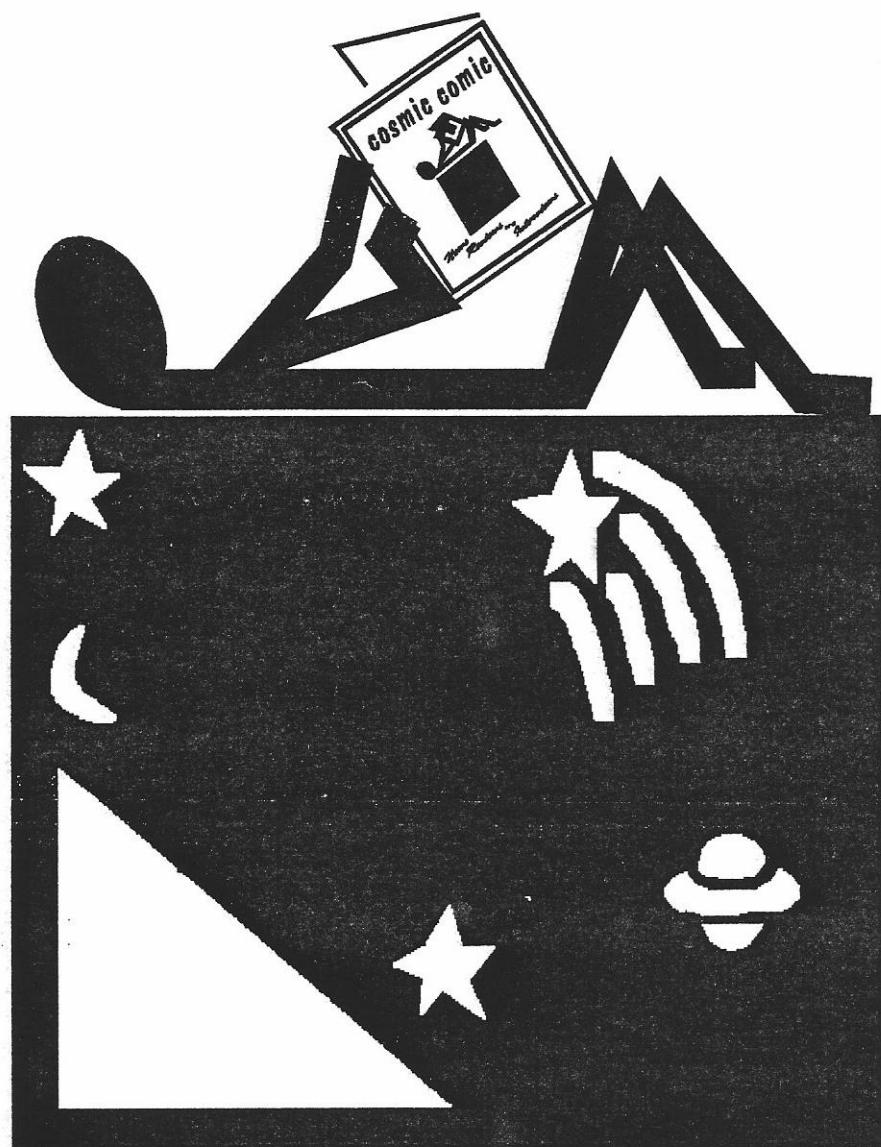


# COSMIC COMIC



*News Reviews and Interviews*

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5

October 1996

## EDITORIAL

Dear Cosmics

I hope you enjoy the magazine. Eddie was unable to work much on the layout, but the quality of the reading, is, I hope, as good as ever.

The magazine has faltered this year but there is every hope that we can get back to two issues per annum. Encouragingly our problems with the magazine have never stemmed from lack of material. Send all articles, race reports, etc. to Brian Lawrie.

There is a distinctly Alpine flavour about this issue. Could you be tempted by a big Alpine race next year? What about Pikes Peak in Colorado, USA? Brian, Steve and Ewan are giving it serious thought!

Take heed of Catherine's article on Hypothermia. The article is very readable, and has implications for all of us who go to the hills, often ever so lightly clad.

A new feature is the results section. The aim is to make this more comprehensive in future issues. So get cracking and write a report on any race that you take part in.

Meanwhile, enjoy the Comic.

Brian Lawrie

## NEW MEMBERS

### Elaine Stewart

Elaine is a mountaineer who got into hill racing through the Highland Cross, which she has done so often, she doesn't want to remember when the first one was. Her racing horizons are now broadening and she will take a well deserved place in the Cosmic team for the British Hill Running Relay Championships of 1996. Elaine can run forever without getting tired (umml!).

### Ron Pratt

Ron's another hill walker who has succumbed to the more competitive running game. (Were full of them). Although he did Bennachie back in 1993, its only over the last six months, that he really has become a regular. Don't be fooled by the quiet exterior appearance, he's a driven man, whose stated ambition is to do a sub two hour marathon! What's wrong with the hills, Ron?

### Rob Mills

Rob is an orienteer, who came to a Cosmic outing after a little encouragement from Tim Griffin. ("A mad group of people"). Despite his apprehension, ("its nice to know what you think of us, Tim!"). Rob enjoyed himself and is a fairly regular sampler of the Cosmic experience. Ron's ambition is to do the London Marathon! What does Coach Rennie have to say about these misguided ideas?

### Bob Sheridan

Many will know Bob from their encounters with him on the Road Running and Cross-Country circuits. (usually as he speeds by). Bob hasn't given up on the roads but is now keen to give the hills a "bash", (quite literally in the Elrick Relay's), to see how well he can do in this very different environment. Full of the blarney.

### Anne Thomson

With only 21 Munroes left to do, there is no doubting Anne's commitment to the hills. Since joining the Cosmics, she has been an enthusiastic and supportive member. Although she has only been racing for a few months, her cupboard is already groaning with prizes. Despite her success she remains modest and insists that all of her winnings be deposited in the Cosmic funds.

# COSMICS ON HOLIDAY

*BY B.B. SAN LEWIS*

A personal impression of our trip to the Sierre-Zinal mountain race in Switzerland

## SAT 27 JULY - SUNDERLAND

Staying with our old climbing friends, the Mercers. The promise of a dozen Aitken's rowies is enough to secure a bed for two nights for Hilda and myself.

## SUN 28 JULY - NEWCASTLE

A visit to a state of the art rock wall in Newcastle - The Berghaus. Trying to keep my hand in. Then Dave drives me out to Penshaw Monument which sits on top of the only lump on this flat landscape. Do 3 x 10 minute circuits. The Alps seem a long way off!

## MON 29 JULY - HULL

To Hull for the 6.30pm ferry to Rotterdam. Carbo-loading proceeds with a vengeance when we discover that our ferry ticket entitles us to a free buffet meal.

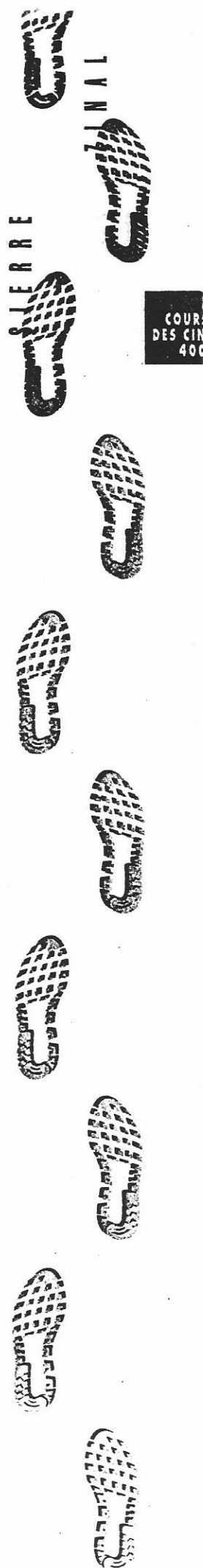
## TUE 30 JULY - ROTTERDAM - BADEN-BADEN

A bit apprehensive about the drive but soon settle into motorway mode. Tired, we turn off the motorway at Baden-Baden in the northern Black Forest area. The tourist office finds a good cheap hotel for us - The Deutscher Kaiser.

I want to stretch my legs a bit so while Hilda showers I head out, rather impetuously, on the forest trail behind the hotel for a short jog. On the descent I somehow take a wrong turn and before long I find myself running about like a headless chicken somewhere on the Lichtentaler Allee (a street) with a mild panic attack settling in. "Keep calm" I tell myself, "You're not the first runner to get lost. Some Cosmics practice it all the time!"

"Sprechen Sie Englisch?" An old lady out for her evening walk rears back startled by what, in my choking manner, must have seemed more like the preliminary attack of a handbag snatcher than a request for help.

"DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE DEUTSCHER KAISER HOTEL IS?" I ask slowly and clearly in the patronising way one does to stupid foreigners who don't understand you. I'm in luck, not only





does she speak English, she IS English, having come to Baden-Baden to retire. Yes, she knows the hotel and soon has me orientated in the right direction. I could have hugged her but settle for a more sedate handshake as we part.

### WED 31 JULY - BADEN-BADEN

We decide to stay another day. First we get a map from the tourist office. There will be no more "incidents"! We start our day by taking a guided tour of the Kurhaus, a world famous casino, agog with the opulence of the place.

Then I try to get Hilda into the Friedrichstad, "the most magnificent bathing baths in the world" (the Rough Guide to Germany). The brochure shows golden tanned women emerging seductively from the pool. Others lie languidly on the masseurs bench having their lithe limbs caressed - I mean massaged!.

Hilda isn't convinced of the accuracy of this picture and reminds me with a prod to my belly, that the human body isn't always a pretty sight. Anyway the three hour plus Irish-Roman bath programme of showers and massages etc seems to hint at more of an ordeal than relaxation, despite being allowed to take off all your clothes. And the price of 38 DM each would be enough to make Ewen Rennie choke on his lentils!

### THU 1 AUGUST - SUSTEN, SWITZERLAND

Tonight we will sleep at the foot of the icy giants. My Lonely Planet Guide has warned us that the Swiss Customs will not allow more than a day's food to be brought into their country. In anticipation of the high cost of living in Switzerland, Hilda and I had loaded the car up with enough food for two weeks! Rather nervously we approach the frontier, our many food boxes draped over with towels and blankets in an effort at disguise but fearing the worst. However, the car is waved right through. Relieved, but slightly miffed at being so squeaky clean, we drive on with no more incidents except for a "shouting match" when we take a wrong turn near Interlaken. Hilda's fault of course!

We clock into Susten at 2.55pm. Bang on time!

### FRI 2 AUGUST - ZINAL

Having had enough of driving we decide to give Switzerland's much-vaunted public transport system a go and take a bus up to Zinal at the head of Val d'Anniviers.

I had forgotten how magnificent the Alps were. The 4000M peaks which ring the valley - the Dent Blanche, Zinal Rothom etc - with their soaring ridges and improbable summits are every school-boys dream of what mountains should look like. Who could get bored if they had all their lives to wander here?



COUR  
DES CIN  
40

First port of call is the tourist office to seek out the venerable Veronique and get genned up on the race. It was Veronique who, after a number of expensive phone calls from Aberdeen, had secured my entry into the race. This was due to my inability to make any headway with the appropriate form. (I'll spare you the details!). On hearing that Mr Lawrie from Aberdeen has actually managed to find his way to Zwitzerland, Veronique duly appears to look over this strange specimen from one of Europe's far-flung outposts. I am rather chuffed that she even remembers who I am! Had it been my telephone manner? Hilda, who could hardly keep a straight face as we leave the office, placed a rather less flattering interpretation on Veronique's long memory. The organisers probably spent the long winter nights laughing over their fondues, telling and re-telling the story of the only man in Europe who couldn't understand the entry form. And I thought I was being enterprising!

When Hilda recovers her equilibrium we set off to walk the 16K to St. Luc. This covers much of the last section of the race (in reverse) and so will be a good recce. Kev Reynolds, in his book "Walking in the Valias", advises against this rather stiff walk on the first day but we can't resist. Much of the walk is above 2000M so I have the chance to acclimatise to the altitude. But principally I remember the trees, the abundance of flowers, the astonishing abundance of butterflies and always the views. Beautiful Val d'Annivers. If you like walking - come here!

### **SAT 3 AUGUST - MOIRY GLACIER (2249M)**

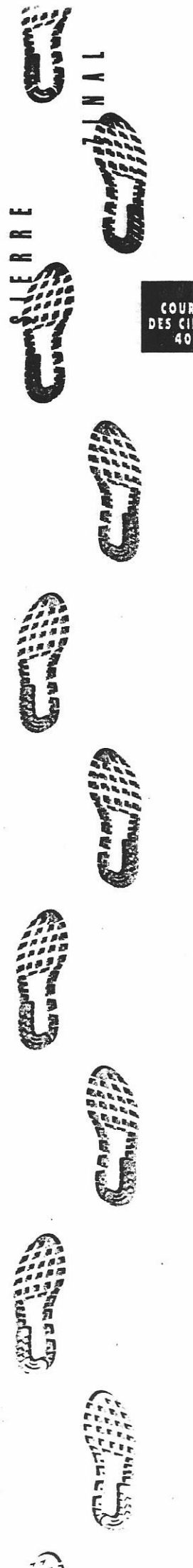
Seventy minutes running in the forest with Sonia this morning. Two big climbs. Sonia has a dilemma - should she return to Scotland for the World Cup trials in an attempt to win a place in the team for Telfes, Austria, or stay put and hope that her outstanding season on the hills will be enough to secure her one of the two discretionary places? Her instinct is to go. There are so many variables to consider. I hope that working out the problem is not spoiling her holiday.

In the afternoon Hilda and I go up to the Moiry Glacier and are thrilled by the sight of two marmots

### **SAT 4 AUGUST - ROC DE LA VACHE (2581M)**

An outstanding walk from Zinal to the Roc de la Vache and back via the Alp d'ar Pitetta. We get our first close views of the Bishorn and the great west wall of the Weisshorn. I have to pinch myself. Am I really here! I have long since run out of superlatives to describe the scenes which are constantly before my eyes.

Tonight Dave and Phil will bivouac near the Cabane Tracuit which we can clearly see from here, and attempt the Bishorn.



## MON 5 AUGUST - ZERMATT

A visit to Zermatt is a must, steeped as it is in Alpine history. No cars are allowed up to Zermatt. Cars are left at Tasch and the final part of the journey to Zermatt is by mountain railway. Poor Tasch, once an attractive village, it has been largely overwhelmed by the development of huge car-parks to take the cars of the tourist hordes.

Leaving sightseeing for later in the day, Hilda and I catch the underground railway up to Sunegga, the starting point for a walk up to the Flualp (2607M) our highest point to date. The uplift facilities around Sunegga seem intrusive but the chocolate-box views of the Matterhorn and other peaks tend to cancel our negative feelings. Leaving Hilda by a delightful little green tarn I attempt to further my acclimatisation by going on a fairly hard 30 minute run. The result of this is that I feel slightly dizzy when I get back to Hilda but soon recover.

## TUE 6 AUGUST - PETIT MOUNTET (2142M)

A short walk to Cabane du Petit Mountet. Drink a few beers and breathe in the rarefied air. Steve and Ewen have arrived and it's good to see them.

## WED 7 AUGUST - HOTEL WIESSHORN (2337M)

A wet day. We drive up the hairpins to Chandolin where Ewen and Steve have their chalet. Steve doesn't fancy a run in the rain and kindly elects to take a look at the brake-pads and discs on the offside front wheel of my car which has become the source of an annoying whining sound. The rest of us, accompanied by John Blair-Fish of Carnethy, go on a recce of the course as far as the hotel Wiesshorn. Unable to resist the charms of this "eccentric Victorian establishment", as one author describes it, we treat ourselves to a large slice of bilberry pie before returning to Chandolin.

There is a fondue party in Susten tonight where we are joined by Phil, Joe and their family.

## THU 8 AUGUST - BELLA TOLLA (3060M)

Our first ascent to 3000M. Steve, Ewen and Blair-Fish are just leaving the summit as we arrive and entertain us with tales of Steve's death-defying, all-or-nothing mantleshelf on the loose and rotting walls of the Rotwand which they had traversed earlier. Steve claim it is more of a purist effort doing it this way than pulling on the convenient chains and ladders!

Ewen and Steve generously invite us to join them for a meal in their chalet. Steve bitches about all the vegetarian food but enjoys it really!



COUR  
DES CIN  
400



## FRI 9 AUGUST - ZINAL

The race is now beginning to take centre stage in my mind! No more walking or running until Sunday. I have been able to take it relatively easy during the holiday due to the really big week Phil and I had in Scotland before we left for Switzerland. This included a complete traverse of the Cuillin ridge in Skye and a four hour run round the Glenshee munros. I think this was a useful strategy as I have been able to concentrate on the holiday without worrying about fitness. We picnic at the Zinal boulders which provide some fun for the rock climbers.

## SAT 10 AUGUST - SIERRE

We register for the race today and I spend most of the day lying in the park soaking up the sun.

Sonia is in the Scottish team and we are all pleased for her. However this means that she will not run Sierre-Zinal tomorrow.

I don't feel well in the thundery heat. Probably just nerves! The forecast for the race tomorrow is thunder, lightening and rain. The organisers are obviously concerned about the weather and have issued a warning to carry a water-proof top.

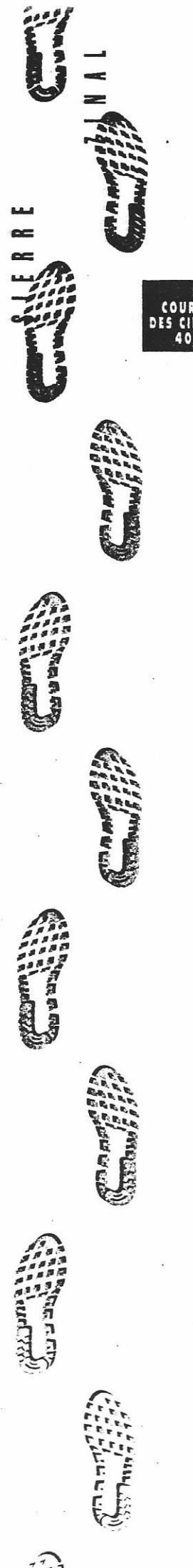
## SUN 11 AUGUST - SIERRE-ZINAL (31K)

Believing hot water to be a good laxative, I've already consumed about 2 litres since yesterday - still no movement! God, you'd think that pre-race nerves would cause something to give!

On the plus side, the day is cooler and the humidity of yesterday is gone. The rain seems to have passed by in the night and we have a very pleasant morning.

We join the 900+ runners at the start - a bit wary of the initial 700M sprint up the Tarmac road. This leads in turn to the monster climb up to Chandolin (see Le Profil). It is relentless! The tracks are steep and narrow in places making over-taking impossible and, anyway, a waste of energy. Sometimes the trail relents a bit and steady running is possible but always it is up. Up! Up! Up! Up! is the encouragement that echoes along the course. The floor of the valley recedes impressively below us. I take advantage of the early water stations and drink two full cups of water at each. Along the course I nibble on my three Maxim bars to keep my energy levels up but get fed-up with them by the end. Phil and I are cheered up by an early rendition of the cosmic song by Ewen. I wonder what the Colombians and Ethiopians think of it!

On our run to Chandolin on Wednesday we had run to the Hotel Wiesshorn in something like 52 minutes which was probably just slower than race pace. However the big climb to Chandolin takes it out of my legs and I find myself walking some sections of the climb which I had





run comfortably on the training session. This make me wary of totally committing myself until I am past the high point at Nava and more certain that my strength will hold out until the end. After Nava the course is flatter although quite stoney in places which breaks the rhythm of the tiring runners. The descent to Zinnal is a typical Scottish one, decidedly hairy in parts if the very slippery short-cuts are attempted. Studs would have helped here but the paths are generally so good that I felt confident in rejecting the security of studs in favour of the comfort provided by my ETA Trails. At the end we collect our medals which have the Obelgabelhorn engraved on them this year. After a long wait I have my legs massaged. This puts an end to the twinges of cramp in one of my calves.

The prize giving is something else! We are given a meal in a huge marquee whilst being entertained by the subtle and gentle music of the alp-horn. I always thought this instrument would sound like a fog horn! As we drink some beer the Black Bottom Jazz Band strike up a more raucous sound which develops into a much-joyful table banging and hand-clapping as the delighted winners are orchestrated to the platform to collect their medals. An unforgettable moment for them! The whole event is carried out with great panache and the organisers must be very proud of what they have created.

#### **MON 12 AUGUST - LOTSCHENTAL**

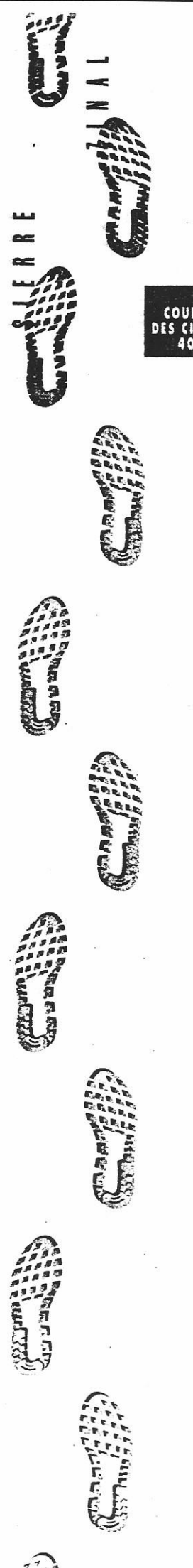
Our last day, which is not to be wasted. In many ways one of our best trips. This is the most unspoiled valley which Hilda and I have visited in Switzerland and being near Susten, is ideal for our last day. Tourist infrastructure is minimal or non-existent here which might be expected of a valley which, as Kev Reynolds writes, "came late into the 20th century". Driving through the villages we see the hideous demon masks or Tschaeggattae nailed to the walls of shops and houses. Part of an ancient folklore, these masks are still apparently paraded through the streets of the villages on carnival days.

We stroll through the meadows and scattered larch wood as far as the mighty Langgletscher glacier and then take the path below the Alp hamlet of Guggistafel back to the car-park. We don't have a map today and therefore don't know what everything is, but it is all magnificent.

Phil, Joe, Hanna and Lisa visit our tent in the evening with a bottle of wine which is soon finished, unfortunately. I think we've all had a memorable time.

#### **TUE 13 AUGUST - BAD HONWEN (GERMANY)**

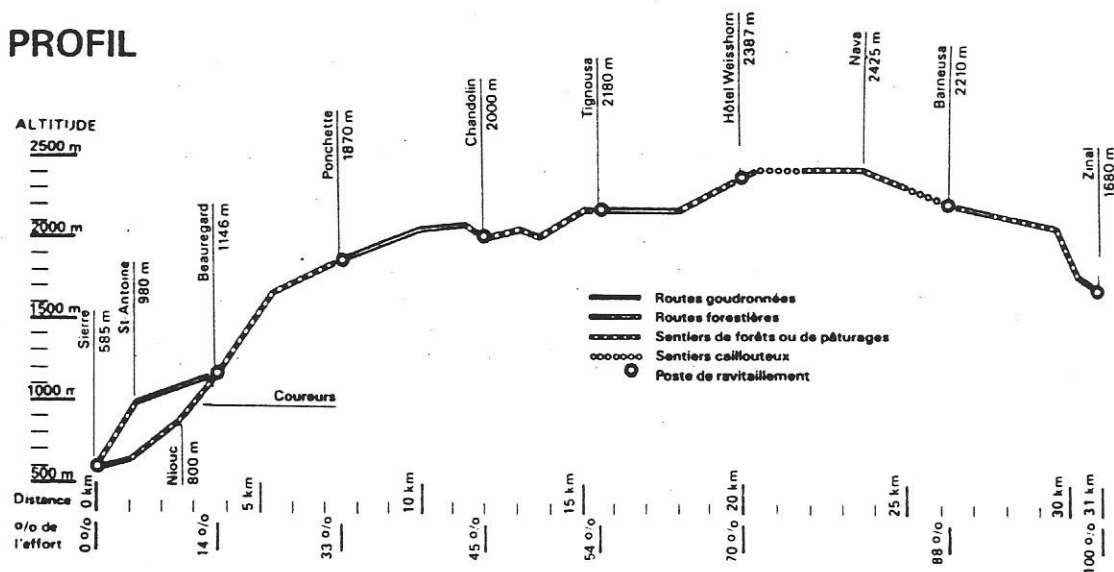
Motorway business again and a long haul home.....



## RESULTS OF THE SIERRE-ZINAL RACE

POS	NAME	COUNTRY/CLUB	TIME
1	Cticha Tesfaye	Ethiopia	2:41:05
2	Sahle Wendewosen	Ethiopia	2:41:21
62	John Blair-Fish	Carnethy	3:12:30
88	Dave Armitage	Cosmics	3:19:06
215	Brian Lawrie	Cosmics	3:40:02
282	Phil Kammer	Cosmics	3:52:28
346	Ewen Rennie	Cosmics	3:59:59
738	Steve Pryor	Cosmics	4:54:11

### PROFIL



Les pourcentages indiqués sur ce graphique donnent une indication du temps qui vous sépare de l'arrivée.  
Exemple : à Chandolin — et bien que la distance parcourue ne soit que le tiers du trajet total — vous avez effectué le 45 % de l'épreuve, c'est-à-dire presque la moitié.



## Ospreys of Paradise Wood - Phil Kammer

She came  
One late April's evening  
In joyous tired flight and circled  
High above with outstretched limb.

She grasped  
The lichen crusted branch she knew  
Of summers past and held it  
Firmly, folded wings, no movement.

She waited  
Watching winter's pack descending  
In torrent through the tree-lined trench  
With eager eye.

She hungered  
Deep within to hear  
The cry and greet once more  
Her eyrie mate for  
Paradise to share.

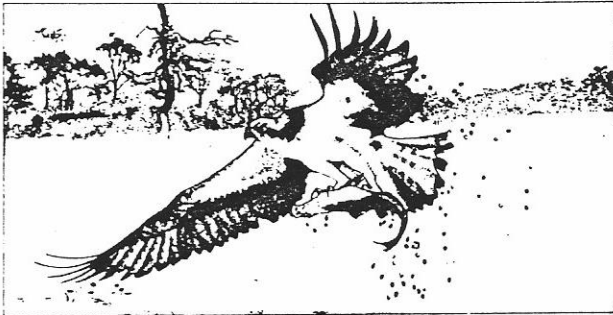


His plunging dive  
A sudden act  
That turned her head  
And with a bow  
She joined  
The celebration flight  
To twist and turn  
And soon to hover  
On their eyrie's hearth.

And falling waters  
Eased the hunt  
For Trout and Salmon  
Passing through  
In talons plucked  
And torn upon  
The high nest floor  
For eager hatchling  
Hungry gape.

Their downy wings now,  
Sprouting flights,  
In readiness,  
Their day to take  
To skies, soft warmed  
with summer sun  
and swallows wheeling.

They stand  
One early August morning  
Taking wing  
Their sire to follow  
Higher then, away from Mother  
Paradise behind them  
Broad horizons reaching  
Ever further beckon.



# THE ITALIAN JOB

by Stuart Chapman

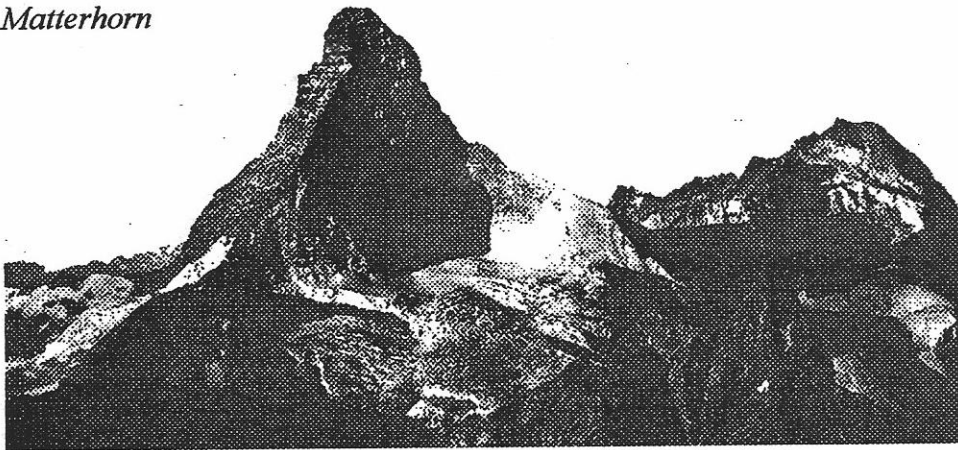
## The Fila International Skymarathon Cervina Italy 15-16 July 1995

**Saturday 15 July** - the qualification run, a simple task of running a vertical kilometre, 3280 feet in old money, this had to be completed in under 60 minutes for men and 70 minutes for women. The course length was approximately 3Km and starting at an altitude of 6580 feet above sea level it certainly is testing. The run itself is on the lower slopes of the Matterhorn.

**Sunday 16 July** - the main race starting from Cervinia (6580 feet above sea level) up the western Breithorn to an altitude of 13,661 feet above sea level and descending over the same course. The distance covered is 13Km on trail and 13Km on snow/ice (glacier).

Now the scene is set and if you're all sitting comfortably I will begin to tell you how badly I did. Firstly, we had to get to Cervinia, a little town in the Italian Alps, which is no problem in the winter as this is one of the main ski resorts, but in summer, no tour operator can help. So after much deliberation we decided to drive. After a mere 1400 miles in 2 days we arrived feeling

*Matterhorn*



extremely tired but we were there. A shame no one else had arrived yet. After a good night's sleep, at the only campsite in the region, we headed back up the mountain to Cervinia to meet with the race organisers as we still did not know a great deal about the race. It must be said at this point that trying to get information out of these people was like trying to get blood out of a stone. You had to ask specific questions otherwise you

were not told what you wanted to know. However, less of my moaning and on with the story.

The race on Saturday was the important one because if you did not run well you were on your way home. The course record stands at 40 minutes 44sec and with prize money of \$1000 this race is hotly competed for with local runners taking part (but not the main race the following day?). The race is run in the form of a time trial with everyone setting off at one minute intervals. This proved to be very good in assisting you to gauge how you were fairing i.e. how many you were passing, or in my case, how many were passing me. The race was won by Fila's number one runner Matt Carpenter (who also won it last year) in a time of 42min 14sec. I qualified in a time of 58min 41sec in 50th position. The most unfortunate runner was a chap called Giuseppe Feragasso who ran it in 60min 3sec and was disqualified. They stick to the rules when it suits them. Of the 77 men who entered 52 achieved a qualifying time and of the 9 ladies who entered 8 achieved a qualifying time (of which 6 ran for the Fila team).

When we had all jogged back down to Cervinia

feeling a great sense of relief and about to head straight to the pub we were informed that in the main race we had to run with ski poles! Nice to have a bit of warning - maybe they thought I wouldn't qualify, mind you neither did I. After a little light refreshment we went in search of the cheapest ski poles

as they are never likely to be used again.

After a night on the local battery acid which had wine printed on the label (\$5 for 5litres - good stuff) I really felt like running up the 7081 feet of ascent that lay ahead of me (I think not). At the assembly area I was surprised to find that only about half the field from the previous day had entered the main race (36 men and all 8 ladies had qualified). I suddenly realised that I was the slowest runner in the event going by the previous days results but unperturbed

by this fact I decided to mingle and find out how strong the field really was. After conversations in broken Italian/English and with the multitude of Yanks' - most were sub two and a half marathon runners (my PB was 2hrs 58sec two years ago) I suddenly felt worried I was going to come last - and there was not even a prize for that.

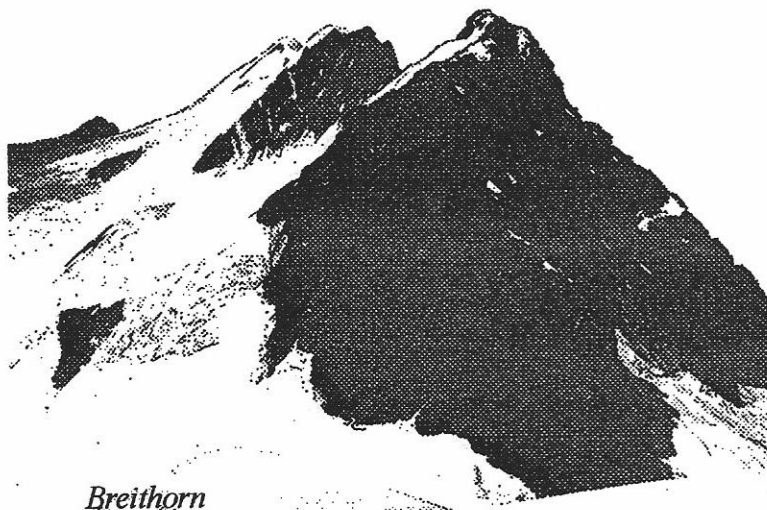
As I stood on the start line with all the obligatory kit i.e. wearing running tights and gaiters and carrying gloves and ski poles. I felt somewhat overdressed for the occasion. No one else had bothered with gaiters so these were discreetly discarded and the Fila team had no ski poles. I thought this is most strange and upon enquiring, the Fila teams ski poles had been taken to the base of the ski slope for them so they did not have to carry them so far, bless 'em.

Unperturbed by their little bending of the rules I lined up in my rightful position at the back of the field and watched in awe as the whole of the field sprinted away from me.

Upon reaching the base of the ski slope which we were supposed to be able to run up there was only two people behind me but I was slowly gaining on two runners just in front of me who had set off at a lightning pace. Unfortunately on reaching the snow in my ETA's I realised why the rest of the field were wearing track shoes. As I slid back in my rubber 'spikes' the rest of the field surged forward on their metal spikes. I had not asked if metal spikes were the best thing, the rest of the field obviously had.

As the race unfolded and I reached the summit of the western Breithorn there was by my calculation four people behind me. Unfortunately I'm not renowned for my descending ability and I convinced myself that I was going to be the last person home.

The first 1000 feet of descent was simple, you stepped over the edge of the Breithorn glacier, sat on your butt and slid. A guide rope had been pegged to assist you and ensure you did not slide off the edge of the mountain. I managed to burn a



*Breithorn*

hole in the butt of my tights, burnt both forearms and ruined a pair of gloves which are now ventilated. The race was now on to get back without being overtaken.

The result at the end of the day was, who else, Matt Carpenter first in a time of 2hrs 32min. The first placed Brit was Mark McDermott in 9th place in 2hrs 55min. The next Brit was Kevin Lilly who was 16th in 3hrs 9min. I came home in a lowly position of 34th in a time of 3hrs 52min. The last man home was an Italian in a time of 3hrs 58min and last was a young British lady called Alison in approximately

4hrs. I can't remember her surname we were only given the result for the men. As an event, even though I've slated the organisers, it is the most magnificent run I have ever done. The views from the Matterhorn and from the top of

the Breithorn of the area is breathtaking. Credit to Fila, they do organise accommodation at a reasonable price in an expensive area and they also provide you with meal tickets for a local restaurant. They also picked Kevin up from Milan airport and drove him to Cervinia and back to the airport free of charge which proves they can be helpful when they want.

If anyone wants further information or advice about the event I will help as much as I can (if you want to borrow a pair of ski poles I have a pair that are virtually unused). For the more elite amongst our ranks the prize money etc. is very good with a first prize of \$3,000 down to \$100 for the eighth place. For the ladies the first prize is \$1,500 down to \$200 for the fifth place. A secondary bonus that applies to some of the races' is the first two men and women 'outsiders' get an all expenses paid trip to the next race in the series which in this instance is run on a plateau at 17056 feet above sea level (needless to say an outsider is a person who is not a member of the Fila team. Who knows certain runners could cause a Cosmic upset!

# **FLEXIBILITY IN SPORT - THE CURRENT POSITION**

## **DEREK A BISSET**

It is an unwritten law of exercise among both elite and casual exercisers that a warm-up is essential for the success of any exercise program and to avoid injury - in actual fact there is not a shred of evidence to support this hypothesis although most would say it is a good idea. The problem is that it is a difficult subject to research - sportspeople will not forego their usual warm-up then exercise vigorously because of their perceived risk of injury - the very thing one is trying to quantify! Stretching is widely considered to be an important part of the pre-exercise warm-up, necessary to promote fitness, assure flexibility and avoid injury<sup>1</sup>: so much so that now many authorities recommend stretching before exercise BUT some believe that it can do more harm than good; itself causing injuries<sup>2,6,7</sup>. Despite this disagreement stretching forms a part of almost all warm-up routines and, perhaps a little worrying, is now becoming an exercise area in its own right with some sportspeople having "flexibility days" built into their training schedules. To look at this subject meaningfully it is necessary to briefly review some of the basics so that the language used is fully understood by all.

### **Physiology**

The muscle spindle that is attached to intrafusal and extrafusal muscle fibres is sensitive to active and passive stretch and helps to control the dynamic length of the muscle. Stretch receptors in the tendons are sensitive to tension and help prevent over-stretching. There is evidence that both muscles and tendons act viscoelastically in response to stretch and that stretching a muscle or group of muscles appears to promote relaxation and lower tension in the muscle-tendon unit, allowing further stretching.

### **Methods of Stretching**

Ballistic stretching entails repeated bouncing movements in the lengthened position of the muscle; it has been suggested that there is a risk of injury because muscle tension is increased. Static stretching involves a slow stretch that is held for up to 1 minute and has become the method most widely favoured among sportspersons and their coaches. The inverse stretch reflex comes into play, permitting further lengthening and greater flexibility. Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation applies the concepts of reflex activation and inhibition through a "contract/relax" procedure. A similar technique, termed reciprocal relaxation, involves contraction of the agonist muscle at the end of the antagonist's range. The last two methods usually, but not exclusively, fall into the area inhabited by physiotherapists.

### **Why?**

As stated in the opening paragraph stretching as part of warm up is considered essential by many to maintain optimum joint performance, afford suppleness and



avoid injury. By extrapolation, stretching has been muted as an area to be addressed with the same vigour as strength and conditioning training<sup>3</sup> - also an area where controversy occurs in no small measure!! It has been postulated that by increasing the range of movement of joints the more effective will become their leverage, e.g. if the hamstrings are stretched the stride length will increase which on the face of it would seem to be an advantage for the runner but makes no allowance for the change in the angle of foot-fall, increased forces acting through the knee and hip nor for the change in trunk carriage attitude.

### The Facts

Does flexibility work reduce the number of injuries? To answer that we have to consider if lack of flexibility is a feature in sportspeople and, if it is present, whether it contributed to injury. A study conducted into the training of elite young athletes<sup>4</sup> found that flexibility up to the age of 14 was uniform in boys and girls and over 4 sports (swimming, gymnastics, tennis, football). The range of movement of various joints was tested and it was found that some flexibility was sport specific but that the actual values were not significantly effected by training time. Over the age of 14 there was a marked variance of flexibility observed between the sexes with the sports specificity becoming more pronounced. It is interesting to note that gymnasts performed much better than the other groups in terms of trunk and hip flexibility but performed relatively poorly in tests of upper limb and glenohumeral flexibility. The 'best' general flexibility was found among swimmers. This state of flexibility persists until the age of about 30 when the elasticity of ligaments and tendons is known to decline and that in the 40 - 50 year-old group bone and muscle strength both decline. Joint lubrication also diminishes in the older group with the atrophy of synovial membranes. Whether this is an inevitable result of the ageing process or due to the relative inactivity which accompanies ageing in most people is not absolutely clear.

It has been clearly demonstrated<sup>5</sup> that the vast majority of sports injuries (>60%) occur during event training and only about 20% during competition with the rest occurring during other sporting interests. Given the effort produced during competition one would expect the number of injuries occurring to be greater than in training if the aetiology was related to lack of flexibility or inadequate warm-up or both. However there is evidence that the higher the level of competition the greater the risk of injury "...the more an athlete pushes towards excellence in a competitive event, the greater the chance of injury"<sup>8</sup>. Again if the aetiology was lack of flexibility or inadequate warm up one would expect the injuries to occur early in the training session. However, this was not the case in a recent study<sup>5</sup>. This showed that injuries occurred later in the session when the athletes were becoming fatigued. This caused not only a breakdown in technique but also a reduction in the capacity of the athlete to judge the workload to which they subjected themselves. Two interesting facts emerged. Firstly athletes who had a coach suffered significantly less injuries than uncoached athletes. Secondly there was no significant difference between hours trained in an average week and injury incidence; this appears to

support the exclusion of 'overuse' injuries as forming a major contribution to track and field injuries. Together this seems to further enforce the hypothesis that practice of poor technique and unsupervised training are the important factors in injury causation.

Older athletes are much more prone to injury, and these injuries tend to last longer, than their younger counterparts. There is no evidence whatsoever that stretching exercises offsets the drop-off in flexibility seen in the older age group. However, this is a group which is attracting the attention of researchers and there is a fair amount of work going on in various centres around the world.

As mentioned earlier, there seems to be a sports specific development of flexibility which suggests that simply "doing" ones sport encourages the range of movement required. This raises the hypothesis of whether by stretching in a way that some would consider injudicious the risk of undesirable movement occurring increases, e.g. lateral movement may develop in the knees of a runner who has over-stretched the ilio-tibial band.

Following injury and some pathological conditions reduced flexibility is a common problem and there is no doubt that stretching plays an important part in rehabilitation - this is well documented. What is less well documented is whether local heat aids this stretching effect and whether or not the long term outcome is improved. Lentell et. al.<sup>9</sup> have demonstrated that using local, superficial heat during low-load prolonged stretch (LLPS) brings about a lasting, improvement in joint flexibility superior to using LLPS alone.

### Rehabilitative Stretching

Warm muscles stretch far more effectively than thermoneutral or cold muscles and this should be considered when dealing with athletes recovering from injury or who are abnormally 'stiff'. Stretching should not put extreme pressure on any joint or tendon attachments as the goal is to increase the length of muscle. Stretching at the end of a workout rather than at the start may be more beneficial and have a carry-over effect for the next workout. A slow static stretch, ending short of pain and held for some 20 seconds, repeated 3 times is considered to be a safe and effective method of stretching<sup>10</sup>.

### Conclusion

There is absolutely no evidence to support the theory that stretching reduces injury rates or is necessary to improve sports performance. The only marked corollaries to injury seem to be age, level of competition and supervised training. Sex, hours of training, warm up and particular event appear to have no obvious relationship. There is no evidence that stretching exercises improve sport performance. Stretching exercises do help to regain joint flexibility following injury and the process is aided by using localised, superficial heat.



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I had been thinking about doing a race on the continent for a while, but I'd always been put off by most of them being uphill only, which has always seemed rather pointless to me - surely after slogging uphill for hours you deserve some fun? When Ben Preece showed me an article about this race in a running magazine I thought it seemed ideal - It starts and finishes in the same place, lots of climbing over a high pass and the pictures looked wonderful. It did occur to me that 67km might be rather a long way, and that 2700m was really quite a big climb, but what the hell, what's all this training for anyway? Ben and I both fancied the race, and our partners Sue and Ali both fancied a trip to the Alps, so we thought we'd make a holiday of it.

The high point of the race is about 2900m, high enough for the altitude to be a problem and a good excuse to go out 2 weeks early to acclimatise. We booked a tour through Mike Gratton, and got a self catering apartment in Davos. Davos is not an attractive town - there are very few old buildings, and it has grown up mainly as a ski resort in the last 20 years or so, although it has been a resort for over a hundred years. RL Stevenson stayed there for a while but found everyone very gloomy apparently. The town is however very well served by cable cars, and has a running track, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, an ice rink, tennis courts and lots of excellent bakeries, for which I can forgive the odd concrete apartment block. The mountains are not the highest in Switzerland, the highest nearby is just over 3000m, but it is the sunniest part of the country, and if you want to do some real climbing, the glacier express to Zermatt calls by every day.

The first week we spent training quite hard - Ben and I would run up to the mountain restaurants, and meet Ali and Sue who got the cable cars. The paths are very well maintained, and there is some really wonderful running to be had. You could do more or less any distance you want, and get the lifts back down if you want to avoid long hard descents. Alternatively you could get the lifts up and run back to avoid long hard climbs. We usually ran up then all walked down together. The scenery is magnificent, and the flowers at this time of year are quite incredible, you can stand at one spot and see more variety than you'll see in Scotland in a lifetime. Actually the same is true of the ice creams, not even Ben could try all of them in two weeks.

The weekend before the big race there is an evening race around the town - 5.8k for the plodders and 8k for the invited elite. Actually the plodders were quite fast, and with the altitude it is surprisingly hard to run well. I did about 19.30 I think, finishing well down the field. Ben was second over 50 in about 20.00 and won a medal. We all got a bag full of toiletries, which shows what the Swiss feel about runners. The atmosphere in the town was great, with people watching from restaurants and apartments all the way round the course. The elite race was won by a Kenyan who went off to Atlanta the next day for the Olympics. Very impressive.

The next day we felt well enough acclimatised to do the uphill only Gotschnaberg race from Klosters, just down the valley. This is 11km and about 3500m climb, at a more or less constant gradient. The altitude was a problem for the last 3 or 4k, but the real problem was the quality of the field. I thought I ran pretty well, taking 71.19, but I only finished 72nd out of 321. Still, I'd have beaten most of them if we'd had to run back down again. Ben was 4th over 50 in 74.31. It's a very pleasant walk back to Davos from the top of the hill, and the ice creams at the lake were well deserved. All three of them.

We eased off a bit the next week, doing more walking than running, and lots of eating. Mike Gratton did a track session mid-week, but I was pretty half hearted. Most of the rest of his group were staying at a hotel at the other end of town and were reputedly going for early morning runs around the lake. Early mornings never struck me as a good idea. We went for a walk over the highest part of the course with the other runners, which was a good idea if only because the weather was beautiful and we saw it at its best. There was also an evening meal with live music at the Jacobshorn restaurant, which was fun but a bit expensive. That was really all we did as an organised group.

By Wednesday I was feeling very fit and looking forward to the race. On Thursday I caught a cold. It always seems counter productive to race with a cold, and I spent the next two days being distinctly miserable, hoping it would go away. Needless to say I still had it on Saturday, but decided to race anyway. It was only 67k after all, and we had come a long way. There are actually 4 races, the whole course was done by about 1500, but you could do it as a relay in teams of three, or just do the first 27k (which is actually mostly downhill), or the last 30k over the mountain. This would probably suit most hill runners best because it avoids almost all of the road sections, and includes about 1800m of the climb. The first race has quite a lot of road, and most of the British group, who were all road runners, did it.

The first 10k of the race are on a rather uninteresting road, but then it makes a long climb through the forest, through a few small villages whose residents were all out ringing cowbells and cheering us on. The standard cheer goes something like 'hup hup hup hup SOOOOOper'. The organisers publish a list of entrants' names and numbers and sometimes someone would call out something close to my name - 'come on Daveeeee'. My cold wasn't too much of a problem (I could breathe at least) and I was enjoying myself. The course follows an old railway line along the side of a huge gorge, the scenery was magnificent, it wasn't too hot, and I felt pretty good. Unfortunately coming into Filisur, the end of the first race, there is a steep, winding downhill on a road, and I felt a twinge in my hip, which rapidly got worse. I thought it was a trapped nerve, and kept hoping it would somehow untrap itself, but of course it didn't. The next 5k were extremely difficult, but we got onto a steep climb for another 5k and it wasn't so bad. I actually had to walk down the steepish descent into Bergun though, where Ali and Sue were waiting. I really should have pulled out there, but I thought that since the next 20k were all uphill, and I'd managed the last uphill okay, I could carry on. Big mistake. The next 4 hours were the most painful I can remember. After a while there was an electric shock through my back at every step. I could have stopped, but since I'd just have had to walk back, and since I wasn't doing much more than walking anyway, there didn't seem to be much point. After 4 hours Ben passed me looking pretty good. I just kept getting slower.

The route would actually be a good run if you are feeling better than I was. From Bergun it is a very beautiful path first through the forests then the flower meadows, there are lots of food stops (bananas and various drinks mainly) and quite good support even on the remotest parts (by now it was hup.....hup.....hup and never mind the SOOOOper). The descent from the pass is a bit steep and rocky to begin with, but mostly it's very runnable. I know this from the walk we did earlier in the week. My recollection of the race is just pain. Particularly on the descent, and the last 5k through the woods. I didn't know you could hurt so much for so long. The finish is in the ice stadium. A boardwalk takes you in above the crowds sitting at tables cheering. In the right circumstances it would be exhilarating but I just wanted to stop. I got a little trophy made of a quartz crystal, and sat down while someone took the electronic tag off my shoe. I certainly couldn't have done it myself. I actually finished 115th out of 1500, so I guess there must have been some very slow runners out there. I took 7 hours 13, of which 2 were very enjoyable. Ben was 3rd over 50 in 7.01.

Was it worth it? At the end everyone was saying what a great achievement it was, and how I must be glad I'd carried on. Well no actually. Well this was the only race I've done where I would definitely say I wish I hadn't finished. However, as a race I'd say it was potentially a great experience, and I can't help feeling that I could have done very much better. The scenery is wonderful, it's very well organised, there's plenty of food on the route (I might actually have put on weight I had so much), the going is sufficiently interesting in parts to give road runners a few problems, but it's never very rough, and Davos is a great place for a running/walking/eating holiday. We're seriously thinking about going back next year.

David Hirst

You've been belaying your partner for half an hour, the wind picks up and it starts squalling. You know you should put on more clothes, but you don't want to stop the show to do this, he's being slow enough as it is!! Finally he makes it, and you get ready for the next pitch, but your fingers are stiff, the rope won't untangle and you can't seem to get your head round the first moves. Sound familiar? These are the first signs of hypothermia, and if you don't get moving, get warm and get your brain in gear, you're in trouble.

You're out in the hills with a bunch of people, a few hours into the walk, and it's been drizzling, windy and 10 C all day. You decide to push the pace to get back before dark - you don't notice the flash of panic cross the new bloke's face. He's been at the back of the line and hasn't said much all day. He was a bit pushy about his prowess at the start, so you don't mind showing him a thing or two. He starts to lag. You ask if he's OK, he gets belligerent so you leave him and set off again. Half an hour later, he's gone. Eventually you find him stumbling around half a mile off the track, incoherent and very cold. What do you do? How could you have prevented it?

Hypothermia is a lowering of the core body temperature below 35 C. It occurs when our body's ability to generate heat can no longer compensate for the rate at which heat is being lost. We can generate heat physiologically by shivering, which raises our metabolic rate by up to 5 times; and by eating, which raises it temporarily by up to 10%. These alone are not enough to keep us warm in a cold environment, and all other methods such as increasing physical activity, wearing the right clothes, making fire and shelter require thought and action. This makes hypothermia dangerous, because one of the first things to go when we get cold is our awareness of our situation and our ability to make rational decisions about how to manage it. For example, strenuous exercise can increase our heat production by 10 times, but this is limited by our level of fitness and stamina, and by how much food and water we have. It may be that in the severest conditions, only the fittest people can move fast enough to keep warm.

## **HOW TO RECOGNISE HYPOTHERMIA**

Be on the look out for it at all times:-

- Hypothermia can occur at higher temperatures than you might expect, especially if it is wet and windy. A wind speed of 20 mph can reduce the effective temperature from 50 F to 32 F i.e. freezing point.

- Heat stroke can occur in cold weather. If you're running in a non-breathable shell for a long period, collapse can be quickly followed by hypothermia.

- Susceptible individuals are often young, elderly or thin, and people with health conditions such as thyroid problems, diabetes or epilepsy. N.B. friends who've been on a bender the night before with alcohol or drugs!!

- Contributing factors are exhaustion, dehydration, hypoglycaemia and recent trauma.



## THE STAGES OF HYPOTHERMIA

### 37 - 35 C

The skin is pale and cold, shivering is constant. The individual is alert and actively trying to keep warm. Fingers can be stiff and uncoordinated.

### 35 - 32 C

Confusion sets in with altered mood states, ranging from withdrawal to aggression. Muscle function deteriorates and shivering comes in waves.

### 32 - 30 C

Apathy and lethargy start to take over and the victim makes little attempt to help themselves. Respirations and heart rate slow down. Shivering stops and muscles become rigid. This state can be mistaken for rigor mortis.

### 30 - 28 C

Stupor turns to coma with fixed, dilated pupils, relaxed muscles, heart rate and breathing are hard to detect. The skin looks blue.

There have been cases reported of "Paradoxical Stripping". It seems that just before consciousness is lost, the thermoregulatory centres in the brain become unresponsive to the cold - a last ditch vasodilation warms the body briefly during which the victim may take all their clothes off. Some have also been found as if attempting to burrow under things. This has been classified "Terminal Burrowing Behaviour"!!! Yes, these were N. American researchers!!

## WHAT TO DO WHEN IT HAPPENS

If they are still mobile and partially coherent, encourage them to move about, give warm drinks - not alcohol or caffeine; take off any wet clothes and replace them with dry ones and be sure to cover their head and neck. Keep them out of the wind and rain as much as possible and away from cold surfaces. If possible, put hot packs under the arms and on their abdomen. If they are not mobile, get them into a bivy sac/sleeping bag along with another person who is stripped to their underwear. They have lost the ability to generate heat so try to prewarm anything that comes into contact with them, including air (mouth to mouth), fluids etc.

If the victim is comatose, do not try to rewarm them. Do not rub the skin. Make sure they are dry and sheltered and not still losing heat, then transport them horizontally and without jolting them(!!) to the nearest A&E department. Sudden movement can send them into Cardiac Arrest.

## PREVENTION

-Check the weather report but, more importantly, learn to read the sky so that you know what to expect and how fast it is coming.

-Always take enough food and warm drinks.

-DRESS PROPERLY: In mountainous terrain, most heat is lost by convection. Air moves across the body surface constantly removing the layer that has just been

warmed. The evaporation of sweat uses considerable body heat and radiation from your head can account for more than half the total heat loss. So...

- Do not wear cotton of any kind, it soaks up water and stays wet.
- Use the layering system: wear a polypropylene "wicking" layer next to your skin. This helps to take moisture away so that you don't use up energy evaporating it. Outside this, one or two layers of a snug-fitting material, fleece/wool will trap a warm layer of air next to the skin, reducing the effects of conduction. Then a windproof, waterproof shell to maintain this cosy environment.
- Use the layering system to minimize changes in body temperature. Take clothes off before you get hot, and pile them on the minute you stop.. Unfortunately, no material is both completely waterproof and breathable, so in wet weather you are probably going to get wet one way or another. Be prepared for this, have spare clothes in your pack, or in the car.
- Know your limits. If in a group, choose a pace that is comfortable for the slowest member of your group, involve everyone in decision-making, and have frequent, short breaks. This way you can monitor energy levels in the group, maintain morale and check that everyone is eating and drinking enough, and adequately dressed.
- If anyone is unhappy about going on, either turn the whole group for home, or send them back with another, strong member of the group, and make sure you are all clear on plans for meeting up again.

HAVE FUN!!



## **A MAD MARCH WEEKEND**

by Phil Kammer

Friday afternoon and as they say across the pond I'm draggin' ass. Never mind though it's the weekend and there's a chance of a couple of long runs. The weather man reckons Saturday will be a better day so it'll be Bennachie tomorrow and probably down to the coast at Forvie nature reserve on Sunday. Although there's some work to do on Saturday if I make an early start I can fit in a long run between feeding swine and feeding cattle. I'm off on Sunday so there's no problem then. There's an added complication though; Jo's parents have braved snowy roads from Oban to spend the weekend so I've got to be sociable to.

The best laid plans almost never work out and Saturday is the proof. By the time the works done, breakfast's eaten and I've had a chat it's too late for Bennachie. I've to look after the wee boys while Jo and her mum take the girls shopping in the afternoon. Right, it'll have to be the beach and dunes of Forvie! Within twenty minutes I'm jogging down the tree lined track in bright sunshine with a cool breeze drifting across from the southwest. The path climbs and narrows to a rough parting in the rank heather that covers the inner sanctuary of the reserve as I trot north towards Collieston. Despite the car park being full there's not a sole in sight up here and as I descend into the vast bowl amid the dunes I note, as I always do, that for a short while there's not one sign of civilisation as the heathery dune tops block sight of the surrounding fertile farmland, Aberdeen's urban sprawl ten miles to the south and in the west there's a clear view to the high Cairngorms behind my old friend Bennachie.

Emerging from the heather I turn east towards the cliff tops and then south into the breeze as I descend steadily to the beach by the salmon fishers bothy. The tide is well out and for a mile and a half firm smooth sand stretches to the mouth of the estuary. The shimmering sunlight on

the sea is almost hypnotic as I close my eyes and float in my own little world. The sand is softer at the river mouth with each step sinking in a couple of inches; good strength training! A group of seals are bobbing just offshore eyeing me with interest and twitching whiskers. Back on the grassy track the going's easier, faster but crowded now with mums and dads kids dogs and more kids. I don't fancy going round again the same way so just before the car park I turn to retrace my steps. I've been running long enough to recognise the look of pity on the faces of non-runners and I see it now over and over as I meet the walkers again.

The beach is just as good second time around but it's followed by a steady climb up along the cliffs back to the heathery fastness. Two miles from the car I catch up with a runner who I must have passed three or four times during my journey and we make the run in together chatting of hills, running and wild places. With seventeen good miles under my belt I head homeward to lunch and two demanding little lads.

The shoppers go and return at five o'clock and I've to go feed the swine again. At 7pm I've finished and Jo's taking her mum to see Torvill and Dean so they go out the front door as I come in at the back.

Tomorrow I'll get up early for Bennachie and be back by 10am - I'll hardly be missed. We don't get to bed until 1.30am and those plans are looking shaky again Very shaky! Having slept in 'till 9am my run will now have to be later in the day after taking the kids swimming in the afternoon. I should be able to fit it in before darkness falls. At 4pm I'm driving west for the hill. Its raining on and off with a menacing wall of cloud building in the distance.

At the foot of Bennachie it's snowing lightly, quite pleasant really with occasional shafts of sunlight reaching through the cloud.

It's either going to be showery or get thicker in which case I can alter my intended route and stay at lower levels in the forest.

Two miles later I'm on the first climb up to the Mither Tap past descending walkers (looks of pity) up past the tree line and feeling strong.

The winds stronger up here but the snow's not getting any worse so on and up. By my reckoning I'll have to run for a about half an hour in the dark so I've packed a head torch along with the usual food foil blanket and first aid kit in my bum bag.

An even inch of snow covers the hill as I skirt the summit tor and descend to the heather brig en route for Millstone hill. The ranger reckons there's a family of pumas living in the woods here and several sightings have been made recently. Two weeks ago I had been out here at first light and heard what sounded like two cats fighting but there was a lot of deep growling and snarling - definitely not pussy cats!

In gathering darkness I cross Millstone hill and descend into the gloom of the forest at Donside . Get a grip! The hairs are standing up on the back of my neck and every now and then I'm looking over my shoulder to check - just in case. What will I do if it appears - all yellow teeth and sunken belly, drooling saliva. The Ranger says there's no threat to people because they eat small animals and there's plenty of those on the hill. But imagination is a strong deceiver. Get a grip!

From the car park at Donside I retrace my steps through even gloomier woods to the summit again and on down to heather brig. The snow is piling in now and darkness is quickly taking over. Fumbling gloved fingers extract the torch from my bum bag and I wear it reassuringly over my balaclava. Not time to turn it on yet, I'll let my eyes get used to the dark gradually and save it for the final descent off Mither Tap.

My mind's made up; despite worsening weather the quickest way back to the car is up and over the top and I know the path well. Still feeling strong I climb steadily

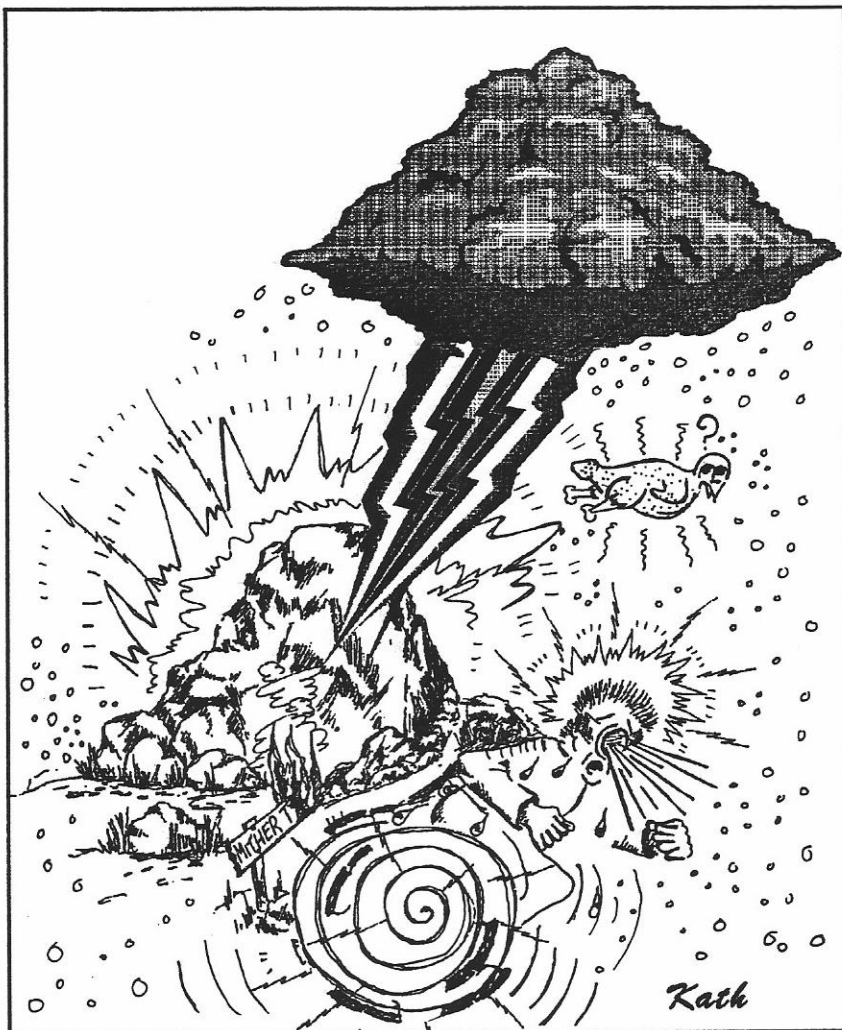
through deepening snow out of the trees onto the open hillside. Still no need for the torch, after all I'm the boy who ran up the big bad Ben at two in the morning and this is *only* Bennachie. Little do I know that fate is a wicked witch and a mind reader to boot!

I've decided not to climb the summit tor as I usually do. It's covered in snow and I have visions of the man from the 'Pru' looking pitifully over his half moon specs across his big desk at Jo and four kids as he points out the small print on my life policy.

Another few steps and I'll be crossing the ridge just 30 feet below the summit and then it's downhill all the way. As I step on the highest point there's a sudden high pitched whine inside my head. I stop. What's wrong with me? I feel alright, it's just the noise, but I'm not given anymore time to think about it. The air around me is filled with orange sparks and the whine has been replaced by a sound like a really big Guy Fawkes rocket starting off. Instinct makes me duck down as I raise my arms to shield my head. A brilliant blue flash is followed by profound darkness and my ears are ringing from that almighty bang. By now I realise that I'm in the very heart of an electrical storm and I know I've got to get off this perch before the next discharge. Stumbling forward I hope I'm still on the path as I grope down snow covered boulders in almost blind panic.

Thankfully my eyesight is returning even though there are bright spots and rings too. In my haste to leave the summit I've forgotten about the torch which is still strapped firmly to my head. A quick twist and the snowy void is floodlit just as the next bolt strikes. I reckon it's earthing on the tor just behind me and as I straighten from a crouch I can make out the waymarking sign at the path junction just ahead. The path steepens here and the strong north wind is whipping my face with hailstones as I plummet downwards using hands, feet and backside all the while trying desperately to crouch low against the snow covered hillside. About a minute

separated the strikes so I'm counting out loud till the next one : Down the steep section 23 - 24 - 25 - 26 and I'll soon be at the burn 39 - 40 - 41 into the trees; I'm going too fast to keep my head torch steady so it's in my hand 52 - 53 another flash and bang. Seems just as close. My panic is channelled into the downward plunge, straight into the wind and hail tearing into my face and forcing eyes closed. Out of the larch woods now and a plummet over the snow covered slabs takes me into the safety of the woods just as the next flash lights up the sky. By now I realise my chest is heaving and I'm hot with the sweat of my efforts. The relief of being down as I emerge from the trees into the car park where a lone walker is sitting in the dim light of his car, glad to have missed the storm. We exchange a wave and a weak smile as I pass. His thoughts I can only imagine. Ten minutes later I'm dry warm and sitting in the comfort of the car. I know that I'm very lucky to have escaped from the summit alive. Had I decided to go over the tor this tale would remain untold.



## **Postscript**

***A lightning strike is not always fatal, although a direct strike usually is. Most hit the ground and you may then receive a secondary shock as the charge is earthing. It is safest to stay out in the open rather than seek shelter behind a boulder, in a cave or under overhanging rock which may work like a giant sparking plug with you in the gap. Exposed summits should be avoided as they take more direct strikes than surrounding slopes. It is best to have as few points of contact with the ground as possible and this may be best achieved by crouching. Do not lie on the ground as this allows any surface currents to pass through the body usually with fatal results.***

***First aid for the victim must be immediate. If there is no pulse begin artificial resuscitation and heart massage without delay and continue until normal breathing resumes or until all hope is exhausted.***

***Electrical storms are best avoided so a weather eye, prudence and use of weather forecasts are all recommended.***



## Cosmic Questionnaire

20 Members returned the questionnaire. Thanks.

When a club reaches a certain stage there is always a danger that those who run the club lose touch with what their members are thinking. The Cosmic questionnaire was devised to find out if any such 'growing apart' had taken place. At the same time I felt that there was a need to tighten up the 'management' structure of the club and the questionnaire might help throw some light on what should be done in this direction.

If the questionnaires returned are representative of members opinion then it's clear that there are no major areas of disagreement about how the club should be run. Nevertheless there were some useful and pertinent points made and these are outlined below.

Most liked the informal nature of the club, but there was a minority request for a more formal club structure which might, it was thought, help carry the club forward positively into the future. (The A.G.M in December will address this issue.)

That the club mixed well socially, was generally accepted although even more social events would not go a miss, thought some. Maybe a few barbecues after Tuesday night runs in the summer months? Without fail, all who responded were keen on an organised social trip to the hills (to walk, train etc.). This will be arranged

The elimination of the summer weekend runs during the busy racing period of July, August and September was generally accepted, but not by all. This needs to be 'reviewed.'

The need for maps to be made available for the long runs in the hills was a point made in several returns. This problem is being addressed now, with colour coded maps now available for the long runs.

On the coaching side, some felt that more coaching advice was needed. It could be that some members who joined in the summer months are unaware of our coaching strength. Note that on Tuesday nights and usually on Saturdays we are lucky to have Ewen Rennie and Terry Kerr available to take our sessions and give advice. Both are qualified coaches with the experience and theoretical knowledge to answer any question. Just ask!

As one or two of you pointed out, we could do more in the way of theoretical talks and improving the navigational skills of our runners. Greg Barbour's talk on navigation last year was very good and I hope he will be prepared to do it again. Definitely try and attend this if you can. What more can be done will have to be looked at.

There was some disappointment expressed that the standard system is not up and running. We have badges and it will be on the go again soon. The club championship on the whole, needs a bit of a boost, as you recognise. The bulletin will be used next year to give quarterly updates on the championship.

A number of replies made comments on the junior issue. 'Open night for juniors'; 'Races for juniors'; 'Better advertising of junior events' were common among them. At the end of the day we really do need a person committed to young people to take on this side of it.

Finally finance. Some of you were not sure if we needed more money. What would it be used for? Why not try the occasional raffles? Others thought we should try 'lottery money' to raise cash or even raise the annual fees by £5! At the moment Cosmics is not desperately short of money. But consider. We subsidised every member attending the FRA relays in Cumbria by £10 the head. With more money we could have paid the total accommodation bill. This sort of facility could be extended to say all championship races and away weekends. We could subsidise the clothing we sell to members, more money could be given to race organisers for shields, prizes, use of toilet facilities and so on.

BL.

# COSMIC CHAMPIONSHIP 1996

Points for each race are awarded on the basis of 11 for the first Cosmic (male and female), 9 for second, 8 for third etc down to 1 point for each Cosmic completing the course. Best five scores to count.

Runner	Elbrm	Clach	G'she	Rinn	CWil	Morvn	Bnch	TOTAL
Dave A.	7	9	0	11	9	9	0	45
Dennis McD.	4	6	11	0	0	6	9	39
Greg B.	11	0	0	0	11	11	0	33
John B.	8	11	0	0	0	7	0	26
Wilson M.	9	8	8	0	0	0	0	25
Bob S.	6	7	0	0	0	0	11	24
Andrew W.	1	1	6	9	0	4	2	23
Graham M.	1	0	0	0	8	5	8	22
Gordon Y.	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	10
Graham E.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Phil K.	2	0	9	0	0	0	0	11
Gordon R.	1	4	0	0	0	0	5	10
Rick A.	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
Ian J.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Graeme M.	1	3	0	0	7	2	0	14
Phil T.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Keith G.	1	0	0	0	5	1	1	8
Steve P.	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
Ian S.	1	0	0	0	4	1	1	7
Alf McK.	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	4
Alex H.	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
Ewen R.	0	2	0	8	0	0	4	14
Brian L.	0	0	7	0	0	0	7	14
Ron P.	0	0	0	0	6	0	1	7
Terry K.	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Steve W.	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	9
John F.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Tim G.	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
Kevin C.	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Mansonia	2	6	0	7	5	7	8	33
Sonia A.	11	11	0	11	11	11	11	55
Tracey B.	0	9	0	9	0	9	9	36
Catherine M.	9	0	0	0	0	8	0	17
Carol L.	0	0	0	8	0	7	0	15
Zoe A.	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Sue B.	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Shona M.	6	0	0	0	0	0	7	13
Liz B.	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Anne T.	0	0	0	0	9	5	0	14
Elaine S.	0	0	0	0	8	6	0	14
Bing K.	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	7
Leonie P.	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6



## COSMIC STARS

Stars are awarded for three performances within 10% bands of the winners time (with women getting an extra 10% allowance).

### ELBRIMICK

\*\*\*\*\* Greg, Wilson, Bob, John, Dave, Gordon Y. Dennis and  
Sonia  
\*\*\*\* Graham E, Phil K, Graham M, Andrew, Gordon R. and  
Catherine  
\*\*\* Rick, Ian J, Graeme M, Phil T  
\*\* Keith, Zoe, Sue  
\* Steve

### CLACHNABEN

\*\*\*\*\* John, Dave  
\*\*\*\* Wilson, Bob, Sonia and Tracey  
\*\*\* Dennis  
\*\* Gordon Y, Gordon R, Graeme M, Ewen and Rick  
\* Andrew.

### GLENSHEE

\*\*\*\* Dennis, Phil K.  
\*\*\* Wilson, Brian  
\*\* Andrew

### BEN RINNES

\*\*\*\*\* Dave  
\*\*\*\* Sonia  
\*\*\* Tracey  
\*\* Andrew, Carol  
\* Ewen

### CAIRN WILLIAM

\*\*\*\*\* Greg, Dave, Sonia  
\*\*\*\* Graham M  
\*\*\* Graeme M  
\*\* Ron  
\* Keith, Ian S, Terry

### MORVEN

\*\*\*\*\* Greg  
\*\*\*\* Dave, Tim, John and Sonia  
\*\*\* Dennis and Tracey  
\*\* Graham M, Andrew, Stevie and Catherine  
\* Graeme M, Rick and Carol

### BENNACHIE

\*\*\*\*\* Bob, Dennis, Sonia and Tracey  
\*\*\*\* Graham M, Brian, Stevie, Gordon R  
\*\*\* Ewen, Kevin, Andrew  
\*\* Ron, Keith and Anne  
\* Ian S.



## COSMIC COMETS

Comets are performances within 10% of the winner's time in Scottish Championship Races. (Women 20%).

<b>Criffel</b>	<b>Winner 43m17s</b>	
Men	47m37s	Tim and Greg
Women	51m54s	(Sonia 52m33s)
<b>Eildon</b>	<b>Winner 27m03s</b>	
Men	29m45s	
Women	32m27s	(Sonia 32m46s)
<b>Aonach Mor</b>	<b>Winner 73m35s</b>	
Men	80m56s	
Women	88m31s	(Sonia 95m46s)
<b>Ben Rinnes</b>	<b>Winner 1h58m34s</b>	
Men	2h10m25s	Dave
Women	2h22m16s	(Sonia 2h26m30s)
<b>Morven</b>	<b>Winner 36m33s</b>	
Men	40m12s	Greg
Women	43m51s	(Sonia 45m13s)
<b>Pentlands</b>	<b>Winner 2h27m05s</b>	
Men	2h41m50s	Greg
Women	2h56m35s	(Tracey 3h16m06s)

## ALTERNATIVE WOMEN'S SCORING

<b>Criffel</b>	Sonia and Tracey
<b>Eildon</b>	Sonia
<b>Aonach Mor</b>	Sonia
<b>Ben Rinnes</b>	Sonia and Tracey
<b>Morven</b>	Sonia and Tracey
<b>Pentlands</b>	Tracey

## THE COSMIC STARS

<b>Comets</b>	Greg, Sonia and Tracey
*****	Greg, Dave.
*****	Sonia, Dennis, Bob, John, Graham M.
***	Tracey, Wilson,
**	Gordon R, Andrew, Graeme M
*	Ewen, Rick

Alterations, upgradings and any arguments see Ewen!

## THE DEVIL'S BURDEN RELAY 1996

Account by Dave Armitage  
3 February 1996 - Falkirk

At 10 o'clock on 3 February 1996, fourteen teams lined up in the middle of Falkirk to contest the first "Devil's Burden" hillrunning relay. The weather was cold and clear and the Lomond hills looked very inviting with their covering of snow. Zoe Ardron and Sue Buchan were to run with the first leg for Cosmic ladies, while John Buchan and I were starting for the Cosmic men's team. The starter's whistle blew and John shot off up the hill on a wave of adrenalin leaving me struggling in second place and the rest of the field trailing in our wake. By the top of the East Lomond, the pattern of the race was already set with Carnethy, Shettleston and Cosmics clear of the rest of the field. We raced down through the soft snow on the other side of the hill and cut off to the left through snowy fields. A short section of road led to more fields by the Ballo Reservoir and then a pleasant trek down through a wood. There was snow underfoot throughout this section, some deeply drifted, but the final section round the Moll Reservoir was clear.

Brian Marshall and Adam Ward led the way to the changeover and we followed with Malcolm Patterson and Des Crowe hard on our heels for Shettleston. We handed the control to Wilson Moir and he settled in battle with Dave Cummings of Shettleston which was to take them both past Carnethy.

Meanwhile, Zoe and Sue were establishing a lead over Westerlands, the other ladies team - an excellent debut to hillracing for Sue.

The second leg climbed steadily up from tracks to White Craigs before descending steeply to Scotlandwell. First to appear through the trees was Wilson, to the delight of the Cosmic onlookers. Shettleston were still in touch with Carnethy slightly adrift in third place. Cosmics were setting the pace as Greg Barbour and Tim Griffin headed back up White Craigs and across Bishops Hill. Both Cosmics and Shettleston took a slow route choice off Bishops Hill allowing race organiser Adrian Davies to take full advantage of his reconnaissance to bring Carnethy back into contention as the three teams started to climb West Lomond. Unfortunately, Greg had been down with the flu and should not really have been outdoors, never mind racing. In the circumstances it was remarkable that by the third changeover, after John Wilkinson had led home Shettleston a minute clear of Carnethy, Cosmics were only a further 2 minutes 40 seconds back in third place.

Bing Kerr ran a steady second leg for the ladies but was passed by world cup runner Helene Diamantedes who then continued into the third leg partnered by Elspeth Scott. Sonia Armitage and Tracey Brindley set off in pursuit across the gleaming white hills on this most attractive leg. The descent from West Lomond looked particularly magnificent, and we were able to watch through binoculars as the teams bounded down the final snowy colour

The ladies appeared in the same order as at the start of the leg and Catherine Manghan made her Cosmic debut as she took over for the last leg. Despite a climb in the middle, this leg was generally flat and fast and there was not really a realistic chance for anybody to catch the

flying Dermot Melgonigle in the men's race. However, unaware that there was a gap of more than ten minutes behind him, Bob Sheridan kept up the pace and brought us home in third place. Catherine also showed good speed on this leg and brought cosmic ladies home respectfully close to Westerlands.

Although it was disappointing that we missed out on both the team prizes and the individual leg prizes (2nd on legs 1 and 2), on reflection I believe that cosmics made a significant impact on this race. In the last few years, Shettleston and Carnethy have dominated the men's teams prizes in Scottish hillrunning whilst Westerland have had no serious ladies rivals. In both categories we ran the established teams very close and, but for bad luck with illness in the men's race and Westerland using their best runner twice in the ladies race as they were unable to produce a complete team, we would have had a good chance of winning both races.

We have certainly put ourselves on the map and there was an excellent team spirit which must be a healthy sign for the club. I also feel that we are probably the only club who would be able to field a second competitive men's team and hope that we will do so next year. I would certainly recommend the race to those who were not able to do it this year.

### RESULTS

#### Mens

1 Shettleston	2.34.26
2 Carnethy	2.35.12
3 Cosmic	2.39.44
4 Dundee Hawkshill	2.53.42
5 Westerlands	2.54.42
6 Fife	2.57.45
7 Lomond	2.58.06

#### Ladies

1 Westerlands	3.26.21
2 Cosmic	3.37.01



## CRIFFEL MICRO HILLRACE - 1996

**NEW ABBEY DUMFRIES**  
**AM/7m/1800ft/17 March**

### 1ST SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIP RACE 1996

The Cosmic Scottish Championship campaign is off and rolling. Twelve of us made the long trip to Dumfries with a stopover on Saturday night at Moffat to break the journey, Carol Lorimer came all the way from Staffordshire to join the ladies team.

Unfortunately, the cold weather which had been chilling the northeast all week had been just as bad down here. A lot of snow had accumulated on the upper reaches of Criffel which forced the organiser into a course change. Instead of going to the summit of the hill, we were turned round at Knockendoch (the first check point), and made to make up the distance with a vicious little climb up to "Waterloos Monument" as part of the return journey.

The lower path of Criffel was a quagmire of mud, slush and deeper slush. At times it was like running through syrup. Everybody must have had a fall or a "near thing" as they slipped and slid back down the hill. All good fun of course.

Tim Griffin led the Cosmics home in 10th place. Greg Barbour kept him company all of the way. Bob Sheridan and Michael Wan had good runs and with more experience gained they will be hot on the tails of Griffin and Barbour.

It was the ladies who stole the show though, with Sonia Armitage taking maximum championship points to lead the Cosmics team home. If this wasn't enough, Tracy Brindley, a comparative beginner in the hills, stormed home to secure the runners up slot with a very gritty run indeed. With Carol Lorimer digging in deep further

down the field it was a championship win for the Cosmics ladies. Brilliant! An historic moment.

Cosmics forked out a £100 subsidy towards expenses incurred over the weekend. It was a long trip and we wanted to encourage members to travel. We will continue to do so.

#### RESULTS

1 Andy Kitchen	Livingstone	43.17
2 Brian Marshall	HELP	43.51
3 Colin Donnelly	Eryri	44.00
10 Tim Griffin	Cosmic	46.17
12 Greg Barbour	Cosmic	46.32
42 Bob Sheridan	Cosmic	51.12
53 Michael Wann	Cosmic	52.12
57 Sonia Armitage(1st lady)	Cosmic	52.33
62 Brian Lawrie(vet)	Cosmic	53.36
80 Tracy Brindley(2nd lady)	Cosmic	55.57
91 Ewen Rennie(vet)	Cosmic	58.05
119 Carol Lorimer(3rd lady)	Cosmic	63.15
134 Steve Pryor	Cosmic	70.17

### CLACHNABEN HILL RACE AM/101/2M/3500ft

The fourth Clachnaben race enjoyed good overhead conditions for a change. 51 runners took part in the event. It is pleasing that our race continues to attract runners from further afield as well as the strong local contingent. Some notable faces were absent this year, however, because of the Scottish squad weekend. It would be a pity if we were denied these runners in future years and I would certainly like to see the squad weekends rotated around a bit.

Congratulations to Dave Weir whose time would have been even faster if the mountain rescue had not locked the gate at the end of the track section, which forced all the runners to clamber over the big stile. Graeme Ackland pushed Dave very close and these two were well ahead of the course record holder, Neil Martin, John Buchan, despite his protestation at not being good over this distance, led the Cosmics home to the team prize and Dave Armitage proved that at Clachnaben there are not many in his age category capable of catching him. Although Brian Waldie had little competition in the Super Vets category, his time was a very good one a record in this category. Sonia Armitage, in

a season which is showing great promise, set a new record in the womens race. Tracy Brindley, who had out raced often over this distance in the hills, must also be pleased with her run. Well done also to Pat Donald the ladies vet. prize winner. She also had had a good season. Thanks to all the runners for turning out and making this a worthwhile event.

### OPS CLACHNABEN HILL RACE AM/101/2m/3500ft

Position	Name	Club	Cat	Time
1	Dave Weir	Perth Strathtay	MS	1.20.48
2	Graeme Ackland	Livingston AC	MS	1.21.04
3	Neil Martin	Lomond Hill Runners	MS	1.25.16
4	John Buchan	Cosmic Hillbashers	MS	1.25.44
5	David Armitage	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	1.26.34
7	Wilson Moir	Cosmic Hillbashers	MS	1.31.55
8	Brian Waldie	Camethy HRC	MSV	1.32.40
11	Bob Sheridan	Cosmic Hillbashers	MS	1.33.40
16	Sonia Armitage	Cosmic Hillbashers	F	1.37.30
19	Dennis McDonald	Cosmic Hillbashers	MS	1.40.46
21	Tracy Brindley	Cosmic Hillbashers	F	1.41.57
24	Gordon Yule	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	1.44.37
30	Gordon Ramsay	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	1.49.42
31	Pippa Blake	Perth Strathtay	F	1.49.50
33	Graeme Marks	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	1.50.57
34	Ewen Rennie	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	1.51.30
35	Rick Allan	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	1.52.03
36	Pat Donald	Deeside Runners	FV	1.52.20
40	Andrew White	Cosmic Hillbashers	MS	1.57.23
48	Liz Bracegirdle	Cosmic Hillbashers	F	2.12.48
49	Alfred McKay	Cosmic Hillbashers	MV	2.13.14

### TISO CARNETHY FIVE MILE RACE

**AM/6m/2500ft/17 February**

1 J Brooks	Lochaber	47.50
27 J Buchan	Cosmics	54.32
33 G Barbour	Cosmics	55.00
36 D Armitage	Cosmics	55.11
	(MU)	
49 W Moir	Cosmics	57.01
63 B Sheridan	Cosmics	58.39
83 S Armitage	Cosmics	60.08
	(F)	
86 P Kammer	Cosmics	60.25
	(U)	
181 A White	Cosmics	67.26
224 G Marks	Cosmics	70.30
343 S Pryor	Cosmics	82.17
366 Z Ardron	Cosmics	87.15

## European Trophy at Snowden 13 July 1996

Before Tracey and I could enjoy our trip to Snowden, we had to endure a very tough hill rep, session at the foot of Cairn William, in front of a Grampian TV camera. We managed to lose our cameraman briefly, who tripped over a log too buzy zooming in on our legs! That'll teach him!

### Friday 12 July 1996

Tracy and I set off for Llanberis on the 7.55am train from Aberdeen, were then met by Pete Baxter, assistant team manager and Elspeth Scott, in Edinburgh, who drove us to Llanberis along with Angela Mudge, the 3rd member of our Scottish Ladies team. The journey went smoothly, meeting up with the other team members en route.

After we had got settled into the Padarn Lake Hotel, in Llanberis, we had a quick wee look at the course, then had to get ready for our parade through the village of Llanberis. Each country lined up in their teams, in alphabetical order, dressed in our team tracksuits. We proceeded through the village, accompanied by some of the children from the local primary school, who were in national costume, a very enthusiastic brass band, and some TV cameras, very warmly welcomed by a very large number of the folk from Llanberis.

We proceeded to the Snowdonia Museum for the opening ceremony, where we had the usual speeches in Welsh, English, French and Italian. We were then delighted with some Welsh culture!! **Ask Tracey!!!** Firstly, we were entertained by the local primary school choir - it was lovely to have them involved in the occasion. Then ..... we had a creme de la creme of Llanberis opera singers to entertain us for a further 40 mintues. Very nice, but Tracey and Sonia were starting to feel very hungry and had sore bottoms from the hard plastic seats. At last, we proceeded to the Royal Victoria Hotel for a very welcome hot buffet meal.

### Saturday 13 July 1996

#### Race Day

We had the morning to relax and try on our obscenely indecent, transparent Scottish kit!. In fact, we gals had to put our foot down and persuaded the team managers to buy us some alternative shorts - made as shorts should be! So an hour before the race, out we went shopping for our shorts.

The open race went off at 11am, so we watched some familiar faces go by, including our very own Cosmic - Bob Sheridan, who had a very good run, finishing in position in a time of 1.18.

1pm the start of the Ladies European Trophy Race - quite a fast start along the first road section, with the French, Italians, Austrians and England's Sarah Rowell going straight to the front.

Sarah, England's top runner means business. Isabelle Guillot of France took an early lead on the steep uphill road section, and held on to that lead throughout the race. We had a very tough and competitive climb up to our turning point. It was windy, so we were all using each other to shelter from the wind. Then a very fast descent back down the track, to the steep road section, then about a mile of relatively flat road, where we are all willing our legs to keep working - trying to hold back the onset of cramp or nursing blisters - on to the finish by Padarn Lake. No blisters for Tracey and me - thank goodness. Tracey is improving with every run, and finished a very good 21st in a very strong International field - Tracey was 3rd Scot. I finished in 13th position - 1st Scot. I enjoyed a very exciting and competitive race, and had a close finish with the two girls ahead of me. We finished 5th team.

2 30pm - Men's European Trophy Race. A very exciting and competitive race, with two of the French team beating last year's World Trophy winner, Lucio Fregona from Italy.

The Scottish men finished strongly. John Brooks was the top Scottish men's finisher in 14th position. The men also took 5th team position. The competition ended with the prize presentation and closing ceremony at the Snowdonia Museum. We then relaxed for the rest of the evening at the Royal Victoria Hotel, where we had a buffet and a few drinks, and were entertained by the tuneful voices of our team manager, Denis Bell and his assistant, Pete Baxter!

### Sunday 14 July 1996

After breakfast we all met at Martin Hyman's cottage at the summit of some mountain! We had an easy training run over the lovely surrounding knolly terrain. Then had lunch which Martin had very kindly prepared for us. We then set off for home after a very enjoyable weekend.



**World Trophy Trial  
Tweedsmuir  
10 August 1996**

Whilst most Cosmics were enjoying their hols, be it in Switzerland or elsewhere, some racing was taking place in the Scottish borders. The premier international race of the season is the Mountain Running World Trophy, which took place this year in Tlefos, Austria. In the past few seasons, the Scottish team has been selected for this event in a special trial. The World Trophy alternates between an uphill only race one year and up and down the next and the trial is supposed to reflect this. Finding a hill 4000 feet high to simulate the men's race is difficult, so the course used this year, on Broad Law near Broughton, involves running up a big hill, most of the way down and then back up again. The continental uphill only races tend to be on good tracks rather than across heather, and the climb on Broad Law is all on a landrover track, which is good underfoot but terribly mindblowing to run up.

Having raced the course once before, it wasn't with enthusiasm that I went down again this year. I didn't really rate my chance of getting in the team, having lost a lot of training with a niggling knee injury, but it's always worth a bash and it is an annual chance to compare oneself with the country's best hillrunners all in the same race.

I was accompanied to the race by Tracy and we expected to meet Sonia there but were glad to be told she'd been pre-selected and so hadn't had to break her holiday in Switzerland. Two men had also been pre-selected - Tommy murray and Bobby Quinn - but apart from lacking these two, the men's field that lined was a bit intimidating. The start was a bit intimidating. The start was abit more sedate that 2 years previously when Bobby Quinn had sprinted off and taken the field with him. The pace hotted up when the race hit the climb though, and I was dropped off the back of a large bunch. The climb is just a grind up an uninspiring track, made worse by the knowledge that it all has to be done twice. The bunch gradually disintegrated as the steep climb told and the field strung out as we turned at the top and headed down a fast grassy descent. Part way down, themen's race passes the women and juniors coming the other way, giving a brief glimpse of how these races are progressing.

After a second grind up the hill, cheered on by Bob who has finally made it (late) to hold Tracy's shoe bag, the effort is finally over. The race for the team places has been decided in front of me, not quite out of sight but almost. Filling the remaining four men's places were Dermot McDonigle, Colin Donnelly, Pete Dymock and Dave Weir, who confirmed the fine form he's been shown in Cosmic organised races this year. The nearly men were John Wilkinson, Mark Rigby and Greeme Bartlett, which shows the

exceptionally high standard of the team. My result? Ninth - same as two years ago. Better than expected, so can't complain.

In the woman's race, Angela Mudge, Penny Rother and Ann Marie Hughes took the remaining three team places with Sonia. Tracy suffering with stomach problems, finished just outside the team, but watch out for her next year! The trial is followed by a long walk back down the hill and a tea in the village hall at which the team are announced. Having a dedicated trial is a good idea in that it provides as fair a test as possible and makes the team selection very public. Other form is taken into account, but selection other than at the trial is rare and has to be pretty clear cut. Even if you're not a world beater, the trial is worth doing, even if just to find out how good the standard of the Scottish teams is!

Tim Griffin.

**Ben Nevis, Fort William  
10 September 1996  
AM/10m/4400ft**

Lastyear the Ben runners had to endure the extremes of wind and rain. This year it was heat that had to be contended with. It was a sweltering 25 C as the runners left Claggan Park, and there was not even the hint of a breeze. As a result times were much slower than usual.

All the Cosmic times were dramatically down on previous years. Andrew White also had to contend with a twisted ankle which added considerable pain to the general purgatory of the day. Do you get the feeling that I didn't enjoy the Ban race this year?

The Nevis race, nevertheless, appears to be as popular as even with about 400 runners starting. A big proportion of the runners are from England, attracted I suppost to run up Britain's highest mountain. There is no doubt the Ben race is unique and one which tests the stamina and technique of the mountain runner. Must we however continue to pay £6 for entry only to receive pie and beans in return for our money? I personally would rather pay double the amount to attend a slap up feed after the race with my fellow runners.

B Lawrie.

**RESULTS**

1 David Rodgers	Lochaber AC	1.31.23
61 Philip Kammer	Cosmic HB	2.01.28
71 Brian Lawrie	Cosmic HB	2.02.42
295 Keith Greenwood	Cosmic HB	2.45.47
322 Andrew White	Cosmic HB	2.54.01
340 Steve Pryor	Cosmic HB	2.58.31



WORLD TROPHY 1996  
TELFES STUBAITAL, TYROL, AUSTRIA - SONIA ARMITAGE

Tuesday 29th August

6.45am. I left Monymusk by car, travelling to Edinburgh Airport to meet half the team, and the Team Managers. We flew to London Heathrow, where we met up with the other half of the team, who had come from Glasgow. The team then flew on to Munich. All went fairly smoothly, at least until we got to Munich! We arrived in a very sterile looking Baggage reclaim area and waited for our bags to come off the plane, or not to come off! My bag failed to arrive in Munich with us. A bit of a blow, however, fortunately, I had packed my racing shoes and Scottish kit in my hand baggage. Anyway, the good news is that my bag did arrive in Telfes the next day by courier.

After we had settled into our rooms in the hotel, we all sat down to a very welcome meal, or was it?? We had a several vegetarians in our group and the meal was plain pasta with chicken; the vegetarian option was plain pasta and nothing else, not even sauce. They haven't heard of vegetarians in Austria!

Friday 30th August

After breakfast, we had a look over or respective courses. The woman's team, Sonia Armitage, Angela Mudge, Penny Rother and Anne-Marie Hughes went round the course with Martyn Hyman, our Team Manager. It was well worth looking at the course just to know what to expect. However, there was no easy way up it, so we all finished the course inspection feeling pretty tired. We then sat down to a nice lunch - potatoes with tomato sauce and fish, potatoes with sauce for the veggies! Afterwards, we got ready for the opening ceremony. We paraded round the streets of Telfes in our national tracksuits, then sat down to watch some Tyrolean dancing in an open-air theatre, which was very jolly.

Saturday 31st August

The day of the Junior Men and the Woman's Race.

The atmosphere was just a bit tense this morning - everyone just wanting to get on with the race. The junior men set off at 9.30am, whilst the women set off at 10.30am. The course started with a loop round the village of Telfes before climbing up through the meadows and then into the forest. We proceeded past a group of cows complete with bells, waiting to be milked, in a milking competition.

Dermot had gone up there to investigate. The course continued through the forest on a pretty, but unrelenting path, climbing to some Alpine meadow areas just before the finish at 7.25Km and at 1740m height. A very tough race - as well as the effort of the climb, there was also the effect of altitude to deal with. It was a bit misty and cool on the top. However, we were well looked after. Blankets to keep us warm; our bags of dry kit had been transported up. There was a variety of drinks to choose from, homemade cakes, bananas and cereal. Alas, there was no transport down, so we had to jog down. After lunch, Penny, Anne-Marie and I went to the Telfes swimming pool for a swim - a wonderful way to loosen off your legs. Later, Martin and Alister took us on a bus to the head of the Stubai Valley, which was beautiful. However, unfortunately the weather was a bit cool and damp; so we warmed up by having a hot drink and apple strudel.

The race was over for us gals, so we decided to do just a wee bit of celebrating; including going to the World Mountain Trophy Disco, to dance with the rather good looking Czech Junior Men's Team!! After a while, we wandered back to our hotel to discover that the outside door was locked! Never fear, with a bit of team work we got into our room safely - I say no more!!

### Sunday 1st September

#### Day of the Men's Race

After breakfast, Angela, Penny, Anne-Marie and I set off for a jog up the Men's course to give them a bit of support. A beautiful, but very tough course - 11Km and 1310m climb, finishing at an altitude of 2270m. Tommy Murray set off very positively and was in the lead at 6Km. However when he passed me at the 9½Km point, he had dropped to 3rd and was looking rather tired. However, he still finished a creditable 10th. The winner Antonio Molinari from Italy was quite outstanding - well ahead of the rest of the field. From the finish of the Men's course, we were allowed the luxury of descending the mountain by Cable Car. I had a quite cosmopolitan trip down. I had to queue for the Cable Car alongside the American Team - one of their Team Members was from the very same University I spent a year at in Laramie, Wyoming, 12 years ago. Then I shared a Cable Car with the Malaysian Team and walked back to Telfes with the Irish Team. Later in the afternoon, we had the closing ceremony in the same outdoor theatre, but unfortunately, it rained fairly heavily. Luckily, I had an umbrella with me!

Later, we all gathered in a big tent beside the open air theatre for a meal and partying. A jolly evening was had by all.



Monday 2nd September

After a short run to stretch our legs, we set off for home. The most joyous moment of the journey was when I saw through the window at Heathrow - my bag on the conveyor belt going into the plane for Edinburgh!

**WOMEN**

1. G. Pflüger	AUS	40.56
2. I. Guillot	FRA	41.09
3. C. Lallemand	BELG	41.18
4. I. Zatorska	POL	41.39
5. F. Gaviglio	ITA	41.52
6. H. Heasman	ENG	42.21
7. R. Rota-Gelpi	ITA	42.38
8. M. Payet-Javerzac	FRA	42.53
9. E. Mura	FRA	43.22
10. A. Hulley	ENG	43.37
13. A. Buckley	ENG	44.31
19. M. Angharad	WAL	45.47
23. J. Dunstan	ENG	46.09
33. J. Bruce	IRE	46.55
34. A. Mudge	SCO	47.29
35. T. Sloan	N.IRE	47.39
36. A. Nixon	WAL	47.42
37. S. Armitage	SCO	47.51
41. A. Brand-Barker	WAL	48.16
42. A. Collins	IRE	48.24
48. P. Rother	SCO	49.45
54. A. Hughes	SCO	51.00

**WOMEN'S TEAM**

1. FRANCE	19 pts
Guillot 2 - Payet-Javerzac 8 - Mura 9	
2. ITALY	23 pts
Gaviglio 5 - Rota-Gelpi 7 - Roberti 11	
3. ENGLAND	29 pts
Heasman 6 - Hulley 10 - Buckley 13	
9. WALES	95 pts
Angharad 19 - Nixon 36 - Brand Barker 41	
13. SCOTLAND	119 pts
Mudge 34 - Armitage 37 - Rother 48	
16. IRELAND	131 pts
Bruce 33 - Collins 42 - Creagh 56	
18. NORTHERN IRELAND	176 pts
Sloan 35 - O'Connell 69 - Havers 72	

**MENS TEAM**

1. ITALY	24 pts
Molinari 1 - Bernardini 2	
Fregona 6 - Galliano 15	
2. AUSTRIA	57 pts
Schmuck 3 - Schatz 4	
Kröll 22 - Piechinger 28	
3. FRANCE	65 pts
Payet 7 - De Jesus Mendes 12	
Icart 14 - Chauvelier 32	
5. ENGLAND	123 pts
Peace 9 - Roscoe 26	
Burns 29 - Holmes 49	
8. SCOTLAND	139 pts
Murray 10 - Quinn 17	
McGonigle 53 - Donnelly 59	
15. IRELAND	274 Pts
Bryson 24 - Cosgrave 76	
McDonald 85 - Heffernan 89	
18. WALES	349 pts
Wheeler 54 - Forster 87	
Jennings 103 - McQueen 105	
19. NORTHERN IRELAND	390 pts
Ervine 80 - Carty 95	
Mawhin 106 - Rodgers 109	

**Scottish Championship Race**  
**Running Shop**  
**Morven Hill Race 21 September 1996**  
**AS/5m/1700ft**

88 Runners ran the fourth Morven Hill Race. Some runners were surprised that I insisted upon full body cover having to be carried for the race but conditions the day before had been cold and windy. Saturday didn't appear to be much different, although in the secluded area beside Groddie a false impression is often received about the weather. The entry form for the race stated clearly that runners would be expected to carry full body cover, so I make no apology.

The ground underfoot was very dry and fast times resulted. The first seven were all under the time of 39.40 set by Neil Martin last year. Dermot's time of 36.33 was fantastic and Mark's attempt to catch him no less so. It seemed all over at the summit, but from being more than 400 yards down, Mark "flew" down the mountain to finish just 2 seconds adrift.

At the finish we all watched in horror as a flock of sheep being driven round the hill by the shepherd, synchronised their arrival at the gate just above the finish with the appearance of the leading runners. Mark and Dermot were surrounded by the beasts and anything could have happened as the sheep ran about in a wild panic. Miraculously they got through and we all sighed with relief.

Sonia Armitage won the ladies' race in a new record time and in so doing clinched the Scottish Championship title. This was a richly deserved award for Sonia who has had a great season in the hills.

Rising Cosmic star Tracey Brindley came second in the ladies race, and clinched second in the Scottish Championships. Well done Tracey, and what a one, two for the club!

Dave Armitage won the Vets prize in style, despite a fall and Ray Wilby set a new super Vets time.

It was great to have a big crowd back at the Profeits Hotel. The proprietor was certainly pleased. Too often runners drift off before the prize giving. I think it an important part of the race and "makes" the day complete

B Lawrie

**COSMIC RESULTS**

1 Dermot McGonigle  
8 Greg Barbour  
10 Dave Armitage  
11 Tim Griffin  
13 John Buchan  
35 Dennis McDonald  
36 Sonia Armitage  
47 Graham Milne  
52 Andrew White  
55 Steven Willox  
57 Graeme Marks  
60 Rick Allen  
63 Catherine Mangham  
71 Carol Lorimer  
73 Keith Greenwood  
80 Ian Searle  
82 John Forsyth  
83 Elaine Stewart  
85 Steve Pryor  
87 Anne Thomson  
88 Alex Hamilton

Shettleston	36.33
Cosmic HB	39.48
" "	40.23
" "	40.34
" "	40.52
" "	44.57
" "	45.13
" "	47.35
" "	50.44
" "	51.06
" "	51.50
" "	52.05
" "	52.42
" "	56.14
" "	57.06
" "	59.55
" "	61.16
" "	61.23
" "	63.33
" "	65.29
" "	69.44

Are you performing at your optimum level?  
Is your performance variable?  
Do you have a tendency to suffer particular Strains or Injury  
or Health problems?

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Various factors affect the efficiency of our muscles by way of nutrition,  
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