

NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNERS  
1997 TO 2005  
and

SOME MEMOIRS

by

JOHN HUMBLE

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A NEW CHAPTER .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE N.F.R. 2005 PRESENTATION EVENING.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A NIGHT TO REMEMBER .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>THE N.F.R. CHAMPIONSHIP 1997 - 2004 .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>THE PRESENTATION EVENING FEBRUARY 11TH 1998 .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>THE CHAMPIONSHIP 2003 .....</b>	<b>60</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

I certainly had thought long and hard about an account of fell running and races in the Kielder area over recent years, and my love and happy memories of those fells, numerous as they are, but had not progressed beyond a brief preparatory introduction a few months ago. I had planned sending it out with the NFR Newsletter to all NFR members, but for one reason or another, no further progress was made.

The Northumberland Fell Runners 2005 Presentation Evening has certainly not only provoked that desire to continue, but also to expand upon that idea, and include some of my own life's experiences connected with the sport I love, namely fell running and fell racing.

Why write it? I suppose, because right at this moment, I want to do so, possibly because I want to pass on to my fellow fell runners, particularly those in NFR, my happy (and indeed some less happy) experiences connected with my love of the sport.

It may be that at the NFR Presentation Evening I was reminded, if indeed I could ever forget, what I did love of the wonderful sport of fell running. Paul Hainsworth on that evening happened to say to me as we were eating, something to the effect that he had gained the impression that I preferred the Northumberland hills to those more majestic hills in Lakeland. Without even considering the question, I immediately told him that I loved the Pennines and quite simply could imagine no greater exhilaration than running quickly off the top of a Pennine hill.

He went on to ask me if I had ever been in "the zone". I retorted that I had never really heard the expression, but when he explained the definition to me, I had probably been in it many, many times, namely to mention a few occasions, running off Kilhope Law in the Allendale Challenge, off Hedgehope in the Chevy Chase and perhaps of most notoriety, running off Deadwater Fell in the Kielder Yomp or Kielder Borderer Fell Race. I cannot ever remember having this feeling while walking.

Before the Presentation Evening I had either forgotten or shut my mind to the friendship and enthusiasm of those wonderful friends without whom fell running would mean so much less. Perhaps I suddenly came to the realisation that, within one year I had lost touch with my 'old' friends and those new members that on the evening I did not recognise. How could this happen when for so many years I knew them all, even if they did not know me? I even knew what times they achieved in races. Could one year really change things so much?

One such new member called Will said to me and Pam Armstrong something to the effect of "Have you been to one of these do's before?" - I did not know what to say and yet I felt I should have done. At that moment I did not even wish to acknowledge the fact that I had been at the heart of every one of those occasions. I suddenly felt not that he should know me, but, perhaps more that he should be able to know as soon as possible, as a novice to fell running, how much happiness, exhilaration and joy that I had gleaned from the sport over the years, and how those feelings had engendered and sown the seed of Northumberland Fell Runners in 1997. It was now my duty to pass this information on to him and others, and possibly remind the more established members, of its origins and the more memorable races and my highs and lows in them over the years.

I therefore write this account (a book is not intended, perhaps 'memoirs' would be more apt, although at this early stage in time I am not sure what its final form will take) of my life and fell running which are inexorably linked. It is really a soul searching account of my life and fell running, but where does it, or should I start?

Perhaps after my experiences of health problems in 2004, I need to draw an imaginary line under the past as far as my sport is concerned, perhaps as far as my life is concerned, and need to write this account for the sake of my future, rather than to progress with pessimistic regret.

I desperately do not want that Presentation Evening and the receiving of that most prestigious award (namely "Northumberland Fell Runners' Fell Runner of the Year") to place me in the history books with no new chapter and in complete oblivion, but rather to swell my enthusiasm for the future. "History" is a word I have used too often about me lately, but I now realize I do not want it to end.

Before that Presentation Evening and after my health problems this account would have been too sad for me to undertake, just as the book David Armstrong lent me "Feet in the Clouds" was too sad to read, but now my account is a positive gesture to draw an intermittent line on the past, and to prepare myself for the next exciting chapter.

## **A NEW CHAPTER**

### **THE N.F.R. 2005 PRESENTATION EVENING**

This seems a most unusual place to start, but I have chosen it because it was a turning point in my way of thinking. An NFR member once told me that after one of the presentation evenings he just simply could not wait to go out and run on the fells. That is probably how I have always approached the occasion of the Presentation Evening, a celebration of achievements and the kick start for the new season.

However, on this occasion I was quite adamant (and I told my wife Moira and some of my closest friends) that I was not going on this occasion. What could be my reasons for thinking this way?

I had lost touch with the club and those people in that club who were so dear to me. I had not run or raced for one year, I had not even resurrected my participation in the NFR e-group following the renewal of a computer. My fell shoes had fallen into pieces and I had mislaid my Fell Runners' Association renewal notice. I had to ask myself how I could lose touch with a club of which I was a founder member, a club that since its inauguration in 1997, had meant so much to me; it was almost part of me, a club with which I was immediately associated. I could never have imagined that the club could ever do without me.

#### **MY HEALTH**

On 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004, I realized that I suffered from angina. I was not diagnosed on that day but events that occurred left me with no doubts; I remember the date because it was my son Philip's 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

I went out for a jog, (nothing more) in Slaley Forest that morning before my son's birthday party at the Metro Centre. I jogged approximately half a mile and at that point could not breathe, my chest hurt and my throat suddenly burnt. It occurred to me that it could be nothing other than angina. Nothing other than that i.e. something affecting my heart and my ability to breathe and take oxygen could be so severe and bring me so suddenly to a complete halt.

Why I came to this realization so promptly I do not know, as I had only heard about angina as a rather general medical term in connection with the heart that happened to people other than me. How could it happen to me when I had been so fit? Perhaps I might have thought of myself as super-fit, training for the Allendale Challenge as I always did for many years at that time of year.

Angina had, until that moment, been a nebulous description for something (in my complete ignorance and naivety at that time), that people had when they

were not fit, those that smoked, those that drank alcohol, those that sat in armchairs taking no exercise and eating greasy foods. Angina I believed at that time was a name that covered everything to do with the heart and yet I could not understand why I knew so clearly I had it. Before the moment in the forest when I was stopped in my tracks angina meant everything and nothing, and yet I knew without any doubt I had it, and I was devastated.

I walked back to my car after a few minutes knowing something was seriously wrong. When arriving home I took out the Collins English dictionary and the definition of 'angina pectoris' fitted the description so aptly of what had overcome me a few minutes before, after jogging gently after five minutes on a reasonably cold, windy day, "recurrent pain in the chest and left arm, caused by a sudden decrease of blood to the heart". Two weeks prior to this, I had been troubled by one of the worst blisters I had ever received (not being one of those people that was particularly prone to such an affliction). I had gone out for a jog to see if my blister had recovered for running and now I was thinking about living and my whole future. How could this really happen to me?

I was in complete shock and did not know what to do. Thoughts such as "it might have been better to have had a heart attack" went through my mind - at least I would either be dead or it would be dealt with quickly and people might have believed what was happening to me.

All of a sudden on that day, previous experiences I had encountered all seemed to fit into place. There was the time two weeks earlier when my wife had deposited me at King's Law in Hexhamshire so that I could do one of my favourite training runs from that spot to Kilhope Law (673m) and back via Watson's Currock, Hangman Hill, Green Hill (527m) and Dirt Pot Allenheads. After having slowly jogged from King's Law to Watson's Currock (a distance of approximately half a mile) I had to stop and sit down after having experienced a feeling, or rather lack of feeling to be more exact, down the whole of my left side, a feeling of complete and utter debilitation. I thought I must have eaten too much, as I normally ran this hill; in fact I always ran the whole route because my mind said it was not the perfect training run if you walked any, no matter how slowly you ran at times.

Five minutes later, however, I was running again and completed the run with nothing worse than a very bad blister on my right heel after wearing untried and untested fell shoes. I felt very pleased as I had surpassed my previous best by not only running from King's Law to Kilhope and back, but on this occasion I had run from King's Law to Slaley as well.

One week earlier I had experienced similar sensations after jogging a quarter of a mile downhill from my house in Slaley to 'Curlew Cottage' with a fell running friend. I said to that friend Ben, "I have never had occasion to say

this to a fellow runner after a quarter of a mile of gentle running downhill, but I will have to stop because I have a strange sensation down my left side". Ben asked me quite calmly whether I was having a heart attack. I explained to him how I felt but he reassured me that I could not be having a heart attack as the pain would be on the right side not the left. I thought no more about it because in any case people like me were not prone to heart attacks. After about five minutes we ran on, completed the planned route (and an extra loop as well) and I arrived home one and a half hours later.

At 11am on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004 my life had changed. Everything was now fitting into place, even the occasions when I felt dizzy and disorientated and short of breath at the coaching football sessions with the junior football team.

Moirra reassured me that I must be the last person to have heart problems, but despite this, I knew with no doubt, that I had angina.

What next? Well, I had to try and concentrate on Philip's birthday party. Moirra received the brunt of my fears and I tried to cover it up from Philip. I was frightened and shocked.

The doctor subsequently thought angina was unlikely but possible, as my risk factors for heart disease seemed minimal.

The complaint was checked and to cut a long story short I was diagnosed with two arteries substantially blocked. The heart consultant said I was quite simply unlucky; I could have smoked all my adult life and he would not have expected arteries so blocked. After a few months and after many visits to the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle I was operated upon.

I was cured, yet the mental scars still remained, and I had received my invitation to the NFR Presentation Evening and had done nothing positive with it. Then I decided I was not going and gave various excuses. I could never have imagined that I could be in this position after seven years of complete involvement with NFR and in particular the presentation evening.

Moirra said I should go because I had a duty to support others. After indecisiveness and much prevarication I went, but as late as 5p.m. on the evening I was still having second thoughts.

I was nervous and apprehensive but went, and I am pleased I did as it has inspired me to put pen to paper.

## **A NIGHT TO REMEMBER**

This chapter also gives me the opportunity of thanking those people who worked so hard to make that evening such a success and a memorable occasion and I do hope that if there are any members who had second thoughts about this event that they should make sure they attend in 2006. It was also apt that those intrepid Antarctica explorers Conrad and Hilary Dickinson from Hexham were the guests, and while Conrad recounted their epic South Pole expedition, the two of them presented the awards to the successful NFR winners. Conrad's account was intriguing and inspiring, his selection of photographs unbelievable. It was apt for the roots of NFR that two established Northumbrians should be present on this occasion. I personally will always remember with pride the moment I was presented with my trophy from Hilary and the very kind words she spoke to me when she presented me with it. NFR - ITS ORIGIN

### How did Northumberland Fell Runners come about?

Firstly, it developed out of some of my disillusionment with the attitude of Tynedale Harriers and Athletic Club (of which I was a member since 1984) towards fell racing in general, combined with a positive desire to have my own fell running club. I mentioned the idea of a new Northumberland Fell Running Club to Matt Simms, Angus Tait and Stewart Beaty (all now current members of the present club) and they all thought the time was right and Matt Simms and I set about forming the new club. Matt seemed to have the same feelings as I did at the time, that the Tynedale Club did not have the kind of enthusiasm or ambition that we did.

Matt Simms had recently arrived from Derbyshire and had been a member of the Dark Peak Fell Running Club, and was at that time, as well as a member of the Fell Runners Association, the committee member looking after environmental issues appertaining to the sport. He was a keen fell racer and yachtsman and never "minced his words". He did not take to too much paperwork, just the essentials for the club, like a simple constitution which we worked out together, but otherwise in Matt's words "Our initial thought is that such a club would be a pretty loose grouping of fell runners with minimal organisation and finances etc etc". So read NFR's first letter to its prospective members, and that letter set out the broad principles of the club. It also set out details of that first famous meeting at the Dipton Mill Pub on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1997 at 7.45p.m.

I have included a copy of that first "Yours in Sport" letter from Matt which was the first correspondence about Northumberland Fell Runners as it subsequently became.

Dear Fell Runner,

### **A NEW FELL RUNNING CLUB FOR THE NORTH EAST**

It is in our experience that the few fell runners in our area are scattered across a number of athletics clubs - if you are like ourselves you may find yourself on the fringe of a club that doesn't really meet your needs. You may also feel that there is value in like minds joining together. If this is the case are you interested in forming a new dedicated fell club ?

Our initial thought is that such a club would be a pretty loose grouping of fell runners with minimal organisation and finances - that would provide a 'vest' and BAF affiliation to race under and enable us to assemble teams for relays and other events. We could also hold a club championship. Presumably we would only register with BAF for fell and cross country leaving members to pursue other events with their existing club should they so wish.

What do you think ? We are having an informal get together to discuss the idea and if people are agreeable to constitute a club. Please come along to the **Dipton Mill Pub** (approx. 2 miles south of Hexham) on **Wednesday 2nd April at 7.45 pm.**

If you cannot come along please give one of us a call and let us know your thoughts.

Yours In Sport

Matt Simms	☎	(01434) 607637
Angus Tait	☎	(01434) 683967
John Humble	☎	(01434) 613656

## HOW DID THIS FAMOUS MEETING IN THE DIPTON MILL PUB COME ABOUT?

There had, however, been other factors at work on the fell running scene, both in and out of Tynedale Harriers and Athletics Club, which developed the idea (albeit unconsciously to myself at that time) of an independent fell running club in Northumberland.

## FELL RUNNING IN TYNEDALE HARRIERS AND ATHLETICS CLUB

Within Tynedale Harriers and Athletics Club was a hardcore of runners wishing to involve themselves more regularly within the fell running scene. Also, certain runners like Bruce Lowdon of Tynedale had been racing local fell races in the late 80's and 90's very successfully, particularly at the Alwinton Fell Races and at Thropton Show. On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1990 Bruce was first veteran in the former race on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1990 in a time of 1 hr. 38 minutes 16 seconds. He was 10<sup>th</sup> overall and Les Atkinson and Doug Henderson from Alnwick Harriers were 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively.

One such person who had an interest in fell running at that time was Ruth Fletcher who I remember announced herself to me by telephone one evening when, inter alia, she reminded me that I had forgotten to mention her in a report for the Hexham Courant newspaper as a finisher in that year's Allendale Challenge as a member of the Tynedale club. From that moment onwards Ruth became an integral part of the fell running scene in Tynedale and as a member of Tynedale Harriers organised within that club the first ever fell and trail race championship for members of the club.

## TYNEDALE HARRIERS FELL AND TRAIL RACE CHAMPIONSHIP 1995-1996

The series of races she created consisted of twelve fell and trail races over various distances and degrees of difficulty and climbing and these races started in December 1995 with the Hexhamshire Hobble and the last one, the Stanhope fell Race took place in September 1996.

The principles behind this series were firstly that fell and trail running were now becoming a particular section or entity of Tynedale Harriers and secondly the sport was open to everyone whatever their ability, as the entry form said, "Remember, the more races you enter - the more points you can score". This meant that the less fit or less able runners could perform very well over the series by participating in as many of the twelve races as possible. Although the series did not come about until 1995-1996, Ruth's influence in what Ruth I remember always called "mountain running" dated as far back as the early 1990's and the June 1993 Club News Update of Tynedale Harriers had incorporated in it a "Fell and Trail Calendar" which mentioned such races as Great Shunner Shuffle, Skiddaw, Wasdale, Kielder Borderer, Snowdon, Reeth Hills and Ambleside Gala Fell Races.

That particular newsletter also included, inter alia, details of an award for that great fell running legend Angus Tait “for his run in the 1993 Allendale Challenge” when he won the event “by a whisker” by just beating NFR’s John Dallinson (then Claremont Road Runners) . There was also a report on the Alwinton Fell Race (14 miles/2500’) which began, “Ruth Fletcher’s wonderful enthusiasm for Fell and Trail Racing finally infected some of the ladies of the Club who, with some trepidation, set off on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June 1993 to tackle this race”. Incidentally Ruth was second lady, first lady veteran and won the North Eastern Championships.

It can be seen, therefore that Ruth Fletcher’s arrival on the scene, produced a new and higher profile for this aspect of running.

The 1995-1996 Tynedale Harriers and Athletics Club Fell and Trail Series produced twenty entrants who, if you look at the results, competed in fell and trail in this series on a very regular basis. I was fortunate enough to win the overall series with 1073 points having completed all 12 races in the series with Peter Scott and Roy Dawson (now N.F.R members) winning the senior and male veteran categories respectively. Other members competing in that series were David Armstrong, Stewart Beaty, Howard Forrest, Mike Fry, Angus Tait and Ruth herself (modestly referring to herself as a “guest” and not including herself in the award winners.

Overall scores

D. Armstrong	93, 88, 91, 94, 97, 84, 89, 95, 88	819
S. Brown	84, 95, 85, 84, 89, 83, 90, 86	696
M. Broadhurst	100, 94, 91, 91	376
A. Clarke	98, 94, 94	286
P. Scott	88, 72, 84, 87, 86, 86, 83, 82, 84, 89, 67	908
T. Wylie	100, 98, 100, 100	398
S. Beatty	75, 78, 72, 71, 76, 74, 78, 76	600
R. Dawson	86, 89, 74, 80, 84, 78, 80, 84, 82	737
H. Forrest	73	73
M. Fry	77, 80, 83, 84, 79, 81, 85, 49	618
P. Graham	84, 86, 73	243
J. Humble	91, 95, 95, 90, 89, 94, 96, 86, 82, 87, 92, 76	1073
J. Hutchinson	79, 75, 76, 72, 76	378
A. Mincham	73	73
A. Tait	90, 92, 86, 93, 87, 94	542
J. Buchanan	78	78
E. Newman	94, 97, 98, 92, 91, 87	559
R. Fletcher	100, 100, 100, 97	397 (guest)
F. Hutchinson	84, 77	161
T. O'Sullivan	72, 75	147

Winners

Overall	J. Humble
Senior men	P. Scott
Vet men	R. Dawson
Senior ladies	E. Newman
Vet ladies	F. Hutchinson

Details of the races

Hexhamshire Hobble: Fell race cat. CM, 10.5 miles on paths around Allendale. Marked course but over moorland and basic navigational skills advisable as early December.  
Riding Mill: Organised by Tynedale Harriers and open to other clubs although not officially publicised. Approx. 9 miles from Riding Mill village on paths and tracks through fields and woodland. Marked course, no navigational skills needed. Hilly in places. Usually held in March.

Allendale challenge: Organised by the local search and rescue team, a 25 mile route on paths and open moorland around Allendale. A tough route with sections for walkers and runners. Navigational skills needed especially as conditions can be difficult. A stiff climb up to the chimneys at the start, an interesting trek across Kilhope Law, a lovely run down to the Burn and then the infamous drag, the dread of many and the end of many hopeful winners! Check points on route with back up problems. Hot meal at a local pub afterwards as part of the entry fee.

Although there appeared to be developing a new impetus in fell racing with new races such as Ray Hayes' Simonside Cairns Race appearing in the local area, the 1996-1997 fell series at Tynedale never came to fruition. I filled in my entry form, but I seem to remember that not too many others did so, and Ruth felt that the series could not be successful with so few entrants, which I personally found very disappointing at the time. Perhaps it was something to

do with the principle “the more races you enter - the more points you can score”. Perhaps the time had come for a series providing choice and awards given on say the results of only some of those races.

#### FELL RUNNING IMPETUS IN OTHER LOCAL ATHLETICS CLUBS IN THE AREA

As well as Tynedale Harriers and Athletics Club, there were other clubs on the Northumberland Borders (although I have specifically excluded north of the border) where the fell running impetus seemed to be growing. Claremont Road Runners were one such example, where they could boast fell running names like Andy Curtis, Mark Forrest, Richard Hackett, Mike Channon, Bill Sloan and John Dallinson. Saltwell Harriers in Durham County were led in the fell running domain by Fred Smith and Keith Wood whose names could be seen on a regular basis in “The Fellrunner” and who now organise the Saltwell Harriers Fell Race, and Morpeth and Alnwick also had fell runners of great ability, although a limited few , who competed on the fell running scene, although probably more on a local basis, people like Ian Holland, Ian White and Roy Scott of Morpeth .

## THE 1996 NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

As well as assisting Ruth with the fell series at Tynedale in 1996, I also organised what I named the Northumberland Fell Running Championships, the seeds of which germinated from my concern that a race that I had cherished since its formation, was in great jeopardy of falling into oblivion and being lost forever. This race was the Kielder Borderer, [starting at Kielder and taking in the Border fells] which had reached a low ebb in August 1994 due to falling numbers.

It was certainly too good a race to lose forever, and I had to find a way to promote its image and to swell the numbers again. I decided therefore to incorporate this race into a series with two other very popular races, namely the long Alwinton Fell Race (May) and the Chevy Chase (late June or early July), hoping that if enough runners wanted to win the series they would enter all three races which would swell the numbers in the Kielder Borderer. This series I called the Northumberland Fell Running Championships. Lawrence Heslop (the organiser of the Chevy Chase for many years) suggested the name of the series to me when I visited him at the Youth Hostel in Newcastle upon Tyne to put my proposals to him for the series and the following details appeared on his very famous 'note to Chevy Chasers' attached to the entry form for that race.

"A brief note to Fell Runners,

The 1st Northumberland Fell Runners Championship 1996

(1) Alwinton Fell Race (Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June)

(2) Chevy Chase (Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June)

(3) Kielder Borderer (Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August)

To be eligible you need to enter all 3 races. You can do so at registration for each race. Later during the year a performance table will be drawn up and issued to each participant. It is also hoped that awards will be given".

This series could not have come about had it not been for the assistance I received from the then organisers of those races, namely Keith Cooper for Alwinton (he still organises this race), Mike Sanderson for the Kielder Borderer and Lawrence Heslop for the Chevy Chase. All three contributed towards the purchase of five trophies (and some gifts) for the winners of that series in 1996.

In all, nineteen people entered all three races, many of those subsequent N.F.R. members. David Armstrong won the senior male category, I won the male over 40 section, Michael Henry of Alnwick the veteran over 45 category, Ray Hayes of Morpeth Harriers (subsequently first chairman of N.F.R) the over 50 category, and finally that Tynedale Harrier called Hilary Dickinson, who presented me with my award at the NFR presentation evening, the ladies section. I have set out the details of those races and the results and as you will see, the less minutes you took, the better you did.

3

## NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS 1996

It was hoped that this year there could be a Northumberland Fell Running Championship based upon the best overall results in the following races:-

1. ALWINTON FELL RACE B.L. 14m / 2500' on 1st June 1996
2. THE CHEVY CHASE B.L. 20m / 4000' on 22nd June 1996
3. KIELDER BORDERER F/R B.L. 17m / 3000' on 4th August 1996

If you wish to enter, please complete the attached entry form.

It is hoped that possibly in 1997 the format could be changed to provide for 4 races to count from 6 and incorporating short, medium and long races in Northumberland.

Eligibility for the championships is as follows:-

- (1) First claim member of a Northumberland club;
- (2) Member of a club outside of Northumberland but having resided in Northumberland for a minimum of 12 months at the time of the first championship race of the season, ie in 1996 the Alwinton Fell Race on 1st June 1996;
- (3) Unattached runner with residential qualification as outlined in (2) above.

*Presentation to winners at Hexhamshire Hall on 3rd December 1996*

Alwinton fell race: Cat. BL fell race 14 miles/2500' from Alwinton up the old Roman route to Bloody Bush and Cushat Law on track, open moorland and paths. Basic navigational skills needed in poor conditions. Prizes presented in the gardens of the local tavern which together with a shorter option run and a junior event makes a good day out for all especially on a nice day. Held at the beginning of June and a good opportunity to see how your rivals are doing in the build up to the Chevy chase and Kielder Borderer.

Three Pikes: Cat. CM fell race, 8m/950' ascent. A relatively new race organised by John Humble and friends starting from Kielder castle as a preliminary to the Kielder Borderer. A superb event with a well marked course over a variety of terrain, panoramic views, undulating (as they say) but with a fast finish to a final dash up the path to the castle. Cafe facilities available. A selection of prizes. Held at the beginning of June.

Chevy Chase: Cat. BL fell race, 20 miles, 4000' ascent with sections for runners and walkers. A very friendly event organised by Lawrence and friends from Wooler Youth Hostel. A popular event, entries need to be in early. Held usually the 3rd Saturday in June. Route on paths and open moorland in the heart of the Cheviots including the summits of Cheviot and Hedgehope. Navigation skills in case of poor conditions. Excellent nosh back at the Youth Hostel and a very friendly prize giving with local products/crafts all delivered in Lawrence's pleasant manner.

Durham Dales: A 28 mile trail event from Middleton for walkers and runners organised by Northumberland LDWA with check points en route and excellent grub. A scenic route over moorland and on river bank paths, some navigational skills advisable. Slightly longer than the other events but the going isn't as hard.

Kielder Borderer: The toughie of the fell races, a cat. BL fell race, 17m/3000' from Kielder castle over the remote fells around Kielder held in early August. Paths and open fell, tough and demanding with some energy sapping heather bashing. Navigational skills needed and it helps if you know who to follow and how to keep up with them! Not to be rushed in the early stages and if you succeed, it's one that you will remember. Perhaps not as many tussocks as the Wadsworth trog but certainly on a par with that event!

Falston falcon: Cat. BS fell race, 4-5 m/500' ascent from the Falston show ground. Held in late August, this is an interesting route with a bit of everything - old railway line, steep rough fields, forest rides, slippery banks, stream crossings, track and woodland. Well marked route (thanks to Simon Banks, the organiser) and navigational skills not needed. A typical Northumberland show, animals, hounds, a beer tent and lots of events for children including a short fell race.

Simonside fell race: Often the day before the Great North run, this cat. BM fell race, 6.75m/1200', held in mid-late September follows paths up to the top the Simonside crags overlooking Rothbury. An out and back river crossing, finishing in the show field. As with Falston, the show is lively, local and has lots for everyone. Navigational skills probably not necessary.

Stanhope fell race: A cat. BM fell race, 9m/1368' from Stanhope ford, on paths and disused railway tracks, an uphill finish and in the heart of the Stanhope moors. Quite tough if you have the wind against you, basic navigational skills advisable if the cloud is down. Held in September.

Next year may include the Rothbury round, a 10 mile loop around Rothbury, taking in Simonside held in December.

Ruth Fletcher

The trophies for those winners were presented in the Allendale Fire Station after the December 1996 Hexhamshire Hobble by that stalwart of the Chevy Chase, Lawrence Heslop.

3

1996 NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

NAME	AGE	CAT	CLUB	AGE TIMES - MINUTES			TOTAL TIME	RANK
				ALWINTON	CHEVY	WILDER		
STEVEN WALKER	36	SEN	BLYTH	128.48	228.31	229.12	586.31	10
JOHN GARY OWENS	39	SEN	U/A	104.21	171.15	D.N.R.	-	-
DAVID ARMSTRONG	36	SEN	TYNEDALE	107.01	181.07	180.36	468.44	1
PETER SCOTT	31	SEN	TYNEDALE	112.23	198.36	204.34	515.33	5
JOHN HUMBLE	44	V40	TYNEDALE	105.04	181.44	183.52	470.40	2
JAMES BLTWE	43	V40	NORHAM R.C.	124.45	202.34	D.N.R.	-	-
CONRAD DICKINSON	40	V40	TYNEDALE	128.32	226.01	222.19	576.52	9
JOHN REA	43	V40	C.F.R.	119.14	192.40	181.06	493.00	3
JOHN HUTCHINSON		V40	TYNEDALE	125.54	225.45	242.57	594.36	13
MICHAEL HENRY	45	V45	ALNWICK	113.56	193.10	203.22	510.28	4
STEWART BEATTY	47	V45	TYNEDALE	133.17	232.06	224.07	589.30	11
PETER REED	45	V45	U/A	130.39	228.23	231.52	590.54	12
MICHAEL JOHN FRY	44	V45	TYNEDALE	117.47	203.13	221.48	542.48	7
KEN TURNBULL	48	V45	BLYTH R.C.	132.10	209.15	D.N.R.	-	-
JOE POTTS	47	V45	BLYTH R.C.	135.07	250.06	231.55	617.08	13
ROY DAWSON		V45	TYNEDALE	117.24	219.57	218.44	556.05	8
RAY HAYES	56	V55	MORPETH	122.30	207.57	206.47	537.14	6
PATRICIA COOPER	42	V40	MORPETH	153.37	282.03	P.N.F.	-	-
MILLEN DICKINSON	42	V40	TYNEDALE	134.35	236.52	249.41	621.08	14



Photo of that presentation

If the winners of those categories at the 2005 N.F.R. Presentation Evening look at their tankards they will see that the first date on them is 1996 with the winners of the Northumberland Fell Running Championships (not Northumberland Fell Runners' Championships) inscribed upon them. Those trophies subsequently became the trophies of the new fell running club, Northumberland Fell Runners. I sought the approval of Keith and Lawrence and the new club adopted the trophies. Other categories have been added and more tankards purchased by N.F.R since 1996 and those categories have new N.F.R. trophies. The history, therefore, of some of those trophies dates back to this Northumberland Fell Running Championship, which was a County Championship for members of all Northumberland clubs. Although a new Northumberland Fell Running club grew out of it, this was not my intention; my intention was to promote fell running in the local area and in particular to save the Kielder Borderer from obscurity.

TOTAL AND PRIZE TO EACH

(3)

SENIOR MALE

		MINUTES	POSITION
<u>DAVID ARMSTRONG</u>	TYNEDALE	418	1
PETRA SCOTT	TYNEDALE	515	5

SENIOR MALE 0/40

<u>JOHN HUMBLE</u>	TYNEDALE	410	2
JOHN BEN	C.F.R.	443	3

SENIOR MALE 0/45

<u>MICHAEL HENRY</u>	ALNWICK	510	4
MICHAEL FRY	TYNEDALE	542	7

SENIOR MALE 0/50

<u>RAY HAYES</u>	MORFATH	537	6
------------------	---------	-----	---

LADIES

<u>HILARY DICKINSON</u>		621	14
-------------------------	--	-----	----

## THE 1997 NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Then came the 1997 Northumberland Fell Running Championships in a different format. I decided it would be more fair to include some short and medium races and I have included in this account details of those races which along with the local ones, I decided to include the Skiddaw Fell Race, and the Langdale Horseshoe Fell Race, as I felt that any credible fell running championship had to include some Lakeland races.

There were the same categories and the same eligibility rules which I improvised from details in the FRA calendar for English and British Championships. The championship, it must be said, had no precedent in the area and no organisation behind it. The presentation was to take place again after the December 1997 Hexhamshire Hobble on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1997.

As Lawrence Heslop and Keith Cooper could not attend this venue, I was privileged to present the trophies to the winners and those award winners I have set out for you in my handwriting the way they were in 1997 together with details of the races themselves. You will see that by the time I presented these awards, NFR had been formed and some of those award winners were already running for N.F.R and some like Steven Walker, Ken Turnbull and Joe Potts of Blyth, Doug Cockburn of Morpeth and Bill Campbell of Gosforth all eventually joined, ran for, and subsequently won awards in Northumberland Fell Runners

## Northumberland Fell Running Championship Winners 1997

### NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIPS 1997

After the success of the 1996 Fell Running Championships it was decided to continue the championship in a different form based upon an entrant's best 5 out of 9 championship races including 2 Lakeland races.

The races are as follows:-

- |    |                 |                              |     |             |
|----|-----------------|------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| 1. | 31st May 1997   | ALWINTON FELL RACE           | BL  | 14m/2500'   |
| 2. | 5th June 1997   | BEACON FELL RACE             | AS  | 5.75m/1500' |
| 3. | 12th June 1997  | THREE PIKES FELL RACE        | CM  | 8m/950'     |
| 4. | 21st June 1997  | THE CHEVY CHASE              | BL  | 20m/4000'   |
| 5. | 1st July 1997   | SALTWELL HARRIERS FELL RACE  | BS  | 5.5m/950'   |
| 6. | 6th July 1997   | SKIDDAW FELL RACE            | AM  | 9m/2700'    |
| 7. | 3rd August 1997 | KIELDER BORDERER F/R         | BL  | 17m / 3000' |
| 8. | 20th Sept 1997  | SIMONSIDE FELL RACE          | BM  | 6.75m/1200' |
| 9. | 11th Oct 1997   | LANGDALE HORSESHOE FELL RACE | A L | 14m/4000'   |

Details of all the championship races are in the F.R.A. 1997 Handbook and Fixtures Calendar.

If you wish to enter, please complete the attached entry form.

CATEGORIES as of 31st May 1997

MALE : Senior Men; Vets O40; Vets O45; Vets O50

FEMALE: Senior Ladies

Ranking is calculated on scores up to 5 races but MUST include one race at each distance i.e. long, medium or short.

Eligibility for the championships is as follows:-

- (1) First claim member of a Northumberland club;
- (2) Member of a club outside of Northumberland but having resided in Northumberland for a minimum of 12 months at the time of the first championship race of the season, ie in 1997 the Alwinton Fell Race on 31st May 1997;
- (3) Unattached runner with residential qualification as outlined in (2) above.

PRESENTATION TO WINNERS AT HEXHAMSHIRE HOBBLE ON 7TH DECEMBER 1997

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY FELL RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS 1997		
RACE WINNERS		
SENIOR MEN		POINTS
1ST - SHAUN SCOTT (NFR)		250
2ND - DAVID ARMSTRONG (NFR)		243
3RD - STEVEN WALKER (BLTH)		207
SENIOR MEN 40		
1ST GARY OWENS (NFR)		246
2ND MIKE BRADHURST (TYNEDALE)		239
3RD JOHN REA (CFR)		226
SENIOR MEN 45		
1ST JOHN HUMBLE (NFR)		219
2ND KEN TURNBULL (BLTH)		193
3RD JOE POTTS (BLTH)		184
3RD STEWART BEATY (NFR)		184
SENIOR MEN 50		
1ST RAY HAYES (NFR)		216
2ND DOUG COCKBURN (MORPETH)		207
3RD BILL CAMPBELL (GOSFORTH)		202
1ST DAVID WRIGHT (TYNEDALE)		130
LADY		
1ST JANE SAUL (NFR)		192
LADY VET		
1ST HILARY DICKINSON		164

There was no 1998 Northumberland Fell Running Championship for various reasons, for example the lack of numbers, the amount of organisation for so few entrants and the formation of NFR. The trophies, however, with the consent of Mike, Keith and Lawrence, lived on as the tankards awarded for winners of the Northumberland Fell Runners Championship once it was formed.

It can be seen therefore that a club was born from the Northumberland County Fell Running Championships in 1996 and 1997, the new local races that had suddenly arisen, whether by chance or by trend, and the fell running renaissance in the clubs like Tynedale, Morpeth, Alnwick and Claremont which all came together in that famous evening at the Dipton Mill Pub in Hexhamshire when plans were put in hand for the new club.

### “JOHN, I THINK IT IS ABOUT TIME NORTHUMBERLAND HAD ITS OWN FELL RUNNING CLUB”

I must mention one more thing however. One damp, midgy evening after the Three Pikes Fell Race in Kielder in June 1996, Ray Hayes said to me at the doorway of the Kielder Castle Café - “John, I think it is about time we had a Northumberland Fell Running Club”. That was the inspiration I needed to ignite my burning desire and form my own fell running club. I therefore approached Matt Simms - the time was right and even if no one joined me, I would go it alone! As it was, no thought could have been so far from what turned out to be

### THE DIPTON MILL PUB



It all began at 7.45pm on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1997 in the Dipton Mill Pub (approximately 2 miles south of Hexham). The reason for the meeting - “a new fell running club for the North East.”

About ten turned up and we discussed ,inter alia, the colour of the vest, the name of the club and the club championship. It went well, with only a couple of disagreements. I felt, I remember saying, that the club should be very outward looking in relation to its club championship, and that a good club championship should be at the heart of the club and that if we were to be a progressive specialist fell running club, we had to look further away for our championship races such as Yorkshire and Lakeland, and I dared to mention the Wasdale Fell Race. Someone retorted quite vociferously that we would find it very difficult to get a couple of members round a route that was

probably the most demanding in Lakeland, in addition to which the race imposed strict cut off times for competitors.

It was discussed but I eventually had my way, and the Wasdale Fell Race was announced as a championship race for the 1998 season at the Presentation Evening in the Robin Hood Inn on Wednesday 11th February 1998.

One of my incentives for a new fell running club was a challenging championship, one that would find the most deserved category winners over a broad spectrum of races. In May 1997 the first informal newsletter was produced by Matt Simms (the club secretary) in his own special style, giving pride of place to the 1997 championship races, which, as I have said, were those that I had originally chosen for the Northumberland County Championships.

By June 1997 the second NFR Newsletter was published and it confirmed – “WE’RE OFFICIAL !!!” What surprises me upon reflection, is that within 2 months of that famous meeting at the Dipton Mill Pub we had 30 members. I had forgotten that the membership numbers had escalated so quickly.

“TRAINING RUNS” – I remember them so clearly and how exciting for runners with the same aims, aspirations and passions to be running for a local fell running club. If you look at those first organized training runs you can see quite clearly the nucleus of the club. Simon Banks led the run from Kielder Castle, I led them over by Pennypie House on Blanchland Fell, and back to the Lord Crewe Arms in Blanchland for refreshments afterwards Angus Tait his beloved Carrshield, Ray Hayes from Lordenshaw Car Park into the Simonside Hills (the meeting point and start of the Beacon Hill Fell Race every June), Ramshaw with Matt Simms when we ran up to Bolts Law, and Falstone with Bill Campbell and Mike Sanderson – HAPPY MEMORIES.

## NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNERS

### NEWS FLASH !!! MAY '97

( I had written a full newsletter but I can't manage to retrieve it from the computer - in the meantime, as time is pressing, here is an edited version of what I think I wrote . Full version to follow ASAP ! ).

#### MEMBERSHIP

Please complete and return the enclosed form. If you want a form for anyone else copy yours or let me know and I'll send you another.

#### CLUB TRAINING RUNS

These have been planned for Wednesday evenings roughly every two weeks through the summer . Meet at 7-0 p.m. prompt and expect to run for one and a half to two hours. Hopefully with a pint afterwards. The first two dates and venues are:

WED 14 MAY ALLENDALE MARKET PLACE . G.R. NY 839 559

WED 28 MAY BLANCHLAND CAR PARK. G.R. NY 965 504

(Venues further north to follow )

#### CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Nine races six to count. You must run one at each distance. Full details for each race in F.R.A. Calendar and Handbook.

SUN 18 MAY FAIRFIELD AM

SAT 31 MAY ALWINTON BL

THUR 5 JUN BEACON HILL AS

THUR 12 JUN THREE PIKES CM

SAT 21 JUN CHEVY CHASE BL (PRE ENTRY)

TUE 1 JUL SALTWELL HARRIERS RACE BS

SUN 3 AUG KIELDER BL

SAT 20 SEP SIMONSDALE BM

SAT 11 OCT LANGDALE AL (PRE ENTRY)

Info. on BAF rules, affiliation, club colours, further fixtures etc. to follow.....any queries phone me on 01434 607637 -MATT SIMMS.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNERS**

### **NEWSLETTER No 2 JUNE 1997**

We're official !!!! Our affiliation to B.A.F. has been accepted so members can now compete on the fells in F.R.A. registered races for Northumberland Fell Runners - probably the newest and fastest growing specialist fell running club. Current membership stands at about 30 with a fair few more who've promised but have yet to fill in a form and pay up!

As a new club we've obviously still to find our direction. The feelings expressed at the inaugural meeting seemed to suggest that people wanted a pretty relaxed outfit without too much organisation. That said things do need to be made to happen and the club can only be what members make it. If you have ideas for what we should be doing be it: club races, new or novel events, training runs, trips to far away races, socials or whatever then discuss it with a member of the committee or better still get on and organise it yourself - it's your club!

#### **CLUB COLOURS**

Vests have now been ordered and should arrive in the next three weeks or so. The design is purple with a green diagonal slash back and front, with 'N.F.R.' printed on the breast. According to Ray Hayes the colours are something to do with the bonny Northumbrian heather. You should obtain your own shorts preferably plain purple or otherwise plain green.

Mens vests come in size large and extra large and ladies in size medium only. I am reliably told that the vests are small for their size and that you should order a size larger than you normally require. All vests cost £13.00 and can be ordered from myself, Stuart Beaty or Ray Hayes - strictly cash or cheque on delivery.

#### **B.A.F. RULES**

There seems to be a lot of confusion over the rules about joining a new club.

If you've just joined N.F.R. and you were previously unattached then you have no problems - just carry on and enjoy running for your new club.

If on the other hand you were a member of another club affiliated to B.A.F. and registered for fell running, you should formally resign in writing from the former club on joining N.F.R. If you wish to continue competing for your old club in events other than fell races then you have to rejoin the club for those other disciplines only. You can run for N.F.R. as an individual straight away but technically you are barred from competing in team events (only) for nine months. It is possible and indeed quite straightforward to avoid this by applying to B.A.F. for dispensation from this rule on the grounds of 'hardship' i.e. your previous club did not cater for fell running or if they did they could not offer team competition. I will help or advise anyone who wishes to do this.

It is rumoured however, that Tynedale H.A.C. may oppose this and ask for the 9 months to be applied to former Tynedale members (what's the problem! - What they don't realise is that this would also prevent any dual members competing on the roads or cross country for them for 9 months!)

If anyone wants to see the rules I have a copy though I hope not to read them myself. The above interpretation was given to me by the N.E.A.A. First Claims Committee Chairman.

Apologies to all unattached, non - Tynedale, and " couldn't care anyway" runners for going on so

#### **RACE RESULTS**

N.F.R. runners have had good results at Hamsterley, Fairfield, Ahwinton, Ennerdale, Beacon Hill, Kielder - well done to Shaun Scott, Ian Mulvey, Emma Moody, Gary Owen. Please submit results from races listing winners name and time and times and positions of all N.F.R. runners for inclusion in future newsletters. Also any description of the race or comments about new or interesting races you've been to.

#### **TRAINING RUNS**

For the time being have been organised for alternate Wednesday evenings. Meet for a 7-00 pm (prompt) start and expect to run for an hour and a half or so. We'll review the format at the end of the programme.

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 9 JULY       | Kielder Castle car park. G.R. NY 632 934 (a run on new territory over the Lamington Fells. |
| 23 JULY      | Blanchland car park. G.R. NY 839 559   |
| 6 AUGUST     | Carr Shield - West Allen valley G.R. NY 802 475  |
| 20 AUGUST    | Simonside - Lordenshaw car park G.R. NY 053 988  |
| 3 SEPTEMBER  | Ramshaw - Boltshope Mine G.R. NY 948 467 (approx. 3miles SW of Blanchland)                 |
| 17 SEPTEMBER | Falstone - Blackcock pub car park. G.R. NY 724 875   |

#### **CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP RACES**

Nine races six to count. You must run one at each distance. Full details of each race are listed in the F.R.A. Calendar and Handbook.

The remaining races are:

- |              |                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 21 JUNE(SAT) | Chevy Chase BL (PRE-ENTRY)     |
| 1 JULY(TUES) | Saltwell Harriers Fell Race BS |

3 AUGUST(SUN) Kielder Borderer BL

20 SEPT(SAT) Simonside BM

11 OCT(SAT) Langdale Horseshoe AL (PRE-ENTRY) SAE for entry form  
to G Clayton, Beechfield, Nook Lane, Ambleside, LA22 9BJ

**F.R.A. MEMBERSHIP**

Club members should also join the Fell Runners Association. Membership enquiries to Pete Bland, 34a Kirkland, Cumbria, LA9 5AD.  
Tel. 01539 731012.

**NEWSLETTER**

Feedback on newsletters would be welcome - as would any articles from other contributors. If anyone else wishes to act as "newsletter sec./editor" please let me know - your computer skills must be better than mine!!!

Matt Simms - Club Secretary. Tel. 01434 607637

## **THE N.F.R. CHAMPIONSHIP 1997 - 2004**

### THE 1997 CHAMPIONSHIP

VENUE: ROBIN HOOD INN WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 1998

### THE RACES

LONG: ALWINTON, CHEVY CHASE, KIELDER BORDERER  
AND LANGDALE HORSESHOE.

MEDIUM: FAIRFIELD, 3 PIKES, SIMONSIDE

SHORT BEACON HILL, SALTWELL  
5 RACES TO COUNT

### RESULTS:

#### SENIOR MEN

1 <sup>st</sup>	SHAUN SCOTT	250 POINTS (MAX)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	DAVID ARMSTRONG	244 POINTS
3 <sup>rd</sup>	MATT SIMMS	209 POINTS

#### VET. 40 MEN

1 <sup>st</sup>	GARY OWENS	247 POINTS
2 <sup>nd</sup>	DAVID BELL	225 POINTS
3 <sup>rd</sup>	PETER SCOTT	181 POINTS

#### VET. 45 MEN

1 <sup>st</sup>	JOHN HUMBLE	227 POINTS
2 <sup>nd</sup>	STEWART BEATY	209 POINTS
3 <sup>rd</sup>	BRUCE LOWDON	186 POINTS

#### VET. 50 MEN

1 <sup>st</sup>	BILL CAMPBELL	213 POINTS
-----------------	---------------	------------

#### VET. 55 MEN

1 <sup>st</sup>	RAY HAYES	219 POINTS
-----------------	-----------	------------

#### SENIOR LADY

1 <sup>st</sup>	JANE SAUL	202 POINTS
-----------------	-----------	------------

#### VET. LADY

1 <sup>st</sup>	PAT COOPER	110 POINTS
-----------------	------------	------------

## NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNERS

NEWSLETTER No 3 FEBRUARY 1998

### ***DON'T MISS..... NFR SOCIAL NIGHT !***

Wednesday 11 February, 8.0 PM , Robin Hood pub- on the B 6318  
Military Road approx. 1 mile west of Whittle Dene Reservoirs. GR 050  
683.

Get together for an Open Meeting and general social gathering to  
discuss possible events and activities for the coming season, the club  
championship, future direction of the club, have a pint and chat etc. All  
welcome.

### **NFR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 1997 - RESULTS (PROVISIONAL - ONLY COUNTING 5 RACES)**

1	Shaun Scott	250 points	
2	Gary Owens	247	V40
3	David Armstrong	244	
4	John Humble	227	V45
5	David Bell	225	V40
6	Ray Hayes	219	V55
7	Bill Campbell	213	V50
8	Matt Simms	209	
8=	Stewart Beatty	209	V45
10	Jane Saul	202	L
11	Simon Gakhar	190	

### **TRAINING RUNS**

Sunday morning runs on the fells. Meet for a 9-30 am (prompt) start and  
expect 10 to 15 miles and possibly a pint afterwards. Try to bring map,  
compass and suitable kit.

8 FEBRUARY ROTHBURY. Meet at Newcastle Hotel. GR 057 017  
(Details - Ray Hayes)

15 FEBRUARY CARR SHIELD -WEST ALLEN VALLEY. GR 802 475  
(Details - Matt Simms)

1 MARCH THRUNTON WOODS nr Rothbury. GR 085 095 (Details - Ray  
Hayes)

## **THE PRESENTATION EVENING FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> 1998**

In the words of Issue 4 of the NFR Newsletter of February 1998 - "The evening was attended by about one half of the NFR members and was devoted to arranging club events for the coming year. Chief among these was the "Club Championship events. These were eloquently proposed by John Humble, and most suggestions were received without too much controversy. There was what amounted to a stunned silence for one proposed event - which was "The Wasdale"! This did stir up a debate with few present feeling that they could undertake this tough (est) event. However, Wasdale remains as a contributor to the NFR Club Championship for 1998".

Needless to say, I did not write that article, Matt Simms did. Upon looking back, I note that 'suggestions' were made for championship races. After this presentation evening, championship races were announced on the night, although particularly over the last three years, the choice of them has been hotly debated in the e-group, at N.F.R Annual General Meetings. and between club members generally. It is one of those issues where it is very difficult to keep everyone happy, but I am delighted that the members now think that the championship races are such an important integral part of the club, that they are prepared to put them at the top of the agenda.

## **THE AWARD WINNERS**

Shaun Scott (senior male winner) did particularly well in the 1997 championship year with 250 points (maximum) from his five counting races. Overall, that season he completed in six championship races, his sixth being Langdale where he was beaten into 4<sup>th</sup> NFR position by Garry Owens, David Armstrong and Steve Birkinshaw.

The evening was very informal, I hardly made a note and gave a brief resume of each race 'from the heart' as my adrenalin flowed freely with barely a note to look at. Such was the relaxed and friendly atmosphere on that evening at the Robin Hood Inn.

This first presentation evening at the Robin Hood Inn was another very important landmark in the development of N.F.R. It was now up and running and I was overjoyed as I left the Inn that night knowing that others were now as enthusiastic and passionate as I was about the future of the new club.

**THE 1998 CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**CHAMPIONSHIP RACES**

LONG: ALLENDALE CHALLENGE, CHEVY CHASE, WASDALE

MEDIUM: BUTTERMERE/SAILBECK, ROAN FELL, STANHOPE,  
SIMONSDALE CAIRNS

SHORT: SALTWELL, FALSTONE FALCON

AWARD WINNERS - VENUE ROBIN HOOD INN

<u>SENIOR MEN:</u>	1 <sup>st</sup>	SHAUN SCOTT	300 POINTS (Max)
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	DAVID ARMSTRONG	295 POINTS

VET. MEN OVER 40

1 <sup>st</sup>	GARRY OWENS	143 POINTS
2 <sup>nd</sup>	PETER SCOTT	142 POINTS

VET. MEN OVER 45

1 <sup>st</sup>	JOHN HUMBLE	287 POINTS
2 <sup>nd</sup>	PETER REED	137 POINTS

VET. MEN OVER 50

1 <sup>st</sup>	STEWART BEATY	261 POINTS
2 <sup>nd</sup>	RAYMOND GRAY	184 POINTS

VET. MEN OVER 55

1 <sup>st</sup>	RAY HAYES	280 POINTS
-----------------	-----------	------------

VET. MEN OVER 60

1 <sup>st</sup>	JOSEPH GARBARINO	129 POINTS
-----------------	------------------	------------

1<sup>ST</sup> LADY

JANE SAUL	217 POINTS
-----------	------------

1<sup>ST</sup> LADY VETERAN

PAT COOPER	79 POINTS
------------	-----------

### **What stands out for me in that 1998 Championship?**

Firstly, from an individual achievement perspective in the championship, it had to be again Shaun Scott's 300 points from six races, a maximum for the second year running.

Secondly, it had to be NFR's team win at the Wasdale Fell Race, which has to be one of the high spots of my fell running career and for the newly formed club. There had been shock when I mentioned it as a championship counter at the Robin Hood Inn at the presentation evening in February 1998 and at the Dipton Mill pub in April the previous year, but NFR went **AND THEY WON THE TEAM PRIZE**. 11<sup>TH</sup> July 1998 will always be a memorable day for me. That is the day I dreamed of, from when a Northumberland Fell Running Club came into my mind; it was the day when we competed with the very best in their backyard in the heart of fell running country and came out top in probably the toughest fell race in Britain.

We should not, however, forget the brilliant run by Emma Moody of N.F.R that day. She finished second to Liz Batt of Buxton A C in a time of 5-44-28. Liz Batt led Emma all the way, but Emma ran incredibly well from Esk House to claw back 6 out of a 7 minute lead by Liz, only to have Liz Batt pull away and gain 3 minutes on the descent from Scafell Pike.

I will leave you to savour the atmosphere of that day by reading the report of Stewart Beaty in the Hexham Courant (set out below) on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1998 and Garry Owens, the former an invaluable NFR supporter at Styhead Pass with Angus Tait (and little dog Eva) and Garry a member of that winning team. From my own personal perspective, I was even prouder when I appeared in the list of veteran over 45's in the Fell Runners Association magazine for finishing 45<sup>th</sup> in a time of 5 hours 42 mins. Also, I could hardly believe it when Matt Simms telephoned me very early one morning at home and said "Do you realise your coloured picture is on the front cover of that magazine running in that famous race?" I had not, but the edition soon arrived and there I was, somewhere above Wastwater carrying my map and wearing that famous purple and green vest of N.F.R.

Regrettably, we have not won it since, but there is no reason why we should not do it again; the success however of NFR in team events since 1997 has been phenomenal.

## Newcomers lift fell running crown



Prize gyps: With one of the daunting peaks they scaled behind them are the prize winning Northumberland Fell Runners team, from the left, Garry Owen, John Humble and David Armstrong. Missing is Steve Birkshaw.

THE 23 mile, 9000 feet ascent Waddale Fell Race in the Lake District is certainly England's toughest fell race and represents one of the ultimate challenges to the fell runner.

The circular route starts and finishes at Ryedale near the head of Watter, England's deepest lake, with the runners setting off with a long climb along the top of the well known Watterwater Screes before reaching the first checkpoint on Wharfedale.

It then back down into the valley, past the bottom end of Watterwater and a mile or so of pleasant cross country running before the climb to the 2,266 foot Scafell, the second checkpoint.

The competitors then have to find the best route over the severe mountain terrain to the next checkpoint on the 2,927 foot summit of Pillar.

This involves crossing around Haycock, Scafell and Scafell Pike.

Following the descent off Pillar and encircling around the northern slopes of Kirk Fell.

The runners then have a severe climb to the 2,849 foot summit of Great Gable, the fourth checkpoint.

Near the tired legs have to endure a knee-jerking descent to Styhead Pass where many competitors had friends waiting with much needed refreshments.

The well known crossing point of Lake-land, Eak House Shelter was the next checkpoint before the traverse over the rocky Broad Crag to the penultimate checkpoint on England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike at 3,210 feet.

Now in the knowledge the worst was over the tired athletes had to endure a descent of nearly 3000 feet via the last checkpoint on the lower slopes of Lingmell before the well deserved ascende at the finish.

With such an arduous route the organisers impose stringent cut off times at each checkpoint, resulting in many competitors not reaching the checkpoints in time and having to pull out of the race.

Consequently only fell runners of the high-end fitness can hope to finish the race.

Steve Birkshaw from Halwaxholme, last year's Karmore Elze mountain marathon winner, had an excellent run despite a navigational error towards Eak House, finishing in seventh place in 4:16, with Hayden Bridge's David Armstrong 27th in 5:1.

John Humble from Slaley felt so ill at Styhead Pass he nearly retired but got a new lease of life after some refreshments, finishing 4th in 3:42 which was just as well as it enabled Northumberland Fell Runners to snatch the coveted team prize, from the Sheffield based fell running club Dark Peak.

Ryde's Garry Owen completed the team finishing in 15th place.

Halwaxholme's Emma Moody, also a member of Northumberland Fell Runners, was second lady in 5:44.

Overall winner was Borrowdale Fell Running Club's Jim Davies in a time of 3:46.

Winning the team prize in such a prestigious event, with the prizes presented by fell running legends Jon Naylor and Stan Bradshaw, little over a year since formation is a major boost to the club which now has well over 50 members.

While the Waddale Fell Race represents the pinnacle of fell racing, the vast majority of the fell running calendar comprises of races accessible to athletes of more modest ability.

Northumberland Fell Runners is a club for anyone interested in fell running and subscriptions are a modest £5 per year.

For further information ring Matt Simons (01434) 607290 or Stewart Bower (01434) 643422.

Extract: Heston  
Countryside  
17th July 1998

Heston C 17.7.98



11th July 1998 NFR's winning team of Steve Buntingham, Gary Owen, David Armstrong and John Bumble collected their team prize from the famous Stag Breughau with Jero Naylor watching on in the background.



Also in 1998 there was Shaun Scott's and Bob Sewell's successful Bob Graham Round on 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> August 1998 when they covered 42 peaks over a distance of 72 miles with a total ascent of 27,000 feet.

[Extract from N.F.R. Newsletter Autumn 1998]

### *Wasdale Fell Race*

*AL/.21m/9000feet July 11 1998*

*Garry Owens:*

*When John Humble suggested the inclusion of Wasdale in the NFR 1998 championship series at the AGM there were many doubters. Nevertheless, included it was!*

*Wasdale Fell Race is billed as the toughest test in the fellracing calendar, it is certainly not an event for the faint hearted...or with the hindsight of a first timer - anyone with a modicum of sanity!*

*Yet let it be known that the prophet Humble was shown verily to have great foresight, for the loyal band of five followers who made the great journey to the nether reaches of Lakeland were to be rewarded in plenty.*

*81 started the gruelling course in almost ideal weather conditions from a sunny and green Brackenclose. Ever the enthusiast and optimist I started with the leading group but, true to form, I was soon to drop off the pace shortly after the ascent of Whin Rigg.*

*It was at this point that I met up with fellow NFR Steve Birkinshaw who was steadily trailing the leading group which included the eventual race 1,2 3 of Jim Davies (Borrowdale) Jonny Bland (Borrowdale) and Andy Trigg (Glossopdale).*

*I think we were about 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at that point. Making good progress and not too far behind were Dave ("Dexter") Armstrong, John Humble, Emma Moody, and Ray Gray.*

*Somewhere between Greendale (home of one of the Gods of the Fells, Joss Naylor) I lost further ground, places, and the sight of Steve in my quest for water! In my state of rapid decline I had expected to see Dexter and John come sailing past me before Gable but, clearly, they were enjoying the views equally as much as I was and had lost a bit of focus on the task in hand!*

*At Gable Ray took the sensible option of the very scenic and probably too obvious short cut home...if only I'd known...!*

*Beyond Gable, feeling a little lost, alone and weakening, who should appear bearing gifts of mars bars and water but Angus (the intrepid team manager) and his worthy accomplice Stewart (official photographer and load carrier). just what I needed - feeling much better now!*

*With still no sight of Emma, Dexter or John, and with Steve long gone, I set off along the path to Esk Hause, the rocky ascent and descent of Scafell Pipe, and finally the long, steep but grassy run off Lingmell to the finish.*

*In 12<sup>th</sup> place at the summit of Scafell Pike we disappeared into the mist and how I came out of it in 16<sup>th</sup> position I'll never know. Even so I had a bit of a race on to beat one of the Dark Peak lads to the finish. I was later to discover that if I had not beaten Will Sullivan we would not have returned with the Team Prize.*

*YES! - NFR WON THE TEAM PRIZE AT WASDALE '98*

*Thanks to the valiant efforts of all those that made the journey that day:*

*Steven Birkinshaw            4h32m*

*Gary Owen                    4h50m*

*David Armstrong            5h07m*

*John Humble                 5h44m*

*Emma Moody                 5h44m*

*Unfortunately Ray had to pull out at Gable but Emma put in a brilliant performance to pick up 2<sup>nd</sup> lady. What a tale for the NFR history book (make a note, Angus).*

*To top everything the prizes were presented by two of the all time Greats - Joss Naylor and Stan Bradshaw. If that's what fell running does for you at 60+ and 80+ I think I'll just keep plugging along!*

*See you at Wasdale 1999? I feel we'll need to turn out in force to repeat our achievement of '98 (which by the way was won by Jim Davies in a time of 3h46m - how do these Borrowdale lads and lasses do it??)*

NORTHUMBERLAND FELL RUNNERS  
CHAMPIONSHIP RACES 1999

1	Saturday 27th March	Allendale Challenge	BL
2	Saturday 17th April	Anniversary Waltz (B/E)	AM
3	Thursday 3rd June	Beacon Hill	AS
4	Saturday 10th July	Wandale	AL
5	Sunday 25th July	Chapel Fell Top Race	AS
6	Sunday 1st August	Kielder Borderer	BL
7	Saturday 7th August	Borrowdale F.R.	AL
8	Sunday 8th August	The Forest Burn	BS
9	Saturday 28th August	Bellingham Show F/R	BS
10	Saturday 9th October	Langdale Horseshoe	AL
11	Sunday 14th November	Lords Stones-Wainstones	AM

CATEGORIES

MALE

Senior Men  
VETS 040  
VETS 045  
VETS 050  
VETS 055  
VETS 060

FEMALE

Senior Lady  
VETS 040

Ranking is calculated on scores in up to six races. If six race scores are used they must include one short, one medium and one long.

Any queries relating to this championship contact John Humble or John Dallinson.

## **PRIZE WINNERS 1999 NFR CHAMPS**

### **SENIOR MALE:**

		<b><u>POINTS</u></b>	
1 <sup>st</sup>	DAVID ARMSTRONG	295	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	STEVEN WALKER	258	WINE
3 <sup>rd</sup>	SHAUN SCOTT	200	WINE

### **MALE V 40**

1 <sup>st</sup>	PETER SCOTT	278	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	GEOFF DAVIS	270	WINE
3 <sup>rd</sup>	GARY OWENS	145	WINE

### **MALE V 45**

1 <sup>st</sup>	JOHN HUMBLE	283	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	JOHN DALLINSON	177	WINE
3 <sup>rd</sup>	KEITH COOPER	167	WINE

### **MALE V 50**

1 <sup>st</sup>	ROY DAWSON	278	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	STEWART BEATY	238	WINE
3 <sup>rd</sup>	RAYMOND GRAY	232	WINE

### **MALE V 55**

1 <sup>st</sup>	RAY HAYES	248	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	MIKE SANDERSON		WINE

### **MALE V 60**

1 <sup>st</sup>	JOE GARBARINO	132	TROPHY & WINE
-----------------	---------------	-----	---------------

### **LADY SENIOR**

1 <sup>st</sup>	KAREN ROBERTSON	284	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	JACQUI LUMSDEN	233	WINE
3 <sup>rd</sup>	JANE SAUL	224	WINE

### **LADY VETERAN V 45**

1 <sup>st</sup>	PAT COOPER	167	TROPHY & WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	RUTH FLETCHER	162	WINE

In the senior male category David Armstrong finally made champion after having been second with very high points total in 1997 and 1998. Shaun Scott was pushed down into third place in this year.

In the 1999 championship four out of the eleven races were in Lakeland which shows how the club in a very short time had increased its ambition. Wasdale was included for the second year running, and also the Borrowdale Fell Race and the Langdale Horseshoe. These are three of the toughest AL races in Lakeland.

In that year Stewart Beaty wrote a personal account of the Borrowdale Race (AL 17 miles 6500') on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1999 and I have set out that report for you. Eight hardy souls also visited Lakeland for the tough Langdale Horseshoe Fell Race. Seven NFR runners also did the Borrowdale race.

By far the most popular race in the championship this year was Ray Hayes' Beacon Hill Fell Race when 31 members ran. Shaun Scott won the race in 46 minutes 35 seconds with Morgan Donnelly (then of Tynedale) coming on the scene in third place in 49 minutes 36 second.

Unfortunately the Anniversary Waltz, our second championship race, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1999, resulted in NFR's Bob Sewell being airlifted to safety from Hindscarth by the Mountain Rescue to Whitehaven after he slid on snow and cut open his thigh.

The true spirit of fell racing was epitomised on this occasion by the fact that a number of runners gave immediate assistance to Bob, and in doing so, dropped valuable British and English Championship points. 440 runners turned up to this race with 560 entrants. 16 NFR runners competed in this race with Shaun Scott receiving a maximum 50 points for his NFR championship bid with Garry Owens and David Armstrong second and third respectively. I personally was delighted with the turnout on a day when blizzards had been forecast and my decision to include a difficult 'A' race in the championship was vindicated. As it was, it could not have been a more perfect day with deep snow on the tops and perfect views to the central lakes for most of the middle of the race, and towards Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake heading back home to Catbells. The descent from Dale Head was variously called exhilarating, awe inspiring and, "like a black ski run". Gavin Bland won the race with Ian Holmes second.

### **ONE YEAR LATER – 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1999 THE WASDALE FELL RACE**

David Armstrong, Steven Birkinshaw and myself returned one year later. I have set out a report that I wrote following the race and the full results to peruse and finally Richard Eastman's organiser's report to whet the appetite for future Wasdales – long may they last!

Despite the fact that we could not repeat the team success of 1998, how the club had progressed since 1997. In 1997 the word "Wasdale" was vetoed – how N.F.R had progressed from an unambitious local club to one that would compete in the heart of Lakeland by 2005. What is more Wasdale is again a championship race for N.F.R for 2005 (chosen this time by the 2005 championship organisers Morgan Donnelly and Jane Grundy).

I hope the prolonged mention of Wasdale whets the appetite for this race for 2005 and the years to come.

### WASDALE FELL RACE - 10th July 1999

I was more confident about the race this year, and did not feel under such great pressure as last, and I wanted to defend the Team Prize, obtain some Championship points, and most of all have a wonderful day out on some of the most beautiful fells after a week of glorious sunshine and an equally optimistic forecast. When you do Wasdale, you will put up with sweltering heat as long as you can see where you are going - that is my view anyway!

I therefore packed my Walsh Raids and put my PBs in as well, although never expecting to use the latter; the Raids have a small flat stud and are ideal for dry conditions.

When I set off from Slaley it was dull and still, and visibility was not good, but I convinced myself that the weather would improve the nearer I came to Wasdale. I picked up Morgan Donnelly and then David Armstrong and off we went at some very early hour of the morning, convincing ourselves as we went that it would be a very sunny day.

Near Cockermouth, it started drizzling, and as we travelled along the coast the rain became heavier. As we travelled beyond Gosforth, inland to Wasdale, it became 'claggier and claggier' (if there is such a word), and wetter and wetter. Had we really passed Sellafield?

Suddenly, we all seemed to go quiet as we realised that unless there was a drastic change, it was not going to be one of those days when one could plan on "following the one in front". When we first saw Wastwater it merged with the cloud - Had we come the right way? Was this really Wasdale? It was, however, very calm, and I suppose one might say, beautifully atmospheric, but not a day to run the Wasdale Fell Race. It was moments like this when you hear comments from around you such as "Did I remember my compass?" "Have I a waterproof map?" or indeed, "Have I a map?" "Is Great Gable somewhere around here?" "Could we be near Brough?" (For those that travelled to '9 Standards' on 1st January 1999).

As we registered and changed, it poured and poured, it came down in sheets and so much for the Raids, out with the PBs. It was hard to believe after a week of the most beautiful sunshine! At least we could not be put off by the sight of what lay ahead.

We set off in mist, with the rain having abated somewhat, just 3 from NFR, myself, David Armstrong and Steve Birkinshaw. I felt apprehensive in a field of 72 runners. I latched on to Mike Walford, a seasoned VSO campaigner from Kendal, who seems to have done them all and always seems to know where he is going - at least I could forget about the map and compass for a while.

Sadly, just before the first checkpoint at Whin Rigg, Mike fell to the ground clutching his knee and his race was run. He said he could hobble back and I said I would inform the marshalls accordingly. This I did and descended almost alone from Whin Rigg in thick mist. Unfortunately, I took a bad line and ended up in thick bracken which was almost unrunnable, but in the utmost relief

eventually found the ankle-jerking track which led down. I say relief because how could I explain to people that I was lost at the end of Wastwater and never even reached Seatallan, Pillar, Great Gable or Scafell Pike.

The next part of the race passes through woodland and pasture, the route of which is marked here and there it is the most beautiful cross country section. Near Greendale, was the famous Jos leaning on the wall and handing drinks out. He seemed to be watching and observing and I tried to cover up my premature feeling of tiredness at such an early stage of the race; any thoughts of retiring must be left until later when Jos is not around. I did, however, take 3 or 4 cupfuls of water as I already felt dehydrated after such a short distance; the atmosphere was very heavy - could I really make it?

Then up to Seatallan in the mist. Do not be deceived, as there is a very steep climb, before the stream at the base of this hump is reached. As I climbed Seatallan, the mist cleared in patches and I could see a few tops, but not Seatallan itself. All of a sudden, I looked to my right and there, as well as scattered 'Wasdalers', across the belly of the hill, was down below Greendale Tarn - I was well to the right. Suddenly, I saw Wendy Dodds and her dog quite near me and unlike me, I had a chat to her - it's a lonely race in mist without any companionship. She knew of NFR, knew Ruth Fletcher and seemed to remember me and Angus in the showers with her after the 1991 (I think) Wadsworth Trog (the beast) - an incredibly wet and muddy year - do you remember it Angus?

Soon I was alone again, down the grassy, but tussocky slope off Seatallan towards Pillar (in mist). I descended on rough scree last year and yearn for local knowledge; it seemed so much easier this year on a grassy track.

I risked contouring along the ridge to Pillar without missing it, and not a body in sight. I was relieved to reach Black Sail Pass, hesitated a few seconds (I cannot think why).

I then contoured around that huge mound called Kirkfell on the scarcely used path, feeling happier, but as happened in 1998, suddenly felt very tired as the path ascended gradually, sometimes rough, sometimes boggy, to the base of Great Gable. The slog up Gable was steep and seemed endless, in mist from 1500 feet. At the checkpoint on Gable the marshalls confirmed I was still within the cut-off time. I had forgotten my watch. Onwards and downwards to Styhead Pass. (Incidentally, Great Gable was the first lakeland hill of notoriety that I climbed with my father and sister about 38 years ago from Seathwaite and I remember distinctly reaching 'the Mountain Rescue box' at Styhead before ascending Gable).

Then a long rocky descent off Great Gable, mainly on the path to the Pass where Stewart Beary, his son Christopher and Jane Saul would be waiting and what a sight they were. What a feeling of exhilaration to see them.

Then off again into the mist - the CFR runner ahead of me had disappeared and I was alone again until the finish. As I ran up to Esk Hause, one of my hamstrings kept cramping up and I felt a little panic that I may not finish, or even - how will they get me down? Will it be by helicopter?

Scafell Pike kept appearing from the cloud momentarily. Eventually I reached the top and set off on a long descent to the finish, rough at first, then a long grassy stretch (the best bit of running in the race). I made sure I did not deviate to Mickledore, a common mistake.

Finally, the finish. We had not won the Team Prize (Borrowdale did, 1, 2 & 3), but Jos Naylor still presented me with my treasured certificate - what an honour again, despite my poor time. I was elated to finish. I will be back again next year - I'm hooked, I love it, I could talk all day about the experience and excitement of it. I take my hat off to David Armstrong - what a result! 11th in 4 hours 46 minutes. Well done David! Anyone who would like to race in 2000, and wants to reccy it, please contact me and we can arrange something. Look forward to hearing from you. A weekend of NFR members at Wasdale camping site would be something to look forward to!

Herewith all results and report and the plan for next year.

# Wasdale Race Results 99

Posn	Cat	Name	Club	Whin Rigg	Seattalan	Pillar	Great Gable	Esk Hause	Scafell Pike	Lingmell Nose	Finish
1	S	Simon Booth	Borrowdale	0.34	1.26	2.06	2.44	3.05	3.27	3.40	3.44.50
2	S	Jim Davies	Borrowdale	0.34	1.26	2.06	2.44	3.05	3.29	3.44	3.48.44
3	S	Andrew Davies	Borrowdale	0.34	1.26	2.06	2.44	3.09	3.33	3.48	3.53.57
4	S	Andrew Schofield	Borrowdale	0.34	1.29	2.12	2.37	3.27	3.53	4.10	4.15.12
5	S	Martin Davies	U/A	0.38	1.37	2.21	3.06	3.36	4.02	4.16	4.21.48
6	S	Andy Trigg	Glossopdale	0.34	1.29	2.16	3.05	3.37	4.03	4.22	4.27.34
7	V45	Phil Clark	Kendal AC	0.39	1.38	2.23	3.09	3.39	4.06	4.24	4.29.20
8	V40	Willie Bell	CFR	0.39	1.39	2.23	3.09	3.42	4.11	4.24	4.34.41
9	S	Stephen Bottomley	Eccleshill	0.37	1.39	2.29	3.21	3.56	4.23	4.38	4.43.54
10	V40	Lugh Warburton	Bowland FR	0.41	1.47	2.33	3.23	3.56	4.23	4.39	4.43.57
11	S	David Armstrong	NFR	0.39	1.42	2.32	3.23	3.56	4.24	4.40	4.46.02
12	S	Simon Fairmanor	Trafford AC	0.37	1.40	2.32	3.25	3.56	4.25	4.46	4.51.14
13	V40	Allan Miller	Kendal AC	0.38	1.40	2.31	3.23	3.59	4.27	4.46	4.51.29
14	S	William Sullivan	Dark Peak FR	0.36	1.51	2.35	3.27	4.00	4.26	4.47	4.52.02
15	S	Tim Austin	North Derbyshire	0.39	1.40	2.31	3.22	3.57	4.27	4.49	4.55.52
16	S	Richard Byers	Trafford AC	0.39	1.41	2.32	3.27	4.01	4.31	4.52	4.56.37
17	V45	Geoffrey Hodges	Macclesfield	0.39	1.41	2.32	3.25	3.59	4.29	4.52	4.57.27
18	V40	Terry Houston	Bowland FR	0.40	1.48	2.37	3.29	4.04	4.33	4.52	4.57.53
19	S	Karl Webster	Matlock AC	0.37	1.42	2.36	3.29	4.06	4.38	4.56	5.01.17
20	S	Trevor Wilkinson	CFR	0.40	1.47	2.38	3.33	4.10	4.40	4.56	5.01.32
21	V45	Robert James	CFR	0.40	1.47	2.38	3.33	4.10	4.40	4.57	5.02.24
22	V45	Irvine Black	CFR	0.43	1.51	2.47	3.40	4.12	4.41	4.57	5.02.38
23	S	Robert Blyth	Kendal AC	0.40	1.46	2.39	3.32	4.08	4.38	4.57	5.04.09
24	V40	Ian Harland	Knightley & Craven	0.40	1.51	2.47	3.40	4.12	4.41	4.57	5.04.35
25	S	Rick Ansell	Dark Peak FR	0.39	1.44	2.35	3.28	4.05	4.35	5.00	5.07.40
26	S	Philip Rigby	Lancs & More AC	0.40	1.48	2.39	3.38	4.13	4.46	5.07	5.12.51
27	V45	Ken Dixon	Kendal AC	0.41	1.48	2.40	3.37	4.14	4.46	5.07	5.13.36
28	V30	John Nixon	Achille Rams	0.41	1.49	2.41	3.37	4.12	4.43	5.09	5.15.27
29	V40	John Dickinson	Kendal AC	0.40	1.49	2.45	3.41	4.18	4.51	5.15	5.21.20
30	V40	Peter Browning	Clayton-le-Moors	0.44	1.54	2.51	3.46	4.22	4.54	5.16	5.21.41
31	S	James Ansell	CFR	0.39	1.40	2.41	3.33	4.08	4.39	5.14	5.22.46
32	V40	Shaun Young	CFR	0.44	1.57	2.51	3.47	4.25	4.57	5.17	5.23.10
33	S	Bob Berzina	Dark Peak FR	0.40	1.49	2.45	3.44	4.25	4.59	5.19	5.26.41
34	V30	Philip Cheek	Macclesfield	0.45	1.56	2.53	3.51	4.29	5.02	5.23	5.28.18
35	V45	Wendy Dadds	Clayton-le-Moors	0.44	1.58	2.53	3.51	4.29	5.02	5.23	5.28.19
36	S	Alan McGee	CFR	0.40	1.47	2.43	3.44	4.25	5.00	5.23	5.29.40
37	L	Christine Ocaswell	Notts AC	0.41	1.52	2.53	3.51	4.29	5.02	5.24	5.31.06
38	V35	John Ely	CFR	0.44	2.00	2.57	3.58	4.38	5.13	5.36	5.43.03
39	V45	John Humble	NFR	0.44	1.58	2.53	3.57	4.41	5.17	5.44	5.51.38
40	S	Dave Toplin	Bowline CC	0.44	1.59	3.02	4.08	4.50	5.24	5.49	5.54.40
41	S	Morgan Donnelly	Tynedale Harriers	0.36	1.40	2.31	3.22	4.00	4.35	5.50	5.59.15
42	V40	Geoff Read	Rochdale Harriers	0.40	1.51	2.53	4.02	4.30	5.32	5.54	6.01.16
43	L	Karen Mather	Saddleworth	0.45	2.01	3.04	4.08	4.33	5.32	5.55	6.01.52
44	S	Mathew Todhunter	CFR	0.42	1.57	3.01	4.09	4.52	5.46	6.07	6.12.51
45	V40	Chris Piddler	Newburgh Nomads	0.43	1.44	2.56	4.05	4.51	5.27	6.04	6.15.21
46	S	Paul Marshall	Newburgh Nomads	0.43	1.54	2.56	4.04	4.50	5.26	6.04	6.15.24
47	V40	Mick Robinson	Notts AC	0.47	2.05	3.14	4.15	5.05	5.42	6.08	6.15.50
48	S	Simon Maynard	CFR	0.44	2.01	3.02	4.10	4.53	5.42	6.11	6.18.29
49	S	Dave Sales	Dark Peak FR	0.44	2.02	3.10	4.14	5.06	5.50	6.22	6.30.39
50	S	Bob Riley	CFR	0.47	2.03	3.12	4.15	5.14	5.55	6.29	6.37.47
51	V30	Colin Grove	Nastie-Rawcliffe	0.50	2.11	3.12	4.15	5.14	5.55	6.29	6.37.48

Teams 1st Gents Borrowdale 16pts

## Retirements

L	Stacie Jullie	Eccleshill	0.56R								
L.S	Annette Morris	CFR	0.58R								
V30	Tony Deall	Kendal AC	0.56R								
V30	Mike Wallford	Kendal AC	R (injury)								
V30	Richard Baker	Ambleside AC	0.44	2.01R							
V35	Paul Blighbrough	Saddleworth	0.56	R							
S	Dan Duxbury	Ambleside AC	0.39	1.39	R						
V35	Barry Johnson	CFR	0.56	R							
S	Stuart Sumner	Ramsdale Harriers	0.38	R							
S	David Atkinson	U/A	0.40	1.47	2.56						
S	Steve Barkinshaw	NFR	0.40	1.45	R						
S	Mark Barkwood	Todley AC	0.45	2.04	3.14R						
S	Russell Cannon	Helm Hill Runners	0.47	2.04	3.08R						
V45	Nick Hambrey	Kendal AC	0.44	2.01	3.10						
V30	Greg Houghton	Caldar Valley FR	0.42	1.59	2.58						
S	Alan Jenkinson	CFR	0.47	2.07	R						
V30	Clive Last	Dark Peak FR	0.48	2.16	R						
V35	Brian Leadley	Clayton-le-Moors	0.50	2.10	R						
V35	Dennis Gibson	Saddleworth	0.45	2.02	3.12						
V30	Ed Smith	Borwick RMI	0.56	R							
L	Clare Kenny	Kendal AC	0.44	2.02	3.08	4.08	4.49	5.26	missd	(6:01:54)	

## THE 2000 CHAMPIONSHIP

The Presentation Evening took place at the Robin Hood Inn again (near Corbridge and Matfen on the Military Road).

## THE RACES

I have set out the diary of races for that year together with a short resume about them that appeared in the N.F.R Newsletter.

<b>Championship Calendar 2000</b>	
<p><b>Allendale Challenge</b> This event will have been staged by the time you read this; so you know the event was blessed with good weather and that a posse of NFR's participated and finished well.</p> <p><b>Fairfield Horseshoe</b> (AM/9m 3000') GR 366064. 1.00 pm, Sunday 14 May This is a classic Wainwright route along the ridges from Rydal Hall. The race is pre-entry and along with being an English championship race parking is difficult – so share transport. Plenty of runners to follow, although hardly necessary unless its misty on the top of Fairfield.</p> <p><b>Yetholm Festival Hill Race</b> (AM/8m 2500') GR 840277 1.00 pm, Sunday 11 June An 'A' category Scottish championship race around the lovely Halterburn Valley, where you can still come across bits of various aeroplanes from wartime air-crashes (see 'Where the Hills Meet the Sky' by Peter Clark).</p> <p><b>Cherry Chase</b> (BL/20m 4000') GR 992278. 11.00 am, Saturday 24 June Pre-entry. A race of two halves, with most of climbing to Hedgehope, but with a testing road section at the end, so keep something back. Plenty of folks to follow with no strict cut-off times. There is a lovely atmosphere after the race at the YHostel, with plenty of excellent food. NFR won the team prize last year, and Shaun Scott won the senior men's title for 3rd consecutive year, and Ray Hayes the V50s at the age of 59 (or so he says! Could be a case of the Dorian Grays).</p> <p><b>Salweil Harriers Fell Race</b> (BS/5.5m 1000') GR 996416 7.30 pm, Tuesday 4 July Don't forget your scuba gear. Roy Dawson will give lessons. Sharp elbows will help on the narrow path along the river.</p> <p><b>Kentmere Horseshoe</b> (AM/11.9m 3300') From Kentmere Hall Lake District A classic Lakeland championship race – a 'LONG medium'. Runners and ridges to follow.</p> <p><b>Forest Burn Fell Race</b> (BS/3.5m 500') GR 067963 2.00 pm, Sunday 13 August. From the showfield on Show day. Karen Robertson</p>	<p>holds the Lady's record. Peter Scott and Geoff Ross both ran the Borderer and Borrowdale before this one last year! – which had a turnout of 14 NFR.</p> <p><b>Bellingham Show Fell Race</b> (BS/4m 600') 2.00 pm Saturday 26 August It's always glorious weather for Bill Campbell's race, and 15 NFR benefited last year. Thanks to Bill for giving the proceeds to NFR (perhaps the Treasurer should do an extra lap?).</p> <p><b>Simonside Fell Race</b> (BM/6.75m 1200') GR 031028 2.45 pm, Saturday 16 September An ideal starter race. Oddly, although this is on John Humble's birthday, it's not his favourite race. But now we know, we can let him buy the pints afterwards. That should endear the race to him!</p> <p><b>Alan Lamb Memorial Fell Race</b> (AL/14m 3500') GR 067299 11.00 am Sunday 22 October Part of Durham Fell Challenge series. The phantom 'marker-mover' has been knobbed and a repeat of the 1999 fiasco will not occur. Note that this is a hard race.</p> <p><i>John Dallinson &amp; John Humble</i></p>

## **AWARD WINNDERS 2000**

3 <sup>rd</sup>	MALE SENIOR	MATT SIMMS	WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	MALE SENIOR	MORGAN DONNELLY	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	MALE SENIOR	<u>DAVID ARMSTRONG</u>	TANKARD
3 <sup>rd</sup>	LADY SENIOR	SUSAN DAVIS	WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	LADY SENIOR	JANE SAUL	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	LADY SENIOR	<u>KAREN ROBERTSON</u>	TANKARD
3 <sup>rd</sup>	MALE VET. 40	STEVEN WALKER	WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	MALE VET. 40	GEOFF DAVIS	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	MALE VET. 40	<u>GARRY OWENS</u>	TANKARD
1 <sup>st</sup>	LADY VET. 40	<u>GILL MENNIM</u>	TANKARD
3 <sup>rd</sup>	MALE VET. 45	KEITH COOPER	WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	MALE VET. 45	PAUL JAMESON	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	MALE VET. 45	<u>JOHN DALLINSON</u>	TANKARD
2 <sup>nd</sup>	LADY VET. 45	RUTH FLETCHER	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	LADY VET. 45	<u>PAT COOPER</u>	TANKARD
3 <sup>rd</sup>	MALE VET. 50	TERRY HART	WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	MALE VET. 50	STEWART BEATY	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	MALE VET. 50	<u>ROY DAWSON</u>	TANKARD
1 <sup>st</sup>	LADY VET. 50	<u>KATHLEEN DALLINSON</u>	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	MALE VET. 55	<u>JAMES WILKINSON</u>	TANKARD
3 <sup>rd</sup>	MALE VET. 60	MICHAEL SANDERSON	WINE
2 <sup>nd</sup>	MALE VET. 60	JOE GARBARINO	WINE
1 <sup>st</sup>	MALE VET. 60	<u>RAY HAYES</u>	TANKARD

## **THE 2000 PRIZEWINNERS**

I will leave you to 'thumb' the races and the results, but I would just like to earmark a few achievements, lest they are forgotten.

David Armstrong won the senior championship for the second year running with 297 points (3 less than the maximum, having performed at the Kentmere Fell Race in Lakeland so admirably and winning the Kielder Borderer in what is still a record time of 2 hours 49 minutes. Sadly I lost my record to him, but what a competitor he is!

In second place in the championship was a new member that year to NFR namely, Morgan Donnelly, who had performed exceptionally well in Lakeland."He always seemed to be on the telly", particularly with his other passion of adventure racing.

In the senior ladies category, in third place, was Susan Davis from Durham City, whose confidence in fell racing had grown so quickly, with past secretary Jane Saul in second place who that year competed in 8 out of 10 championship races.

In first place, retaining her trophy, was Karen Robertson. I think I am right in saying that she amassed enough points to win the championship before other events like having a baby, took over that year

In the male veteran 40 category, Garry Owens won (despite his exertions in the Everest Marathon) with 294 points (second best score over 6 races for that year and second only to David Armstrong). Geoff Davis was second with 280 points and Steven Walker from Blyth was in third place.

Winner of the Veteran 40 Lady category was Gill Mennim, a stalwart in running over the years, but not seen as much of late. I hope she has forgiven me for having both of us disqualified after she followed me in the Alan Lamb race in Hamsterley Forest and I got her well and truly lost.

In the Male Veteran 40 category Keith Cooper (organiser of the Alwinton and Windy Gyle Races) was third (after a third in 1999). Second was Paul Jameson and John Dallinson won the category with 280 points.

Ruth Fletcher, that indomitable and unstoppable competitor, was second in the Veteran 45 category despite injuries that year, and Pat Cooper won her category for the second year running with 189 points.

With 290 points (third most championship points that year) Roy Dawson won the championship with one of the most notable seasons I have ever known from any NFR runner. That year he was unstoppable. His result at the Carnethy Fell Race that year was phenomenal, retaining his trophy with NFR.

Cath Dallinson did not receive a trophy for winning the veteran 50 category as we did not have one, but she received a bottle of wine for her efforts in winning that year, and we wrote on the bottle.

Jim Wilkinson won the Male Veteran 55 award. I could dedicate a book to this man's fell achievements, but to name just one of those, he has competed in over 20 Chevy Chases, leading ultimately to him receiving the Jim Gardner Cup at the Chevy Chase for exceptional service to that race in June 1992

N.F.R's founder chairman won the veteran 60 category.

Second in the Veteran 60 category was Joe Gabarino and third the inaugurator of the Kielder Borderer Fell Race, Mike Sanderson.

I had always revelled in the element of surprise "on the evening" and this was no exception as I decided to give special awards to three very special people achieving very "notable achievements" and these are the words I had inscribed upon their plaques which I announced and Ray Hayes presented.

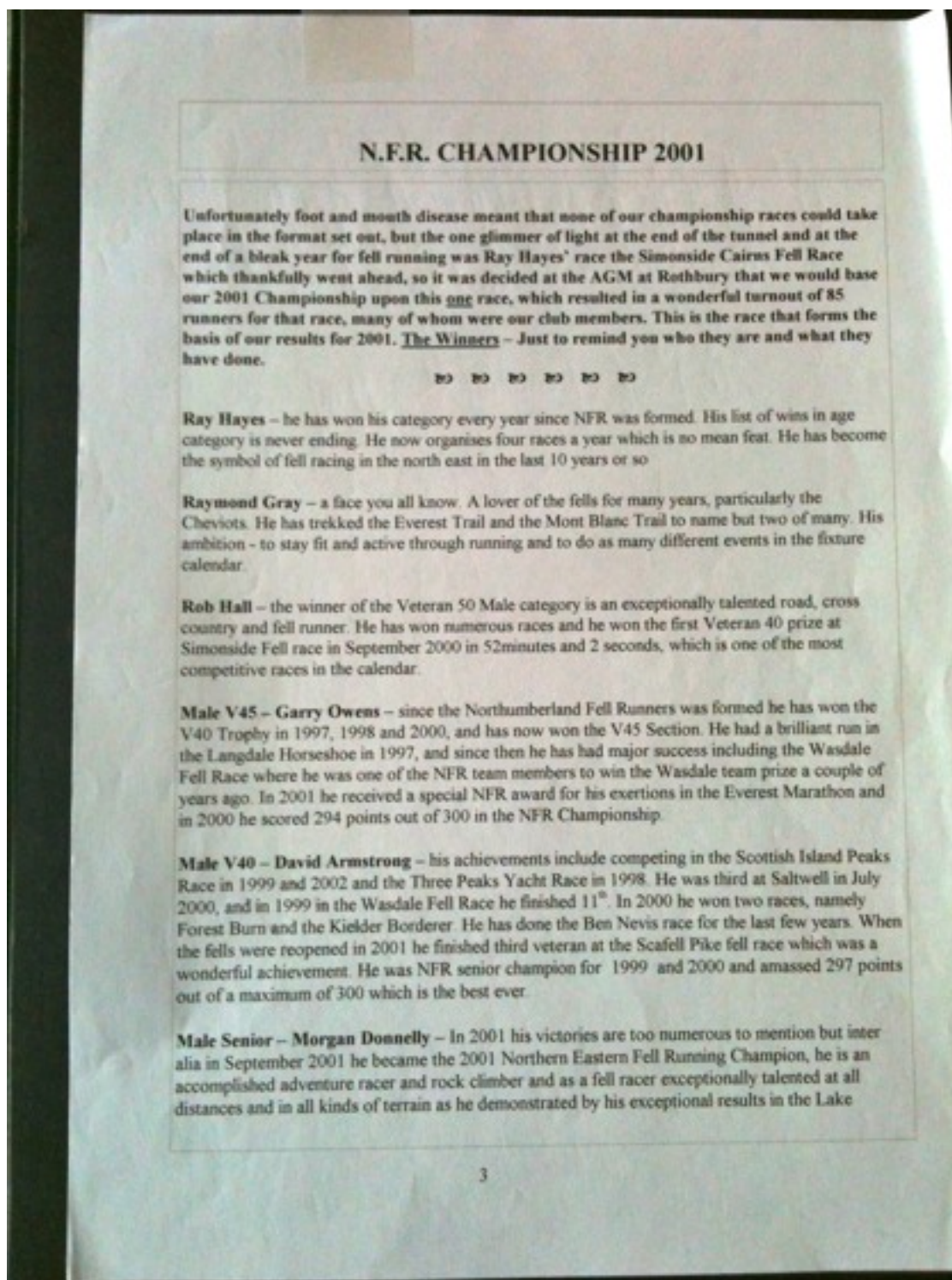
The first was to Geoff Davis in recognition of him racing 8 out of 10 championship races and amassing more cumulative points than anyone else over those 10 races with 368 points and for being a regular competitor in so many races since N.F.R was formed. I also was proud to remind the gathering that he was one of an elite few talented runners who was a member of the Bob Graham Club following his successful round in 1999. It was apt that on this pedigree and his insatiable appetite for racing that he should become Club Chairman of N.F.R in 2003.

The second and third "notable achievements" were to Garry Owens and Peter Reed who that year completed the amazing achievement of completing the Everest Marathon. Garry was 12th overall and the first non- Nepalese to finish the race and Peter not too far behind. Peter's further achievement was that it was the second time he had completed it (first time in 1998) and in addition to this very soon after completing his 157 mile desert run the Marathon des Sables 2000 "the toughest foot race on earth" which he entered to raise money for the Children with Leukaemia Foundation. Peter also incidentally, completed the Himalayan 100 mile stage race in 1999. Also, they raised a lot of money for charity, and in addition to their plaques, I was proud to announce that N.F.R would donate a further sum of £25.00 towards their chosen Charity of Northern Genetics.

After the meal that evening my co-organiser of championship races John Dallinson announced the races for the season ahead, namely 2001. This format of the presentation evening has been followed in the subsequent years.

## N.F.R. CHAMPIONSHIP 2001

I was proud to announce at the Robin Hood Inn in February 2002 the results of the 2001 Championship. It was not difficult on that evening to give the audience a flavour of their other achievements at that time, which I succinctly set out in the subsequent newsletter.



District over the last couple of years. If you wonder who Morgan Donnelly is – he is the young looking chap that has been finishing in the prizes and the fella that is always smiling and being asked if he is doing the junior race. He is also the one who drinks lots of water.

**Lady V50 – Ruth Fletcher** – Again, her achievements are too numerous to list but inter alia in 1998 she was the world ladies champion in Quadrathlon and British Veteran lady Ironman Champion. In 1999 she was the Tynedale Ladies Sports personality of the year and has achieved first veteran at Ben Nevis in 2hrs 17 minutes, first lady veteran at the Don Morrison Edale Skyline in 1998 and has entered endless 100K races accompanied by mammoth success. As of late, she has competed on a more low key basis as the result of injury and illness, but her enthusiasm is unsurpassable and irrepressible.

**Lady V45 – Pat Cooper** – a consistent fell racer over the years and she loves the Simonside Hills. Her strength over the years has been the long fell races and like husband Keith is always ready to support the club and enter team events like the Ian Hodgson which this year they entered as a team running the second leg between Patterdale and Hartsop.

**Lady V40 – Ann Potts** – a real competitor. She won the championship by finishing the Simonside Fell Race in 1 hour 57 minutes when the previous year she had finished in 2hours 12 minutes. Ann does well over the longer distances and has won on two occasions the Shunner Shuffle (29 miles and 4000 feet of climbing) and has picked up numerous prizes and awards with Blyth Ladies Team.

**Lady Senior – Karen Robertson** – Her achievements include over the years first lady at the Blaydon Race, first lady twice at the Phoenix 14. Her best time for 10 miles is 57.03 and for 10K 33 minutes 10 seconds. She has represented the North East in both road and cross country events. In 1994 she became the Northern Area Lady Champion. She started fell racing in 1998 and in 1999 won the North Eastern Athletics Association fell championship and the NFR championships which she has won ever since. She was winner of the Hexhamshire Hobbie in 1999 and also the Simonside Cairns race in that year.

## 2001 Championship Results

### Senior Male

1ST	MORGAN DONNELLY
2ND	STEVE BIRKINSHAW
3RD	JEFF ROSS

### Male V40

1ST	DAVID ARMSTRONG
2ND	GEOFF DAVIS
3RD	WILL LAWRENCE

### Male V45

1ST	GARRY OWENS
2ND	ANDY CURTIS
3RD	FRANCIS MORGAN

### Male V50

1ST	ROB HALL
2ND	TERENCE HART
3RD	JOHN HUMBLE

### Male V55

1ST	RAYMON GRAY
2ND	BRIAN ORR

### Male V60

1ST	RAY HAYES
2ND	MIKE SANDERSON

### Lady Senior

1ST	KAREN ROBERTSON
2ND	JANE SAUL
3RD	LUCY HALL

### Lady V40

1ST	ANN POTTS
2ND	SUSAN DAVIS

### Lady V45

1ST	PAT COOPER
2ND	BARBARA YOUNG

### Lady V50

1ST	RUTH FLETCHER
-----	---------------

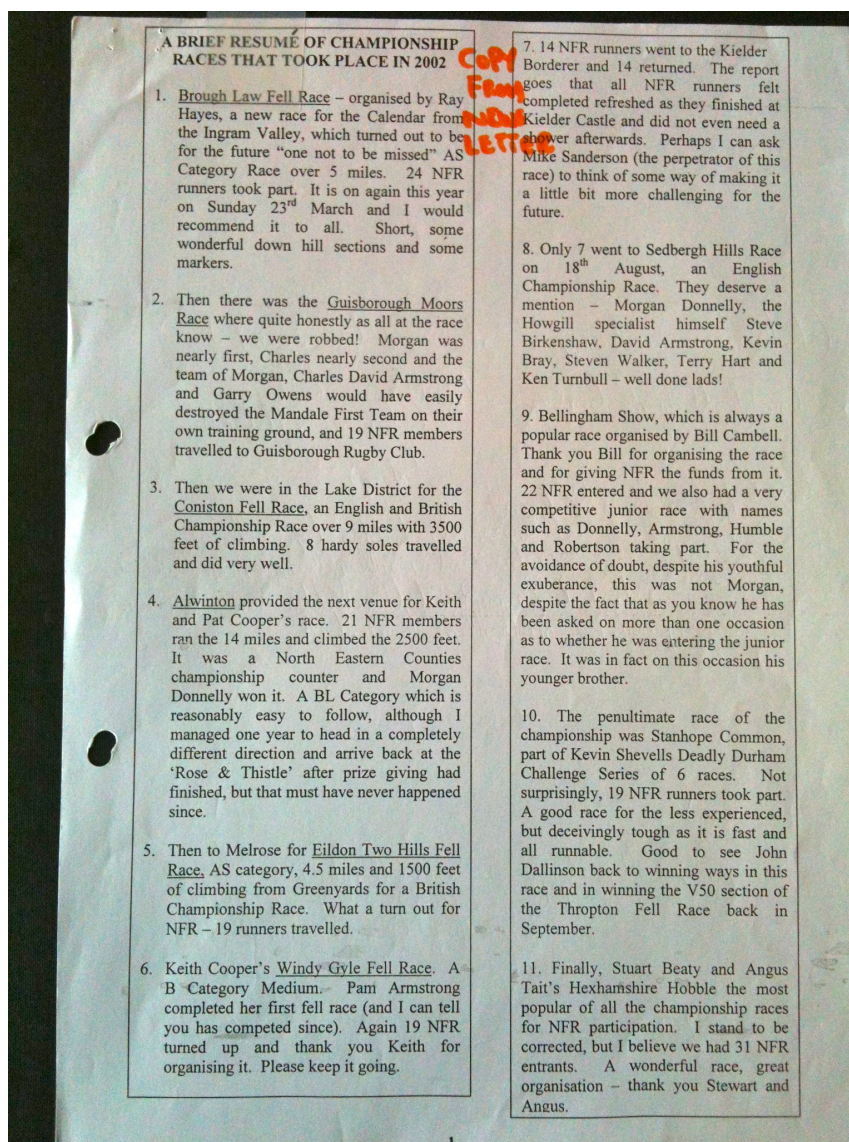
## THE 2002 CHAMPIONSHIP

### THE RACES

- LONG: ALWINTON F/R, GUISBOROUGH MOORS, KIELDER BORDERED AND SEDBERGH HILLS.
- MEDIUM: CONISTON, WINDY GYLE, STANHOPE COMMON, AND HEXHAMSHIRE COMMON
- SHORT: BROUGH LAW, EILDON TWO HILLS AND BELLINGHAM SHOW.

(Six Races to count to include a long, medium and a short).

I have included an extract from the March 2003 NFR Newsletter in which I outlined the races and listed the results and a photo to record the championship category winners with their tankards.



Perhaps the most exhilarating feeling I had on the presentation evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2003 at Fortini's Restaurant Hexham was announcing the winner of the Lady Veteran category. This lady is third from the right in the picture and is Susan Davis. I remember that evening saying that she was an example to all aspiring fell racers. She competed in five races and gained 148 points. A few years earlier she was a novice and in 2002 she won a difficult category. By 2002 she was competing confidently and regularly on the fell running scene, not just in her local area but in Lakeland as well. I notice that she is now entered for the 2005 World Mountain Running Championships at Keswick in September with chairman husband Geoff Davis.

I remembered and may have mentioned to the guests that evening the Sunday morning she came to my house in Slaley with husband Geoff (and I think Andy Curtis was there that day as well) and Susan and I had a training run in Slaley Forest and on to the fell while the others romped away. That was in about 2000 I think and at that time she had not done much running and certainly no fell running, but gradually she has become a regular fell racer, winning further awards in the 2003 and 2004 championships.

The announcement of the winner of the male veteran 45 category also gave me great pleasure that year, surprisingly enough, on the prize list for the first time since the formation of N.F.R. That was Andy Curtis.

I always looked forward to the presentation evening so much with always however, that nagging doubt that something may go wrong and I may somehow let these wonderful people down e.g I may get the results wrong or the meals may not arrive in time. Perhaps, however, the most uncanny satisfaction came from announcing the winners, not however just the overall winners but those that were second and third, and those that received special awards, often those people who did not know they had won anything, and those that I just simply wanted to tell the NFR members what they had achieved.

One such person in 2002 was Joe Garbarino, who that year won the male veteran 60 championship.

In the veteran 40 category for men in 2002, there were also two men to whom I was delighted to give awards as they had not been prize winners before. Third that year was Glen McWilliams from Wooler who has contributed greatly to the sport over the years by his organisation of events and his most enthusiastic support of others. I have seen him for example, encouraging runners up the Cheviot in the Chevy Chase, when he himself was injured with a groin strain. I have seen the work he has put in organising the run for Wooler School Fair and from the Glendale Show at Wooler, both of which I have participated in and enjoyed greatly, and I appreciate how much work and worry goes into them.

Second in the category was Simon Banks a man who for years has trained in that unforgiving area in the Borders, his favourite jaunt being from Carter Bar to his home in Kielder Village over some of the most desolate moorland in the country, never mind the county. I know how hard he trained to achieve that award. He was one of the founder members of NFR and has worked stoically (as we will hear later) to organise and help organise races around the Kielder area. This man has been a true friend to me over the years and an unsung hero for fell racing in the area.

In the veteran 40 male category that year, David Armstrong continued his rich vein of form by winning the category with 297 points out of a maximum 300 points. In 2002 David was 67<sup>th</sup> at the Coniston F/R, 11<sup>th</sup> at Guisborough Moors, 4<sup>th</sup> at the Chevy Chase, 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Kielder Borderer 2<sup>nd</sup> at Forest Burn and 3<sup>rd</sup> (1st veteran) at Bellingham Show.

In the senior male category Morgan Donnelly scored a record maximum 300 points and during that 2002 season won at Doctors Gate (Hamsterley Forest). Nearly (really) won at Guisborough Moors, an 'elite' Karrimor winner with Steve Birkinshaw, 10<sup>th</sup> in the Spelga Skyline (less than one minute behind the multiple British champion Ian Holmes) won the Alwinton Fell Race and the Hexhamshire Hobble, won the Hebridean Challenge with Jim Davies of Borrowdale, was 5<sup>th</sup> at 2 Riggs in Lakeland, 14<sup>th</sup> at Ras Garn, 8<sup>th</sup> in the British Championship race at Criffel. , 25<sup>th</sup> in the Northern Cross Country Championships and to crown it all was runner up in the Tynedale Sports personality of the Year, all in all a most successful year for a great athlete who has treated fell racing in his words as "cheap, friendly and I love it".

The winner of the senior ladies award, had won the award for the last three years. In 2002 Karen Robertson was first lady at the Windy Gyle Fell Race, first lady at the Kielder Borderer, 1st lady at the Bellingham Fell Race and I believe that year in cross country running represented the North Eastern Counties in the Inter Counties Cross Country Championships in Nottingham. Over the years Karen was and still is a very successful road racer and triathlete.

Many, many years ago I remember mentioning to a very young lady at Tynedale Harriers that she might 'try' the Simonside Fell Race as she had, I believe, not fell raced before this. I also believe she went to that race that year and won the ladies race!

I was proud to announce special awards that year to the following:-  
Jane Saul, Terry Hart and Ken Turnbull for entering most championship races.  
David Armstrong for achieving most points in the 11 championship races, while Karen Robertson received a similar award for the ladies section.

Incidentally Terry Hart also finished second in the veteran 50 category, after being third in 2000 and second in 2001. In 2002 he finished 2nd veteran 50 at the long Alwinton Fell Race and his attendance at races over the years is nothing but phenomenal.

Also, I must mention Ken Turnbull third place in the veteran 50 category. That year he raced at Eildon Two Hills, Bellingham, Coniston, Windy Gyle, Stanhope, Hexhamshire Hobble, Guisborough Moors, Kielder and Sedbergh and on the Saturday after the presentation evening, was racing the 22 mile Buttermere Round from Keswick.

Stewart Gardner received a bottle of wine for completing the Bob Graham Round, but his great achievement was recognised by all present.

Joe Garbarino was awarded for his bravery in getting back to fell racing after heart surgery and winning the male veteran 60 category.

Finally Morgan Donnelly and Steve Birkinshaw received the accolades for winning the `elite Karrimor.

I referred to two men "loitering within tent" and held up the picture of them that appeared in one of the October editions of the Hexham Courant in 2002, following their Karrimor success in October of that year. As you may know the Karrimor International Mountain Marathon two day event is the oldest and biggest race of its kind with 2000 competitors, the blue riband race of mountain marathons. Steve had won the 'elite version on three previous occasions, and in 2002, two N.F.R. members took the title.



Also in 2002, the same pair won the British Adventure racing championships in North Wales and won the gruelling Salemon X - Adventure GB Series National Event in the Scottish Highlands, an extravaganza of cross country, country running, mountain biking, abseiling and canoeing for which they each won a new Saab sports car for one month. Incidentally, I had the pleasure of being a passenger in this with Morgan driving when he took Stewart Beaty and I to the N.F.R. AGM at the Newcastle Arms in December 2002. All I will

say is, we arrived and returned very quickly! Do all Saabs go around corners on two wheels? This one did.

I also mentioned that evening an achievement by Steve Birkinshaw which will live on in my fell running memories. In 2002 he finished 5th at the Borrowdale Fell Race and on the following day won the Kielder Borderer Fell Race in difficult conditions in a time of 3 hours 5 minutes - QUITE ASTOUNDING!

It is quite strange but I can remember vividly the principles that I referred to that evening, before announcing that Terry Hart and Ken Turnbull had won "notable achievement" awards. I began by saying that success in itself was important to the members individually and the club but of equal importance were participation and perhaps of paramount importance "the love of the sport" and a lot of the time the special award winners epitomised these principles, as this particular year did Terry, Ken and Jane Saul.

**Copy**  
**2002 Championship Results**

**SENIOR MALE**

1<sup>ST</sup> MORGAN DONNELLY  
2<sup>ND</sup> JEFF ROSS  
3<sup>RD</sup> CHARLES STEAD

**MALE V45**

1<sup>ST</sup> ANDY CURTIS  
2<sup>ND</sup> GEOFF DAVIS  
3<sup>RD</sup> STEVEN WALKER

**MALE V60**

1<sup>ST</sup> JOE GARBARINO

**LADIES SENIOR**

1<sup>ST</sup> KAREN ROBERTSON  
2<sup>ND</sup> JANE SAUL  
3<sup>RD</sup> LUCY DONNELLY

**LADY V45**

1<sup>ST</sup> PAT COOPER

**MALE V40**

1<sup>ST</sup> DAVID ARMSTRONG  
2<sup>ND</sup> SIMON BANKS  
3<sup>RD</sup> GLEN McWILLIAMS

**MALE V50**

1<sup>ST</sup> JOHN HUMBLE  
2<sup>ND</sup> TERENCE HART  
3<sup>RD</sup> KEN TURNBULL

**LADY V40**

1<sup>ST</sup> SUSAN DAVIS

**WATER YES ORIG PHOTO AVAILABLE**



■ Prize gives Northumberland Fell Runners held their awards evening for the 2002 championships at Farnley's restaurant in Mether. The club, founded in 1997 now has about 100 members and is a club for those that are interested in running and racing on the fells. The women included Morgan Donnelly who was seventh in the British Championships. The 2002 Championship was based upon 12 pre-chosen runs, with the best six running in the championships, some home, and others in Lakeland and the Scottish Borders. The line-up is (from left to right shown): Karen Robertson (Carlisle), David Armstrong (Mether Bridge), Pat Cooper, Morgan Donnelly (Mether), Susan Davis, Andy Curtis, John Humble (Bakey).



3 Champions Together -  
left to right: Morgan Koppelman,  
Andy Curtis and Charles Stead at  
My Presentation Evening at Fortino's  
Restaurant in Norham in February 2003

## **THE CHAMPIONSHIP 2003**

### **THE RACES**

The 2003 championship was to be the last time that I announced the results of the championship.

The 2003 Annual General Meeting in December that year at the Newcastle Arms in Rothbury was a very big landmark for me and the club as a whole, because some of the "old faces" were replaced by the "newer " ones. Ray Hayes, the first chairman of the club was replaced by Geoff Davis, a long standing member of the club from Durham City, but not one of the "Dipton Mill Pub 10". It was also innovative for the club that someone living outside of Northumberland should become its chairman. I was very happy that Geoff's appointment at that meeting was "rubber stamped" by those in attendance, and he has proved to be a very active and very good chairman to date.

It was however, very sad for me to see Ray Hayes move aside, because he was synonymous with N.F.R; his charisma, his love of running, of races, his impeccable record for the birth of new races in the area was quite remarkable and still is.

Before that AGM Jane Saul as secretary had fulfilled her role very well having taken over from Matt Simms a few years earlier. Somehow the secretary of N.F.R. had done a similar job to chairman up to that date by, for example, chairing the annual general meetings.

From December 2003 we saw a new style chairman in Geoff Davis with an administrative secretary of Louise Wilkinson from Bellingham (who I proposed that evening) and two new social secretaries, namely Stewart Gardner and the Charlotte Roberts (now Gardner) who lived at Crook in Durham County. Incidentally, they celebrated their marriage vows by running the Bellingham Fell Race in wedding apparel, although I was not there to witness it.

I said I would continue looking after the newsletter, which I had taken over a couple of years before, in default, and gave up the role of deciding upon the championship races, which I had done over the last few years with John Dallinson. Prior to that I had chosen them myself. I proposed Simon Banks to take over from me and he would work in unison with John.

As you can see, there was much change and I can acknowledge that on that day N.F.R could function quite independently of me. My brainchild had now fled the nest and was independent.

## THE PRESENTATION EVENING - FEB 2004

So it was in February 2004 that Stewart and Charlotte invited me to announce in my usual fashion, the award winners for 2003, but not as I had normally organised in a pub or restaurant in Northumberland, but this time a hotel in Newcastle.

At first I refused as I felt that the venue was not appropriate and perhaps, in retrospect, because I was not controlling everything, I felt I should step aside for the new club. Perhaps my style of presentation evening was now old fashioned and they should bring in "the new".

I did however agree to announce the winners at the Rooftop Restaurant and Bar at the Quality Hotel in Newgate Street in Newcastle, when I believe I was referred to as the Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

I was quite nervous for the evening as I was not in my accustomed surroundings in the Robin Hood Inn or as in 2003 the back room of Fortinis Restaurant in Hexham, I was perched on a stage in a hotel in Newcastle, but I did my best to set out the achievements of those prize winners and the championship races in which they had participated.

It was, I must say, very strange for me, as before this I had been in control of everything for that evening. I had picked the venue, organised the menu, paid the bill, decided the times for the programme of events, in 2002, I even decided who was sitting where and with whom, when I was running out of space in the Robin Hood Inn. I had been in complete control, I had decided everything and everything had to be organised to the finest detail because the people and the club together all meant so much to me.

Now I was part of someone else's organisation for the evening and I was M.C. I did not want to be M.C. - I was simply John Humble, a passionate fell racer passionate about my club and those wonderful people who came year after year. John Dallinson that evening before announcing the championship races, said to me "John how can I follow that?" My announcement (I hate the word speech where N.F.R is concerned) had gone well and I hope I did justice to everyone there, particularly the award winners.

I would mention, however, that almost subconsciously and spontaneously I left my script, and mentioned and dwelt on that never to be forgotten meeting at the Dipton Mill Pub in 1997. I realized how far the club had progressed from me saying to Matt Simms in early 1997 - "I want my own club - will you help me?"

So I digressed from my notes and looked around the room and said how far

the club had expanded and advanced, in numbers, in ambition, in every way beyond all recognition beyond my wildest dreams. It must be right, although it is so sad, how the old must give way to the new for the sake of progress and the enjoyment and happiness and ambitions of the majority. Some of these people, indeed many, may not have known the significance of my digression. Perhaps now they may, but words to convey the emotion do not come easy. I had lost N.F.R forever, and after that night my club would never be the same again. Also I could never have imagined the changes that took place in my life before the next presentation evening, when I was a name on the list of acceptances for the evening.

Lest I am sidetracked too long, back to the 2003 championship year.

### THE AWARDS FOR THE 2003 CHAMPIONSHIP

Ten races in the championship, six to count. Some statistics. Steve Birkinshaw broke his own record for the Allendale Challenge race in 3 hours 14 minutes. Also in 2003 Steve won the Simonside Cairns Race, Doctor's Gate and the Kielder Borderer in 2 hours 55 minutes.

Morgan Donnelly was 9<sup>th</sup> at Stuc A Chroin (15 miles/5000') a British and Scottish Championship race, as well as one of NFR's. Garry Owens won Alwinton Fell Race as a veteran 45. NFR's Jeff Ross was second. 29 NFR runners entered this race.

12 NFR runners went to Pen Y Ghent; Charles Stead of NFR was 21<sup>st</sup> in this English and British Championship counter. Seventeen members ran at Kirk Yetholm, a true classic fell race and one of my own personal favourites. Morgan Donnelly was 22<sup>nd</sup> at Skiddaw in the British Championships.

At the Falstone Falcon Fell Race, Louise Wilkinson won the ladies race and David Armstrong was third and first veteran 40.

At the Langdale Horseshoe Lewis and Jane Grundy (new members in 2003) were 1st male and female back for NFR. True to the spirit of fell racing David Armstrong helped an injured runner of the fells and had to abort the race, an important championship race for him at that, having had a 'ding dong' battle with Mike Jeffrey all season.

Steve Birkinshaw won the Simonside Cairns Race and Karen Robertson the ladies race, while John Metson won the male veteran 50 prize.

Out of all the championship races, Doctors Gate, the first of the 10 was most popular with 31 NFR runners taking part. Those races further a field attracted an excellent contingent of NFR runners.

I did however still choose the winners of the special awards, and I announced those as Louise Wilkinson for scoring a record number of points for 6 "counting races", namely 299 points out of 300 i.e five wins and one second.

The second "notable achievement" award went to David Burn for competing in the most championship races and scoring the most points i.e. 410 out of 500 points. He competed in nine out of ten championship races.

The third award went to Bill Campbell for his unselfish support and encouragement of other when he himself could not run, after recuperating for a heart attack in 2003.

As I have said before, one of the joys of the presentation evenings has been the element of suspense - who has won. 2003 saw some new names on the trophies, namely Jeff Ross winning the senior men's title after being third in 2001, and runner up in 2002. In 2003 he won the Forest Burn Fell Race, was fourth in the Allendale Challenge, second at Alwinton, fifth at Falstone and fifth at the Simonside Cairns Race.

Another new name was Allan Welsh who was second to Jeff and he only missed out by two points. He first raced a fell race in 1995 at Alwinton and is ardently trying to complete the Munros in Scotland - he may have achieved that now.

In the male veteran 40 category, two new names, David Burn third and Mike Jeffrey, second.

David Burn, a relative newcomer to fell racing has over the few years he has raced gone from strength to strength. He has now taken on and beaten many of the difficult long fell races in England and Scotland. In 2003, for example, he raced at Stuc A Chroin and Langdale, two of the toughest AL category races. He also had excellent results at Pen Y Ghent and Yetholm, very demanding in their own way. In 2003, he also ran a sub three hour Dublin Marathon on the roads. He is one of the kindest, endearing and understanding people one could ever wish to meet. To see him at races just adds to the whole enjoyment of the day.

Mike Jeffrey was also only two points behind the winner and the championship in this category went to the very last race at Simonside Cairns.

I believe his best race of 2003 was at Langdale Horseshoe where he finished an awesome 71st in two hours 43 minutes. He was also fifth at the Beacon Hill Fell Race in June 2003.

He started as a hill walker, has a love of the fells but also likes an odd road race as well. His dedication certainly paid off in 2003.

David Armstrong won the veteran 40 category again. He was the senior winner in 1999 and 2000 and winner of this award in 2001, and 2002.

In the veteran 45 male category I was delighted to see a new name on the trophy, namely N.F.R. chairman Geoff Davis, after being a runner up on so many occasions. Geoff has competed in the Carnethy Race every year since 1990 and successfully completed the Bob Graham Round in 1998. What is more, since then, he has unselfishly assisted and indeed escorted more and more people around the route. He, like David Armstrong and the Gardners would not miss the Ben Nevis Race in September each year for love nor money.

In the veteran 50 category John Dallinson was back to winning ways followed by Stewart Gardner (second) and John Metson (third).

Stewart is a long established fell racer and an excellent social secretary of the club.

John Metson did his first fell race at Falstone in 2002 and I raced him over the line and beat him by a few seconds. In 2003 he won the veteran 50 prizes at the Stanhope Common Fell Race, the Hexhamshire Hobble in a phenomenal time of 1 hour 14 minutes and also at Simonside Cairns. His hobby, I believe is bee keeping. I think I'll try it if it produces results like that.

In the Ladies categories, another new name on the trophy, namely Louise Wilkinson, relatively new to N.F.R, but already has the ladies record for the Kielder Borderer in 2004. Steph Scott was second having raced at Allendale, Alwinton, Pen Y Ghent, Yetholm and Skiddaw. Jane Saul was third.

Jane Walker won the ladies 40 Category and was first lady at Forest Burn in 2003 to name but one success. Her first fell race was the Simonside Cairns Race in 2001 and she has improved so much over the years since then.

The 2003 championship, as you have seen, revealed new faces and successes for them. I think the audience that night was as staggered as I was when I read out the achievements of the winner of the Ladies veteran 40 category, namely Charlotte Roberts (now Gardner). I have set out some of those achievements in the profile section. She is now with husband Stewart working as social secretary for the club, and like Stewart, doing a wonderful job.

### The Award Winners

1 <sup>st</sup>	Senior Man	Jeff Ross
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Senior Man	Allan Welsh
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Senior Man	Steve Birkinshaw
1 <sup>st</sup>	Over 40 Man	David Armstrong
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Over 40 Man	Mike Jeffrey
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Over 40 Man	David Burn
1 <sup>st</sup>	Over 45 Man	Geoff Davis
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Over 45 Man	Garry Owens
1 <sup>st</sup>	Over 50 Man	John Dallinson
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Over 50 Man	Stewart Gardner
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Over 50 Man	John Metson
1 <sup>st</sup>	Over 55 Man	Raymond Gray
1 <sup>st</sup>	Senior Lady	Louise Wilkinson
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Senior Lady	Steph Scott
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Senior Lady	Jane Saul
1 <sup>st</sup>	Lady Veteran 40	Jane Walker
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Lady Veteran 40	Sue Davis
1 <sup>st</sup>	Lady Veteran 45	Charlotte Roberts
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Lady Veteran 45	Pat Cooper
1 <sup>st</sup>	Lady Veteran 50	Cath Dallinson

# THE RACES

Date	StartTime	Race	Grade	Statistics
Sun 30 Mar	11:00	Doctors Gate Hill Race Hamsterley GR 067299	BS	5.5m/1100
Sat 5 Apr	10:00 runners 8:00 walkers	Allendale Challenge From Allendale	BL	25m/3000
Sat 3 May	13:00	Stuc A Chroin Strathyre	AL	15m/5000
Sat 17 May	11:30	Alwinton Fell Race Alwinton GR 921063	BL	14m/2500
Sat 7 Jun	14:00 Men 15:00 Ladies	Pen Y Ghent Horton in Ribblesdale GR 806727	AS	5.5m/1650
Sun 15 Jun	13:00	Yetholm Festival Hill Race Halterburn GR 840277	AM	8m/2500
Sun 6 Jul	12:30	Skiddaw Fell Race FitzPark Keswick GR 268238	AM	9m/2700
Sat 23 Aug	14:00	Falstone Falcon Fell Race Falstone	CS	5m/500
Sat 11 Oct	11:00	Langdale Horseshoe Fell Race Old Dungeon Ghyll GR 286062	AL	14m/4000
Sun 14 Dec	1100	Simonside Cairns Fell Race	BM	11m/1400