

## THE LAKELAND CLASSICS SERIES

As Todmorden Harriers have very generously donated £50 towards the Trophies and Mugs awarded in this Series, I have been harangued into writing a small article to explain what it is all about to our members.

The Series was devised a few years ago by Graham Breeze of Skyrac A.C. in an attempt to rejuvenate interest and boost flagging entries to some of the long, classic Lakeland Races. If something were not done to bring back the punters there was a serious risk that some of these fantastic races would go to the wall, never to be run again. This had already happened to the Dockray-Helvellyn Race.

The races included in the Series are;

Super Longs;	Duddon ;	20 Miles with 6000' of climbing.
	Ennerdale;	23 Miles with 7500'
	Wasdale;	21 Miles with 9000'
Longs;	Borrowdale;	17 Miles with 6500'
	Three Shires;	12 Miles with 4800'
	Langdale;	14 Miles with 4000'

To complete the Series and have the chance to win one of the 10 Lakeland Classic commemorative mugs one has to finish three of these races, at least two of which must come from the Super Long category. The distance and rougher terrain encountered justifies a pace rather slower than is expected at our local races, which suits me just fine. So this year I decided to have a crack at 'The Classics'.

The Duddon; normally the easiest and most runnable of the super longs, was this year hit by very adverse weather. I went a bit off course a couple of times being something of a novice navigator, but not as badly off course as some...who need not be named!

The Ennerdale Horseshoe; Perfect weather and by halfway I was going strong and passing many of my rivals. Then for some inexplicable reason I departed Kirk Fell on the wrong flank and headed towards The Wasdale Head pub instead of towards Pillar! This error cost me a decent position in the race, but it was still a great day out.

The Wasdale; Although I can usually function reasonably well in blistering heat, on this occasion I did not feel remotely sprightly. I was not alone in my lethargy however and did just manage to shuffle up Great Gable within one minute of the cut off time. I was thus able to finish the race.

Borrowdale; Sadly we were away in The Alps when this was run this year. It is one of my all time favourites and a must for all Fell Runners at some time in their careers.

The Three Shires; This is the shortest of the Lakeland Classics at 12 miles. It is pleasant, scenic and not too rocky underfoot. A great one to get started on and I defy anyone to do this race and not say it was a good experience.

The Langdale Horseshoe; The weather on the day was fair, although the course was very wet and greasy following lots of rain in the preceeding week. As this was the last English Championship race of the season every man and his dog turned out causing a bottlenecked, slow start and a lot of serious competition. I was pleased with my time on the day and in a non championship year may even have been good enough for 'an old ladies' prize'.

To conclude, I'm not sure if I've done enough to win a coveted pottery mug, but it's been a good experience....and there's always next year to try again. In my humble opinion, anyone who has not done at least one of these 'Classic' races is only living half a life. So do yourselves a favour....Get a full life and have a go next year, or the year after.

Or to quote The Fellrunner February 2005...."When these races are on, why would you want to run anywhere else?"

Jane Smith (The reluctant Raconteur).