

MYNYDD DU

Mountain Runners

Editors Bit Ade Orringe

Not a lot to say really (which makes a change!). Winter has been and gone and now it's officially Spring. Club members have ticked over during the winter with the South Wales Winter League series or venturing to the Longmynd Valleys and several did the Llanbedr – Blaenavon, which is a local favourite.

Three of us ventured up to the Lakes for the clubs winter weekend training outing and had a good, if not tiring, time there.

As you may know we're hoping that we can get support from the club for the British Champs this year so if you fancy taking part put your entries in and let either me, Dave Finn or Mark Palmer know. We share transport, usually my car despite the pxxx taking, and sort our accommodation. Things might change when I get my camper van but I understand certain people have already got their seats booked – but you can sod off as far as sleeping arrangements are concerned!

I think I've planned too many races and events for the year so I'm going to have to re-think things through and be more realistic. So far I seem to be racing every weekend from May – November! I fancy having a go at one or two of the Montrail ultra-distance events, you can see the details on www.runfurther.com.

Don't forget to send my your news or articles and any good

photos you have as I'm running out and never remember to take my camera with me these days.

Your support would be appreciated at The Sugar Loaf race on 28th April either running or helping out. Crispin and me are also putting on a race weekend 21st and 22nd July called the Brecon Fans Race Weekend and I'd especially appreciate helpers for the 22nd.

Having just celebrated another birthday I ask myself am I the oldest member of the club?



24miles/4500feet in old money. The course record is 2 hours 46 minutes 3 seconds set by Andy peace in 1996 and the Ladies is 3 hours 16 minutes and 17 seconds set by Sarah Rowell, also in 1996. There is an entry limit of 600 on the race.

Ade Woods is planning to come out of retirement and get fit enough to get round. Any one fancy joining him?

International Honours for Mynydd Du Members Ade Woods

Three club members have been selected to represent Wales at the British Fell Running Championships to be held on the coastal mountains of ' Knockdhu,' Larne in Northern Ireland on April 28th. Congratulations to Harry Matthews, Senior Men and Bethan Woods and Nicki Cornock who will compete in the Junior under 20 category.

National Event Coach - Mountain and Fell Running

Club member Adrian Woods has recently been offered the position of National Event Coach for Mountain and Fell Running by Welsh Athletics. Adrian has produced a three year operational plan for the sport which is currently being considered by Welsh Athletics. It includes the establishment of a National Coaching Scheme for Mountain and Fell Running in Wales. Anyone interested in coaching Mountain and Fell Running as a discipline are invited to get in touch.

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2008 World Long Distance Challenge, Mountain Running (England) Ade Woods

One of the longest established traditional mountain races in England, the ' Three Peaks' (www.threepeaksrace.org.uk) will host the World Long Distance Challenge in its 54th running of the race on April 26th 2008. It gets the name ' Three Peaks' because the course traverses three mountains in the Yorkshire dales. It is 38km long and involves a total climb/ascent of 1,400m that's

Cumbrian Winter Weekend

Ade Orringe

February in the Lakes is now becoming the annual winter club training weekend with an away team of myself, Mark Palmer and Dave Finn venturing north one Friday afternoon. Once again we were hosted by the Achille Ratti club at their Langdale valley hut / hostel. As you know the more you meet and talk with people the more you get to know them and our conversation on the way up focused largely on race prospects for the year and the merits of various running gear, etc. But an unexpected snippet came to light when Dave took a fancy to someone in the M6 services who, according to him, had a large pair of knockers - but as Mark and I know the 'suspect' in question was a guy not a girl!



Imagine my thoughts when later during the weekend Mark confessed to his ambition to become a ballet dancer! Methinks a quick change of travelling companions is called for!!

The trip has settled into a usual format by now with food and booze bought at the local supermarket and all travel costs, etc. shared between us. Evenings at New Dungeon Gill or Old Dungeon Gill or Stickletarn Barn, sharing cooking duties back at the hut and two days on the mountains followed by me driving back whilst Mark kips in the back. We meet up with new and old friends at Achille Ratti, they're a good bunch and willing to share 'secret' short cuts on race

routes or little known about routes off the beaten track. Friday night and it's five pints of Cumberland Ale, a whisky and off to bed by 12.30am.

7am Saturday, porridge / banana, kit check and away by 9am. Today Mark and Dave recce the Old County Tops route from Langdale over to Helvellyn, back across Dunmail Raise, High Raise, Rossett Pike, Bow Fell and back via The Band (18 miles loads of climb). They get in just as I do having been out with a group of 8 from Achille Ratti over Pavey Ark, High Raise, Rossett Pike and Bow Fell. Then six head back while me and Phil push on over Esk Pike, Great End and back via Esk Hause and Rossett Pike (16 miles again loads of climb). We've all been out for about 5.45 hours but the weathers been mild with only a brief shower but visibility was sporadic with thick mist at times.

I think Mark and Dave's run went well with little incident. The group I was with lost the line going up Bow Fell (the diagonal shelf for those that know it) and we ended up scaling the buttresses.



Then coming off Great End Phil lost the line and we descended steep crags and boulder fields followed later by a steep section coming down Rossett Gill. None of this did my nerves any good at all (I don't like heights) so it was back to the pub at 5pm.

Sunday morning was a repeat performance but this time from Cockley Beck over Mosedale to ascend Scafell from the SE

with just myself, Mark and Dave (the others took the sensible option). We'd been told of a good line off Scafell on the Old County Tops route into Mosedale but it was too steep to see from the summit so best viewed from the bottom. So having run 4 miles of open boggy moorland we ascended the steepest side of Scafell via scree, boulder fields and patches of grass (definitely off piste). I took the tactical decision of letting M & D take the lead so that I could judge the best line and after a long, long, climb I popped out over the top some 100 meters in front. Not being one to gloat I have to say that despite a last dash by Mark I claimed the summit first, sorry boys but it's that old adage about age and experience yet again! The info we had was quite right, the ground was too steep to see the line off from the summit so we took a compass bearing for future reference - remember boys 164. To be fair the old knees and height thing slowed me down over the boulder descent but I quickly recovered. No I didn't fall waist deep into the beck, I thought I'd take Paula Radcliffes training advice about plunging into ice cold water and it obviously works because I was first back at the car.

Then back to the hut, shower, brew, toast/peanut butter/jam and long drive home inwardly laughing at the weekend highs, the adventure and friendships strengthened. I couldn't do it on my own, I wouldn't have the confidence or know the nooks and crannies so thanks again M & D and to Achille Ratti, see you in a couple of months.

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Give us your money!!

Don't forget to send Dave Finn or me your £5 subs for 2007!

Do it now!!

**How High is a Mountain?
The Meanderings and
Questions of a Retired Road
Runner
Tom Morgan**

Thrown out of road running in 2003 I found myself returning to my roots and the Welsh hills via the MDC Winter Series of 'fell' races. Did I say fell races? Yes fell races in Wales. Born close to where Snowdonia dips its head into the Irish Sea, the village where I grew up had a fair share of hills and we even had a 'mountain' but I do not recall any fells.

Along with other philosophical questions that had long troubled me like *'how long is a piece of string'* and *'why does it always take longer to get to a summit the slow way'* my simple mind was confronted with another puzzler - what was the difference between a hill, a fell and a mountain and indeed how high is a mountain? In my quest to find the answer, I soon realised that like all good summits I was not the first to tread the path to the top, indeed this very question has long been debated.

The fell runner who went up a hill and came down a mountain

The older mountain goats amongst us will remember the whimsical movie *The Englishman who went up a hill and came down a mountain*. The story, which concerned Welsh villagers building up the local mountain to the required 1000 feet so that English surveyors who had previously measured it and called it a hill would record it as a mountain, purportedly was based upon a true incident.

For fans of trivia, the incident was alleged to have happened on Garth Mountain six miles northwest of Cardiff. Legend has it Ade O was one of the original villagers - Can you confirm this Ade? (*Ed: It wasn't called Pooh Mountain for nothing!*).

There's controversy in them there hills

There has been much heated debate about how to best define a 'mountain'. Anyone familiar with mountaineering is likely to have heard of the 'Munros'. These are broadly speaking the hills of Scotland which are over 3000 ft. First listed in 1891, the original list has undergone many revisions. A number of books have been written on the subject and it is evident that just like the Munros, there is no consensus about the mountains of Wales either.

Numerous sources highlight the pitfalls in defining a 'mountain' by some mathematical formula with no regard for commonsense. The mathematical method has given rise to listings of Welsh mountains - the 'Marilyns' and 'Hewitts' for example. The downside of this approach is that it ignores the immeasurable - the shape of the mountain, its appeal to the eye, the feeling it inspires, local perceptions and knowledge, meanings of mountain names. Should Garnedd Uchaf be considered a separate mountain? Are there 14 or 15 mountains over 3000ft in Wales? In the final analysis, the issues cannot be resolved by tape measure alone.

Have you heard the one about the Welshman who went up a fell and came down a mountain?

Just like Milton Keynes have a mountain rescue team and the Swiss have a navy, Wales have a Fell Runners Association (WFRA). Just like some other characters from Celtic folklore the Welshman who went up a fell and came down a mountain may have never actually existed. Whatever you do don't ruin the fun of the select few and tell them there are no fells in Wales. The best definition I could conjure up for fells are that they:

- a) Describe what I have done several times coming down steep slopes without stabilisers on the Inov8's;
- b) Are what northern English folk call their hills. It appears England many years ago cornered the market for fells so watch out WFRA you may have the geographical features police knocking on your door.

Ordnance Survey know the difference between a hill and a mountain - don't they?

Perhaps the Ministry of Contours (OS) could tell me the difference between a hill and a mountain. The man at the ministry turned out to be non-committal and told me there is no precise international classification of a mountain, and he certainly didn't have one, but it is policy to reflect local nomenclature.

In England, Wales and Ireland it is agreed that the minimum height is 2000 feet (610metres). There are however two schools of thought

- That every summit over this height should be regarded as a mountain
- That a mountain must possess a distinct summit or peak.

Thus under the first definition, Kinder Scout (636m), in the Peak District National Park, would be classified as a mountain. Under the second definition it would be considered as high moorland because it lacks an obvious summit. Pen-y-Ghent in the Yorkshire Dales would certainly be a mountain under the latter definition.

It may even be necessary to add the qualification that a mountain must lie north of 51 degrees to take into account of Yes Tor and High Willhays on Dartmoor. They both exceed 2000 feet and have quite

satisfactory rocky peaks, but are never described as mountains.

In Wales mountains over 2000 feet in height are called Hewitts.

Conclusion

There has been much heated debate about how best to define a 'mountain' and the application of subjective appraisal has resulted in various definitions, each with an accompanying list of mountains.

Next time you are running up a steep incline in Wales if you really want to know if you are running up a fell, a hill or a mountain – ask a local.

Footnote: If anyone comes across any fells in Wales would you please let the WFRA know as they are waiting to organise the 2007 calendar!

References:

The Welsh One Hundred - Dafydd Andrews (ISBN 0-86243-497 1)

Plus loads on links on our website

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Edale Skyline or Endure & Survive

Ade Orringe

It was the Wednesday evening before Sunday race day when I received an email from the race organiser "Someone's dropped out, you're on the reserve do you want to run?" So I travelled up to camp out Saturday ready for the 10.30am start. Saturday night and it's been raining for 5 hours, strong gusty winds with worse weather on its way. I get up at 4am to put the tent pegs back in and tighten the guy lines realising that the ground is white with hail stones.

It's reduced to an occasional shower by the morning as I

break camp and make my way to registration. I queue to get my number, I queue to get my dibber (electronic timing that gives you accurate checkpoint times), I queue for the mandatory kit check:

- ✓ gloves, hat
- ✓ cag with hood, over trousers
- ✓ map, compass, whistle
- ✓ food

I'm wearing everything I've got including lycra tights and extra T-shirt, as is everyone else except for 2 or 3 guys who wear shorts (it's not bravado it's just plain recklessness). Not enough food perhaps looking at what some are carrying but there are two drink stations en-route and I've got my camelbak bumbag.

410 runners start the 21 mile 4,500 circular course around the top of the Edale valley. A straightforward route with only two main climbs as you initially ascend onto the ridge then cross the valley lower down. From here on I can only give my personal account of the race aided by the results which show my checkpoint times and position.

The mass start ascended the first climb but became bunched and slow as narrow zig-zags were negotiated followed by a steep step-up over a rocky knoll buffeted by gale force winds which took your legs. At the first checkpoint I was 175th and battling through a hail storm driven by strong winds with gale force gusts. But I was making progress after a fairly slow start and began to move through the field along an undulating ridge comprising grass and gravel footpaths. The terrain and running conditions are very similar to the Beacons, good runability, clear views of pretty much the whole route (squinting though the hail that is) and easy navigation. I descend into the valley to the first drinks station, supporters hand out bananas,

flapjacks, cakes and drink bottles to their runners, I make do with a cup of water out of the bucket!

I tactically walk the climb out of the valley so that I can eat my energy bar, which is a cross between cardboard and sawdust and tastes just as good. On to checkpoint 3 having moved up to 164th then we stay high to move west up the valley, round the head, back down the other side and



back to the start/finish, another 12 miles over what is mainly an undulating runnable route. Except it's not all runnable as we're against the gales and now the hail is so thick it's difficult to see. To be fair there are occasional bright patches and I even saw some sunshine for a couple of minutes. En-route to checkpoint 4 I pass the mountain rescue team, they attend 6 calls during the race to assist runners in difficulty, another 72 runners retire many of whom are helped off the mountain by marshals. It's a difficult call for an organiser to cancel a race due to weather conditions on the day or to reduce it's length but I truly admire the marshals who were out in force assisting and encouraging right around the route in what were truly horrible conditions.

I pressed on (literally) gaining more places, at checkpoint 5 I'm 153rd it's 12 miles into the race and I've been going for 2hrs 10mins. At this pace I should be finished in 3hrs 43mins placed about 105th but then I begin to unravel and over the next half-hour my energy cell drains to empty, then my old nemesis as my gluteus

muscle seizes into a tight knot. I can't maintain the momentum and the pain in my hip forces my stride length to shorten to a painful shuffle. I'm out on the exposed top hacking through heather and over rocky paths, wind-chill is somewhere below zero, the hail is still being driven by gale force gusts, there's no shelter or respite. I negotiate the slight descent to checkpoint 7 that is 5.5 miles from the finish and the last escape route off the mountain; I'm losing places and shuffling/walking in pain. A marshal checks me over "Are you going on? I can get you down to the Landrover if you'd rather call it a day?" A quick appraisal is called for, I take the last of my water and carb gel, I feel OK morale is high and I'm not too cold – bollocks I didn't come all this way to DNF. The result will be humbling but at least it'll be a result no matter where I eventually finish but finish I will.



I ascend Grindslow Knoll now 3 miles from the finish and down in 184th, I lose another 39 places in the next 35 mins but there it is - the finish, just the last checkpoint on the rocky knoll of Ringer Roger to negotiate. Cruelly the gale picks up strength just as I get to the knoll, the marshals are hanging onto the rocks to avoid being swept off. They can't get into the lee of the wind because they'd be on the blind side and miss the incoming runners, poor buggers. I start to climb down the rocks but can't make any headway in the wind, in fact I'm going back up! That's the trouble with being skinny, no body weight to hold you up

in this sort of stuff but I push hard and eventually make it down (and sideward's) off the knoll.

Through the finish in 4hrs 19mins 232nd which is about 100/110 places down on where I realistically thought I'd be at the half-way stage and the last 6 miles has taken me 1hr 40mins, I'm in reasonable shape but my hip is killing me. The registration hall is 10 mins down the road where I partake of Wilfs bean casserole and brew, there are bodies everywhere with some people looking worse than me suffering with the effects of cold and exhaustion. I'm now shivering cold and going downhill, it's still blowing hail showers so I leg it (well sort of) back to the car which is another 10/15 mins up the road. You know the scene, frozen hands/fingers trying to undo muddy laces then change into clean gear. It's now 4pm so time to drive home, another 4.5 hours through blizzard conditions, I pass an overturned car as I leave it's left the road due to road/weather conditions but mountain rescue are there, well done mountain rescue you've had your work cut out for you this day.

For the record Lloyd Taggart won in 2hrs 44mins, 5 mins ahead of 2nd place Simon Bailey. First lady was Janet McIver in 3hrs 21mins with Jackie Lee 2nd in 3hrs 25mins.

Photos courtesy of Dark Peak Fell Runners website.

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**Llanbedr – Blaenavon
24.03.07**

Ade Orringe

Following my previous weekends disaster/injury at Edale Skyline I wasn't sure about doing this but you know how it goes and anyway I'd feel worse not doing it. 43 starters

assembled in Llanbedr village in perfect conditions with Gareth giving us our final briefing and then off we went. I saw Mark Palmer, Dave Finn and Martin Shaw at the sharp end climbing Crug Mawr with Crispin Flower not far off. I was chugging along nicely in company with two others and kept in their company coming off Crug Mawr but I lost contact with them as one went too far left on the descent and the other sprinted off. I lost sight of everyone then until I passed Pat Woodisse having a bad run up Sugar Loaf. On the descent and through Abergavenny still no-one in sight until I got to Llanfoist when I passed someone at the drinks station suffering with an early stage of the 'Bloreng Bonk'. Then as I came out of the woods I saw three guys already ascending the Bloreng. I felt good so stuck into a good walk pace and passed two of them by the time we got to the block house. I quickly passed the third up to the trig and even put a spurt on over the last 2 miles! At the finish I met up with Martin and Crispin who were chuffed at having had good runs themselves, especially Martin (dark horse this one) who obviously benefited from the excellent coaching advice I'd provided when we reced the route. I found Mark and Dave in the showers ('nuff said, see my earlier article, nod nod) who rather rudely commented on my cheery nature being a sign that I'd had a good run. Then all back to the rugby club for buffet and prizes. Mark had brought his massage couch with him so I acted as stooge so that he could demonstrate his prowess at manual manipulation of the lower limbs. Dave wasn't too happy with his result but he'd had a chest cold all week and was still full of it (the cold I mean). Honours this year went to our club again as we consolidate our grip as the premier club in South and Mid Wales. Our club results are as follows:

1 st and 1 st Vet	Mark Palmer	2.06:38
3 rd	Martin Shaw	2.13:35
5 th	Crispin Flower	2.18:50
6 th	Dave Finn	2.21:50
9 th and 1 st SV	Adrian Orringe	2.29:39
27 th	Andrew	3.02:50
Blackmore	John Darby	3.24:34

PS: Crispin Flower ran the Forest of Dean half-marathon the following day! I couldn't even walk as my injury seized up but Mark Palmer went to watch it and captured Crispin below (sorry I don't know his time).



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and finally ...

I've always said "You send it and I'll print it." Well to prove the point some sneaky, conniving, so-called friend (or should that be fiend) sent me an article that I'm honour bound to publish. So without more ado here it is ...

The Alternative Report!!

It has been notice that over the last 2 years that the new letters have been very quick to mention all the club members cock ups, disasters and navigational errors. But there has always been one club member never mentioned!!

Yes Ade Orringe !!!!

Well it is time for me to spill the beans, on just a few of the incidents, some under the

influence of alcohol and some down to old age that have been kept from public knowledge.



Above is a demonstration of Ade caught eating other people's food (it is free!)

So here we go:

Incident 1

Picture the scene, Ade has gone on about what a good idea it would be to have a club tent for us all to use when getting changed in at races etc. Great idea so the tent was purchased and when the Club went up to the FRA Relays, everybody was looking forward to getting out of the cold wind and rain on a bleak moor. Where was the tent, yes still in somebody's garage!! If you ever see the tent please let me know, I have my suspicion that it has been converted into an awning for Mr. Orringes new VW Camper van.

(Ed: well that's you walking up to the Lakes mate!)

Incident 2

A pub in Yorkshire, several club members are sat around enjoying various strange ales before going to the FRA Relays Disco. Ade has by now had his fill!!! (and not paid for one) and is now telling everybody his plans for the next year.

The Joss Naylor Round, The Bob Graham Round on a pogo stick ect, ect. It is amazing when he sobered up, his plans soon rapidly change! The only thing he has failed to get out of is The Old County Tops as he was pre entered by his partner.

Incident 3

Borrowdale 06 and we are waiting for Ade to arrive at the

finish. In staggers this grey, wild-eyed beast in a Mynydd Du vest. We could not understand anything that was grunted, but I think some Welsh swear words were used. He disappeared in the direction of the car park weaving from side to side dragging his knuckles on the floor. We next found him lying in the car park in the middle of the track blocking traffic saying that you could poke fell running up you're a**e. He was never ever going near Borrowdale again! I believe he is pre entered for 07 already.

So there are three small incidents that I thought I would bring to everybody's attention. So if you are ever away in Ades company, make sure he gets his round in and take all he says after 3 pints of Cumberland Ale with a pinch of salt. But you will be guaranteed a great weekend away and a bloody good laugh.

Cheers Dave Finn

Ed:

Too bad matey I've got some column inches left ...



Mr Finn after half a pint of lager just before he peed off the balcony of Stalag Blea Tarn. Oh! I'd forgotten about that, hope he missed Ade W.'s car.

Perhaps a little ditty?

That money talks
I won't deny.
I heard it once,
It said 'Goodbye.'

Which is exactly what happened last week when he had a fiver off me!!