

## The Fellrunner Index 1971-2019: An Introduction

### Background

The FRA was founded in April 1970, *The First Magazine* appeared in September 1971 and the Winter 2019 issue of *The Fellrunner* was the 125th. There were 12 formally recognised editors in the period covered by this index following the early years of the FRA when production was more of a group activity with e.g. Roy Swinbank editing material gathered by Eddie Heal for issue # 3 but Mike Davies editing issue # 4. In terms of content most editors build on the pattern of their predecessors whilst bringing their own style to the task, some are opinionated whereas others are more restrained. Editors are *definitely* not all the same! In the early years the journal had several different formats but then a significant external change was the move in 1987 to the current A4 format. Another was from 2007 when Britta Sendlhofer, drawing on her professional skills, progressively transformed coverage, style and layout and introduced full colour - the format which lasted until 2019 and the changes made by Paul Booth.

But on its path over the half century *The Fellrunner* has always remained the journal of record for the sport: committee reports, "issues of the day", championship news, race results...all of its time, much that was ephemeral and some that is now only of distant historical interest, if at all. But everything contributed by photographers and writers for the love of fell running and without regard for financial reward.

Some historical content, and most obviously much of that contributed by the late Bill Smith (1936-2011) is timeless. Bill's description of "The First Wasdale Fell Race" is as fresh to read today as in 1972 when it appeared in the Autumn issue; and re-read it everyone can because all copies of *The Fellrunner* up to Summer 2013 (issue # 106) are available on the FRA website. Later editions will be added progressively, subject to a rolling two-year delay to protect the interests of FRA members.

### Where To Start?

But without any index to *The Fellrunner* how does a newcomer to the sport know Bill's Wasdale account exists?

This work attempts to address this difficulty by identifying and providing a reference to the more worthy articles that are still important or of interest today, notwithstanding when they were written. It is selective and excludes minor or redundant pieces to limit its length and so as not to detract from worthier content. Whilst it might include the first article on a subject, such as a new mountain marathon, it will not necessarily reference later years. International race reports are more likely to be included if medals were won by the UK. Regular articles are only listed when they were more than routinely interesting. Junior matters have been categorised separately.

This index is not an alternative to race results that are published regularly in *The Fellrunner* and GPS support is not provided for articles that anyone seriously interested in researching should find with ease - so anyone who wishes to revisit, say, the 1988 Championships should first consider looking at the Autumn 1988 *Fellrunner*.

### Listing Methodology

Items are listed within broad groups (see Appendix) on a "best fit" basis and generally in date (i.e. not alpha) order to illustrate how the main themes of fellrunning have changed over time and can be viewed in contemporaneous context.

Items are generally listed with the original title and author so if an article was credited to W.R Smith, rather than Bill Smith, that is how it appears. Anonymous articles have been left anonymous even when the author may be surmised. Titles often gave no indication of the subject but in general they have been left as printed providing an intriguing opportunity to discover "what is that article about?" However, because, for example, it

might not be immediately obvious that *What a Buster* in the June 1989 issue is about the Dales Way, help has sometimes been provided.

The focus is on articles of length rather than extractions from regular columns such as Committee News, Celtic Corner or Junior Pages - but there are exceptions such as some record "Rounds". There is no listing of the poems of Peter Travis, his admirers will know where to find his work - but see the June 1993, February 1994, and February 2003 issues. Some articles, such as those that only the author's mother would ever wish to read again, may have been omitted although minority interest did not exclude *Fell Running In Outer Mongolia* (February 2003), which was always sure of its place.

Letters have generally only been identified on an exception basis such as the prescient and long letter on GPS published in Autumn 2008 - a decade before a more vociferous debate that eventually informed FRA policy.

The later years of the Index include Juniors under two categories (9 and 10) including short interviews, usually produced by David & Eileen Woodhead in connection with their races.

In the interest of clarity, titles have avoided a plethora of punctuation and finally, the list was not produced by a search engine but by a flawed human being, and so may be subject to errors, omissions and awe.

## **Bill Smith**

Bill Smith made his first contribution in Spring 1972 and his final article (The First Edale Skyline Race 1974) appeared posthumously in Autumn 2011. For almost 40 years Bill's work in breadth and erudition was simply the best writing on fellrunning - and it still is. Bill wrote for many journals but mainly for *The Fellrunner* and in Autumn 2012 the FRA published a 52-page collection, *Writing By Bill Smith*, to recognise his status as the pre-eminent authority and historian of matters relating to fell running. Accordingly, his major contributions - generally excluding race reports - have been listed separately under his name. This is no slight on other long serving and always interesting authors of whom Neil Shuttleworth stands as tall as anyone. Neil was a founder member of the FRA, he started contributing in the 1980s, he has written books about running along the way (Bill Smith reviewed one in September 1990) - and he is *still* contributing.

## ***The Fellrunner* - The Early Editions**

References to the history of *The Fellrunner* are included in *Turn Back The Hands Of Time* (June 2006), *A Sense of Perspective* (Summer 2015 -Summer 2016), which attempted to provide an overview of the main themes and influences affecting fell running over the last half century, and also *The Fellrunners Association: Past and Future* (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition Summer 2020).

The first four editions of *The Fellrunner* were duplicated on foolscap paper with the page size changing to A5 from November 1974. The fifth issue was dominated by race reports because it had started as an 84-page edition but then had 36 pages of general material removed "for reasons of economy and to appear later in the year" leaving a 48-page edition of mainly race results. Money mattered then because five years after its formation the FRA still only had 500 members subscribing just 50p a year (it had been 25p). In fact, the sixth issue didn't appear for another full year in November 1975 when Peter Knott was announced as the Editor and promised to produce two regular magazines a year - which he did.

The content of these early editions could vary significantly. The Spring 1976 edition is mainly accounts of long-distance runs (notably Bill Smith's BGR) with only a few race results, in contrast to Autumn 1976 which has rather more race results and also lists the new FRA members taking the total to over 600 - six years after the FRA was formed. The steady growth in membership and therefore funds is apparent as firstly photographs appeared (Spring 1976) and the quality of printing improved.

## **From A5 To A4**

In Spring 1987 the *Fellrunner* moved to an A4 format which eliminated the problems of the increasingly bulky A5 format and provided for bigger photographs, longer articles and generally presented a more modern

professional look. The final A5 issue (Summer 1986) was a chunky 106 pages of which, before facebook, 14 pages were Letters to the Editor. The clearing of a backlog of material meant the first A4 issue in Spring 1987 was 38 pages (equivalent, according to Editor John Reade, to an unmanageable 160 pages in A5 format) with the increasing flow of new material allowing the magazine to move to publication, as of now, to three magazines a year.

### **FRA News**

Between September 1984 and October 1986 and before the *Fellrunner* moved to tri-annual publication, it was supplemented by five issues of a 4 x A4-page *FRA News* which, on cost grounds, was distributed "by hand" and not through the Post Office. As the title suggests these contained short news items and race results but no long articles warranting inclusion in this index, although *FRA News* remains a useful document of record on e.g. the pro/amateur issue of that time.

### **Editors**

After the first five issues the thirteen editors were:

Peter Knott	Autumn 1975 - Summer 1979 (8 issues)
Andy Styan	January 1980 - December 1982 (7)
Hugh Symonds	July 1983 - Summer 1985 (5)
John Reade	January 1986 - Winter 1987 (5)
John Blair-Fish	May 1988 - January 1991 (9)
Neil Denby	June 1991- October 2000 (29)
Dave Jones	February 2001 - October 2006 (18)
Britta Sendlhofer	Spring 2007 - Summer 2013 + Spring 2015 (21)
Richard Reeve	Autumn 2013 - Spring 2015 (4)
Andy Watts (interim)	Summer 2015 (1)
David McCabe	Autumn 2015 - Summer 2018 (9)
Paul Booth	Winter 2018 – Spring 2020 (5)
Dave Littler	Summer 2020

Neil Denby's decade of producing 29 issues - nearly one quarter of the total - and on the due dates is an astonishing and magnificent achievement that is very unlikely to be equalled.

### **Handbook & Fixtures Calendar**

A detailed analysis of how the Calendar has changed since 1970 (40 races listed) is outside the scope of this piece but it might be appropriate to take note at various points of some aspects of its history taken from *The Fell Runners Association: Past and Future (q.v.)* and the broader review in Margaret Chippendale's *The FRA Calendar: The First 40 Years in The Fellrunner* for August 2009.

FRA Calendars produced between 1970 and 1978 were typed and duplicated on A4 paper with the first printed Calendar, in a smaller page format, appearing in 1979 (80 races). The next significant change was the move to the current A5 format with card covers from 1986 and including the FRA Rules For Competition. The change to A5 format was supported by Reebok who sponsored the Calendar from 1986 - 89 and their support was recognised on the cover. By 1989 the Calendar listed 260 races - an exponential growth over the decade.

When comparing the 1986 and the latest Calendar, three things are apparent: more races, more colour and “gloss”, and that half the current Calendar is now devoted to the “Handbook” element whereas in 1986 the booklet was called simply “Fixtures”, and that is all it was.

The Calendar has only had six Editors. After the initial 1970 list the Calendar was compiled by the General Secretary and was associated with several people, notably Dave Moulding. In 1979 Peter Walkington became the General Secretary and Dave was appointed as the first Fixtures Secretary to be succeeded by Tony Hulme, Dave Jones, Margaret Chippendale, Andy Butler and currently Dave Bowen - all from Pennine Fell Runners.

## **A Commentary By Decades**

### **The Early Years And 1990s**

*The Fellrunner* underwent significant changes during its formative first two decades: editors, page size, frequency of issue, introduction of photographs, etc, but from the adoption of the A4 format in Spring 1987 and into the 1990s things settled down with the magazine then having only two editors during the 1990s: John Blair-Fish (who rather immodestly graced the cover of his final issue - January 1991) and the long-serving Neil Denby. The first colour cover (of the Matterhorn) appeared in October 1991, the second in October 1992 and then routinely from October 1994.

FRA membership grew during the decade from 2800 members in 1990 to 5000 by the year 2000 and the size of *The Fellrunner* grew commensurately (more members + more money + more events + more contributors = a fatter magazine) from an average of 40 pages in 1990 to 60 pages by 1999 - when no one would have dreamed that eventually two issues (Autumn 2008 and Autumn 2011) would appear containing 188 pages of densely packed material - probably the pinnacle in terms of content, and all in full colour.

### **Bill Smith - Rediscovery And Remembrance**

One of the joys of revisiting old journals is the rediscovery of classic pieces. Bill Smith's *On The Right Track* (February 1992) epitomises the sort of article only he could produce and during the 1990s Bill would submit a series of classic articles such as *Fell Racing In Bowland* and *A Short History of Clayton-Le-Moors Harriers*. A comprehensive list, *Bill Smith: Writings*, was included in the Spring 2012 *Fellrunner*.

### **Carol Matthews - Judith Taylor - Brian Belfield**

As the journal of record for the FRA, the pages of *The Fellrunner* had to address issues such as the death of Carol Matthews in a Welsh Relay Race in April 1991. This prompted intense debate, primarily energised by then FRA Secretary, Mike Rose, on safety in fell races - leading towards the FRA safety rules in place today. The circumstances of Carol's death were slightly unusual - she was an inexperienced fell runner on a 6-mile solo leg of a new relay run in poor weather who went off route - but the tragedy prompted the FRA to buy its first radios for use by Race Organisers and to start sanctioning runners who broke its safety rules, and name such runners in the magazine.

Unfortunately, only 3 years later in 1994 the experienced and well-equipped Judith Taylor died during a well-established fell race - the Kentmere Horseshoe - prompting further changes designed to make the sport safer. As the pages of the *Fellrunner* show (e.g. “Better free than fettered”, February 1993) rules on safety were not always welcomed. Nevertheless, changes were made and it was 20 years before another fell runner - Brian Belfield - died from hypothermia after going off course in the Buttermere Sailbeck race after which, following the Coroner's Inquest, the FRA had to implement further revised safety standards from 2014.

And importantly all of the above was reported and recorded for reference in the magazine.

## **Ways, Rounds, Fashion And The World Outside**

Perusal of the first twenty years of the *Fellrunner* of the 1970s and 1980s reveals how frequent were attempts on the Pennine Way Record during that period compared with the 1990s when other long-distance challenges became more attractive. The number of references under the appropriate General Headings (e.g. 6. *International Races and Challenges*) illustrates that not only were more runners writing about their exploits, but the topics were much broader in scope as more opportunities for runners to race away from their British back yard arose. And, as with everything in life, some events and challenges became fashionable and then less so.

Of course, only a minority of fell runners ever race abroad and many fell runners have never regarded races outside Britain with the seriousness that they think "proper" fell running deserves - not least because some of those foreign races are run on tracks or tarmac and even only uphill! But the two individual World Mountain Running Association Trophy/ Championship Gold Medal wins in consecutive years (1992/1993) by Martin Jones was undisputedly a tremendous achievement and no other British individual Gold Medal winner (Carol Haigh, Beverley Redfern, Angela Mudge, Kenny Stuart) won Gold more than once. It is now twenty years since the last of those Gold Medals was won - the peerless Angela Mudge in 2000 - and with hindsight it might now be recognised that Martin's double Gold achievement is not, despite *Jones Strikes Gold In Italy* (October 1992) and *Reflections On The World Cup* (February 1994) accorded the awe that it probably deserves.

### **And The Blazers?**

Fell running has always had to deal with other administrative bodies (and there have been rather a lot of them over the years) and the index refers to accounts on some of those interactions. If there is one highlight it must be Selwyn Wright's report, *Freedom At Last!* (February 1995) when the then British Athletics Federation finally agreed that, after a mere century, runners who competed in unpermitted races should no longer lose their amateur status. Who running today but not competing at the time would believe that such nonsense ever prevailed?

### **Dave Weatherhead & Barbara Carney**

Although their astonishing contribution to fell running continues, the 1980s saw Dave Weatherhead and Barbara Carney formally start their journey of providing a magnificent unbroken results service to *The Fellrunner* from May 1988. If anyone deserves the wholehearted thanks of the fellrunning community it is they - and Dave's smiling face in race mode can be seen in the June 2006 issue in, naturally, *Results* and his words can be read in the short piece he contributed, *Race Reports & Results*, for the Autumn 2008 issue (he wrote again in the Summer 2015 issue). The FRA tends not to rush at things but finally in 2019 the FRA recognised Dave and Barbara's outstanding contribution to fell running (which also included a total of 10 years of service on the FRA Committee) by awarding them Honorary Life Membership.

### **And Photographs?**

As noted above it was mid-decade before funds allowed photographs to become a major feature of a plumper magazine and so between 1992 and 1995 a *Fellrunner Calendar* in A4 format was sold at £2 (eventually £3) to provide a better display of the work of the top fell running photographers of the day. The work of Bill Smith was featured, and he later wrote profiles of co-contributors Peter Hartley (CLM) for the October 1999 *Fellrunner* and then Steve Bateson (Rossendale) for the February 2001 edition.

Of course, anyone can point a camera at a runner and click but artistry and imagination are something else and Peter's death in 2014 was a huge loss to fellrunning photography. His great picture of Steve Kirkbride (Kendal) in the Three Peaks Race appeared in the June 1994 issue and the picture was so popular that by demand it was reproduced again in the October 2000 *Fellrunner*. The Index guides readers to just five pictures selected to represent the sport. Three more are by Peter: Scoffer after the British Relays (February 2001), Tom Murfin at

Kelbrook (February 2005), juniors at Widdop (Autumn 2010), and the fifth picture is of Sally Malir at the 2005 Three Peaks Race (June 2005) taken by Tony Fickes.

## **The Fixtures Calendar 1990 - 1999**

The Calendar for the 1990s spans the middle period of the FRA history. Dave Jones edited it for the whole period during which the number of races increased by some 50% from around 260 to over 400 and more non-race material, i.e. handbook content, such as the FRA Constitution and a Summary of the Insurance Cover, started to be introduced to supplement simple race listings.

The 1989 *Fixtures Calendar* contained 50 pages of fell race lists, Competition Rules, Access/Environmental Guidelines - and nothing else. A glance at the 142-page *2020 Handbook and Fixtures Calendar* illustrates how things have changed.

## **The 2000s**

### **Good Times/ Bad Times**

The topics for articles during the 2000s continued to broaden and so whilst reports about, say, the Pennine Way record disappeared, fresh material on completely new subjects appeared such as those listed under Category 7. *Coaching, Fitness and Wellbeing*.

In the first edition of 2000 Neil Denby announced that he was stepping down as Editor (to be succeeded at the following AGM by Dave Jones, then Fixtures Secretary) after editing a special *30 Years Of The FRA* issue which reprinted notable articles (marked by *30 Years* in the Index). The same issue also announced the establishment of an FRA website - oh what innocent days! - and that the average age of members had increased from 37 years (2000 members in 1985) to 44 years (4500 members in 1999).

But 2001 was the year of foot and mouth disease and it is also depressing to be reminded how long the non-carrying of kit has been a safety issue by reading the three accounts, an article, race report and editorial, (October 2005) of when Sam Ayers disqualified 22 runners for kit infringements at her evening Coledale Horseshoe 2005 race. As she noted, one person did turn up with a map for this north Keswick race - but the map was of Scotland!

### **The World Outside**

Reference has been made to the huge effect Britta Sendlhofer had when she took over as Editor (Spring 2007) on the look of the journal but her influence was also evident in the broader coverage of the magazine which expanded far beyond conventional articles on traditional fellrunning. The balance between the receipt of submitted articles and the commissioning of articles on broader subjects is known only to the editor who, of course, ultimately still relies on what arrives in the in-tray, but during Britta's period as Editor the coverage of the *Fellrunner* was transformed, with articles like *Trail Running In The Canadian Rockies* (Autumn 2008), stretching far beyond the submissions traditionally received from regular contributors.

The first issue of 2000, by which time the journal had been appearing for almost 30 years, had a normal 58 pages but by the final issue of 2009 this had swollen to an astonishing 172 pages, not least because material was being published on subjects that had just not appeared in previous decades.

This broader coverage did provoke some "give us back our fell magazine" criticism but there is a limit to how many times an editor can print an article on, say, fell races on Pendle and that point might, for the present, have been reached.

## **Mike Rose**

The October 2003 issue reported the death of Mike Rose who served on the FRA Committee for 11 years. It was Mike I spoke with about joining the Committee and in his presence, meetings were never dull. Mike's personal views appeared in *Ramblin' Rose* between February 2001 and February 2003 and as the General Secretary he was knowledgeable, industrious, wise, intolerant of fools - and irreplaceable.

## **And Dr Martyn's Problem Page**

Although not listed in this Index the series ran from the second issue edited by Dave Jones (February 2001) until his final issue (October 2006). Other series have been published anonymously in *The Fellrunner*, but this was probably the funniest, and certainly the rudest.

## **From 2010 and Celebration To 2019**

Having achieved 40 years, the Spring 2010 issue (164 pages) was accompanied by the first ever special supplement, *Celebration: 40 Years of the FRA* and under Britta Sendlhofer's stewardship the magazine continued to grow. However after 20 issues Britta, by then the second longest serving editor after Neil Denby, retired with the Summer 2013 issue (although returning temporarily to edit Spring 2015) and the next three Editors - Richard Reeve (4 issues), Andy Watts (an interim single issue) and David McCabe (9 issues) - all produced magazines following the same broad format. As did Paul Booth for his first issue as Editor before introducing a radical new design from the Spring 2019 issue (# 123) for the final three issues covered by this Index.

## **Changing Themes**

Not surprisingly most of the articles that have filled the pages of *The Fellrunner* over the last 50 years have been written by runners about fell racing but with a discernible growth in articles about foreign challenges and Rounds and also an increasing number of contributions on broader subjects than racing.

There are now fewer articles about the history of the sport. Perhaps most of it has been said although some writers clearly feel that nostalgia should still be a part of a *Fellrunner* along with reports of the latest long distance record and so to re-encounter Neil Shuttleworth's article on Rivington Pike Races and Racers (Summer 2016) is a delightful reminder of the times when *The Fellrunner* was mainly about fell racing.

For a long time race organisers and marshals were unsung heroes absent from the pages of *The Fellrunner* but in the last decade several have emerged to produce excellent articles about what they do before and on race day for others to enjoy, whether as marshals or race organisers. Ian Winterburn has produced a series of outstanding articles on a range of subjects including how runners can stay alive, while still enjoying themselves, by learning to navigate (Summer- Autumn 2013) and avoid hypothermia (Spring 2016). And if one thought that after all these years there was now no fell running topic unexplored, then the article from Dave Beston, the CVFR Press & Publicity Officer, illustrated that there remained at least one fresh approach (Autumn 2008).

And of course, we have seen the growth of junior pages - juniors were non-existent in FRA activities 50 years ago: but look at them now!

But perhaps the most refreshingly brilliant new contributor was not a runner or an organiser but a physiotherapist. Denise Park's first article was printed in June 2005 and she has featured in every issue since - except for Autumn 2013 after which the FRA rapidly made amends with her regular article *and* a Profile in the following issue. Her articles might well be the most avidly read in the journal, and then reread when injury occurs - the jewel in the crown that is *The Fellrunner*.

And, of course, her punning titles remain inimitable. They are not always a clear guide to the subject matter although *Storm in a Teacup...Or Rather a D-Cup* was more illustrative than others.

## **A Thing Of Wonder**

Even a pandemic does not provide enough time to fully relive and savour and marvel at the depth, breadth, erudition - and humour in 125 *Fellrunners*. For someone new to the sport it might be likened to discovering a great author and realising with delight that there is a lifetime of books waiting to be read.

One can compare an early *Fellrunner* and a current one and superficially think that not much has changed; articles about races, profiles of runners,... and yet those contributions today just feel richer and broader - as though the reputation of the magazine is now so high that every contributor raises their game to submit their very best.

Truly, *The Fellrunner* is a thing of wonder.

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Of the 125 issues of *The Fellrunner* even those for just the 1990s contained 4400 pages. The best for all five decades should be listed in this Index, in a mere 20,000 words, but where the compiler has erred then, hopefully, it was on the side of kindness.

## **Appendix: Subject Group Headings**

1. Editorial, Committee Matters, General Topics and Safety
  2. Bill Smith - Writings
  3. Interviews, Profiles and Obituaries
  4. Race Locations, Reports & Histories and Club Histories
  5. Bob Grahams, Other Rounds & Challenges, Mountain Marathons, Relays and Notable Reports
  6. International Races and Challenges
  7. Coaching, Fitness and Wellbeing
  8. Book Reviews, Significant, Interesting, Amusing and Three Photographs
  9. Juniors - Articles
  10. Juniors - Reports/Profiles + Associated Seniors (David Woodhead, Duncan Richards, Chris Jones)
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