

## British Fell Relays 2004 Report

After a night of howling gales and torrential rain which left the organisers wondering if there would be anything left of Kinder Scout let alone their carefully marked-out courses the actual day of the event proved to be almost ideal - a little claggy and damp to start but rapidly improving until by midday the sun was actually appearing and spectators could wander comfortably onto the top of the dam to see what was going on.

Just to show that you can't plan for everything a unilateral decision was taken by the lady runners (obviously not as emancipated a bunch as we had assumed !) that our warm and cosy unisex changing tent wasn't acceptable, so they promptly turned the refreshment tent into a separate ladies-only establishment - there's a moral here for future organisers !!

Judging by the feedback we've had from competitors and spectators the venue and courses were very popular and certainly the amphitheatre-like setting of the Kinder Reservoir site (many thanks to United Utilities) with all the facilities, including Elaine Doherty and Dave Ambler's very popular pre and post-race massage service, situated on the one field right next to the changeovers, coupled with the fact that all the legs were totally on the fell from the first step to the last made for a most pleasant and enthusiastic atmosphere with good viewing for spectators and participants alike.



The Event Centre as competitors start to arrive; from the top of the Leg Four start  
Photo - Debbie Scottney

The details of who did what can be seen from the attached tables of results, courtesy of Graham Fecitt, but in every category the positions swapped around to make things very competitive with clubs moving merrily up and down the table. In every category it was the Navigation Leg (3) which made the difference and put the eventual winners in a leading position which their Leg Four runners managed to maintain - a careful look at the tables to work out what happened on Leg Three makes it very obvious how crucial good navigation is to an event of this type and how much some clubs need to develop their skills in this area. While we're on the topic of navigation there are things which happen on events like this which make you wonder what good all the instructions and precautions are - those of you who ran Legs One or Four may remember the checkpoint on the top of Sandy Heys, an inconspicuous little spot with only great bunches of yellow flags, yards of fluttering tape, a tent and a marshal to make it stand out. On Leg One a certain Mr.M.C (whose

blushes we will spare by not identifying him further !!) who is very familiar indeed with Kinder Scout, ran right past all this lot, ignoring the shouts of the marshal, and charged on round the edge of the plateau fuelled by racing adrenaline for some distance, accompanied by a bunch of followers who clearly trusted his every decision, until he realised that he hadn't seen any flags for AGES and had to turn his trusting group round and head back the way he'd come, thus losing lots and lots of places !



Richard Scottney & Jim Trueman (Pennine) setting off on Leg Three  
Photo - Debbie Scottney

Although by 2.15 p.m. the majority of clubs were well into the final leg - Simon Bailey's spirited blast up the steep start of Leg Four in pursuit of Tim Austin being particularly notable - the tribulations of some runners on the Navigation Leg meant that there were still a few Leg Four runners waiting for them, so we decided on a mass start at 2.30 p.m. so as not to protract the proceedings too much and to ensure that nearly everyone would be back in time for the Prizegiving in the Royal at 5.00 p.m.

The Prizegiving itself was packed, cheerful and appreciative and a number of runners stayed on, as hoped, for an evening's chat, drinking and rock 'n roll. Prominent among these were the very satisfied, ebullient and extrovert members of Clayton-le-Moors, who certainly had a good time and were still there when we left at nearly 1.00 a.m.

No event of this size can succeed without being a team effort and in this regard we were very fortunate indeed and there are some acknowledgements we would like to give :-

Firstly we would like to extend our very sincere thanks to all the members of Pennine Fellrunners, Knott Fellrunners, Pennine Offshoots, friends, wives and associates who formed our team of helpers. Whatever your tasks, either on the day, before it, after it or all three you were superb. Everyone fulfilled their responsibilities admirably and coped with any glitches on the day with efficiency and good humour. Thanks to you all - we couldn't have run the event without you.

There are other people and organisations to whom we are most grateful - to Richard Day for acting as Controller, casting an appraising and constructive eye on our plans and checking over the routes on one of the most atrocious days it's possible to imagine; to United Utilities, who were generous enough to grant us access to the reservoir site free of charge and so provided us with a first-rate venue; to Mrs Eva Hodgson, who not only kept everyone well fed during the day but was also kind enough to allow us the use of her grazing land for the event field and the run-ins on both sides of the dam; to Mrs Liz Hodgson, who provided us with the essential space on her land for car-parking; to the National Trust, whose positive and helpful attitude to the event from the start enabled us to provide routes which were both challenging and fun (we hope !); to Edmund Bradbury and Simon Burford, the farmers whose land was crossed by some of the routes, for their permission to go where we did; to LightTech for their generous loan of all the heavy-duty cabling, etc. which enabled us to run the P.A.system and the Results service (very efficiently provided by Graham Fecitt) and finally to the Hayfield Mountain Rescue Team, who provided emergency cover and first-aid. While on the subject of first-aid and injuries - we suffered a 2.1% injury rate; ten runners were treated back at the Event Centre for a variety of minor injuries and four people had to be taken off the hill, one of whom was taken to hospital but happily proved to be OK, more or less.



Leg Four mass start runners in hot competition over the wall - by any means possible !!  
Photo - Debbie Scottney

Our final, heartfelt thanks go to all the runners for the admirable example they set of sportsmanship, good humour and consideration - the Hayfield residents were full of praise for fellrunners and their sport afterwards and there wasn't a speck of litter anywhere.

Well done and we hope you all enjoyed yourselves.

Congratulations to Dark Peak (twice) and Clayton and over to the Scots for next year.

Alan Brentnall & Dave Jones