

## ARCC Annual Dinner – Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup> 2019

61 members and Club guests Joss Naylor and Jill Grundill attended this year's annual dinner which was held at the Bridge Inn, Santon Bridge. Following a great meal the Club Chairman Chris Lloyd spoke –

*“Welcome all - I would like to thank everyone for coming this evening. It's fantastic that we have managed to cross to the Western side of the Lakes for this year's annual dinner; it takes us one further step towards re-establishing the Wasdale valley as the Club's second home, as it was for a good part of the second half of the last century. Clearly the major part of this process was buying and renovating Little Ground House. Ten years ago who would thought that we would now have a hut which is so close to our original Wasdale base at Buckbarrow. I'm sure it brings back happy memories to our older and more established members. Unfortunately due to my tender years I missed out on the Buckbarrow experience, but the tales that have been passed down from those who were lucky enough to stay there make me just a little bit envious. By the way, anyone staying at the hut tonight is advised not to ask John McGonagle to show you the way back – if past experience is anything to go by you might not make it. Having Buckbarrow taken from us was a big loss to the club at the time and as good a replacement Beckstones was, unfortunately it wasn't in Wasdale. Well things do go round in circles and now they come with added benefit of there no longer being any danger of the Trust throwing us out of Wasdale. Thanks have been said on many occasions, but again can I express sincere gratitude to all those involved in the purchase and renovation of Little Ground House – it is down to their efforts that the club sees itself in this fine position.*

*As good a gathering of members that we have here this evening, there are two people who aren't with us tonight who deserve mention. Several weeks ago our President Fr David Elder lost his battle with cancer. Fr Elder had been a member of the Club for many years and he was President for the last five. He will greatly missed by all of his friends and by the Club as a whole.*

*About three weeks ago Dot Wood the hut warden of Little Ground House suffered a stroke and is currently recovering in Lancaster Hospital. Dot's illness came as a great shock to us all and we wish her a speedy recovery.*

*It gives me great pleasure to Welcome Joss Naylor and Jill Grundill to the dinner tonight as guests of the Club. I don't need to introduce Joss to anyone here; those of you who don't know him personally will be well aware of his achievements, which are too many in number to mention them all – if you're interested you can read one of several books which describe Joss's fell running career or you can even look on his Wikipedia page – yes he is important enough to have his own Wikipedia page. Not many of us in the Ratti can say that.*

*Amongst Joss's many achievements there is one which I think does deserve mention here. That is his completion of the Lakes Meres and Waters challenge in 1983. As we are all aware this is a challenge that was devised by Leo and soon after Leo completed it two of the fell running greats of the day Alan Heaton and Joss Naylor also took on the challenge. Joss completed an extended route which included a detour to Kentmere in an incredible time of 19hrs 15mins. When you compare this with Leo's time of 35hrs 29 minutes, and Leo was no slouch, you quickly realise what level Joss was performing at. Despite being a great route, the Lakes Meres and Waters didn't gain much popularity as a long distance fell running challenge in the years which followed Joss's run. It was a good few years later that the route was repeated by Dave Makin and Andy Pooler. I'm pleased to say that efforts are now being made by the Club to raise awareness of the Challenge and this year Tony Marlow became the seventh person to complete it.*

*Whilst it is only over the last few years that I have met Joss in person, he has been a hero of mine for a good bit longer. In February 1972 my Mum and Dad gave up their day jobs to head to Snowdonia to run Pen Y Pass Youth Hostel. I was seven at the time and my brother was four. Those who know Pen Y Pass will understand that it was quite an isolated place to grow up, but one of the benefits from living there included getting exposed to mountaineering and fell running from a young age. I have few memories of the early years at Pen Y Pass but one that has stuck in my mind was being with my Dad when he was marshalling the Welsh 1000m Peaks Race checkpoint above the hostel in June 1972. I saw the first runner coming from a distance and Dad said "that will be Joss Naylor". The name has stuck in my head ever since. Joss went on to win the race that year in a time of 3 hrs 37 minutes. Joss obviously enjoyed the 1000 meters because he also won the race in 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1976. 1976 was the first time I entered the race at the age of 12. That year Joss finished in a time of 3hrs 26mins. I actually managed a finishing time that was eight minutes quicker, but*

*I had the advantage of only having run half the course; in those days the ladies and Junior races started in Ogwen but we did have to dress as mountaineers.*

*Joss's attempts to win six 1000 meters in a row in 1977 did not come to fruition because he missed the start by about an hour. He never managed to catch up Mike Short, who won that year, and Joss ended up 31<sup>st</sup> in a time of 4 hrs 47 minutes. A name known to many of us also features in the 1977 results – that is Mick McGovern who finished 10 minutes ahead of Joss. I'm sure Mick appreciated the head start. Joss took a year off from the Welsh 1000 metres in 1978 but he did return in 1979. On that occasion Joss came second finishing nine minutes behind Mike Short who had the stronger finish up Snowdon. I should also say that in 1979 the ladies race was won by our very own Jean Lochhead in a time of 1hr 53 minutes.*

*So that's a brief history of the Welsh 1000m which clearly demonstrates Joss's fell running supremacy throughout the 70's and this continued with some amazing challenges that he completed in the 1980's and later including the Lakes Meres and Waters as I've described. Joss's achievements were recognised in 1976 when he was awarded an MBE.*

*As a Club we are privileged to have you with us today Joss. I know you were a good friend of Leo who is sadly no longer with us but it is great that you have formed friendships with some of our current club members and we are honoured to be associated with you in the way we are. You are always welcome at LGH. Before I call on Joss to say a few words I must announce that we have a birthday girl with us this evening – Ann McGonagle we wish you a happy birthday". Thanks also to Tash Fellowes for doing the bulk of the organisation for this evening's dinner"*

Joss then told is a bit about his early years in the Wasdale Valley and his life as a fell runner. Joss then invited questions from Club members and several were asked.