make a person megga depressed! Nice web site though! I'm not running at the moment due to a chronic hamstring injury and have been told by the physio to lay off running for 3-4 weeks. So yesterday I wore my walshes for the first time since I ran the Cakes of Bread last July, watched Jos Naylor's 60 summits video and drank a can of "Boddy's". Now I'm really, really bloody depressed!!! Will be in touch.

By the way, wots all this winging and wining in the DP news letter and FRA mag regarding paying extra club levies. We pay over four and a half quid for provincial licences every season on top of membership fees and club levies. It is compulsory to wear licence numbers on the back of club colours in addition to race numbers, unattached runners have to pay for temporary licences up to half marathon distances over and above that you must be a fully paid up member of a club!

In short it works here very well and athletics (particularly road running) is in a healthy situation and contributes towards promoting athletics to the under privileged and youth in the townships and rural areas not to mention financing most of the big events. So you tight gits - cough up and pay for the privilege of running them hills, I would (and that's coming from a right porridge XXX)!

Mind you I would exchange my Randburg vest for the shitty brown one of Dark Peak once again any day. I've just got to convince Bev and a good job offer.

Andy

andrew.forsyth@za.abb.com

IFeatures

Grand Raid De Reunion

Le Ravine de Souris Chaud. In the canyon of the hot mouse the Reunion Harrier circles above, hungry eyes downward, vigilantly searching for dinner. Deep down, in the box canyon below, the hot mice dance, for they are not out in the open with Les Fous.

The raptor turns, empty eyed and soars up and away, to the volcano top where the air is clear. There is food below, but Les Fous are moving too quickly. Over the volcano dance Les Fous, for it will soon be the bright night, the full moon, and in October each year that means The Traverse des Fous, the crossing of the Crazies.

Who are they, and where are they, these Fous?

The **Ile de Reunion**, a volcanic outburst, rears abruptly from the Indian Ocean to a volcano of 2700 metres in the south, where the Piton de Fournaise still erupts regularly, and did so last year. It's a fairly well behaved shield volcano, and doesn't usually cause much grief to the islands inhabitants. Not many choose to live in the savage south, beneath the corridor taken by lava flows.

Out in the ocean, a long way out from Africa and India, Reunion developed relatively recently in geological terms, and ecologically the island is quite poorly resourced, with no large native mammals and no snakes. Just les Fous.

Reunion had no indigenous humans. Lately, in 1646, the French deposited some hapless mutineers on a seemingly inhospitable volcanic island. They thrived, and the French government saw fit to turn Mascarin, later renamed Reunion, into a colony. It remains French, and because its economy is part of France, it is relatively affluent for a close neighbour of India and Africa. Prices are not much different to the French Riviera.

The Reunion Harrier is unique to the island. And les souris chaud? Almost certainly they jumped ship. But that is to digress. Who are the crazies, and what is their dance?

The Grand Raid

In late October each year, almost 2000 people gather before dawn in a sports stadium at the south of the island. Surely that's enough to call them crazy? Drums beat in the tropical night, floodlights blare, people with serious intent mingle restlessly. Then at the hour of 4.00am, the stadium empties as a flood of energy propels a rush uphill, through a torchlit avenue and up through the sugar cane fields. The leaders have the most severe attack of the crazies. They run uphill with determination, relentlessly, and when civilisation fizzles out they take a jungly tunnel up and up, eventually meeting the dawn sunshine on the very rim of the volcano.

Its about 20 kilometres to this awesome view over the still smouldering lava fields, and just another 5 kilometres to an ash desert and the first crossing of the public road. The road has wound its way up the Piton de la Fournaise in a more leisurely way than the runners, reaching a height of 2400 metres and a magnificent overview of the crater. But on this day, the Crossing of the Crazies, there are many people milling within this remote moonscape. In a tented Point d'Assistance, helpers serve endless coca cola and water, fruit, energy food, and for those who need it, first aid for blisters.

The Mini-Raiders, not yet fully fledged Crazies, call it a day at this point. They've ascended 2400 metres in 25 kilometres from sea level, and are quite justifiably tired.

The sun beats down and most Crazies are wearing 'foreign legion' sun hats with a generous neck flap. As they jog over the fine ash sands and lava flows, their manes fly in the breeze. They have another short climb in sight, and at 2500 metres they top out on the high point of the Grand Raid. The biggest climb is now over, but only 25% of the total distance has elapsed. All later climbs will be smaller, usually a mere 1000 metres.

I took 6 hours to reach this point by 10.00am on Friday 29th October 1999. Its already been a hard day.

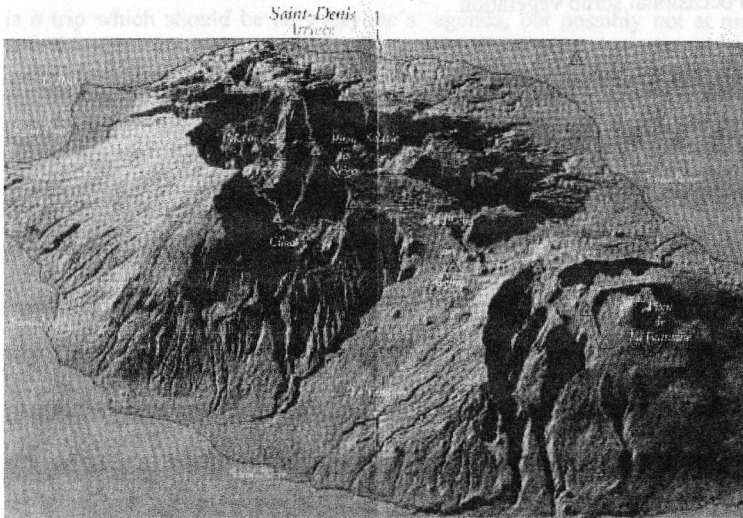
What's it all about?

The Grand Raiders are on an epic voyage from south to north across the island, a traverse of 125 kilometres (80 miles) from Saint Joseph to Saint Denis. The super athletes at the front will complete this traverse non stop in under 18 hours, whilst the hikers will take up to 60 hours, the threshold for medal qualifiers. Colin Donnelly took just under 22 hours last year, and I think became the first British finisher. Ever.

The Grand Raid style of ultra-marathon is familiar to the French, and a mountain activity which appeals to fell runners, joggers and hikers. It may appeal to the sort of person who would like to do a Karrimor Mountain Marathon (it takes place on the same weekend!) but doesn't want to carry a tent and sleeping bag, and doesn't like the uncertain British mountain weather in late October. Funnily enough, it doesn't seem too crazy...?

The organisers of this mountainous Grand Raid make it very easy for their huge entry of almost 2000 starters. They provide a well marked route, with repeating sponsors streamer tapes to reassure the uncertain, guarding participants against wrong junctions and warning of death potential and dangerous terrain. Every few kilometres they provide a Pointe d'Assistance with food and water, often helicoptered up to mountain tops: encamped paramedic teams lurk along the jungle trailside at frequent intervals, waiting for victims. Not predatory, actually really kind people whose object in life is to keep Grand Raiders on their feet, massaged and cajoled into continuing on a journey of a lifetime.

Le GRAND RAID de l'île de La Réunion
7^e Edition - 29, 30 & 31 Octobre 1999



The support is more than just water and oranges: as much Coca Cola as you can drink, non alcoholic beer, hot soup and all manner of energy food.

At two locations there are major aid stations, halfway in Cilaos and threequarter stage at Grand Ilet. Both have teams of masseurs, paramedics, hot meals and halls full of campbeds with blankets, some with fleas too. Some people collapse for a full nights sleep, others rest an hour or so before pressing on.

The climate during the Grand Raid is quite variable, but predicible. Mornings are hot and sunny and by early afternoon the sea mists have risen to the mountain tops and a complete cloud cover obscures views. This keeps things tolerably warm rather than scorching as it is at sea level. In the ravines the mice stay hot.

1999 Grand Raid

This was the 7th running of the Grand Raid de Reunion, and the first five British finishers. Etrangers form a very small component of the Raid; the majority of entrants are Reunionaise and French mainlanders.

To get accepted for the event I had to provide medical evidence of craziness, just sufficient to say that my body was in reasonable working condition. Upon acceptance, the organisers issue route descriptions and maps, and encourage people to train on the course, or by going upstairs two at a time.

As already described, the first section of 33 kilometres climbs from sea level over le Piton de Fournaise, a dramatic taste of volcano scenery, alpine heath, barren black ash and lava with occasional scrub vegetation.

Once the mini-raiders have pulled out, the field thins down a bit, but there are still plenty of people around. You're rarely alone on a Grand Raid. The second 30 kilometre section starts benignly enough with a pleasant descent from the volcano through cattle pastures with an exotic juxtaposition of delicate Arum Lilies and rough gorse, to a crossing of the main trans-island highway. The Grand Raid is a big event for Reunion. Hundreds of cars pack the road verges, giving a carnival atmosphere along the approach to a huge feeding station. There the party continues with a barbecue, music, sandwiches and people lazing around, enjoying the early afternoon sun after a big effort.

But it's not over yet, hardly started. The trail continues gently uphill on jungly tracks, insidiously creeping back up to 2200 metres altitude on the lip of the cirque of Cilaos. There, perched on the edge of a colossal drop is the Bivouac Kerveguen, established and refuelled by helicopter. It needs to be, because it's a long way from anywhere, and in particular, a very long way down. The verticality is exceptional, and if it were not for the tropical vegetation clinging to the cliff face and concealing the exposure, some thoughtful people would decline to continue without a handrail or parachute. This is a cruel descent of 1000 quad destroying metres, a rocky zigzagging trail, sometimes with short metal ladders. A fall wouldn't always be fatal, but it would sometimes be a close thing.

All good and bad things must come to an end, and this bad thing comes to a good end in a beautiful forest of Japanese Cryptomeria trees. If you've never seen a forest of these trees its worth going for this alone. Beautiful, but at a terrible price, for the last few kilometres on a good road down to Cilaos were the red hot road to hell...

The organisers had planned well. They knew the likely casualty rate, and at the Rest Station a huge paramedic team was busily syringing blisters and taping up the debris. An even larger team of masseurs was pummelling tired legs, whispering encouragement to exhausted Raiders. Across the yard were dozens of dozing bodies, wrapped in dubious blankets. Outside and inside people were showering, changing sweaty and dusty clothes from packages sent ahead to wait at each rest station. The better prepared even had slippers and towels!

This was half way and for some, the end of the line. For me, after 14 hours on the go, it marked the end of daylight, because tropical days are 12 hours, and followed by 12 hour nights. Soon after 18.00 it was dark and I sat on the edge of a campbed contemplating the pleasure of a little doze. Perhaps just a few hours? But all around me was activity as people pulled on the headtorches and prepared to set off into the night. Carried along by their enthusiasm I abandoned thoughts of much needed sleep and creaked myself upright. Amazingly, despite complete fatigue an hour earlier, everything seemed to function, and I was off.

The third 30 km section links the three huge cirques of Cilaos, Mafate and Salazie, and is a trip which should be on everyone's agenda, but possibly not at night! These massive natural amphitheatres hang around Le Piton des Neiges, Reunions' high point, and yes, sometimes there is snow on the Tropic of Capricorn! To link the cirques is a feat of great footpath engineering, something which French Grand Randonees have never shirked from. Reunion's GR1 tackles this challenge, and probably is best enjoyed in daylight. I have a numbly recalled sensation of a long dark climb, the statutory 1000 metres of up, before plunging, equally precipitously, down 700 metres to the deserted school at Marla. There are no roads into the cirque of Mafite, but there is quite a community spread out over the farmable lands. Marla is a spooky place to encounter at midnight. From the dark hillside comes an increasing glow, then round a corner to meet a blaze of floodlights and all the razzmatazz of a feeding frenzy. Bodies lying everywhere. The bunk beds looked appealing, but all were full.

Reluctantly creeping out of the lively atmosphere I had a vague recollection of the map image of a short ascent followed by a col where vehicles can drive to overlook the inaccessible cirque. I had reasoned that the road would continue easily down by zigzags to Grand Islet, the next major destination. An optimistic miscalculation!

The climb out of Cirque Mafite started spookily, crossing watercress beds, then climbing up through rocky woods, often on rickety log paths. With the whole of my world limited to the spread of a Petzl beam, it was hard to get a feel for the big picture. Occasionally a glimpse upwards would locate pinpricks of headlamps from people zigzagging in front. But the really spooky bit was almost tripping over the casualties. The headtorch would pick up a reflection, and I would imagine that I was arriving at an aid station. As I got closer it would turn out to be a reflective strip on someone's jacket, crashed out and sleeping on the edge of the track. Sometimes wrapped in a space blanket, sometimes just slumped forward. These people must have pushed themselves to their limit, and just collapsed. Not serious casualties, the night was too warm for hypothermia but definitely running on empty.

In a particularly eerie wood came the rising sound of roaring generators. Expecting to stumble into another feeding station, I emerged to a deafening water meadow, where thousands of frogs were making amorous sounds.

At last the col, and roadhead, with a couple of cars enjoying the view? At 3.00am? More amorous sounds?

A steady jog down a well made road soon brought me to another feeding station. In my mental picture the next rest station was almost in sight, but cruelly, this was not to be. Just around the next corner the GR route deviated from the road and began another of those quad destroying 1000 metre descents. This one was interminable, and every bend and rocky step was just like the last. Going slowly, with barely enough light, it seemed to take forever. A group of about ten people crocodyled downwards, staying together for mutual support. And when the down bit stopped there was an awful

revelation, and audible groans. Looking up we could make out lines of headtorches zigzagging back up again. Seriously taxing at 4.00am, after 24 hours continuous effort. I was relieved to see that it was taxing everyone. Some were so taxed they collapsed, and there were bodies collapsed by the track all the way to Grand Islet. Some were swaying dangerously, close to sleep, staggering across the path, tripping and stumbling like drunks.

I was grateful to reach the Rest Station at Grand Islet and immediately joined the queue for a massage, then a session of blister bashing before wrapping myself in a flearidden blanket for a short doze. Dawn was breaking as I slept, and at 7.45 I was up and fresh for the final 33 kilometre section. Its amazing what a couple of hours sleep can do!

All systems seemed to be working adequately and a steady amble down the road led to The Wall. There, at the threequarters stage, was the crux. Simply, a seriously steep 1000 metre cliff. The path miraculously zigzags a climbable route which is thankfully concealed by dense vegetation. Without it the exposure would be awesome. Anyone familiar with levadas in Madiera will be able to picture the type of vegetation dripping hillside, rarely tackled head on by footpaths.

This climb takes well, it takes what it takes. Ages. And along the way are the exhausted bodies of the fallen. Some have fallen asleep. Some have just fallen. Its an awful interminable slog and sometime later, after some unhelpful stretchy cable handrails, the top happens suddenly. An abrupt transition from vertical to horizontal. On the horizontal bit there is water, food, music and smiling friendly people whispering kind promises of downhill all the way to the finish. It sounds good, but the reality of 30 km to go hasn't quite sunk in..

The mist had already swirled in and visibility on the Plaine des Chicots intermittent, a glimpse ahead, then gone. But the trail is a smooth worn route across cracked slabs, painted with a white line. This must be a notorious place, easy to wander off route on a huge pitching rock platform. Soon the track reaches the refuge, another oasis of comfort in a harsh and remote location.

The next 10 kilometres brings depressing little ups and down as the track takes a switchback ride along the cliff edge, through thick jungle. All around was thick mist, in the open barely wet enough to feel like rain, but in the jungle, water condensed on the large leaves, and fell steadily as massive drips, turning the trail to slippery mud.

As each 10 metre climb followed another in quick succession, the map denied their existence and showed only down; its large contour intervals concealing the reality of a sawtooth mountain ridge. Finally, a brutal climb heralded the true descent, and from there on it was truly sweet, or would have been had it not been for the rain, mist and mud. The rain grew more persistent, the jungle denser and the mud grew thicker.

This proved to be a huge tactical advantage for anyone wearing nicely studded Walshes and wielding a couple of handy trekking poles. I was able to whiz along the jungly tunnels, steaming past struggling slippery soled crazies as they clung to trees, often sliding out of control down dangerous descents. All went fine until the final five kilometre plummet. This was torture, as the path zigzagged down through dense woods for 700 vertical muddy metres, over rocky steps, fallen trees, down muddy channels; finally to emerge onto the road just a few hundred metres from the La Redoute Stadium.

Although the leaders had passed through the finish many hours before, there were still plenty of people supporting enthusiastically. It seemed to be expected to put in a bit of a jog around the half lap of track to the finish.

My finish was at 18.00 on the Saturday, 38 hours after starting at 4.00 on Friday, and just in time, as it was dark within an hour. My position was 659th from 1400 finishers within the 60 hour cut-off, and from just under 2000 starters.

The Reunion Harrier circles overhead. It is now late on the afternoon of Sunday, the third day, and the stragglers down below look well nourished and slow, easy prey. Better than those scrawny fleet footed ones....

Mike Browell

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Derbyshire Mountain Hares

From 'The Independant' (24 January 2000) (via Martin Fox);

Mountain hares of Derby - stand and be counted

By Michael McCarthy

A survey is being planned of some of England's least-known wild animals - the mountain hares of the Peak District, whose fur turns white in the winter.

Usually thought of as creatures of the Scottish Highlands, a small population lives in the hilly moorlands of north Derbyshire after being introduced more than a century ago.

Now the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust wants to check their numbers to see if they are suffering the same steep decline that has affected their commoner and more familiar relative, the brown hare, all across Britain.

Hillwalkers are being asked to report on any mountain hares they see, before a full survey is launched later in the year. The animals are often easy to spot, because their white coats, which act as effective camouflage in the snowy conditions of the Cairngorms and other Highland mountain ranges, make them stand out sharply when

the dark lower hills of the Peak District such as Kinder Scout are snow-free, as they often are.

Besides its difference in winter colouring, the mountain hare, *Lepus timidus*, is smaller, rounder and fluffier than the brown hare, *Lepus europaeus*, and feeds on heather rather than on lowland plants. It is native to Britain, whereas the brown hare, like the rabbit, is believed to have been introduced by the Romans.

Mountain hares were brought successfully to Derbyshire from Scotland for hunting in about 1880, although other attempts to bring them south of the border - to the Cheviot hills of Northumberland, the Lake District and Snowdonia - have all failed.

The Peak District population probably consists of between 500 and 1,000 animals, compared with the estimated 35,000 mountain hares in Scotland. In the Highlands their main predator is the golden eagle; in Derbyshire they are taken by foxes and stoats, and in the northern part of the Peak District National Park they are still hunted with dogs. The hares are afforded no legal protection.

The survey, which the trust will carry out in conjunction with the Mammal Society and the National Park, will take place against the background of the precipitous decline of the brown hare across Britain over the past 30 years.

Its numbers have been sharply reduced by changes in agricultural practice, in particular the switch from hay-making to silage. Grass is cut for silage in early summer when the leverets - the baby hares - are still small and vulnerable to agricultural machinery.

"With the mountain hares, we want to find out if there is a decline, and if so, what are the threats to them," said David Mallon, an ecologist and teacher who is co-ordinating the survey. They are very characteristic elements of the Peak District landscape: when there is no snow they stand out like a sore thumb and you can spot them a kilometre away.

"They freeze at the approach of danger, so if you're quiet you can get quite close to them. They're really charming animals."

I contacted David Mallon of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust about the survey - he is happy to have his address included in the Newsletter along with the article. What he wants is:

Date, place of sighting (4 fig. GR if possible) or number seen along specified route (eg. 8 between Back Tor & Margery Hill), observers name.

Info. to: David Mallon, 3 Acre Street, Glossop, SK13 8JS or d.mallon@zoo.co.uk

Martin Fox

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HUGH'S HUT RUN

It was a bright winters night, freezing cold, and the good villagers of Eyam were safely at home. Its now 335 years since villagers had to go down into The Delf to collect food, left because the village was in isolation for the Plague. Dark nights, long memories! No-one comes this way now.

Something stirs in the dale. Then a torrent of lights emerges from the muddy defile! Curtains twitch. Is it a second coming? No, just a convoy of Warts emerging from their minibar halt. Yes, Hugh's Hut Run had its moments, plenty of them.

The first heart stopping moment was at the bend by the Dore Moor Inn, where Sheffield's gritting stopped and cars were going all directions on black ice. Hand up those who smiled to see a 4WD in the ditch? At this juncture, most sane people would have returned safely home. But no-one dares offend the Don! So shaken and stirred, 20 or so warts found their way to Hugh's Hut.

As one of our very own Hut Restoration Gurus, Hugh's upbringing in the Derbyshire Pennine Club had taught him a thing or two about huts. But it was probably an error of judgement to let DPFR see that other huts have kettles, water, toilets and lots of other civilising features. Dreams were kindled....

It was a gloriously white night and The White Peak was as white as it could be. The roads were as slippery as snails slime, and puddles were frozen at the edges. Luckily the snow was soft and gave reasonable grip, so no serious injuries were inflicted.

Glossing over the middle section, its enough to say that Hugh's Hut Run took in a rapid ascent of Coombs Dale, over Longstone Edge and down to Rowland, then back up n'over the edge via Black Harrys Gate and then an illegal but interesting descent via the Stoney Quarries. Into Eyam from The Delf, striking terror into the hearts of the curtain twitchers, then gloriously down the main street where lads with big tractors pull local talent. Moths to a flame...

We took the back way over to Stoney Middleton, but cut through the crag to the petrol station (a path that the Harvey map chooses to keep secret) from where a short return up dale took us to the crux, and highlight of the evening's delights...

The Windy Ledge Cave: In daylight, Windy Ledge means one thing, but at night quite another. For a start, you can't see the drop! Windy Ledge Cave is one of Derbyshire's delights! Totally safe, spacious enough to almost stand up, virtually dry, quite clean, and without tricky routefinding. The real challenge is to do it without a torch!

There were a few who backed off, muttering such excuses as 'totally unjustifiable' and 'devils territory' or 'just remembered I've got to be home soon...' But for the trusting Stalwarts, a superb climax to a super run!

Mike F Browell

Mountain Marathons

Karrimor International Mountain Marathon : October 1999

No clubs shown on Karrimor results so apologies if I've missed anyone!

<u>Elite</u>		<u>day 1</u>	<u>day 2</u>	<u>total</u>
1	M. Seddon & S. Birkinshaw	7:00:00	4:01:35	11:01:35
4	S. Bourne & A. Ward	7:19:37	4:10:37	11:30:14
15	W. Sullivan & G. Williams	8:21:40	5:11:23	13:33:03

65 started, 34 finished

<u>A</u>				
1	R. Gladstone & T. Lenton	7:20:30	5:06:38	12:27:08
9	R. Hopkinson & M. Wynne	8:43:06	5:07:48	13:50:54

104 started, 64 finished

<u>C</u>				
1	S. Wilson & C. Ashton	4:52:50	3:35:42	8:28:32
6	D. ni Challanain & U. May	5:15:14	3:53:50	9:09:04
7	A. Mayer & S. Clawson	5:23:03	3:47:47	9:10:50

279 started, 184 finished

<u>Long Score</u>		<u>points</u>		
1	C. Harwood & M. Elsegood	335	270	605
7	M. Scotney & G. Pettengall	249	265	514
30	C. Barber & G. Seaman	225	160	485
62	W. Gibbons & B. Needle	175	130	305
85	M. Musson & L. Bland	130	155	285

285 started, 230 finished

<u>Short Score</u>				
1	P. Vincent & C. Wall	247	220	467
42	D. Bradbury & K. Saville	160	120	280

299 started, 258 finished

Reports and Results

CHELMORTON CHASE : 11 SEPTEMBER 1999

5 ml , 1000 ft .

Chelmorton is a special village; through Bakewell in the White Peak; with a phone box, church weather vane and field systems of distinct interest. The course was a welcome addition to our local races, making a route down Deepdale and steeply over Chelmorton Low. Where else do we get free bacon butties at the finish? To discover the extra feature of this race you'll have to run it.

Great Urban Fell Race : 29 January 2000

(Walkley)

... here we stood,
Roof'd by the cloud, which cast his frown between
Wardsend and Loxley's Moorlands...

(Prospect from Thryberg)

Thou only, Wincobank, reign'st undespoiled
King of the valley of my youth and prime,
Through which the river, like a snake uncoil'd,
Wanders, though tamed, a match for
conquering time
Behind thee mountains, solemn and sublime,
take from the stooping skies their purply gold...
(Ebenezer Elliott)

'The People's Race' was resuscitated in response to a mixture of nostalgia and fin-de-siècle fervour.

Driving wind, vicious squalls, flying slates and chimney pots, rogue wheelie-bins: these were some of the additional hazards that combined with the familiar rigours of the classic 10 mile tour via Shirecliffe Hill, Wincobank Hill, Wardsend Cemetery and the Bole Hills.

An elect field of 22 runners and one bold cyclist (John Pearson) responded to the call to celebrate this first (and probably last) running of the event in the new millennium. Jim Fulton and Alan Yates got detached in the first 200 yards by taking an early detour down Conduit Road to salute the Harmer family in the process of filling a removal van with their possessions for transhipment to Loxley. Detached throughout was 'dark horse' Will McLewin, who put in a very creditable sweeper's 1h 48m, after arriving 20 minutes late for the start. His highly qualified support team (Helen), though, seems to have made lonely visits to hitherto uncharted regions of the urban nether world in her efforts to link up with her charge.

Over Tina's renowned chip butties and fine ale in the Noah's Ark, the post-race debriefing discussion covered an entertaining array of other deviations, discrepancies and private duels. Bob Berzins did well to hold off a strong challenge from the STC crack squad, and he took the laurels after having neatly worsesled an extremely adhesive Dave Tait in the Longfield Road area.

Vegetarian Bob and Dave, who was sort of disqualified, turned down first and second refusal, respectively, on the handsome garland of pork sausages (with commemorative medallion) kindly donated by Master Butcher Ron Hayman of School Road. The sausages were eventually claimed, with good cause, by McLewin: the medallion will be appropriately mounted as a permanent millennial memento for champion Berzins. Antarctic fossils (specially donated in a previous aeon by Ben Hodges) were awarded to Jim Fulton, for valour, and to John Pearson (first cyclist, first landlord, first sponsor, etc.). The results, to be savoured in tranquillity by competitors and cognoscenti alike, follow.

Alan Yates

In Gear

Club Kit

Vests: There are now plenty of vests available in most sizes, cotton vests are £12.00 and synthetic vests are £16.00.

Woolly Hats: Still the same as the last few years, one size fits all and available in black, green, red and blue £7.00.

Tracksters "dark peak": New purple tracksters are now available, sizes are small, medium, large and extra large, there are a couple of green pairs but only large £18.00.

Shorts "dark peak": This is a new item, green cycling type running shorts, I have placed a small order for medium only (more to be ordered if successful) £17.00.

For all the club kit please see me at a club night or at a race, I usually take a few things with me, otherwise please ring me to check. I can post out most things at about 50p per item.

Richard Hakes, 0114 233 9912.

Shops and Discounts

The following shops usually give discounts to club members (exact amount varies with shop and product: **Keep on Running, Rock and Run, YHA shop, Blacks, Hitch and Hike, DB Sports, Feet First (Walsh resoling)**. Let Richard know if you encounter problems or find any others who will give discounts.

Lost Kit...

Did anyone find a black bum-bag amongst the debris after the Calderdale Way Relay? It contained compass, whistle and my spare car key!

Gavin Williams



The-bit-at-the-end

Dark Peak News Summer 2000

In the Next Issue:

• Spring race reports
& whatever you send in!

Articles can be submitted handwritten, typed or in electronic format on disk or via e-mail. Please use the electronic option if you can. MS Word format preferred but I can read/convert most formats and can also scan typed documents if you haven't got access to e-mail or disks. And if you must resort to hand writing I now have some voice software which is surprisingly good until you get to words like 'wart, and worselling!

Emails welcome to: mike@frosthole.demon.co.uk

Deadlines for submission:	Wednesday	31 May
Publication date:	Wednesday	21 June

Thanks

Thanks for D.P.News Spring 2000 to; Rick Ansell, Chris Barber, Bob Berzins, Mike Browell, Ron Caves, Hugh Cotton, Andy Forsyth, Jim Fulton, Richard Hakes, Andy Harmer, Dawn Hopkinson, Dave Jones, Andy Malkin, Roy Marlow, Anthony Mayer, Maurice Musson, Dick Pasley, Mark Salkild, Paul Sanderson, Roy Small, Dave Tait, Gavin Williams, Alan Yates.

Cover

Front: Roaches - River Dane water splash - photos by Dawn Hopkinson. Can you identify the nine Dark Peakers featured?

Rear (also p.35): Club hut restoration circa early December 99 - photo - Ron Caves

Keep up to date with latest news & results via www.frosthole.demon.co.uk

