

## KEEP'S MILLENNIUM DIARIES

A special edition this month, highlighting golden memories penned by our star athlete whilst on one of the club's infamous expeditions.

### Mar 24<sup>th</sup>

*Another intrepid expedition to add to the long list of conquests that I have notched up (in the running sense, of course!). Set out on the Thirlmere Way with a variety of eccentric club members, including one Jeff "Blast from the Past" Cummins. Mind you, he very nearly didn't make it. Despite having an elite athlete like myself on board, progress on day one was painfully slow, with the result that Jeff rendezvous-ed a good 20 miles up the route away from us. A couple of mobile phone calls to Mr Fisher should have soon clarified the situation - except that the phone was turned off and all we got was "Pete, turn your f\*\*\*\*\*g phone on and tell me where the b\*\*\*\*\*y hell you are!" Not that Pete would have been able to give an accurate reply anyway. A typical trip, in fact.*

### Mar 25<sup>th</sup>

*Day two of the Thirlmere Way, memorable for Black Gates, White Legs and Colin's haircut (I actually first saw the latter yesterday but felt too strongly about it to comment at the time). The Way follows the route of the pipeline carrying water from Thirlmere to Manchester, and black gates mark where the route crosses the actual pipeline. This should have made navigation easy, and spirits were further raised by the arrival just after breakfast of ace navigator Dennis the Menace who brought a map. However, he was so stressed by having to explain to the B&B landlady as to why he hadn't stayed the night (he told her that he loved his wife too much - a transparent excuse that was understandably rejected by the good woman) that he couldn't concentrate, and it was left to Colin and Pete Fisher to find the way to where we'd finished the previous evening. As we drove south on the A6 without any prospect of ever seeing the Thirlmere Way again, I understood with startling clarity why Pete once managed to turn a 6-mile jog into a 23-mile hike on the Pennine Way.*

*Underway at last, events took on a familiar pattern. Colin ran the route on his own, although he had to enter Tony Knowles "Dog Mode" when the Menace only gave him directions for 200 yards at a time! This involves sprinting to the next landmark and jogging back with tongue hanging out waiting for directions. Colin is as yet a novice - Mr Knowles has even been known to fetch sticks as well!*

*In the afternoon the sun came out, and in the spirit of heady euphoria that surrounded the trip's participants (otherwise known as unfitnes) I threw caution to the wind and, in direct contradiction of Old Ma Walkinghome's famous proverb "Ne'er cast a clout til' May is out, ne'er bare your flesh when it's still nesh", I took my trousers off. Overall, I found the response of fellow expeditioners and members of the public positive, although most seemed to be squinting at me as the bright sunlight reflected sharply off my English Rose-coloured rippling thighs. I think most people were simply awestruck. Things improved when I put my shorts on!*

*A satisfying conclusion to the day when Colin "haircut" Crane and Mick "Sniffer" Sumpter got hopelessly lost and therefore sent Charlie's carefully planned logistics even further up the creek. I find it best to stand back in these situations, nodding sagely and showering sympathy on all and sundry. Everyone knows that if it was left in my hands all would be well, but I think it only fair to give enthusiastic amateurs the chance to "have a go". Made a mental note not to run with Colin tomorrow.*

*Evening in Kendal. Having finally tracked down somewhere to eat (remarkably difficult in an alleged "tourist" town), a chance to reflect properly on that haircut. Some theorists identify some form of mid-life crisis, but I pointed out that Colin has been in crisis for as long as I have known him. The eventual theory is that he has been made to look like that so there is no chance of getting into trouble on club trips (or even training sessions).*

**Mar 26<sup>th</sup>**

*The climax of the Thirlmere Way. In the way of many long-anticipated climaxes, this one petered out in a low-key and rather unsatisfactory fashion*