



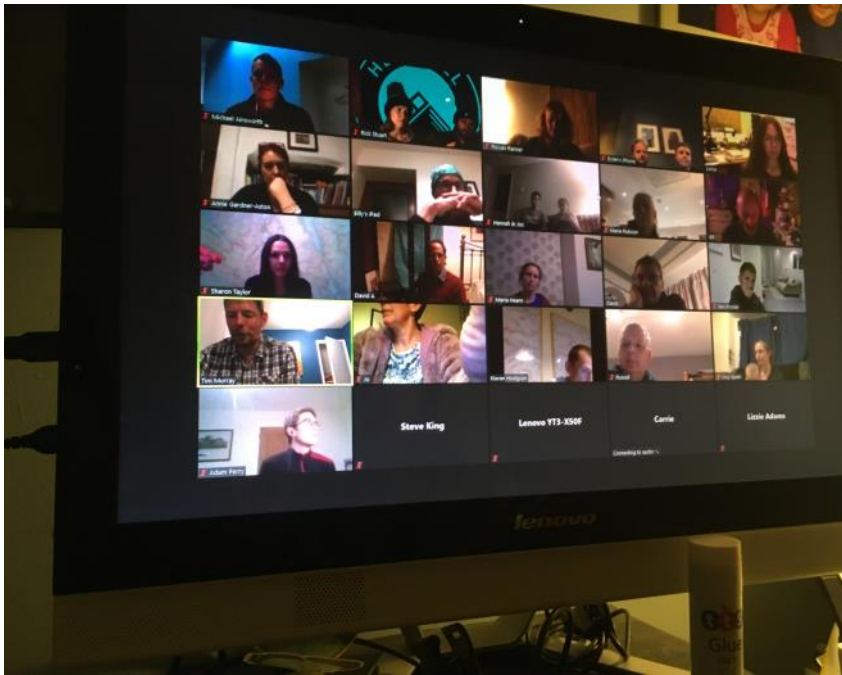
# HELM HILL NEWS

WINTER 2020/21





## 2020 VIRTUAL AGM



### ZOOM. NO CHIPS

H elm Hill held its first virtual, online Annual General Meeting in November. Traditionally held after the last training session of the main season on The Helm it's always well attended, possibly due to the attraction of free chips and sarnies and a bar. This year however members were left to fend for themselves.

### BIG NEWS FROM THE AGM!

The AGM report appears further on but the big news from the AGM was that **TIM IS STEPPING DOWN AS CHAIRMAN AFTER 15 YEARS!!!! YES, 15 YEARS!**



The AGM gave us the opportunity to thank Tim for the immense role he has had in steering the club to what it is today.

The following pages reflect how we all feel.....



From Billy:

Over the years since the start from very humble beginnings, we have had some tremendous people who have done wonderful things for Helm Hill. Tim is one of those people. As I recall, we were looking for a new Chairman and Tim's name was thrown into the hat, so when the AGM came about he was duly voted in, not knowing at the time that it would be 15 years before he could make his escape!

It all started off pretty low key, but it became very apparent that one of Tim's greatest strengths was to motivate other people to get involved at committee level, encouraging them to follow his example in commitment to advancing the club to where we are today. Over his period of time as Chairman, we have moved from a small, understated club to becoming one of the most respected and formidable fell running clubs in the country. Probably

one of the greatest compliments was said by the late Ken Shuttleworth, who could be a man who didn't waste words, we had just finished the Christmas presentation at Netherfield Cricket Club, with Ken looking to scale back his involvement with the club, he looked at Tim standing on the stage and looked at me and said "Well Billy, I'm leaving the club in capable hands, you've got a good 'un there" Now you don't get much better praise than that I can tell you!

Tim leaves a legacy of setting the standard in junior coaching and leadership. He is extremely gifted at motivating seniors to get to races and is a pivotal character around the buzz of the start line, when seniors need a little reassurance and guidance, often making the pre-race anxiety disappear by organizing whole team photos, which always made people feel like they were part of a club and not just a race number.

Who can forget seeing Tim with the Carnethy claymore, waving it around, above his head, as proud as punch at Barbon KWL the day after the race? Tim was also instrumental in encouraging the organizers to get a ladies claymore made to recognize the ladies team, as anybody who races knows, we all have to run the same course, the same hills and suffer just the same!

I am pleased to say that as a club, we could not let someone of Tim's caliber slip through our fingers, so he is to take up a new role as life Vice-president of the mighty green (jade) machine. So in final summary, in Tim's 15 years we've moved from about 100 members to about 400, but the level of respect that we now hold within the fell running community, cannot be measured in the same way. All I can say is thank you Tim!

Billy Procter,

Helm Hill Club President



We made a presentation to chairman Tim on The Helm to thank him for all the amazing work he has done over the years for the club.

A sign of the times meant we could only have 6 of us there but we know the Helm spirit was there en masse!

Thanks to Jo Cater for the beautiful trophy and to Billy Procter for making the presentation.

Of course we then had to do Billy's Tour de Helm!





## A short message from the outgoing Chair

A huge thanks to everyone for the gifts which were presented to me to other week on a windswept Helm (of course!). Special thanks to Ali for organising it all and to Jo Cater for the trophy which is magnificent. It's been an honour and a privilege to

have been involved with the Club as Chair over the past 15 years. Our new Chair now knows what to expect when he stands down in 2035! I will, of course, continue to be involved as Vice President.....and in the organisation of the Relays later this year. Hopefully we will be back racing by then!!

Best Wishes and a Happy New Year, Tim



# HELM HILL AGM 2020 MINUTES



## Committee Member Reports:

**Chairman** Despite the restrictions due to the pandemic we are still managing to keep up the communications and where possible we are organising virtual races. Thanks to Kath Aubrey, Chris Schofield and Lizzie Berry as they are standing down from their roles on the committee this year. Departing remarks from Tim as he stands down after 15 years of dedication: "we need to be proud of the fact that we are an inclusive club, we cater for all ages and abilities and there is no segregation between the seniors and juniors. We are a club that likes to race and we encourage others to do so by supporting them in their endeavours. A big thanks to all those that have been the architects of this and in their support for Tim over the years." Tim will be handing over to Michael Ainsworth and believes that he will be a fantastic going forward.

**Deputy Chairman** *Unable to attend but wanted to relay his thoughts on Tim standing down:* 'On behalf of the committee, club coaches and club members both junior and senior I would like to thank Tim for his 15 years as club chair. During his time as chair the club has grown from a small club to one of the most successful fell running clubs in the country. Tim has served as chair with enthusiasm and a sense of humour steering the club onto greater things and supporting those in the club who have brought ideas to the committee. Fifteen years ago many in the fell running community would not have even heard of Helm Hill, now when the green machine turns up at championship races everyone on the start line recognises and fears the green vest. Thanks Tim for steering us forward and for having fun on the way.'

**Membership Secretary** Marie mentioned that she is considering standing down from next year and really enjoyed her time and would encourage others to take on this rewarding role. We have 229 members of which 149 are seniors and 68 juniors - we have 12 18-23 yo members (not charged). 23 family members and 37 have joined England Athletics.

**Welfare officers** All the news is positive and this is mainly due to the cooperation of all the members.

**Treasurer** We have approximately £30k turnover annually and we continue building the reserves, however this was a quiet year. Membership subscriptions - last year 5.5k, this year >3k. So moving forward we need to push for increased membership.

**Junior Coordinator** Despite the restrictions from the pandemic we are running 4 groups on a Monday and 4 on a Wednesday. Anna Stevens and Tim Murray are stopping their junior coaching this year.

**Team Captains (Sharon/Michael)** Not much to report due to the cessation of racing but we are all staying ready for what we hope will be some competitive events in 2021.

**President** Billy thanked Tim for the many years of services and as a fitting gesture proposed Tim was made a lifetime VP of the club - all members agreed and this was seconded by Michael Ainsworth.

## Election of Members

**Chair** | Michael Ainsworth

**Dep Chair** | John Bagge

**Membership** | Marie Robson

**Welfare** | Jo Wilcox & Annie Aston-Gardner

**Treasurer** | Jo Grisedale

**Junior Coordinator** | Lorna Askew

**Secretary** | Bill Coupe

**Team Captain** | Sharon Taylor & Adam Perry

**Member** | Ben Proctor, Ali Richards, Richard Cater, Russ Cannon

(NB Details of proposer/seconder available from Bill Coupe)

To see some blurb about Who's Who in the Helm Hill Committee see the club website '[About Us](#)' tab



## Pete Bland

**9th November 1941—28th November 2020**

Helm Hill would like to pass on their sincerest condolences to the Bland family regarding the sad loss of Pete. It was clear from all the messages on the Pete Bland Sports FB page just how much he was loved and valued by the fellrunning community. He will be sorely missed.

Pete was someone who always had a kind and friendly word for people no matter whether they were an elite runner or at the back of the field. We will remember him with great fondness when we see the Pete Bland van and in particular at the races where he was organiser or ever-present such as Kentmere, Reston Scar and Grasmere Sports. An absolute legend and someone who gave so much to our sport.

The following words are from his son Matt, originally posted on the Pete Bland Sports FB page and printed with permission from Matt:



*The Bland family are sad to announce that Pete Bland passed away on Saturday 28th November.*

*After testing positive for covid on the 7th November, Pete was admitted to hospital on the 16th. He fought so hard but the virus showed him no mercy and he passed on the 28th.*

*He leaves behind wife Anne, children Louise and Matt, son and daughter in law Glen and Tracey and grandchildren Robbie, Holly and Billy. He also leaves behind a host of friends forged in the running community.*

*Pete devoted most of his life to two things, family and running. A long running career in the lakeland fells, with the odd spell on the roads led him to open Pete Bland Sports 39 years ago. Once the legs grew tired, Pete turned his attention to helping other runners. Ten years as England fell & mountain running team manager, forty years organising the Kentmere Horseshoe (as well as other races) and a long stint on the FRA committee just some of his notable contributions.*

*This is a devastating loss for the family, but we take comfort from the fact his legacy will live on at Pete Bland Sports.*

A quick intro to Mike, taking over the key role from Tim....and Adam taking on one of the two team captain roles...



**Chairman: Mike Ainsworth**—Chair of Helm Hill....Crikey! When I joined the club in 2014 I certainly wasn't planning on this but, when Billy explained we hadn't had anyone step forward to fill Tim's rather large studs, I decided I'd put my hand up!

So it's from the winter league results cave, to club captain to chair! Whilst it's daunting taking on a role like this, it's also exciting thinking about what we will do next. I was lucky to find fell running after an 'illustrious' grassroots football career that spanned A&E departments across Lancashire and Cumbria! I was even luckier to find the greatest fell running club in the world....I see this as a great chance to now make those same opportunities for others.



My focus in the short term is obviously the pandemic and how we keep our activities going in a safe and responsible way. My more inspiring and enduring focus is seeing how we can improve as a club and get even more of you running and racing on the fells for the green machine! I'm lucky to count some of our original members as fell running friends and it's fantastic to think in a few decades time lots of you will still be running on the fells because of Helm Hill...I hope to be with you too!

Mike likes to jump into things feet first.





**Team captain; Adam Perry**—Let's hope that the next 12 months is as transformative for our lives as the last 12, only this time it will be back to the race line rather into our homes we go. I have come to the role of Men's Captain following several years running with Helm Hill, under the direction and leadership of lots of determined, inspiring and effective captains / coaches / members of the club. I would like to think I know most runners at the club and members both past and present. For those that don't know me, I came to running about 14 years ago and fell running especially has provided opportunities to explore far corners of places big and small, meet fantastic people and push my own physical and mental limits. Individual hard work, commitment and desire brings the collective results, memories and experiences the club is well renown for. Being Men's Captain is a chance to continue the fantastic work (over more than a quarter of a century !) of all those people before me. Helm Hill offers all of our runners the opportunity, infrastructure and safe environment in which to personally excel. Whilst I think it is important to always have 'fun', I am keen to help maintain the competitive environment at the club. I would appreciate existing and new members getting in touch to tell me your thoughts on what the club does well, and where it could improve insofar as it is relevant to this role. I am especially keen to continue the club's growing success. Whilst I will be looking to build on what the club already does so well, I think it is important that we continue to build our knowledge, craft and speed in the fells. Please do be in touch so that when we can all get back to gritting it out on the fells, trail or... road...Helm Hill remains the fantastic environment which I discovered many training sessions ago. Keep training... we will be racing before you know it. Adam



Hello all,

Happy new year!

Don't know about you but I feel like there's been more ups and downs to this pandemic so far than one of Billy's Helm Hill circuits!

I hope you are managing to keep happy, healthy and fit one way or another. Running is a great sport to have chosen for the situation we're in so keep lacing up those trainers through the winter, enjoy the frosty mornings and endure the rest of it...summer smiles are made in the mud! So keep going...we will do this!

Club training continues whenever we can and it'll be a great night when we will all meet again together on the Helm. In the meantime we'll look to adapt to any further changes in the law or guidance to make sure this keeps going safely and with thought for the communities we live in. Thanks to you all for taking the time to understand and stick to the new arrangements. Also big thanks to David Griffin as COVID coordinator and all our coaches and helpers for their efforts in keeping sessions on.

Then there's racing to think of. Dave Appleyard did a fantastic job putting on the recent relay event. It was great to see so many of you suffering again! We have a few more ideas for club events in the pipeline including a junior relay so keep looking out for these.

If you are still looking for (non race) based motivation, then keep an eye on the club [Facebook page](#)...It's been great to see and hear about so many of you taking on personal challenges throughout the last year and there's been some great inventiveness. So why not try and beat your 800m/carnethy course/24hr (!) own best...or take on an annual challenge in distance/routes....run your own 'round' or get to know some classic race routes so when they are back you have an advantage! I hope Father Christmas or (Jeff Bezos!!) brought you all a training calendar to write down your goals and targets for 2021!

See you on the fell

Michael





We had a good quantity of Helm juniors taking part in the Winter League races that happened at the start of the year, and had a strong uptake on the colours challenge in the summer, with some very creative cakes, postbox routes, trig photos and lovely pebble art as well as some challenging running and cycling achievements.

It has been very pleasing that practically all our juniors returned to training after our long lockdown break. We are operating four training groups on a Monday night and four on a Wednesday night. This allows the groups to meet in areas separate from each other, so mixing of groups does not take place. Also it means the presence of groups running all over town or the Helm has been kept to a lower profile than usual, with less likelihood of mixing with the general public or getting in the way of walkers, dog walkers etc.

The new time for training of 6.15 – 7.15pm has been popular. Thank you to parents for bringing the children to and from training, providing the necessary footwear, hi viz gear and facemasks.

An extra special thank you this year to all the junior coaches and their helpers as you have all taken up the mantle of coaching again despite the possible risk re Covid, and the children all seem to be really enjoying their training. An added difficulty at present is that adults cannot swap between junior groups, so I am very grateful to the helpers who turn up regularly to assist with the coaching because it is not easy to replace a helper at short notice.

In recognition of this hard work and commitment, the club committee funded some Christmas wine for all coaches and helpers ... delivering twenty bottles of this in the environs of Kendal kept me busy on my bike for a while!

This year we have said goodbye to **Anna Stevens** and **Tim Murray** from the team of junior coaches. Both have coached for many years, turning out regularly on a Wednesday night in all weathers, and they have supported a very large number of juniors on their running journeys. Many youngsters have a lot to be grateful for regarding the voluntary input of these two generous people. Anna coached those youngsters who were starting their journey with Helm – taking them from the waiting list and showing them how much fun can be had on a Wednesday night regardless of the cold, mud, rain or sun. Tim's forte was with the older juniors; improving their stamina, discussing racing, giving them turns at leading the group and then handing them on so they continued their running journey; many reached Helm Senior groups, have competed at various levels, have taken up cross-country or athletics at University or used their running ability and fitness as part of their work, training or vocation.

Meanwhile, all our coaches;

**Level-1:** Dan Hughes, happily assisted by Steve Baker

Sam Moon and Cathy Sanderson, with the reliable help of Andrew Douglas

**Level-2:** Tim Roe and Sarah Atkinson (usually with Amy Pearman, who is seconded to James and Warren at present!) with Alastair Dunn – who has done so much

for the club in the past and is STILL helping out.

James Mulvany and Warren Kinley – with Amy and Matt Pearman

Justin Tancrel, ably assisted by Kirk and Kerrie Wadsworth. Thank you here also to Stu Carter, Rich and Jo Cater, Claire Mason and Pete Bryant.

**Level 3:** Maria Hearn, with the steadfast input of Mike Richards

Lorna Askew, with Jo Pennington whom I couldn't do without

**Level 4:** Dream Team Kate Simpson, Jo Appleby and Dan Malcolm

continue to work hard at planning and providing training sessions which are fun, worthwhile and safe. A big thank you to them.

## Saturday 23 January

At the time of writing, Covid restrictions will allow us to put on an event for Helm Juniors on **Cunswick Scar**. I am organising this as a morning of racing; all juniors will be assigned to an age category and given a time to turn up and run the course. The course will be on the area surrounding the Cunswick Scar cairn, and will not go across any stiles or through any gates.

The committee will be turning out to help with the organisation, and to see our upcoming runners. Juniors should remember that the committee is not just looking at those who lead the field – they are looking for determination and hard work; speed is not everything!

We have some Helm Hill memorabilia – money boxes, for example, and possibly some mugs, which every Junior will be entitled to once they have completed their run.

Save the date!



Junior members enjoying the Christmas lights on a Monday's training session.

Pic: Catherine Cullinane



## Pete Bland Poster Competition -

### Isabel Sanderson

When I heard about the Pete Bland poster competition, I thought it sounded like a great opportunity to support the NHS as well as being fun to do. The aim of the competition was to design a poster for the reopening of Pete Blands running shoe shop. The poster was about saying thank you to the NHS and key workers. I had a good think about the design and how it could also involve running. In the end the poster had some colourful bubble writing, The Helm Hill logo and Pete Bland logo. It also had a snowy mountain with a rainbow above it. There were footprints in the snow to show that a runner had been there.

A few weeks later my mum told me the good news that I had won the competition and my poster would be displayed in Pete Blands shop window. I was so excited to hear this. 'Socially distanced' prize giving was at Pete Blands the next week. I went down to the shop where the other winners were also collecting prizes. We went into the shop and were given goody bags. I received a compass and a bum bag as well as some sweets. There were also pictures taken of us too. This was such a great prize as I had been talking about getting a compass over lockdown. I just needed to learn how to use it!

The next day my dad and me went up on to Scout Scar. We had the compass and a map of the area. The weather was pretty good and we ran up to the mushroom. I practiced how to find something on a map and get to it using my new compass. My dad gave me some things to find using the compass and we set off to find them using the compass bearing. It was really enjoyable to be able to do this. It was a bit easier than I expected. While we were out a mist came down and that made it more realistic as I couldn't see what I was looking for.

We went to Scotland this summer and climbed lots of mountains. My compass came with me on all of them. The bum bag is handy too as its bigger than my old one and can fit lots of stuff inside. I'm really glad I entered the competition and gave it a go.



## Growing up on The Helm—Becky Dyer

**M**y name is Becky and I am seventeen years old. I started running as part of Helm Hill Running Club when I was eight – back in the days when you could just rock up on the Helm and tag along without joining a waiting list.

I have had so many fantastic coaches – Gavin, Anna, Sarah and Lorna – all of them brilliant coaches who could make training fun even when it was tipping it down. I participated in many races over the years, primarily the Winter League races which offered a familiar environment. I even managed to drag my little sister Hannah and my mum along who have turned into keen runners. I will never forget our muddy and wet KWL Sundays!

The highlight of my childhood at Helm was when I came third in the winter league and was rewarded with a huge bag of Heros! I enjoyed training from a young age and would like to thank all my running coaches from Helm Hill who have helped me – each and every one of them enthusiastic and supportive in many ways.

Increased academic pressure in years 11 and 12 motivated me to pursue running in a more social way rather than competitively – Kate and Jo were an amazing coaching dream team who understood that sometimes we had to skip a session to keep up with school work and that training was not just about running but the social aspect.....chatting to your mates! Last year Kate and Jo released us into the unknown world of senior running groups. Russ and Ali made sure we had a seamless transition into Green Group and our new running buddies were very welcoming. I am very grateful that we managed to keep our sessions up during these difficult times.





## Dylan Cater

Hello, I'm Dylan and I've been a member of Helm Hill for eight years. Since I started at the club I have enjoyed socialising with my friends whilst improving my fitness. As I moved up through the groups, over the years I have made new friends and developed a greater love for running.



When the first lockdown was introduced in March, all sports club activity was put on hold. However I kept my fitness up by doing PE with Joe every morning and running lots from my house. I enjoyed the the club colours challenges that were set from the fastest kilometre to running all three trigs around Kendal.

Before the second lockdown I was given the opportunity to train in the senior red group, guided by Billy, along with Henry and Alex. It was a big leap forward and we pushed each other every session. From hill reps to relay races the coaches pushed us to our limits to make full use of every session.

In October, Ambleside organised the first fell race since lockdown- the Wansfell uphill race. Although everyone raced separately it was good to be apart of an organised event.

Recently Alex, Henry and I have been moved up into the senior black group. This has been another huge step up, however the support from the group and especially Mike Ainsworth has helped me push myself. The intensity and distance have increased and there is no easy session or time to relax!

Dave Appleyards club relay, on the Howgills, was another highlight. It was a brutal leg with a really steep start. It was fun to be apart of such a well organised event.



I look forward to going back to normal training and competing in more races in 2021!

## How I kept up with running during lockdown - Ollie Sanders

**H**i, I'm Ollie Sanders. I am both a track and fell runner. This is a problem, as one is 800m... a sprint, and fell running needing both physical and mental endurance. They are very different yet have the same training principles: consistency, discipline, and hard work. This is how I balanced both during lockdown...

Everyone knows that lockdown has been a weird time, being hardest hitting on these three principles mentioned above as a runner. As a 16-year-old who had their track and fell season taken away from them, it was hard for me to get the motivation to train when I didn't know what I was working towards as there were no races. I had no motivation, consistency or discipline with my training. Therefore, I went from being in the best form of my life, aiming towards top 20 in the UK for 800m... to running once a month and losing the love I had towards the sport.

However, this was the best thing for me.

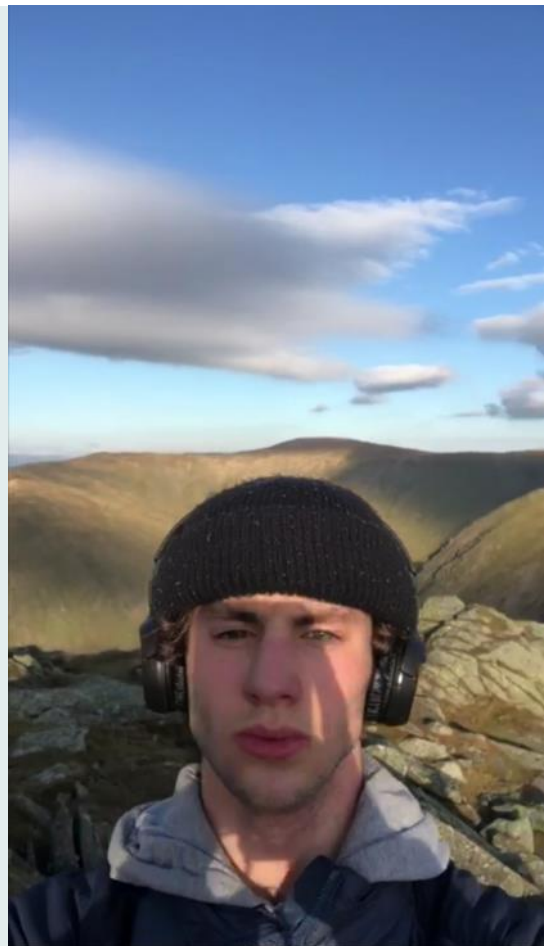
The three-month break from running, from training hard 4 times a week, only thinking about my times and placement in races made me take a step back. A step back from the mindset I had towards running and made me realise why I started in the first place, it made me find what drove me to work so hard, it reset my mind. Reset my view towards running and why I was even doing it in the first place. The 3-month break from not training made me incredibly motivated and made me want to work really really hard and push myself to my limits for the next running season in 2021. The break helped me find drive, motivation and mainly the love for the sport again.

I started doing workouts 5 times a week, running every single day, pushing myself to my limits; running marathons over endless hill. My days involve waking up at 5am every school day, doing school-work, and a run before school. The early morning runs set me up for the day and cleared my mind. Just me, the roads and my music... I would then do an hour workout in the evening.

Pushing myself has helped me both in day-to-day life as well as my running. Sometimes you just need a break, a reset, to find that drive again. To find the reason why you started running and what makes you continue doing it. At first I found it hard getting myself out of bed so early and going for a run, yet I now find it hard doing a day without that. My problem was that I couldn't find motivation to do these things, but I've now found that it isn't motivation that I need... it's discipline and consistency. Once you turn an action into a habit then you therefore don't find it a burden to carry out. Motivation is a short-term fix, it only gets you through that one run or that one workout, however drive is what keeps you going over and over again. You need drive. You need to find what keeps you going and going until you're at your limit.

And this is the best thing that I've ever learnt. This is how I found the love towards running again. This is how I've kept up with running over the past few months.

Drive, consistency, discipline...





## Very little SHORT RACING SHORTS in 2020

No races so no short reports. But....

2020 saw loads of other great challenges and achievements—see the club website for more details/links to amazing stuff from Alex Staniforth, Howard Dracup, Kelli Roberts, Chloe Lumsden, Sarah Gerish etc etc



**AND...Hot off the press!! Solo-unsupported Winter Bob Graham round:** Shane Ohly becomes only the 2nd person EVER to complete a solo and unsupported round in proper mid-winter! Massive congrats Shane!

**Winter Abrahams Tea Round:** Kieran completed this on NY day 2021

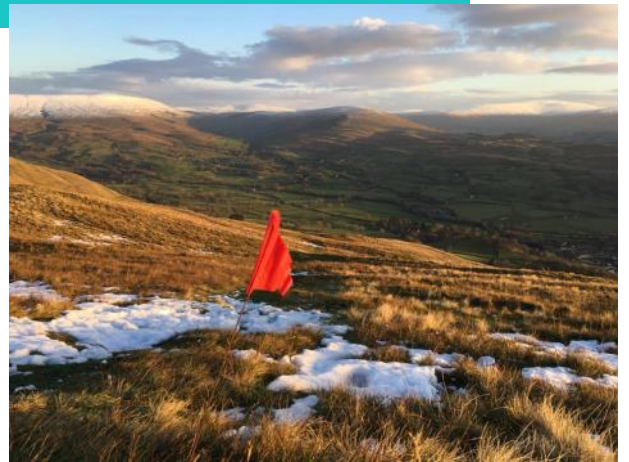
## LOCKDOWN CLUB RELAY

The Well done to the winning teams and fastest leg runners on the socially distanced club relay on The Howgills.

'It's just a cough': May Song-Crawford, Michael Ainsworth, Billy Procter Peter German.

'Balls to Bearings': Vicky Atkinson, Rob Jebb, Simon Whittaker John Robson.

'Howgill Horrors': Henry David Hunter, Ollie Barker, Janie Oates, Caroline Holden.



Also for the fastest legs

Leg 1: Dylan Cater, Lilian Lewis.

Leg 2: Rob Jebb, Sarah Gerrish

Leg 3: Billy Procter, Janie Oates

Leg 4: Sharon Louise Taylor, Adam Oliver





# KENDAL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL

Helm Hill's Jenny Rice put together a great Road Bike Session as part of the recent festival including a brilliant interview with ex-Helm Hill junior and now professional cyclist James Knox, with questions from KCC juniors, and Helm juniors Megan and Thomas... and a surprise appearance from Billy Procter!

James had fond memories of tough training sessions on Wednesday nights—even going as far as to say 'I was made on The Helm'



James racing in 2009 at Anniversary Wa! and racing in the 2020 Giro D'Italia





Hi all, you may remember me as the fool who ran every day of 2018 as part of the "RED4GREG" challenge to raise awareness and funds for Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK), a cause very close to my heart after the son of close friends of ours - Greg Savage - was diagnosed with this degenerative muscle wasting condition. I was so encouraged by all the support (financial and moral) of Helm, it's a cliché, but I really couldn't have done it without you!



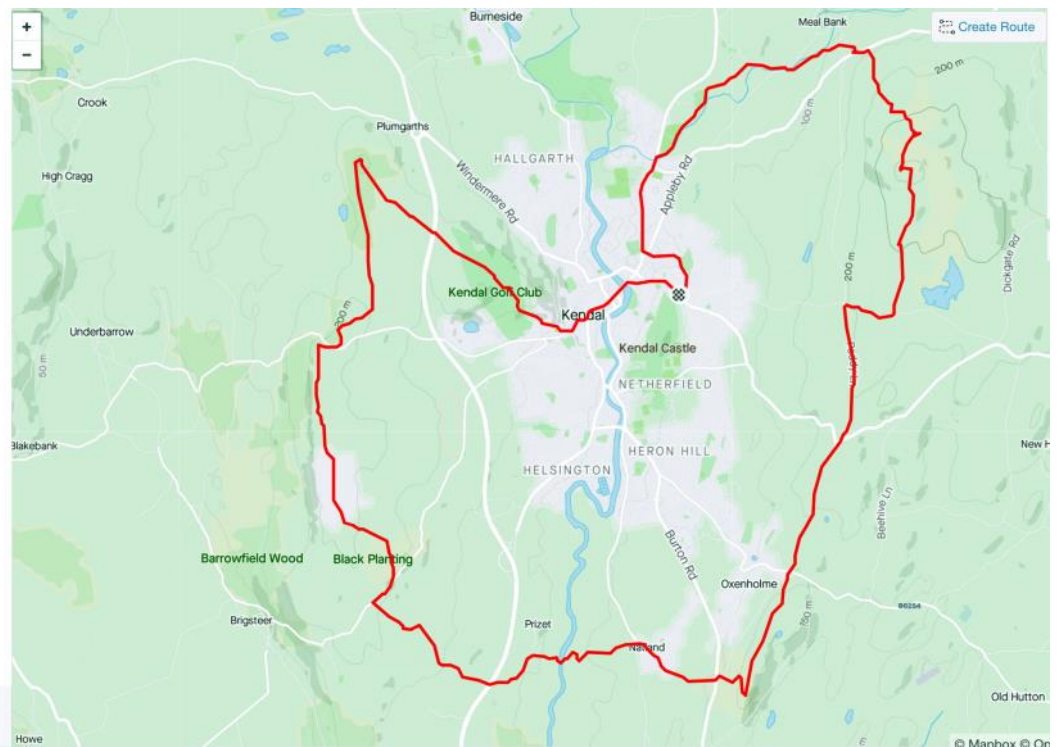
*Me (centre) with Greg and his many friends and family after a group run in Leeds, his home town*

Enjoying a rather lower impact 2019 I continued running, but was glad to be able to have days off and also to enjoy other sports and interests beside our beloved running.

A big part of achieving the distance challenge I set myself for RED4GREG of 100 marathons (2620 miles) was a regular route I already knew quite well "The Kendal Round". Typically a 17 mile run with around 2,200 feet of climbing that has many variations but takes in the three trig points around Kendal, Benson Knott, The Helm (woop woop) and Scout Scar.

I called it simply the "Skyline Run / Tricorn Run" when I started doing it, as it followed the immediate skyline visible from Kendal Castle / looked a bit

*The typical route of the Kendal Round*





like a three pointed hat. Chatting to Andy Cox (Coxy) during training one evening, he told me that it was an established route\* and I know it has become a festive favourite with a number of club members doing it usually on the last Sunday

before Christmas (see photo below). I've since heard from Sam Gibbs a bit more about these runs, quoted as follows: "The original I think was late 90's. They did jäger bombs every 4 miles and it was on Xmas eve, apparently. The best story I heard was when they got lost coming off Benson Knott and ended up in docker...lot of angry wives that afternoon."

I imagine I'm not alone in needing a challenge to keep myself motivated, and this year has been no different. I decided early on 2020 to try and average a Kendal Round a week.

Pre-lockdown I realised this would probably mean doubling up on some weeks to account for time away and / or illness spells. fast forward to March and Lockdown #1 happened meaning we were all confined to quarters which presented a dilemma: I would have more reason to get out on the route to relieve cabin fever BUT I didn't want to be the sheepish numpty that wound up in A&E with a twisted ankle... On Benson Knott during the first week of lockdown however I saw an even bigger muppet trying to hurl himself off with a paraglider so recalibrated my risk level from "irresponsible" to

"reasonable" - I would take extra care, always carry a charged phone and not try and be a hero...

There were other ways to mitigate the risk and make the challenge more manageable, I finessed the route - by finding the most direct route up Benson Knott via Birds Park, stitch-

\* Kendal Skyline round - a regular training route of Boyd Millen, a legendary local ultra distance specialist who sadly died in 2007. Boyd was the first person to do a double Bob Graham round. His widow set up 'Boyd's Kendal Skyline Memorial Walk which has become a regular fixture of the LDWA.



*A grubby group of festive fell runners celebrate near the end of the 2019 Kendal Round*

“...recalibrated my risk level from "irresponsible" to "reasonable"





ing together neglected footpaths around Prizet and heading straight down from the Scout Scar trig the route could be shortened to around 13 miles and a couple hundred feet shaved off. This came in handy for the weeks when it was necessary to squeeze the Round in before school or even over a long lunch break.

Many people have asked "Don't you get bored running the same route every week?" My answer is always no, for me the interest has come in seeing the gradual changing of the seasons, lighting conditions, weather, colours and wildlife as the year has run through its seasons. There is also something comforting about a familiar route, you don't need to worry about navigation, so if conditions are right your mind can wander and get into a "state of flow" where you enter an almost meditative state. With all the anxieties and uncertainties this year, it has been a great reset. Running early in the day as I often do, there is the added bonus of glimpsing wildlife on the hop, with foxes, hares, owls, herons and even a Devil's Coach Horse Beetle making appearances!



*Spotted this curious little fellow near the Scout Scar trig*

*Sunrise over Benson Knott*



As the end came within view and completing the challenge seemed a plausibility I started to think about how to "round" off the year. I'd been lucky to be joined for quite a few Rounds by various friends and so thought it would be nice to get a group together to mark the 50th round - anticipating the last Round would be in the social no-man's land between Christmas and New Year. Being ahead of schedule thanks to the unusually high amount of sunlit days and limited options of how to spend them, this milestone landed on the last Sunday in November. Just after Lockdown 2.0 was announced..!

This put a crimp in the plans for a group run, so we settled for the next best thing, a relay where I would be joined by friends for different "legs" of the route to keep within the Covid rules. To create space for another friend we decided to extend the Round to marathon distance by taking in Potter Tarn and Gurnal Dubs. Joined by Ed Newcome, Dave Goadby, Cathy and Dave Sanderson, there ended up being a bit of overlap but we all kept a good distance apart and the company made it one of the most enjoyable runs of the year, with the 27 miles and 3,500ft flying past.

*"...I recently ran to Keswick on the spur of the moment"*

Having hit my target of 52 Rounds last week, I'll be scratching my head for the next challenge to keep the motivation up. In the meantime it was great to feel the improvement in my hill climbing



*Left: Me with Dave G and Ed N on a very claggy Benson Knott, Right Cathy & Dave S on Scout Scar*

stamina and general fitness increase over the year. I recently ran to Keswick on the spur of the moment, looking at Strava Flyby I was interested to see that this jolly jaunt coincided with the most recent Helm Hill Kendal Round. Passing within a few hundred meters of the group I didn't know was there as I trotted off along Burneside Road, a big part of me would've turned left to join them to add a final Round with the mighty Green Machine. Running has been such an important part of my life, especially this year, and it has been fantastic to take part in all the great virtual challenges (yes, even the Crunch!) organised by the dedicated and enthusiastic members of the club - cheers, and here's to a better 2021.

#### Stats:

39 Full Rounds (17.3 miles / 2,345' climbing)

10 Abridged Rounds (14.2 miles / 2,175' climbing)

3 Extended Rounds (longest 27 miles / 3,564' climbing)





### **When and why did I join Helm?**

I initially came along with my daughters as they had friends who were also going. I didn't really have a running background but had always enjoyed being in the mountains, walking and climbing etc. I also had a number of friends who were into 'fell-running', and recommend I give it a go - Kentmere Horseshoe was the first race. How hard could it be I thought?

### **Greatest achievements so far?**

Hmmm, - to still be running?

Actually being a counter in a British champs race hence contributing to a v50 team silver...which precedes the recent avalanche of club honours.

Surviving Shaun's track sessions.

**Favourite races?** Fairfield, Wansfell, Arant Haw, Lakeside Gummer's How.

### **Typical training week?**

I've been trying to up my mileage recently and be a bit more consistently hit 30mls per week, mostly around Kendal and the Scars, occasional Howgill ventures. I'm missing racing and need to get out for some longer days - roll on the spring.

**Future Goals and ambitions?** One day I'll do a mountain marathon and do some shorter mountain races in Europe.

**Persons/ People I admire in the club?** . Too many to mention. I love being around people of all ages with such a wealth of talents who are always willing to give their time and experience to help others wanting to improve.

### **Running tips for younger runners?**

Don't worry when things aren't going 100% - you have time on your side...





**When and why did I join Helm?** AFTER I HAD MY FIRST BABY... ALI SAID I WOULD ESCAPE BATHTIME AND BEDTIME AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK. AND THEY SAID THERE WOULD BE GIN

**Greatest achievements so far?**

DOES THIS MEAN RUNNING?! IF SO, THEN I GUESS IT WOULD HAVE TO BE THAT I AM ALWAYS EXCITED TO GO RUNNING, AND ALWAYS FEEL GRATEFUL AND ENCHANTED TO BE ENGULFED IN SUCH A FABULOUS COMMUNITY.

**Favourite races?**

THE MUMS RACE AT SPORTS DAY... ITS ALSO THE MOST COMPETITIVE AND MOST STRESSFUL

**Typical training week?**

THIS IS A FUNNY QUESTION AS THERES AN ASSUMPTION OF ACTUAL TRAINING!

I RUN WHEN MY CHILDRENS SOCIAL LIVES ALLOW IT... WHICH VARIES FROM EVERYDAY BECAUSE I HAVE TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY... TO NOT FOR A WEEK. BECAUSE BORIS HAS CLOSED THE SCHOOLS AND FOOTBALL TRAINING IS CANCELLED.

**Future Goals and ambitions?**

ME AND MY FABULOUS FRIENDS ALI, JAYNE AND KATE ARE GOING TO RUN THE ABRAHAMS TEA ROUND IN STYLE EARLY THIS YEAR... BY "IN STYLE" WE MEAN THAT WE ARE FIT AND STRONG ENOUGH WHEN FINISHED TO DANCE ON THE KITCHEN TABLE TIL 3AM... THO ITS LOOKING INCREASINGLY LIKELY WE'LL BE IN OUR OWN KITCHENS DANCING ON OUR OWN

**Persons/ People I admire in the club?**

PROBABLY EVERYONE I KNOW, THEY ALL HAVE SOMETHING UNIQUE AND MAGICAL... BUT IM ALWAYS DRAWN TO THE UNSUNG HEROES AND THOSE ACHIEVING AMAZING PERSONAL AND COLLABORATIVE FEATS, AND ALL THOSE ALTRUISTICALLY SUPPORTING ANOTHER... THAT PROBABLY COVERS PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE IM LUCKY ENOUGH TO KNOW IN HELM.

**Running tips for younger runners?**

STAY OFF THE GIN

**Anything else?**

FIND YOUR PEOPLE (ITS EASY YOULL DRIFT TOWARDS THEM)... AND RUN WITH THEM JUST TO BE WITH THEM AS MUCH AS FOR THE RUNNING... THEN YOULL ALWAYS LOVE TO RUN \*





Foul winter weather has some fell-runners scampering for the pub fireplace whilst others thrive when the weather takes a turn for the worse. Some can't wait to bust out the thermals and Goretex for a 'type-2 fun' day out, whilst others yearn for warm sun on their singlet-clad skin. On a training run you can pick when to go based on the weather forecast to make the most of the day. When racing (remember that?) you have to take what Odin throws at you as the gun goes and make sure you have the right skills and equipment to get you home safely and as quickly as possible.



It takes time to build up the confidence, skill set and equipment to venture into minging winter conditions with confidence. There's plenty of articles covering navigation, winter skills, hill safety and equipment. Some are better than others and it pays to utilise a critical eye and raised eyebrow on all articles you read, advice you hear and equipment suggested. That includes this piece. I've been asked to put something together to cover some basic navigation and winter hill safety (which due to Christmas has been somewhat thrown together). Bear in mind I am not a trained coach or mountain professional, but I have built up experience of navigation and looking after myself and others in crap weather on the hills. I have learnt much from getting it a bit wrong. Here I'll briefly cover navigation, winter equipment and sound mountain judgement. It remains a fact that your safety on the hills is your responsibility.

Despite enjoying washing machine weather for the best part of a decade, I always check my experience before going out the door. Be on your guard for complacency or cockyness creeping in. Always be aware of potential dangerous scenarios. Could your skill set and bumbag contents allow you to cope with it? Be aware that a trip or a slip could render you immobile in nasty conditions. How long could you stay warm like that? Fail to prepare - prepare to fail. Finally, and most importantly, never underestimate 'easy' runs - having to call Mountain Rescue from The Scar would be difficult to live down!

## **Section 1: Navigation for Racing** (adapted from my Fellrunner Spring 2019 article).

Navigation can be seen by some as a Dark Art and whilst full-blown orienteering may well be the preserve of Voldemort, a little thought and confidence with a map and compass can greatly improve your safety (and maybe tweak your race results) on fell, hill and dale. Getting lost can be fun, a good tale for the pub but on the fell it can get serious quickly. Here are a few tips and pointers to ease your passage the next time the clag comes in. This isn't a beginners course - for useful background reading see *Mountain Navigation for Fellrunners and Hill Walkers* by Ian Winterburn (Dark Peak) in the current Fellrunner magazine or [here](#) and [here](#).

### **A: Choose your weapons.**

- 1. The Map.** Ensure your map is legible with enough information that you can navigate the course with it. Even waterproof paper will get limp in the rain and print can rub off. Maintain it in a sturdy plastic bag. If you've home-printed a map, seal the bag with some tape as water attacks from all angles in the UK and navigating from papier mache is not advised.

- 2. Strong and stable.** A hiking compass is a good tool, but it will only settle properly when held still and flat. Some compasses are designed to be more stable and are therefore more accurate when used on the move. Look for a plastic disc just above the needle to damp it.

**3. The spinny thing.** On your compass the orange bit of the needle points North. It always does. 99.99% of the time. The few things that can stop this fact of life include keeping your compass next to your phone, other compasses or in your car long-term (these can lead to demagnetisation). There's also a very slim chance you are near one of the few and far between known areas of magnetic deviation (e.g. the summit of Ben More on Mull.) Locations of these Bermuda triangles are fairly well known. Claiming you have found a new one is a good excuse for saving face but we all know the truth...

**4. Use it, abuse it.** Your map and compass aren't emergency kit to keep stowed away. They are the main tools to prevent you getting lost in the first place. OK you don't need them out all the time, but think about when you might want to use them. Heading off path? Get them out and set a bearing before you leave the beaten track. Misty conditions? Get them out before you head into the clouds. Have them easily accessible (e.g. top of bumbag; zip pocket) so you can get them out without emptying your required gear, food, hopes and dreams across the hill.

### **B: Know your enemy.**

**1. Have a clue.** Check the route map in the days before a race and memorise key points - checkpoints, road crossings, streams for water etc. Add any notes or bearings beforehand. Know roughly which way you approach or leave obvious features e.g. checkpoints, hill tops, paths, river junctions. Will you be going up or down? Should you be running up, down or across a river, ridge, valley or a path?



**2. Invest time.** On the race, as you get to a checkpoint take a few seconds to check the map and your compass so you start heading in roughly the right direction from the off. I've heard tales of £130 taxi rides from Wasdale Head back to Seathwaite after getting it wrong off Scafell Pike. Going 180° the wrong way off Hard Knott in The Duddon and ending up in Boot is a big error that can be easily averted with 5 seconds of thought - even in the worst of conditions.

**3. The 6<sup>th</sup> sense.** If something feels wrong, stop and check your direction with your compass and map sooner rather than later - i.e. straight away! In poor visibility check your compass regularly to make sure you're still going in roughly the right direction and not round in circles. Yes, this is easier said than done and takes self control, whatever that is.

**4. Don't get too caught up in the detail.** There seems to be an impression that you need to know exactly where you are at all times and checkpoints have to be hit bang on. Many agonise about finding certain trods or lines, but these are not the be all and end all. Often it can be quicker to take a slightly longer but navigationally safer route, utilising obvious hand-rail features.

**5. Don't always trust the navigator.** You may have latched on to someone with their map and compass out; someone wearing a local vest; that fell legend you trust to know what they're doing. Still be wary and use your map and compass! Have your map out and have an idea of where you are and the direction you're heading. Mistakes happen or your 'guide' could drop you good and proper. Some have been known to drag their followers over the roughest terrain



to force a disconnection. Maybe that's just me...

**6. Tip your driver.** If you do sit in someone's back pocket for the whole race, thank them after and learn from what they do. Sitting in the back pocket then swooping past in sight of the finish is poor form!

### C: Practice good practice.

**1. Enjoy the process.** There is no divine right to being a good fell racer straight away. The skills required (including navigation, ability in rough terrain and mountaineering) take time to learn and optimise. There's a reason people like Holmesy know all the lines – they've spent 30-odd years learning them and I dare say many mistakes have been made in the process!

**2. Crowdsourcing.** Take your compass out on your normal training runs to get used to holding it and how it works. Take a map and match the squiggles on it to what's on the ground. Initially practice in good conditions so you can learn from your mistakes safely. As confidence builds increase the difficulty – either conditions or more remote terrain. Get together with friends or clubmates and question and help each other – after all there's no point practicing bad techniques! Discuss mistakes in a race to learn from them. With more confidence you can start taking and holding bearings across open fell/moorland and trying to judge distance travelled. Your local orienteering club may hold come-and-try-it 'O' events in a local park. You may know the park very well but informal coaching will be provided and you will learn! (check [britishorienteering.org.uk/activity](http://britishorienteering.org.uk/activity)). Yes

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## Section 2: Winter Running Equipment.

Full winter conditions require thinking more like a mountaineer and hill-walker than a runner. For venturing high in snow [this is an excellent article](#) covering equipment, navigation and more. There are many good articles linked from it. You should exercise Sound Mountain Judgement at all times and think particularly hard about everything that could go wrong.

Our temperate climate results in more wet and windy days than perfect snowy conditions. Again here you need to think carefully about your route planning, navigation and the equipment you carry. It's worth analysing your kit at the start of winter and after each outing to see if you trust it to keep you warm when stationary on the hill.

### **A: General clothing.**

On your top half layers are your friend. A good base layer/thermal and a mid-layer over it are the minimum. When it's particularly cold I'll switch to a wool or extra-thick base layer, and throw a lightweight down jacket or fleece in my pack. When it's really cold, the heavyweight down jacket and multiple extra layers come out.

It's worth emphasising though that wool and fleece offer some insulation even when wet. Down is great in dry cold conditions but rendered useless when wet! Often a problem in the UK! A good alternative is the synthetic primaloft fabric.

As for your legs, there is nothing 'soft' about wearing leggings. They'll keep your muscles warm so reduce injury risk. More importantly they keep the blood going to your feet warm. One thing to think about is if you will come across boggy ground and river crossings – excess water in leggings can make them heavy and cooling, so 3/4 leggings can be a good choice. I used to wear shorts all winter but more recently have been wearing leggings since October. I'm yet to lose my Y chromosome.

Under snow/ice conditions goggles and sunglasses on those rare super sunny days are really important to guard against snow blindness and painful blasts of snow crystals/ice pellets

## **B. Waterproofs.**

There is a wide range of jackets marketed as Waterproof. Seriously assess your collection now as to whether you'd trust them to keep you dry and warm in sideways rain, whilst stationary on a hill. Taped seams are a must for passing race kit checks and sealing against water. Super lightweight (<100g) 'tracing paper' waterproofs (e.g. Inov8 Ultrashell; Montane Minimus; OMM Halo) are excellent for your summer race requirements when it's beach weather, but will not cut the mustard when the weather is bad - in summer or winter. They are just glorified windproofs, excessive rain will overwhelm their hydrophobicity and they will not keep warmth in. For winter a heavier jacket is required. I've found those made of named materials (e.g. GoreTex; eVent) are often best, though own-material offerings can work well. They keep the rain out and keep the heat in. Even as they age and water soaks into them rather than beading, they still breath and keep warmth in. Yes they're at a higher price point but they are necessary and I have found that a good investment will last a long time.

There are also 'tracing paper' waterproof bottoms which again should be avoided in foul weather. Again there are named-fabric heavier-duty overtrousers, but I have found that fairly cheap hiking pants work excellently. They're not sleek and stylish - but neither am I. Again make sure they have taped seams. A zip at the bottom of the leg makes them easy to put on over shoes. Just be aware of baggy trousers flapping around your feet and becoming a trip hazard.

## **C. Extremities.**

**Gloves:** Keeping hands as warm as possible is a must. There are plenty of expensive gloves out there that profess magical heat-giving properties. Whilst they may work I have found that layering works well on the hands too. Thin woolen gloves work really well, and are further weather-proofed when paired with overmitts. If you're in and out of your bag, elastic straps can keep them securely attached to you whilst you rummage around.

**Hats:** If heading high and windy something more substantial than a buff is advised. For a proper 'mountain day' a balaclava or multiple buffs is essential. I'll pack multiple buffs (as well as a good hat) so I can mummify myself against the wind. Strategically placed around the neck can stop wind getting in.

**Socks:** Again there are many magical heat-giving socks at high prices. I have found that running store own-brand wool socks are the best. They can be warm whilst wet, shed water effectively and rub less than cotton/man made fabric alternatives when damp. Neoprene socks are excellent if it's properly wintry, snowy and slushy - your feet may still get wet but the water trapped in the sock will be warm. They can be paired with thin socks to reduce rubbing. Kieran adds 'calf length ones are best for winter as it's so important to try to keep dry feet in freezing temperatures. I've tried a lot over the years and notable brands are sealskins, dexshell and 360 dry'.

**Shoes:** Remember that all the lovely dry trails of summer will be choked with mud, so trail shoes are out and fell shoes with proper grip are in. I'll even plan my route to avoid having to slide down the muddiest descents.

Spare gloves, hats and buffs are always handy to carry with you.

## **D. Extras.**

**Survival Bag** - A decent survival bag lives in my hill bag all winter. If you're incapacitated it will keep you warm and I often deem it more important than overtrousers. Even carry it on 'easy' local runs. If running with a group a larger bothy bag would be good to carry. In particularly foul conditions a warmer blizzard bag or even a sleeping bag would be good.



**Bags** - Don't skimp on kit just because it won't fit in your trusty bum bag. You may dislike the new breed of race vests, but I find them excellent for carrying an extra layer and survival bag and heavier winter kit that my bum bag would struggle with.

**Headtorch** - Firstly be aware of the sun set times over winter, and if your plan will have you out close to or beyond this. If heading out in the afternoon take a headtorch just in case you are delayed in getting back. A 1 LED torch that comes in a christmas cracker is useless - make sure it's usable. You can spend a lot of money on a headtorch but for an emergency lamp it doesn't need to be too fancy. If you run in the dark in the hills a lot there is a veritable lumen arms-race you can choose from with scary price tags attached!

**Food and Drink** - Take a bit extra in case you are delayed. You don't want to have to rely on that race emergency gel that's been in your bag for 3 years. Real food (flapjack, crisps, pork pies) can be more palatable and tempting than gels. Eat early and often to stave off 'the bonk', which could have harsher consequences than if it happened in the summer. Don't forget to drink in winter as you will still get dehydrated, especially if the air is cold and dry. Be aware of potential water sources en route and take a bottle if you don't trust them.

**Phone** - A fully charged phone, wrapped in a buff/hat/spare gloves to keep the battery warm. As I have an old phone I'll put it into 'flight' mode to save battery usage so it's as charged as possible should I need it. The OS locate or What3Words apps can be excellent for pinpointing your location if you need to do this in an emergency. Also register your phone with emergency sms. It's a free service. It takes minutes and could save your life one day. Especially in our fells where coverage can be patchy! More info: out [https://www.emergencysms.net/files/3649\\_esms\\_6.pdf](https://www.emergencysms.net/files/3649_esms_6.pdf)

**First Aid Kit and Whistle** - I'll be honest I don't carry this as much as I should, but if heading out for a day on rougher terrain a bandage, wound dressing and some plasters could be useful. A whistle is a must for attracting attention if required (recognised distress call for help is 6 long blasts a minute, wait a minute the repeat until help is summoned)

**E - Sound Mountain Judgment.** Exercise it at all times! The mountains will always be there so if in doubt chalk it up as experience and head home - a short day in the hills is better than a full day in the office! Never think you've mastered something, there's always room to learn and improve. Don't get cocky but stay vigilant. Is today really the day for your tracing paper waterproof and scrimping on food? Finally, always tell someone where you're going and when to expect you back, and try to stick to it!

*About the author: Nic doesn't live in Cumbria so you won't see him too much outside of races. His 2 year Helm Hill career has coincided with a lengthy illness followed by a global pandemic so he hasn't raced in his new vest much. He has no outdoor qualifications. He's neither the best runner or navigator but some level of competence and enjoying 'challenging' conditions has lead to opportunistic victories at Edale Skyline, Duddon, three Marsden-to-Edale Triggers and one Mountain Trial, as well as three 2<sup>nd</sup> places on OMM Elite (as well as a catastrophic navigational error leading to getting too cold and forcing a retirement).*

Nic (2nd from right) in the winning team at the 2017 High Peak Marathon (for those of you unfamiliar, its 40 miles across the High Peak, starts at 11pm, in February!) Pic: <https://highpeakmarathon.wordpress.com/>



I've always loved a good race. From the excitement of school sports days to x-country mud baths in freezing November mists: to the spectacle of the London marathon and finally discovering the exhilaration of a fell race on a classic mountain round.....racing has always been central part of my life.



If you had told me previously that we would not race beyond March in 2020 and that the racing calendar was still almost blank for 2021, I would have been aghast, sad, and worried about how I would motivate myself to keep running.

2020 has been an intriguing revelation for me - I can honestly say I have barely given a thought to missing racing. This thing that supposedly defined a big part of me hasn't featured and hasn't been missed.

But oh how I have missed so many of the things that happen around racing! How I have missed being huddled in a damp village hall - pre-race full of nervous energy and seeing brilliant characterful people I would not see otherwise - and post-race camaraderie with the glowing cheeks, the brews and the pies and the endless banter. How I have missed the reccies on the fells and the excitement of the relays and the trips away to Wales and Ireland. I have missed the hugs with my friends and racing in new places. Overall it is the ready-made social aspect of my life that comes through racing that has been missed. People. Always the people. I won't be hanging up my racing shoes just so I can be a part of that again.

Slowing down though has had its benefits. I now have umpteen variations on beautiful runs from home rather than my previous standard 3 training routes. I now have a new fondness for my home village of Burneside - with its choice of the scar (through a tunnel under the A591 - who knew?!), Potter fell and Brunt Knott ( why did I think you can only run to Brunt Knott from Staveley?! ) the beautiful river Sprint with its swimming pots (so much more picturesque than the Kent) and even to Benson Knott ( via the Kent, Mint and Sprint - my own 3 rivers route). And I think Gurnal Dubs will forever be etched in my Covid-year memory - all the picnics, swims, paddle boards and even a hen do. A place I used to just run past!

I've spent so many hours exploring with my daughter Megan and I've realised that she really really does not enjoy racing and that is ok. She loves nature, exploring, challenges and pushing herself - but with her own boundaries not those defined by other people. She loves Helm just like I do, but for the friendships and the process of running itself, not for competition.

I've realised that I don't need racing to force me out the door to train - the getting out itself is



enough. Without pushing myself with the running I can enjoy so much more the views and the nature and the company that I am with. I have loved the Helm challenges and am enjoying slowly ticking off the Wainwrights but it has been great, and liberating for me to finally learn that I can be motivated without the pressure of having to train for a race.

I've also learned that more than anything I am a social runner. If I can't run with anyone I can still run but it feels harder and more of an effort. If I have someone to run with and chat to, I'm probably not going any faster but it is much more likely to feel effortless. The benefits of exercise for me are so much more when I'm with someone else. I have absolutely loved Wednesday nights and being out with the green group - thank you to Russ for his endless patience and calm leadership and thanks to everyone for the wonderful company. I always come back smiling.

But I think more than anything this year, I have realised that we all run for different reasons and what motivates each of us will be different from each other. I know some people cannot wait to race again, and others that cannot fathom why people need to run with other people during a pandemic when we are forever being told to "social distance". We are all different, but what brings us all together is that whatever it is about running that lures us into doing it; we all find it helps us muddle along through our lives, especially during the testing times. Let's appreciate being connected (whether in person or virtually) through that. Happy running everyone!



Fell running has been my main sport for years, certainly since the early 1990's, although I have always enjoyed other sports such as hockey, swimming and cycling. I've been a member of Helm Hill Fell runners Club for many years. Over the years I have been part of the ladies teams who have regularly won medals in the British and English fell championships. Despite this however, I have not been in good shape physically and more recently, I have spent years really struggling with injury, whilst trying to maintain my training and racing.



One cold miserable November morning, my daughter suggested that we should go to a CrossFit session together at Westmorland CrossFit. I had no idea what CrossFit was, but I agreed to go along anyway, because any activity indoors sounded like a good idea!

Jamie Stuart was coaching the class. The first thing I remember him asking was whether anyone had any injuries! When I mentioned glutes, he gave us all a green resistance band and made us walk around the gym holding the band high in our hands whilst walking on it with our feet wide apart. That certainly hit the spot! Other warm up exercises, specifically aimed at glutes were also demonstrated.

During the session I was introduced to Olympic weights and learnt how to dead lift safely, followed by a 20 min calorie burning metabolic conditioning (METCON) session using the assault bike, ring rows, ab mat sits, press ups, wall balls, air squats etc. I came away from that session completely exhausted but exhilarated.





After that initial experience, I decided to attend the Cross-Fit sessions every Sunday.

Sadly, although I loved running, there was very little running in my weekly training due to constant glute and hamstring problems so I tried to maintain fitness through other sports. I later discovered that this was not solving anything and that the route of the problem lay in my physical weaknesses.

Physiotherapists always recommended strengthening with step ups with weights/single leg glute bridges, single leg dead lifts etc and I was even treated with acupuncture.

In January 2020 after a METCON session I approached the Jamie Stuart who was coaching the class, to discuss options to work through the injuries I was carrying.

I started personal training with Jamie the following week. When I asked him what we would be working on – he responded ‘we will start with your weak points’. I wondered how he knew what they were as he didn’t even know me very well. Later on I knew that it was obvious – there were weaknesses throughout my whole physique!

We started with resistance bands, light weights, body weight exercises and assisted pull ups. Starting to improve the core strength. Running was kept to a minimum, and then only short reps and within my comfort zone. A programme was written, focusing on individual areas of the body – upper body, lower body, and core. It was called strength and conditioning. I was given homework, to practice in the gym at least twice a week. The discomfort following the PT sessions could not be underestimated, as muscles were

worked hard and would hurt for days afterwards. Perseverance was key to a positive outcome.

The change to my physique started to become obvious after about 6 weeks. Initially my weight increased as fat turned to muscle. This was slightly demoralising, but at the same time, my body became more toned and my clothes started to fit more comfortably. This started to accelerate over the following few months, and slowly there were far fewer obviously visible weak points!

As my fitness improved the programmes were adapted with the introduction of increased weights and harder and more technical exercises, always within my limit of capability. My initial concerns about bulking out with muscle were unfounded.

Sadly, in early March, as Covid-19 sent us all into lock down and the gyms closed, we had to learn to adapt to online Zoom classes. So I joined Proper Northern Yoga online because Jamie Stuart was coaching some Tone classes during the week. All the classes were bodyweight, so a lot of the gains I



had made during the gym sessions were at best halted or at worst, reversed. The classes did however incentivise me to get up early to do a fitness class before settling down to working at home.

With the savings I was making on not commuting to work, I decided to invest in some gym equipment. This was easier said than done, as suddenly there was a national shortage due to extremely high demand. I managed to buy some resistance bands, a kettlebell, some dumbbells, gymnastic rings. I already had a wall ball, a mat and a fitness ball. I also had a swing frame which turned out to be useful for assisted pull-ups and ring rows. The patio turned out to be ideal for step ups and box jumps. I made a 25kg sand bag from a bag of rock salt, covered it in a hessian sack and taped it up. I filled a ruck sack with 2 breeze blocks. Improvisation was needed because equipment was in such short supply.

Jamie started coaching on line, adapting the programme to make use of the equipment available. He insisted on videos being taken of training sessions so that he could keep an eye on technique and advise on corrections if necessary.

One positive outcome of lockdown was that there was virtually no traffic on the roads. As a lot of my fitness training was on the bike because of my injury, it was really good to be able to cycle on extremely quiet roads. In fact there were far more cyclists and runners/walkers using the roads than there were cars which meant that cycling was so much safer.

Later, when restrictions were lifted in late May, outdoor 1-1 coaching was allowed, and then the gyms reopened in July. Relief!!

During the lockdown, I started to work on my running. Initially trying short interval training, working within my comfort zone, and then building up the distance to 2 – 3 miles a couple of times a week.

I started to feel so much stronger, even in the early stages, as my running technique changed as my core strength began to improve. Even after a few weeks of getting back to running training, my times started to improve considerably. It was such a good feeling and a huge relief – particularly because I had become so demoralised over the years due to constant injury and I didn't believe that this problem could be resolved – I just thought that I would have to live with it.

In March, Mountain Fuel decided to host the virtual Fell Championships. A number of my friends from Helm Hill Runners decided to enter. The championships involved 3 races to be held on certain dates over the course of the summer months. There was a 4 mile (900 ft), 8 miles (1800ft), and 12 miles (3000ft) race. You had to plot your own course and then race it. Plotting a route over a certain distance was easy. Working out the elevation was the tricky one! We chose Loughrigg Fell for the 4 mile race, Brunt Knott for the 8 mile race and Kentmere Horseshoe for the 12 mile race.

For all the races I was relieved to find that I could run injury free. This was a good test of my fitness. I felt strong, fit, and in control for the first time in years. Result!

Our club (Helm Hill) also set up some virtual races, one called the 'crunch' where once a month you had to race 4 miles over 500ft, route of your choice, with the aim of seeing if you could progress each month. The route had to be the same route and had to start from your home. We also had a 1500m race (from home) and I was very happy to complete it in sub-6 minutes.

The local fell running clubs organised some inter-club fell races which involved 2 members from each club racing against 3 or 4 other clubs on a Friday evening over a certain race route. The camaraderie was so good. No prizes, no results, just a good night out with fellow fell runners.



The virtual fell races kept me motivated throughout the summer season. Without these it would have been very difficult to maintain the enthusiasm to progress with the strength and conditioning work which proved to be so valuable to the journey to becoming injury free.

The hard work has to continue, so that there is no chance of regression, but I can honestly say that the decision to take up Personal training has truly transformed my life and I can once again enjoy training and racing on the fells with confidence and without the restrictions which an injury brings. METCON is an essential part of a runners training in order to maintain a full body fitness and to reduce the risk of injury.



Caroline at one of the inter-club socially distanced races. Pic: Sharon Taylor

## LETTER FROM LINDSAY



\* VIA AIR MAIL \*

\* CORREO AEREO \*

\* PAR AVION \*



I'd worked at South Lakeland District Council for the past 13 years but left at the end of July to embark upon an exciting adventure....

After almost two years of 'discernment' (involving numerous meetings, book-reading, a couple of essays and 'work experience'), I attended a three-day residential 'BAP' (Bishops' Advisory Panel) in February, which included three separate hour-long interviews, giving a presentation, taking part in group discussions and completing written tests. Although it was 'full-on', I enjoyed it and was delighted to be selected to train for ordination in the Church of England. I was even more delighted to be accepted to train at Cranmer Hall, which is part of St John's College at Durham University and has an excellent reputation.

I had to downsize from my three-bed house in Kendal to a single room in a house shared with three other ordinands in Durham. This entailed giving away most of my furniture, packing anything I couldn't take to Durham into boxes and storing them at the houses of seven different friends (in a cellar, two lofts, two spare rooms, a garage and an outbuilding)! I have let my house out to a family and the rental income is helping to pay for my out-of-term-time expenses, so that's worked out really well.

In my first term we've studied: pastoral care; mission & evangelism; the New Testament books of Mark & Revelation; Denominational Ministry; Christian History and Doctrine; A farewell run on the Helm overlooking Kendal Preaching; and New Testament Greek. In addition, I help at two churches 17 miles northwest of Durham. It's a great deal of work, leaving very little time for anything else, but I'm really enjoying it.

My running has suffered since I started at Cranmer, but I've still been running 5K each Saturday round a small lake in a local park and then have gone for a brief swim in the lake which, although cold, is strangely enjoyable! I do hope you are able to celebrate Christmas whether on your own or with others. Stay safe and here's to a happy and healthy 2021.

With love from Lindsay

## REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL—David Ratcliffe



*A selection of David's musings on the facebook page...*

Reasons to be cheerful part one :- 1) Shoulder operation 100% successful and fully recovered 2) running too slow to catch Covid.19 3) Survived one of the hardest 'EASY' I have ever done. Thank you Ruth Nelson. If I wake up tomorrow there may be other reasons to be to cheerful, waking up being one of them !! Stay safe everyone !

Part two of reasons to be cheerful :- 1) I woke up this morning, always a good start to the day 2) today was was not a day I had planned to go running and have you seen the weather ?3) no matter what tier they put us in we can still go running and living in this area that is such a mental bonus in my opinion. Stay safe everybody. There may be further reasons tomorrow - if I can think of them !!

Part 3: Out running this beautiful morning on the river bank, Natland to Watercrook then back along the canal. On the way back There was a lady in front of me with two dogs, both running free. Bearing in mind my recent history of hospital visits and surgery I called out 'Good Morning' so that she was aware of my presence. Then I asked if the two dogs were safe and explained that I couldn't risk them jumping up at me. She said ' Oh, alright. I will make sure I stay well in front of you !' I said 'but I am out running' to which she replied ' Oh, sorry. I hadn't realised' After I recov-




ered from the awful feeling that I don't even LOOK like I am running I just had to laugh. Soon after getting home our youngest daughter, Caroline, who lives in S. Wales rang for a chat and whilst she was on the phone our doorbell rang, it was the postman with a parcel for my lady wife from Caroline. Joan was on the phone so C. told her to open the parcel now. Joan said 'It might be a hug from you' She opened it and inside was a cushion with the word CWYTCH embroidered on it. That is the Welsh for hug! Feeling quite cheerful now. Stay safe everyone !!


I have to confess that today I have found it difficult to come up with 'Reasons to be Cheerful'. However, after coming home from a very necessary trip into Kendal the postman arrived and brought a card from our grandson who is at Dundee Uni. The front showed the 3 wise men stood round the manger containing the baby Jesus with his Mother and Dad at the back. The wise men were holding out their 3 gifts and the caption read - What do you mean you don't want hand sanitiser, paper wipes or face masks ??? That cheered me up a lot. Then I saw the photo of some of our Junior runners at training with the tree in the background and that completed my full cheer up. Long may it continue. Stay safe, tomorrow is another run !!


## 'THAT MAN SAID RUN STRAIGHT DOWN' (AKA 'I'VE RECCE'D IT—FOLLOW ME!')


Our yearly points competition for less-than-perfect efforts in th


2020 ROLLOVER! There's been little chance to go astray in races, lose car keys, forget fell shoes etc we're rolling over the points comp until 2021.


 **Craig B** sneaks in a classic 'lost and found car keys' on Brunt Knott late in 2020 **5pts**

 **Jake Lowther** starts 2021 well by leaving his fell shoes on the ground and driving off home. Tim reports 'He says that he didn't leave them 'we all left them'' **5pts**

 So good **Rowan** did them twice: Rowan and Ali had a very wet walk with reluctant kids to tick off 2 small Wainwrights from Borrowdale. A couple of weeks later Rowan recommended to Ali a lovely walk she had done with her mum and the kids from Watendlath to.....2 small Wainwrights. Could be a while to tick them all off if you keep revisiting them without realising Rowan! (Don't tell Leo and Emmy this by the way, they will not be impressed!) **5 pts**

 Paddling nowhere fast: On holiday in Wales in the summer, **Ali and Megan** set off on a paddle board adventure down the Dovey estuary. Ali thought she had it covered by checking the tide times carefully to make sure the outgoing tide would help their journey to the beach at the end. Unfortunately she failed to appreciate the effect of a rather strong onshore wind that meant they were going nowhere fast.....tail between legs they had to be picked up from a sandbank after the tide went out only a mile from where they started, some 3 hrs later. **5pts**

 Last day to get the mountain fuel virtual fell race in. 12 miles 3000ft. **Lorna and Caroline** need this race to complete the series. Jayne suggests that **Phil** should go with us as 'he knows Kentmere like the back of his hand'. Clag is down. Compass is out. Thought we were heading east back towards Kentmere but ended up travelling north above Blea Water. Couldn't see a thing. 2.5 hours later arrived back to the car. Nil points!.. **5pts!**

 The Adventures of **Carrie's Car Key** 2020: following on from a good set of adventures where one car key was completely lost on the hill, my one remaining car key has been lost but found on the hill twice (the 2nd time I had to go back through the pictures I'd taken to try and line up which mini top I was on when it obviously decided to have a break and jump out my bag to find it) then it locked itself the car and the AA man had to come. It did this again only to realise it wasn't in the car all along oops finally it stowed away in my trainer for a week and I couldn't use my car as I'd looked everywhere for it. My key thanks all and I mean lots of helm hiller's that have been involved in these adventures....roll on next year **5pts + 5pt bonus for repeats**

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**Take 2: Helm Hill will host the British Relays in October 2021!**

**F**ollowing the enforced cancellation of this years British Relays the FRA and British Athletics have agreed that we can host the relays in 2021.

Traditionally it is held on the 3rd weekend of October (to be confirmed.) The relays are one of the highlights of the Fell Running Season and it is an enormous accolade for the club to host the premier national event in the fell-running calendar. This will be the biggest event in our club's history and will be an enormous challenge but one we know we can meet if the whole club pulls together.

Featuring 250 teams and 1500 runners, clubs from all over the country meet up in a different muddy field somewhere each year and compete against each other over 4 varied race routes. It's an exciting, gruelling, fun packed day full of thrills. Organisation has gone on apace in 2020 and will continue in 2021! It goes without saying that we will need a huge number of people to help us put on the event. Dark Peak, who hosted 2019 and Ambleside AC in 2018, both needed around 150 volunteers so we know the size of the task. Here's a flavour of the volunteer help we'll need so please put the dates in your diary and let the Volunteer Coordinator Ali Richards or your coach or any committee member know if you can help in any way even if it's just for the morning or afternoon or evening.

**Fri** : main set up of: race arena, registration, race start/finish/changeover areas, litterbins, controls on fells, flag/tape obligatory race route sections, arena signage, car parking signage, camping area taping off, direct delivery vehicles etc

**Sat (event day)**: car parking, registration, Kit check, fell marshals x 18, finish/changeover marshals x 6, arena, marshals x 6

**Sun** : Clear up of site, remove controls off the fells etc

As an incentive, there will be a bit of an afterparty on Saturday eve for all those involved in making the event happen. We have an enormous marquee after all!

If you are interested in helping, running, organising.....there will be further information in the spring.



# Looking ahead to 2021

Hopefully we can do more of this.....



....and more of  
this!

## Saturday 23 January—Juniors

At the time of writing, Covid restrictions will allow us to put on an event for Helm Juniors on **Cunswick Scar**. A morning of racing; all juniors will be assigned to an age category and given a time to turn up and run the course. SEE Lorna's article for more info

And if all  
goes well....

Senior FRA  
ENGLISH

The six races are as follows:

- Short: 15th May – Alderman's Ascent  
28th August – Arnison Crag  
Medium: 10th April – Guisborough Three Tops  
3rd July – Blencathra  
Long: 12th June – Ennerdale Horseshoe  
19th September – South Mynd Tour

[www.cragrunner.com](http://www.cragrunner.com)  
[www.patterdaledogday.co.uk](http://www.patterdaledogday.co.uk)  
[www.eskvalleyfellclub.org](http://www.eskvalleyfellclub.org)  
[www.edenrunners.co.uk](http://www.edenrunners.co.uk)  
[www.cfra.co.uk](http://www.cfra.co.uk)  
[www.merciafellrunners.org.uk](http://www.merciafellrunners.org.uk)

Note: These races are likely to be pre-entry; check details in the Fixtures Handbook or the FRA website.

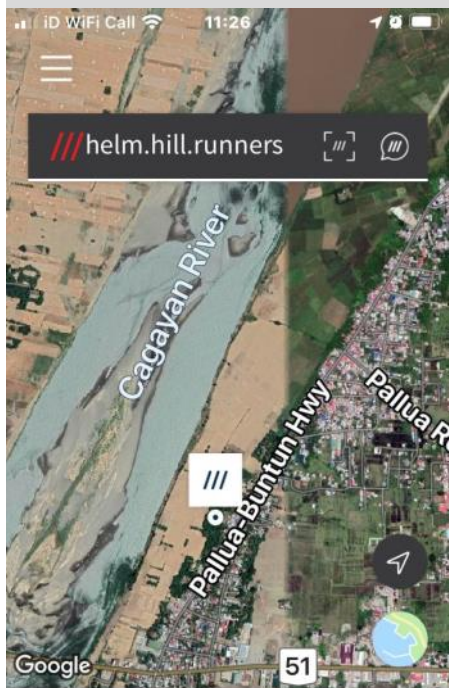
The four races are as follows:

- Short: 28th August - Arnison Crag Horseshoe, England  
Medium: 27th March - Aran Race, Wales  
Long: 24th April - Seven Sevens, Northern Ireland  
7th August - Glenshee Nine, Scotland

These races will be pre-entry; check details in the Fixtures Calendar

Senior FRA  
BRITISH  
Champs:

## FUN FACT



Helm.Hill.Runners has a location in What 3 Words!

## SOCIAL MEDIA



Helm Hill Instagram is full of fab pics and now has over 800 followers!



If you are on Strava, join the Helm Hill group and see what your club-mates are up to!



### Helm Hill Runners

Private group · 341 members



Facebook - [the fb Group](#) is strictly for paid-up members only (or parents of paid up Juniors). We get about 10 requests a week from runners in other clubs or from random people around the world so if you have just joined and requested access please also let Ali Richards know via your coach/Wednesday group leader or message Ali on fb messenger.



Helm Hill Runners



Contact HelmHillRunners: [info@helmhill.co.uk](mailto:info@helmhill.co.uk)

[www.helmhill.co.uk](http://www.helmhill.co.uk)

