

NFR

The newsletter of Northumberland Fell Runners Spring 2007

NFR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

Terms and conditions

- 6 races to count.
- Min of 3 to qualify which must include a short, medium, and long race.
- FV60, FV 65, and MV70 are exempted from completing a long race and only 4 races count.
- Your age on date of first race (17th March) determines your category for the rest of the year.

Sat 10 March—High Cup Nick

Been and gone

Sun 15 April—Gisborough Moors Race

BL; 12.5 miles; 2,600 ft; 11 am

Sun 29 April—Cheviot Summit Race

AM; 6 m; 2,000 ft; 11 am

Sun 6 May—Kielder Borderer

BL; 17 m; 3,000 ft; 11 am

Sat 2 June—Duddon Valley

AL; 20m; 6,000 ft; 11 am; pre-entry

Sun 15 July—Kentmere Horseshoe

AM; 11.9m; 3,300 ft; 1 pm

Sun 12 Aug—Forest Burn

BS; 3.5m; 500 ft; 2 pm

Sun 19 Aug—Sedbergh Hills

AL; 14m; 6,000 ft; 12 noon

Sat 15 Sept—Simonside Fell Race

BM; 6.75m; 1,200 ft; 2.30 pm

Sat 6 Oct—Great Whernside

AS; 4m, 1,555 ft; 11am women and 12 noon men

Sun 25 Oct—Clay Bank West

BS; 5.5m, 900 ft, 10.30 am

- Full details of races in FRA Calendar.
- Cheviot Summit Fell Race details given in this newsletter
- Early pre-entry of Duddon Valley advised as it is a British and English Championship race.
- Races chosen by our championship selectors Steph Scott and Geoff Davis
- A cracking selection

2006 WINNERS

Senior Men

- 1st John Duff
- 2nd Phil James
- 3rd Will Horsley

V40 Men

- 1st Chris Little
- 2nd David Atkinson
- 3rd Rob Stephens

V45 Men

- 1st David Armstrong
- 2nd Geoff Davis
- 3rd Paul Hainsworth

V50 Men

- 1st John Dallinson

V60 Men

- 1st Ray Gray

Senior Women

- 1st Karen Robertson
- 2nd Steph Scott
- 3rd Katherine Davis

V40 Women

- 1st Sally Welsh
- 2nd Jane Grundy
- 3rd Michelle Armstrong

V45 Women

- 1st Susan Davis

V50 Women

- 1st Pat Cooper

V60 Women

- 1st Kath Dallinson

NFR Fell Runner of the Year

Chosen by the members at the annual dinner for contributions to the club over the years, notable fell running performances, being an allround good egg etc

- Winner—Geoff Davis

Welcome to your favourite club newsletter. This edition has news of this year's championships, early season fellracing reports, and wise words from Old Cheviot. There's even a report on the New York Marathon from Katherine Davis. This is rather removed from fellrunning, but the editor thought members would be interested to read it. So forget about training for a while, and read on...

GREYS PIKE FELL RACE 2007

Ink black crows wheel around the austere ramparts of Kielder Castle as the runners gather by the old sandstone walls. Breathing out mist and banging gloved hands together, there is a hushed expectancy punctuated by nervous laughter. Sideways glances confirm the presence of old friends and bitter rivals. The Southern Raiders mingling with athletes from Wooler, Keswick and Midlothian. Faces drawn, determined.

No defending male champion this year but Karen Robertson is smiling and confident. Joe Blackett, up from the Dark Peak, has been out on the course since eleven o'clock checking the route and conditions with customary meticulous planning. A few words from Racermaster James and the field is unleashed. Away down the hill, over the river and off on the first easy mile. There's a dash for the front – Coxon, Horsley, Armstrong, Steel and Jones leading the local challenge.

The caterpillar strings out along the viaduct and then it's "hands on knees – through the trees" over and over - the mantra in time with the muddy footfalls. Slipping and sliding through sphagnum slurry, the panting chain threads up through the firebreaks and the snagging branches. Breaking out onto open ground, the angle eases and gaps in the chain become bigger.

The leaders reach the top and turn back – flying past their teammates who struggle upwards. Blackett and Horsley have reached the top first and astonishingly, Will (who was second last year), stops dead. Does he feel responsible for the lack of summit marshall? After waiting a while and directing others, he too heads down after sacrificing a possible winning position. Coxon is now in second but this position is squandered after he takes the wrong direction on the descent. The first of four who follow suit at various times in the race. Maynard and Steel are fighting for bronze medal position and Relentless Robertson is well up in the overall classification.

A steady drizzle sets in. Those at the back are walking up to the trig point as, two miles away, the leaders arrive back along the river with the iron grey castle coming into sight through the trees. A final push up the last incline and it's all over. Joe Blackett has won, but outside Nick Swinburn's record setting time last year. As the runners drip back into the castle there is concern. Where is Steph? Wasim? The others? Anxious moments but they all arrive. Wrong routes and slow times. Back in the castle the Webmaster allocates the spoils. Smiles all round. 54 started and finished. Relentless is rewarded, Dexter is 3 places up on last year, and scouts look to sign up Adrian Brown. The Southern Raiders claim their prizes, the tea cups are put away and the castle is left to the crows. The wilderness is pristine again. The Theatre of Dreams reconvenes in May at The Borderer.

Dave 'Stuart Hall' Hinckleton



From the top: David Steel; Mike Jeffrey pursued by Relentless Robertson; Allon Welsh and Paul Appleby; Rob Stephens followed by John Dallinson. All photos in this newsletter are courtesy of Rob Stephens from his website.

NEW YORK MARATHON

It had crossed my mind just to enjoy New York and not even bother with the race, but I talked myself out of that one quickly, knowing if I'd stood on the side line watching I'd regret not running for ever more. This thought was because I wasn't 100% happy with the way (lack of it) my training had gone and anyway it was the last marathon I'd do.

After a 5.15 start to the day and a 3½ hr wait till 10.10 (the start of the race) in freezing temperatures, I made my way to the correct ladies-only corral. As I was number 711 I was very near the front and could see the lead vehicles. I stood on the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and was strangely very calm. To be honest I didn't think I could match my previous times of 3.17 and thought just do your best and see how it goes.

The gun sounded and as I crossed the bridge I looked left to get a fabulous view of the Manhattan morning skyline which certainly lifted the spirits. It wasn't long before I warmed up, ditched my gloves, and had to do a tricky manoeuvre of taking off my long sleeved top and tie it round my waist without removing my MacMillan vest which was over the top. I wasn't going to dump it, it was last year's official London Marathon top!

At the 5 mile stage my husband Colin sprung me a lovely surprise visit at Brooklyn to cheer me on and I wondered where I'd see him next. The miles ticked over and I realised at the half marathon stage (1 hr 32 mins) this could end up being a good one, but hey there was a long way left to go and anything could happen.

There are too many things to mention about the race so I will jump to the last mile where once again a deep voice that I recognised from the side surprised and cheered me on; he'd been on a marathon himself round the suburbs of New York. It's amazing how you deal with the mileage and in my head I now only had to run to Sainsbury's, (Whitley Bay) 'come on it's easy, that's not far' was what I thought. Central Park is a blur other than the atmosphere and noise were unbelievable.

The undulating final few 100 yards were tough and I had to dig deep, although I did pass a few on the way. When the finish line and clock came into view I had to dig even deeper as I could see I was only seconds away from 3.15, a result I've always had my eye on. I gave it everything and sprinted to the finish literally throwing myself onto the chip mat as the clock turned 3.15. I came to a very abrupt halt and just burst into tears I was so overwhelmed! Two very concerned officials came over and asked if I was feeling faint, light headed, dizzy- 'no, I'm just very very happy' I cried. 'OK then, keep moving please' was their official response. On the way back to our hotel lots of New Yorkers congratulated me which does make you feel really proud and adds to the sense of occasion, it was a truly fantastic experience.

Colin was more anxious than me to go out and buy the New York Times to see my adjusted result and when I saw it at 3.14.46 I was amazed. I still don't know where that performance came from but whatever, it was good for me on the day. I now qualify for an elite start which is an opportunity I simply can't miss, so maybe I'll have to rethink 'my final marathon' thought too!

My overall position was 1,999 out of 37,935, and 7th British woman.

Katherine Davis

UK ATHLETICS

Readers will have noticed plenty of debate in the latest edition of *The Fellrunner* on the vexed subject of affiliation to UK Athletics. NFR hasn't taken a position on this as a club, and is unlikely to do so. So if/when there is a vote to leave UK Athletics, it will down to the decision of individual members.

As secretary, I receive regular mailings/newsletters from UK Athletics. They concentrate almost exclusively on track and field athletics, and hardly ever mention fellrunning. This is not surprising. Fellrunning gets little or no coverage in the national media. The focus is on winning medals at major athletic championships (no doubt leading to London 2012). So UK Athletics probably rightly concentrate on this, as this is the criteria on which they feel they will be judged by the press and the government.

However we do gain two important benefits from UK Athletics:

1. public liability insurance, which covers both us as a club and race organisers
2. recognition as an affiliated club—this entitles our members to compete under NFR's name at national championships eg English/British Championships

If these criteria can be satisfied by affiliating to another body whose primary interest is fellrunning, then to me this would seem to be a sensible move. The obvious candidate for this other body is the FRA.

The ongoing debate about UK Athletics seems to generate much heat but little light. I receive all the info as secretary, but struggle to follow it all. So goodness knows how other members keep up with it.

Most people's reaction is probably similar to mine: who cares? As long as I can turn up to fellraces and run in the hills, then I'm happy. But we do have to affiliate as a club, principally for the 2 reasons given above.

I hope this gives some clarification. Please note these are my own views, rather than NFR's as a club.

John Duff

NECAA CHAMPIONSHIP

The fourth running of the North East Counties Athletic Association (NECAA) Open Fell Running Championship series is to take place during 2007. As in previous years the series will incorporate the North East Hill Running Association (NEHRA) Fell Running Championships for veteran men and women.

The series will consist of **six races** of which a competitor's **best four results will count**. The results will be calculated on the same basis as the British and English championships i.e. 1st 52 points, 2nd 49 points, 3rd 48 points and then 50th 1 point in each of the categories (see below).

This year, as has been the custom, races are selected from those that are published in the first edition of the FRA calendar. The races have been selected from both Northumberland, Durham and North Yorkshire. This should enable most competitors to participate in at least three of the four races in an area within a reasonable travelling distance of their home. An attempt has been made to select races that also balance the competition in terms of length, height climbed, winning times and distribution throughout the year.

The first race in the series will be the Greys Pike Race on Sunday 4th March. The distribution of the races will hopefully give people sufficient lead in time to enable as many as possible to take part in the championships and **complete at least four of the six races**.

The competition is open to all those over the age of eighteen who were born in or have been resident for more than one year within the boundaries of the old NECAA from Whitby, north to Berwick upon Tweed. (Northumberland, Durham, Tyne and Wear, Cleveland and part of the old North Riding of Yorkshire). Engraved medals will be awarded to qualifying competitors as shown below.

Competition categories are:

NECAA FR Championships

First three Senior Males and Females

NEHRA FR Championships

First three Vet O40 Male and Female

First three Vet O50 Male and Female

First three Vet O60 Male and Female

Keith Cooper

Sunday 4 March—Greys Pike
Been and gone

Sunday 15 April—Gisborough Moors Race
BL; 12.5m; 2,600 ft; 11 am

Sunday 3 June—Chapel Fell Top Race
AS; 5m; 1,322 ft, 11 am

Sunday 24 June—Windy Gyle Fell Race
BL; 9m; 1,800 ft; 10.30 am

Sunday 21 Oct—Saltergate Gallows
BM; 8m, 1,200 ft; 10 30 am

Sunday 9 Dec—Simonside Cairns
BM; 11m, 1,420 ft; 11am

Full details of all races in FRA Calendar



Keith pictured running at the first race of the series: Greys Pike.

RELAYS

David Atkinson is once again our team co-ordinator both for the Ian Hodgson and FRA Relays. We will be entering one team for the Hodgson (which will be selected on the basis of our 8 best available runners). For the FRA relay, we will be entering 3 teams: men's open, ladies' open, and men's vets. The dates are:

- Sun 7 Oct Ian Hodgson Relay
- Sat 13 Oct FRA Relay

An account of last year's relays, and initial details of the FRA Relay, are given in *The Fellrunner*.

NFR performed exceptionally well in both events last year, and it would be good to follow up with similar or better results this year.

If you would like to make yourself available for selection, please have a word with Dave.

SUBS

Subscriptions for the year are now due. If you haven't already paid, then please do so. A subs renewal form is attached with this newsletter. It helps our records if you can complete all the form. This ensures we have your up to date address, e-mail details etc. The form and subs should be sent to David Armstrong.

E-GROUP

Most NFR news is circulated via e-mail. This includes race reports, results, events etc. So if you are on e-mail but haven't signed up for the e-group, then do it now by contacting:
colin.blackburn@durham.ac.uk

THE BORDERER

Will Horsley and Phil James have taken over this race. You can't consider yourself a true Northumberland Fell Runner until you've completed it, so have a go. It's in the championship. Full details on the website:
www.kielderfellraces.org.uk

HIGH CUP NICK FELL RACE

The championship kicked off with a new race in the calendar courtesy of NFR old-boy Morgan Donnelly. This testing 9 miler started at Dufton and headed to the base of the geological wonder High Cup Nick.

The compulsory checkpoint was at the top of HCN, and runners could take any route they wished up HCN to get there. Some went straight up the valley, others went higher up the flank and then wished they hadn't. Will Horsley was first NFR runner home in fourth place. Karen Robertson was first NFR lady and secured the team prize with Louise Wilkinson and Susan Davis. The men's team prize was won by some club called Borrowdale (come on chaps, we can beat them next year).

NFR was to the fore in the junior races also with Seth James, Fin Robertson, Matthew Forster, and Millie Robertson competing with distinction.



AGM MINUTES

These have previously been circulated by e-mail. A hard copy of the minutes is attached for all those not on e-mail. If you haven't received the minutes by e-mail or with this newsletter, please contact John Duff who will send you a copy.

CHEVIOT SUMMIT RACE

There is a new race in the calendar this year. The Cheviot Summit Fell Race is being organised by Glen McWilliams. It is an out and back route from Harthope Valley with a full-on climb up Cheviot, and then a swift descent to the valley.

Details of this race are:

- Date 29 April
- Time 11 am
- Distance 6 miles
- Climb 2,000 ft
- Entry—£5 on day
- Venue Langleeford Farm, Harthope Valley, nr Wooler
- Full kit to be carried
- Further details from Glen McWilliams tel 01668 282 059

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Chairman

Geoff Davis
9 Lady Durham Close
Sherburn Village
Durham
DH6 1RW
e-mail: geoffsusan@davis456.freeserve.co.uk

Treasurer & Membership Sec

David Armstrong
Ladykirk
Belmont Gardens
Haydon Bridge
NE47 6HG
e-mail: david.a@ribchesters.co.uk

Secretary & Editor

John Duff
10 Millfield Gardens
Tynemouth
North Shields
NE30 2PX
e-mail: john@johnduff.co.uk

Social Secretary & Kit Officer

Karen Robertson
Carr Houses
Halton
Corbridge
NE45 5PZ
e-mail: therobertsons@carrhouses.fsnet.co.uk

Joint Social Secretary

Steph Scott
e-mail: stephscott0106@yahoo.co.uk

NFR website

Put club name into google and you will find it

Website editor

Paul Jameson
e-mail: pjameson@globalnet.co.uk

E-group co-ordinator

Colin Blackburn
e-mail: colin.blackburn@durham.ac.uk

ASK OLD CHEVIOT

The editor is delighted to report that Old Cheviot has made a welcome return to this newsletter. As ever OC is on hand to offer wise words and top tips for all your fellrunning queries. OC's postbag has been positively overflowing with all your mail, so here we go...

Dear Old Cheviot,

I read in the last edition of *The Fellrunner* a guide to healthy eating. It contained the usual references to cereals, fresh fruit, lean meat etc, and cautioned against the empty calories of alcohol. I have been duly following this diet for the last month. My insides feel like they have scoured by a brillo-pad, there is no noticeable improvement in my fitness, and my friends now refer to me as "wimp of the track". Should I persevere with the diet?

Yours gastronomically, Alf Tupper

Old Cheviot replies,

Dear Alf, I fear you may have forgotten your own diet, formulated all those years ago. A balanced diet is the key. By all means follow the healthy option, but make sure you do not forget the fish and chips which have been your staple diet for so long. A little alcohol can do wonders for your constitution. Indeed even St Paul used to say that 'a little wine was good for thy stomach'. As ever, it's a case of all things in moderation.

Dear Old Cheviot,

How right you are! I have been training on beer and fish and chips all my life, and it's never done me any harm. However I would like to know: what classes as moderation? Do you think that a couple of pints before dinner is overdoing it a bit?

Yours in ale, Relay Dave

Old Cheviot replies,

Dear Relay Dave, not at all.

Dear Old Cheviot,

You didn't let me finish. What I was asking was: do you think that a couple of pints before dinner is overdoing it a bit when you are going out with your mates afterwards for several pints more?

Yours in even more ale, Relay Dave

Old Cheviot replies:

A few glasses of beer do wonders for the soul and make the world seem a better place. So keep up the good work. However OC does caution against drinking copious pints of Old Peculier straight after the Borrowdale Fellrace in the company of Chris 'the wailer' Little, unless of course you want the hangover from hell.

Dear Old Cheviot,

My route finding on fellraces is not very good. If there's a poor line to take, you can guarantee that I will be there sussing it out. As a result, I never win any fell-races and am always being overtaken by other runners. What do you suggest?

Yours hopefully, A Lost Soul

Old Cheviot replies,

Dear Lost Soul, are you sure that it is your route-finding that is preventing you winning races? OC has reece-ed several races to his heart's content, and he is still overtaken by runners on a regular basis. However OC can impart one top tip on route finding that is particularly hot off the press: the quickest way up High Cup Nick is not by the southern escarpment. Several NFR runners will testify to this from bitter experience.

Dear Old Cheviot,

Some friends of mine are in training for their Bob Graham. I decided to accompany them the other day on one of their training runs. This started steadily enough with a climb up Blencathra, followed by an ascent of Great Calva. I was just about hanging on for the final climb of Skiddaw, when one of the group suggested running up Skiddaw Little Man. The rest of the day is a bit of a blur, but involved a precipitous descent off Lonscale Fell and several pints of Snecklifter in the pub afterwards. It is now a week afterwards, and I am still having to walk down stairs backwards because my quads are so sore. How on earth do these BG-ers do it?

Yours sincerely, Southern Softie.

Old Cheviot replies,

Dear Southern Softie, they're made of tough stuff these BG-ers, as you have just found out. They don't train round Hyde Park on a warm spring day, and then cool down with a namby-pamby white wine spritzer. Not a bit off it. They're out on the hills in all weather. They think nothing of traversing the Hellvellyn ridge on their hand and knees in a howling gale. They can find their way around Yewbarrow North Top in the clag. And they always manage to fit in a pint of good refreshing northern beer afterwards. In short, they are 'nails'.

That's all Old Cheviot's got time for. But keep those letters flooding in. More from OC soon.



David Forster emerges from High Cup Nick.