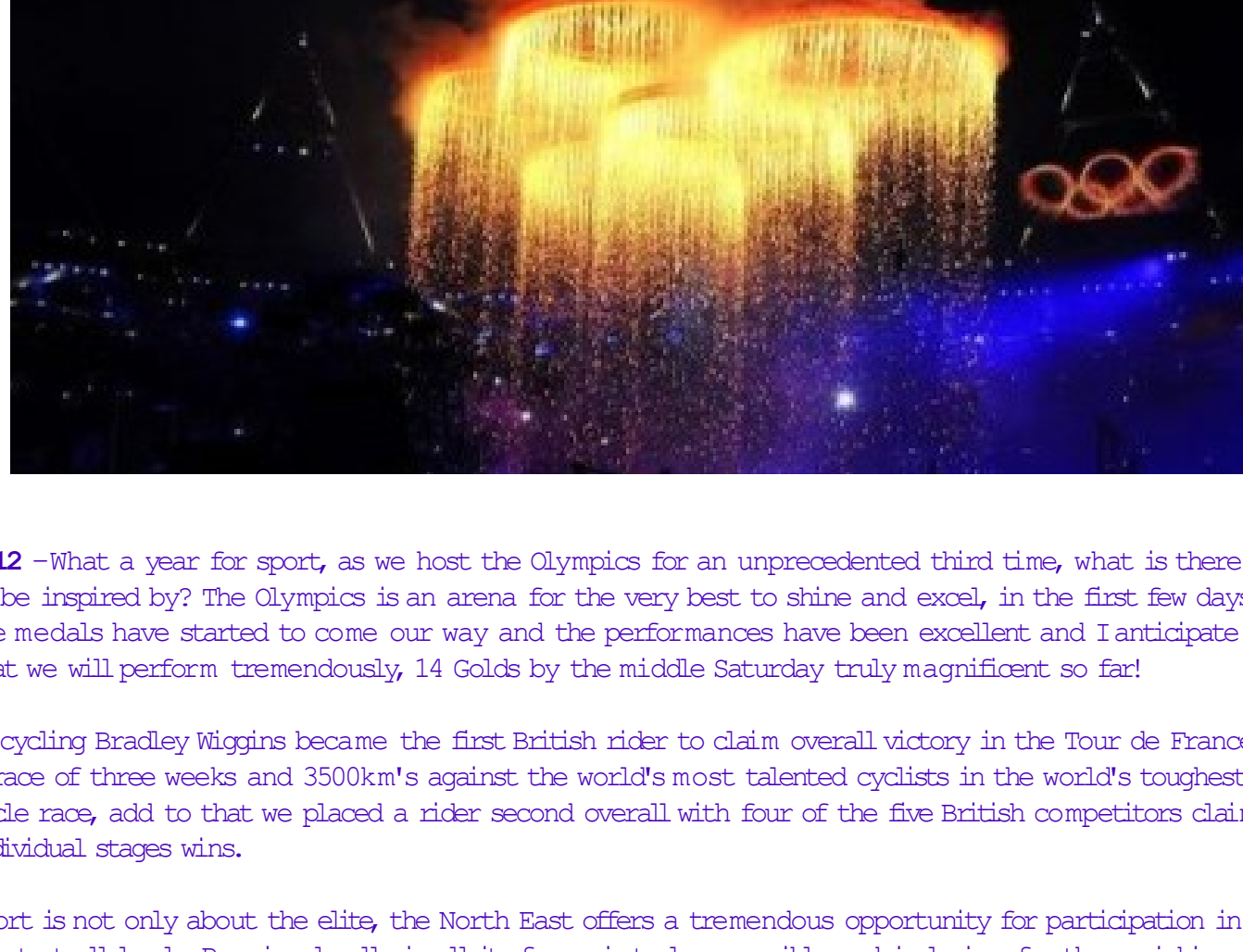




The Esker - A Sporting Summer



Esk Valley Fell Club's Blog



2012 -What a year for sport, as we host the Olympics for an unprecedented third time, what is there not to be inspired by? The Olympics is an arena for the very best to shine and excel, in the first few days the medals have started to come our way and the performances have been excellent and I anticipate that we will perform tremendously, 14 Golds by the middle Saturday truly magnificent so far!

In cycling Bradley Wiggins became the first British rider to claim overall victory in the Tour de France, in a race of three weeks and 3500km's against the world's most talented cyclists in the world's toughest cycle race, add to that we placed a rider second overall with four of the five British competitors claiming individual stages wins.

Sport is not only about the elite, the North East offers a tremendous opportunity for participation in sport at all levels. Running locally in all its forms is truly accessible and inclusive, for those wishing to dip their toe in the water look no further than the parkruns. A 5km timed run, starts at 9.00am in Middlesbrough (Albert and Stewart's Parks), Stockton-on-Tees (The Barrage), Redcar (Locke Park), Sedgefield, Durham, York, Chester-le-Street, Gateshead, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Whitley Bay and Harrogate. So why not register, participate and volunteer.

The North Yorkshire moors offers an off-road running heaven, hills, trails and scenery, with the home of fell running only a short trip away over the Pennines. The Esk Valley Summer and Winter Series offer accessible running competition for all abilities, with events coming thick and fast throughout the year, so why not?

So where are you running this year and next and the next?

ANOTHER REMINDER

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE FOR 2012/13 - £10.00

PAYMENTS TO DAVE PARRY

Racing/Training dates

Tuesday 07/08/12 19.00hrs - Training - Tourist Information Car Park, High Green, Great Ayton, then adjourn to the Royal Oak P.H. Over the road for a chat, drinks and chips.

Tuesday 14/08/2012 19.00hrs - Training - The Black Horse P.H. Main Street, Swainby.

Wednesday 15/08/2012 19.15hrs - Guisborough Grunt - BM - 9.5km/425m - 6miles/1380' Venue Guisborough Rugby Club, Belmonte, Guisborough GR NZ 616155 £6.00 on day minimum age 16 (on 01/01/12), no junior races. Event number 10 in the NEHRA/Esk Valley/Northern Runner Summer Series and the Summer event in the Four Seasons Trophy.

Tuesday 21/08/2012 19.00hrs - Training -The lower Clay Bank Car Park, start of the Inclined to Madness race, lets recone the race, just below the Clay Bank Car Park off the B1257 some 3 miles south of Stokesley.

Tuesday 28/08/2012 19.00hrs - Training -Maynards Nursery layby, ¼ mile south of Great Broughton on B1257.

Wednesday 29/08/2012 19.15hrs - Inclined to Madness - BM 10km/375m, 6.1miles/1230' Venue - The lower Clay Bank Car Park, down the hill from Clay Bank Car Park, just off the B1257, some 3 miles south of Stokesley. GR NZ 579038 £6.00 on day, minimum age 16 (on 01/01/12) No Junior races. This is Race 11 of the Esk Valley/Northern Runner/NEHRA Summer Series, test yourself against the incline.

Esk Valley Summer Series

Time for a fairly quick trot through the Summer Series so far, but before I start, its fixture setting time shortly, so Dave Parry would love to hear your views on this year's fixture list and how that might shape next year's. The main changes this year have been the move of the Summer Series events to a Wednesday, previously held on a Tuesday, what do you think? Also this year has seen a fuller fixture list with events held on successive weeks, plus a move to shorter events, shorter events mid-week do make sense from an organisational point of view at the earlier sunset times.

The traditional Summer Series opener was Carlton Challenge (02/05/2012), James Bulman now of New Marske Harriers, better known now for his road exploits claimed victory, from Winter Series winner Cameron Taylor of home club Esk Valley came in second, the Eskers were team victors with Joe Johnson, Tom Hodgson and James Meadows backing-up well. In the ladies race, Kay Neesam made it a double for New Marske Harriers starting well after her Winter Series victory. Esk Valley ladies came out of the blocks quickly with second in the team competition, let by new member Nicola Wiseman with Gill Jones and Clare Williams.

Next up was a visit to the southern edge of the North Yorks Moors, with our early season trip to Lockton village for Levisham Limping (16/05/12). Second running of this event, you must attend even if you don't run as the cake spread is tremendous. So with the BBC on-hand to film the events, a sunny but cool night all was set fair. Cameron Taylor of Esk Valley claimed his first victory of the series, with a narrow victory over Hull's Stuart Carmichael on the final climb, this is a reverse of a winter season race. Esk Valley earned their first team victory of the series with Cameron supported by Richard Clark, Clive Thornton and James Meadows in good early season form. Nicola Kent of Loftus and Whitby was first lady from Kay Neesam, Esk Valley placed a B team in 6th, led home by Chris Jamieson.

On a revised course third in Summer Series was Ossy Gils (30/05/2012), it was a three way battle at the front between Cameron Taylor, Paul Lowe and Dan Middlemas (now representing Dark Peak). Cameron eased to victory on the final climb and descent to win by one and a half minutes, Dan used his descending skills to close within 10 seconds of Paul. It was NYMAC's turn to claim victory in the team competition after packing well at the front, Esk Valley came in second with Joe Johnson an excellent 6th, Dave Dedman 16th (now V50), Dean Stockwell 25th. Kay Neesam of New Marske returned to winning ways, though Thirsk and Sowerby ladies earned team victory. Esk Valley placed well with their B team in 5th, Richard Lindsay took advantage of some consistent training with 29th, backed up by David Minchin, new member this season Andy Mochrie and Adrian Martin. The Esker ladies claimed 2nd with Jill Libby, Allison Rolfe and Louise Campbell.

One week later and new race Broughton Woods Wobble (06/06/12) was run off, with a 330m/1000'+ climb mid race being its trade mark. The race was marked by some navigational errors with runners not knowing their south from north after descending Cold Moor. Cameron Taylor in a fine vein of form raced to victory with a 9 minute victory over Dam Middlemas and West Yorkshire visitor Damien Kiplin from Penistone FR. Esk Valley returned to winning ways in the team competition, with Andrew Bennett, Sheldon Cockburn and David Dedman supporting all in the top 13. Kath Aspin of New Marske took a break from Marathon running to claim the ladies race in 21st overall. Kendra White was best placed Esker and helped the ladies team to second place with Jill Libby and Allison Rolfe. EVFC B, came in 5th, with new member Graham Middlelitch, David Minchin, Adrian Martin and Chris Jamieson.

Continuing the theme of shortening courses to the 10km mark, the Whorlton Run (20/06/12) finish was changed to the Castle rather than the Black Horse P.H. Car Park. James Bulman in his second Summer Series event used his road running skills to good effect with overall victory, Lewis Rodgers of Loftus and Whitby tipped Cameron in the run-in by one second, Norman Greenwell took a break from Triathlon training to take a top 10 finish in 9th, and Michael Quinn took a break from Lakeland Classics duties for 20th and with Dean Stockwell in 33rd claimed second in the team competition behind Loftus and Whitby. Kay Neesam made it three victories in the Summer Series, leading New Marske to their ladies to team victory from Esk Valley claiming a consistent second with Gill Jones leading from Allison Rolfe and Fiona Massey.

Another new race, start one week later, Carlton Midsummer Meander (27/06/12).. It was a brute of a course, with a jump up Crinkle Moor, dropping down to Tofts Hill, a climb midway up Crinkle Moor and then descent to the bottle of Green Hill and an epic climb back up to Lordstones. Reminiscent of the latter half of the 2006 English Champs course, Cameron Taylor made short work of the just under 5 mile course claiming victory from Esker Simon Greenwell in second, with Richard Clark in 11th and Michael Quinn 12th, home club Esk Valley eased to victory from NYMAC and Esk Valley B, - Dave Dedman, Mark Dalton, Andrew Mochrie and Chris Jamieson. Kay Neesam of New Marske continued her winning ways with victory in the ladies race and the team ladies. Good to see 5 ladies team finish compared to three mens. Esk Valley ladies claimed third with Gill Jones, Allison Rolfe and Louise Campbell.

A third week on the bounce saw the running of a lengthened this time, Maybeck Three Crosses (04/07/12), to avoid the pesky midgies. In our traditional visit to the East, Loftus and Whitby claimed the top four places, first three male, Lewis Rodgers, Rob Williamson and Mark Young, with ladies victor Cath Williamson in 4th. Despite a small turn off of 36, Esk Valley still placed two male teams with the A's - Richard Clark, Dave Minchin, Mark Naylor and Chris Jamieson in second and Ian Harmer, Clifford Calladine Bob Lillie and Ian Robinson placing 4th for the B's.

We were treated to the luxury of a three week break before Cook Howe and Beyond (25/07/12), It was a claggy/mizzleg night so some scope for navigational fun, but all was okay on the night. It was left to southern runner and Self-confessed road runner (we all have our crosses to bear) Matthew Hammerton of Romsey RR, It was a night for the vets with M55 cat runner Andy Normandale of York Acorn coming in third. Joe Johnson of Esk Valley stepped up to the mark in the absence of Cameron Taylor who's taking a mid-season break, with 10th overall and with support from Andrew Bennett, Richard Clark and Dean Stockwell, (Summer Series A-team regular) took the Eskers to victory. The Esker B's placed well again in fourth overall, Mick Walters, Vince Stockwell, Chris Jamieson and James Angus. In the ladies race Cath Williamson took victory and led the ladies team to victory. Esk Valley stalwarts Allison Rolfe and Louise Campbell claimed 5th overall.

Another double-header, and race 9 of the summer series, Gribdale Gallop (01/08/12), James Bulman raced to his third victory of the Summer Series. With the continuing absence of Cameron, James had it mostly his own way, the race takes in the iconic landmarks of Captain Cooks monument, Hanging Stone and Roseberry, the ground underfoot was fast but Jim couldn't beat his 2007 record, though Father-time is against M40 James regrettably. So NYMAC packed the front end of the race to claim team victory, Esk Valley weren't too shabby and were 2nd and 5th, B team reps were Jonathan Manilier, Will Dyson, Chris Jamieson and Vince Stockwell, both keeping up appearances in the Summer Series. The second placed e-team were led home by Joe Johnson, BIG CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECENT MARRIAGE, in another top 10 in 8th, Danny Brown in 17th, Richard Lindsay and Dean Stockwell. The other two Eskers to finish were back in the running this series Martin Hunt and Paul Hunt. Cath Williamson again eased to ladies victory, using her GB Team cycling fitness to good effect, unlucky not to qualify for the Olympics! New Marske claimed the ladies team with Kay Neesam, Shelli Gordon and Kath Aspin.

Summer Series Standings

In the Series standings, Cameron Taylor of Esk Valley leads the mens standings, still needs one event to complete the seven required, James Bulman could still overtake if he wins the four remaining events. Rob Williamson of Loftus and Whitby is second, with Dan Middlemas in Third. Kay Neesam leads the Ladies Overall, though needs one event to make up the seven maximum and to win the category. Nicola Kent - Loftus and Whitby is second with best placed Esker - Allison Rolfe in 11th, though still has events in hand.

Cameron Taylor has claimed the Junior (Under 21) title, with four races to run. In the Mens Senior Category, Giles Hawkins of Knavesmires Harriers leads from Dan Middlemas, with Esk Valley's Joe Johnson in 9th but still needs 3 events to optimise his standing. In the Ladies Seniors Shelli Gordon of New Marske leads, with Gill Jones in 6th best placed for Esk Valley.

F40 - Nicola Kent leads, with Louise Campbell best placed Esker in 3rd, M40 - Brendan Anglim of NYMAC leads just from Jason Ellis of Hartlepool BR, Vince Stockwell leading Esker in 5th. Rob Williamson leads the M45 category with Esk Valley's Martin Hunt in 9th, Thirsk and Sowerby's Lorraine Hiles leads from Kay Neesam in the F45 with Allison Rolfe of Esk Valley in 4th, Mick Clarke - Ennerdale Harriers leads the M50's with Ian Robinson EVFC 5th, Janet Cordingley - Knavesmires Harriers leads the ladies F50. Sue Haslam of Scarborough AC is leading the F55 with EVFC's Jill Libby in 4th. Lastly for the ladies Pat Kirby of Thirsk and Sowerby leads the F60's.

Back to the mens, Steve Mummery of York Acorn leads the men's F55, Ian Harmer EVFC is currently 13th, Mick Shaw - NYMAC heads the M60, with new this season member Clifford Carradine 6th so far, Evergreen Neil Scruton of Scarborough AC leads the M65 and Ron Sherwood has already won the M70 category.

Well Done all so far, four races left, Guisborough Grunt (15/08/12), Inclined to Madness (29/08/12), Castleton Show (09/09/12 - Saturday) and finally Rosebery Topping (12/09/12 - 19.00hrs). Then the Winter Series starts on Sunday 23 September 2012 with the Viking Chase Four Peaks.

Lakeland's Classic Trophy

The Lakeland's Classic Trophy is arguably the ultimate Fell racing challenge, introduced some 10 years ago to re-invigorate interest in the longer Lakeland fell races which in the 1990's had seen declining interest. The series consists of, Duddon (Superlong), Ennerdale Horseshoe (SL), Wasdale (SL), Borrowdale (SL), Three Shires (Long) and Langdale Horseshoe (L), with competitors having to complete 2 Superlongs and 1 Long to qualify.

In its short life Esk Valley has had a good presence, placing a team finish in 2010 and Richard Clark placing as an individual in 2010 and 2011, along with Stuart Backhouse and Phil Conner in 2010. First up this year was the Ennerdale Horseshoe, (02/06/12) a near marathon at 23.5 miles and 7500' of climb, three Esk Valley runners completed the race, Phil Conner placed 60th in a time of 5hrs 31min 47sec, Richard Clark 74th in 5hrs 49min 25sec and Michael Quinn in 83rd in 6hrs 29min 17sec, 105 completed. For a sense of the race read Phil Conner's report:

Race Report - Ennerdale Horseshoe Fell Race 2012

2nd June 2012

Three members of EVFC had signed up for the gruelling Lakeland Classic Fell Race that tours the 23 mile long ridge around Ennerdale; Phil Conner, Richard Clark, and Mick Quinn. Having completed the race once before I knew what I was letting myself in for..... We travelled across together with a quick breakfast in Keswick, arriving at the Race start (west end of Ennerdale Water) at 10am. The weather forecast looked good, and so it proved to be with a very light wind, sun shining, and temperature around 14 degC in the valley. A few midges were making themselves felt as we stripped off to racing kit.

I was feeling good, and quite confident with a "target time" of 5 hrs in mind (30 mins off my PB and a new EVFC record.....). Mick was trying the "beetroot juice" endurance approach for the first time.

After registering and collecting race numbers and electronic bibbers, we assembled at the start line and set-off at a steady pace at 11am. Mick in the lead, and Richard somewhere behind. The first 1.5 miles are easy going and a great warm up for the first big climb (600m) of the day to Great Borne, the start of the North ridge along Ennerdale. The climb starts easily enough but is steep through the middle section. Legs felt good, and I was making a few places as we headed higher. A couple of false summits finally leads to Great Borne. Ran alongside with Nigel ##### (DFR) and started to worry I had gone off too fast (he's usually miles in front of me in local races)! Reached the summit of Great Borne (CP1, 44.01, 2.30 ahead vs 2010) well inside the 50 minute cut-off. Fantastic view along the ridge to Red Pike and the distant Great Gable, with the whole ridge clear and in the sun. A fast descent and steady contour on sheep trod around Starling Dodd leads to the steady pull up to Red Pike Summit (CP2, 1:14.11, 1.30 ahead vs 2010). Chatted with Ian Hodgson (NYMAC) but lost contact with him and Nigel near the summit of Red Pike. Caught up with Mick Quinn leaving Red MAC, but ran together the long traverse around High Stile and High Crag more or less following the ridge line. This proved quicker than the contouring route I had used last time I raced the route. A sub-optimal line off the steep end of High Crag put Ian Hodgson and his group out of sight.

Mick was struggling with a "dodgy tummy", perhaps the beetroot juice....? and basically feeling crap. The soles of both of my feet were starting to feel painful (blisters?) and on the steep descent into Scarth Gasp sharp pain and a "squelchy feeling" confirmed my worst fear of blisters less than half way around the course. My legs felt strong but the blisters started to sap my confidence. On reaching Beck Tarn (CP3, 2:01.16, 4.08 ahead vs 2010). Mick told me to go on ahead as he needed to take a rest. I took a higher line (wider arc keeping further left) than previously upto Green Gable, and this proved quicker and less strenuous, and took a few more places. I reached Green Gable Summit (CP4, 2:32.59, 4.26 ahead vs 2010) 40 mins ahead of the cut-off time and was told by the Marshall that I was in 50th place. A quick slurp of water, and I headed off Green Gable down a grassy strip and onto loose scree, to take the lower traverse (Moses Trod) under Great Gable and across to Beckhead Tarn. Feet feeling very sore, and shoes full of small stones from the scree run.

The ridge ahead is awesome with Kirk Fell followed by Pillar and in the distance Haycock. It's a steep and stiff climb upto Kirk Fell, but runnable after the first steep rocky step. Reach the summit of Kirk Fell (CP5, 3:00.25, 4.07 ahead vs 2010) and enjoy a drink and the 3rd slab of my home-made flapjack - good energy food but needs water to wash it down. Lose some time by following the old fence posts off the summit and take a bit too wide an arc on rough ground (no-one in sight in front), but recognise the gully entry into the severe gully that marks the route down to Black Sail Pass. Have to keep to the right of the grassy dale to a family with 4 children coming up - not a good place by a starting walker at the col, and then start the long climb to Pillar. Keep below the main track and find an excellent trod. Doesn't seem as bad as last time I did this part of the route, and even manage to keep running upto the final rocky good out to the Summit plateau of Pillar (CP6, 3:44.19, 2.21 ahead vs 2010). Stop for Flapjack No.4 and another good drink from the Marshall supply (turns out to be my last drink of the day). A sub-5hr finish looks out of reach. The painful Wendy Dodds (LV60) arrives just as I set-off - one of my race targets was to keep in front of her! A very painful (blisters) descent off Pillar, with virtually no soft ground, just rocks and scree - much worse than I remember. Feel like I'm slowing, although legs still ok. Reach wind gap and climb on rocks steeply towards Little Scoat Fell. Look back and no sign of Wendy Dodds and a small group with her..... and remember contouring on south side at this stage last race. Realise I'm too high then spot the Dodds some 500m ahead and 50m lower. Scramble back over big boulders and reach the easier ground and race line. Lost several minutes. Now the route becomes very runnable, and I pick up speed but just maintain my distance from the group in front. My camelback water supply gives up the ghost at Haycock summit (CP7, 4:19.38, 0.44 ahead vs 2010), and Marshall supply is also empty.

Keep expecting Rich Clark to come past me - amazed I've held him off this far. Easy running now over undulating grass along the long southern ridge of Ennerdale. Catch a couple of runners in a group in front at Iron Crag (CP8, 4:44.37, 0.33 ahead vs 2010). Realise the EVFC record is out of reach. Dying for some water, and getting twinges of cramp in my calves. Suck the salt off my arms and this seems to take care of the cramp. Raising with two other runners on the long run-in, and keep ahead of them all the way Crag Fell (CP9, 5:11.35, 0.51 behind vs 2010). The final climb up out of the woods below Crag Fell is a struggle, but everyone else appears to find it equally tough, and I manage to keep going without a stop or anyone passing me. Plunge down from Crag Fell on steep grass and small diagonal path down through the lower woods. Legs tired but not cramping. Have to wait the final short 100m climb on the track, before the final downhill run-in across fields to the finish at the foot of Ennerdale Water. Cross the finish line in 61st position in 5:31.30 (2.46 outside my 2010 time). Slump into some welcome chairs and devour 4 cups of juice and 3 cups of tea in quick succession. My knackered but ecstatic that I'm first club member home. The relaxed group to my left includes the race winner Rhys Finkley-Robinson who had finished the race almost 2 hrs earlier (3:50.40)! How do they do it?!

Rich Clark crosses the line about 20 mins later (5:49.25), having run with Mick Quinn the second half of the race, but dropped him on the final descent from Crag Fell. Mick crosses the line a further 15 mins later (6:02.17), having cramped on the final descent.

Ennerdale certainly lived up to its reputation as a classic, and one of the toughest races in the fell running calendar. Phil Conner EVFC, June 2012.

Thanks Phil, anyone else tempted? The Lakeland Classics are not for the beginner, you need to be not only fit, but ready for the Lakeland terrain and don't underestimate the potential navigational difficulties when the clag is down and of course when it isn't.

Next up was Duckdon Long (09/04/12) on the day the clag was down, so a day for the map readers and navigational joy, 82 competitors made the finish sheet, Taking on another Lakeland monster one week after Ennerdale Michael Quinn (running much better) was the sole Esker placed well into the top half in 36th in a time of 4hrs 23min 53sec.

Third up was Wasdale, (14/07/12) which takes in the highest point in England, Scafell Pike, Four Eskers made the trip this time, Michael Quinn just inside the top half of the 121 finishers in 60th (qualifying for the trophy standings) and a time of 5hrs 29min 59sec, this race is arguably the toughest of the Classics at 21 miles long and 9000' of climb. Next home was Richard Clark in 75th in a time of 5hrs 41min 36sec just inside the top 100, Joe Johnson placed 97th in 6hrs 1min and 34 sec, and taking advantage of his spring of training, David Gibson came in 106th in a time of 6hrs 12min 35sec. Well Done all!!!

The last of the Superlongs is Borrowdale (04/08/12), 17 miles and 7500' again takes in Scafell Pike and rounds off with Dale Head just when you think the end is in sight! Richard Clark and David Gibson were the only Eskers to make it to the start line, as an English Champs counter over 400 finished the race. Richard Clark claimed a top half finish in 165th and a time of 4hrs 22min 29sec, David Gibson again completed a Classic placing 275th in 4hrs 59min 17sec. Excellent running both!

Around the Parkruns

We almost have an embarrassment of parkrun riches, with the original Albert Park, a flat fast two and a half lap event, Locke Park hosts the newish Redcar event, not yet 20 runs in, its a twisty in places course based on 3 one mile laps and a finishing straight. Tees Barrage is another newcomer, a single lap event up and own the River Tees from the White Water centre, includes some steps so not accessible to all. Stewart Park is the fourth local local event, not quite 10 yet, a two lapper, includes a short section of off-road and undulations. Enjoy a post event coffee at the newly refurbished visitor centre.

Slightly further a field are, Sedgefield, York Racecourse (the fastest local course on its day), Harrogate, Chester-le-Street, Gateshead, Durham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Whitley Bay and Sunderland.

The parkruns are all 5km distances, start at 9.00am every Saturday morning (though check for local changes due to other events), register for parkrun via their [website](http://www.parkrun.com), on registration a barcode will be sent through, print it off and take to the event of choice. No need to sign on, just start and pick up you tag as you cross the finish line, both will be scanned and tag returned. Results are available on the events website later in the day, with email sent-out, you can sign up for text notification of event results too.

Parkruns are wholly run locally by volunteers, so why not help out, parkruns, good training, very friendly and a great way to start your weekend.

Simon Greenwell took advantage of his current form to claim an Esk Valley record for the local parkrun event of 17min 27sec for the 5km event, and recorded fastest time at the event on the day. Joe Johnson had a terrific run on 2nd June 2012 with 17min 37sec and 4th on the day. Clive Thornton claimed a new pb and EVFC V45 record of 18min 44sec beating June 2010's effort.

Allison Rolfe and Louise Campbell continue to attend Albert Park on an almost weekly basis, both involved with organising the event one week in four and mentoring the less fit back into a more active lifestyle. Louise has claimed her 100 event T-Shirt and Allison her 50, but with 90 events complete the 100 evertier is being folded ready for posting Allison.

At Redcar, Jamie Henderson took his opportunity to claim fastest time on the day on 23/06/12 of 19min 40sec, Sid Gallands has made a couple of visits with a pb of 23min 23sec and an early EVFC record. Clive Thornton claimed the EVFC overall record of 19min 13sec on 28/07/12.

Next Time

Club Championships round-up, summer series round-up and the lots more.

Fell Pic courtesy Katie Thornton

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