

Mynyddwyr De Cymru

Newsletter - July 2006



John Sweeting in the clag at Ras Pumlumon. Photo by Pete Macmillan and provided courtesy of Richard Wilson

Editorial

Well, I waited and waited for the the articles to come in for this newsletter, but it seems you've let me down! I know that you have been out there enjoying yourselves on the mountains though. In May a number of members took part in the second Mountains to the Sea; from Cwm Lluch to Merthyr Mawr on foot and by bicycle and earlier in July several members did the four principal peaks of Wales (Snowdon, Cader Idris, Pumlumon & Pen-y-fan) on foot and cycling in between over two days. It sound like this was a very civilised weekend away and involved stopping off to eat and drink at every available opportunity! Photos/news from either of those

events would be welcomed for the next issue. I've heard today that member Dan Booth succeeded in an attempt at the Paddy Buckley Round in North Wales yesterday – by my reckoning, 107km with 8465m of ascent – in 23 hours 17 minutes. Congratulations Dan. They've got proper big mountains up there! I supported Dan on an attempt two weeks before, but unfortunately we were defeated by wet and windy weather. As I write this, Jules Carter and Andy Cleves are taking part in a six stage, 250km endurance race across the Atacama Desert in Chile. I can't wait to hear how that went.

Other useful news is that whilst not out training (on the sand dunes wearing lots of clothes, no doubt), Jules has found time to get the club website running again. It's at a slightly new location www.mdcwales.org.uk and is apparently still a work in progress, but thanks for that Jules.

Don't forget; contributions (monetary or literary) to me as soon as you can please!
Rhys

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Deadline for next issue: 7th October 2006

Results

Note: only runners entered as MDC listed in the results tables here. For full results, consult the internet or the race organiser.

Pentyrch Hill Race BM 6.5miles/1600feet. 25th April 2006

Pentyrch Hill race results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
1	Matthew Collins	SM	42:46	1 st man
8	Mark Saunders	M40	51:10	
33	Haydn Griffiths	M40	59:13	
35	Mick Learoyd	M40	59:56	
39	Alan Stone	M40	61:08	
74 finishers				

Knockdhu Home Countries International 29th April 2006

Congratulations to club member Hannah Jarvis for being selected to run for Wales at this competitive event.

Moel Eilio AM 8miles/3000feet. 13th May 2006

Moel Eilio results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
42	Rhys Williams	SM	1:26:37	
75	Adrian Moir	M40	1:45:35	
91 finishers				

Cader Idris AM 10.5 miles/3000feet. 27th May 2006

Cader Idris results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
152	Adrian Moir	M40	2:14:12	
165	Gareth Jones	M50	2:19:35	
209 finishers				

Mynydd Troed AM 6miles/2400feet. 28th May 2006

A pleasant day for the first running of this metamorphosis of the Llangorse Loop and an exciting tussle for first place. Matt and Mark went head-to-head for most of it, with Matt edging away and hanging on to set a challenging time for future record attempts. A good performance by Helen Fines for 7th overall. Joe Blackett did well for 3rd especially after his exertions in the Cadair Idris race 24 hours before. Thanks to the Ludlow and Sri Chinmoy contingents who together made up nearly a third of the field. We were privileged to have two lasses from the Edinburgh section of the Sri Chinmoy "movement". Thanks to John Darby, John

Sweeting, Sue Ashton and Gerry Ashton for course marking, marshalling and timing.
Dick Finch

Mynydd Troed results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
1	Matthew Collins	SM	56.42	1st man
2	Mark Palmer	M40	56.54	1st M40
4	Mark Saunders	M40	70.00	
17	Andrew Blackmore	SM	78.40	
20	Richard Hooley	M50	79.15	
21	Andy Stott	M40	79.30	
22	Alice Bedwell	F40	79.32	1st F40
32	Helen Bennett	SF	95.34	
35 finishers				

Welsh 1000 Metre Peaks AL 22miles/8000feet. 3rd June 2006

1000m race results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
10	Dan Booth	SM	4:54:35	
DNF	John Syms	SM	-	
70 finishers				

Coity Race BS 5miles/1000feet. 14th June 2006

Coity results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
3	Mark Saunders	M40	40:23	
9	Rhys Williams	SM	44:17	
12	Andy Stott	M40	45:37	
15	Alice Bedwell	F40	47:30	1 st lady
19	Norman Jones	M40	49:00	
22	Dave Gilbert	M50	54:13	
25	Cledwyn Jones	M60	57:55	1 st M60
31 finishers				

Well, it was such a lovely afternoon as I strolled round the course putting out the markers in about 2 hours! But, as the evening wore on things started to deteriorate. I think you all managed to avoid the worst of it as did our first marshal, Terry, who came down on his paraglider, but poor old Bob had to walk back from the furthest point on the course and was soaked through having only taken

Blaengwynfi Three Peaks AM 6.5miles/2350feet. 18th June 2006

Blaengwynfi results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
4	Patrick Wooddisse	SM	76:06	
5	John Syms	SM	77:23	
7	Mick Learoyd	VM	85:09	
8	Andrew Blackmore	SM	86:21	
9	John Darby	SV	87:27	
10	Richard Hooley	SV	87:55	
14	Helen Bennett	SF	98:55	
15 finishers				

Ras Pumlumon AS 5.25/1550feet. 25th June 2006

Thanks to marshals and helpers Anne, Tim, Pat and David. Thanks too to Team Dolly for coming down from north Wales and providing safety radio cover at all the control points. We are grateful to the Crown Estate, and to grazier Mr. Richard Vaughan, for allowing us to stage the race, and for permitting Team Dolly to spend the preceding evening testing their radios. Thank you all for coming; we hope you enjoyed the race. See you again next year!
Richard Wilson and Dave Ormerod

minimal waterproofs. Perhaps we need a kit check for marshals! Anyhow, a good turnout by current standards of 31 starters and finishers including some welcome new faces. However, there were only 9 seniors and 5 of those were women. Everyone else was vet or above so more new blood is still needed. We had 12 women entrants which is as high a percentage as any race I can recall. Nice to see you all. No records broken but there were some close finishes with Dimitri Vorres holding off Tony Robson to win by only 10 seconds. The super vets again was won by Phil Miles, only 11 seconds clear from Steve Herrington. In the ladies, Alice Bedwell, a vet, was 35 seconds clear of Naomi Law. Hope you all enjoyed the night, the real ale and the doorstep sandwiches and hope to see you back next year. Best Wishes.

Gareth Buffett

Beacon Batch BS 5miles/1000feet. 20th June 2006

Beacon Batch results				
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time	
5	Mark Saunders	M40	34:13	
16	Rhys Williams	SM	37:03	
62	John Battersby	M60	1:00:07	
63 finishers				

Ras Pumlumon results			
Posn.	Name	Cat.	Time
15	John Syms	SM	52:12
22	Neil Lewis	SM	54:15
24	Richard Hooley	M50	54:46
37	Helen Bennett	SF	58:43
50	John Sweeting	M50	79:29
50 finishers			

John Syms at Pumlumon.
Photo by Pete Macmillen and provided courtesy of Richard Wilson



Wilderness ARC 2006 – by Tom Gibbs

There are times during expedition style races that you really wonder why you are doing it, and other times you really know why. The lows are usually in the middle of the night, like this time, following a deer fence through a big bog with mountainous tussocks (or babies' heads as we called them). The highs are generally at sunrise, sunset or when something magical and unexpected appears. This year we saw a porpoise at the end of one of the paddles. Highs usually quickly follow lows and so it was when we got the stress and hassle of preparation (a big low) out of the way and finally left Fort William on the first stage of our journey (a high).

The organisers started off with a short orienteering course on Cow Hill to split up the teams. Our goal was to get round quickly and be first to the rope section, something we managed to do. The first rope section, an abseil, was situated in Glen Nevis high on a crag with stunning views of the Mamores and Ben Nevis.

After the abseil we had the canyoneering section. A large crowd had gathered to watch us throw ourselves into the maelstrom. The first section involved a jump into the boiling water of the Water of Nevis then a float downstream through some

rapids. The water was pretty chilly and we all came out feeling like our heads had been deep frozen – “ice cream head”.

We quickly moved through to the last section of canyon – a simple 5m or so jump and swim out. Once done we could change back into trek/running kit and continue on over some more ropes to a big climb up and over the Mamores to Loch Leven. We tried to keep up a good pace to get a gap on the chasing pack, by running the flat and downhills. By the shores of Loch Leven we had gained some time, and as Nick and Helen changed for the swim we couldn't see anyone behind us.

Nick had cunningly bought some cheap boogie boards for use on the swim. Having seen swimmers last year suffering in the cold water, it was quickly apparent that the boogie boards had really helped when Helen and Nick looked quite chipper as they exited the water. At the end of the swim, we portaged and paddled off down Loch Leven, hoping to get past the narrows at the Ballachulish Bridge. We had swum at low tide, but by now the tide had turned and was against us across Loch Linnhe to the shores of Lochsanda bay, this was probably the toughest bit of paddling we had on the race, and the only comfort was that teams behind

would be getting a worse tide. After what felt an eternity (3 hours) we arrived at transition. Waiting for us were the boxes we had packed before the race, full of kit and food, we quickly changed out of the wetsuits and grabbed food for the next section.

The sort of food we eat on races isn't what you will find in TV diet shows, high energy foods are the norm. Juice Doctor fruit drinks, chocolate, flapjacks, lots of sandwiches and energy bars and drink from EAS. Especially the meal replacement drinks and bars which help get some nutrients into our bodies.

We thought before the race that this section, a 45km trek over some remote hills, could be the crux of the race, and we had been racing to get as much done in daylight as we could. As it was, we managed to get to the summit of the second peak before dark and only had two checkpoints to find before the manned checkpoint where any penalties from the prologue would be served. Thanks to us winning the prologue we had no penalties, however it was 2:30 am, and we were a little sleepy, so we decided to have 1.5 hours of sleep in the tents available at this control. This proved to be a good move as we felt fresher and it was light when we left. Crucially, no team had arrived at the control, so we were still in the lead despite sleeping.

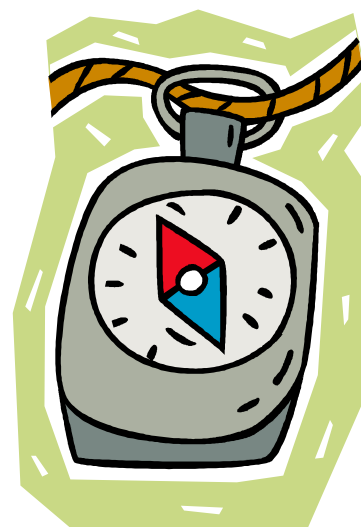
In these events sleep is included in your race time, so teams have to decide when and how much they have. Less sleep isn't necessarily as quick as sleeping and being refreshed so a balance has to be struck.

We finished the long trek 3 hours later and were soon on our bikes enjoying being sat down and having the weight off our legs. The ride was an 86km classic; a clockwise route round the edge of the Morven peninsula, then all the way along the shores of Loch Sunart to Strontian. The weather was good and views stunning. Riding was superb, especially on our super comfortable Marin Mount Visions. We finished the ride mid afternoon on a high. The only down point being that the pesky tide was past low tide and so would be against us (again) for the next paddle. We had a short catnap to

allow us to avoid the worst of the tide and set off.

For the first half of the paddle we stuck to the shorelines to keep out of the flow and it was hard work with a fair amount of chop. At the mid point we saw our nearest rivals on their bikes and so we knew that we had roughly a 5 hour lead. Luckily for us the wind died down and the second half of the paddle was a delight, culminating with the visit of a porpoise and some seals.

At about 9:30 in the evening of the second day we finished the paddle and were in high spirits, before being told that we had taken a wrong track on a short section of the bike and managed to annoy a landowner. We were aghast at our error and accepted the 30 minute penalty hoping we had not done any lasting damage for the organisers. We set out on a trekking leg in determined mood to make sure that the penalty wouldn't cause us to lose our lead.



This next section proved to be a real tester, with a slog through a tussocky bog at 2 in the morning, draining reserves and spirits. These were raised when we got to the summit of Beinn Resipol for a fantastic sunrise, probably one of the highlights of the route.

Soon we were back in Strontian and sleeping our penalty off on the hard ground of the car park, much to the amusement of the marshals. In total we had 1.5 hours sleep then moved off in the early morning

sun for a great bike up the side of Loch Shiel to Glenfinnan and the river crossing.

The organisers had set up a rope and instructions on what you were allowed to do. Bikes must be attached to rope and buoyancy aids must be worn (only 1 of which was on the near bank). After a brief deliberation we stripped to our shorts, relayed the bikes across and were enjoying the sunshine whilst drying off on the other bank. The organisers were being quite cute here, as some tired teams would spend a lot of time trying to get across.

We continued on the bikes past the Harry Potter Viaduct and over a hike-a-bike col to Glen Dessary and the road down Loch Arkaig. Soon we were at the last paddle of the race and finally looking forward to making the most of the tailwind with our sails. The wind wasn't as good as hoped, but still blew us down the loch at a good pace. After the portage into the Caledonian Canal we were soon at the transition enjoying the awakening Scottish Midge, so far missing from our journey.

Needless to say we were out of transition very quickly and on to the last bike (and hike-a-bike) section. It was here that our bikes were tested to the extreme. After an argument with a rocky streambed, we had broken a rear hanger and had to convert the

bike to a singlespeed for the last road section. In the approaching dark, we finally got to use our excellent Exposure bike lights, which did a great job of guiding us into the last, and best, transition, Roybridge Village Hall. With its fire and roof we quickly decided upon a last 1.5 hour sleep before tackling the last section – the Grey Corries ridge.

Starting this leg at 2 am we had only 32 kms between us and victory, plus one of the best high level ridges on the Scottish mainland. After a long slog we got to the top of the ridge. When we reached the top it was cold and windy but wrapped up inside our Paramo jackets we were toastie and eventually the clouds cleared and the wind dropped to reveal a breath taking view. Soon we were dropping off the end of the ridge to the Water of Nevis and the famous Harry Potter Steall waterfall. On the final stretch we had chance to remember some of the early stages of the race, just 3 days ago, but felt like over a week. After a steep climb up Cow Hill we descended into Fort William and cross the finish line 75 hours after starting, elated, tired and hungry.

We had experienced some of the best scenery Scotland has to offer and completed a journey of epic proportions, but as this sunk in; all we wanted was food, sleep and some clean dry shoes.

Magazines:

I've been donated several magazines by an ex-member. If you'd like any of them (for FREE), please contact me by October before I dispose of them elsewhere (hopefully at a great profit).

I have available:

The Fellrunner Magazine

Feb 2002
Oct 2001
Feb 2001
Feb 2000
Oct 1999
June 1999
Feb 1999
Oct 1998
June 1998
Feb 1998
Feb 1996
Oct 1995
Feb 1995
Oct 1994
Oct 1992

Plus the very rare and highly sought after:

Up & Down

No. 11 June/July 1992
No. 8 Nov/Dec 1991

**Photo by Rhys Williams:
Dan Booth on the steep ascent
of Moel Hebog on a recent
Paddy Buckley attempt.**

