

## Chris Lloyd's speech at start of the Leo Pollard Memorial Race – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Good evening all, as Chairman of the Achille Ratti Climbing Club I have been asked to say a few words about Leo Pollard before the start of this race which as we all know has been re-named in his memory. I shall start by stating the obvious, and that is not all fell runners get races named after them when they die – it is usually an honour that is reserved for a select few who contributed to the sport in a way that made them stand out from the crowd. Those that knew Leo through his involvement with Horwich RMI, Lostock AC and the Achille Ratti Climbing Club would not argue against him being in that select group.

Leo's love for fell running started in the 1970's and soon after he joined the Achille Ratti Climbing Club which provided the opportunity for regular trips to the Lake District and Wales. He started running the classic Lakeland Fell Races and it wasn't long before he developed a passion for long distance challenges. He completed his Bob Graham Round in 1976 as number 44 and this was followed by numerous other long days out including the first completion of the Lakes Meres and Waters route in 1981. This was a run of approximately 100 miles visiting all twenty six Lakes Meres and Waters in the Lake District. At the time it was considered to be such a significant run that it was soon to be repeated by the likes of Joss Naylor and Alan Heaton. Few have followed in their footsteps, but Achille Ratti are trying to increase the profile of the challenge and I'm pleased to say that current Lostock AC member Tony Marlow is having a go in a couple of weeks' time. Leo would have been thrilled with this.

Leo remained active in the fells until he suffered a stroke about ten years ago. One can only imagine how frustrated he must have been when he watched all of us doing what he loved to do, but those frustrations were never aired. All that Leo would ever convey to his friends both whilst he could run and after his stroke when he was not able to, was encouragement and inspiration. His ethos was to promote friendship in the hills and to encourage us to support each other with the aim of someone achieving what they would not have thought possible beforehand. He was particularly keen to encourage the young generation of fell runners and was never happier than when watching junior members of the club running around the fells; he was a regular attendee at the club family meets for many years.

I don't intend to say much more as we have a race to run. I started by saying that it is only a select few that have races such as this named in their memory. As well as Leos talent as a long distance fell runner, it was his positivity and his

ability to inspire others that makes Leo a worthy member of this select group. I'm sure that I'm speaking for all of Leo's family and fell running friends when I thank Lostock AC for naming this race in Leo's honour. It is a fantastic race run over Leo's home ground – a race that Leo would look forward to every year.

I hope you all enjoy the run this evening.

Chris Lloyd