

Ambleside AC Newsletter

February 2019

In Brief

John Muir wrote, "The mountains are calling and I must go." It's a beautiful encapsulation of the inexorable and inevitable pull that calls us back again and again to the wild places and the high places. The simple "must" excusing our desires. Crouching in soft snow or glittering, diamond hard as the first light touches pristine summits, the mountain landscape you see is like a visual drug that calls you back: go all weekend until you're cold and bone tired yet guarantee you'll spend all week gazing out of the window, absentmindedly acknowledging colleagues, dreaming of the next time you can go and recapture those emotions. It is without parallel. Especially in winter: days when you feel the weather has more in it than you have in you; when you pause beneath an ice blue sky looking down upon seas of softly lit clouds and far below you, folk are still asleep or just waking up.



Congratulations to Tom Gibbs, completing his winter BG. And there's news of two more winter adventures in February's Reet Good Reads as Ben and Jack completed the Cumbrian Traverse on a stunning bluebird day whilst John's account of his Spine Race is an inspiring and beautiful read.

Happy running.

Ed



Junior News

A huge, warm blue and green welcome to all of our new juniors and their families who have joined us in the last couple of weeks at the Phoenix track. May you enjoy many years of fun and friendship at Ambleside AC.

Senior Club Champs 2019

Encourage one or two of your club mates to participate and you'll have a blast leapfrogging each other up the table or across the age categories. I'll try and secure some great prizes, like the fantastic juniors, and I'll be as swift as possible to publish results on the web site after races."



Any questions email me: jimevans68@iCloud.com

Jan 12	Clough Head	S
Feb 9	Carnethy	S
March 9	Blackcomb	M
April 10	Loughrigg	S
April TBC	Orienteering	S
May 4	Coniston	M
June 1	Grasmere Gallop 10km	M
June 9	Howtown	L
July TBC	Up Hill	S
Sept 7	Grizedale Horseshoe	L
Sept TBC	Downhill	S
Nov 16	Two Riggs	S
Dec TBC	Kirkstone Handicap	S

Next AAC Races

24/2/19 (last Sun of Half Term) Loughrigg - Silver Howe Chase

The race that isn't a race 'cos it's under the radar but everyone knows it *IS* really a race to the death. Meet on cattle grid by the park at 10.45am for an 11.00am start. No entry fee, no marshals, no prizes...no GPS ☺

A few details on the website.

Any questions, ask Michelle.

First Aid for Fell Runners

"Langdale & Ambleside Mountain Rescue have kindly agreed to put on a specific fell runners first aid course for Ambleside AC. We last had one around 7 years ago which was excellent. The course will be held at the mountain rescue base in Ambleside on Wednesday 13th February at 7pm. It's an informal course i.e. there is no qualification, but it will specifically cover incidents and accidents that we may come across on the fells.

Please could you email me, to give an indication of numbers. No problem if you change your mind either way, it's just to get an idea of numbers.

Please feel free to invite fell running friends from other clubs etc. but don't plaster it all over social media!"

Ben_Abdelnoor@yahoo.com

AAC Committee Meeting 29/1/19

Apologies for absence: Lou, Paul C, Helen, Steve B, Matt B

1. There are several people who though not on the committee are very interested in being kept in touch regarding issues and discussions. They will be added to the committee mailing list. Cath Musetti, Press & Publicity Officer. Jim Evans - club champs organiser, Ben Abdelnoor, Michelle Crowley, Chris Hodgson, Selwyn Wright, Tom Simpson. Anyone else who would like to go on this list please contact us.
2. Update on finances (Chris G) Relay final figures - The surplus was just under £6000. After other expenses for races and buying vests for the juniors have been accounted for, the club has a total in the bank of around £19000.
3. What to do with our funds? There are no major items expenses foreseen, and it was seen to be wise to leave the funds largely untouched, so that our options are open in the future. Some suggestions were discussed, for example getting a nutritionist in to talk to the club, running navigation courses for both seniors and juniors, mini-bus training courses. All these were agreed as worth while, and some people present on the night will take these forward. Chris G will draw up guidelines on funding that the club can provide, for example on transport to races/events, food and prizes.
4. Newsletter - Michelle produces this every month, and although it is popular she struggles to get enough contributions. Runners are encouraged to write about races etc and email reports to Michelle
5. International Youth World Cup to be held in Ambleside June 2020. This is a big prestigious event in junior mountain running, and Duncan Richards from the FRA has been instrumental in bringing this to the UK, and is very keen for Ambleside to host it, based on the club's very successful Todd Crag juniors races. It would probably be combined with the Juniors national championship races beforehand as well. Jim Evans is keen to lead the organization of this event on behalf of the club. It is expected that Juniors' parents will play the major role in planning and staging the event.
6. Club trips 2019. Carnethy, February, Stretton Hills Eng Champs 17th march (entries open 1st Feb on SI). Other trips will of course happen as well
7. Bob Graham Relay - Dan is keen to make this a big club event, sending several teams (each of 5x pairs) around the BG legs. Doing it all on one day makes the logistics simpler and turns it into a good event. The best date is 22nd/23rd June. Dan will post further info on this and gauge interest
8. Club Championships: new organizer Jim E would like to purchase a small prize for everyone who completes 5 or more races in the series (as well as the usual top prizes) e.g. a run of mugs or some other similar token of participation. This was agreed.
9. 'Ideas for summer social'. A meal will be organized on the first Tuesday after the clocks change in March - Sarah M suggested a new place in Windermere, which was agreed. It was also agreed that more socials/meals after club runs would be a good idea. Meals out after runs have been popular, so why not do more of them? A social event combining seniors and juniors was popular as well. A BBQ sometime around the Coniston Gullies race was mentioned.

AOB: Sarah M mentioned that The Choices Gym in Troutbeck is offering a 10% discount for AAC members

Current committee members

Dan Duxbury - chair

Paul Knowles - secretary

Chris Giles - treasurer

Sarah McCormack - membership sec

Eleanor Knowles - juniors

Helen Holcroft - social sec

Jim Tyson - social media sec

Jack Wright - men's captain

Paul Cornforth - Men's vets captain

Lou Roberts - women's captain

Training Schedules

Whatever day it is, you'll find something to suit in this lot. All details are also on the website in "training" sections and keep your eyes on FB for updates, last minute changes and informal outings. Print off and stick on

your fridge/biscuit tin/whatever...

TUESDAY TRAINING: Jan – March 2019

8/1/19: Hills of Ambleside

15/1/19: Kenyan hills, Fisherbeck loop anti-clockwise (3 x 8 mins, 3 min rest between each set)

22/1/19: Hills of Ambleside

29/1/19: Kenyan hills, Kirkstone loop towards Stock Ghyll (2 x 12 mins, 3 min rest between sets) Committee Mtg afterwards in Rule. All welcome as always.

5/2/19: Hills of Ambleside OR Kirkstone session (5 mins effort, 3 min walk/still recovery, repeat to Kirkstone Inn)

12/2/19: Kenyan Hills, Fisherbeck loop clockwise (3 x 8 mins, 3 min rest between each set)

19/2/19: Hills of Ambleside HALF TERM

26/2/19: Kenyan Hills, Kirkstone loop left side (2 x 12 mins, 3 min rest between sets)

5/3/19: Hills of Ambleside

12/3/19: Kenyan Hills, need to find a loop for this one, possibly up through college and back towards Rule (2 x 15 mins, 4 min rest between sets)

After this date, I'm going to monitor daylight hours! If there's enough light, there's some great Kenyan loops just waiting for y'all on Todd Crag/Lily Tarn. Perfect for some 3 x 8s. Watch this space.

Thursday Evenings are Phoenix Nights! – Captain Jack's Track Pack

These sessions are led by Jack throughout the depths of winter. They are track speed sessions and are designed to work you hard and really get some speed into your legs. Sessions typically entail a big, multi lap warm up, followed by about 25 minutes of very fast running split into effort reps with rest in between and finished up with another big, easy, multi lap warm down. They look really pretty and a bit weird on your Strava trace! They take place at the Phoenix Track (the 300m field of dreams tucked away down Phoenix Way, Windermere). Just check out FB for details of that night's session or just rock up at 6.25pm for a 6.30pm start. Trail shoes are usually best as it's a cinder track with pretty tight bends although you'll get away with road slicks if it's dead dry. No need for a head torch as it's floodlit.

Sunday Mornings: January 2019 to April 2019.

Scheduled Sunday morning club runs are back in for 2019. There should be 2 or 3 groups of different paces and distances - check out the club's Facebook group to find out who's intending to run. Please be ready for a 9.30am prompt start.

Date	Location
06/01/2019	Elterwater Common car park - lower one on North side of road
13/01/2019	Kirkstone Inn
20/01/2019	ODG
27/01/2019	Coniston Sun Inn
03/02/2019	Troutbeck Church
10/02/2019	Grasmere lay-by before Travellers
17/02/2019	Silecroft big layby for Black Combe recce
24/02/2019	Tilberthwaite car park
03/03/2019	Sedbergh People's Hall - potential Howgills race recce
10/03/2019	Hartsop - Sheep fold car park
24/03/2019	Torver - Church House pub
31/03/2019	Sedbergh People's Hall - potential Howgills race recce
07/04/2019	Rydal Lane
14/04/2019	Three Shires Pub
21/04/2019	Troutbeck - Mortal Man
28/04/2019	ODG - potential Gt Lakes recce

February's Reet Good Reads

THE SPINE RACE, 2019.

By John Knapp

Third time what? Lucky? It didn't feel much like it standing in a dark playing field in Edale waiting for the off as the wind whipped the drizzle sideways across the rugby pitch. But at least it wasn't snowing yet.

I'd finished the Spine in 2017 and 18 and knew what lay ahead so what was the reason to have a third jaunt up the Pennine way in January?

'It'll be fun' I'd always answer, but really?

The Spine Race. The Pennine way in winter, 268 miles starting in Edale in Derbyshire and travelling north to Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders. Its a single stage race with five checkpoints where competitors have access to a drop bag as well food, weather forecasts, somewhere to sleep and medical resources. You can make use of other public facilities along the route, so the Pen-y-ghent cafe does a great trade and sleeping in public toilets out of the weather isn't uncommon.

There is a 168 hour time limit, the clock keeps running, the route is variably marked and being January it's dark over 15 hours in 24. The mandatory kit list is extensive and includes the necessities to bivvie out on the route in winter. It's not a light weight pack.

The starting line up was interesting, no Pavel Paloncý the 3 time winner and Jim Mann and Carol Morgan had both chosen and subsequently won the 'baby spine' 108 mile option that finishes just after Hawes. Previous winners Eugeni Sole and Eoin Keith, also the record holder, were on the start as were new comers Jasmin Paris and Jayson Cavill. There were also other overseas athletes with good reputations from the US, Denmark and Spain and from the UK previous top five finishers Gwynn Stokes and Matt Neale had been preparing well.

Starting, the field quickly divided itself into those hoping to run everything possible and those who recognised it might be wiser to pace it by striding rather than running up the first inclines. By 2km the leading group was out of sight and at the top of Jacobs ladder the only person visible was the Dane who had sussed I knew something of the route and was hiding out of the wind on my heels. There was a head/side wind gusting up to 60mph which made running on the flat a challenge at times and carried enough venom to cause wind blindness in some who forgot to use their goggles. It was rain and clag all the way to Torside reservoir where I was surprised to catch Jayson, only to see him disappear again when one of the race team stopped me to fix my tracker. With the exception of an hour or so with Gwynn just before Middleton in the early hours of day three this was the last time I'd have company in the race.

By nightfall I was trying to battle the headwind on the section of reservoir tracks before Stoodley pike. It's a mind game to see where you've reached before switching on the head torch to compare years and this one was slower but the rain had largely stopped and it wasn't cold jogging down to CP1 near Hebden bridge. There's an out and back section here which allows you to see who is within 30 mins of you. Jayson was just leaving as I approached the CP and after just a quick restock of hill food and a snatched bowl of chicken and rice I was pleased to get out before anyone else appeared. Check points are also where you get news of what's happening in the race and I was surprised to hear that with Jasmin, Eugeni and Eoin running together, they and Jayson were the only people ahead.

There's hills and fields, stone slabs and open boggy moors that last all night until the relative flat lands around Gargrave and the approach to Malham. I kept going, keeping to a schedule of eating little and often with only mild nausea and one episode of heaving something straight back up again. After day one the pace is generally slow enough that somehow stomach issues become less of a bother. Dawn slowly crept up as I reached Malham and one of the first real highlights of the route, the cove. Slippery limestone but drying underfoot and the wind dropping so by Fountain Fell it was the most fabulous sunny morning. Pen-y-ghent passed uneventfully, it's often iced or a

gale on top, but after more than 24hrs of trotting along my knees didn't enjoy the long stoney descent. The cafe was open! Beans on toast and a bottle of coke saw me right and back on North.

Although no outside support is allowed you can't stop friends from turning up out of the blue to say hi and it was brilliant to get a cheer coming down into Hawes. Still light at CP2 and 106 miles completed with no sleep so far. A couple of small blisters to dress while eating, swapping maps, choosing clothes for the coming night, changing head torch batteries and restocking the back pack. Switched shoes to move the hot spots around. Reports from the front are that Jasmin has tried to get away from Eugeni but not succeeded, that Eoin is beginning to go off the back, and Jayson has withdrawn.

In previous years I'd attempted to sleep at Hawes, but it's not been productive, brain too active to switch off, so make the strategic decision to push on over Great Shunner Fell with a view to getting some kip later in the night. Options though are limited with only the odd barn and the porch of the Tan Hill pub being places to get out of the weather. It's a cold wet journey over the top and I probably don't eat enough. Between Thwaite and Keld it unravels a bit, I'm beginning to stumble more on the limestone scree and desperately want to sleep. The generous people of Keld however have left the reading room of the public hall open overnight with a kettle and snacks to buy. I wrap up on the wood floor and get a decent hour or so before waking with sore bones.

Refreshed it's back on to the moors and Tan Hill. I find Gwynn here, he's passed me while I rested, so as he gets a cup of tea, I leg it hoping to get out of sight on the infamously boggy Sleightholme moor. After God's bridge and the A66 underpass where Jim Mann has left a bowl of treats for runners I stop briefly in the refuge at the end of the shooters hut to have something more substantial. I find my head nodding as I chew giving Gwynn his chance to get back on terms. It's good to have some company for the remainder of the night, but he's suffering with tendonitis and hasn't slept at all yet. I escape from him descending into Middleton and despite stopping at the Coop to get real food for later in the race am half through the CP there before he arrives. Motivated I scoff some scrambled eggs and get on my way.

From Middleton-in-Teesdale to Dufton is possibly the most rewarding day of the Pennine way, Low and High Force on the Tees, Cauldron snout and High Cup Nick, so despite a good going headwind and some slow stretches where you cross scree by the river it's just brilliant to be out. Take a 10min powernap under a bush, but otherwise all good and have the hills to myself. By Dufton the sun has set behind the lakeland mountains and after rehydrating some porridge it's time to face Cross Fell.

Cross Fell is the highest part of the trail and attracts all the weather you could want for a winter experience. No snow this year, but it's dark, you're in the cloud, the wind is roaring and visibility is dire. The trail constantly disappears and I fear wandering into the old mine workings while trying to find the right line off the top for the track to Gregs hut. It's well into night 3 when I arrive, relieved. The Spine race always places a small team there and they dish up a mess tin of chilli noodles to sustain you on your way. Knowing just how long it might take to get right off the hill and wanting to avoid a repeat of the staggering before Keld I take another 10mins kip before getting back on the trail. In Garrigill despite it being 11pm two women are waiting outside their house with offers of home baking and coffee but I'm keen to get to CP4 in Alston for a decent rest. There's something like 30 fields, and worse, 30 stiles, to negotiate first. Somehow the steps get higher on each stile and the tiny, pointless, gates on the top are trying my patience. By this stage only one leg is happy stepping up, the other manages the lowering down.

At Alston CP it's double helpings of Lasagne and my one long sleep of the race. Planning on 2hrs I fall back to sleep while looking at my watch and am furious with myself, but perhaps the extra 30mins was needed. It's raining heavily when I leave, but Gwynn hasn't yet arrived so it feels like there's a decent gap.

To Greenhead goes well, the weather fair's up and turning East on Hadrian's wall finally the wind is full on my back. In the light I've no need for map or GPS and can keep going without any interruption. A fast moving hail storm paints the trail white and suggests that the relative warmth of the first few days is coming to an end.

I don't really use a watch so am fascinated to see how far I can get before it's dark again. I'm delighted to not only get off the wall but almost to Horneystead farm before the torch is back on my head. I know I'm ahead of my previous years efforts. The small holding here is owned by a couple who walked the Pacific coast trail back in the day and they leave a thermos of broth and snacks out in a barn for spinners. I keep my stop as short as I can without being rude. I'm still feeling pretty good and can sustain something like a running motion on a fair bit of the trail to Bellingham.

Arriving at CPs there's usually someone to greet you, but at Bellingham it feels deserted - I find out later they've been crowded round a screen watching Jasmin finish. She's not only won the race but has blown the previous record out of the water. While her running is phenomenal her ability to execute a race plan so well over a distance she's not raced before impresses me even more. I'm only 42 miles behind. I've caught up with Eoin a bit, but he's already 5km up the trail and even if I take no sleep I know him well enough that he'll be in control of the gap. Gwynn is still at the wall so I've time to eat, get feet patched, attempt to sleep and sort myself out before he arrives. Sleep is more difficult as legs and joints are complaining as soon as I stop moving. I lie on the floor for a fitful 90mins.

I'm not so efficient on getting up and the team are making sure I know the weather forecast. It was getting frosty as I arrived and the forecast is for snow and winds of 50mph on the Cheviot. Air temp -5, but with windchill -18C. I dress accordingly and carry thicker gloves and a decent duvet jacket. They undertake a full kit check before I leave. I try to fool my body into thinking it's morning by having breakfast before I go.

It's beautiful as I head out, it's about 2230 but all's quiet in town, the dogs bark in the first farm but there's not a soul around. The ground is beginning to freeze up nicely so the going gets easier although there's plenty of wet peat beneath the ice. The wind has turned more Northerly so the snow is driven in my face but it's highlighting the thin rut through the deep heather. When it stops, it's almost magical, the moon is close to full and on the road section before Keilder forest I can run without a headtorch for a while enjoying the unpolluted night sky.

Just before the Cheviots there's an intermediary checkpoint at a B+B in Byrness. There's a max time of 30mins here, so no sleeping but they provide a dish of mince and tatties to get you up the hill. It's a haul on to the ridge and once out of the trees it's fully exposed to the wind, the fresh snow isn't deep and in places I can reassuringly see Eoin's footprints. It's 0430, it's the fourth night and I've had about 6hrs sleep since the start. The cold is biting through and as I faff around putting on my last warm layer and a third pair of gloves I'm wondering if I've pushed it all a bit too far. If I can't stay warm all I've got left is my sleeping bag and bivvie. I tell myself it'll be dawn soon and the path eventually turns away from the wind.

I find out later that I'm not the person having the worst time on the ridge. Eugeni has been going light and pushing hard to stay with Jasmin and then maintain his place as first male. The stretch over the Cheviot is a bit over 40km with two small mountain huts for shelter. As I heard it he gets to hut 2 out of food and presumably cold. After a long time there he starts the final 10km but in the same conditions that are causing me some concern. He has less substantial kit and becomes delirious, disoriented and stops. Fortunately he presses the SOS on the tracker and a rescue team get to him before it's too late. He's out of the race. Brave effort or poor judgement?

Seeing the outline of hills against the horizon is motivating, and having traversed this section in December's 'Cheviot goat' race I have some memory of the twists and undulations before hut 1. It doesn't come quick enough, but I get there and am delighted to find a small crew of medic and

rescue team who will be checking on runners welfare for the next 3 days. Get out of the wind, a brew and 10mins shut eye and by then the sun is up and it's a brand new day. Layers off and get going.

In my previous two races the last stretch has been dark so to get it on a crisp clear winters day, dressed in snow and frost and with the bogs frozen and the slabs swept clear by the wind is almost perfect. I feel happy but my mind keeps racing to the finish when there's still 5hrs of running to go. There's more than Eugeni that have made it this far only to have to stop so I try to keep the excitement in check, but it's as good a day as you could ask for in January. Pleasingly while the legs are exhausted on the climbs they're happy to keep trotting along on the flats to keep the miles rolling by. Hut 2 is empty, I don't really stop but have to keep reminding myself that it's still a couple of hours and to keep the calories going in. As I near the end a couple of friends run out up the trail to say hi, but leave me alone for the finish. It's a quiet time knowing it's all over. At the Border hotel a small group cheer and a camera is in my face for the embarrassingly inarticulate finish line video, and that's it.

Third place, second man, and a personal best time of 102hr19min. I'm happy with that.

In the pub shortly after I'm pretty sure I said 'three's enough'. It took a full 36hrs to start planning more fun in 2020. Apparently entries are now open at thespinerace.com.

Jack & Ben's Cumbrian Traverse

By Ben Abdelnoor

Jack Wright and myself, both from Ambleside AC, completed the CT last week, Thursday 17th January, in 10 hours on the nose. I thought it was 9 hours 58 minutes, but I think the GPS download said 10 hours and 17

seconds. Sorry Jack, this might be the first you heard of my timing error! I can submit my GPS download, if you wish, for verification. I could say it'd be easy to provide you with the trace but I have a grade E- GCSE in electronic devices, and it'll take most of next week (I still have holiday to take, so should be fine).

We had a stunning winter's day: a howling, freezing wind over the Coniston fells, which turned towards a very pleasant late afternoon from Honister to the finish. The MWIS forecast for the day advised of -20 degrees with windchill at dawn; I could believe it. There was some light patches of snow and ice on the ground, but otherwise the going was good.

We took one of Britta's border collies with us (Rook) who clocked up 28 miles before we handed him over to Britta on Cat Bells summit (he didn't seem phased by a DNF; it was Jack and I who were more concerned he might be disappointed).

We set off in the dark at 7am, with a headtorch each for the first 50 minutes and didn't need to use them for the end, despite the fading light. Fish and chips in The Kingfisher Chippie in Keswick is mandatory after a CT completion. I think I may have face-planted into the mushy peas though as I was pretty tired. Britta didn't say anything. Thankfully Jack had arranged for Michelle to do the track session for the Club that evening; he was due to lead it, but having ran further than he ever had in his life, it was asking a lot of him (and he's only got thin legs).

This is my second completion; along with Ricky Lightfoot (Ellenborough AC) we made the Traverse in winter, through some seriously deep snow, but this was some years ago and I don't think I know the date, although the time was similar. I could probably find the date; Ricky has a GPS implant in his left thigh (part of a sponsorship deal).

Who to send your information to

For the Newsletter

- Updates and pleas for help from race organisers
- Info about social events
- Captains' updates
- Minutes from committee meetings
- Juniors updates- so the old gits know who's snapping at their heels!
- Club Champs updates
- Relay 2018 updates
- Articles written by you!
- Race reports either from the Race Organiser or a runner
- Pictures to go with any of the above
- Items for sale (running related!)
- Cartoons...Jim T:-)
- Banter and general mickey taking that we're renowned for!

SEND YOUR INFO AS A WORD DOCUMENT TO:

mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk

For the Website

Send your information to one of these people who regularly update that section of the website:

News section (including social stuff and trips away)- Neil Talbott neiltalbott4@hotmail.com

AAC Races pages - Dan Duxbury danmunro2014@gmail.com

Training pages - Michelle Foxwell mcrowley@ghyllside.cumbria.sch.uk

Club Champs pages - Jim Tyson jim_tyson@hotmail.com

Junior pages - Eleanor Knowles eleanorknowles333@btinternet.com

'Articles' for the 'blog' section - Neil Talbott neiltalbott4@hotmail.com