

ACHILLE RATTI LANGDALE JUNIOR MEET

15 - 16 September, 2007

THIS was a great meet; 15 kids, ages ranging from 2 to 14, turned up with families in tow. Saturday's weather was mild and dry so there was a group walk over Side Pike and Lingmoor Fell, returning to base via the pub (for some). Arthur's new barbeque was put to good use in the evening, with plenty of burgers, sausages, marshmallows, lemonade and a chocolate fondue! Oh, and a few beers too. Although Sunday morning turned out a little damp it seemed to clear up briefly just about when the traditional junior fell race took place in the Bishop's Scale back garden. Each competitor received a medal and some sweets, and class winners received trophies, all presented by club hero Danny Hope! The results and picture are below.

Keep an eye on the meets card / newsletter for details of next year's meet. It will be run along similar lines, but as we are a climbing club we hope to do a bit of cragging and other more adventurous stuff as well.

ARCC Annual Junior Fell Race 2007

Under 5s

1. Isabelle Kelly
2. Ruby Makin
3. James Kelly

Under 8s

1. Harri Tipping
2. Tom Makin

Under 10s

1. Jack Lloyd
2. Jack Gale

Over 12s

1. Jayme Gale
2. Zoe McArthur

Under 12s

1. Charlie Perry
2. Tim Tipping
3. Emma Lloyd
4. Freya Hardcastle
5. Emma Gale



QUEEN FOR A DAY, 8 - 9 June 2007

Tash Fellowes' Bob Graham Round

"IT'S your turn now," is what my husband Chris said to me when he'd successfully completed his Bob Graham Round in June 2006. Having watched him throw up at Dunmail, traipsed around leg 4 with him in low cloud and rain trying without success to convince him to eat anything but gels, I thought this was a bad idea. "Well," he replied, "you can either come with me to the BGR dinner next year and watch me get my certificate, or you can come with me and get one of your own." He had planted a seed in my mind and just waited for it to germinate, as he knew it would. It didn't take long for me to see the training commitment as an opportunity rather than an inconvenience and over the next 6 months I was out in the hills every week in all weathers, doing long races or just long days out with mates. It was wonderful; only once did I wish I was at home doing some ironing rather than lost in the mist looking for Rossett Pike. My endurance steadily improved so that my last big run, the Old County Tops race with Dave Makin of Achille Ratti, gave me a huge confidence boost and at last I felt ready for my attempt at the Bob Graham Round.

Thankfully, Chris and Dave sorted support and logistics for me; not two of my strong points. Finally 9 June approached and nervousness turned to excitement as the business of preparing gear and food took my mind off the size of the challenge. And then there we were, at the Moot Hall, taking photos before the off at midnight.

It was a relief to get going and I felt as if I was floating as I headed comfortably up towards Skiddaw with Chris, Phil Hodgson (navigating), John Thompson and Chris Preston. Passing through the car park at the fell foot some lads sitting in a very fragrant car asked us happily if perhaps it would be a better idea to go up in daylight. On this particular night it wouldn't have been; the view from the top of Skiddaw was lovely, lights twinkling down below us and Great Calva silhouetted in the distance. As we descended Hare Crag the air became deliciously cool and damp. Great Calva came and went quickly as we chatted, and then we met up with Chris P, who had skirted around the bottom of Skiddaw. Ascending Mungrisdale Common a fat yellow crescent moon hung just over the horizon and shortly after that the skylarks started chattering as it began to get light. Phil led an excellent line down Halls Fell and as we trotted towards Threlkeld and breakfast

we watched the light brighten over the valley bathed in cloud. We were 10 minutes ahead of schedule and I felt great.

Janet Makin and Debbie Campbell had tea and porridge ready; I forced it down ("I'll need it later..."), a quick change into a T shirt and then off again, this time with Jonny Whitaker (navigating), Jeff Lea, Anna Maria Crabtree and Chris P. The porridge was heavy in my stomach but I put my head down and plodded, not looking up again until we had conquered the steep part of the ascent up Clough Head. The view looking back to Threlkeld was magnificent, the remnants of the cloud inversion dissipating just before the sun came up. The conditions underfoot were bouncy and we made good progress over the Dodds, unavoidably massacring thousands of antler moth (according to the FRA forum) caterpillars which covered the ground. We were steadily gaining time and so took it easy over the rest of leg 2, not wanting to get to Dunmail too early (as had happened with Chris the previous year) or to risk exhaustion later on. Jeff did a brilliant job making sure I kept drinking; the temperature was rising and it looked like it might be a scorcher of a day.

After the descent from Dollywagon Pike, Anna Maria went on ahead to alert the troops, while Jonny, Jeff and I tackled Fairfield. Eyes down, steady pace and the summit soon appeared, although we'd left behind Jeff who, concentrating on me, had neglected himself and badly needed a rest and some refreshments. Luckily Dunmail wasn't too far away. On the ascent of Seat Sandal we picked up Chris P and then trotted down for a bacon butty and tea at Dunmail where there was a great party atmosphere to match the weather. The catering team (Janet Makin, Debbie Campbell, Kaz Howard) were awesome in their efficiency. We were 30 minutes up on the schedule.

"You were so jammy with the weather," said Mandy Goth later (she completed her Round in 2006 in less than ideal conditions). She was right. Although there was a hot sun, the breeze kept the temperature down. I kept a hat on to stop the glare and I'd pinned a wet flannel to it to keep the sun off my neck. I set off up Steel Fell with Alan Kenny (navigating), Andy Dalton, Phil Hodgson, Richard Leonard and Jane Smith. As with all the big climbs at the start of each leg, I kept my eyes down and focussed on a steady pace until the steep part was behind us.

With 20 years of supporting Bob Graham attempts under his belt, Alan was spot on with the pace and knew leg 3 like the back of his

hand. The first half is not my favourite, but it soon passed as he pointed out wheatears and teals while Phil and Richard discussed the merits of hydroponic cultivation and the price of tomatoes. It was good to catch up with folk I'd not seen for a while, and when I was tired it was good to listen in on the conversations and banter going on around me.

We stopped for a few minutes on Rossett Pike where Austin Guilfoyle, Pete McGonagle and Arthur Daniels were waiting with tasty snacks, coffee and soup (which was the business). There and on the ascent of Bowfell I noticed dozens of pretty little gold and green beetles, which became less charming when they sunk in their teeth (or whatever beetles have instead of teeth). By this time, clouds were wraithed around the Crinkles and we wondered if it was going to clag over. It didn't though; it just came and went, and kept the temperature down whilst not affecting visibility.

My spirits rose as we ascended Bowfell; we were approaching my favourite part of the route where there are rocks to skip across when it is dry, and it was. The concentration needed takes your mind off your legs so the miles passed very pleasantly. Paul Charnock and Dave Talbot had a rope ready on Broad Stand and in these conditions it was a pleasant scramble and not the nightmare slimy stream that Chris had had to deal with the previous year. The scree run off Scafell was fun and we arrived at Wasdale feeling very buoyant. It was getting difficult to eat but rice pudding (and of course tea) went down OK while Mick and Rhys tackled the unpleasant job of looking after my feet. All this attention really did make me feel like the queen.

Soon we started off up Yewbarrow with Rob Green (navigating), Dave and Sean Makin, Rhys Watkins, Mick Howard and Andy Brookfield. Eyes down, steady pace, we got to the summit 9 minutes up and agreed it would be a good idea to slow down a bit. I enjoyed the views as we ticked off Red Pike. There was plenty of banter to listen to, and scuffles going on as the lads vied to offload water and energy drinks. The lakes glinted and the hills were in shades of grey in all directions. I wished I had a camera with me.

Around Scoat Fell and Pillar we came across streams of runners; it was the Ennerdale race. Some looked pretty wasted and I thought that's the difference that racing makes. By the time we got to Steeple everything tasted the same and it wasn't a good taste. While Dave and I nipped over to Steeple the lads set up a picnic so that I could

choose something to eat. What a huge choice, from pies and butties to choc bars and fruit. I chose banana and grapes, hoping that the juicy grapes would help it go down.

A great little trod avoided a lot of the rocky path between Pillar and Black Sail Pass, and the route up the nose of Kirkfell was enjoyable, again the climb taking my mind off my tiring legs. I was starting to feel pretty weary now. At every summit I asked Dave how we were doing. "Don't worry, we're still well up," he would say vaguely. I took this to mean that we were slowly eroding into the buffer of time that we had previously gained. I wanted to preserve it so I dug in.

I've never been phased by Great Gable but today it looked a bit bigger than usual. Fortunately Martin Kirkman was waiting at its foot with tinned peaches. They could have been tinned anything and I can't say I enjoyed them, but they were just right to set me up for the ascent. Eyes down, steady away and eventually the summit appeared. After that, the rest of the ridge was fine and we descended happily to Honister.

Arriving at Honister, Chris said "What hills did you miss out on that leg?!" It was only then that I realised that we had gained another 38 minutes. Despite this good news I felt pretty glum, my chin kept wobbling of its own accord and I really, really didn't want to eat anything. "Pull yourself together and get your blood sugar back up," I thought and forced down some soup and parts of a crisp butty (good idea Kaz!).

The atmosphere was like a party going up Dalehead with Dave, Rhys, Mick, Andy, Chris P, Mandy Goth, Debbie Campbell, Arthur Daniels and John Thompson (preparing for his own attempt the following weekend). The ascent passed quickly carried by the happy chatter going on around. I made sure to absorb the view from the top – my day was nearly over and I didn't want to miss anything.

I had noticed my feet getting a bit sore over Brandreth and now, as we picked up the pace on the descent off Dalehead, I could feel blisters coming up nicely on the balls of my feet. I remembered a TV programme I'd seen about military training where one of the officers had said something about pain being temporary so I concentrated on that. Hindscarth came and went, and I nibbled on a piece of mint cake on the last climb up Robinson. And then there we were, summit number 42. What a feeling, and what a view, thunderheads in the distance, evening sunshine over us. Arthur suggested carrying on to Causey

Pike. No thanks. Someone said it was time to walk now and enjoy the remainder of the day, but it was actually time to disengage the brain and have some fun on the final descent off Robinson.

At the gate we met Chris, our children Emma and Jack, and Harvey my father-in-law who ran down the road with us to Newlands Church where I changed into road shoes. The road section was hard because, not having recce'd it, I didn't know where I was or what to expect and I don't enjoy road running at the best of times. However, having mates all around kept me going and the flies helped to keep my blood sugar up.

It was the biggest buzz running, or rather floating, up Keswick High Street to touch the Moot Hall 21 hours and 5 minutes after my last visit; there was noise all around and then I had FINISHED. My grin got wider and wider, I wish I could have that feeling bottled. We celebrated with champagne and then later in Langdale with plenty of beer at the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel. I didn't want it to end.

It was an unforgettable day, made so by a brilliant support team and perfect weather. Thanks very much to everyone who helped me and especially to Chris for being such a saint, I owe you all!



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