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**WELSH
FELL
RUNNERS
ASSOCIATION**

**2013 EBRILL
CYLCHGRAWN
NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2013**

2013 INOV⁸

WFRA Open Welsh Championships

With only one race having taken place so far it is all to play for. Please note that Nant y Moch and Peris Horseshoe are long and arduous races. Good navigational skills, kit and fitness are necessary, especially in poor weather. It is advisable to recce both these routes prior to race day. RP

2013 WFRA North Wales Series

**Sponsored by
Cotswold Outdoor**

Unfortunately, Ras Yr Aran did not take place due to deep snow and ice on the course. It is not yet known if this race will be rescheduled for later in the year. Details of rescheduled / alternative race will be posted on the website as soon as the information is available. Please note that Nant y Moch and Peris Horseshoe are long and arduous races. Good navigational skills, kit and fitness are necessary, especially in poor weather. It is advisable to recce both these routes prior to race day. Also, note that the Moel Hebog route crosses some rough and rocky terrain. Please do not enter unless you are comfortable in these conditions.

TARREN HENDRE Saturday 9th February

There was a good turnout as the race was the first counter in the 2013 Cotswold Outdoor North Wales Series. Weather conditions were damp and misty, resulting in a number of runners going astray. It was very wet and muddy underfoot.

The race was won by Martin Cliffe of Eryri in a time of 53 minutes and 36 seconds (also 1st over 40). Rob Grantham of Chester Tri was 2nd in 56.41 and David Parker of Meirionnydd was 3rd in 56.44. Other category winners – Under 23 Huw Davies (Mercia) 57.19, Over 50 Ian Lancaster (Tattenhall) 59.43, Over 60 Mario Foschi (Helsby) 65.44, Over 70 Phillip Jones (Prestatyn) 83.22.

The ladies race was won by Lauren Jeska of Aberystwyth in 59.26, Jayne Joy of Helsby was 2nd in 65.06 and Louise Barker of Aberystwyth was 3rd in 66.10. Other category winners - Over 40 Lucy Aphramor (Mercia) 70.01, Over 50 Juliet Edwards (Meirionnydd) 74.55, Over 60 Maggie Oliver (Eryri) 102.40. RP

**SUGAR LOAF RACE
on 13 April 2013
will be the East Wales Fell
Championship Race**

Hypothermia and Fell Running

It is well known that fell runners do not like carrying stuff. We want to feel free in the elements and be as unencumbered with kit as possible.

For most of us keeping cool on a big climb is generally more of a concern than how to keep warm. Red faces and sweaty bodies are nature's way of regulating our temperature in such conditions but as we know they can only go so far and we sometimes need to provide nature with assistance to cool ourselves down. Our bodies' have converse methods to keep us warm when we actually reach the top of the hill or pause to eat. Again, whilst very efficient, and really quite a feat of engineering, our bodies can only do so much to combat the cold.

And this is where travelling too light can create a problem as we may not have the means to bolster our bodies' inbuilt responses.

As humans we operate most effectively with a body temperature of around 37C.

When heat is allowed to leave our bodies without being replaced the temperature will drop. A very small loss is all it takes for the early stages of Hypothermia to start to take hold. This is something we will all have experienced at one time or other and is characterised by the shivering that we all recognise as our bodies' way of telling us to put on an extra fleece, eat something sugary or drink something warm. However shivering whilst running is not reliable as it is hard to shiver AND run, thus while running and losing heat the runner may lower their core temp significantly and only start shivering when they stop. Feeling cold, poor decision making, poor concentration (e.g. navigation errors), fatigue, and irritable mood are also all early signs. The body's energy needs also increase in mild hypothermia because the sugars are used to create heat, and by the muscular effort of shivering. Heart rate and breathing initially increase to help with the increased demand, but then reduce as shivering stops.

Shivering cannot be absolutely relied upon as an indicator of cold as pain from an injury may prevent it so making sure an injured person is kept warm is important both in terms of preventing shock and hypothermia.

Once the body is down to 35C. it is now suffering from Mild Hypothermia.

As your temperature drops the body decides that it is fighting a losing battle in trying to raise the temperature of the whole so concentrates its efforts purely on survival. As the body cools further, shivering will stop. The body

This article is by Ian Winterburn and first appeared in the 2012 summer edition of the Fellrunner magazine.

Ian is an experienced Outdoor Instructor Professional Mountain Leader and a member of Woodhead Mountain Rescue Team.

He runs with Dark Peak Fell Runners.

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Hypothermia is the dominant cause in most fell runner deaths. It is also, if not the prime cause, then a secondary concern in many Mountain Rescue call-outs. On the hill the condition is generally seen as Exhaustion Hypothermia. This is an insidious condition. It creeps up so slowly that its victims do not notice the symptoms of its gradual onset. The alternative, Immersion Hypothermia is brought about by sudden heat loss typically caused by falling in water – or a particularly large bog.

is now becoming severely hypothermic. You will stop shivering but not because you are getting warm. Blood will be drawn into the core. Heart rate and breathing will slow down. As blood cools it becomes more viscous, takes more effort to pump round and is less able to carry oxygen. Without sufficient oxygen the body cannot metabolise sugars so energy levels drop further creating a vicious cycle. Being dehydrated will exacerbate the problems.

As the cooling continues the victim may become incoherent and display 'the Umbls': grumbling, mumbling, stumbling, fumbling, apathetic or irrational. Skin will become pale and clammy (remember to check under clothing as well as the exposed bits). It may sound like a parody but lips and fingers really do turn blue. Blood

should usually take 2 seconds to return to the skin on a fleshy extremity after pressure is applied with finger and thumb. If it takes longer than this it is an indication circulation is slowing down.

Below 32C, consciousness is often lost and the heart beat can become

irregular. The body no longer has the energy to make the muscles work to generate heat so stops trying and releases the blood it has managed to keep warm into the full circulatory system. It is this that results in the phenomenon of a hypothermic person sometimes taking off all their clothes and complaining of being too hot. At 28C a cardiac arrest is almost a certainty.

So, how should we respond to a Hypothermia victim?

Well first, remember you are the most important person there. Helping others is all very commendable but creating a second victim by getting cold yourself will help no one. Prevent further heat loss by putting on dry clothing, find shelter, insulate from the

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Reminder. . . Championships and Series races

New eligibility rules

To be eligible for an award/prize you must be a paid up member of WFRA by the end of May. Also, there are other changes specific to each Championship and Series. Please check your Race Calendar for more information.

Members Discounts

The shops listed below have confirmed that they will give WFRA members a discount on purchases. This may not be on all items (eg sale items). Discount is normally 10% unless indicated otherwise. You must show your WFRA membership card.

BENARD'S GALLERY

Craig y Don, Llandudno

BLACKS

Llandudno

CONWY OUTDOOR SHOP

Conwy

PETE BLAND SPORTS

Kendal

Y WARWS

Beddgelert

JOE BROWN SHOPS

Llanberis and

Capel Curig

COTSWOLD OUTDOOR

Betws y Coed

RUN AND BECOME

Cardiff

RUNNING BEAR

Altrincham

If there are other retailers members would like to be included please contact any Committee member

High Peak Marathon

1st/2nd March 2013

I have done this challenge many times with different teams and never tire of it. Although it was initially planned as a challenge for walkers and runners, demand for it from fellrunners has grown so much in recent years that very few walkers' teams take part. This year there were 49 teams on the start list;



L to R Natalya, Yiannis, Richard and Amy

44 started, only two were walkers' teams. In the last few years I had not entered a team. This year I entered one but we were not selected. As on a previous occasion, I joined a team as a substitute for an injured team member. It was a mixed team made up of a very good male orienteer and two young female runners, one of whom had done the event before. I had not met any of them before.

The challenge starts on Friday night – 10pm walkers, 11pm runners at minute intervals – and traverses 42 miles of the toughest terrain the Dark Peak District has to offer. Friday March 1st was a cold day. There was some snow lying in the gullies from previous snowfalls and the ground was frozen. We set off at 11:10pm. It was cold, dry and clear, ideal conditions for fast times. We ran steadily and made good progress. Lines of torch lights in front and behind were spectacular in these conditions. Navigation was not an issue and maps stayed in the bags. Local knowledge and good visibility helped us pick good lines although the accumulated snow in gullies and paths made it difficult to use some shortcuts to full effect. Despite the very low temperatures, the ice in some of the notorious boggy patches was not strong enough to take weight, as one of our team members found out when she sank thigh deep.

There are many checkpoints and two feeding stations, manned mainly by Sheffield University students, who do their best to cheer up tired and sleepy runners. During the race it is not easy to estimate the team's relative position due to the staggered starts and the number of retirements but we were happy with our pace right up to the end. We finished in 11 hours, which is quite a good time and this put us in 18th position out of 38 finishing teams. Six teams failed to finish. The first and second men's elite teams broke the course record, which had stood since 1988. The Carnethy ladies team, captained by Angela Mudge, set a new women's record despite losing time due to a serious navigation error.

It was a very enjoyable HPM as all team members did their best. Personally I would rather have poor visibility and soft underfoot conditions so that navigation and local knowledge play as big a role as speed.

Yiannis Tridimas

WELSH 1000 METRES
JUNE 1ST

Marshals needed. If you can help please contact Organiser

Mercia Hill Trial 20th January, 2012

The Mercia Hill Trial is a new navigation and fell running challenge based on the successful Kinder Trial. Competitors start at intervals and have to visit a number of checkpoints in any order and return to the event centre. We launched the event to encourage runners to learn better navigation skills and show how much fun this kind of event can be. Competitors either run solo (with previous experience of similar events) or in pairs.

The days before the event had seen some heavy snowfall over Shropshire and those placing the checkpoints had a chilly couple of hours work late on Saturday afternoon. Sunday dawned without further snow and it seems that everyone who tried to travel successfully reached us including Robert Taylor (Pennine FR), a welcome visitor from up north.

The early starters definitely had the best of the conditions as heavy snowfall from 10:30am made both the navigation and the underfoot conditions progressively more difficult. Kristof Nowicki was one of the first to go out, setting a time which proved impossible to beat. SLMM veteran Brian Crowther navigated superbly to claim second overall paired with Chris Atherton, a local runner who has improved greatly in the last year. The remaining prizes were taken by Mark Bollom and Anna Bartlett (first mixed pair), Susan Howarth and Lucy Aphramor (first lady pair) and Joanne Dodd of Wrexham Tri (first solo lady). It was great to see Emma Clarke, one of Mercia's promising juniors, navigating the course with her dad Phil, and also local farmer Roger Lloyd combining a bit of fell running with a check on his sheep!

In view of the conditions we'd asked all the runners to take special care and look after each other and were pleased to see the event was very much run in a competitive but friendly spirit. Thanks to Zoe Owen, Mark Agnew and Ian Vann for helping place and remove checkpoints, the event centre team of Charlie Leventon and Keith and Pauline Richards, Wrekin Orienteers for their mapping, and most of all to John Taylor for sitting through a snowstorm for four hours in a tent at 1,600' to provide safety cover on the hill. The event was a great success which we hope to repeat next year.

Jim Tinnion. Coaching and Development, Mercia Fell Runners

Nutritional Supplements to Enhance Performance

Alan Stone

I recently overheard a fell runner at a local race meeting berating all GP's for lack of knowledge on nutritional supplements to enhance her performance in her fell running. As a GP and a fell runner I thought this a little unfair. GP's are after all, there to diagnose and treat the sick and the ill. Their training is not in how to enhance performance in elite athletes. I was too knackered to argue the case (or admit I'd been eaves dropping on her conversation).

It also set me thinking about what, if any, evidence existed about the use of nutritional supplements in sport. I'm sure we've all seen the tins of various powders stacked on the shelves of our local sports stores and seen the adverts in the back of the various running magazines. I've been to friends' houses and seen the pill pots lining the bathroom shelves. Lots of claims are made – but is there hard proof?

I set about conducting a literature search of the entire medical literature published since 1950. Fear not fellow fell runner I was not to be seen brushing the dust off ancient tomes, but did it all from the comfort of my own home and logged into the British Medical Association electronic library. Millions of articles from thousands of journals are available at the press of a few buttons.

The results were confusing. There were a lot of small scale trials just involving a limited number of athletes. The margins of error on these trials were often greater than the difference between winning and not qualifying for an international event! Many were clearly sponsored by the manufacturer and of poor quality.

Of the few good quality trials there was universal agreement about the need to maintain adequate hydration during exercise. Carbohydrate mixed with your fluid was better than water alone. What a surprise! So far so obvious. What was of interest was that it doesn't seem to matter if the carbohydrate is in the form of gels, jelly babies or special powders.

Keeping an adequate protein intake was also considered essential. This is to repair muscle damage sustained during exercise. However there was no evidence that I could find to suggest that amino acid supplements were any better than a good steak. The evidence that protein improves performance is at best equivocal.

There was some evidence that bicarbonate helped improve performance in short burst high in

tensity exercise. Not very applicable to fell running!

Creatine supplementation was associated with an increase in muscle mass and other parameters of measurable muscle function in the laboratory. There is some evidence of increase in power and delayed buildup of lactic acid in intense anaerobic exercise. There was some evidence that creatine may be useful in some power sports or those where maximal activity occurs in very short bursts. It would appear to be totally ineffective in endurance events.

Caffeine did improve muscle performance in doses well above those found in your average cup of coffee! The doses involved would have been sufficient to cause side effects such as palpitations, tremor, nightmares, irregular heart rhythms etc

Iron supplements in adults who aren't iron deficient appeared to make no difference to performance in swimmers.

Alcohol impairs performance during consumption and during its metabolism afterwards – as my wife keeps telling me!

Minerals have not been shown to improve performance. Vitamin supplementation in athletes with an adequate vitamin status has no effect on physical working capacity. Possible exceptions may be the use of vitamin E at high altitudes and for the use of vitamin C and multiple B-vitamin supplements in hot climates.

What about the older athlete? I hear you cry. For the older athlete who is competing in high-intensity endurance exercise little evidence supports the use of ergogenic aids, such as supplements and unusual food products.

The American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada, and the American College of Sports Medicine thought that Vitamin and mineral supplements are not needed if adequate energy to maintain body weight is consumed from a variety of foods. However, athletes who restrict energy intake, use severe weight-loss practices, eliminate one or more food groups from their diet, or consume unbalanced diets with low micronutrient density may require supplements.

One of the problems of nutritional supplements is that some of them are contaminated with banned substances and other ingredients not listed on the packaging. Sometimes this may be

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Hypothermia and Fell Running

continued from page 1

ground and rewarm the body slowly. Don't forget to remove wet clothing; the body cools much quicker when wet. Get off the hill if possible. Do not apply direct heat (eg heat pads, standing in front of a fire, sitting on a radiator).

Warm, sweet drinks, high energy food and gels will help replace lost energy and warm from the inside out **if the casualty is able to swallow**. Do not give alcohol or caffeine. Treatment and movements should be gentle as rough handling, rapid movements and vigorous rubbing can cause cold blood to rush to heart and brain. This is likely to cause Ventricular Fibrillation (VF arrest) – otherwise known as a cardiac arrest. If the casualty is unconscious check the air way but if you cannot find a pulse do not attempt resuscitation unless you can keep up CPR until you can get to a hospital. There is a Mountain Rescue adage that a Hypothermic victim is not dead until they are warm and dead. Survival rates from Hypothermia can still be quite high even for those found with no apparent signs of life.

Finally, never underestimate the value of encouragement and a good hug; a positive attitude and shared body heat can make a massive difference to recovery.

Of course prevention is better than cure.

Basic physics states that energy can be conserved and converted. In fell running terms that is wearing the right clothes and eating the right foods. Make sure you take on enough food before & during a run. Recognising when you need to take in more food and water, when energy levels are dropping and you are in danger of pushing yourself too far is key, not only to improving performance but, preventing Hypothermia. It's worth bearing in mind that if you are recovering from an illness particularly cold or flu you are much more susceptible.

Make sure you understand the gradual effects of cold and make allowances for wind chill. Warm, dry clothing is important in staving off both Immersion and Exhaustion Hypothermia. Pay particular attention to the extremities, especially head, neck and hands. When checking for a pulse, it is particularly important to keep these "Arterial" areas warm. They have a high volume of blood, close to the surface of the skin. Think how we instinctively tuck our chins on to our chests and hide in a high collar when it's cold, but "expose" our necks

when it's warm. These are examples of the body instinctively doing the right thing.

Dress for the conditions;

We have all seen runners on cold days in vest and shorts that must use more energy keeping warm than keeping their legs moving. Minimum kit levels are decreed by FRA race rules but consider whether minimum kit is sufficient for your needs and then use it. In the 2007 Edale Skyline a number of runners were afflicted with hypothermia despite carrying minimum kit. In some cases it was because they were indeed carrying it rather than wearing it and eating it. Marshalls reported having to dress and feed runners because fingers were no longer capable of opening a bum bag or gel

pack. Interestingly, this occurred more with faster runners (who presumably thought they were not going to be out long enough to get hypothermic or were generating sufficient heat through their running) than the slower ones.

In respect of other kit, survival bags are better than blankets for retaining heat. Plastic backed foil does not tear as easily as foil on its own whilst retaining a weight benefit over plastic alone. Remember however foil only work with reflected heat; if you are very cold, there is little heat to be reflected back. If you are going out as a group think about sharing the weight to include a group shelter and emergency kit, especially at night.

It can take experience and a brave decision not to push on, especially when

in a group. Always work to the ability and condition of the weakest member of the group and perhaps arrange a buddy system to make sure everyone has an eye kept on them. In any combination of WET, WIND AND COLD be more cautious. These are the killers. As a general rule, if conditions are such that you have to ask whether to go on, the answer is probably 'no'.

Our bodies have remarkable ability to generate and conserve heat but in extremes of environment we need to give a helping hand.

Many thanks to the doctors and medics of Woodhead Mountain Rescue Team for their input in verifying the technical details and to my fellow fell runner for his honesty in providing the case study shown below.

Case Study

This incident happened at Tanky's Trog as remembered by those who were there

The runner's story . . .

Around Hey Moss before the first CP I took a dunking in a bog. I went in over my waist but as I was running the momentum of moving forward caused my body to flop forward when I was already waist deep. As a result all the front of my chest and neck became wet. I got out and carried on through CP1 over the road and towards Lawrence edge. As we started to climb up we were hit by the hail storm. I started to feel a little cooler but not cold. Once at the top we started running again. I started feeling tired and lethargic. I thought I was starting to bonk a bit so I had some jelly babies and an oat biscuit – during this time we (I was running with my mate Chris; we had agreed beforehand to stick together) slowed down to a run / walk. I was feeling ok apart from having no energy. Chris was talking to me and said I seemed "normal" but I couldn't shake off the lethargy and get moving properly again.

We stopped for a minute and I put on my mountain wind proof over my other tops. I already had on 2 long sleeved tops, club vest with my OMM smock over the top as well as a hat and tights. We then saw a MR guy about 1k from snake pass. We stopped and spoke to him for a minute and he gave me ½ a cup of coffee. After drinking the coffee I felt a lot better, unfortunately it didn't last long. I then told Chris that I was going to retire at the next CP as I didn't feel up to it. Once at Snake Pass I told Chris to leave me and that I would make my own way down the road to CP2. By the time I got to Birchen Clough car park I felt lousy. Being a cheeky bugger I asked a guy in a Saab estate, who was supporting some other runners, if he would give me a lift to Snake Inn which he did. Once there I retired from the race and went inside to keep warm.

In the pub I stripped off my wet tops and put a dry one on, got a

coffee and some food from the bar (glad I didn't get a pint or who knows what state I would have been in). I stood next to the fire to warm through – this was a big mistake. Once by the fire I started shivering slightly – this was the first time I had shivered all day. The shivering became a bit more violent. I ordered another coffee.

Shortly afterwards one of the MR medics came in. The bar maid was a little bit concerned about me and asked if they could check me out. I agreed to this. I then heard a voice say do you realise your face and lips are blue? 'No', was the answer. Then someone asked me to stick my tongue out, and I heard someone say your tongue is blue. I am not a doctor but I know that wasn't a good sign. The MR medic and doctor put their hands in to my arm pit and said I was very cold. The next 5 to 10 min's are a bit of a blur but I remember been asked if I minded stripping off my damp socks and leggings and putting some more dry clothes on. Again I agreed and before I knew it I had been stripped and redressed in dry warm clothes, moved away from the fire, my feet elevated and I was given 2 sweet cups of hot chocolate, had a gel pack squeezed in to my mouth and a temperature probe shoved under my arm pit – my core temp was recorded at 33.4C – not good.

My pulse was checked and was 89bpm which I am told is fairly high. My details were taken and a log filled out.

In amongst all the above a brief discussion was held by the MR about calling the air ambulance out – thankfully it didn't come to that!

The MR team then monitored and chatted to me for the next 45 min's until my core temperature rose to 36.9C

By this time Chris had finished the race and driven around to the Snake Inn. He retrieved my warm dry clothes from the car and I changed

in to those before being sent on my way.

On reflection hypothermia snuck up on me. Chris and I kept talking to one another and looking out for any symptoms as we run but there were not the obvious ones like shivering, confusion, slurred speech. With hindsight other more subtle symptoms were there like coldness, tiredness and lack of energy but these can also be the product of a day out on a cold hill.....

The Medic's Story . . .

"The casualty had already been seen by me in the car park and I had offered him a blanket which he refused. Interesting how he can't remember talking to me and the team doctor after being dropped off.

He sat right in front of the fire which caused a rapid re distribution of warm/cold blood causing classic 'after drop'. His 2 cups of coffee were espresso, the caffeine content of which would help along the hypothermia by stimulating him further. Caffeine, like alcohol, predisposes a person to hypothermia. The lift in the car would have further added to the cooling process as he had stopped exercising. Humans are homoeothermic; we generate heat through exercise.

The lethargy he describes is the early onset symptoms of hypothermia. By the time he hit the pub he was probably heading into the second stages which had been helped by incredibly rapid rewarming in front of that fire, being a fit fell runner probably helped fight off unconsciousness less fit individuals may not have been so fortunate.

He was given sweet warm food and drink, glucogel (23g 40% Dextrose), and changed wet for dry clothes and put into a casualty bag(big fleece sleeping bag) at the back of the pub away from the fire.

The doctor will concur that the casualty was borderline severe hypothermia, and if left untreated would mostprobably have lost consciousness in the pub – it was his fitness that kept him fighting on so long."

CALENDAR UPDATE

MYNYDD SWTAN

Sunday 14th April
this race has been
cancelled.

MIDWEEK SERIES

Dates changes
Abergwyngregyn is now on
23rd April
3 Hills will be on 4th June.

The Inaugural Dark Mountains Mountain Marathon

Saturday, 26th January, 2013

by Ellie Salisbury

Back in November, when Nick Barrable (Ed) asked me to write an article about the Dark Mountains Mountain Marathon for CompassSport, in return for a free entry to the event for the Fabian4 Team (Adrian Moir and myself), it seemed like a jolly good idea. After all, I like anything that's going free, and I also quite like writing articles, and since there was a high chance of running on crisp snow in glorious full moonlight, I decided it was an offer Adrian and I shouldn't refuse.

What I hadn't banked on was that:

Adrian would have been up all night the night before filling in our tax self-assessment forms, and was therefore already in sleep-deprived mode [AM – it was only until 01:55 which is early for me!]

having just finished a course of antibiotics for a particularly bad cat bite at work (I am a vet in my day job), I would be starting to go down with the dreaded 'flu lurgy' that had laid Adrian low all over Christmas and New Year

the RAC website would be reporting on Saturday morning that the main route along the Southern Lakes was still blocked with snow

the weather forecast for that night would have been as shown below:

It didn't bode well for either of us! However, off we went up to the southwest Lake District, and thence to the spectacular Muncaster Castle (roads now passable), where the event was based. This historic 'haunted' castle has been the residence of the Pennington Family since 1208, and it proved to be an interesting event centre.

As we drove the last few 100ms, and then as we walked in the pouring rain and wind from the car park to registration, laden with all our bags which were already soaking, we saw a few teams who'd already begun their long night, (start times were from 19.00hrs – 22.52hrs), and I began to wonder if we'd made a terrible mistake.....

However, as soon as we entered the registration area, we were given a great welcome by the organizing team, and seeing fellow competitors making their final preparations and drinking tea soon helped to get the adrenaline flowing. A very thorough kit check was undertaken on all competitors, and any lack of compliance with the compulsory items list would have meant that registration would have been disallowed. All the usual mountain marathon essentials were on the list, including tent and cooking stuff, but obviously, the head torch had to be of sufficient strength, and a spare battery was compulsory. We were looking forward to putting our Christmas 1500 lumen torches to the test!

By the time we'd walked the 2k to the start, we'd already changed our minds numerous times on exactly what to wear. It was raining heavily, but it didn't feel that cold, and we were anxious not to get too warm while run-

ning. This is what we eventually opted for:

I wore thin lycra tights and pertex over trousers (OMM 1998 in the Cheviots and Borrowdale OMM 2008 are the only other times I've ever worn over trousers in a mountain marathon or race). My OMM kamleika trousers were in my pack. Adrian wore shorts (?!?) and gortex over trousers, and carried his KimmLite tights.

I wore a gore long-sleeved top, a pertex/primaloft gilet and my Haglofs smock, while Adrian wore a LAMM short-sleeved wicking top, a fleece and his Haglofs smock. I carried another gore windstopper long-sleeved top and Adrian carried a thicker fleece.

We both wore neoprene socks, and I also 'wore' my LAMM foot bags, as I knew we'd be tramping through lots of snow and freezing water. They were remarkably comfortable, but didn't provide the extra warmth I'd hoped for.

I wore gore windstopper mittens and gortex over mittens, and carried spare mittens and handwarmers. Adrian's hands were bare, and unbelievably remained so the whole time we were out, although he was carrying his Lowe Alpine powerstretch gloves and his Dachstein mittens. My big problem is Raynaud's Syndrome, and I really suffer as soon as my fingers and toes become wet or are exposed to cold air. Because we both had to dib at the controls, and our SI dibbers had been secured to our wrists, I had to take my over mitts off fairly early on, in order to be able to dib, and therefore my right hand became cold and very painful after a matter of only a few minutes.

Adrian wore his Rab hat. I wore a silk balaclava and a buff round my neck, and I carried my Rab hat and another spare fleece buff.

We had entered the 8hr score class, but this had been reduced to 7hrs due to the implementation of "bad weather courses"! By just before 11pm, we were off, and for the first hour or so, appeared to be going quite well, despite my feeling rather under the weather. In less than quarter of an hour, we arrived at our first chosen checkpoint on a summit cairn, and were soon running along quite happily to our number 2 on a small knoll half a kilometre away. It was on the way to our next control that I already began to realize the enormity of what we'd taken on. It was now raining very hard, the wind was incredibly fierce, and the freezing water, ice patches and tussocks made running very difficult, so we weren't really going fast enough to keep warm. However, we plodded on, and half an hour later, we arrived at our next chosen check point on the top of another knoll, which was amongst a few knolls and re-entrants grouped together, but thankfully, Adrian found it fairly easily [AM great technical terrain in the dark – orienteers will love it].

Next came the first of the two compulsory controls at a gate indicating the start of a marked route through a large out-of-bounds area. As this route was flat, and along a road (albeit a very wet one!) sheltered by hedges, forward progress was easy for the first time since the start, and Adrian began to plan our route in earnest. We decided to head for the bunch of 30-pointers in the middle of the map, and he devised a cunning route to incorporate them and a few others, which would get us to the second compulsory control in time to run along the taped route to the finish. However, as soon as we left the taped route and started climbing to our chosen fifth control, conditions became difficult again, and our pace was frustratingly slow. We were climbing steeply and finding it difficult to get our fell shoes to grip on the mud/soft snow (although we did have Kahtoola microspikes in our packs which may have helped). The slush and running water, which were unavoidable, were absolutely freezing cold, so now I had acutely painful toes as well as fingers, but tried to keep my concerns to myself and just keep going [AM – my legs were a bit chilly in the shorts too!]. After all, I'd completed the unforgettable 1998 KIMM, and 73 other mountain marathons – this one wasn't going to beat me!

We made it, eventually, to our next control, and headed off to our sixth on the top of quite a high, exposed summit. The approach to this involved a trudge up through soft snow, knee-deep in places, and just short of the narrow summit plateau, we passed a couple of teams who were squatting behind a boulder attempting to put on some extra clothes. If we'd known then that this was to be the last 'sheltered' spot (and we're talking in relative terms here – big time) for the next few kilometres, we'd have done the same. Once on the summit plateau, the strength of the wind was like hitting a brick wall – it became almost impossible to make any sort of forward progress. In order to be able to tolerate the wind, and not lose our maps, we had to almost lie down to dib the control. Taking my mittens off to dib here was, I think, the final straw for me. It was on our way off the summit, still battling against fearsome winds, that I managed to make Adrian hear me say that I thought we should head back. I told him that I was seriously cold, and that I hadn't yet eaten anything, as I couldn't face taking my mittens off to grab my bars/jelly babies. Had I been able to bear the thought of stopping, and more significantly, taking off my smock-top and my mittens again in order to put on my spare clothing, perhaps I would have been able to warm myself up and continue, but it all seemed so complicated and so painful, I couldn't bear to try. He suggested we carried on in the direction we were heading, down to a path heading westwards along the valley from Devoke Water, (which is, in

accidentally, the largest tarn in the Lake District – not that I was bothered to appreciate that at the time!) in the hope that we'd find somewhere sheltered where we'd feel more able to face going through the whole extra-clothing procedure.

Sadly, the said 'somewhere sheltered' never materialized. Indeed, we appeared to be trudging down a featureless, exposed hillside, without even a boulder in sight, and having to wade across perishing Linbeck Gill was the deciding factor. We both agreed to call it a day, grabbing the second compulsory control on our way back. After all, if your emergency fall-back is your tent, and you can't put your tent up because of the unrelenting wind, and the ankle-deep freezing water, it's time to be sensible, and make the decision to get off the hill. My added worry was that, being an insulin-dependent diabetic, I need to carry out regular blood tests, and doing so under such conditions would have been nigh on impossible, which could have serious implications.

I'm not one to bottle easily – my diabetes hasn't stopped me trekking in the Himalayas, the Andes, on Mt Kenya and Kili, and I've never retired from a mountain marathon, but it's through experiencing/surviving such adventures that one learns about oneself and one's limits, and enables one to make informed, appropriate decisions in all sorts of situations. It's part of why we do these mad things – it's character-building stuff, and we relish the challenge of the mountains and the elements, but we are also keenly aware of the dangers, and always endeavour to take only calculated risks, and make sensible decisions about when to give up, thus maximizing our chances of still being alive and ready for the next adventure! Adrian pointed out that as we were doing the score course, and we would have visited both compulsory controls by the time we'd finished, we weren't technically giving up, although it did seem like it at the time.

Decision made, I began to feel less anxious, despite still being unbearably cold and wet, and we began the long 2.5k trudge South-West to the second compulsory control at the gate indicating the start of the taped route to the finish. Well I say 'taped' – it was taped, and also extremely well marked with glow sticks. Goodness knows how many of these the course planner had put along the route through the 'killer bogs'! (as described by the organizers!). That really must have been a labour of love, but was very much appreciated. The route in took us over half an hour, so slow was my progress with my painful toes. It was such a relief to arrive at the finish, and enter the comfort of an old stone outhouse, where we received the most fantastic, and for me unforgettable welcome from 3 wonderful marshals, who for all I remember, might well have put a fun

continued on page 8

South Wales Winter Hill Series 2012-2013 Final Table

	Name	Club	Cat.	Fan Fawr		Sugar Loaf		Blorengre		Skirrid		Tor y Foel		Nant y Groes		Pentir		Llanthony		Total
				Time	Score	Time	Score	Time	Score	Time	Score	Time	Score	Time	Score	Time	Score	Time	Score	
1	Peter Ryder	CRB	M	18.35	108.11	40.06	103.57	26.42	100.82	36.31	93.54		0.00		0.00	0.00	32.16	103.42	509.46	
2	Richard Johnson	Mdu	M40	18.59	106.13	43.17	95.92	28.01	95.93	37.30	90.67		0.00	33.09	98.35	33.30	99.94	34.13	97.59	497.94
3	Max Suff	Hereford	M50		0.00	47.34	85.62	30.00	88.56	37.01	92.08	38.20	93.35	32.12	101.27	34.31	96.90	34.28	96.84	480.44
4	Kevin Hagley	SWRR	M50	20.51	96.90	47.24	86.02	31.53	81.56	36.49	92.66	39.26	90.29		0.00	34.35	96.70	35.59	92.30	468.86
5	Peter Sowerby	Brecon AC	M40	22.24	89.24		0.00		0.00	38.08	88.82	38.05	94.05	32.47	99.48		0.00	37.36	87.46	459.04
6	Neil Lewis	Hereford	M40	21.10	95.34	46.45	87.58	30.19	87.38	38.32	87.66	40.42	86.77		0.00		0.00	37.56	86.46	444.73
7	Robin Smith	u/a	M		0.00	49.35	80.77	35.40	67.51	41.19	79.54	42.24	82.04	34.28	94.32	37.10	88.99	37.49	86.81	432.92
8	Mark Cason	u/a	M40	24.25	79.26	50.32	78.49		0.00	0.00	50.07	60.57	33.30	97.28	37.22	88.39	40.31	78.73	422.15	
9	Peter Williams	MDC	M50	23.37	83.22	51.23	76.44	32.55	77.72	40.25	82.17	45.10	74.34	33.51	96.21	39.22	82.42	40.55	77.53	421.74
10	Dominic Shields	S Domenico	M40	23.15	85.03	51.46	75.52		0.00	42.52	75.02	43.15	79.67	33.11	98.25	39.14	82.82		0.00	421.29
11	Edward Dickson	MDC	M		0.00	52.44	73.20		0.00	41.21	79.45	41.25	84.77		0.00	36.26	91.18	36.03	92.10	420.69
12	Niki Morgan	Chepstow	F40		0.00	50.50	77.77		0.00	40.57	80.61	43.39	78.56	33.58	95.85	38.14	85.80	42.30	72.79	418.59
13	Simon Blease	CRB	M50	22.43	87.67	49.19	81.41	33.56	73.95	42.00	77.55	41.11	85.42		0.00		0.00	39.03	83.12	415.17
14	Steve Littlewood	Hereford	M60	23.10	85.45	50.34	78.41	34.22	72.34	41.23	79.35	42.44	81.11	36.13	88.95		0.00	42.11	73.74	413.26
15	Richard Wall	Hereford	M50		0.00	58.28	59.41	34.14	72.83	42.19	76.63	43.27	79.12	32.55	99.07	38.34	84.81		0.00	412.45
16	Ben Moon	MDC	M		0.00		0.00		0.00	36.07	94.70	36.00	99.84		0.00	31.37	105.57	33.39	99.28	399.39
17	Rhys Williams u23	N Emlyn	Mu23	25.03	76.13	53.57	70.27	35.35	67.82	42.22	76.48	45.12	74.25		0.00	38.36	84.71	38.41	84.22	395.79
18	Thomas Burden	u/a	M		0.00	42.20	98.20	27.32	97.72	34.48	98.54		0.00		0.00		0.00	33.18	100.33	394.80
19	Steve Herrington	Hereford	M60		0.00	51.11	76.92		0.00	43.25	73.42	42.55	80.60	37.47	84.15		0.00	43.17	70.45	385.54
20	Andy Stott	MDC	M50		0.00		0.00	36.45	63.48	42.59	74.68	43.11	79.86		0.00	39.19	82.57	40.29	78.83	379.42
21	Paul Chester	FRA	M		0.00	45.46	89.95	30.05	88.25		0.00	37.14	96.41		0.00		0.00	33.54	98.53	373.14
22	Les Williams	Eryri	M60	26.18	69.95	56.25	64.34	37.44	59.83	46.58	63.07	48.15	65.76	36.44	87.37	42.00	74.55	43.39	69.35	366.98
23	Katie Beecher	Les Croupiers	F		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	41.18	85.10	33.32	97.18	36.12	91.88	39.52	80.67	354.83
24	Mike Harris	MDC	M50	25.14	75.23	56.13	64.82	39.57	51.60	50.01	54.18	50.25	59.73	38.52	80.83	43.57	68.73	48.33	54.68	349.33
25	Richard Mordey	S Domenico	M40	24.27	79.10	51.23	76.44		0.00		0.00		0.00	34.01	95.70	39.49	81.07		0.00	332.31
26	Naomi Prosser	Cardiff U	Fu23	25.46	72.59	58.21	59.69		0.00	47.31	61.47	48.02	66.36		0.00	43.17	70.72		0.00	330.83
27	Gavin Brace	u/a	M		0.00		0.00	35.02	69.86		0.00	41.46	83.80		0.00	37.24	88.29	38.52	83.67	325.62
28	Martin Lucas	MDC	M50	27.24	64.51	59.31	56.89	42.06	43.61	52.40	46.45	50.50	58.57	38.50	80.93	45.58	62.70	50.43	48.20	323.60
29	Neil Grant	Chepstow	M60		0.00	51.39	75.80		0.00	40.53	80.81	44.06	77.31		0.00		0.00	39.45	81.02	314.94
30	John Darby	MDU	M60	28.21	59.82	58.45	58.73		0.00	50.51	51.75	49.44	61.63		0.00	45.02	65.49	43.59	68.35	314.02
31	Clive Rowberry	Hereford	M50		0.00	57.31	61.69	38.53	55.56	47.53	60.40	50.32	59.41		0.00		0.00	45.17	64.46	301.52
32	Chris Atherton	Maldwyn	M		0.00		0.00		0.00	37.53	89.55	39.44	89.46	32.03	101.73		0.00		0.00	280.74
33	Wyn Davies	MDU	M40		0.00	64.06	45.86	45.50	29.74	55.08	39.26	51.55	55.56	38.11	82.92	49.40	51.65		0.00	275.26
34	Rhodri Evans	Pontypridd	M		0.00		0.00	30.10	87.94	36.39	93.15	38.17	93.49		0.00		0.00		0.00	274.58
35	Anna Auchterlonie	Eryri	F		0.00	63.51	46.47	43.05	39.96		0.00	52.41	53.43	40.17	76.48		0.00	50.36	48.55	264.88
36	John Aggleton	MDC	M50		0.00	49.14	81.61		0.00		0.00	40.06	88.44		0.00	35.52	92.87		0.00	262.92
37	Stewart Thomson	MDU	M50	28.19	59.98	55.04	67.59		0.00		0.00	46.33	70.49	44.11	64.52		0.00		0.00	262.58
38	Janet Richards	MDU	F40	29.39	53.39		0.00		0.00	58.40	28.96	51.45	56.02	43.35	66.36	50.19	49.71		0.00	254.45
39	Paul Tucker	u/a	M40	23.38	83.14		0.00	32.47	78.22		0.00		0.00		0.00	37.24	88.29		0.00	249.65
40	Rob Brown	Chepstow	M60	29.24	54.62	66.51	39.25	44.45	33.77	56.49	34.35		0.00	41.34	72.55	50.45	48.42	56.54	29.69	249.19
41	Gerry Ashton	Chepstow	M50		0.00		0.00		0.00	47.31	61.47	52.53	52.87		0.00	44.14	67.88	45.25	64.06	246.28
42	Chris Taylor	Mercia	M50		0.00	52.02	74.88		0.00		0.00	42.09	82.73		0.00	37.35	87.74		0.00	245.36
43	Steve Brown	MDC	M50	32.34	38.96	59.05	57.93	44.50	33.46	58.52	28.38	53.51	50.18	44.58	62.12		0.00		0.00	242.65
44	Martyn Peters	u/a	M60	30.56	47.04	66.22	40.41	47.00	25.41	55.43	37.56	54.30	48.37	48.34	51.08		0.00	51.37	45.51	232.42
45	Andrew Ellison	Rhondda	M	24.14	80.17	51.13	76.84		0.00	44.38	69.87		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	226.89
46	David Smout	MDU	M60		0.00	52.49	73.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	40.08	80.13	42.22	73.19	226.32
47	Robert West	MDC	M70	29.31	54.05	67.59	36.53	43.34	38.16		0.00	58.27	37.38		0.00	51.05	47.42	51.19	46.40	223.42
48	Dick Finch	MDC	M60		0.00		0.00	42.47	41.07	51.26	50.05	53.52	50.13	39.37	78.53		0.00		0.00	219.78
49	Andrew Dickens	MDU	M40		0.00		0.00		0.00	44.24	70.55	46.28	70.72		0.00	41.46	75.25		0.00	216.53
50	Anne Marie Harris	MDU	F40	30.05	51.24	60.19	54.96	38.59	55.19	50.52	51.70		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	213.09
51	Duncan Birtwistle	Harrogate	Mu23		0.00	39.52	104.14		0.00	31.45	107.43		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	211.57
52	Sharon Woods	MDU	F50		0.00		0.00	37.20	61.32	45.14	68.12		0.00		0.00	41.20	76.54		0.00	205.99
53	Chris Jones	MDC	M		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	36.08	99.47		0.00	32.09	103.97		0.00	203.44
54	Mike Fawcett	Wye V	M40		0.00		0.00		0.00	36.43	92.95		0.00		0.00		0.00	33.56	98.43	191.39
55	Sasha Habgood	MDU	F40		0.00	56.52	63.26		0.00	46.05	65.65	49.32	62.19		0.00		0.00		0.00	191.09
56	Stuart Moore	Wye V	M40		0.00		0.00	29.36	90.04		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	34.05	97.98	188.03
57	Lou Summers	Chepstow	F40		0.00	61.50	51.31		0.00		0.00	48.58	63.77		0.00	43.24	70.37		0.00	185.45
58	Mike Link	Hereford	M40		0.00	45.55	89.59		0.00	36.15	94.31		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	183.90
59	Richard Davies	Eryri	M50		0.00	58.19	59.77	38.02	58.72		0.00	48.27	65.20		0.00		0.00		0.00	183.69
60	Bryan Lloyd	u/a	M50		0.00	56.15	64.74	40.57	47.88		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	43.27	69.95	182.57
61	Huw Jackson	u/a	M		0.00		0.00		0.00	37.11	91.59	40.38	86.95		0.00		0.00		0.00	178.55
62	Paul Satchell	u/a	M50	27.08	65.83	58.04	60.37	40.03	51.23		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	177.43
63	Mark Saunders	MDC	M50		0.00		0.00		0.00	38.52	86.69	39.40	89.64		0.00		0.00		0.00	176.33
64	Steve Ironside	u/a	M		0.00		0.00		0.00	39.04	86.10	39.53	89.04		0.00		0.00		0.00	175.14
65	James Ballard	u/a	M		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	40.49	86.44		0.00	37.23	88.34		0.00	174.78
66	Steven Atherton	FRA	M50		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	45.47	72.62	33.10	98.30		0.00		0.00	

Martin Lucas Reviews the

South Wales Winter Hill Series

It's been a long and cold winter in the allegedly sunny south, and to make things even more challenging for the intrepid Winter Leaguers the series was increased to eight races for the first time. The soft-hearted organisers relented though by allowing 'best five from eight' to count towards the championship, but those who sought the coveted Walter Winter-league mugs for completing the series had to complete all eight races. Only four did so. Weather conditions varied from bearable (Fan Fawr) to knee-deep snow (Cwmnantygroes) via varying degrees of mud and wind (Tor y

Fthanking all the race organisers for oel, Skirrid, etc). As well as tion must go to the marshals for standing –generally with good humour– on freezing hillsides so that we can have our fun.

232 runners took part in the series, although of those 137 ran only once and thought better of doing another one.

Unfortunately due to a financial shortfall we were unable to award prizes for the minor places this year, except for the largest age group (M50) where Kevin Hagley (SWRR) got second place and fourth overall. As far as I can tell,

THE SERIES WINNERS WERE:

MALE		Pts.	
1st	Peter Ryder	u/40	Brycheiniog 509
2nd	Richard Johnson	o/40	Mynydd Du 497 (2nd overall)
3rd	Max Suff	o/50	HerefordM50 480 (3rd overall)
4th	Steve Littlewood	o/60	Hereford 413
5th	Robert West	o/70	MDC 223
FEMALE		Pts.	
1st	Niki Morgan	u/40	Chepstow 418 (12th overall)
2nd:	Katie Beecher	u/40	Les Croupiers 354
3rd:	Naomi Prosser	u/23	Cardiff Uni 330
4th:	Anna Auchterlonie	u/40	Eryri 264

putting on events in often challenging conditions, a special menPeter Ryder is the first person to win the

league three times.

For various reasons, after 20 seasons John Sweeting and I have decided it is time for new blood in the admin side of the winter league, and it seems several parties are keen to take the league into its third decade. Perhaps they can attract a major corporate sponsor? Anyway, to summarise 20 years in a few statistics:

There have been 132 winter league races since 1992.

1230 people have run at least once. 695 (over 50%) have run only once (!). Only 148 have run 10 or more racesbut 21 people have run 50 or more and have qualified for the coveted green sweatshirt.

Only three (John Darby, Sharon Woods and I) have competed in every season, and in 132 races of slipping and sliding only two people have ended up in hospital. Unfortunately I'm on that list as well!

The full results will doubtless be available on the WFRA and/or MDC websites once cleverer people than I have wrought their digital sorcery.

Remember- as they say about the Arctic Fell Race Series – you have to be Inuit to Winuit. Hope to see you all on a hill soon and thanks for your support over the last 20 years.

Six months in the hills of Snowdonia

Nina is washing dishes in the ice cold water of the spring next to our house, while I am digging a hole in which to bury the toilet bucket. I am labouring against frozen and sloping ground and cannot get one single satisfying shovelful of dirt as I am constantly colliding with roots and rocks. We are rushing as these chores have to be done before darkness closes in. Nina suffers from Raynaud's phenomenon and her fingers sting and go a deathly white in the freezing water. It may be better if we were to swap roles, but she washes faster than me and I dig faster than her. Moreover, although we have no showers or mirrors, and make-up and leg waxing seem like otherworldly extravagances, she is still my angel and I draw the line at her burying my shit.

After these jobs are done we will light a Tilly Lamp and candles, one of us will make dinner while the other starts a fire. It is around 3 C in the house at the moment, the temperature of a fridge, but we cannot burn our fire for too long as we live half way up a mountain with no road to the house. All wood and coal must be carried on our backs up a steep, rocky and boggy path that no 4x4 could negotiate.

After dinner we sit by the fire with a cup of tea and Radio 4. Nina makes some hot water bottles and we change into pyjamas (including night hats), then up to bed. It is even colder upstairs as the drafty house doesn't retain any heat from the fire. But the absolute stillness of living 2 miles away from our nearest neighbour, and the cold, fresh air always ensure we sleep deeply.

Nina's relatives own this little house called Gelli. A long time ago when the old place needed a new roof, Nina's dad helped his cousins to heave slate up the hill for a week. The herculean task earned him the freedom of the cottage. He and Nina's mum spent their honeymoon here.

Nina and I have been together, but apart, for the past 7 years. We were both getting tired of living away from each other (Nina in Oxford, and me in London) but neither wanted to relocate to the other's city. Somehow Gelli was mentioned as a compromise, we both laughed. But as time wore on and other options fell by the wayside, we couldn't think of a really good reason why not.

The house is largely empty over the winter as it is so cold and the days are short. But we have lived here every November for the past 6 years and reckoned we could handle it. We have no mortgage, no kids, and no responsibilities. The world wouldn't miss us terribly if we took 6 months out to have an adventure. The joke became more of an ambition, and something we got more and more excited about. We knew we may never have an opportunity like this again, so after receiving consent from the owners, we started planning our escape.

We both feel it has been a great decision for so many

reasons. In London you can't leave the house without throwing

away a tenner it seems. Trains, tube, pub, Starbucks, cinema, Pizza Express, where ever you turn it is all so expensive, crowded and prosaic. Here we can live on a very small budget, food and petrol being our only outgoings. Walking in the hills is free, as is sitting by the fire reading. Life is completely dictated by the weather, a few sunny weeks and we feel like Adam & Eve running round in the Garden of Eden, a few bad weeks (or months as the case seems to be) and we feel like Russian prisoners, sentenced to a term in a Siberian Gulag. But however bad it gets, we are always alive and a part of it.

North Wales is vastly superior to the city if you like running, and we both love running. We are spoilt for choice with beautiful woods, hills and beaches everywhere you look. We are still discovering new fantastic places to run.

Running is a daily necessity for us out here, and not because we are 'streaking' (I am referring to those who run every day, not those who run around naked). We recently had a rest day, and were miserable the whole time. It is just too cold to stay sitting about up in the house, no matter how many hot chocolates you make. The act of running does more than keep us fit; it keeps our metabolism high and our body temperature up. A one hour run can keep you warm for the rest of the day, it is an amazing resource.

Discoveries like this give us insights into the lives of those who inhabited this house 300 years ago. They must have had similarly cold, snowy winters where the only way to get warm, paradoxically, was to get out of the house, and get working.

Talking of discoveries, finding Fell Running and the WFRA has been like uncovering a jewel in a stash of gold! We urbanites are conditioned to the ubiquitous track and road races that all seem to blur into each other, so the colourful variety and excitement of fell racing has breathed life into our legs. The events we have taken part in have all been brilliant fun, taking us to new parts of North Wales we would never have found otherwise. The community is friendly and welcoming and we are loving being a part of it.

We hope to see you at the next race. You can't miss us, we are the couple with flies orbiting around our heads. We do miss having a hot shower every now and then! For more about our adventures in Gelli, check out our blog www.gellipower.wordpress.com

Russell Bentley



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Have you paid your 2013 subs?

Why not set up a Standing Order and take the hassle out of paying your future subs.

For S/O Mandate please contact the Membership Secretary at g7hgc@btinternet.com

Dick Finch Reports on South Wales Races

BLORENGE

1 December 2012

Young Simon Barnby, with a fell running background of running in the Howgills and representing England in the 2007 World Mountain Running Trophy, saw the Blorengge race listed on the WFRA website and travelled down to Llanfoist from his current base in Herefordshire. "Since 2007 I have kept the running up but racing has taken a bit of a back foot although I try to run the Yorkshire three peaks each year which is a particular favourite."

Simon snatched first place from last year's runner-up Paul Murrin with Pete Ryder in third place.

Ellie Salisbury travelled down to take the first woman's prize followed by Sharon Woods and AnneMarie Harris on the comeback trail following the birth of her first, Eden.

Other category winners were Gill Stott, Rich Johnson, Max Suff, Neil Lewis, Clive Rowberry, Steve Littlewood, Les Williams and Rob West.

A bright clear day gave marvellous views much appreciated by the 54 runners, as were Race Organisers' Jess and Chris Taylor's delightful post-race refreshments and the seasonal chocolate treats for all entrants.

SKIRRID

22 December 2012

20 year-old Bristol Uni undergrad Duncan Birtwhistle stopped off at the ancient Skirrid Inn on the Monmouthshire-Herefordshire border on the way back home to Yorkshire for the Christmas vacation.

The first running of this race to the summit of the Holy Mountain and back attracted 85 other runners, only one of whom, Andy Brown (of Lancashire's Clayton-le-Moors of all places), got to the summit before Duncan. But the Harrogate Harrier's dynamic descending got him to the finish line 100 seconds clear.

Only 27 seconds separated the first three women in what race organiser Andy Creber described as a thrilling sprint finish. Chepstow's form lady Niki Morgan beat Jean, another member of Clayton-le-Moor's Brown family, to first place, with MDC's Katey Roby just behind.

Jean Brown, Alice Bedwell, Gavin Fisher, Kevin Hagley and Neil Grant took overall age category prizes, while the novel 'fastest from summit to finish' trophies

went to Duncan Birtwhistle, Richard Johnson, Kevin Hagley, Neil Grant, Katey Roby, Jean Brown and Alice Bedwell.

KYMIN

5 January 2013

Local schoolmaster Huw Evans led Cardiff's Les Croupiers club in their race-within-a-race mob match against Chepstow Harriers in this now well established early year opener to the fell season.

Huw said after that he was pleasantly surprised to get to the finish line ahead of Chepstow's Paul Murrin after a neck-and-neck contest that saw Huw inch away as he reached family support at the top of the final climb to the Kymin Naval Temple and Round House.

Chepstow's Matt Stott took third place setting the stage for a ding-dong inter-club battle, 70 of the 121 entrants belonging to either club.

Jane Horler led the women's race from start to finish with Chepstow colleague Niki Morgan and Les Croupier's Claire Beatty and Marcia Smith following.

Pete Ward, Max Suff, Steve Herington and Alice Bedwell left the Mayhill pub with age category prizes after helping to demolish the sausage and chips post-race spread.

And the mob match? Well Chepstow outnumbered and out-pointed Les Croupiers on this occasion. But next year ...?

TOR Y FOEL

12 January 2013

Another Day on the Bare Mountain Just one runner short of the century for the second running of this South Wales Winter League race, despite Met Office warnings of thick fog, blizzards and strong winds. There was a snow flurry on the 550 metre top, but visibility was crystal and the wind barely noticeable.

Race Organiser Les Williams was delighted with the extra 40 runners that last year's initial running had attracted. Starting and finishing on Talybont dam wall, Tor y Foel offers plenty of flat running along the ancient dram road as well as the steep climb and descent to and from the bare mountain's summit.

Last year's winner Ben Moon was eventually squeezed into second place by Mynydd Du's Sean Taylor with Jason Rowley over from Somerset just four seconds back.

After a few months' absence

from the fells, Katie Beecher returned to head Katie Roby by just 24 seconds with Sharon Leech a further 36 seconds away and first F40.

Other age group winners were Alice Bedwell, Patrick Wooddisse, Paul Jeggo, Steve Littlewood and Rob West.

Thanks to all marshals and the supplier of the tasty post-race refreshments.

CWM NANT Y GROES

26 January 2013

Snow drifting to waist height and the near impossibility of laying a clear route - let alone following it - made this shortened first running of this South Wales Winter League race a great leveller with less than two minutes covering the first 14 runners.

Full body cover was prescribed, and those hardy souls who chose to carry theirs suffered painful nicks on their legs when ploughing through the ice-coated drifts in the highest regions.

Stressed organiser Rich Johnson's plans to arrive early enough to do a thorough job of flagging the white wastes of the Abertillery mountain were thwarted by his car getting stuck fast in the compacted snow in the steep streets of Six Bells. He did his best in the time available and then joined the race from the back in time to catch and show the main bunch the way!

Chris Atherton in just vest and shorts finally prevailed on the slushy run-in just nine seconds before M50 Max Suff and M40 Peter Sowerby.

Katie Beecher followed up her come-back win at Tor-y-Foel by pipping Niki Morgan by less than half a minute, with Anne Auchterlonie taking third.

Steve Littlewood finally won the tight battle of the 60 year-olds over close rivals Les Williams and Steve Herington.

Before distributing the prizes, Organiser Johnson rightly paid due homage to the intrepid marshals for their reassuring and encouraging work in the frozen wastes.

PEN TIR DROP

26 February 2013

Eventual winner Ben Moon was pressured by young Chris Jones until the turn at Pen Tir cairn, but thereafter steadily pulled away to establish a half-minute finishing lead. His time of just over 31½

minutes seems a good target for future runnings of this new race considering that the published length of 5k was found to be over a mile short of the true distance!

M40 and M50 winners Rich Johnson and Max Suff were just two and three minutes abaft in third and fourth, Max having fought an epic tussle with rival age category man Kevin Hagley. Dai Smout and Rob West secured the remaining age group places.

Katie Beecher continued her winning streak in eighth place overall, with Niki Morgan and Erin Ballard atop the other podium platforms. Sharon Woods, F50 winner, was only one place behind.

The organiser was pleasantly surprised to hear that many runners had found a moment to enjoy the fine all-round views in the mild, clear conditions.

Thanks are due to marshals Kay Lucas, John Battersby and Gill Stott, as well as HQ workers Sue Ashton, Jess Taylor and Paula.

TOUR OF TORPANTAU

3 March 2013

Following the success of last year's first running of this 8 mile/2,500 feet-of-climb unmarked race, the 2013 Inov8 WFRA Open Welsh Championship began here in the cold and misty Brecon Beacons. Organiser Andy Blackmore was delighted with the increase in entrants from 22 last year to 82.

The Tour lived up to its designation of "Navigational Skills Required" as illustrated by the dozen or so who DNF'd plus a few others who put in some extra mileage!

But the leading trio of Tim Davies, Huw Aggleton and Pete Ryder navigated their route to the Cribyn and back in a skilful manner, with only descending and sprinting skills in the final stages determining the podium places in a thrilling finish.

Martin Cliffe took the M40 prize in fourth place with the next finisher 15 minutes behind - a gap that presumably would have been filled by some of the less navigationally-skilled front runners.

In the women's race Louise Barker pipped Katie Beecher in another close finish with Sandra Rowlands less than a minute back in third.

Susan Howarth, Maggie Oliver, Andy Stott (6th overall), Martin Cortvriend (9th overall) and Rob West completed the age cat winners.

Dark Mountain Marathon

continued from page 4

nel in my mouth to administer copious quantities of tea. Whatever, I drank masses of the stuff - the best I've ever tasted - without having to expend any effort, and they even got all my spare clothes out of my pack and fitted them onto me somewhere, somehow. By the end, I was wearing leggings, 2 pairs of overtrousers, my winstopper top and gilet, my spare windstopper top, Adrian's spare thick fleece, my Haglofs smock, my silk balaclava, my spare Rab hat and fleece headband, my buff and my spare fleece buff, my spare mittens and handwarmers! I don't think I would have done much on a catwalk, but I felt warm for the first time in 4 hours, and was happy at the thought of a walk back along a flat, sheltered road.

We arrived back at HQ to find that we were one of many teams who'd decided on an early finish, and we were warmly greeted by Shane Ohly, the race director, who explained to us that after downloading, we should help ourselves to the hot drinks and snacks provided, and then go and have a kip in the competitors' sleeping room. We were also given a ticket for the full-English which was being served from 6am. Significantly, the atmosphere there at HQ throughout the night was calm and happy - there was no suggestion of stress or worry from the organisers, and no suggestion of moaning or regret from the competitors. Indeed, everyone appeared to be in high spirits.

After all, we competitors all knew that in reality, the 'chance of running on crisp snow in glorious full moonlight' had been an extremely remote one, and Shane and Charlie Sproson (the course planner) knew that all those mad enough to enter would have been fully aware of what they were letting themselves in for, and would have the experience to cope with it.

My verdict? A fantastic idea and an amazing challenge - well done

to the organisers for having the guts not to cancel it, despite the weather, which made Day 1 of Borrowdale OMM 2008 seem like a walk in the park. On the day of the event, Shane quotes on the event website:

In the days preceding the event the planning team took a battering, whilst the Lake District fells were pummelled by gale force winds and blizzard conditions. By Friday evening, the night before the event, conditions on the hill were so poor that the organisers held a minuted meeting to discuss the weather, the risk to competitors and whether the event was still viable. Race Director Shane Ohly said, "We had all experienced the very serious weather that day and were genuinely concerned for the safety of the competitors should the event proceed".

Shane's post-event verdict? What the statistics don't tell you was the high degree of mountain sense that the competitors displayed. Many decided to cut their night short and head finish early, whilst some decided to camp on the fells and finish on Sunday. Without exception everyone arriving back at the Muncaster Castle Event Centre was in good spirits and had stories to share of the "worst weather ever". Marmot Dark Mountains promised to be a very serious test of competitors all round mountain craft and Saturday night certainly lived up to that expectation. The fact that there were no significant hypothermia problems, despite everyone arriving back wet and cold, speaks volumes about the sound mountain judgment each team displayed.

My regret? Not wearing more clothes from the start. Another quote from the website, post-event:

It was the elite course that had the highest finishing percentage and although the experience of the competitors is of huge significance here, a strategy of risking running hot (i.e. being slightly overdressed) rather than risking running cold seems to have been the winning formula.

In the end, only 4 teams finished the elite course, 3 teams finished A, no teams completed the B or C courses, and 18 finished (i.e. did at least the compulsory controls) from the original start list of 56 on the score course, of which we were the 15th. Perhaps we didn't do so badly after all.

Would I do it again? Despite being confined to bed with 'flu for the following three days, yes, I would, but I'd be dressed up in that not-one-for-the-catwalk-outfit

Secretary's Corner

The WFRA Committee held its first ever 'virtual Committee meeting' courtesy of video communication technology which enabled South Wales members to participate fully in the Committee's discussions. Despite a few glitches, the experiment was deemed a success, especially considering the environmentally damaging alternatives of long distance car journeys.

The meeting was productive with key focus being on progressing the WFRA's move to becoming an Incorporated Association (limited by guarantee), commensurate with the path taken by the Fell Runners Association in 2011. All members of the WFRA will have an opportunity to discuss and vote on this Incorporation proposal at a meeting later this year.

Other matters discussed included an updated Safety Code and the manner in which the WFRA can provide further support and encouragement to current and prospective Race Organisers - this was recognised as being important given the relative limited number of races insured by the WFRA in mid and South West Wales. The Committee would be delighted to hear from, and offer as much advice, guidance and practical assistance as necessary to any prospective Race Organisers.

Andrew Blackmore, Hon. Sec.

LLANBEDR TO BLAENAFON

6 April 2013

Clear blue skies greeted the 71 runners who turned up for the 33rd running of the (in)famous South Wales 3 Peaks fell race, which this year was the second counter in the W.F.R.A South Wales Race Series. Despite the relatively benign weather conditions, there was still plenty of compacted snow on the higher slopes, especially on the never ending climb up the face of the Bloreng and past the masts - this accounted for the generally slower times.

Whilst crampons would have been helpful on the climb up the Bloreng, a number of runners would also have benefited from use of a wet suit, as there were tales of deceptively deep pools of water on the tracks immediately above Blaenafon, resulting in a few competitors taking an unexpected and unwelcome ice bath.

Once the race started 'proper' - on the bridgeway before the open fell below Crug Mawr, Hugh Aggleton, MDC took the lead and held it consistently throughout the race to finish in a commendable 2:15, somewhat 7 minutes slower than his previous PB. Hugh was using this race as his last serious effort before the London Marathon later this month.

In second place, with a time of 2:20 was race stalwart and first M40, Mark Palmer, Mynydd Du (who along with Ben Gibbison and Sean Taylor won the men's team prize), closely followed by Simon Barnby in third, a newbie to this race, but certainly a name to look out for in future.

Turning to the ladies, the race was won by Liza Barry of CLC Striders in a time of 2.52 with Louise Barker, Aberystwyth and Katy Roby, MDC close behind. Mynydd Du's Emma Bayliss, Sam

Toop and Sharon Woods won the female team prize.

Age cat. prizes went to Adrian Woods, Gary Gunner, Lou Summers and Sharon Woods.

Thanks as always to Chris and Dimitri for organising this wonderful 'daddy' of all South Walian fell races and of course to the marshals, helpers and supporters and the ever trustworthy John Chidlow.

Andy Blackmore.

SUPPLEMENTS

continued from page 2

"accidental" and at other times is deliberate. Several international standard athletes have tested positive for banned substances after consuming supplements they thought were safe.

One study gave participants a starch pill telling them it was performance enhancing. Not surprisingly they did well in ergonomic tests afterwards. This shows the strong effect of beliefs when it comes to the whole science of nutritional supplements. If you believe it's doing you good then it probably will make you run faster. Dumbo's magic feather does work - but it only enables you to do what you were already capable of!

So - do I take any supplements? The answer is yes, one, Glucosamine. This substance has been shown to reduce the rate of loss of joint space in people with established osteoarthritis of the knee. I take it on the basis that osteoarthritis only starts to produce symptoms once it is relatively far advanced. It is likely that as a 50 something year old athlete that I already have some arthritis that is not yet producing symptoms and by taking glucosamine I hope to prolong my fell running career. Is there evidence for this? Unfortunately not. At least it's cheap and unlikely to cause harm.

So, in summary, there are no short cuts, you have to train, drink plenty of fluids, take a carbohydrate of your choice with your fluids and afterwards head to the pub for a chicken curry arf'n'arf. The science supports you! (Reference available on request)

*Thanks . . .
to every one who
has contributed to
this newsletter.*

The next edition is due out in August.

The deadline for contributions is 20th July.

Geoff Clegg