

# Ambleside Athletic Club 2020 Round-up

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## 1. Chairman Dan's Update

Happy holidays to all members. I hope this message finds you well. Due to COVID, the committee decided that it wasn't appropriate or necessary to hold our traditional AGM this year. This 'Round-up' will serve as an update for members in lieu of the usual meeting. We hope this is ok with people and hope to be back to our usual meeting in 2021.

Some good news is that all committee members and race organisers have agreed to stay on for 2021 (see list below). It has been a strange year in many ways, with very few races happening from March onwards and fell runners having to make their own fun. I hope our club's race organisers have enjoyed their 'year off' and I am sure will be ready to get back to it with the usual brilliant support of club members as soon as we are racing again. A big thanks to them!

The series of COVID safe club events through summer, ably organised by Chris H, Selwyn and Jack were a huge success and it may well be that a series of similar events will form the basis of a Club Championship for 2021 until regular racing resumes – watch this space!

A personal highlight of this year was seeing so many runners at our summer Tuesday night training runs. New faces, younger members, warm sunshine – a taste of the future. Sarah McCormack is our membership secretary and reports that we currently have over 260 members, which is certainly an all-time high and a sign that we are doing something right as a club. If you are a new member reading this – welcome to the club and we hope to see you at training and club events in 2021.

Club Treasurer Chris Giles has produced his usual thorough appraisal of the club's finances, which are attached to this email for your viewing pleasure. The headlines here are:

- Club funds have remained at the same level as last year (around £16,000)
- Membership subscriptions have risen significantly, and with no club races, gave us our main income in 2020
- Main outgoings were: a new club flag, first aid kits for coaches, subsidising a navigation course for club members and the usual costs for training venues (Phoenix track and Ambleside Rugby Club)

All that remains from me is to wish you a Happy New Year and kindly remind you to pay your subs of £10 on 2<sup>nd</sup> January this year!

*Dan*

## 2. Ben's Review of the Year

*An abridged version of noticeable achievements from AAC members in 2020...*

In no particular order but starting at the start of the year, Sarah McCormack set a course record at Nine Standards on New Year's Day coming 6<sup>th</sup> out of a field of nearly 180. North of the border Jack Wright and Matt Elkington had storming runs at Carnethy to take 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> places respectively. Helm Hill's top men took 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> places; just saying. Beth Hanson ran a great race too, taking 8<sup>th</sup> place in the women's race.

We might as well get this one out the way... It was clearly a year for big rounds and there is a great series of accounts in the latest *Fellrunner* magazine on 'the big three' as well as some less well-known routes. There were some noticable Lakeland achievements and I'd like to start by congratulating Antonia Fan on a superb time of just over six hours for the George Fisher Tea Round. The 30-mile route with 12,000 feet of climbing, starting and finishing in Keswick, has quickly become a popular route and there's a list of Amblesiders on the completion list: Jack Wright, Simon Rowe, Ben Abdelnoor, Jacob "Beast from the East" Snochowski, Matt "Lovely Legs" Beresford, Jez Lefton, James Harris, B Halcrow, Michelle Foxwell and Tom Simpson to name a few. *None* of those names listed have gone under seven hours. Rumour has it that Georgia Tindley held the ladies record prior to Antonia taking it. Georgia runs for Helm Hill; just saying.

Other big hands of applause should go to noticable achievements on the BG front from Captain Jack Wright in just under 17 hours and to Harry Scheull in a little over 21 hours. George Foster did a BG too.

As we got stuck into fell running season it was looking good for Matt Elkington and Garry Greenhow who went down to Wales and took 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> places respectively at the Yr Aran British Champs race. Then it all went downhill so to speak, more so for Matt who went *very* downhill. Good to see Matt back at it now and running strong.

A special mention for Neil Talbott who, and I quote from our esteemed Chairman, "single-handedly saved the world from the scourge of GPS and trail-runningification of fellrunning". Neil has done a huge amount of work for the FRA and the sport in general. I and plenty of others never cease to be amazed by the professional standard he maintains with the work he puts in in correspondance, meetings, debates and discussions. Even his emails are written like a professional. Apart from my Aunt, he's the only person I double-check the spelling and grammar of my emails before I send them to him. I can also confirm that he does *not* work for MI5, but does set crosswords for a national broadsheet, did fly planes for the RAF but had nothing to do with Saddam...

Sarah McCormack and Amazon both try and avoid paying taxes in the UK; Amazon by having good accountants, Sarah by spending more time in Italy than Cumbria. Signorina McCormack did make it worth her while though, winning the Montserrat Skyrace, the Italian Long Distance National Mountain Running Championships, the Italian National Vertical Kilometre Championships, and in the Italian Mountain Running Relay Championships she broke the course record on her leg of the event. Finally, and despite a lack of UK events, Sarah managed to sneak in a victory at the Keswick Lakeland Trails race.

Dan Duxbury very briefly held one of the weakest records around, involving a complicated points-based challenge called Ali's Round, which sets off from The Climber's Shop in Ambleside, visits Wainwrights of your choice and requires an inordinate amount of kitchen-table planning and late nights. The Oxford English Dictionary cites Dux and the planning of his route as an example of the definition of 'anal retentiveness'. Dan's record has since been beaten by an overweight skier from Nottingham, and latterly Neil Talbott, who may still hold the record. Neil is also listed under the same OED citation...

At the back end of the year we had the Club handicap up Kirkstone which was won by Atonia, with George Foster setting the fastest time this century, according to club statistician Paul "free beer Friday" Knowles. Worth noting that the second fastest time this century was set by one Martin Cox, who happens to be George's coach.

Among his many other talents and accolades Selwyn Wright published a great little book on his running exploits and memories, *Just for Fun: Me and Fellrunning* which is for sale at bookshops and places that sell his book. All profits from sales of the book are going to Age UK, so indirectly helping the likes of club stalwarts Tony Walker and Barrie Laycock.

Scout Adkin set a phenomenal time in the Wansfell uphill race in September (15-50) finishing inside the top 10 overall, not just winning the women's race but taking some noticeable scalps in the men's competition e.g. Michael Ainsworth and Kieran Hodgson, both of Helm Hill. Just saying. Thanks to Niki Rylance and Michelle Crowley for helping to put on a COVID-secure and very popular event. Scout also won the Kong winter series of races coming out of winter 2019/20, and in September of this year won the Scottish Athletics hill running Championships, retaining the title from 2019.

Paul Tierney has struggled to find any sort of form since his Wainwrights Round; he's still keen to come to the opening of any envelopes and happy to show his film at said openings. He did put on a good show though by taking on the Cumbria Way in November, a long haul of 70 miles from Carlisle to Ulverston in a time of 17 hours.

In other long challenges, Lucy Downham took on the Cumbria Way on a two-day trek with an overnight camp on the hills, Marcis Gabuts set out on the Lakeland 100-mile route, finishing it in a time of 23 hours 33 minutes which is incredible given that this time would have won the event on previous occasions. B Halcrow had a rather chilly, but very successful, Frog Graham round with help from Tom and Paul Simpson. If there's a frost on Skiddaw I don't think the thought of a swim across Bassenthwaite can be terribly appealing...

Well done to Matt Reedy who got himself very fit during the lockdown months to set some pretty fast times, notably at some of the Club events and inter-club races.

Talking of inter-club races, Ambleside women won the first round of the 3v3 league against Helm and Eden Runners. Lou Osborne, Hazel Robinson and Sarah McCormack were the winners against Eden with Antonia, Beth and Sarah winning out over Helm on a Loughrigg course.

Brathay Trust hosted the Ambleside 60km race which is in its second year and I think it'd be fair to say that whilst it's not surprising Cath Musetti ran well enough to take the V50 prize, she was also first woman home – well done Cath!

Gary Thorpe also made the most a few months without injury and did a speedy Joss Naylor Challenge, racing (and 'beating') Daz Fishwick, who set off at the same time. If you have a spare couple of hours, ask him about it some time.

Finally, club 'grey man' Simon Rowe completed the unfathomable misery fest that is a mid winter BG. Thereby adding his name to an illustrious list including several (insane) club members.

Huge apologies to anyone I've left out but that just leaves me to say: well done George, a very good effort.

*Ben*

### **3. Nikki's Junior Report**

COVID has not killed off the juniors enthusiasm for fell action!

Twelve members completed the 'Summer Skyline Challenge' during lockdown. Congratulations to Isabel, Zeke, Joss T, Rosie, Cara, Rowan B and Freddie B on completing the 'half' and to Sophie, Magnus, Tess R,

Kitty H and Freya for finishing all the 20 challenges. Challenges included baking an Ambleside inspired cake (numerous blue tongues on this one), painting AAC stones and hiding them around the fells and 1 mile time trial. Celebratory T shirts were presented at a socially distanced Santa run to Rydal Cave for cookies and hot choc before Xmas. Photos of some challenges are on the website - well done to all!

Junior training started back in September with a full COVID risk assessment and guidelines in place. Congratulations to newly qualified coach Kingsley and new helpers Jez and Alison. We couldn't run juniors without the support of parents and the club. We have 40 - 50 kids turning up each week and there is nothing better to hear the squeals of enjoyment and muddy antics to make it worthwhile.

We do always need help so if you fancy helping out or training up please get in touch! Due to COVID restrictions, juniors will not be swapping to the Phoenix track in the New Year and will continue to hurtle around the fells of Ambleside. Watch out for their head torches as they run amock on Thursday evening! As reigning English Champions, I really hope that everyone will put their enthusiasm behind the English champs races in 2021. The dates and venues are out:

<https://www.fellrunner.org.uk/juniors.php>

We are not sure how they will run yet but put the dates in your diary in preparation for blue and green action!

Finally, the U18 International Mountain Running Cup has been rescheduled for July 24th 2021. More information here:

<https://www.amblesidemountaincup.com/>

We have booked out the whole of Ambleside YHA to house all the teams who will start to arrive on the Wednesday. The event will kick off on Friday 23rd July with a parade by all the teams, accompanied by AAC juniors, through Ambleside to the opening ceremony at the Market Cross. The Wansfell Uphill Race will then follow, in the daylight this time and with some big money prizes - get training! The International races will be on the Saturday morning. The best U18runners from around the world and fingers crossed some Ambleside AC juniors on the England team! As ever, we will need helpers if your free!

Fingers crossed for a year full of fell fun!

*Nikki*

#### **4. AAC Race Organisers for 2021**

April - Loughrigg - Paul Tierney (with Ben Ab's support)  
May - Fairfield - Jon Deegan  
June - Great Lakes - Ben Abdelnoor and Britta Sendleoffer  
June - Langdale Gale - Tod Coates  
July - Blisco - Selwyn Wright  
July - Rydal Round - Carolyn Meyneaud  
Aug - Arnison Dash - Tom Simpson  
Sept - Three Shires - Selwyn Wright  
Oct - Langdale - Dan Duxbury  
Dec - Wansfell - Michelle Crowley

#### **5. AAC Committee 2021**

Chair: Dan Duxbury

Secretary: Paul Knowles

Treasurer: Chris Giles

Membership Secretary: Sarah McCormack

Men's Captain: Jack Wright (vice cap: Tom Simpson)

Men's V40 Captain: SITUATION VACANT

Ladies' Captain: Sarah McCormack

Social Media Secretary: Jim Tyson

Social Secretary: Tom Simpson

Juniors Co-ordinator: Nikki Rylance