



Kirkstall Harriers

Newsletter

Editor: Matt Sykes-Hooban

In this issue

Page 1: Picture of the Month

Page 2: News in Brief

Page 3- 7: Laura goes long in the Pennines

Page 8: Cross Country News

Page 9: More Cross Country and Birthdays

Page 10 & 11: Neil Marshall's is this month's member profile

Page 12: Run to the Mast

Page 13: Run to the Mast, PBS and New members

Page 14: Winter Time Trial

Page 15 & 16: Jemma takes on the Auld Lang Syne

Page 17 - 20: Victoria goes just as long in the Pennines

Page 21: That's All Folks

Welcome to the February edition of the club newsletter. This month we are going long, really long! We have not one but two versions of the epic trail race that is the Spine Challenger, thanks to Laura and Vic for their, amazing accounts of their dirty weekend in the Pennines. And if that's not all we have all the usual news, race reports, birthdays and some great pics. So, put the kettle on sit back and get stuck in... It's cold and dark outside anyway so you'll not be missing anything! - Editor Matt



Picture of the Month

Ben does his 'special' PECO Dance... praying for mud again is it? - Ed

News In Brief

CLUB AGM:

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 20th February at 8.30pm (after a shortish training run) At the LPSA. The club business will be discussed the committee for the year to come will be elected, followed by the awarding of the trophies to the winners of the Club Championship and Sportswoman and Sportsman of the year. The evening will be concluded with a buffet. All members are welcome to attend.

Club Trip:

Rachael Kearns and Collette Spencer have volunteered to organise the next club trip.

They have booked the YHA at Wooler on the edge of the Northumberland National Park which looks perfect for our needs. It is just north west of Alnwick.

Dates are the 7th/8th/9th April 2017 with overnight stay in the hostel on 7th and 8th. We normally arrive from mid afternoon on the Friday and leave after lunch on the Sunday.

This is a self catering YHA that can accommodate up to 57 people. Usual £50 per person which will include accommodation and food. Collette is taking taking £25 deposits now (or full payment if you like). Please pay Collette or Rachael in cash or if you prefer online transfer please email Collette for details at collettespencer@yahoo.co.uk . Please make sure that you put your name in the transfer reference.

Looks like there are some cracking views to be had... And maybe a cracking pint as well? – Ed



We have a separate Facebook group for club trips. If you wish to join, please use the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/914242285337321/>

The Spine Challenger according to Laura Davis

The Spine Challenger is a long winter ultra up the Pennine Way. Officially the route is 108 miles but, always keen to get good value for money, with trips in and out of checkpoints, to the van and a few very minor navigational wanderings we managed a bonus 10km with the Garmin showing 114.3 miles. There are 18,494 feet of ascent.

Dot watching on this race has been a January hobby for a few years now and I'd always had some vague idea that I'd like to have crack someday if I was ever fit enough. Vic was on the race safety team in 2016 and when she asked me afterwards if I'd be interested in being her race partner I realised the only way I'd ever be fit enough was by entering and committing to the training. I put in an application and after a few emails with the organisers who wanted to know about race and navigation experience I was in. Better get on with some training then!

I'm usually pretty haphazard as far as training goes and just go out and enjoy running about in the hills without much in the way of structure. I knew though that there was no chance of getting round the Challenger without a more organised approach. The distance, terrain and amount of kit carried meant that this was going to be more about maintaining a fast hiking pace than running, so after building mileage over the summer and into September, by October I was on a weekly running and walking mileage of 80-90 miles along with yoga and strength training. That sounds like a lot, but it was surprisingly manageable. 10 miles each weekday to and from work and out with the dog and a couple of longer walks or runs at the weekend had it covered and, apart from a couple of weeks where I had to ease off with a bust ankle in late November/early December, I was able to keep this up comfortably until January when I tapered with a couple of lighter weeks. Thanks to super supporter Bethan who picked us up from a variety of random lay-bys on the top of the moors at all times of night and day, Vic and I had managed to recce the whole route in advance, with day sections recce'd in daylight and all the night sections recce'd in darkness.

The mandatory kit list for Spine Challenger is pretty hefty, and with good reason. If you take a tumble and have to wait for rescue on the tops in winter, you're going to be in trouble pretty quickly. In total this lot, along with water and food weighed in around 8-9kg:

1. Backpack
2. Compass and Maps
3. GPS (Watches and Smartphones are not permissible)
4. Whistle
5. Goggles (You may also wish to carry a pair of sunglasses)
6. Knife
7. Head Torch (1 set of spare batteries must be carried at all times)
8. Waterproof Jacket with a hood and taped seams
9. Waterproof Trousers with taped seams
10. Hat
11. Gloves
12. Spare Socks (1 pair)
13. Neck Gaiter
14. Base Layer Top
15. Base Layer Bottoms
16. Appropriate layering for Mountain/ Fell Running
17. Appropriate footwear for Mountain/ Fell Running
18. Kahtoola Microspikes/ Yaktrax/ Similar ice spikes

19. Minimum Compulsory Medical Kit:

- a. BandAids/ Plasters
 - b. Paracetamol - 16x 500mg tablets
 - c. Loratidine - 2x10mg tablets OR Cetirizine Hydrochloride
 - d. Loperamide - 4x 2mg
 - e. Antiseptic Spray or Wipes
 - f. Your personal blister Kit
 - g. Any regular medication
20. Sleeping Bag 0c (Zero Degrees Celsius) Comfort Minimum
21. Roll Mat
22. Shelter, choose one of the options:
- a. Option 1: Tent + Survival Bag
 - i. Tent users must also carry a Survival Bag (or a Bivvy Bag)
 - b. Option 2: Bivvy Bag
 - i. Bivvy Bags are acceptable on their own
23. Gas or liquid fuel stove with one pan to produce hot water
- a. Jet Boil, Mini Trangia etc
 - b. 48hrs Fuel (Full or nearly full 100g gas canister, used for emergencies is acceptable)
24. Waterproof matches/ and or lighter
25. Spork or similar
26. 2l Water carrying capacity
27. 3000kcal of food (inclusive of food you eat whilst racing)
28. Mobile phone and Charger in your drop bag
29. GPS Tracker



And this pic proves why all of the above listed kit is mandatory... Nice day for a walk girls?!

By January we were ready for the off. The race rules allow competitors to choose to have a support vehicle and we were very fortunate that Bethan and Catherine had offered to crew for us. We hired a camper van, filled it full of food and spare kit and set off for Edale. Although we both knew we had trained well and were as ready as we were going to get, we were both making a step into the unknown. Neither of us had done a race of this length before and of course we had no control over what the weather conditions would bring. Course rules give 60 hours to complete (of which only 24 are daylight), but as a single stage race the clock keeps ticking throughout the event and any time spent resting reduces the time you have to complete the course. Our aim was just to complete (we had no intentions of racing anyone!) so we'd made a pacing plan that allowed two short sleeps and gave our support crew expected arrival times at the road crossings. This suggested we would get round ok, but the usual DNF rate for the race is between 30-40% and, as a measure of how tough it is, the elite athletes at the front end are only able to average around a 15-17 minute mile pace. Of course, the distance and winter conditions mean there is a pretty hefty injury risk too, so it was largely a case of just setting off and seeing what happened.

We arrived in a beautiful snowy Edale on the Friday for a safety briefing, kit check and mugshot and then headed over to Castleton YHA for tea and to try and get some sleep. Kirkstall Harrier Nick Clayton works there and cooked us up a splendid tea. We were tucked up in bed by 8.30 and tried to get some sleep (not very successfully in my case!). After an early alarm and a drive in to Edale with a bit of Tina Turner on the stereo, we were fitted with our trackers and assembled on the start line just as it was starting to get light. Then we were off, out of Edale, over the icy tracks and fields to climb Jacob's Ladder and we headed onto the Kinder plateau. It was snowing and windy and we had to stop to put goggles on to protect our eyes. There was deep snow lying on the ground and this, combined with more falling snow gave whiteout conditions for a short while which made navigation a bit tricky but eventually we passed Kinder Downfall, the sun came out and we were heading over to Snake Pass in a beautiful winter landscape.

From there we crossed over onto Bleaklow and dropped down to Torside for our first meet with Catherine and Bethan. I was struggling a bit with back pain here but with a quick application of Voltarol, a brew and time for Vic to retape her blister prone feet we were away again. From here, it is a long steady climb out to cross Black Hill and Wessenden Head Moor and on to a road crossing where we saw the crew plus a few extra supporters again. It was getting dark now, so we got the head torches on ready for the long night ahead. After a quick pit stop we headed on across Marsden Moor towards Standedge. From here we continued on, eventually crossing the M62 footbridge and on to Blackstone Edge. Another quick stop for some hot food at the van we then pressed on past the reservoirs eventually passing Stoodley Pike and then dropped down into Hebden Bridge before climbing and then dropping down again into checkpoint one at Hebden Hey. The approach to the checkpoint seemed to have been chosen especially to make things as grim as possible and the route took us down a very steep wooded track of ankle deep mud and huge rocks. It was pretty horrible, and we weren't thrilled by the knowledge that we would also have to leave by the same route.

At the checkpoint we were able to access drop bags so after we were given a quick assessment by the medics to make sure we were still functioning ok, we both showered and changed and headed back up that horrible path to the van where we planned to have a three hour rest. After the sleep I felt much worse and really struggled to force some food down, but Catherine and Bethan kept up their side of the support crew bargain and pushed us out of the van when our time was up and we headed off up the Pennine Way again. Despite feeling pretty grim, our legs were still working perfectly well so we plodded on. The temperature had risen considerably now and all the snow melt had added to the mud and bog across Heptonstall, Stanbury and Ickornshaw moors which would make up the next 16 or so miles...

After a few more brews and various snacks provided by the crew and several others who'd come out to support we got to my least favourite bit of the course, where you just go through muddy field after muddy field and it feels like you're getting nowhere at all. I was livened up by getting electrocuted though, thanks to some kind farmer who'd put an electric fence directly across the right of way, so after that surprise we commando rolled underneath the fence and pressed on to Gargrave where we were greeted with more cups of tea and some cheesy chips. We headed from there through yet more muddy fields and onto Malham where we stopped for an hours sleep.

From here, the climbing really starts and we made our way in the fog up the side of Malham Cove and on to the next checkpoint at the Malham Tarn Field Centre. Here the race officials had another look at us and made us a brew before we headed off to make the long climb over Fountains Fell. This was a long trudge into the fog and wind until eventually we were over the top and on our way back down the other side. Here we had a short pit stop for a bacon sandwich and were overtaken by the race leaders in the full Spine who, despite setting off 24 hours later than us had somehow caught us up. Now it was time to hit Pen y Ghent. The legs were definitely grumbling a bit now and the short sharp climb and scramble up the rocks to the trig is not what anyone's legs want after 90-odd miles, but we were soon over and making our way into Horton in Ribblesdale. In my head, the next section over Cam Fell was going to be fairly easy: it was really simple to navigate, there were only about 15 miles to go and I'd somehow managed to convince myself it was fairly flat. In reality, it was a long, hard upwards slog on ruined legs up a really boring Roman road. It seemed to go on for days but eventually we did get to the end in Hawes, well within the time limit.

I'm really chuffed that we managed to finish, and did so together. I've never been so pleased to see a finish line and completing this event has finally made me understand what it means to leave everything out on the course. At times it was a brilliant race and at others doing it was the worst, most stupid idea I've ever had. It was undeniably hard and, as I had expected, was much more a mental game than a physical one. Vic was a great race partner and we were in decent spirits nearly all the way. Although our lows and highs didn't always happen at the same time, we worked really well together and were able to share the navigation duties as well as looking after each other when we were suffering. There may have been some slightly hysterical laughter on the final stretch about the state of Vic's feet and the fact that I needed the loo but was sure if I crouched to go I'd never be able to get up again, but there was no point at which either of us thought we wouldn't make it, so our training and overall approach seemed to pay off. We finished in 57:26:59 (for some reason Vic's official time is about a minute slower, but we crossed the line together) and although there were only a couple of people who finished behind us, 31 of the 94 starters had retired. Well done us!

I want to say an absolutely massive thanks to all the people who supported us in various ways. Bethan and Catherine were absolutely brilliant as our crew. They gave up huge amounts of time and sleep and did so much to help us along our way. As well as feeding and watering us, patching up our broken bits and always being cheerful, when someone is willing to dry your stinking bog filthy socks on the air vents in the van they're driving you know they're well and truly on your team :) Thanks also to Gary, Vicki H, Lucy, Ben, James W, Jennie, Sam, Malcolm and Alan and canine supporters Jazz and Cleo who also helped us loads by popping up at various points with food, drinks, back massages and motivational words and to the people who sent messages of support whilst we were out there. You're all ace and it would have been much, much harder without you.

After the race we had a night at the White Hart Inn in Hawes which has really comfortable rooms and comes highly recommend if you need a place to stay around there. We had a great evening meal and breakfast, the best shower ever, a fantastic sleep and the staff couldn't have been lovelier. I think I might have been a bit endorphin high by this point, but it really is a very nice pub and well worth a visit. Immediately after the event my body, although tired, felt pretty much ok. The swollen feet and ankles took a few days to subside and the blisters on my shoulders where my pack had rubbed healed up pretty quickly once I took the rucksack off. My body clock on the other hand, has been all over the place for the last couple of weeks and

my brain has definitely not been operating at full capacity. Mostly though, I think I feel a bit sad that the experience is over. Training gave me a focus for months and along with poring over maps, route finding and testing out bits of kit gave me a project that has kept me occupied for a long time. Taking part in a race like this is a really intense experience and during the event itself you're in a strange little bubble with the rest of the racers, support crews and event team so adjusting to normal life when it is over is quite odd.

So there you have it, the Spine Challenger. The longest race I've ever done by nearly 80 miles and the only kind of distance where 'only a marathon to go now' is an appropriate motivational slogan. It was a bloody long way and snowy, icy, hard, cold, muddy, wet, dark, hilly, awful and brilliant, but it can't have been too bad, because we both said we'd do it again before we'd even got home.



Above Left: Laura on a foggy hillside somewhere in the Malham Cove area.

Above Right: The Dream team at the finish!

Phew... What an adventure, right now take a moment to stretch it out have a break and make a brew before you crack on with the rest of the newsletter! - Ed

PECO CROSS COUNTRY RACE SUNDAY 22ND JANUARY

Many thanks for all the helpers, who came just to help, or helped and ran too on what was quite a cold morning. As far as we are aware the race went down very well with most of the runners and was generally a great success. Several runners were heard to say they thoroughly enjoyed the “proper” cross country course, which probably included the muddy bits, and all the marshals were very supportive. This only enhances the name of Kirkstall Harriers as a well organised and happy club. Without your help whether it be a little or a lot, we could not put on these races and put our little bit back into the running community. At least we all can continue to turn up to other races with a clear conscious. A special mention to Adam Moger for organising all the registration, first aid, course marking and marshalling duties, despite several changes of the course – including the last-minute ones too, testing everybody’s patience. Thanks also to Horsforth Harriers for supplying a similar calibre of volunteers and sharing the workload. At least we can now relax and just turn up to run the Pecos for another two years.

YORKSHIRE VETERANS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION YVAA

The yvaa website has a list of 9 provisional races for this year see below. If you have not done any of these before we can strongly recommend them as a 6 milish run, mainly off road, with some lovely views in interesting places all with a friendly competitive nature. You have to be 35 or over to compete, and each race has winners in each age group of 5 years, prompting a bit of extra enthusiasm if you have just entered a new age group. As well as spot prizes, there is also awards at the end of the year to the best runners of each group, provided you have done the minimum number to qualify. Last year we had a couple of winners with Niamh winning the ladies overall and Emma Lavelle-Wood winning her age group. We also had Alyson Glover and Adam Moger also getting into their respective top 3. As well as individual award’s there is also a team competition. Last year the ladies finished 4th out of 28 clubs in all 3 competitions, and the men finished 5th 6th and 5th out of 36 teams. With each individual scoring points in each race, these are all added to the team score. So even if you finish in the last 6 or so, like myself, your points still count for your club. I did manage to contribute 546 points to the club total and finish 11th out of 34 in my own age group – so there is a chance for you all. All this for £5 a race and more often than not – some food at the end. What else could a Yorkshire person ask for. Lifts to the venues can be arranged on the day too if necessary.

The provisional list of races are

Honley – Sunday 23rd April

Kirkstall – Tuesday 30th May

Lythe (nr Whitby) – Sunday 4th June

Halifax – Wed 9th August

Meanwood – tbc

Knavesmire – tbc

Stainland – tbc

Horsforth – Sunday 17th Sept (same day as our KA7, so hopefully this will change)

Spenneth – Sunday 12th November.

Do not worry if you have not made a note in your diary – I will keep reminding you all. **Peter Hey**

More Cross Country News *because we love it!*



5 hardy harriers spent an eventful day out over the Pennines after doing missionary work amongst the Lancastrian heathen. And whilst there they indulged in a bit of downright dirty cross country.

The going underfoot was deemed a bit of a challenge, not good for the racing nags but perfect for northern running clubs.

Rain overnight and throughout the morning made for heavy going on the course, but as watery sunshine greeted these Kirkstall thoroughbreds, solid performances were turned in by all:

Marion Muir 48:54 (273rd but more importantly 1st Kirkstall lady. Well done Marion) *And also the whole ladies team? - Ed*

For the men:

Chris Hudson 1:10:08 (597th)

Simon Smith 1:11:57 (617th)

Kieran O'Brien 1:20:43 (659th)

Sean O'Halloran 1:26:04 (672nd)



So much Mud, I'm surprised we didn't end up with Tiger Feet.

That's right, that's right, that's right, that's right. Great day had by all.

A sense of a challenge well met. Next year, why not join us??

Simon Smith (Stolen from Facebook by Matt)

Getting another year wiser this month are..

*Noel Akers	*Russell Bromley	*Ben Clarke	*Rebecca Dwyer	
*Paul Grist	*Paul Hallam	*Kevin Kelly	*Shelia King	*Ewan
Malone	*Kieran O'Brien	*Gemma Rathbone	* Simon	
Smith				



Member Profile

Left: Neil running the 2017 TNT

Next Page: Neil doing a ton at Parkrun & finally Neil dressed as a Minion... noow if that's not a tease you tell me what is? - Ed

Age: 36 - an age where I now have no excuse, I am old enough to run in the vets races.

Occupation: Fraud Investigator for big evil corporate soulless financial institute that covers my mortgage.

Originally From: High Wycombe. But I moved to Yorkshire before I was 2 so that doesn't really count. Mainly from Wakefield, a bit of Bolton and now a few years of Leeds.

Time as a Harrier? Over 2 years, under 5.

When did you start running and why? I started running when I was 24 to lose weight after the soul redeeming breakup, of which I won't go into. I ran for few years then gave up for a few more to become a van man and eat far too much food, then slowly got back into it about 3-4 years ago which coincided with Cross Flatts parkrun starting. (#dfyb).

I joined Kirkstall when I realised I couldn't play hockey, (field, not ice), anymore - not due to lack of skill, I had game, but due to the twisting and turning causing lots of fun for the insides of my knees. To be honest, only 2 clubs had training sessions on that I could get to and Kirkstall (thanking you Mr. Glover) replied first so I went down and who wouldn't want to wear purple all the time? (Purple was also Leo's favourite colour at the time so I took that as a sign).

What are your motivations for running? Mainly so I can continue eating cake. Also to set a good example to my son because obviously I am a responsible parent, but mainly the cake. And biscuits. And bacon sandwiches. Also to feel smug whenever I talk to friends who don't run or do exercise. But still the cake.

What are greatest running achievements? 2016 was the year of the PB, new personal records at all distances raced, (5km, 10km, half marathon and marathon); still making Matt Kasparararek work hard to beat me at any races; 100 parkruns (#dfyb) and counting;

Worst running related memories? Toss up between Leeds Half Marathon 2015 & Yorkshire Marathon 2015.

Leeds was hell, hadn't fully recovered from a hockey injury, had to run (or in my case walk) along Kirkstall Road until I was nearly in sight of the fire station and forced myself to run because I knew there would be purple peeps there and there is no way I could let them see me walk - 2 hours and 12 mins of evil running.

Yorkshire because it was my first marathon, it didn't go well despite training for it, although there

were the 2 plus sides of knowing that Hannah Lee probably hated that one more than me (I found out just how many swear words she knows during the last 8 miles - very unladylike) and also still had the traditional Maccy-D's with Liz Walker on the way home. So yeah, Leeds Half wins that one.

What are your best running related memories? Pudsey Family Fun Run with Leo last year where he got his 1st running medal which he was really excited about, until he saw the frisbee in the pack and then that was his priority.

Also Yekanth bringing the samosa's to the 2016 Golden Acre Relay - awesome.

Finally, doing the Leeds Half and Yorkshire Marathon justice in 2016 - 20 & 45 mins faster than 2015 times respectively - which means I shall never have to run them again --- YAY. (Never pay to run along Kirkstall Road, if you do then there is something wrong with you).

Do you have any words of wisdom for your fellow harriers? If you need to go, then go (take wipes and a baggie on a long run, better safe than sorry).

Also, if you get a lift anywhere with Liz W or Sam Broome - bad bad bad music taste.

Can you share an interested fact about yourself? There are so many interesting things and facts about me but I tend to hide them away - they're may not be good so I'll share some of the public knowledge ones: Dang, there are no interesting facts about me so I'll make them up....nope....can't even do that. Sorry, I guess if you know me then you know them already. Although Yo Yo Ma does indeed rule.

Oh go on Neil tell us something – Ed

Okay here is an interesting fact, my long suffering wife Claire thinks I'm crazy for running but still hasn't found a way to make it grounds for a fair divorce!!!



Run to the Mast

Even though it meant getting up early and heading to the wrong side of the Pennines, the prospect of a 10km race with a 5km downhill finish was too good to miss.

Setting aside the little matter of what would happen for the first 5km, I had signed us up for the inaugural Mast Race setting off from the Smithills School just outside Bolton. There were about 300 runners, one in three were female, which was nice.

Correct shoe choice was essential, the course was described as out-and-back, 6km on roads, 4km on fells. Personally, I can fall over on my own doorstep, so I knew whatever I went with, the odds would not be in my favour.

The glorious sunshine on the Yorkshire side was replaced by thick mist over in Lancashire. Despite the mast being 300m high and on top of a whopping great hill, we couldn't see a damned thing, still, we knew what direction we would have to head, it was up, up, up, with a bit more up.

I've racked my brains to think of another race I've done with so much climbing over 5km, 300m, of upperty up. I can't, or if I could, it's been expunged from my memory. After quite enough of the steep road, complete with comedy slip-siding on black ice, it was through the kissing gate, where no kissing took place, and on to the moor. By this altitude, we were above the mist and could see the mast in all its masty glory, no navigation issues there, then.

The comprehensive race instructions had warned us that the moor could be a bit tricky underfoot (for that, read ankle-breaking rocks, thick mud, narrow trenches and peat bogs) and to be careful when passing runners coming from the turn-around who would be taking the racing line. Add to that ice and a sprinkling of snow and it had all the makings of a magnificent and challenging run.

I was glad I'd chosen trail shoes, I'd seen a couple of folk in road shoes, they had very muddy faces, arms and legs. It was very technical in places and there was a certain amount of deft bunny hopping, although I say so myself. The faster folk were meeting us coming back and of course we gave way to them, they were in it to win it after all. Personally, I just wanted to make sure I wasn't last.

After the turnaround at the mast, it was downhill all the way and, much to my delight, folk on the way up were giving way to me, so I knew I wasn't going to be last. Apart from negotiating the runners' cars coming out of the car park which I had to get through to sprint to the finish, it was a brilliant end to a rather good run. And there were medals, you can never go wrong with a bit of bling.

So all in all, an enjoyable race, I'd happily do it again, maybe one for the club championships? **Anne Akers**



Noel and Anne showing off a nice bit of bling after a trip up t'moor to visit Masty McMastface.

Hey Anne you said it muddy? There is barely a spec on the pair of you - ED

Monthly Boasts

Member PBs for January

Distance		Name	Time
5k	PB	Lee Hardy	0:19:53
5k	PB	Matt Kasperek	0:22:14
5k	PB	Simone Salgado	0:25:00

And we welcome Amy Crook as our newest member of the Purple Army

Winter Time Trail, race 4, Monday 16th Jan 2017

We had 26 runners for this the 4th time trial of the winter series. We only had 2 new faces for this run of this seasons. Sheila King an "old" new face and Sarah Barnes who has only been down to the club a few times, but is now thinking of joining our motley crew. Hopefully this run did not put her off.

It was a damp but not too wet a night and not too cold for the late starters to hang around for 15 minutes or so. Well I felt warm in my 4 layers? A resident must have lost two pence or something, as the road had been turned over in the search for it, necessitating a very slight change to the start and finish line. Hopefully this did not affect the PB situation as we had 7 PB's, or could it have been reverting to the "old" way around. The PB's went to Liz Walker 27.53, Sarah Ruxton 26.27, Hannah Newman 27.00, Simone Solgado 25.00, Matt Kasperek 22.14 Mark McKone 23.12 and Lee Hardy 19.53. Lee was the fastest runner on the night - just beating Stephen Burrell Ben Coldwell and Tim Dixon.

Bringing up the rear was Stephen Knight who must have been trying to be last as he was spotted going in the wrong direction at one stage. Just in front of him was Jacquie Elmer, who may have had a bad run - or just suffering from a bad handicap, following two good finishes in earlier races. At the front this time - again probably more a fault of bad handicapping - or coming back into form - was Sam Broome in a run time of 31.53, second was Matt Kasperek with 22.14 and third Malcolm Taylor with 25.28, just missing out in 4th place, having overtaken 18 runners was Lee Hardy.

The fastest lady on the night was Sheila King with 24.05. Many thanks to Gary Carlisle, Jemma Roe and Lucy Churn and her furry friend for ensuring all runners started on time - and we got them in the right finishing order - including Martin Fraser. Any queries on the times - please let me know

We already have 5 people who have done all 4 races, therefore qualifying for contention in the overall best 4 results out of 6 races. Dave Wood on 30 points, Carol Moran on 51, Simone Salgado 18, Adam Moger 26 and Paul Miller 52. There is also 8 who have done 3 who may also come into contention. If you thought some of the handicaps were unfair, then they may seem more unfair for some now with just a few of you getting the better of any doubts.

Auld Lang Syne by Jemma Roe

We two have run about the slopes, and picked the daisies fine

I'm fairly sure when Burns penned "Auld Lang Syne" and the Scots adopted it as a customary New Years Eve song – not one of them pictured a bunch of hardy fell runners, dressed as anything goes really, splashing through streams in a jolly manor (well, first splash round anyway) in honour of a New Years Eve fell race of the same name. Yet that is what happens on New Years Eve on t'moors of Yorkshire – and I thought this year I would give it a go.

I am very keen to do more fell running, it is high on my list of goals for this year (once I get some *minor* leg niggles fixed) I find it much more enjoyable, and the miles seem to melt pass much easier than when your pounding on road. However, I am apprehensive, for one main reason – I get lost easily... I can't read a map- in fact if you ask George he can confirm I struggle to read Google maps, even when she is also vocally shouting the directions at me at the same time, this and the fact that I lack experience put me right off – So when the post went up on the KH Facebook group that the race was opening for entries my first question was of course WILL I GET LOST ON THIS ONE? And when Mr. Glover assured me you will be fine- I thought well if you can't trust your club chairman then who can you trust (no pressure Chris) – and I popped my £5 note and entry form into an envelope and whipped it off in the post hoping I would be just in time! This race definitely fits the Jill Buckley scale at that price.

Many people made mention of what a lovely race this was when I told them I had entered! Oh it really is beautiful, it's so scenic, it's so much fun, it's so cold you will want to cry..... errrrrr? So I felt a tiny bit of trepidation on the day, not least when the weather forecast for Haworth was showing 30mph winds – still I had an elf hat to keep me warm, and I was hopeful that my bright green net tutu wasn't voluptuous enough to act as some sort of sail making me a prime candidate for take off once we reached Top Withens. Everyone was huddling together at the start to keep warm, apart from the Brownlees who allegedly ate a bit too much at Christmas and were carrying some Christmas timber (not confirmed or denied) The race set off, it climbs out of a kind of basin of rock and then drops down towards the road before it picks up a traily path, which thankfully wasn't too wet or muddy, clean feet for now....

It's a great sight to see the many, many colours of jerseys and costumes streaming ahead along the hillside, and I was pleased to be running not too near the back and also with some of the Rocky Horror Picture show (dammit Janet) for now. It's slightly unnerving when you realise that up ahead – people seem to be disappearing off the face of the earth, there must be a bit of a downhill then? And I approached it I began to get that nagging feeling of well if I am going down then there must be an up? The course does drop down then – and quite rapidly, I don't mind a good downhill and to be honest when your already dressed up as a Christmas elf you don't really need to worry much about what your form looks like so I greeted this downhill in the style of running that could only be characterised by Phoebe from friends. You splash through a beck at the bottom – it's freezing and then you look up... and up... and (you get the picture).

It's the biggest climb I've ever had to do – and I am not ashamed to say there was walking, in fact I am not ashamed to say that as it continued to then climb all the way to Top Withens there was walking. As the course loops over the moor at the top and then descends back the way it came, it was a chance to see the much faster runners doing their thing, which I always like, it's nice to give a cheer to the ones you know, and tell yourself you will have those gazelle abilities one day, in your sleep. As I reached the top I started to agree with what people had told me about the race beforehand. It is spectacularly beautiful, and it was so cold – the wind was crazy on the moor above Top Withens enough to blow me sideways on several occasions.

The descent down again was very welcome, it was boggy, but I liked that, a few shouts from the ladies in front of, "they're not that deep" gave me a bit more confidence to pick up a little speed on the way down, one was almost knee deep and I feared I may lose a shoe but I ploughed on. Halfway down off the moor, Kirkstall's own Alyson Glover had stopped to give some aid to a man who looked to have badly twisted an ankle – she's a true star. The descent continued, and then the world fell away again as the hill dropped down to the beck. Happy to say I managed this descent all on my feet, though the bum option some picked did look a little more exciting. I was very tired by this point and the windy cold mile and a half back to the finish line seemed long and hard – but wasn't ever un-enjoyable. Auld Lang Syne done – and I hadn't thought about the distance or my time once! Loved it! You get a cup of coffee at the end and biscuits, and each person gets a bottle of Daleside beer – which for £5 is truly amazing. Its then off to the Sun Inn in Haworth – for a pint and post race food..... if you can get in the pub. As with all Woodentops races the prize giving is truly generous, and we saw the winner leaving with enough chocolate to last him until next years race... even if he didn't ration it to one bar a day! A great New Years Eve – and I definitely earnt my celebratory New Year beverages that evening.

I feel here before I end I must give a shout out to fellow Harrier Rose George, who some how – against all of my understanding managed to run the windy race ... in a cardboard ark – a women whose talents know no ends (I have no idea how she didn't take off)



Left: motley crew of fancy runners.. sorry fancy dressed runners!!!



Right: Jemma loving the Mud, the view? No actually it's the Mud. Photos are courtesy of Woodentops, ta loves x

Spine Challenger according to Vic Daniel



108 miles 60 hours

Edale – Kinder – can only be described as a “whiteout.” This introduction to the Spine was a sharp and quick reminder of why it’s dubbed as “Britains Most Brutal Race.” It was goggles on, head down and crack on, there was no talking between Laura and I for this part. The blizzard must have got into my eyes before I decided to put my goggles on as for some parts of it I had a lot of “bright dots” within my vision.

Kinder to Torside – Our tricky start was followed by a lovely reward of some cloud inversions over Black Moor which was completely snow covered but above us the sun was shining and the sky was bright! Just as we were settling into the race we noticed a guy doing a spot of cross country skiing, it looked like he was much fun! We’d both made the decision to start in our snow shoes, I was wearing a pair of Saloman Snow Cross, which was definitely the right choice. The Spine was good to us at this point!

Torside – Was where our support crew (Bethan and Catherine) were first put to the test! They were amazing from beginning to end. We hired a VW T5 camper van for the weekend which would be our safe haven.

Wessenden Head the arrival of some purple people! We met a lady named Harriet, also doing the Challenger, who was loving life and on a huge high. She featured in our race a few times and remained on a high throughout! As we climbed up to the main road at Wessenden Head we were greeted by Sam, Malcolm, Gary and Vicki. In fact we heard a laugh in the distance and both said “Gary” in unison! It was a real boost to see the guys were out supporting us when it was dark and cold. Its very exposed at Wessenden so it really kind of them to stick about for us, then treat us to tea, more snacks, words of encouragement/abuse! And off we went again!

Wessenden Head – M62 – This section was pretty non-descript in the dark. It was a case of just making progress. We'd recce'd this section in the dark in preparation and we reminded ourselves of the recce which was more eventful. We had agreed previously that we felt safer on the moors alone in the dark than we did near any road crossings, there was something about suspicious vehicles pulling up at the roadside together then their lights going off! We had to remind Bethan (who often dropped us off late at night on the moors and picked us up even later) that, although it was helpful for us to see her flashing her headlights, that she may also find she gets some unwanted attention from others!!!!

Not a great fan of heights the M62 bridge crossing is always a little beacon in my mind. The Spine safety team met us just before the crossing and warned us to keep to the left, wait, was it the right, no it was left, - tiredness was creeping in, I hadn't listened properly so I was about to find out for myself. The bridge actually dips in the middle which again isn't good for vertigo! I decided to sing to myself across it!!

Stoodley Pike – can only be described as a mirage! Its outline never got closer, we took a little minor diversion here, tiredness and navigation skills don't mix well. We both knew that at this point in the race the route gets cruel and wicked. A guy running the Mountain Rescue race challenged our navigation and he opted for a different route. We stuck to our decision which was the right one, I was pleased that we followed our rules of trusting our own navigation and not following others (even MRT boys and girls!). The route drops you down into Hebden, back up onto the tops, back down to a beck, back up and then down through a bog fest into Checkpoint 1, the Scout Hut at Hebden Hey.

Checkpoint 1 Hebden Hey – the volunteers were amazing, they carried our drop bags to the shower room and there was nothing that they wouldn't have done for you! I opened my wash bag to find tuti-fruti shower gel – oh that's a treat!! Quick shower, fresh shoes and fresh socks 02:30 am and it was time to make our way to the van – rest at last!!!

The next part as trivial as it may seem caused me a mini melt down. With fresh, clean, dry feet, socks and shoes, I managed to slip out of my shoe. My foot submerged in mud I had to put it back in my clean dry shoe. A good chunk of time wasted in seconds. This caused a few expletives I must admit, but with a hand on my shoulder, Laura gave me a few words of encouragement, picked my shoe out of the mud and jeered me on, Purple Teamwork!!

Waking up we were aware of also waking up the local residents, we all agreed to be super quiet...that didn't work. Turning the engine on caused a blast of the radio, I think it was Catherine who scurried to turn it off but in doing so sounded the horn! We felt like drunken teenagers returning home from a night out trying to be quiet but failing epically! Kit together we were off out into the wind and rain. The next section is a bit of a blur. It was foggy and rainy over the moorland sections and a lot of single file travelling which made it a little non-descript. Just as we were approaching top Withins we were unexpectedly greeted by a damp Jazz (donning his purple coat), James and Jen which was a treat for us (other civilians, yey!!!). James informed us that we had some other supports at Ponden reservoir which again was something good to look forward to. We were not disappointed, bacon sandwiches awaited us along with more tea. I questioned if this was the beginning of my hallucinations as I could hear Ronan Keating playing "when the going gets tough!!" nope it was a moment our cheesy support crew were having! Sleep deprivation was obviously filtering down to them too at this point! We also had the pleasure of more cheers from Lucy (loud cheers!), Cleo (another damp K9), Ben, Gary, Vicki, Sam and Malcolm. Laura and I

had said so many times and probably said it all the way to the end that seeing people we knew was so uplifting. It made a massive difference to see smiling faces and hear words of encouragement.

A little stop and we were off once again! Arriving in at Ickornshaw the Mountain Rescue Tent had a lot of lovely treats on offer and again everyone was super friendly. Somehow the keys to the camper got locked inside the van but our amazing crew and supporters seemed to have that in hand (maybe a tale for them to write about!). Now I don't know what happened in this next section but arriving in at Lothersdale I felt very emotional, Lucy came to give us words of encouragement and I had to tell her not to come near me as there was a high possibility of tears! It was too late, I admit, I had a little cry, a biscuit, a cup of tea and a cuddle from Cleo who if she could talk would have said "you've chosen to do this!!!" Dusting myself down we were off once more. Which brings me on to the farm incident!

The PW goes directly through Spring barn which I had nicknamed the sluice farm as id previously waded through slurry on a recce. Having felt very proud of avoiding this we practically skipped through the farm yard until we were stopped by a white cord keeping some lively cows in place. Laura had suggested it wasn't that powerful, it was enough to give her a bit of a shock and send me into a fit of giggles (sorry Laura, I did check you were ok first!). A commando roll was needed to avoid a second shock! Eventually arriving into Gragrove our lovely supporters had been to the local pub and had pre-ordered us some chips! AMAZING!!!! And truly touched that everyone was again still out in the dark supporting on a very miserable cold night.

Malham Tarn was the next major stop. I was cold and broken by the time we got into the village. I think we maybe had an hour or two rest in which I tried to warm up but couldn't. I'd taken myself into the pop up roof section of the van and literally squirmed around for ages trying to get comfortable, I was hurting and cold. Catherine administered electrolytes which seemed to work wonders and I think I drifted off to sleep. 02:00am the lights came on, engine on and the instructions were "COME ON, GET UP AND GET OUT!" That's what we did! Navigating became tough, it was really foggy and we were crossing a section with no obvious path. Fountains Fell seemed to last forever and a day. We had picked up an American guy called Tim who wanted to stay with us for navigation. I think we were all too tired for in depth conversations at this point and it was a case of head down and move.

It was just getting light as we approached the foot of Pen-Y-Ghent and our trusty little crew were waiting, again with bacon sandwiches. Just the thing for the next long haul. We'd at some point started saying things like "JUST A MARATHON TO GO!!" Then realised what we were actually saying! We agreed that at mile 100 we would have a 100th mile selfie! I was starting to think about the end but with caution. I was confident of navigation, we had plenty of time but this was the Spine, anything can happen! We rocked into Horton in Ribblesdale and changed from our snow shoes to more appropriate footwear and we were off. We wouldn't see anyone again until the end, maybe at Cam fell but that wasn't to be relied upon.

My feet at this point were swollen and rather battered. This was where the Inno-V8 "mule" was invented. Sleep deprived, battered by the elements, physically tired, this is where normal conversations ended. The "mule" was basically a running shoe without the back! It is designed for long distance enthusiasts who need a little Achilles heel downtime caused by swelling! We discussed how we would market this and who from our running club could pull it off and launch it. We decided that Alyson Glover would be the best person following her title as planking champion she can show that hardiness can go hand in hand with

glamour! Suffering and just generally needing looking after we said that if Alyson was with us she'd be really nice to us and tell us to brainwash ourselves that this was easy! We also imagined Carol running elegantly alongside us (as she does when she takes over you at PECO) saying "keep it up!" We started doing this walk where we'd go for like 50metres then do a kind of squat just to stretch things out, another 50m, squat, but not too low as we wouldn't get up! Mirages of the van were boulders in the landscape. Cam Road, the road to hell!

The last push really did take everything out of us. We both agreed as we approached the end that we had definitely not left anything on the course. Not a single thing. Maybe my dignity in places! We chatted about how grateful we were to people who had come out to support us, messages of encouragement and Facebook posts. It really did make a difference and was at times well needed, so to everyone, thank you!

After 57 minutes and 27 seconds and a 114 miles (I think it was in total) we arrived at the Town Hall in Hawes at the finish. There's about 10 steps into the hall which I thought was a bit cruel but we had done it! What an experience! 108 miles or 114 miles rather all on foot, that's all I kept repeating. The human body is an amazing thing and it did as I asked!



Pictures: Page 16: White out conditions... Brr! And haven't we seen this craggy hill before anywhere? Page 19 The long walk! And finally show us your bling!

That's All Folks!

Catherine Barrett...



Is that a cheeky Thumbs up for an epic newsletter?? Gee Fanks hun!

Martin Frazer says..



Goodbye Everybody have a Beautiful Time!

Kirkstall Harriers meet every Monday and Wednesday at Kirkstall Leisure Centre at 6.50pm for a 7pm start. All standards of runners are welcome to join us. Just turn up and say hello, we are very friendly! Please visit our website for more info: www.kirkstallharriers.org.uk
Please email kirkstallharriers@googlemail.com if you would like to contribute to the newsletter.
All articles, member profiles etc gratefully received.

