

## **The journey is the reward – Old Cheviot reports on the Chevy Chase**

Old Cheviot descended steadily off Hedgehope, his aged bones rattling as he felt every inch of the steep fell. Ahead of him, Emma Bain and Frank Shillitoe were running strongly – they even found time to climb Long Craggs in their enthusiasm. Alongside him Graham Walton was sporting the Tour de France's yellow jersey, which was only natural for someone who was cycling home after the race. As he took in the view of the Harthope valley, OC reflected that it was good to be back on the Northumberland Fells.

The Chevy Chase had started under steady drizzle and leaden skies. But as the runners wound their way their past Broadstruther, the clouds gradually lifted until only the top of Cheviot was clagged in. OC used some local knowledge to sneak past a few runners on the descent to the Harthope Valley. This proved to be a pyrrhic victory, as the runners duly left him in their slipstream on the climb up Hedgehope. "Twas ever thus", OC ruefully reflected, stoically plodding onwards towards Langlee Craggs where Lawrence Heslop gave him a cheery greeting.

Dropping through Brands Corner and into the Careyburn, OC passed NFR's support crews – James Green and John Telfer were on hand to offer encouragement. It was much appreciated, as the run up Careyburn and Hells Path doesn't get any easier. OC forced his legs into one last effort, and in true style was overtaken on the road by a couple of runners racing each other in. OC didn't mind, he was happy simply to arrive at the finish at Wooler Youth Hostel in one piece.

It turned out that NFR ladies had taken the event by storm. Emma Bain was first lady, Steph Scott third, and Nina Cameron fifth. The men also ran well, winning the team prize on count-back (step forward John Butters, Mark Clarkson, and Jeff Ross). Bruce Crombie (Alnwick) won the race ahead of John Butters. John Tollitt received a special prize for sporting behaviour – retrieving a competitor's mobile phone, and taking a tumble going to the aid of another runner. As usual, the whole event was run superbly by our friends at Wooler Running Club, to whom many thanks are due.

Afterwards Old Cheviot tucked into tea and cake, while wearing his Chevy memento with pride, noting that "The Journey is the Reward" – to quote the wording on the smart Chevy buff. As he made his way home, OC thought that it was time for another journey. And so, as if by magic, he found himself in a licensed premise, to enjoy a pint of real ale – reward indeed after 20 miles on the fells.