

## **Glossopdale “Women-Only” Fell Race**

**Approximately 3.5 miles, 750 feet. Years active 1995 – 1996.**

Information courtesy of Liz Sparkes and Nev McGraw...

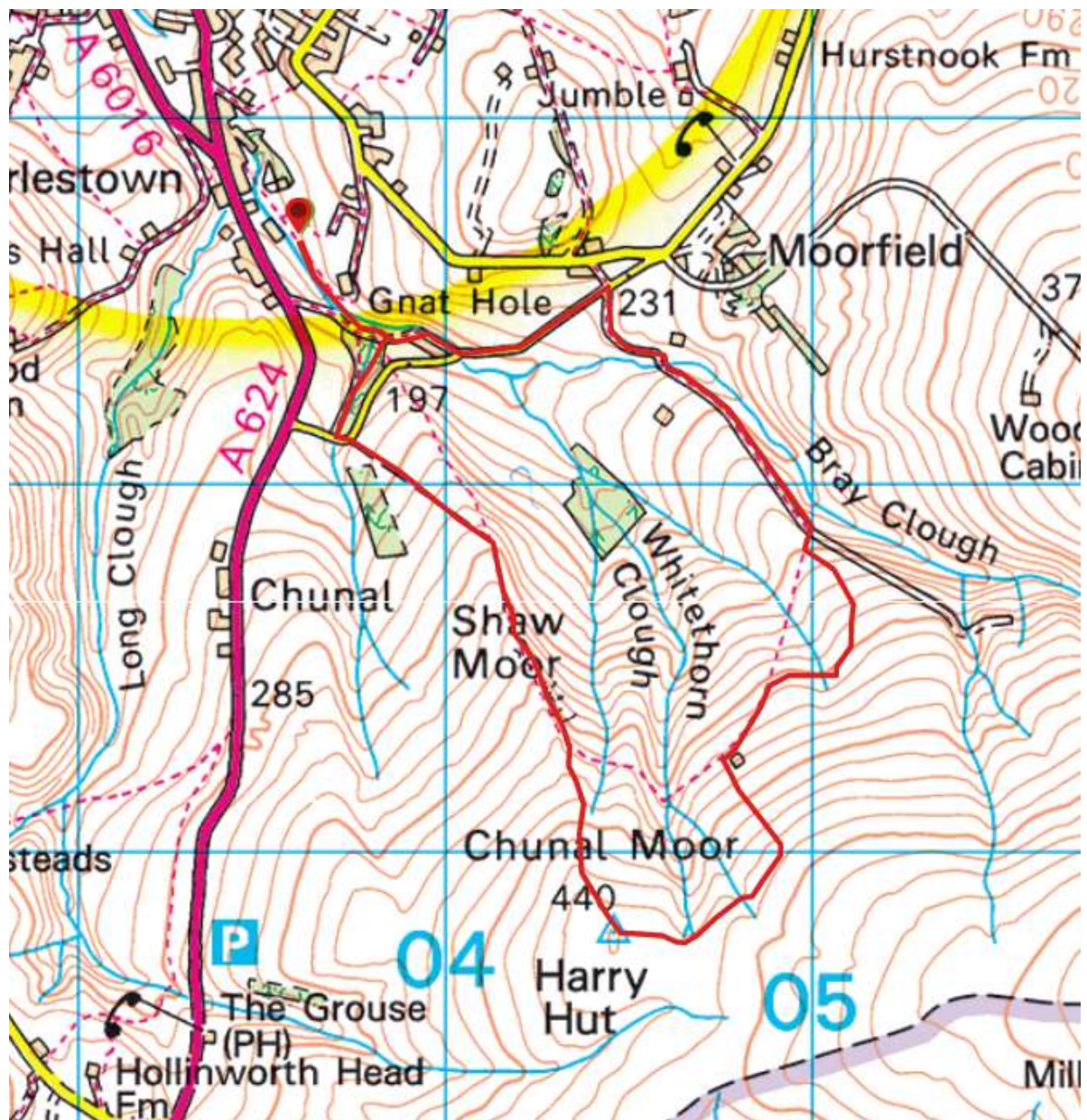
The Glossopdale Women-Only Fell Race was organised by Shaun Priestley and Liz Sparkes, and was inspired in part by the aforementioned witnessing the British Fell Championships of 1994, where in an exciting and tight series to find the Women's champion, Shelf Moor was the deciding race.

In December of that year, Glossopdale Harrier Neil Shuttleworth wrote an article for “The Runner” (attached) summarising the amazing achievements in the short history of women in fell running to that point, and also tackling head on, some of the thorny aspects of sexual discrimination in the sport.

Shaun is quoted here as considering a Women's only race, of around 3-4 miles in distance. Billed as introduction to Fell Running, yet still providing a challenge to more experienced runners, so it was that the Glossopdale Women-Only Race was born. Using The Drovers pub for registration, the route is very similar to today's Wormstones Fell Race, although in reverse and going from The Gnat Hole.

From a field of just 10 runners, the 1995 race was won by East Cheshire Harrier Ros Dunnington in 31:50, with Glossopdales Sally Newman in second place. 1996 attracted a similarly unfortunate field of just 7 runners, with Helen Sandelands of Skelmersdale winning in 34:04. In 96 the race grossed just £10.90, making a net loss of £3.19, which presumably led to the demise of the race. A real shame. Maybe at the time, women's fell running was too much of “a niche within a niche” to make a success of the race. Today, things have changed massively, and whilst it could be fairly argued that the race itself ultimately failed, there's no doubt that the efforts of Shaun and Liz made a huge contribution to addressing the balance of the sexes that now exists within fell running.

The clockwise route started in the Gnat Hole Fields, exiting south over the footbridge along the track through Gnat Hole Farm. Turn left and take the long tarmac climb up Derbyshire Level, before turning right onto the Bray Clough Track. After approximately ½ a mile, take the right turn onto the track heading for the shooting cabin, then climb the grouse butts line to No.3 butt. Here, take the trod over to Harry Hut, before the long descent past Wormstones, and down to the layby. From here the route goes through Gnat Hole Wood, sticking to the lower path. Finally, the routes crosses the footbridge, and back along Gnat Hole Fields to the finish.





# **GLOSSOPDALE HARRIERS**

## **WOMEN-ONLY FELL RACE**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 8th, 7.30pm**

### **GNAT HOLE, GLOSSOP**

**3, 1/2 miles, 750 feet**

SCENIC COURSE SUITABLE FOR AN INTRODUCTION TO FELL RACING YET STILL PROVIDING A CHALLENGE TO EXPERIENCED RUNNERS. THE ROUTE TAKES IN GNAT HOLE, BRAY CLOUGH, SHOOTING CABIN, HARRY HUT AND WORM STONES.

CAR PARKING ON TURNLEE ROAD,  
GLOSSOP. SIGNPOSTED FROM THE GLOSSOP TO  
HAYFIELD ROAD.

## GLOSSOPDALE HARRIERS

### WOMENS FELL RACE JUNE 8th,1995

1	R.DUNNINGTON	V35	E.C.H.	31.50
2	S.NEWMAN		GLOSSOPDALE	33.23
3	S.DUNIEC	JUNIOR	HOLMFIRTH	34.26
4	G.MARKHAM	V35	MELTHAM ZERO	39.13
5	I.BRADWELL	V45	E.C.H.	40.12
6	W.SYKES	V35	MELTHAM ZERO	43.39
7	H.BELL		GLOSSOPDALE	43.48
8	L.SPARKES	V35	GLOSSOPDALE	46.18
=9	H.STAVRINIDES	V45	U/A	52.52
=9	A.HOWARTH	V45	U/A	52.52

Thanks for supporting the first running of this race and I hope that this might become an established fixture in the calendar.

## GLOSSOPDALE WOMEN'S FELL RACE

JUNE 6th, 1996

### RESULTS

1	HELEN SANDELANDS	V35	SKELMERSDALE BOUNDARY H	34.04
2	STEFANA DUNIEC		WAKEFIELD HARRIERS	34.22
3	SHARON JONES	V35	GLOSSOPDALE	36.15
4	NATASHA FELLOWES		NEWBURGH	36.23
5	SUZANNE BUDGETT		MCR YMCA HARRIERS	39.12
6	JANET HUTTON	V35	TOTLEY A.C.	40.16
7	EVA MOORE		ALTRINCHAM & DISTRICT A.C.	44.32

This was the second running of this race and again was apparently enjoyed by those who ran. Thank you to those who travelled some distance to the race (particularly the two runners who came from Skipton but arrived too late ) and we hope to see you all again next year. Thanks are also due to the marshals and to the landowners, without whom we would not be able to hold the race.

# GLOSSOPDALE WOMEN'S FELL RACE

JUNE 6th, 1996

## income

Entries 10.50

Results 00.40

Total **10.90**

## expenditure

Prizes 13.71

Postage 00.38

Total **14.09**

Balance for 1996 -3.19

Balance brought forward -12.52

Cumulative deficit **-15.71**



## Liz's Organisational Notes from 1995

WOMEN - ONLY FELL RACE JUNE 8TH

ROUTE: GNAT HOLE / ROAD / TRACK (JIMMY LN?) / SHOOTING CABIN

GROUSE BUTS (TO NO. 3) / HARRY HUT / NORM STONES / GNAT HOLE

GAMEKEEPER: FRED MITCHINSON, BRAY CLOUGH  
853 768.

CLEARED FOR 1996  
24/10/95. CONTACT  
AGAIN NEARER TIME  
TO UNLOCK GATES, ETC.

CONTACTED VIA JILL WEELDEN (NCT).

AGREED 21/5/95. CONCERNED THAT WE KEEP TO TRACKS TO  
AVOID DISTURBANCE OF FLEDGLING BIRDS.

AGREED TO UNLOCK GATES ON TRACK TO AVOID DAMAGE -  
WILL MEET US ON THE NIGHT TO RUN MARSHALS UP THE TRACK  
AND SHOW THEM HOW TO RE-LOCK THE GATES. (RING TO ARRANGE  
MEETING TIME/PLACE).

LANDOWNER: PHIL MARTIN, GNAT HOLE FARM (BEHIND MILL) 852 768

RETIRED FARMER, LETS OUT THE FIELD AT TIMES.

CONTACTED VIA FRANK BALLINGTON, MOORVIEW, LEANTOWN.

AGREED (31/5/95) TO START + FINISH IN THE FIELD - RATHER  
SEE FELL RACE THAN PEOPLE IN PUBS

TURNLEE CENTRE: WHITE HALL CENTRE, LONG HILL, BUXTON. 0298-23260

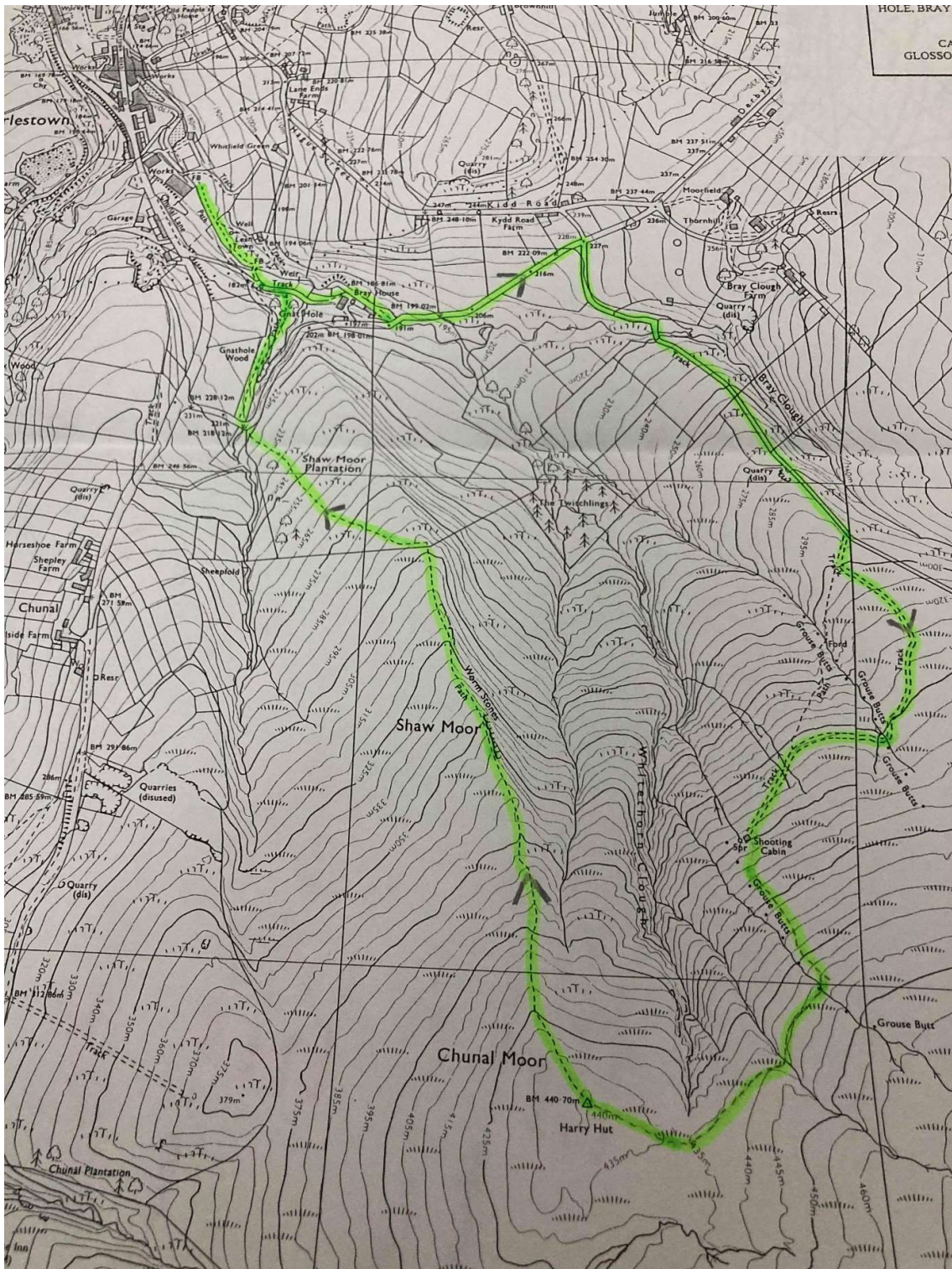
CARETAKER - ?

AVAILABLE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BOOKINGS AT 50% DISCOUNT i.e.  
£32.50 + VAT. BOOKING ONLY WITHIN 1 MONTH OF REQUIRED  
DATE.

PROVERS ARMS: LANDLORD DAVE? 854 704.

AGREED 4/6/95 TO ALLOW USE OF TAP-ROOM FOR REGISTRATION.  
FROM 6.30 p.m. ONWARDS.







# Women on the fells

An appreciation of women fell runners

In October I was brought to task by Glossopdale club mate Edwina Hill who said "Don't get me wrong, I've lots of admiration for Billy and Joss, but you didn't discuss women?" This was because I hadn't mentioned any women in my "who is the best" article (about fell runners), despite opening with a quote from a lady Cumberland Fell Runner. This month I hope to set matters right and discuss several topics relevant to them.

Since "Who is the best" was assumed to be male, I wondered, in the short history of women running on the fells, "who is the best woman?" In my view it could be narrowed down to four (in alphabetical order):

**Angela Brand-Barker** - four times British Champion 1983, '86, '93, '94.

**Ros Evans** - '79/'81 Champ who ran 1:44 for the 1981 Ben, top 16% and was fifth in the 1983 Karrimor Elite (the top class) with Dave Rosen.

**Carol Greenwood** - former World Cup winner; highly placed in fell races - once third in a fell race; 1993 English Champion.

**Sarah Rowell** - London Marathon winner and once held the UK record; outright winner of the Seven Sisters Marathon; her 3:19:21 Three Peaks run for 22nd in 1991 is

■ By Neil Shuttleworth,  
Gossopdale Harriers

already a legend (or '92, 15th overall).

It is a debate one could have forever as it is difficult to compare one generation with another, especially as the distaff side of the sport is still in its infancy and less than a dozen are actively involved in the Championship.

In the Olympics at Munich in 1972 women did not even race a mile - (1500m was the longest then permitted and a mile is 109 metres more than they were then allowed).

The marathon was first contested 10 years and three Olympiads ago. Our heroines have only been encouraged on the fells during a similar short time scale; Ross Evans was the first ladies' champion in 1979.

It was therefore, I feel, a great retrograde step when separate starts for women were implemented in some championship races this year ('94).

Various arguments can be cited for not separating them - centred on the competition enjoyed by racing in a decent-sized field and there being safety in numbers - more so since about a tenth of the entry comes from women and they may be chasing championship points both as an individual and for team/club. (The FRA only give points to the first ten women in championship races).

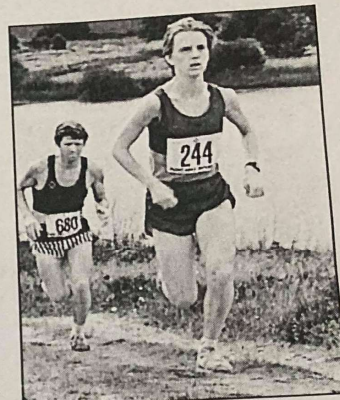
British Champion Angela Brand-Barker said before the season started; "This year they are introducing separate starts (for women) on the shorter courses purely because of the pressure of numbers and quite often there are narrow constrictions.

"If you've got 400 people all going for a gate at once, then people tend to get trampled on and it does tend to be the females. It does mean now we can race against each other rather than purely against the males, where we don't know our position in relation to other females, and it does add an extra dimension to it."

The old adage that two heads are better than one is certainly true when you go astray in the mist, or get injured or seriously hurt.

In the early days of fell racing for women, organisers proceeded with caution, setting them off, say, ten minutes before the men for an hour's race.

For the few who did take part in a race on unfamiliar terrain it must have been a daunting prospect to 'pioneer' or 'tread' a route ahead of the men. Ross Evans, Sue Parkin and others happy with map and



■ Carol Greenwood. Photo: Alan Greenwood.

compass had no qualms about navigating.

Bingley's Carol Greenwood, the 1993 English Champion, was absent from the fells in 1994 and concentrated instead on the track. However, she was all in favour of starting with the men. For marathons and road races on a marked circuit it can be a different story.

Most women feel there should be no discrimination on the hills and want to race with the men.

This, it seems, is the general view of a survey by Kendal's Alison Crabb, published in the last issue of the Fell Runner.

The moral is, we will accept change whatever the topic, but I understand that there was very little debate before the change was instituted. So please, FRA, discuss it first.

A closely fought British Championship was sealed in September at the Shelf Moor race for both men and women. Andrea Priestley of Fellandale, the ladies' team champions, led before the race but was defeated by Angela Brand-Barker whose final total was just a few points more.

Organiser Shaun Priestley said, "It was a very competitive race. I was pleased with the outcome, and hope to see you back next year."

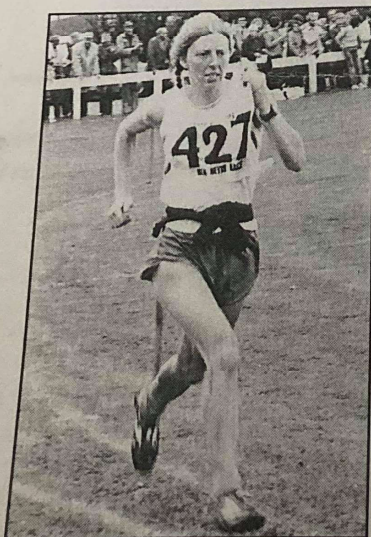
Shaun is considering staging a short ladies'-only race next summer.

He thinks about three or four miles would be an ideal distance to let them try fell running, and has various natural circuits to choose from on the edge of the Peak District.

There are road races for women only, and some road types may like to extend their horizons.

On the fells one women's-only race exists (apart from the Mountain Trial over 15 miles) and that is the World Cup Trial, an elitist affair that may be too intimidating for many.

Nothing has been finalised yet but if you are interested and want details, drop me a line c/o The Runner.



■ Ros Evans, winning the Ben Nevis Fell Race in 1981, the year she set the record. Photo: Neil Shuttleworth.