



January 1996

### **CHAIRMAN'S WINTER MESSAGE.**

Welcome to the latest edition of HELP's CHASER.

We are now into another year in the HELP history books after holding the AGM at the Haddington Rugby Club on the last Wednesday evening in September.

It was a memorable meeting for 2 club members. Murray Scott travelled down from Kingussie to present George Armstrong with the annual marathon trophy he so kindly donated to the club when leaving North Berwick. Murray didn't realise that the club wanted to help him celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on 11<sup>th</sup> November. He was surprised and very grateful to receive the presentation of a crystal whisky glass and a bottle of malt whisky.

Dave Jones was then presented with Honorary Life Membership of the club for his services and his example to all members of the club that age is no barrier to fulfilling athletic challenges. Dave has given the club great service over the years and continues still to be very much involved.

HELP has already made another good start to the mens's Cross-country season with at least 12 runners at every event so far. Most of the members enjoy the team spirit that is generated at these events and you are always chasing the nearest red & white vest in front of you.

We have started the winter handicap runs again over the winter months around our 2000 metre loop in Haddington and young David Hastie has already shown all the senior men that he is a real force to be reckoned with.

I think that Club nights always get busier in the winter as it is a rare chance to get some company to run with when the nights are long and dark. So, remember, we are always at the Aubigny Sports Centre in Haddington on Monday and Wednesday evenings at 7.00 pm for a run.

I forgot to say earlier that at the AGM, Drew Morris stood down as the club Treasurer and we thanked him for his service to the club over the last few years. Charlie Bamford has now taken over the role of Treasurer and we are very pleased to welcome him onto the HELP committee.

Morag Hay and Jean Aitken are organising the annual Club Dinner Dance, which will be held in the Tranmare Hotel in Tranent in February. We are joining forces with the East Lothian Triathlon Club to help increase the numbers and hopefully make it a financial success.

I will take this chance to offer my best wishes to all members over the festive season and we can all look forward to sweating out all the excess food and drink during the month of January.

Best wishes,

Joe.



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## **JOE & KEN RUN NEW YORK CITY MARATHON.**

Club chairman Joe Forte and member Ken McCaulay from North Berwick flew out together from Glasgow on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November, heading for New York in order to run the annual City Marathon on Sunday morning November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Both members enjoyed the build-up to the big day, doing all the sightseeing of such a vibrant and exciting city. The race seems to have a very international feel to it with nearly every second athlete coming from a foreign nation. As race day approached the weather forecast sounded nasty and both Joe and Ken hoped it would be wrong - temperatures were predicted at between 0 and 5 degrees C. Ken, being a top-class 2<sup>nd</sup> row rugby player a few years ago (gaining 6 Scottish caps) was not as bothered about the weather as Joe who was having doubts as to whether a sub-2hr 40 minute effort was possible.

Sunday morning dawned and the forecast was spot-on; very cold and 25 mph north-west winds.

Runners would have to hang around the start-area on Staten Island for nearly 3 hours before the gun would go off and this was an effort in itself: trying to stay warm and calm before the big 'Off'!

The race started with the sound of a cannon gun on the Verrayona Bridge at 10.50 am. Joe was quickly into his running, having got to the very front of the Blue start. Ken was on the Red start on the opposite carriageway of the bridge and it took a few minutes for him to get over the start line.

Joe passed 5 miles in 29.50 and was feeling O.K. By 10 miles in 59.50 he was beginning to feel as though it was harder than it should feel at this point in the race; and by 18 miles, any thoughts of a strong finish were gone and he bravely finished in 2hr. 54 minutes. This was 15 minutes slower than he had hoped for and he possibly paid the price of not respecting the conditions on the day and, taking it a bit steadier over the first half of the race, might have paid dividends.

Meanwhile, Ken was having a good steady run. He met an old rugby colleague at around 10 miles and ran with him to the 18-mile mark. This became the worst part of the race for Ken, but he rallied around to cross the finish line in a p.b. of 3 hrs 57mins; the first time he had gone under 4 hours and he was delighted. It was then straight to JFK airport for Ken to catch a flight to Bermuda where he was meeting up with his wife Pat and then playing in an over 35s rugby tournament where he was representing Scotland.

Joe stayed on in New York with his wife, Norma, and sister Bridget, who had given him great support on marathon day. They all enjoyed spending Monday and Tuesday visiting the Empire State Building and other memorable sights of New York City and left JFK airport saying "We will be back!"

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## **Letter from Denis Bell.**

{For those new to HELP, Denis was a founder member and is a past Chairman of the club. A couple of years ago, he left the area (Tranent), and moved to Torrance, commuting to the East Kilbride area to work. He has retained his interest in, and support of HELP and is still a very active veteran hill-runner. After gaining Scottish vests, he was elected to Life Membership of the Club. Now Read On!}

"My first time in HELP's colours was actually at the Edinburgh marathon in 1984 when the club's epicentre, the right honourable H.M.<sup>1</sup> said to me 'You're not running in that!' - an old mesh-type yellow polo shirt - and pressed me into wearing his vest. On reflection, folks will recognise this as a typical Magnanimous Man's gesture and to be considered able enough to wear Henry's vest was, of course a privilege.

Phil Beeson and I ran 2.34.30; Phil's third or 4<sup>th</sup> marathon and his best, while it was my first. So, not to dwell too much on the past, my early marathon training (70 - 76 miles per week) set me up eventually to be a pretty durable long-distance hill-racer. I could cope fine with 3 ½ hours, but didn't ever really get into the longer 'endurance-type' of events. I always liked the race with racers, at faster speeds.

Anyway, that's years ago. How about the present?

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Muchamore, the man who dreamt-up and then activated HELP.



Well, HELP goes on and still gets some top class people out - notably Brian Marshall and Dave Bell (the other, younger, D. Bell I), although usually only Peter Marshall and I ran regularly. But, we did get team results occasionally with Ironman<sup>2</sup> (another very close friend - a huge club servant and one who has an awe-inspiring durability) and the raw youth of David Bell with a few other guys who get involved in races, off and on.

Our best result by the way was the team win at the Two Breweries, when it was still a classy and heavily entered race - i.e. loads of good English athletes.

I guess that Brian and David feel a bit let down that I (and others) have not supported them properly for the last 2 years or so. Well, this year I've basically done nowt due to a post-viral disability and in addition, I've put a huge commitment into the Hill Running Commission and tried to help our sport forward. This year's experience has, I think, shown that you can't do everything and my vain attempts to try to (I'm getting older, you know I) has had painful consequences . . . and I don't like being 'out' I

This year, Hill-running has again achieved a great deal, culminating in hosting the World Trophy in Holyrood Park and for all those involved in the event as 'helpers', we were treated to a feast of classy endeavour on a wonderfully warm September Sunday. The effort to stage the event on the ground was colossal and cost about £35K, but I think us Scots did ourselves proud as hosts, and as competitors. I'm sorry if this is biased a bit, but for the Senior man to get a Silver Medal is a wonderful(UL) achievement. However, it may still be underestimated by those outwith the sport.

Both Brian and David have had superb results; Brian gett -ing a Scottish vest - with more to come I hope - and David showing very creditable form. Has he aspirations and qualities to gain vests ? I think so - and where there's a will there's a way . . .

I don't have all the results to hand, but here are some to show what the guys have done.

| Brian                  |                            | David            |                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Championship 94        | 3 <sup>rd</sup>            | Tinto 94         | 4 <sup>th</sup>  |
| Culter Fell 94         | 26 <sup>th</sup>           | Bishop Hill      | 3 <sup>rd</sup>  |
| Glamaig 94             | 3 <sup>rd</sup>            | Cairnwell uphill | 6 <sup>th</sup>  |
| Craig Dhu 94           | 3 <sup>rd</sup>            | WMRT Trial       | 21 <sup>st</sup> |
| Tinto 94               | 3 <sup>rd</sup>            | WMRT Open Short  | 8 <sup>th</sup>  |
| Carnethy 95            | 7 <sup>th</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Bishop Hill 95         | 1 <sup>st</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Chapelgill             | 1 <sup>st</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Screeel                | 2 <sup>nd</sup> (v. close) |                  |                  |
| Dumyat                 | 1 <sup>st</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Knockdu ( )            | 7 <sup>th</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Glengoyne              | 2 <sup>nd</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Moffat Chase           | 16 <sup>th</sup>           |                  |                  |
| Durisddeer             | 1 <sup>st</sup>            |                  |                  |
| WMRT Trial (Pentlands) | 23 <sup>rd</sup>           |                  |                  |
| Moffat Beeftub         | 1 <sup>st</sup>            |                  |                  |
| Aonach Mor             | 2 <sup>nd</sup>            |                  |                  |

All in all, an outstanding year for Brian and with more focus on the 'longs' he has a chance to be an absolute top-class all-rounder. Brian's class resembles that of my old colleague Peter's huge track record.

For David : Some decent results here considering his lack of racing due to a "southern posting". Press on David.

Hill-running is a sport which grips all who venture into it with its friendliness, lack of elitism and 'levelling ability' - we've all been brought to earth with a bump - and the hills always win, they're always there !

Good luck to HELP - my one and only club. I am an honorary life member, with pride and affection. HELP always does great things - Cross-country championships at 'Pans pending.

<sup>2</sup> In case there is anyone who doesn't know George Armstrong he is 'The Ironman of Tranent'.



Last mention, Joe Forte goes for further marathon success and I hope a sub 2.35 is on for this through and through club man; a stayer.

Best regards to all - well done in '95 for some super races - and good luck, fortune, and primarily health(UL) in '96.

Denis Bell.

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### **? THE CHANGE OF LIFE by Murray Scott.**

(Murray Scott was a founder member of HELP, running the first London Marathon in 1981, with Henry Muchamore, John Fyfe and Alistair Rourke. From then on, Murray, from his house in North Berwick, was a regular and active club member, not confining his activities to road races, but running the hills and even, in the veterans Commonwealth Track and Field meeting, tackling his first-ever Steeplechase at the age of 60. A move shortly after this to his beloved Speyside has meant that we see him rarely down here, but anyone venturing north to the Kingussie area has been made to feel so wonderfully welcome in the eyrie of An Gruach that we always look forward to any trip north - where not only are we fed by Murray and June, we are often given the opportunity to have a run on the paths, tracks and forests surrounding their house.)

Murray writes:

For a year or so, I harboured the notion that pains in my knee when running, would disappear—after all, I underwent surgery a year past May to remove offending particles of cartilage and, for a while I really believed things would get better. Not so I. On a return hospital visit some few weeks ago, I was introduced to the inner workings of my joint, courtesy of X-ray photographs, and was finally convinced that my particular road in the running world was nearing an end. All too obvious to see was the juxtaposition of bone on bone with little cartilage to be seen. I suppose the good news is that the pain will be less as the bones wear away and get smoother; the bad news is that in stature I will become smaller and smaller !!

However, the really good news is that I enjoy cycling without pain or impediment. More and more I am turning to this activity to replace my participation in running. Fortunately for me the local cycling club - Cairngorm Cycling Club - is not elitist and I was very cordially welcomed into the Tuesday evening club runs. These usually involve a 35 to 40 mile spin. The advantage of being a bit older than all other members is that if the going is hard, particularly on steep uphill sections, there are plenty of willing hands to give a slight push. It saves my energy, gives extra training to fit young racers and helps to keep the group together. I should add that I am not alone in receiving these helping hands. Two or three of the ladies in the club are likewise assisted.

Sadly, for cycling's development, this emphasis on looking after the weaker members in a group is not typical. It is usually a matter of sticking with the pack or being dropped. Advantages in training no doubt there are if one can stick the pace, but the constant drain of would-be participants, scared off after their first so-called 'club' outing is a loss far outweighing the advantages. It is significant, for example that the Cairngorm Club has nine female members (and me) in a total membership of 27 and yet it still has its elite racers who participate at national level. This is certainly not a typical cycling club !

One could almost say, in spite of the club scene, that cycling in Britain is a popular activity. In total, there are estimated to be 15 million cyclists with this number increasing annually by 2 ½ million !

Unlike road-running and racing however there are few mass participation events. One of the few cycling events to remotely compare with, for example, the London Marathon is the London to Brighton bike ride where the event for safety reasons is actually restricted to 27,000 cyclists. Both these events or events like them can be sources of inspiration for competitors/participants, but afterwards the runner can go off and take part in a whole range of road races, from 10 K. to full marathons but there is much less for the cyclist, particularly if he or she is unaffiliated.

For affiliated cyclists there are time-trials and road races, but these can be quite daunting. Road racing in particular is not for the faint-hearted. Time trialling though can be fun once one gets into the system. But that is not easy! Without going into detail it is all highly organised, but the attraction for me is that it offers an opportunity to compete against a realistic target - namely myself. Time trials are really all about PBs although in time, as in running, one gets to know who is out there to beat and a little healthy competition keeps the interest alive.



Before I start writing about off-road cycling, which is what Dave Jones invited me to do, I would like to mention an event that Cairngorm Cycling Club and The Wolves of Badenoch, our local running club, organise jointly. It is a mid-summer biathlon, started two years ago essentially as a social event, but geared to be a last minute preparation for the Highland Cross - a well-publicised charity biathlon from the west coast to the east coast of Scotland. Our local event is very small by comparison - a mere 4 miles of cross-country followed by 16 miles road-cycling.

In this, the second year of our event, by accident we hit on an idea which I think will become more and more popular. Some cyclists, for one reason or another couldn't run and vice versa - so we allowed pairing. I couldn't do the run, but I teamed up with a runner who couldn't cycle and together we made a very creditable team effort. It strikes me that this kind of event could prove to be very attractive. Husband and wife team, father and son/daughter and so on - the possibilities are endless. Food for Thought!

However, back to my main topic - Off-Road Cycling. This is a sport which is growing at a great pace and no doubt many if not most of the annual 2 ½ million increase are so called Mountain Bikes. I say 'so-called' because many sold as Mountain or All Terrain bikes are not adequately constructed for all conditions. Basically the frame and components, particularly the wheels, are not strong enough to withstand the severe punishment that occurs on a typical off-road route. These are hybrid bikes and should be confined at worst to good minor roads. Without going into detail a simple rule of thumb can usually be made on cost. Obviously it is not a criterion that is fool-proof, but generally a bike costing less than say £300 will not last the pace of off-road cycling.

On a typical off-road tour one will encounter a wide range of terrain. Road, forest roads, rough tracks, stream beds, footpaths, grass, are all fair game and there is great satisfaction in negotiating a difficult stretch without coming off. Coming off though, as in skiing, is an acceptable and necessary skill which at speed can be quite an unnerving experience. Helmets of course, are essential equipment.

Clearly, without photographs and maps, it would be futile to describe in detail some of the routes which I have undertaken - always in groups for reasons of safety - but suffice it to say that mountain biking gives access to parts of the countryside that previously were the province of hill-walkers and mountaineers. Indeed, in some instances, this ability to penetrate relatively quickly into remote countryside is not universally welcomed. Question of access is a topic in itself and in this brief article I would not want to elaborate. Clearly, mountain bikers, as do other users of the countryside, have an obligation to respect this privilege and if a simple code of behaviour is adopted and followed there should be no problem. In areas where city and countryside are relatively close together there have been some problems, but this, as I have said, is a very long and complex topic.

Most of my trips have been in fairly remote countryside, generally following Rights of Way, and there have been no problems whatsoever. One, which most of you will recognise, is an off-road round trip of the Cairngorms. Drumguish, my home, is a good start and finishing point. The total distance off-road is 98 miles, i.e. roughly 33 miles each day (including about 6 miles where cycling was impossible and bikes had to be carried). This was a comfortable and fairly leisurely pace; 4 or 5 hours in the saddle with many stops for photo-calls, drinks and grub. On this trip we carried light back-packs stopping off at Tomintoul and then Braemar for B & B. On other trips we have used tents but these have been brought in by a support car as we don't believe in lumbering ourselves with heavy panniers, particularly as nearly all our routes involve a modicum of bike-pushing, -carrying.

There is no set pattern to our trips. Sometimes we take both road and A. T. cycles to a base and vary the machine from day to day. This year for example, our plans will centre on Ballater as a base and over a period of 3 or 4 days we will have single-day expeditions either on or off road. The advantage of an ATB of course is that short road stretches are possible and in this sense it is more adaptable.

Increasingly, mountain bike racing is becoming a very popular sport and one that appears to have a wider appeal than racing on roads. This prompts me to raise one final thought. Returning to the notion of paired cycle/foot races it would be much easier to organise the cycle part as an A.T.B. event. Road Traffic Acts and conforming with all kinds of rules and regulations about racing on public roads can make its organisation a bit tiresome.

How about a 'Big Club' first for H.E.L.P. ? !

Good Running - and Cycling - -

Murray Scott



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## ADDING VARIETY - DEVELOPING SKILLS.

*(The Scottish Hill Runner magazine for October 1995 contains an article by Ewen Rennie, which he closes by saying "Feel free to copy this - so I have - ED. (May I say that I fully agree with his contention that hill-running or even just hill-walking is a tremendous support activity to all other athletic activities. I never did believe that road-running and sprinting, or hill-running and cycling were mutually exclusive. Anything that builds up Strength and Stamina and at the same time (u) pleases the mind, is worth doing, and variety IS the spice of life to many of us.*

*If you are aiming to be world-class in one branch of a sport, then yes, at that level you have to be focussed on a particular event, but to my mind, the stamina and strength I have achieved, especially in my legs, and the mental toughness necessary to last out long periods of physical effort in long races, are derived in large part from my hill-walking and mountaineering efforts of 20-odd years or so, before I began to run at all seriously. Bear this in mind and apply it to your own condition and interests as you read Ewen's article. Ed.))*

Question: What have Sonia Armitage and Fraser Clyne in common ?

Answer: They have both represented Scotland at hill-running amongst other disciplines.

Phil Mowbray, Keith Anderson and Peter Dymoke are all regular hill-runners and yet are good enough to challenge for major honours on the road, track or cross-country. Liz Lynch (McColgan) is a former ladies winner at Scolty. Yet many athletes (and their coaches) tend to dismiss hill-running as an event for cranks or has-beens.

In this article I will argue that there are more skills to hill-running than any track event (and most field events) so we should be aiming to encourage our youngsters to participate in this most natural of events rather than dismissing it as dangerous or insignificant.

What are the component skills of hill-running? Depending on the actual race being considered I would argue that there are at least eight possible component skills that go together to make up the masterful performance - the complete Wilson-of-the-wizard supremo.

The complete hill-runner needs Basic Speed, Descending Technique, Endurance, Motivation, Navigational Skills, Nutritional Sense, Pace Judgement and Uphill Strength. Other coaches may argue for more skills, or even a different list, but someone with these eight will be hard to beat.

Basic speed can be required for a sprint finish in any race but becomes particularly important in some races where an early obstacle (such as a stile), restricts the field and can lead to the loss of vital seconds. In hill-running the sprint may come far earlier (with resultant implications of lactic acid and oxygen debt) and involve speeds that would worry even Linford Christie.

Descending Technique combines basic speed and superb balance with courage and confidence. In many races the leading runners will descend at under five minute mile pace over rough boulder-strewn terrain, narrow paths or heather; e.g. Snowdon in 1980 leading marathon runner, Jeff Norman, covered the five miles down from the summit in 22m 35 secs.

Endurance is what becomes important as the race becomes longer but even the shortest hill race is not necessarily won by the person with the fastest time over a hundred metres. Speed Endurance - the ability to maintain a constant high effort over time (thereby tolerating a high lactic acid build-up) is what is likely to count. What makes hill-running unique is that the hard effort comes on the uphill, early in the race, so that the lactosis has to be coped with for far longer.

Motivation is frequently what separates the also-ran from the champion. Forget the myth that champions are born not made. THEY ALL HAVE TO WORK TO IMPROVE WHAT THEY'VE GOT.

Motivation/determination is needed not just to get them up for the event but also to do the training on a cold wet winter's night. Many a grafter has beaten someone with far more natural talent. There is nothing like watching the long climb on a hill race to see who has, and has not, got IT !

Navigational skills or route choice are often the weakest part of the hill-runner's armoury. Too few races actually demand these skills but all hill-runners should be able to pin-point their own position and navigate from A to B. Just occasionally the mist comes down or the snow sweeps in and then the results can be turned upside down. At a cloud enshrouded Jura in 1991 supervet Bill Gauld almost sneaked a victory through his ability to pace count and use a compass. Orienteering is a super way of giving your athletes confidence and having them spend time on their feet.



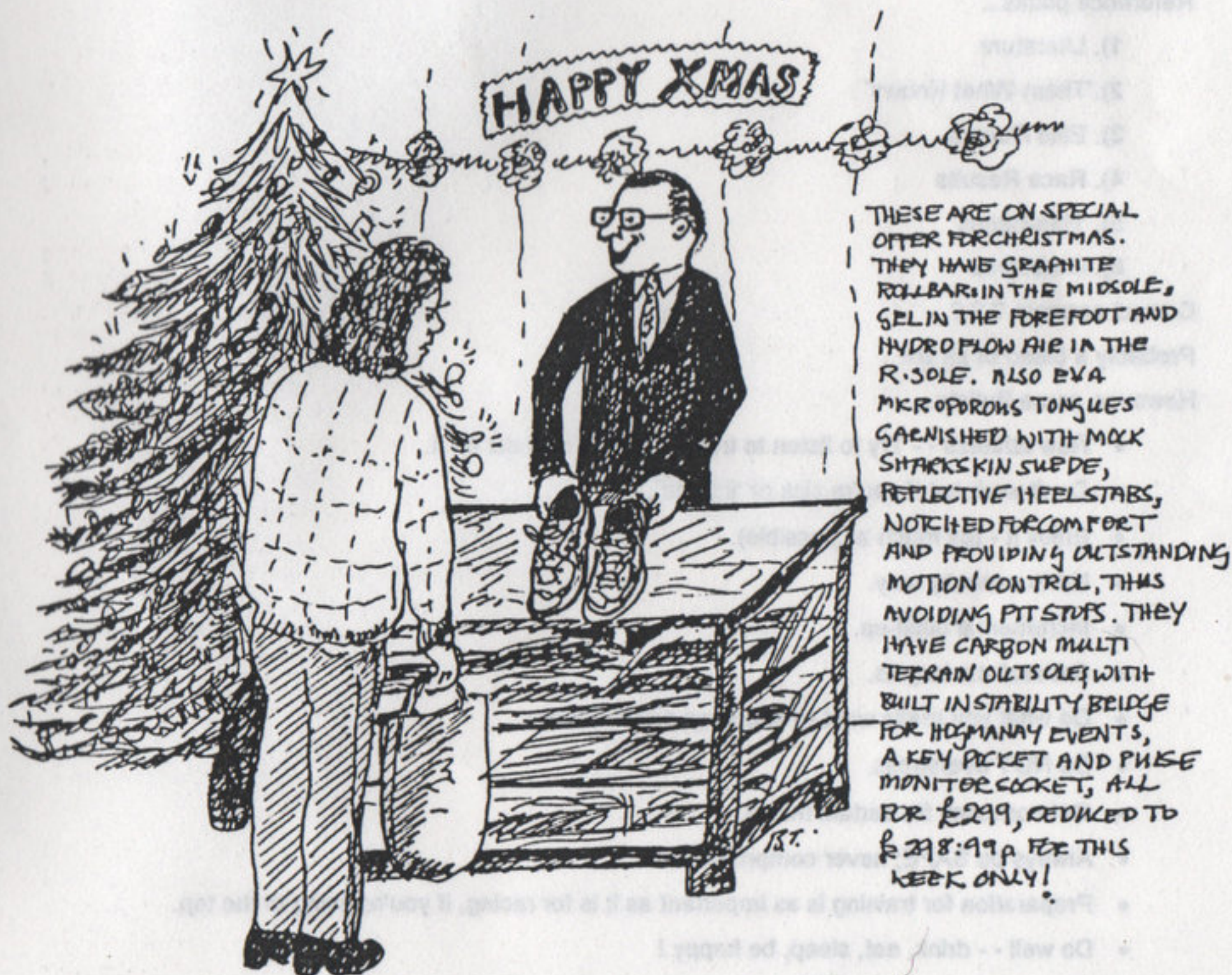
Nutritional Knowledge may seem a marginal skill to include but athletes like Sally Gunnell reckon it's what has given them the edge to be a World Champion. If Steve Ovett had listened to advice about fluid losses prior to the 1984 Olympics then Britain would have had all three medallists in the 1500 metres. Hill-running is a good (but cruel) teacher of the importance of fluid and glycogen replacement that will serve any athlete well whatever their actual preferred event.

Pace Judgement is vital in any race longer than 100 m. Not even John 'Mr. Muscle' Regis can run a 200 m flat out the whole way. He talks about cruising the bend and sprinting the straight (or vice versa). The nature of hill-running (with climbs and undulations allied to different runners' strengths and weaknesses) makes the event a superb teacher of the skills of self-knowledge and pace judgement.

Uphill strength is both a mental as well as a physical thing. Virtually every coach from Arthur Lydiard to Harry Wilson has emphasised the role of hill reps in building track athletes. Surely the obvious next step is to do some hill-races!

Different races will make different demands on these skills and areas of knowledge (with some only being marginal in junior events) but they should all be worked on and they can all be improved. The very fact that every hill is different and so times cannot be compared, is a further prime reason why you should be taking your athletes to the odd hill-race or two!

Ewen Rennie





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## **EFFECTIVE TRAINING ? ? ? ?**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>EFFECTIVE</b> | ...Productive of, or capable of producing a result...                           |
|                  | ...Producing a striking impression...   |
|                  | ...Actual rather than theoretical, real..                                       |
|                  | ...Equipped and prepared for action...  |
| <b>TRAINING</b>  | ...Guiding or teaching, as by subjecting to various exercises or experiences... |
|                  | ...Controlling or guiding towards a specific goal...                            |
|                  | ...Exercising and preparing for a specific purpose...                           |
|                  | ...Improving or curbing by subjecting to discipline...                          |
|                  | ...Focussing or bringing to bear on something...                                |
| <b>TRAIN</b>     | ...A series of interactive parts through which motion is transmitted...         |

(Collins English Dictionary)

"..effective training for anybody and everybody is when the individual makes steady and continual progress towards their own goal(s) over the timescale set, with as little disruption to progress as possible due to good management; the result being, that increased performance meets personal desire and is at an acceptable cost..."

Denis Bell. (29/12/95)

Reference points...

- 1). Literature
- 2). 'Them What Knows'
- 3). Elite Racers
- 4). Race Results
- 5). 'Has-Beens'
- 6). Ourselves

Correct answers ? ? ?

Probably a blend of all six...

However, some Bullets....

- Raw athletes - - Try to listen to trusted advice and act on it.
- Don't work out if you're sick or 'injured'.
- Enjoy it - (as much as possible).
- Up to capacity only.
- Incremental build-up.
- Set realistic targets.
- Do what you really want to and keep some variety.
- Do NOT overstress.
- Get company for certain things.
- Always be SAFE; never compromise.
- Preparation for training is as important as it is for racing, if you're going to the top.
- Do well - - drink, eat, sleep, be happy !
- Don't become totally self-centred.



- There's always tomorrow !
- Rest days are more important than training days.
- Don't hurt existing injuries.
- Warm up ....Cool down properly.
- Think about what and why you're doing it.
- Think ahead. Have some sort of plan.
- Think about why it feels good.... and why it didn't !
- Experiment, but in a controlled way.
- Get tough - by pushing out the limits.
- Train the body, train the mind.
- Pace judgement.

There's more where this came from !

Ask for copies, or see the set on HELP's Noticeboard.

(Editor)

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### **THE LAW EXPLAINED**

I understand from friends that the origins of the following, oft-quoted law are not as well known as they should be. I therefore offer here this simple piece of history which I am told is the guaranteed, four-square, unvarnished truth.

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### **SODD'S LAW.**

Ernest Sodd, (who, not surprisingly, really preferred his original family name of Murphy) was a well-known 19th century Turf Accountant, whose brief rise and meteoric fall would probably have passed unnoticed, had he not become famous for his claim that: it doesn't matter what you do, or how efficiently you do it, it ALWAYS turns out to have the opposite result from the one you expected.

also:

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### **THE AGEING 3-SPEED FARTLEK.**

1. Slow. 2. Dead Slow. 3. Oh - blimey ! I gotta stop and get me breath back!



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## **RUNNER'S PROFILE - TOM HARLEY.**

Club: Joined H.E.L.P. in 1990.  
Job: Car Mechanic (Ian Glass's Garage).  
Place of Birth: Edinburgh.  
Favourite Race: Haddington 5-mile Road Race.  
Favourite Sports Personality: John Grieg (Rangers F.C.)  
Who in the world would you like most to meet?:  
Littlewoods Pools Man (with huge cheque !!)  
Favourite holiday location: Scottish Highlands & Switzerland.  
Favourite T.V.: Cheers, Goodnight Sweetheart.  
Favourite Singer: Nat King Cole.  
Favourite Film: The Quiet Man.  
Race P.B.s: 5 miles - 27.45, 10 miles - 57.38 ½ marathon 77.00  
Favourite Food & Drink: Sweet Puddings, Champagne.  
Favourite Training run: Aberlady Coast Run.  
Favourite Athlete: Moses Kiptanui.  
Sporting Ambitions: Sub- 3 hour Marathon Sub-4m 30sec. Mile:

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## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

JAN. 27<sup>th</sup> 1996 East District Cross-Country League.  
Livingston.  
FEB. 10<sup>th</sup> National Cross-Country Championships.  
Irvine.  
FEB. 17<sup>th</sup> Tiso Carnethy 5-hill Race.  
Pentlands.  
Events being considered by the Committee.  
May 19<sup>th</sup> Round East Lothian Relay.  
A charity run on behalf of UNICEF  
with Dunbar Running Club.

### **WEEK-ENDS AWAY I (Shades of the Black Isle)**

Late JUNE or early JULY. Braemar/Aviemore.  
Through the Lairig Ghru - or jogging through Rothiemurchus Forest.  
Around Loch Morlich. Your choice.  
OCTOBER. DUBLIN. Marathon. Sight-seeing, Guinness drinking, Shopping, Guinness-  
drinking, or - What's this Murphy's I've been hearing about ??  
and did someone mention Irish Cream ?



## ON YOUTHFUL CONSIDERATIONS OF AGE

and Age's reply.

(with acknowledgements to Charles L. Dodgson)

'You are old, Father David', the young man opined,  
'And your beard has become very white,  
Yet I know that you frequently run like the wind,<sup>3</sup>  
Do you think at your age that is right?'

'In my youth', Father David replied to his son,  
'I feared it might injure my heart.  
But now I'm assured that I never had one,  
I simply rush off to the Start.'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'as I mentioned before,  
And have grown most unnaturally lean,  
Yet you turned a back-somersault onto the floor,  
Pray, in heaven's name what does that mean?'

'In my youth,' said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,  
'I kept all my limbs very supple,  
By the use of these tablets - ten pounds for the box.  
Allow me to sell you a couple?'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'and your arms are too weak  
To support you when doing some press-ups,  
Yet your fat, hairy legs are those of a freak.  
Do you think you are some heavenly mess-up?'

'In my youth,' said his father, 'I ate lots of eggs,  
And argued all day with my wife.  
Running from her gave great strength to my legs,  
Which has lasted the rest of my life.'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'One would hardly expect  
That your strength would have lasted so long.  
Yet you run like a loon on the smallest pretext,  
The drop of a hat - or a song.'

'I have answered your questions and heard all your gibes'  
Said the father: 'Don't tempt me too much,  
Or I'll say something harsh that'll upset your vibes  
And you'll fly - with my boot in your crutch!'

<sup>3</sup> Is it a wind-up? or is it the wind-up?

Shakespeare used the former - 'Blow, blow, thou ....', so why shouldn't I?



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## VALE

Rod Stone, former Chairman of HELP and another of our Irish internationals is, to our regret, leaving the area to take up a new post in Morayshire. Not only did Rod collect three vests, running for the Northern Ireland team in World Cross-country Championships, he was also a winner of the Belfast Marathon in a time of 2 hours 19 minutes.

Rod's lean frame and elegant loping stride will sadly no longer figure in our training sessions or our races, nor will he be so easily encouraged to be one of our 'back-room boys' on race days. Much as we will miss him, we can only offer him congratulations on his appointment and very best wishes for the future, hoping that the move will suit him and his family. Who knows, maybe he will be inspired to try his legs out again in the Morayshire Marathon before too many years have passed.

Good Luck, Rod, and do come back to visit us occasionally.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY

by David Jones

It was really all George's fault. Well, I have to blame (UL) someone for my idiocy, don't I?

Some time after Brian Christie and I had completed the Pennine Way, he, George, told me that I could - and should - run the West Highland Way. I suppose that started the little worm of dissatisfaction wriggling around in my brain. Every now and again, the thought surfaced, was considered and then rejected. That is, until last September, when in another fit of idiocy (purely my idea this time), I ran/jogged/ walked through the Lairig Ghru and back in a day, having a delightful hour or so in company with Murray, June and Fiona Scott in Coylumbridge to break the journey into two halves. Afterwards, having survived the 40 miles or so in reasonable shape, despite my body having taken a pretty hefty beating 3 weeks previously in the Great Wilderness Challenge. I considered that 'now' was the time to give serious thought to the West Highland Way.

And so it was that in the New Year I began a programme of Get Fit, Stay Fit, and 'pile in the miles'. Advice from various friends in various fields helped and, to keep me focussed on the end product, and ensure that my resolve didn't weaken, I decided to run for sponsorship, selecting Age Concern - Scotland and Alzheimer's Scotland as the charities I would support.

Before going any further I must express my thanks to my advisers, especially Adrian Stott, of 'Run and Become', a very experienced veteran long-distance runner and conqueror of the West Highland Way on a few occasions. George Armstrong was another who gave me help from his years of experience, not only of running the West Highland Way, but from other long-distance runs; and I can't leave out Joe Forte, not so much for his experience of distance running, but principally because he was always ready to hear me out while I bent his ear about my preparations. Many others had to suffer what may well have become my boring and ever-present thinking and talking about the proposed run. To them I apologise, but I would insist that this was all part of the training. A considerable degree of the success of any event such as this is the (UL) mental conditioning that goes into the preparations. Much of my time was spent thinking along the following lines - 'What if - ?' 'Should I do this - or that - ', 'Will I be able to - ' - and the trouble was that for most of the time I didn't have the answers. Those would only become clear after it was all over and I began to reconsider just what I had done. Would the fact that I had only tackled some 44 miles in 'oner' on a couple of occasions and 35 on another few be sufficient practice for my body to keep going virtually non-stop for 95 miles? Would I trip and fall in the early stages, and not be able to continue? Would I struggle over the last lap at such a slow pace and in such agony that I would have to pack it in within striking distance of the finish?

I realised, with the doctor's help, that I had reached a state of high tension a week before the run was due, when twice I lost a complete meal without any apparent cause and no real after effects. For example, I went out for a planned run just after losing my breakfast one day and ended up by running 14 miles quite happily. 'Pure tension' said the doctor; 'Relax'. That reassured me - although I found it hard to believe - and I was able to set my mind to the final preparations knowing that I was as fit as I could expect to be and was not coming down with some dread disease.

A fair knowledge of much of the route was, to me, essential for an easy mental approach, but it had been impossible to cover every part of it. This, added to the tension of the start was enough to ensure



that I was lost within a couple of minutes, having failed to see the necessary notice hidden behind some ornamental statuary in the Milngavie pedestrian precinct. To find someone walking around there at 5.30 on a Saturday morning was quite miraculous and luckily he was sober enough to help me out. Not knowing where you are going, all the time, is a definite tension factor and there were a few points where I had to stop and consider options despite the supposed route markers.

Once, I missed a marker completely and, on another occasion, either I didn't interpret one correctly or else it didn't show its arrow for turning off. Consequently I lost time and ran extra miles, which wasn't exactly helpful.

Additional tension and an increase in pace result from these errors too, especially when one is due to be at a certain point to meet up with the support group.

Support is certainly one of the most important factors in a successful run of this type - if not THE most important.

I was extremely lucky to be served with incredible care and attention to requirements - and here I will note my most grateful thanks to my friends, Roger and Morag Phillips, who not only met me with food and drinks on every possible occasion, but also ran some of the more difficult parts with me. Lomondside, from Rowardennan via Inversnaid to Inveraman with Roger, who kept me up to scratch - as far as this is possible on those terrible up and down rock scrambles etc. and Morag, who simply danced up, down and around me on the last stage from Lundavra into Fort William.

Reaching Bridge of Orchy as the last light went and the rain started falling out of low clouds, I began to relax, taking in some drink over a period of maybe an hour, knowing that I was still able to keep going but with the next short stage another piece of unknown territory, I decided to extend my rest period from the allowed hour - my choice - and relaxed across the back seat of the car in the dry. I must have dozed for a while, surfacing to hear the occasional bursts of heavy rain, but soon began to get restless and did some quiet and complex sorting of clothing, eventually getting out of the car as a bit of light became visible. Asking Roger for a time-check, 'it's 3.15' he said - and that was exactly the time I had planned to set off again. This I did, head torch on, bumbag with some snack food and waterproof jacket there to fend off the drizzle that was still about. I wasn't expecting to see Roger and Morag again until Blackrock Cottage at the opposite end of Rannoch Moor, but 2 miles later, there they were, as I came off the wee hill at Inveroran. Picking up a drink and dumping my head torch, only used for some 10 minutes, I set off on the track across the Moor.

Although I had come down this part of the route before I couldn't remember a lot about it and was prepared for it to be rougher than it turned out to be. 'Not bad' I thought, despite the wind and occasional scuds of rain and although it was 9 miles, short breaks now and then for food and drink seemed to make it pass reasonably quickly. Blackrock Cottage appeared through a smirr of rain at the foot of the ski road and there were my faithful support party. But it was a brief stop because Kingshouse Hotel was only a mile or so away. Trotting up the hill towards this I was aware of a car and a tent beside the road, displaying some sort of banner or flag - one on each. I was almost on top of them when I realised that they were not banners, but T-shirts emblazoned with 'Age Concern - Scotland'.

This was my support party No. 2; Liz Mitchell with her husband and daughter from Fife. Liz is Age Concern - Scotland's Information and Publicity Officer and as keen walkers and campers, she had said that they would try to end up somewhere near the finish to meet us.

7.00 am in the drizzle, with a strong breeze is not the best time to conduct a social chat, but we did quite well, although I am afraid they must have got a lot of dampness into their tent. This pleasant morning socialising meant, of course, that I had taken a lot longer to reach Kingshouse than either I or my No. 1 Support Party had expected. They couldn't understand how I could take half an hour to do about a mile.

I have to admit to being on a bit of a 'high' for the next hour or so. I've never been one for early morning runs, but this was different and the 2 or 3 miles from Kingshouse to Altnafeadh were almost dream-like and even the last bit, which was slightly uphill, was taken at a fair jog. I warned Roger and Morag that I'd taken around half-an-hour to get up the Devil's Staircase even when almost completely fresh, so I reckoned I might need up to an hour this time. I also knew that there was a further 6 miles to go to Kinlochleven and the early part of the path, once up the Staircase, was not only pretty rough but a bit upsy-downsy too. However, I got what was virtually a flying start because I was at the top of the Staircase in 32 minutes. What I hadn't appreciated though was that the route, after 2 or 3 miles took you on forestry tracks back practically into Glencoe - or so it seemed. However, when I



eventually ran back onto the road in that Charming (!) - and Picturesque (!) - village of Kinlochleven, my 'teams' were thunderstruck as they thought I would have taken considerably longer.

Well, all good things come to an end and the feel-good factor began to leave the equation very rapidly. The ascent - from near sea-level, by zig-zag paths through woodland up onto the exposed stony tracks, soon brought me back to reality and weariness began to show. My feet were beginning to feel the effect of being blistered in various places and were tender even where they weren't blistered, so that even running downhill had lost much of its pleasure. It merely became slightly less of a chore than running uphill. The final stretch, a mere 6 or 7 miles to Fort William was, we thought, going to be a doddle. Morag announced, as we set off; "Roger says 'Just a little uphill stretch, then it will be downhill all the way into the Glen'".

Morag believed him. I sort of half did. Well, I hoped I did.

He was right so far - a little uphill, but then we waited and waited. All we found were steep undulations. Up a few hundred yards, then down a few hundred yards. The uphills were frequently artificially constructed steps and were even worse for Morag than for me. She's considerably shorter and stepping up the steps was sometimes a major effort even for fresh legs - and she is light on her feet too. I just couldn't remember (UL) ever covering the ground in the way that she did. Literally, she just danced along - until we had tackled a few of these sets of steps - that is.

Well, all things did come to an end - even all those upsy-downsy stretches - and apart from a few photographic sessions, it was a steady advance on civilisation again. Photography such as - 'Runners with the Ben in the background' - 'Runners approaching in Age Concern T-shirts,' - 'Runners finishing!' - ('Runners absolutely Finished!!') etc. etc. We simply trogged on. I remembered my ploy, learnt in the summer on boring long solo training runs when weariness was setting in - 100 double paces running followed by 50 double paces walking. Counting these out loud got the Support Teams going along with it until someone had something to say and we lost count. In the end it was a slightly hysterical group that passed the finish point around 3.30 pm on the Sunday afternoon. I was warned a couple of hundred yards from the finish that I would have to up the pace if I wanted to finish in 34 hours and although it may have appeared to onlookers like an ancient runner's shuffle, to me it was almost a sprint.

Presented with a bottle of bubbly at the finish, I was too thrifty to waste it in spraying the others, the air or the road, so it was saved for later consumption. Maybe they were disappointed, but I'd never been on the receiving end of a bottle before and the waste of anything potable or edible really pains me. The Mitchells also presented each of the 3 of us with a West Highland Way badge and a commemorative mug, which I found very touching and the latter has taken its rightful place amongst my various trophies - at least in the meantime until I have a spate of breakages in the kitchen, while the badge has lived on one of my frequently-worn pullovers. We all retired to the local hotel bar and began the task of getting back into liquid balance - with orange juice for me! I must confess that I didn't feel like chancing my arm (legs) with alcohol. I wasn't feeling that my legs could really cope with movement even in the normal way and there was the possibility that even a few drops of alcohol might put them totally out of commission.

Back into the car and I stretched out across the back seat. I seem to remember appreciating that we were going back through Spean Bridge and Dalwhinnie but really, the next thing I was aware of was pulling away from the Forth Road Bridge. I managed to drive myself home safely from Edinburgh on my own (UL) and climb the stairs to my second-floor flat, something I'd always been afraid that I wouldn't be able to cope with on this occasion, so that told me I'd not suffered as badly as I feared and after a good night's sleep I was almost back in business. By Tuesday I was: walking around North Berwick delivering and collecting catalogues once again. That was it. After many months of involvement and preparation, it was all over. Well, for this year at least!

When I started putting this article together, one of the points I felt I had to get over to potential Wayfarers was that - O.K. you need a fit body, one that has stamina and energy to last out the required time, but it's the mind that really matters. I remember saying to myself approaching Altnafeadh 'only another 23 miles to go', the inference being 'not far to go now'. In normal circumstances if someone had told me that I was to run 23 miles that morning, let alone adding it to a previously full and energetic day, I would have had a mild fit. Yet, 23 miles as a proportion of 95 was not a great distance. Think of it as 6 miles out of a marathon. Purely because I had conditioned my mind to these big numbers, it didn't have the usual impact.



Tiredness is also relative. I expect I really began to feel tired not because I was reaching exhaustion point, but because I knew - and my body knew, that I was nearing the end of the run. The last 6 miles would have been quite a strenuous run for me on some days, but as the last 6 miles out of 95, they were just 6 hard miles that I was desperately keen to get over and done with. I'm convinced that if an hour after finishing, someone had offered me a lot of money to run another 5 miles, my body just would not have been capable of doing it because my mind hadn't been prepared to do it. But if, at Lundavra someone had told me they'd made a mistake and it was really 11 miles to the end, I would have been depressed, but I'm sure I would have done it.

Think on't !

Then set yourself a challenge; work at it with your mind (ul)and your body and prove to yourself that you too can do it. You can. I swear it.



H. E. L. P.

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