

BRITISH HILL AND FELL RELAY CHAMPIONSHIPS Alva, Scotland 17.10.99

It all started at the 1998 race at Keswick, talking to Mike Rose when he came out with his normal straight talk. "about time you Scots put on this race"! So that was it... we were committed. We always had the idea of holding the race in the Ochils as it was convenient to the motorway network to the south, consisted of runnable steep sided hills and had a string of towns right at the foot. Surely one of these would be suitable and provide all the facilities required. Once we had asked Ochil Hill Runners to join Carnethy Hill Running Club as organisers, we had the local contacts necessary and soon homed in on Alva. With direct access to the hills, a large school (for changing, food etc), playing fields at the foot and a very helpful local council in Clackmannanshire (Scotland's smallest and keen to get better known by hosting a British event), it appeared the ideal venue.

We were worried that not many clubs would make the long trek up to Scotland but in the end received 106 entries, which shows the popularity of the event these days. We wanted to put on an event that made the traveling worthwhile with good varied courses, good quality maps, plenty of food, a race memento, good weather etc. and I hope we succeeded even though the last was down to the gods!

So to the race -

Both the 1998 Open and Ladies' winners pulled out leaving the second placers from the previous year to take the honours. In the Open race, champions Bingley, unfortunately pulled out the day before due to illness which really left the way open for Borrowdale, although whether Bingley would have challenged a strong Borrowdale team that has dominated fell running this year is very debatable. In the ladies it would have been a big upset if the current British Champions, Carnethy, had been beaten. However there was plenty of exciting racing, particularly for the runners-up positions.

Borrowdale came in a few seconds down to Aberdeen's Cosmic Hill Bashers (6th last year) on the first leg, but from then on dominated the race to win by over 11 minutes. However, they didn't dominate the leg splits as they didn't record a fastest time amongst them. Such is their consistency that they were 2nd fastest on each leg! There was much honour at stake for the minor places as Cosmic had expressed confidence of finishing top Scottish club and were looking good at when they set off in 2nd place on the last leg. Livingston, however, had always been quietly confident and they showed why with a storming run in the navigational (3rd) leg, recording the fastest time and pulling up to 3rd, and then did enough on the final long leg to pass Cosmic and keep in front of a fast finishing Pudsey & Bramley, twenty seconds separating the 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams after four hours of racing! But well done Livingston (the highest ever position by a Scottish club in the open event?)

There were equally close results in the Veterans' race for the minor places, but Kendal led the race all the way, although never far enough in front to completely relax. Cumberland came within 20 seconds on beating Mercia as they chased and nearly caught up on the last leg but ran out of hill before they could close the gap completely.

In the Ladies' race Carnethy, like Borrowdale, won by a large margin but in this case they didn't move into the lead until the navigational (3rd) leg when the decision to put their best four runners on the last two long legs paid off. There was an exciting race for 2nd place, down to a sprint finish round the field with Cosmics narrowly getting the better of Dark Peak. This result, arguably, made Cosmic the most successful club as they were also 4th in the Vets and 3rd in the Open.

Thanks to the clubs who wrote expressing thanks, it's nice to get some feedback and appreciation after putting in so much effort. Thanks, also, to all the helpers, marshals etc from both the clubs (and other clubs) and also sponsors Maclays Brewery and Clackmannanshire Council. We hope you enjoyed the day. As for me, I look forward to traveling down to the Peak District for the next race, it's so much easier than organising!

Andy Spenceley

1. Borrowdale	3:46.56
2. Livingston	3:58.11
3. Cosmic Hill Bashers	3:58.29
4. Pudsey & Bramley	3:38.33
5. Cumberland FR	4:02.44
6. Carnethy HRC	4:04.02
7. Clayton	4:07.08
8. Hunters Bog Trotters	4:08.46
9. Keswick	4:11.34
10. Ambleside	4:12.48



Withens Skyline Jane Benham leads Charlotte Roberts
Photograph: Allan Greenwood

VETERANS

1. Kendal	4:15.35
2. Mercia	4:19.08
3. Cumberland FR	4:19.27
4. Cosmic Hill Bashers	4:27.36
5. Dark Peak	4:28.23

LADIES

1. Carnethy	4:45.04
2. Cosmic Hill Bashers	4:58.53
3. Dark Peak	4:58.59
4. Livingston	5:25.56
5. Horwich	5:27.35

SALTERGATE GALLOWES HILL RACE Cleveland BM/8m/1200ft 17.10.99

A fascinating start to the "New Balance Winter Series". The men's race was won by P. White and P. Stevenson respectively. They led throughout the event but both being visitors to the "Heartbeat" area, were notably cautious throughout. This was perhaps just as well, as they were about to cross the railway, along which all those steam trains run and particularly at weekend, they had to wait to allow one of these large metal beasts through. So, having had to pause, they shot up the last ravine with some alacrity!! As I was a little short of marshals, I had had to marshal "Hudson's Griff" myself and as I returned to the finish area on foot, I also had to make an appropriate effort towards the finish, otherwise they would have had to take their own times!

The ladies' race was an excellent contest with Margaret Curran and the highly rated, Helen Johnson both beating the previous course record and being only yards apart throughout the race.

Dave Parry

1. P. White	LeedsC	58.48
1. P. Stevenson	P&B	58.48
3. S. Backhouse	Scarb	59.55
4. M. Wynne	Saltwell	60.10
5. R. Burn	ThirskS	60.18
6. M. Burn	ThirskS	60.42
7. A. Normandale	Nestle	61.59
8. P. Buckby	Mand	62.50
9. C. Choutles	ThirskS	63.07
10. I. Ellmore	Scarb	63.24

VETERANS O/40

1. R. Burn	ThirskS	60.18
2. A. Normandale	Nestle	61.59
3. P. Buckby	Mand	62.50
4. I. Ellmore	Scarb	63.24
5. G. Lucas	Scarb	63.49

VETERANS O/50

1. G. Couison	Hgte	64.45
2. J. Robinson	R&Z	66.59
3. M. Hetherton	Nestle	70.03
4. D. Hearn	Scarb	72.57
5. M. Brooks	R&Z	74.14

VETERANS O/60

1. R. Sherwood	NMarske	73.42
2. B. Hood	Mand	78.48
3. D. Reading	Scarb	80.02

LADIES

1. M. Curran	Safrica	67.23
2. H. Johnson	ilk	67.30
3. A. Raw	Darling	70.32
4. S. Jemson O/35	NMarske	83.41
5. M. Gibbs O/35	ThirskS	84.19