HELM HILL NEWS

AUTUMN 2021





CLUB STUFF

Welcome to the long overdue HELM HILL NEWSLETTER for 2021

Normally there's 2 per year so this one's a bumper edition! Thanks to everyone who contributed. We even had to leave out the eagerly awaited HHR Lifestyle Supplement so you'll have to wait till next time for that.

We're a big club and there's loads and loads that goes on and the contents are really just a snippet of things members have been up to over the year. It's great to be back out there racing again with the big green Helm Hill racing machine!



WELCOME TO ALL THE NEW MEMBERS IN 2021!

We hope you are having a great time with Helm Hill Runners and have met loads of great people. There's loads of really great articles in the back catalogue of newsletters—see 'About' on the Helm Hill website .. Who knows you might even feel motivated to contribute something for the next newsletter!



A new **HELM HILL RUNNERS COMMITTEE** was voted in for 2022 at the recent AGM.



Chair – Michael Ainsworth
Vice chair – Ali Richards
Secretary – VACANCY
Treasurer – Victoria Thompson
Membership secretary – Marie Robson
Welfare and safety officers – Annie Gardner-Aston and Andy Thompson
Club captains – Sharon Louise Taylor and Adam Perry
Junior coordinator – Lorna Askew
Senior training coordinator – David Griffin
Media coordinator – David Appleyard
Social coordinator – Jos Addison
Committee members – Russell Cannon and Ben Procter

And of course… **President Billy Procter and Vice President Tim Murray.**

Since the AGM **Jos Addison** has kindly offered to take on the role of **social coordinator** working closely with **Hannah**.....they've got lots of good ideas and so if you want to help them make these happen why not join the social subgroup (see elsewhere in newsletter).

Those who stood down this year after successful periods and with my thanks for all their efforts and enthusiasm were **Bill Coupe, Jo Grisedale, Rich Cater and John Bagge**....the latter after more years than he can remember. Great servants of the club all.

Club Secretary

JOB VACANCY



Are you a well organised individual and always wanted to help the club out? Can you spare an hour a week and an evening every other month for meetings? If so this is for you!

We're looking for someone to fill the post of club secretary until October. Main jobs are administrative such as booking meeting venues, taking minutes/notes and making sure we are insured and affiliated etc. An ability to use google drive and a (good) sense of humour would be an advantage!

Salary: Biscuits provided and after recent 'feedback' these will now be **chocolate**!

Please get in touch with Michael if this is something you'd like to discuss

MAKING THINGS HAPPEN WITH HELM...!

Ever wanted to help make things happen with Helm Hill but not sure where to start?

Well....why not join one of our new committee sub groups?!
We are in the process of setting up committee subgroups to make things happen....these are;

Juniors (Lorna Askew) Training and events for junior groups
Training (David Griffin) Senior training programme, coaches etc
Racing (Adam Perry) Club race...and club racing organisation!
Social (Jos Addison) Coordination of social events and challenges etc
Governance (Michael A) Finance, safeguarding, membership, safety etc

So.....If you are interested in getting involved in any of the above and can offer ideas, energy and enthusiasm to crack on and get stuff done please speak to any of the above, a committee member or your coach and we will gladly point you in the right direction....totally flexible on commitment and time etc so please don't be shy!

CHAIRMANS' BIT—MIKE AINSWORTH



Wow!

Over ONE HUNDRED VOLUNTEERS....ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED RUNNERS runners and we managed to have FOUR TOILET ROLLS left at the end. Relay planning perfection!

Thanks again to everyone who helped the club host the British Relays so successfully. It was a great team effort from everyone who helped before, on the day and after. A great team effort!

With training coming back together over the autumn it feels like we are really a club on the up again...it's been fantastic to see so many juniors in particular so well done to you all and to our coaches for making this happen.

Next year the Kendal Winter League and Club Championships return and as a club I want our focus to be getting as many of you racing as possible..... it doesn't matter to me or us if you finish first, last or anywhere in the middle, we just want to see you racing and doing your best in a HH vest! There aren't many sports where you can line up and experience competing alongside elite internationals like our own superstars Chris Richards and Hannah Russell. You (and I!) may not be at their level but remember finishing last is still finishing way ahead of all those who didn't do it and we will support you all the way....so go for it!

And if that still doesn't appeal....don't forget the social side! Reccying routes together is a great way to learn not just the route but also top tips for all sorts. We're hoping to get a new social committee up and running in the New Year....so watch this space for other events too!

On another topic, I'd like to thank one of our members for writing to the committee to explain their frustration at seeing different levels of prizes being handed out to men and women at fell race finishes. I see how this can make women feel less welcome in the sport and so am committed that we act to improve things. As far as I am concerned a runner equals a runner and so I will always want you all to feel welcome at training and racing regardless of gender or any other characteristic for that matter. The club has a long history of positively acting to improve gender equality in the sport from first introducing equal prizes for juniors to prompting the production of a women's claymore for the Carnethy 5. We think our own prizes are already equal after earlier changes but as a first step we will now check and make sure they are before then be discussing what else we could do on this topic at committee.

As a final point, thanks again to all those who responded to the club survey. It's given us lots of ideas and offers of help. All members will have had an email setting out what you said and what we are going to do in response. Also good to know that at least 2 people in the club recognise that a buff is a hat!

So...well done for all we did together in 2021 and here's to a great 2022!

See you on the fell (I hope!)

Michael

CAPTAIN'S BIT—SHARON TAYLOR



Where do I start with 2021? Our ladies have had another AMAZING year of success on the fells.

If anyone was contemplating the challenge of a Bob Graham, I'm sure watching Bianca, Ali & Rowan successfully tick the box will have inspired you to go for it! A highlight for me was when racing the Ennerdale Horseshoe I was able to shout some encouragement at Rowan as our paths crossed on Red Pike....we couldn't have planned for that to happen if we'd tried!

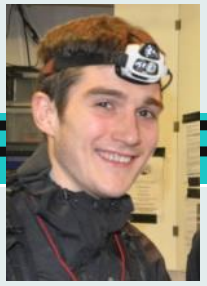
I have really enjoyed meeting our new members over the last few months since training has come back together and it was great to see the enthusiasm for the British relay teams. I hope you all enjoyed racing in your Helm vests as the dates are now out for next year so I do hope you can pencil some of

the dates into your dairy.

Last, but not least, I must make comment on what I think is history in fell running – the Helm Hill women have WON the British AND English Open & V40 team championships AND the Hodgson Brothers Relay AND the UKA Fell Relay for 3 consecutive years. Can we make it a 4th year?

Hopefully this inspires everyone to train hard and keep injury free over the winter for next season. I know it has me!

See you all in 2022.



CAPTAIN'S BIT—ADAM PERRY

As 2021 draws to a close I hope runners young and old share my optimism for 2022. The race calendar is looking fuller, we already have a list of British and English Championship races available in addition to a range of training groups meeting week in week out.

Club comes first. It was a genuine delight one sunny Wednesday evening mid-summer to see our many training groups all together on the Helm. The effort and excitement was back and I am pleased the momentum has continued to build since then.

Despite the reduced fixture list and opportunities for club training in early 2021, we have seen some outstanding individual success as this year has gone on. From British Champions, to Lakeland Classics and Mountain Trial triumphs. We have also seen lots of individuals out pushing themselves on their own challenges. Well done, it is a motivation to see !

It is together as a club that we achieve and all benefit the most in my opinion. Whether this be keeping a roaming training calendar going, competing with the best at the relay events and organising a very memorable FRA Relays event in Tebay.

We have been successful again in 2021 as individual runners and as a club, helping one another develop and collectively deliver an outstanding range of events, training and leaning opportunities. Looking ahead to 2022, I would like us all to think a little about how we can make a difference by:

For the Male teams turning those nearly moments into gold or silvered lined success. We have strength in depth across the age categories and I encourage our whole team to come together to train, travel, race and celebrate. We have some very experienced and talented runners on the periphery or not currently training with us and I urge you to come back and share what you know.

As individuals step forward and take on responsibilities for helping to coordinate, organise and lead training, social events, transport and other less obvious activities the club is required to do. The club offers a fantastic environment in which to learn skills and gain confidence and I encourage people to make the most of the opportunities for developing these alongside our long standing and newer members who give so much to the club.

Bring new ideas for training, races and events to the club so that we can support you in making these happen.

Lots of effort is already going in to planning race fixtures, the club championship and Kendal Winter League. I am looking forward to seeing you all competing.once we get a solid winter of training under our belts

cheers, Adam



JUNIOR COORDINATORS BIT—LORNA ASKEW

See pages 16—17

WE'RE BACK FELL RACING!

It's been great to be able to get out on the fells again with friends for just the sheer joy of running on the fells with friends. But even better to be racing again against friends in our fellrunning community.

Before we delve into the rest of what everyones been up to lets start with an article by one of our junior runners Izzy Sanderson which capture the mood of 2021 perfectly.



In 2021, I found that the BOFRA races were a great way to escape the stresses of Covid-19.

There were still restrictions such as wearing a face covering on start lines but there was a great atmosphere that I hadn't felt since before the first lockdown. At first, I was worried that I would get lost but there were marshals and flags around every corner! I really enjoyed the first race in Coniston and aimed to complete as many of The BOFRA races as I could over the summer. I found the racing really exciting.

It felt so good to be out and about with other people again. Often it was a sunny day and all the race organisers were friendly and helpful on the start lines. You could see that everyone was enjoying themselves at the start line as well as when you got back and had finished.

For the juniors the race routes are fairly short in the under 12s about 3km but they usually have a steep ascent and some tricky downhill! Sometimes there is a little bit of flat terrain which evens out the race. One of my favourite races was Kettlewell because it was really steep and you could see the whole course from the bottom. There were other juniors from Helm too and it was good to bump into them at events and cheer them on in their races.

In the end I ran in nearly all the BOFRA races this year and each one felt different. For me the races were a great opportunity and a chance to do something that felt 'normal' again!

By Izzy Sanderson















HELM HILL RUNNERS

2021 BRITISH FELL CHAMPS

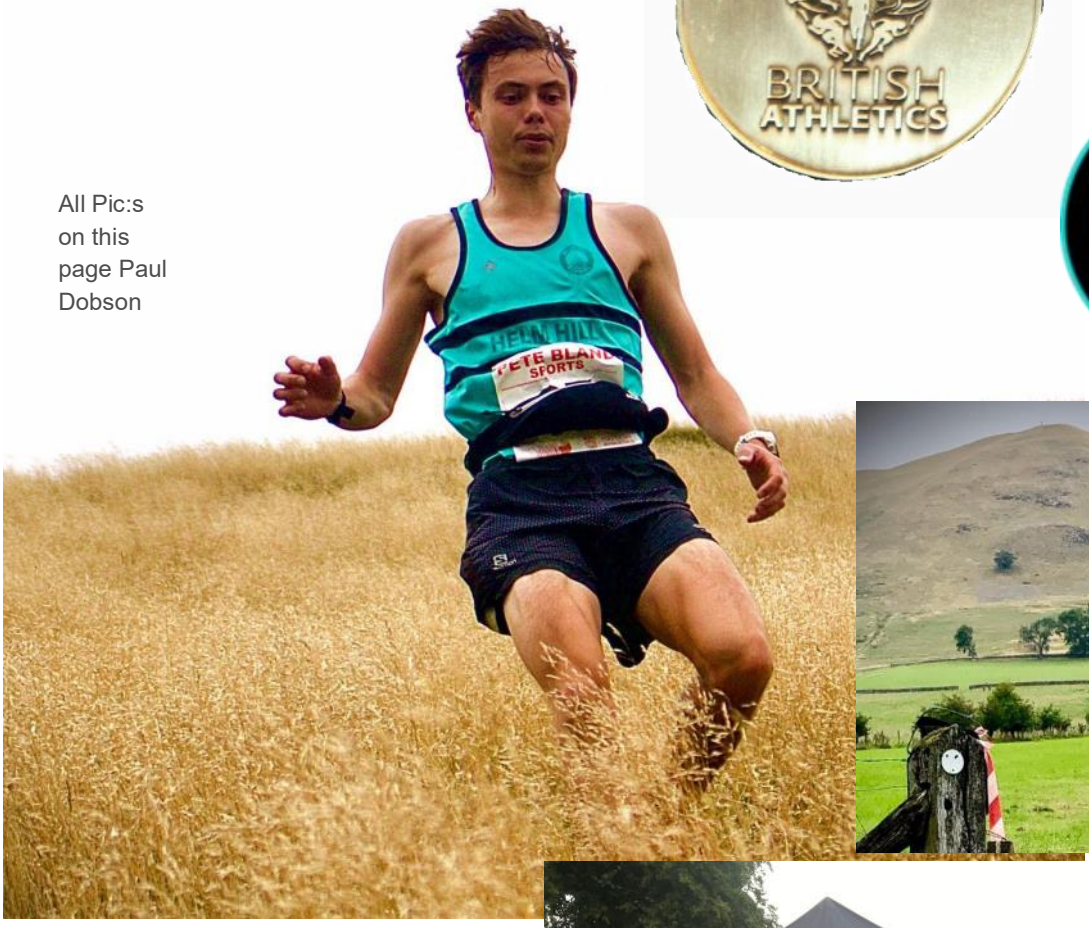
..and what a year of racing it's been!!

2021 BRITISH MENS FELL CHAMPION

— CHRIS RICHARDS



All Pic:s on this page Paul Dobson







Chris had a storming race at the UKA British Fell Champs race at Dufton, beating the cream of British fell racing.

All pics: Paul Dobson

2021 BRITISH WOMENS BRONZE—EMMA GOULD

2021 BRITISH W40 GOLD—SHARON TAYLOR



All Pic:s on this page Paul Dobson





2021 BRITISH M40 GOLD—ROB JEBB

2021 BRITISH OPEN TEAM CHAMPS —

HELM HILL WOMEN: GOLD !!!



MEN: BRONZE !!





2021 ENGLISH FELL CHAMPS

2021 ENGLISH WOMENS V40 CHAMPION: **SHARON TAYLOR**

2021 ENGLISH MENS V40 & V45 CHAMPION: **ROB JEBB**

2021 ENGLISH MENS V60 CHAMPION: **BILLY PROCTOR**







ENGLISH WOMENS OPEN TEAM CHAMPIONS —

HELM HILL WOMEN: GOLD !!!



MEDALISTS (counters): Sharon Taylor, Janie Oates, Victoria Thompson, Hannah Russell, Lucy Spain, Bianca Dyer, Emma Gould
And credit also goes to everyone who raced!

Pics: Granddayoutphotography.co.uk

2021 ENGLISH WOMENS V40 TEAM CHAMPIONS —

HELM HILL WOMEN: GOLD !!!



MEDALISTS (counters): Sharon Taylor, Bianca Dyer, Caroline Holden, Marie Robson, Carrie Gibson, Mhairi Helme
And credit also goes to everyone who raced!

2021 ENGLISH MENS V40 TEAM — SILVER

MEDALISTS (counters): Robert Jebb, Kieran Hodgson, Will Acland, Paul Reilly, Paul Aitken, James L Baron, David Griffin
And credit also goes to everyone who raced!



The mens start at the Black Combe English Champs Race

2021 ENGLISH WOMENS OPEN BRONZE: SHARON TAYLOR

2021 ENGLISH MENS OPEN TEAM — BRONZE

MEDALISTS (counters): Robert Jebb, Philip Rutter, Joe Kenny, Chris Richards, Adam Perry, Sam Dixon, Kieran Hodgson, Michael Ainsworth, David Griffin
And credit also goes to everyone who raced!

2021 ENGLISH MENS V50 TEAM — BRONZE

MEDALISTS (counters): James l Baron, Willliam Procter, Jacob Dyer, David Griffin
And credit also goes to everyone who raced!

WMRA NATIONS CUP, ITALY—CHRIS RICHARDS

An insight from Chris into the world of international mountain running and balancing that with racing on the fells....and the road!



I had 27 days before the Nations Cup in Italy and I needed a plan. The time I'd spent off ill had provided a decent amount of rest and recovery. I'd been asked to compete in the national road relays the weekend after the Hodgsons and then the British Fell relays the weekend after that. I then heard that Harry Bolton and Joe Dugdale were planning on flying out to Italy to do the famous Trofeo Vanoni mountain relay as a team Cumbria the week before the Nations cup having also qualified for the England team and I was incredibly keen to get involved. I once again decided to use the races as training. Looking at the race profile of the Nations cup it appeared to be a downhill half marathon. 22 kilometres with 600 meters climb and 1000 meters of descent on mostly road and hard packed trail. I knew I needed to be fast and the national road relays would tell me whether I had managed to retain any leg speed. I also needed to able to withstand the impact of 1000 meters of fast downhill running and I was fairly confident that having smashed my quads to pieces so many times already that season that I was in fairly good shape to handle that as well. I did a road session the week of the national road relays which went very well .

I thought the Nations Cup would take about 80-90 minutes so I needed some longer runs and cycles to ensure I could actually run the whole thing at pace. I also needed to be strong enough to handle and recover from any big adventurous mountain runs that we would do in the week leading up to it, which meant that I needed to be fresh at the start of the trip.

The British fell Relays went well and me and Rob climbed very well running the 3rd fastest leg of the day despite Rob's hamstring attempting to scupper things. Two days later I set out to do a very specific session that I thought would prepare me well for the Nations cup. I wanted to do an uphill tempo up to Ill Bell from Kentmere with a moderate descent and then drive out to Ings cycle path to do some intervals on legs that were a bit smashed from the hill running. This was the type of running I'd experience in Italy and I wanted my legs to be ready for it. It was horrendous weather and I did not enjoy the uphill tempo at all but the intervals were relatively quick despite the stormy conditions and it turned out to be just the session I needed.

We flew out on Friday the 22nd of October to represent Cumbria in the Italian mountain relay on the Sunday. We finished 7th as team just edging out Poland and beating Scotland, Wales and Ireland. I posted the 6th fastest time of the day in 30:10 and our combined time of 1 hour 34 minutes was only 4 minutes behind the French national team. In our air bnb with the Scots we had won 12 bottles of wine between us.

The day after we spent 6 hours hiking to 2300 meters up a nearby mountain. We finished the long descent just as it was getting dark. After a reasonably easy day which entailed a massive lay in and a 63 second 400 meter rep with local junior team we did another 6 hour hike up to 2600 meters, climbing 2300 meters in 9.8 kilometres! We had another rest day after that before meeting up with the England team in Chiavenna for the Nations Cup race.

Nations Cup Race Report:

It started relatively fast but not too fast. The trail climbed gradually for the first 2km and then kicked up steeper up the first stone steps of the course to about 4km, climbing almost 300 meters. I realised we had almost done half the elevation of the whole course within the first 4km of the 20km race and that this was going to be a very, very fast race. I was working no harder than I needed to and was positioned perfectly behind Zak Hannah and Max Nicholls who were setting the early pace up the first climb and English Fell Champ Billy Cartwright was tucked in behind me and I realised we had a cracking shot at a team medal if we managed to hold this form for the next 80-90 minutes. A breakaway had formed and a chase group had formed. The Kenyan and the German were in a class of their own which meant that the rest of us were battling for a top 10 position. It was important to me to jump on the back of the group and not get shot out the back. Along the technical undulating early trail I did just that and I waited until the path opened up onto the downhill road to see just how fast people were willing to descend. We hit the road close to 5km and I started going past people. I was level with Max, my roommate, teammate and British Mountain Running Champion. But we weren't running up a mountain today, we were sprinting down tarmac and with my quads hardened by long a long fell running season and over 4000 meters of descending in the previous 10 days (which I had only just recovered from) I could handle an incredible amount of force.

I was leaning forward into the downhill taking long quick strides and taking the full impact of the asphalt through my legs with ease. I felt good (relatively good, I felt as good as you can feel when running full speed down tarmac chased by a huge field of international mountain trail runners). I had run myself into 4th place and was chasing down 3rd. But I wasn't thinking about positions or medals or overtaking I was thinking about running fast and catching the Czech runner up ahead. I was thinking about racing. I had my racing head on and the rest of the world had faded away. I was running fast and that's what I like to do.

After 10km of punishing downhill we reached another technical uphill trail and I had caught the Czech runner in 3rd place. My legs felt heavy and bruised at only half way this wasn't a good sign and I realised we had just run the previous 5km in just under 15 minutes. (Strava has me setting a personal best mile of 4:10 on this section and 8:50 for 2 miles!) "That's probably why". I worried that maybe I had set off to fast that everyone else had done a better job of pacing, that I would blow up and end up jogging into the finish with everyone flying past me. But those were just thoughts and I let them come and then go again, just as I had practiced in 100's of races and what feels like thousands of training sessions.

I stuck to my task and proceeded to tap my way up the second climb of the race with the Czech runner. We ran up together and down together and at some point I managed to get a gap which I held until we got to the mad crazy steep stair section next to the waterfall which was made up of uneven rocks with slabs sticking up at just the perfect height to catch a toe on and trip and fall off the side of the mountain. By most people's standards I descended it pretty well, I was smooth but still a little cautious. The Czech and the Slovenian did not display such caution and cruised past me taking 3 or 4

steps at a time, absorbing the impact, demonstrating incredible coordination and confidence and built a gap as I slightly more gingerly picked my way down, unwilling to risk a fall or incapable of producing the extra technical downhill skills needed to stay with them.



Once we were back on the valley floor under the waterfall I was able to close the gap over the cross country and road section. Daniel Pattis from Italy had also caught up and he was getting huge cheers of support from the home crowd lining the sides of the road. We entered the last 5km of technical undulating forest trail together. The four of us would complete the top six. The climbs were short but they felt huge. The descents provided a short break from the climbs but Timotej the Slovenian runner and Daniel the Italian were out performing me on the uneven stone slab descents and were outclassing me on the short steep climbs which after 11 miles of hard running was incredible to witness and they pulled away. Jachim the Czech runner having set an early aggressive pace was now suffering more than I was and dropped off the back and I was left alone in the forest. I finally made it out of the woods unscathed and in one piece having stayed on my feet which at that point was a great victory in itself. I hit the final 500 meters of cobbled road section and quickened my stride, stretching my legs to cover the ground quickly so as to ensure no one could catch me as I did not fancy a sprint finish. I wasn't entirely sure where the finish line was but I knew it wasn't far. The crowds were thickening and the music was getting louder.

The course turned a corner and there was the finish line along with my father and England team manager. 1 hour 22 minutes and 46 seconds after I saw him at the start line in Switzerland I had ran up and over the Italian border and down into Chiavenna and had finished 5th in my first major international mountain race as a senior athlete. We hugged and celebrated and watched more runners topple over the finish line. Italy had packed well and were sure to take team gold. Max came in 10th, he had given everything and was hobbling towards us. The skin on his heels and the bottom of his feet had completely worn away and he was taken to the ambulance to be patched up. Billy was 13th an incredible effort, his fell running strength had seen him through on a course that favoured faster road runners. We had done enough for a team silver medal! Scout Adkin came through and took the women's silver medal for Scotland and behind her the England's women's team had packed incredibly well with Kate Maltby 5th and Caroline Lambert 6th less than 90 seconds behind Scout. With Kirsteen Welch 10th they had taken team gold ahead of the home nation Italy.



It was a truly incredible experience. Full kudos has to go the race organisers and team managers that worked so hard to make the event happen in the short time that they had to do it. And under all the circumstances in which they found themselves operating. The race rounds of by far my best year of running and has provided me with plenty of food for thought as to how to approach the future.

My English Junior Championships Experience – By Millie Jebb

For 2021 the English Junior Championship was made up of 4 races with your best 3 scores counting towards your overall position. After missing a year of fell racing due to covid, I was keen to do as many races as possible!



The first race was at West Nab in Meltham and after walking the course I thought it was probably not going to suit me as it was a fast track out onto the hill and another fast run back on a single track through the woods. I was however very wrong as joining these 2 sections was a long steep descent and this was where I managed to get into 2nd position although just lost out on the sprint finish and was 3rd, although really pleased with this result.

Just 2 weeks later we went to the second race in Derbyshire called Up the Nab. This was again another fast race but I had gained confidence from West Nab so never gave up. I turned at the top in around 5th position and descended well to in 3rd place again!



Unfortunately, isolation meant that I couldn't go to the 3rd race so I was keeping everything crossed that I would be able to get the final race at Ilam – and thankfully did! Ilam was going to be a tough race as we were running with the U11's so the distance was half of what I had been running but this ended up being one of my favourite ones. Amazingly I again finished 3rd and was rewarded with a bronze medal overall in the U13 girls championships.

I have loved doing these races as they have given me the chance to go to new places that even my mum and dad haven't raced at before, the opportunity to race different runners from across the county and most importantly have lots of ice creams after racing!!

JUNIOR COORDINATORS BIT—LORNA ASKEW



What a mixed year it has been!

Earlier in the year the junior section was split apart with four groups meeting on a Monday evening and four on a Wednesday, hardly seeing each other and certainly avoiding any moves of children between groups. Now we are back to meeting all in the same place, at the same time, with the buzz of excitement which that brings.



Earlier in the year we were focusing on the club colours challenges, which included the opportunity to design the colours badges for this year. We managed an award ceremony for this on the Helm; thank you to Coniston Corporate for providing the special hoodies which were presented at this ceremony.

As the year progressed, racing returned and the club colours sheets began to include races rather than the colours challenges.

Some juniors therefore got going in racing in the BOFRA series; Izzy Sanderson has written a separate article about this, and Millie Jebb entered the FRA Junior Championship, where she won a third place. Millie has written about her championship experiences; please look for her article in this newsletter too. As I write, the Cumbria Athletics Association cross country winter league is underway, with two races still to go; quite a number of Helm juniors have been taking part. Also we have junior participation in the mid-lancs cross country league again this winter, and I expect we will have many juniors running in our own fell Winter League 2022 series starting 9 January.

Coaches have remained dedicated to supporting our juniors to obtain the most possible out of their training sessions. Here is a round up of our coaching team;

Level 1 groups

Dan Hughes, who will be sharing his group with another coach from the New Year onwards – Ian Harrington has volunteered to have a go at this.

Sam Moon, Cathy Sanderson and Olly Waters. Olly joined the coaching team recently.

Level 2 groups

Tim Roe and Sarah Atkinson

Warren Kinley, who will be taking a break shortly from coaching whilst establishing his own business; good luck Warren with self-employment, and James Mulvany.

Justin Tancrel, who will soon be sharing the coaching of his group with new volunteer Jo Haslett. Welcome Jo! Justin is also regularly supported by Kirk Wadsworth and Simon Leigh.

Level 3 groups

Younger level 3 group – Maria Hearn, ably assisted by Alastair Dunn

Older level 3 group – Lorna Askew, ably assisted by Jo Pennington

Level 4 group

Kate Simpson, Jo Appleby - and Dan Malcolm who has coached for a good number of years and is now stepping down. Dan is looking to train with the Seniors sometimes, and to find sufficient time to fulfil his new duties as Chair of Kendal Tri Club. Thank you Dan for all your hard work and input with our older juniors. Jacob Dyer is joining Kate and Jo in order to fill Dan's shoes. Thank you Jacob!

Those new to coaching will be supported to undertake their coaching qualifications in the New Year.

To finish, here are few pictures of our juniors out and about this year;



Hawkswick BOFRA



InterCounties Fell running championship



Pete Bland Sports NHS poster lockdown challenge



Helm Race Night July 2021

The very popular, hotly contested Hodgson Brothers Mountain Relay is based at Brotherwater with 4 legs taking in stupendous, technical, challenging Lake District mountain terrain. Helm Hill Runners had another great day out with the rest of the fell running community.

HELM HILL Womens team WINNERS!!





<<<< Mens V40 Teams 2nd Place

Mens open team 5th place

BRITISH FELL RELAYS 2020~~2021~~



Helm Hill host probably the best ever UKA British Hill & Fell Relays!

The day finally came. Over two years in the planning by a team of 15. Over ONE HUNDRED VOLUNTEERS. ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED RUNNERS. From across the country, 200m of bike racking. 2 custom-made HHR wind-socks. Miles and miles of flagged race routes. Precision car-parking for 400 vehicles. Fell comms from Cumbria Raynet. A bar. Excellent coffee. An endless cake stall. Great hot food. 26 portaloos. .....and we managed to have FOUR TOILET ROLLS left at the end. Relay planning perfection!

The British Relays are one of the highlights of the Fell Running Season and it was an enormous accolade for the club to host the premier national event in the fell-running calendar. This was without doubt the biggest event in our club's history and we put on a great event. We had lots and lots of great feedback on the day and afterwards from other clubs who praised and thanked us for putting on such a great event. We couldn't have done it without hours and hours of effort from volunteers.



A MASSIVE THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED IN THE RUN UP, ON THE DAY in the car park, race field, on the fell AND THE DAY AFTER!





Billy's hand-crafted custom flag-holders





















Rammed bike racking! Loads cycled from the car parking a few miles away

Fell Relays 2021—Leg 2 lucky map handout

By Thomas Hearn

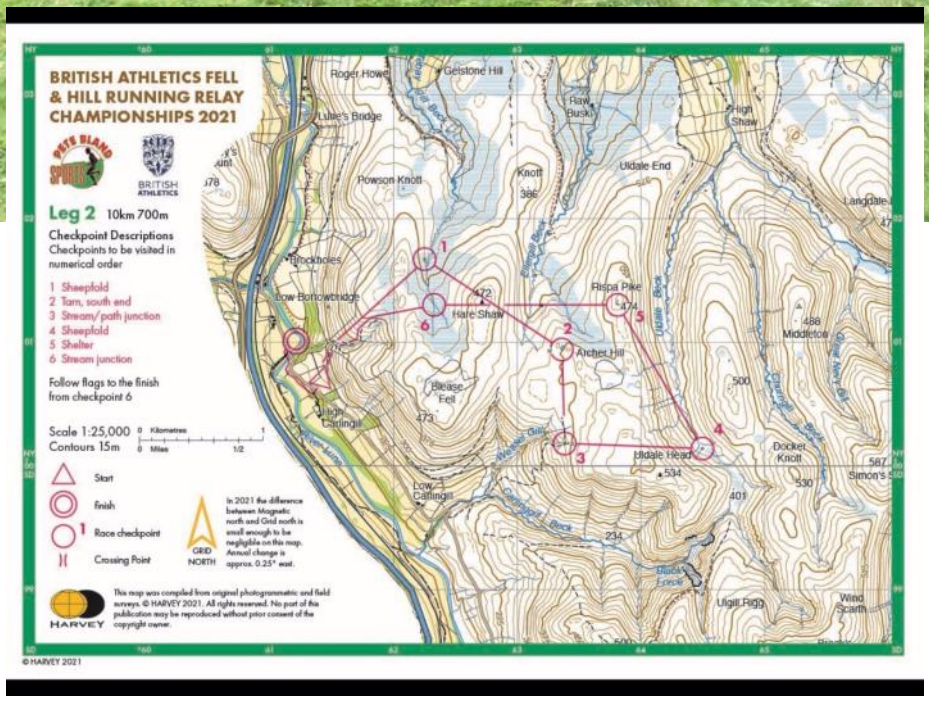
After a few months of stressful preparation, the day finally came. We left our house at 7:00 am and headed to Tebay, to help at the British Fell Relay Championships. The reason I wanted to go is because I hadn't been to any events quite as big as the relays. Once we arrived it wasn't long before we were given a job. Along with the Jebbs and Coopers we set off to give out maps to the leg 2 runners.

Handing out maps was great because it ended up being a race of who could hand their maps out first.

And it was cool to see how tired all the runners were as they came past, one way Harry and Joss persuaded people to take their map was by saying that their map was lucky and would help them win the race.

Another thing we helped with was litter picking, it was amazing to see that we could barely find any litter, so we acted as more of a portable bin for people to put their litter in. It was a great experience, and I would definitely do it again if I had the chance.





Leg 2 Map—competitors have to navigate the controls with no prior knowledge of where they are

Many thanks to Helm Hill Runners for putting in the massive amount of time & work in organising this years FRA relays. We wouldn't have a sport without so many people giving up their time to marshal & put on events & the scope of the relays is huge. My leg (1) was beautifully flagged with masses of support from marshals enroute, the flagging from carpark to venue was impressive. Well done Helm Hill 👍👍



You, Ali Richards, David Appleyard and 357 others 10 comments

Like Comment Share

WE RECEIVED LOTS OF THANKS FROM OTHER CLUBS.....HERE'S A SAMPLE....

~~To: <secretary@helmhill.co.uk>

Dear Helm Hill,

Thank you for a terrific day yesterday. We all enjoyed our run out on great courses and it was a superbly well organised and marshalled event. I cannot begin to think what your logistics must have entailed, but from a competitors perspective, it was worth it!

Please pass on our thanks to all those involved, both on the day and doing all the hard work behind the scenes.

The Whitaker family (Helene, Jonny, Lexi and Eve from Harrogate Harriers)

Eóin Lennon
17 October ·

Huge thanks to Helm Hill and all involved in organising yesterday - a great event, and fantastic, tough courses! Thanks again, from all at Carnethy H R C, looking forward to hosting next year!

You, David Appleyard, Paul Turner and 70 others

Like Comme

Subject: Re: Holmfirth Harriers V50 Team

Hi, Kath.

Just wanted to say on behalf of Holmfirth Harriers how much we 'enjoyed' the race on Saturday! Great organisation from Helm Hill & the atmosphere was great. We were particularly impressed that you'd arranged a steam train 'flypast'!

And I ended up having to run after all, as we had a drop-out at 9.30pm on Friday night! My quads are still complaining!

Cheers, Phil

Cumberland FR @cumberland_fr · Oct 17

Just joining the long list of clubs, in thanking @HelmHill and all the marshalls, runners and supporters in making yesterday's British Fell Relays a success.

Every CFR member who took part loved it. (There was a few of us as we fielded 7 Teams!!).

#fellrunning



3 35





NOT ONLY DID WE HOST THE EVENT BUT THE WOMENS TEAM WON!!!

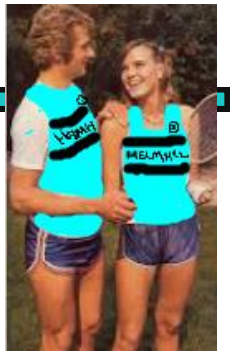


Sarah Murtagh on the glory leg bringing home a storming performance from the womens team to win the womens event. Congrats Bianca Dyer, Jannie Oates & Victoria Thomson, Sharon Taylor & Hannah Russel and Sarah Murtagh.

Pic: Sarah Gerrish

SHORT RACING SHORTS

Snippets of good stuff







International duties

Well done Chris Richards 5th in the WMRAmountainrun Nations Cup helping England to an amazing 2nd place, and Duncan Richards proud dad moment. See also p12-13

Hannah Russell & Chris Richards raced in England vests at the Home International/ GB trial in Sedbergh





Kendal Mountain Festival Trail Race

Loads of Helm Hill took to the streets and trails around Kendal at the KMF blast around Scout Scar.

Joss Naylor was in town and many of the women wasted no time in grabbing a photo op with the legend.





THE MONTANE DRAGONS BACK RACE ®

The Montane Dragons Back Race® is a six-day, multi-stage mountain race covering 380km and 17,400m of ascent across Wales. No less than 5 Helm Hill Runners stood on the start line in Conwy Castle in what was to be one of the hottest weeks of the year. Here's how Cat Slater, Jenny Rice, Chloe Lumsden, Fi Marley-Paterson and Nick Barber got on.....

Cat Slater's week:

At the start line in Conwy Castle, the anticipation of what was to come, the excitement was palpable.


Pic: No Limits Photography

The course takes you over most of the peaks of Wales. Day 1 includes Crib Goch and what an experience we had. The clouds were cascading down the valleys and we were left with this stunning vista of the full Snowdon Horseshoe.

The first 2 days were forecast to be warm, but the reality was much worse. The hills were baking and on the second day this caused a lot of problems resulting in a record number of dropouts. Any body of water was much appreciated either to dunk your head and hat in, or if possible, to submerge in. Llyn Du before Rhinog Fawr was a lifesaving swim. This could have caused some runners some problems, not only did you have hot, sweaty feet but potentially now they were soddened. Blisters could be and were a real issue.

Before the event I had seen a Podiatrist to help me manage hard skin and learn how to tape my feet. Many people said 'why tape something that isn't broken' but if I hadn't done this, I would have had blisters. I used talcum powder after each day too - to help prevent/reduce maceration and ensure my feet were ready for the next day. Feet were my number 1 priority!

I had seen the forecast and had a real shuffle around of food. I know I struggle to eat in hot conditions so I moved any gels or liquid based foods I had from later days to day 1 and 2. I increased my fuel (Tailwind) in my water and made sure that at the Support Point I had food that I knew I could eat but was calorific. Meatballs and pasta saved me on day 2!

Day 3 remained sunny, but not too hot. Cadair Idris was beautiful in the morning sun and the runoff was a welcome break from the steeper, rockier terrain from day 1 and 2. It was tough though, I walked into the Support Point eating a bowl of pasta I'd picked up from the garage in Machynlleth. For me, this is where the event really started. I had survived the first 2 days, but the calorie deficit was huge. I checked myself over, then had a word with myself - there was nothing wrong me other than being tired, I just needed to eat and keep moving.

The camaraderie was something I have never experienced. There was a real feeling of being in it together and we all felt that relief of surviving the first 2 days. I got distracted by various other runners, funny stories, ridiculous conversations, singing... I had Beyonce 'Survivor' stuck in my head for hours - and together we made it to camp 4. It had been a real tough day.

The emotional rollercoaster really began on day 4. Dragon Mail™ from friends and family was amazing but had me in bits. On this day I was sobbing at the start line, but the volunteers were there ready to pick me up and gently persuade me on. They were amazing and unlike any volunteers you will ever come across. It felt like they wanted you to achieve this almost as much as you did!

To train for this event I had help from running coach Paul Tierney. I wanted guidance to help prevent over training and looking back this is 100% what would have happened. The tricky aspect of the Dragon's Back Race is you need to be good at everything - mountain running, technical terrain, road running, trail running. My friend Jenny and I also recce-ed the whole course over 3 long weekends - this meant our training was done on the actual terrain. I personally think this was invaluable!

Day 5 was my favourite day. There was a lot of ascent on pathless terrain but with a new friend Antonio, we chatted all day and had fun. Running over the Brecon Beacons, in the clouds, wind and rain, was such a welcomed relief and I ate everything I had on me for the first time all week. I had little grab bags of Mountain Fuel flapjack cut up, Naked bars, Baby Bells and beef jerky. I also had a little bag of sweets to celebrate with at check points.

The last day... in my mind it was just another day, yet more checkpoints, I just couldn't think too far ahead. At the first checkpoint, I saw some friends and cried. I was somewhat emotional, but the volunteers sorted my food, filled up my water bottles, and offered words of encouragement and off I went again. Anna Troup kept appearing on the course everyday supporting everyone and on the final day, all I remember was her telling me to 'grind it out' and that's all that went through my head.

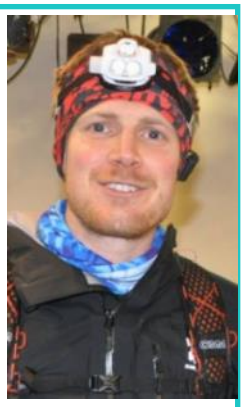
I finally had confidence that I just might make it. I had this thought as I arrived at the daily Support Point to find a surprise visit from my mum and dad! And that was it, the tears came again. My mum making sure they were tears of happiness in seeing them!!!

The last 10 miles were some of the hardest miles I have ran but on seeing Cardiff Castle, I was filled with happiness, relief, shock... I just couldn't believe I had made it.

To finish in Cardiff Castle was the ending this journey deserved for all Dragons. It felt special and will be a memory most will never forget.



Nic Barber's week



I entered the Dragon's Back Race this year as I'd helped out in 2019 so had a cheap entry. I'd engineered this as I thought I might want a go. I did a bit of recceing but not too much – I wanted to leave some undiscovered bits for the race itself. The overriding aim was to get to Cardiff, and be able to dance at my wedding 3 weeks later.

The week before the race was full of nerves and poor sleep – maybe due to the race, maybe due to starting a new job. Packing was complicated by discovering at the last minute that my race pack had been demolished by my hungry Greyhound. Thankfully the 25,000 calories I'd packed for the week were safely secured and a new (better fitting) pack found quickly.

North Wales was hot. Barely 3h in it felt like someone had given me an anvil to carry up Tryfan, heart beating at short race pace. I took the decision for a 5 minute time-out in some shade to try and re-set, and despite still feeling rubbish it seemed to work as I regained time on others.

At no point during the week did I feel particularly good (even on day 1) but scrabbling over the Rhinogs and flying (well it felt like it even if it might not have looked like it) off Cadair Idris with a tailwind were highlights. Pacing, drinking and eating saw me fare OK, until day 5 when, despite much cooler and wilder weather that I normally love, my body gave in after 3h. It was a long walk over the Brecon Beacons to finish just as night fell. The last day into Cardiff started with some nice running and high spirits, but degenerated into a long walk from Merthyr to Cardiff. I didn't care about dropping places in the last days, I just cared about finishing. Thankfully my body held up some I got some of the training right – but I obviously missed something with the energy systems.

The DB is a juxtaposition of fell running and events organisation. In the pro column you have the mountains, the challenge, and many like-minded people. In the cons list you have the (necessary) commercialisation and some entrants who have no idea what they're in for, almost comically so. Thankfully I managed to avoid much of the cons.

Will I do it again? There's a bit of disappointment with my fade but, at the moment, I have no burning desire to return. The aim was to get to Cardiff and I have my little dragon to prove it. If I do return, Dragon focus won't be as all-encompassing as it was this year. I've been busy enough over the last few months that the experience has just faded somewhat – it's not standing out as 'wow that was great!' as some things have done. It was there, I did it, that's it. I'm looking forward to racing more in the next few years.

Oh, and I managed to dance at my wedding quite easily.

Jenny Rices's week



I've been aware of the Dragon's Back race since I read about it in Feet in the Clouds. In 2011 - I was living in London, and was doing quite a bit of running, and I'd seen that it was being brought back to life, I'd just done alright in an Exmoor trail marathon (I won the women's race, woop!), and was feeling really excited to try something more challenging. I tried to enter, despite my complete lack of mountain and navigation experience, and unsurprisingly (as entries were vetted) I didn't get a place. Looking back now, I was completely naive as to what I'd have done if I had ended up with a place, I do wonder how far I'd have made it... but I don't think I'd have completed day 1!

Fast forward to 2020, and I knew I wanted to enter the race, and for it to be the main goal of the year in 2021. It was awesome to know there were several other women at Helm keen to sign up too - firstly Cat, and then Chloe got the chance a bit later in the year. After entering in September 2020 I had my

first recce in October, joining a friend who lives in Llanberis we did a huge 21 mile day taking in Snowdon twice, the next day I did 20 miles taking in the first part of day 2. I felt great - and that was my plan - big back to back mountain days. As the year went on my running paused for Kendal Mountain Festival, and chatting to Cat - she'd signed up for coaching with Paul Tierney. Initially I just thought I'd do my own thing, but the more she told me about it, the more interested in the process I became - and I ended up doing the same thing, starting coaching with Paul in January. I honestly think if I'd not have done that, I'd have completely overdone it earlier in the year trying to do big days in the mountains... instead those first few months were a really consistent start to the year, gradually building a base, and slowly increasing distance. Cat and I made a plan to do the Old County Tops route on the day it should have been in May, so we built up to that, and then we planned three 3 day recce weekends, where we would cover the entire route. The main thing I'd spoken to Paul about was how to deal with my head when things get hard - he's completely right when he said that your mind will go before your body, and I did what I could to read up on the mental side of things, have strategies ready to deal with the dark moments, and think from the start about all the things that could go wrong, and how I'd deal with them when they did go wrong...

In June, we covered days 1 and 2 from Conwy to Dolgellau - 3 epic days over the best of north Wales' mountains, with the help of our amazing friends in Llanberis who shuttled us around all weekend, and fed us every night whilst we fell asleep at the dinner table.

In July, my parents joined us in Machynlleth, where they also helped drive us around mid Wales (and my dad even joined us for a section)! I was amazed how the training was paying off, and after 3 days covering 28 miles over Cadair Idris & the 'Tarrens', 36 miles over the Cambrians, and 33 miles through the Elan valley, Cat and I trotted into Llandovery like we'd just been out for a Sunday long run... we were both amazed at how smoothly it had all gone.

Before we knew it, August came and it was our final weekend, it was 3 of us this time - me, Cat and Chloe! The first 1 1/2 days we were traversing the entire Brecon Beacon range, and enjoyed 2 nights in what must be the world's smallest hostel, before dropping into the valleys on the way to Cardiff.



The next few weeks were kit faff central - so much to think about - deciding on kit to pack, shoes, food... On the Sunday of registration, I'm standing in the blazing sunshine near the M6 junction 36 roundabout waiting for a lift from Steve Birkinshaw, it was amazing to chat to him on the drive to Conwy about his 2012 experience of the Dragon's Back Race (which he won!) and why he was back again - because now the race had a proper finish - extended by a day to finish in Cardiff Castle!

When Paul said to think about all the things that could go wrong in this race, one thing I didn't even consider was a September heatwave, I spent way more time worrying about bad weather, and I initially packed 3 sets of waterproofs. As we trotted along the Castle walls out of Conwy at 7am, it was already hot. Cat and I pretty much spent the whole day checking on each other - had we eaten enough, drunk enough, was the pace too hard - we knew it would be easy to get carried away on the first day with the excitement, so we constantly kept reigning it in. We got to the support point for day 1 and already there were dropouts including Marcus Scotney and Kim Collison, both due to injury, but lots more people dropping because of the heat. A steady climb up Tryfan, and over the Glyders, where we caught Fi on the descent to Pen y Pas. We all stopped for a cooling Calippo and can of coke at the cafe - and

as we started up Crib Goch, I remember optimistically saying that we had to pretend we'd just started out for an evening run over the Snowdon Horseshoe. It didn't quite work - my legs felt completely trashed as we slowly trudged up to the foot of the ridge. I also remember everyone literally hugging the shady rock as it was still cool!

That late afternoon on Crib Goch was completely spectacular, and eventually we dropped off the final and ridiculously steep descent to camp - trying to descend as gently as possible, knowing we'd have to get up the next morning and start running again! It was a brilliant feeling running into the finish with Cat on day 1, it was just gone 6pm, we'd been out a tad over 11 hours, and finished in 41st and 42nd overall. We soon heard that of the 367 starters, over 80 had dropped out. The first night in camp was a big learning process - I soon got sorted with my 'camp bag' that had all I needed in it so I just carried it round with me.

The tents were pretty cosy, and I don't remember sleeping much, and I do know I got up to the toilet more times than I should have! The next day, Cat and I set off together at 7.20am, enjoying the relative cool of the morning - but it didn't last long! After the first summit of the day - Cnicht, we had our first (of many) swim of the day in a beautiful little reservoir, before beginning the climb up the Moelwyns. And so the day continued - slow and steady climbing, trotting along the flats and downs, and dipping at every opportunity. About halfway through the day, I really started to flag, and gradually Cat disappeared into the distance - we'd always said that we wouldn't commit to running together - but it was good whilst it lasted! I tried not to worry too much, and just kept plodding onwards to the day 2 support point. I made the support point with 25 minutes to spare, only stopping for 5 mins to refill my food and drink, and then ate my lunch on the move up the Roman steps towards the infamous Rhinogs. We'd recced them, but they seemed to have become even bigger, rougher and tougher than I remembered. I was thankful to catch Fi, and we spent the rest of the day to and fro'ing with each other. As the sun dropped below the horizon, I didn't think I'd still be out on the hill, and things gradually went downhill from there. I stumbled and whimpered my way off the final hill of the day, knowing that as soon as I hit the road it was still 10km to go... My main memory of that evening was of meeting Fi again on the road and the both of us crying and trying to work out why we were doing what we were doing as we shuffled onwards to camp. As it flattened out, we just walked the final 5km - I didn't want to be there, I just wanted to go home, I couldn't stop crying, I missed Scully, I felt like an idiot - this was meant to be my holiday...

We made it to camp after 9pm, still an hour before the cut off. I hobbled around, and had long since given up trying not to cry in front of people. Everyone was so supportive, but also they all had to focus on themselves. I tried to sort myself out but didn't really know what to do first. Shane was a complete star and found me crying in the tent - he told me to get to the food tent, get myself some dinner, and eat and drink until I couldn't eat or drink anymore. I was adamant I was done, and would be going home the next day, but he just kept saying 'decide in the morning'. As so many people had now dropped out - the tents were suddenly a lot more spacious and I slept quite well, but when alarms started going off at 4.30am, I just didn't want to get up, I still didn't know what to do. When I did eventually drag myself out of the tent, I was surprised that I actually felt ok, my feet had dried out and didn't hurt, no blisters, my legs were sore, but I could move reasonably well... I was almost disappointed that I didn't have a reason to stop. I taped my feet where they'd been sore the previous day and rushed to get ready - I didn't want to be chasing cut offs again. As I left the start line Stephen Ashworth ran next to me with a camera, and this footage of me, once again trying not to cry, whilst saying something about 'feeling completely awful' made it into the BBC iPlayer film about the race. I

both hate that this was recorded, and I also appreciate it as I can look back and it reminds me that although I felt completely shit that morning, I was still giving it a go and starting day 3. Five hours later after hauling myself at snail's pace over Cadair Idris, being overtaken by everyone, and crying most of the time - I called it a day and pulled out at the water point 15 miles in.



I just breathed a sigh of relief - I was so thankful I could stop, and as much as I wanted to complete the Dragon's Back Race, I just don't think I had it in me. A few others, including Chloe were also at the water point and we all got driven to the next camp together. I was really happy with my decision, and Chloe and I carried on running part days, trying to help Cat where we could. She was a woman on a mission to Cardiff and it was amazing seeing her focus. We still did some big miles, and with some extra recovery time in the mornings and evenings meant we were ready for the next day. I loved the 30 miles we ran together over the Brecon Beacons, in opposite weather to that we had in north Wales.



Part of me was disappointed - Paul was right - my mind had stopped me before my body. But the rest of me just loved it being fun again, that there was no pressure any more, and it was this brilliant running holiday from then on!

On the final day I couldn't decide whether to run into Cardiff Castle or not - initially I felt it wasn't right to unless I'd run all the way - but in the end Chloe and I ran the final 18 miles of day 6 together, and rather wonderfully ran the final 10 miles into the finish with Cat. I actually tear up a bit thinking back to it, but we'd run the same section a month prior, the 3 of us together, and here we were again - only Cat had run the entire thing. It was a really emotional end and as we neared the castle, Cat's pace picked up so much so that Chloe and I couldn't keep up - we trotted into the finish behind her to see her on the big screen with John hugging her and Roo jumping all over her!

It was an epic finish in Cardiff - hats off to Shane and the team for creating such an incredible event. It was a massive adventure, I learnt such a lot in the year leading up to it, and got to see a LOT of Wales, and spend time with some brilliant people.

Everyone asks me if I'd try it again - in the immediate aftermath I said no way, but after a few more days I kept thinking about how much I'd learnt, how lots of it I wouldn't worry or stress about, I knew what kit worked, what food I wanted, how organised I needed to be in camp, and what training I needed to do. And I'll have an idea of how hard it is - that was always unknown as the recces were never that tough, and so I didn't end up in any dark places - so it's just working out how I work out pushing through when it gets hard, rather than quitting and enjoying a running holiday! So maybe I'll be on the start line again in a few years...

BOB GRAHAM ROUNDS

The summer of 2021 saw a bumper crop of Helm Hillers attempt (and succeed) doing the iconic Bob Graham Round. For those of you who aren't sure what it is, it's tour of some of the Lake Districts finest peaks covering about 66 miles with 28,00ft of climb (102km + 8,000m) that has to be completed within 24 hours. HH newsletter decided to interview the 7 successful Helm athletes who completed this year – Bianca Dyer, Sam Gibbs, Dan Hughes (solo), Will Laye, Adam Oliver, Rowan Ranner and Ali Richards. So grab a cup of tea, compare/contrast answers and get inspired!



What was your main motivation for attempting a BG?

Bianca – I had never seriously considered doing a BG, I loved racing and there's only so much fun you can have. But no races, less work and no taxi duty during lockdown gave me the perfect opportunity to spend long days in the fells. It wasn't until the start of 2021, that I thought I might put those long runs to good use and the idea of a BG was born. I was inspired by Cat Slater's training for her Dragon's Back and had heard that Ali and Rowan might have a go too.

Sam - I read about it in orienteering magazine about 35 years ago, so it has always been on my radar. It was mainly friends who I ran with that convinced me I was good enough get round, and it got to a point where I ran out of excuses not to give it a go.

Dan – To see if I could do a round without support and to see if my knees still had it in them.

Will – To have an epic day out with my friends and family plus get the iconic round in before departing my twenties.

Adam – The BG is just such an iconic challenge for people who love being out and running in the fells I felt I couldn't not give it a go – especially having moved to Kendal in 2015 and therefore having that on the doorstep.

Rowan – It was Ali's idea. She made me do it.

Ali – It wasn't really intentional but Rowan and I got very fit in lockdown going out for long runs

to save our sanity! Originally we were just training to do the Tea Round but over many hours of running we both talked ourselves into the BG Once we committed it was a team project with Bianca as well. Also a personal motivating factor was to shut up my teenage son who kept saying I hadn't really done a BG as I did it in 26 hours last time!

What training did you do?

B – At the beginning - before I had thought of doing a BG - I did a mix of long local runs, revisiting old race routes and exploring new race routes working on nav skills. Once I had decided to give it a proper go, we started to recce the five legs a couple of times and I supported both Ali and Rowan doing double legs. The recommended 3000 metres ascent per week became a bit of a guide for the months before the big day. I also managed to squeeze the occasional swim and bike ride in just for a change. The dress rehearsal was doing the Howgills 40 tops which was a great day out! I had never run for that long (12hrs) and it was good at this point to find out that there was still a bit left in the tank.

S – By Christmas, I was reasonably fit and injury-free, so just upped the mileage and climb month by month – consistently hitting 10,000ft+/week from March onwards. I figured it was better to focus on elevation gain and do one massive run at the weekend, then maybe a steady, hilly plod midweek (Kudos to Andrew Douglas *), plus loads of pilates and squats.

D – Mostly I'd look to see what Sam had done on Strava and try and do similar – he comes up with some good routes. Elevation over distance.

W – Fairly standard BG stuff. About 10hrs a week, hilly and a long 'un up to 5hrs every other week. Howgills perfect for it.

Ad - No real specific training just a lot of time out in the hills trying to build up the weekly mileage and ascent – mostly all low intensity and getting up to a maximum of 60 miles/12,000 ft per week.

R – 10,000ft of climbing a week and roughly 50 miles running per week from January 1st. Lots of Acceptance and Commitment therapy.

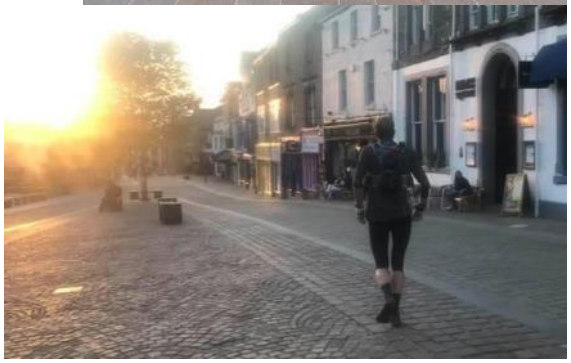
Al – RED January; After that 20-40 miles per week trying to get 10 000 feet of climb; A long run each week; Tea Round/ Howgills 40 tops; Tracy's online body pump (100s of squats!!); Hours of chat - essential



How did you feel at the start?

B – Very odd - not having to carrying ANYTHING after so many big days out lugging tons of food and kit around the countryside felt very strange.

S – Calm about the distance/climb, but concerned about the heat – it was 26° when I set off at 6pm.



D – Relaxed.

W – What lay ahead felt beyond comprehension but I felt happy and focused.

Ad – Quite nervous but relatively fresh after 3 weeks taper, but mostly extremely grateful the weather wasn't set to hammer it down for the next 24 hours

R – Very calm on account of being ridiculously fit and feeling very comfortable with an unknown outcome.

Al – Happy it was half-term! (I'd come straight from work) Also this was quite early out of covid restrictions (end of May) so it just felt wonderful to be with people!



What was the best moment?

B – Hurtling towards Jacob, the kids and my friends awaiting us at the Moot Hall with Hannah by my side was pretty special.

S – The whole day was superb, even though it might not have appeared that way from Wasdale onwards. Humbled by how many friends put so much in to the day, particularly those who ran more than one leg and helped at multiple road crossings. The training itself was superb – so many great days and nights out with some of the best people I've ever met.

D – All of it.

W – Rolling into Wasdale, felt like a million dollars after getting good calories since Blencathra and the sun coming out for the first time!

Ad – I realise this might come across cliched, but I genuinely loved all of it from the second I left Moot Hall – the whole experience and feeling King for the day is so much more rewarding than any one part

R – Leg 1 flying down Halls Fell.

Al – Asking what time it was on Gable and realising with shock - as I'd talked myself into a pit of doom - that I was going to be able to sit down at Honister and still have time to finish.

What was the worst moment?

B – On Rowan's round, which was 2 weeks before mine, I ended up with huge blisters on my feet and pain in my knees. I really didn't think I would be in a fit state to attempt my own round. On the day, possibly the start of the road section on leg 5 – it went on forever.

S – Heading out of Wasdale thinking 'It's 7.30am so it'll be cool, plus there'll be a breeze going up Yewbarrow'. A wall of heat hit me before I'd even crossed the bridge just out of the car park and there was no breeze for the rest of the day. I went from a rational human being to a grunting neanderthal diva in the space of about ten minutes.

D – Incredibly thick clag on Kirk fell and the pressure of keeping moving in the right direction.

W – A lonely time on Hellvelyn ridge in clag and driving rain then sitting at Dunmail shivering and wet with 6hr leg ahead.

Ad - Definitely all the planning/prep/putting people out was the worst thing about wanting to do a BG for me – if the moment needs to be from within the round itself it would be feeling very emotional coming into Wasdale and the thoughts of what lay ahead in leg 4.

R – Realising we were only half way on reaching Rosset Pike.

Al – Asking if I was on pace going up Yewbarrow, feeling like a snail and the reply being "what, you mean for a slowie" (I think it might have been a joke but I was NOT in the mood!)



What was the most embarrassing moment?

B – Second hand embarrassment - when my support crew arrived almost too late at Honister because they (read HE) wanted to go for a swim and then got stuck in traffic.

S – A couple – standing naked at a road crossing whilst being doused in cold water and not caring one bit about who saw me. Then going up Dale Head and answering the inevitable call of nature after 20 hours of eating hideous food combinations. Andrew Cox saw things no human should ever have to witness, for which I am eternally sorry.

D – How bad my socks smelled in the van on the way home.

W – Being dressed and undressed throughout the day like a childs doll.

Ad – Realising I must have some OCD when several supporters viciously mocked my separately labelled leg organiser packing cubes.

R – Leg 6—bedroom to bathroom viral video (technically post-BG).

Al – Well I did have a lot of bad wind on leg 2 and 3 but I had to just get over the embarrassment and fart away as my belly felt dreadful. Apologies to all who were there!

Describe the 5 legs in 5 sentences.

B – 1. I feel light as a feather not having to carry anything - loved having Roo (Cat's dog) by our side. 2. Janie, Dave and Chris did a great job getting us to Dunmail through the fog and darkness and at last, the skies cleared and we were treated to the most amazing views of the moon. 3. Scrambling up Lord's Rake and scooting down the scree slope into Wasdale was great fun! (Ali's amazing nav deserves

a mention – it was dark but I could still see how focussed she was!) 4. Rick did a fabulous job as a last minute nav stand-in and Hannah's enthusiasm (I swear she's half human half border collie puppy) were priceless. 5. I didn't think it would be possible to laugh so much on the last leg – the team regaled me with the latest political mishaps I seem to remember.



S – 1. Glorious evening sunshine, worryingly warm, feeling strong and a great descent down Parachute. 2. Three shirtless men running well over Helvellyn at 2am, puerile humour, and feeling like I wasn't really doing a Bob Graham. 3. Invincibility marching up Steel Fell and just kept it up through the magnificent sunrise over the Langdales and Bow Fell…proper unforgettable, life-affirming few hours with Coxy and Dougie. 4. The equivalent of being melted in a toastie-maker…zero escape from the heat from above and below, feeling like things were getting out of control, then the wheels coming off quite spectacularly and everything going blurred. 5. Entering a dream/nightmare-like state whilst suffering from memory blanks, desperately trying to hold it together physically and mentally, with my ever-present support crew driving me on – I simply cannot thank Jo, Dylan, Coxy and Dougie enough as they had my back every step of the way.



D – 1. Lovely., 2. Lovely. 3. Lovely but claggy from Rossett Pike.

4. Buoyed up by being on home turf (my mum's from Wasdale) but clag, clag, clag, and more clag. 5. That road goes on for longer than I remembered.

W – 1. Incredibly exciting heading out and a treacherous descent off Halls in dark and clag but overall brilliant. 2. Character building - started well but cold and miserable in the clag with limited support as Rich was focused on being absolutely immense on nav. 3. Lots of fun with old and new friends over some epic terrain; bumped into the remnants of Great Lakes Race backmarkers who burnt me off no issue! Descent into Wasdale was dreamy! 4. Best few hours on a fell ever. In the sun with some incredible people, views and chunking the miles down. Yewbarrow was just fine! Great Gable not so much! 5. Getting dark and trotting it in. Almost passed out with 3 mile to go from dehydration (maybe or salts?) so walked it in to seal the deal.



Ad – 1. All memories from this leg have been erased except for that of passing Ross Jenkin heading anti-clockwise on the final leg of his four rounds, the sight of a person looking like the literal walking dead is now etched on my brain. 2. Night time with clear skies over the Helvellyn range is awesome. 3. An absolute beast but a fantastically varied and interesting with a brilliant scree shute descent at the end. 4. The crux, but by far the best. 5. The pressure was off on this one and I did it with my Wife and best mates so really enjoyed it (except for the silly tarmac bit obviously).



R – 1. Calm. 2. Silent. 3 Peaceful 4. Nurtured 5. Loved.

Al – 1. Yay we're off and I feel pretty good. 2. What a beautiful calm night, just don't think about Fairfield. 3. Grump central who cares about sunrise then feeling invincible over the Scafells. 4. Pit of despair Yewbarrow to Kirk Fell. 5. Happy happy happy, yay I'm going to do it.

Did you have a bad patch? How did you deal with it?

B – I felt quite tired on leg 3 and a bit sick on the climbs on leg 4. Not thinking about having to get all the way back to Keswick but rather taking it one leg at a time was helpful. Arriving at the changeover points being greeted by my next bunch of enthusiastic supporters and treated to a brew, some hot food a fresh pair of socks definitely gave me a spring in the step.

S – Most of leg 4 and 5. I just zoned out and did whatever my pacers said. In amongst the incoherent muttering and profanity, I remember repeating in my head 'I'd rather die than not get round this'. It all got a bit primeval.

D – A minor dip on Kirk Fell and feeling it was unfair the clag never ending. I kept on focusing on moving steadily in the right direction.

W – Most of Leg 2 was rough - at the end of the day if you decide you're going to do it you're going to keep going except for injury or safety. No need to make a hoo ha over it, just get on!

Ad – Lots of bad patches but none of them completely terrible. Gable was the mental and physical crux for me. Dealt with them by knowing I had lots of low points in training runs and always came out the other side.

R – Yes. Focus solely on the present moment e.g. "am I ok right now?.....yes. Focus only on right now"

Al – Yewbarrow to Kirk Fell was a downward spiral of feeling dreadful and too hot and I thought I'd blown it but was too 'gone' to make sense of times. I also had a continuing negative thought of "What is wrong with me, the weather is great this time" and feeling like a total failure..... Bianca gave me a cola gel and read me a note from Megan on Kirk Fell which made me give myself a talking to! I asked Bianca if she would go behind me up Gable to push me on. Bianca took this quite literally and put a hand on my back which was unexpected but surprisingly comforting and steadied me up the climb. When I finally made sense of the time on Gable I felt instantly 100 times better and was able to run pretty much all the way to Honister, it's amazing what the mind can do to you

How did you feel at the end?

B – Totally ecstatic and utterly exhausted.

S – As soon as I saw the Moot Hall, everything just zoomed back into focus and I felt perfectly normal, put on a 'sprint' finish, touched the door, savoured the moment in the setting sun, poured a bottle of champagne over my head, hugged everyone, then had a little cry on Keeley's shoulder.

D – Brilliant (and hungry).

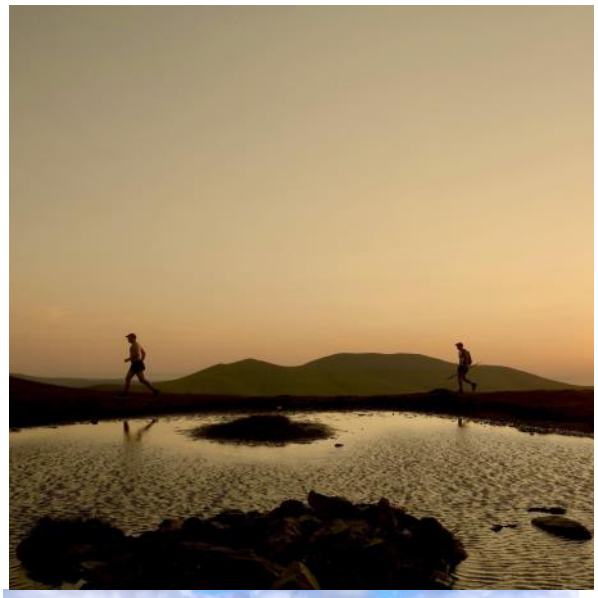
W – Gratitude to all the people who took the time to help and make it possible - completely indebted.

Ad – Massive relief that I'd done it first time round and didn't have to try to organise a new date to have another attempt.

R – Unbelievably loved.

Al – Really chuffed and surrounded by love and friendship - it was a special moment for sure. All the

emotion came out 2 weeks later when Rowan finished I cried with relief we'd both done it. When Bianca finished I just felt so proud of her (she was incredible in mind and body all the way round) and proud of us all for what we'd achieved.



Hypothetically, if you were to do it again, what ONE THING would you do differently?

B – Take less food – we still have spaghetti hoops in the cupboard!

S – Nothing. I wouldn't change a thing, not even the weather. The heat was all just part of it. My pacer/support choice was perfect – the sole reason I have done a BG is because of them.

D – Not carry all those potatoes.

W – I couldn't eat anything solid without nausea from Blencathra, it was only until Scafell Pike I decided on fluids only - which worked a treat for me - things smoothed out and I got stronger. I'd go heavier on liquid calories with some solid at changeovers.



Ad – Use anti-chaffing cream in sensitive areas.

R – Nothing!

Al – Have Marie there as she had been so amazing keeping me going on my first Bob.



Top 3 tips for aspiring contenders?

B – Lots of long, hilly runs (3000m ascent per week) and reccies with a bunch of great friends on both reccies and the big day. I started using poles on the longer training runs – they were a game-changer. But most importantly, don't do it if the weather is bad. Luckily, we live close by and have a fantastic club behind us so last-minute changes ARE possible as I learned the hard way on Friday morning.



S – During training, focus on (i) a massive day out each week; (ii) Pilates; (iii) squats; (iv) protein; eat like a king on every run; choose your mates who you run with

regularly as your pacers – you need to trust them implicitly - they will see you at your very best... and very worst.

D – Having done the training relax, enjoy, and trust your body.

W – Whenever possible, do it with friends and family. It makes a big difference from your own perspective of accountability plus some good chat; It's one foot in front of the other. Many people who give up get overwhelmed by how much more is to go and they probably could have completed otherwise; If you're a good hiker you can probably do it under 24hr. I think being a good hiker is more advantageous than being a fast runner.

Ad – Use anti-chaffing cream in sensitive areas, don't cut corners in training (and have a long taper) so that you can actually enjoy the round and the experience with your mates, if you think/question yourself whether you're going too fast you probably are.

R – Recognise and acknowledge whether the rhythm of your life will enable you to take this on. Train well. Eat well. Sleep well. Choose your support crew well.

Al – Persuade a best friend that they REALLY want to do it too so you can spend hours chatting on long days out; Core/strength training and no racing made the difference on my 2nd round. Don't try and 'fit it in' around other plans; Poles are your friend, don't be snooty about using them.

Any plans to do another round? Winter round? Double round? Solo round? Triple winter solo barefoot round? Other one of the big rounds?

B – Hopefully lots of reccying and supporting other rounds! I can honestly say that doing a BG was the most amazing experience – if you get the chance, do it! It's right up there with our wedding day and the birth of our children. We are part of a supportive club and can draw from a huge wealth experience – there's really no excuse. Get your diaries out and pencil a date in ;-)

S – Not sure – the thought of a last minute, low-key solo or unsupported round is (still) strangely appealing. Then again, I owe my family a lot of time. After all, I've had my turn...

D – I've tried and failed at a mid-winter round...

W – 'll never know but it might be similar to childbirth, you need a bit of time to forget the pain! Too soon!

Ad – No plans. Totally going to rest on my laurels now and continually attempt to steer conversations towards the BG whomever I'm talking to (especially strangers) so hopefully they'll ask if I've ever done it but if not... "Have I ever told you I've done the Bob Graham Round?"

R – Well.... I didn't plan to do this one. Who knows...

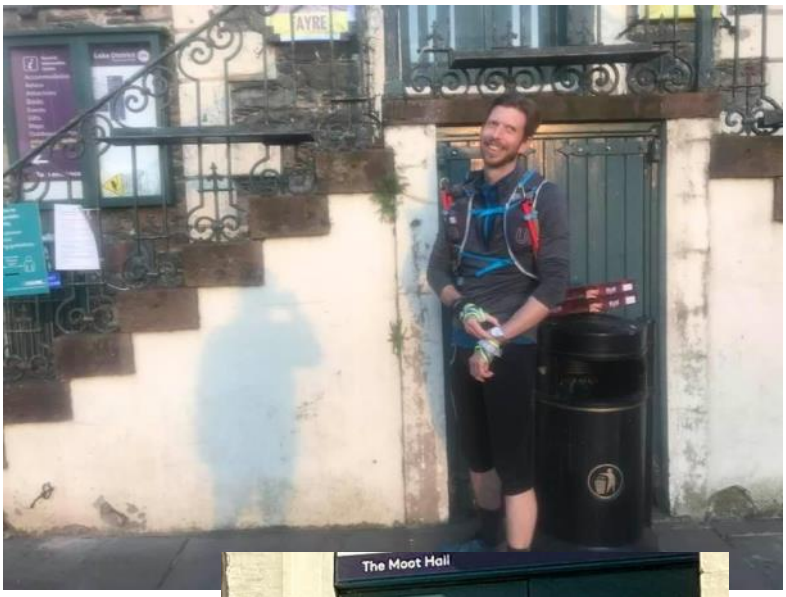
Al – Definitely no time or headspace to train to do any more rounds now I'm back on mum's taxi service and all the football is on again. It was a window of opportunity that I'm not sure I'll have again until I'm retired and then I'm definitely not doing any rounds unless it's over several days and involves luxury BnBs with hot tubs!

PTO FO R FINISH PICS ETC

If you need any advice about doing a Bob Graham, or are looking for support, there are many, many Helm members who will be happy to oblige!

And here's how it ended.....

















A special thanks to The Round (pub opposite the start / finish) who without fail delivered an on-the-house celebratory beer for each finisher (provided you had a load of supporters there to give you a big cheer so they heard!)







And a big shout out to all the people supporting behinds the scenes, on the fell and at road crossings,





The Bob Graham Club holds an annual dinner where certificates of completion are handed out and you get to reminisce with other runners who completed the BG the same day or close to yours.



The Spine v The Bob Graham

Kate and Dan's musings: **The Spine v The Bob Graham. Which is tougher?**

Rick took time out from his busy schedule polishing his van and supporting endless Bob Graham rounds, to interview Kate and Dan about their summer of ultra-running achievements.

Rick – *So this year Kate you did the Spine Challenger and two days later Dan you ran a solo Bob Graham- how do you support each other to take on these big challenges?*

Dan- Well Kate is usually away a lot with work and if she is home she causes chaos so having her in the house all the time during the pandemic meant I was desperate for her to find something very time consuming to do that involved lots of recceing a long way from home so I could have some peace and quiet.
Kate – yes, Dan's too tidy. I can't cope with him constantly putting things away I'm still using, so to get him out so I could make a mess in peace I sent him off to train for a BG.

Rick – *ok so the big question is which is tougher the Bob Graham solo or the Spine challenger?*

Dan: - The Spine is just following a straight footpath – it even has signposts- how hard can it be? And it's not like she did the full thing!
Kate- The Spine Challenger is 50 miles LONGER than the BG – which, as Rob Jebb says, is just for joggers
Dan: Frankly I am not sure what took her so long, I kept going to bed and waking up and she was still bloody out there
Kate: Yours was so short you didn't even have to sleep
Dan: ….at least I didn't have to phone a friend half way through the night for a cry.
Kate: …..- speaking of friends you only ran it solo because you don't have any friends.
Anyway the BG was easy you've done it before (well apart from the two times you tried to do it and didn't make it)
Dan – technically I only actually failed once,– the other time I kicked a cup of tea over and scalded my foot and never even started.

Rick: *Well this is a fascinating discussion. So I understand a big part of ultra-running is the mental side; you have to go deep inside yourself and confront who you truly are and what really matters to you if you are going to achieve these remarkable feats of human endurance- what is it that motivates you in those dark moments when all you want do is give up and go home?*

Dan –the fact Kate had tried and failed three times to run a solo BG was the major driver for me to keep going. Also by doing it 2 days after her Spine Challenger I wanted to steal some of her thunder.
Kate- Part way through the first night I realised if I really slowed down and had a lot of naps I'd get a whole extra night away from Dan.

Rick: *eeerrrr clearly the motivation for both of you is high – so what next?*

Kate: I hear a full winter spine would give me 8 days away from home
Dan : I've just watched a film about ocean rowing and a woman who was at sea alone for 87 days which frankly sounds quite appealing

(Editor's note - Surprisingly Kate and Dan remain married. No children were neglected (much) in training for these challenges.)



Kate finishing the Spine Challenger 100 mile race



Dan finishes his solo BG next to the finishing bin he said goodbye to a day earlier.

Keep Running



Why doesn't it make sense
Too much to think about
Keep running
Keep running
The fog will lift and the mind will clear.
I reach the mountain summit
The wind is there to meet me and
for a few minutes it drowns out the minoutomus noise of distant traffic, replaced by the calming sound of rythmic breathing and the feeling of euphoria.
For a time
I'm no longer part of society
An escapee
A free spirit
Keep running
Keep running

~ Marcia Frith

A love letter to friendship...

I have the greatest friends.

2020 and 2021 was hard, and yet it could have been so much harder.

As an alternative to focusing on the challenges thrown at us, we took the sourest lemons, and made sweet lemonade.

We mixed long runs, with congruent, authentic, wholehearted and raw conversations... we sprinkled new routes and great adventures... we developed new friendships... we blended experience and new approaches... we collaborated... there was no element of competition, no element of anxiety or comparison... there was only an overwhelming sense of nurture, and a desire for the other to succeed and do well- no matter what... We forged an enduring, life long trust.

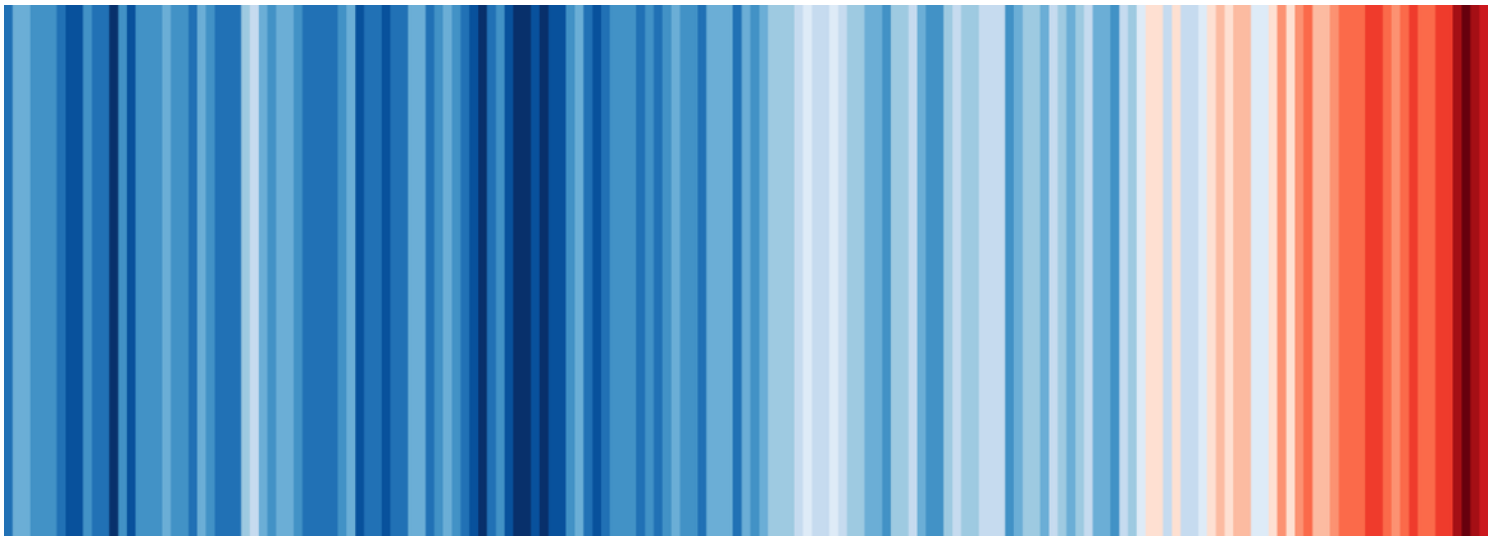
By being driven by our values which are intrinsically motivating, rather than goals which can be obtainable or unobtainable, we achieved so much more.

Thank-you 2020, 2021 and Bob Graham. You would have had no idea you could support and elevate the creation of a beautiful and formidable force, from adversity and struggle x









Navigating the climate crisis—Meg Stuart



No single person, country or system has caused the climate crisis and no person, country or system can solve it alone. It affects everyone, and everyone can do something about it. But not everyone is equally responsible, and not everyone is equally impacted.

To tackle the unequal impacts we need to see climate change as a political, social and cultural issue. We need to look at, and change, the systems, policies and cultural behaviours that contribute to it. And we need to listen and learn from communities around the world who are doing something about it.



The smaller picture

Although for some, especially those in Global South countries, climate change means the difference between life and death, it also impacts our ability to enjoy day to day hobbies and sports. In the local running world alone, we've seen Park Runs cancelled due to flooding, and Mountain Marathons cancelled after extreme rain and wind.

Landscapes we enjoy running in are also changing, both globally as explored in many Kendal Mountain Festival films, and locally. The Lake District is home to birds, plants and rare fish, many of which are under threat from climate change. Increased path erosion due to heavier rainfall could mean owners and caretakers are less likely to allow races across their land.

However, runners stand (run) in

good stead to do something about these global and local impacts, and plenty already are.

How those in the running world are responding

Rosie Watson is a local fell runner, climber, wild swimmer and all-round mountain lover. Rosie set off in 2019 on an incredible majority solo and unsupported run across Europe and Asia to meet people and communities taking action on the climate crisis. Rosie aims to tell a new story of better ways of working, living and meeting our needs in the climate crisis. Find out more at www.newstoryrun.wordpress.com/ and read Rosie's article on the culture change needed in the outdoor world https://adventureuncovered.com/stories/building-a-sustainable-outdoor-community-after-covid-19/

Trees not Tees work with race event organisers to offer runners the option to plant a tree rather than gain a t-shirt for completing a race. They aim to tackle the negative impacts of cotton production and waste resources, while adding native, diverse and carbon storing trees to four UK forests. Find out more at www.treesnottees.com/

Ruben Razetti, a teenager from the North Lakes, ran the 13 mile journey across the fells to his school in Keswick last year to raise awareness of climate change. Watch the short film The School Run at https://vimeo.com/396000774

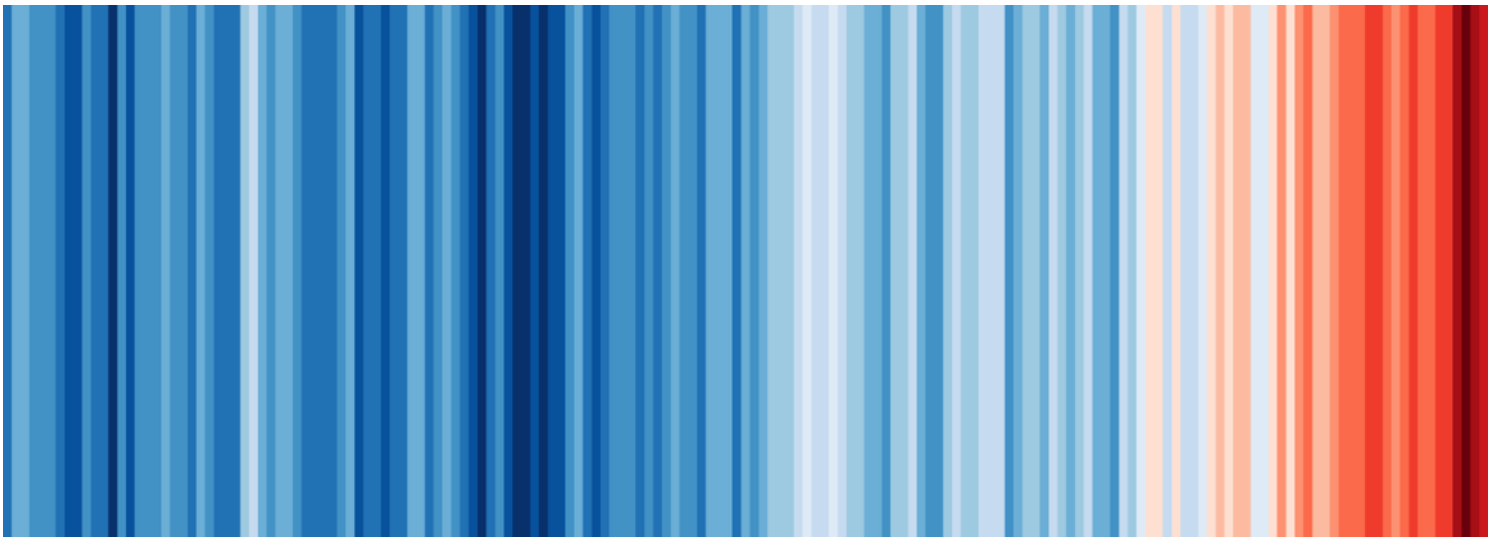
ReRun sells pre-loved running clothes, shoes and equipment via their online shop, as well as campaigning for less waste in running events. ReRun was set up by a Team GB 24hr ultra runner and family. Find out more at www.rerunclothing.org/

Pushpanath Krishnamurthy is an almost 70 year old campaigner who recently (speedily!) walked 400 miles from London to Glasgow for the UN Climate Change Conference to highlight the need for climate justice. Find out more at https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/why-im-walking-to-glasgow-to-call-for-climate-justice/

Athlete Climate Academy, run by Killian Jornet and science communicator Huw James, offer live sessions, podcasts, presentations and films to help athletes talk about and take action on climate change. Find out more at www.anturus.co.uk/athleteclimateacademy

Let us know what you're doing!

We're looking to add a new 'Climate Corner' to the Helm Hill Newsletter. If you or someone you know have done something, little or large, to take action on the climate crisis, let's share it to inspire others! Send to newsletter@helmhill.co.uk with subject 'climate corner'.



MHAIRI HELME TAKES ON JOSS NAYLOR'S LAKES, TARNS AND MERES

Touching the Water

—Mhairi Helme



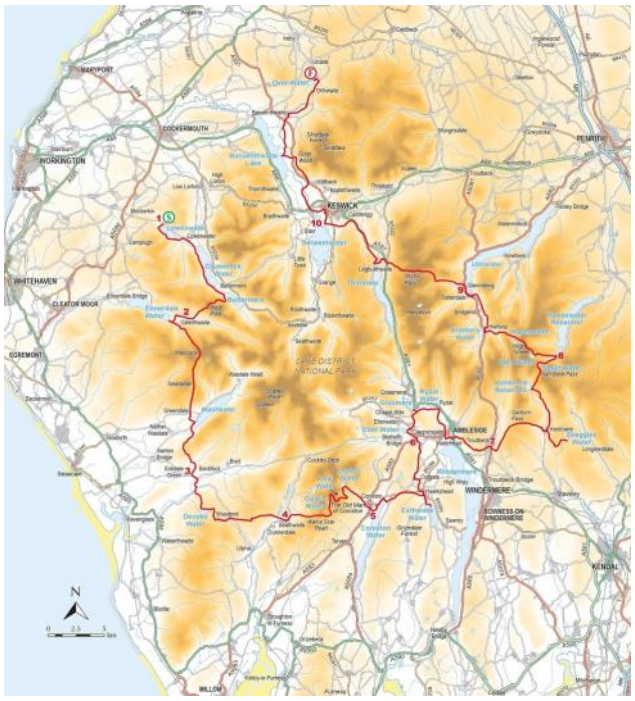
I started pushing my writing and poetry more seriously pretty much twelve months ago. Part of this was developing my social media pages. I'm pleasantly surprised to have gained some three thousand followers over the last twelve months and I'm sure you can imagine my surprise when Joss Naylor first liked one of my posts in May this year. Joss's social media is, in fact undertaken by an amazing gentleman, Pete Todhunter and shortly after the first like, I received a message from him to say he'd enjoyed my work on Instagram and would I like to meet Joss for a walk and a chat?

Of course there is only really one answer to this and it was an absolute delight to meet Pete and Joss for a walk in Grasmere a couple of weeks later. Pete and Joss explained to me about the book that was to be released later in the year about Joss's experience of the Lakes Meres and Waters route, written by Vivienne Crow and suggested the idea of me writing a poem to help promote the book. I said I'd be happy to look at writing a poem, but wondered if a film may be better promotion for them and offered to put them in touch Pete then told me about a beautiful film called "A Shepherds Hand" written by Geoff Cox which was a poetic journey along the Joss Naylor Route. Initially I thought the idea of a poetic fell running film sounded completely naff to be honest, but agreed to give it a watch. A Shepherd's Hand, of course, blew me away completely and I realised as soon as I'd watched it what needed to happen. If I was going to write the poetic script for a run around the route, I needed to do the challenge myself, it always has to come from experience for me when I write. I was a bit reluctant to star in the film myself but as the idea progressed I realised it had to be me that both ran and narrated; critically the main difference I wanted between my film and Geoff's was that I wanted to film it on the day of my actual attempt. I really wanted it to show with brutal honesty how challenging it would be for me.

I did as much training as I could and I am certainly not as fit as I was in my youth (!) but felt as ready as I could be - I'd had about twelve weeks from meeting Joss and Pete to train. Three weeks before the day, I fell tripping over a tiny pebble on Scout Scar and banged the bone on the side of my knee. A large hard lump developed right where my ITB ran over and when I tried to run more than about 4 miles, I ended up in excruciating pain. I stopped running completely for 2 weeks hoping that it would go away feeling very stressed as a lot was riding on me getting round the route to make the film. We had an amazing film maker, a friend through children, Hannah Maia, lined up to film, Joss and Pete had scheduled the time in to support me and several other people who I find really inspiring such as Fi Marley Patterson, Selwyn Wright, Lucy Spain, Jenny Rice, Sarah McCrmack, Lauren Munroe Bennett, Paul Simpson and Sabrina Verjay lined up to pace. John's amazing Mum was pacing and also help with the children, I just felt that I couldn't let them all down. I chose to believe it would all be ok and reminded myself all I needed to do was get round the route to write the poem, I had to let go

of aspiring to any specific time.

I heard that John Kelly abandoned his Wainwrights attempt a couple of days before my LMW attempt because of the heat, but tried to be calm. The forecast was incredibly hot for the two days I had but I was travelling between water bodies so hoped I could cool off in each one as I went. When it came to it, my knee became incredibly painful running after about 4 miles - all that resting for nothing! But I realised that I could still walk pretty quickly (I can walk at about 4-5 mph) and though the ups and down's were excruciating, LMW route has a lot of flat in between the hills that allowed me to rest from the pain - my knee didn't hurt the flat. I was gutted nt to be able to run, but wheat the whole thing was about was doing the route to write the poem, this was my first 100miler and all I needed to do was finish. There is not time limit for LMW, it just has to be completed in one continuous effort.



Joss Naylor's Lakes, Tarns & Meres route.
Image Cicerone press

So I took it steady, ate drank and just kept going. My pacers moved me to more than I ever thought was possible, I just felt electrified by the presence of so many people I look up to in the outdoors and also really enjoy the company of! My knee really was pretty awful, the bottom of my feet sloughed off, I drank to much and got hyponatraemia (but managed not to vomit on Joss, I waited until we were driving home for that!!) but I knew I could keep going. I had the whole route in my head from recceing and just knowing the Lakes so well from other adventures and I actually never doubted that Id finish until the last leg from Bassenthwaite to Overwater which is where the hyponatraemia really got me and I really wasn't very well. Note to everyone running in the heat to research the symptoms of overhydration!! Ultimately I have come to believe that hurting my knee so that I had to walk may have been a critical factor in me actually being able to complete the route. I think if I'd run then it may have been a lot more serious that I'd drunk too much and not taken in enough electrolyte.

Touching the water with Joss truly was utterly amazing. I know that many many people do amazing things in the outdoors now, but this was my first 100, I've done quite a bit of shorter ultra running but always knew it would be hard for me going longer than say 60miles. I've found it super hard juggling family and work to make time to train and actually do the event. I also personally miss my kids so very badly when I do these longer events as I'm away quite a lot for work, so it was all just a really big effort not just for me but for our family. But John and the kids were amazing and really I feel that I survived on the energy everyone gave me on the day. I just feel super lucky to have had this experience, the chance to work with Joss and to write the words. I was so, so worried I could never do such a great man justice, but I also know not to let fear stop us from doing something we love so I just did my very best to write from the heart, to capture the route and to try and take the audience with me on the experience and Hannah Maia the film maker did the rest. I definitely feel that most of the skill in a film comes from the film maker and not the subject matter. Hannah exemplified alot of what the film was about too, she filmed and made the film with little Otis, her six month old son, in tow. What a woman!

Thanks also to Carrie and Jo for helping with the night shots! And I also want to give a special

thanks in general to Sharon as team captain and all of the (especially ladies) team/runners for making me feel so welcome in the club and being so inclusive. I really do think Helm Hill should be incredibly proud that despite being really, such a massive club, it maintains such a friendly and welcoming feel to all new members. And finally just a note of how lucky I was to be able to present the film alongside Joss at Kendal Mountain Festival, such a very special experience and we are so lucky to have such a special festival here. It really is a highlight of our family year!

The poem is below and will be the first poem in a pamphlet I'm writing to publish about the LMW. The rest of the poems are about my experiences swimming the length of all of the LMW and reflecting on different aspects of the Lake District (and life!). I've made a good start this year having swum Coniston, Windermere (thanks Jo!), Bassenthwaite, Derwent and Grasemere.

Intro

Joss Naylor; fellrunner, shepherd, pensioner, MBE completed the 100 mile Lakes, Meres and Waters challenge in the English Lake District in June 1983 in a record time of 19 hours and 14 minutes.

He even managed a short nap and a bath on route! His record remains untouched today, 6 hours and 2 minutes faster than anyone else.

Joss is one of my all time heroes and a huge source of inspiration.

Loweswater; calm, early touched gold
first light greets the sky
Geese honk on Crummock side
Every sound; magnified
Feet. Breath. Gate

Dread rises on Buttermere shore
By top of Red Pike; heart sunk disbelief;
my knee is not to last.
I cannot run, how can I have failed already?
Then I remember a shepherd's tale
of suffering at shearing time;
I have a job to do...

I fix my gaze ahead
turn my eyes out from pain.
Like life, sometimes, things must change;
I can still walk.

Past heavy cotton candy fists;
up Haycock's rocky shoulder;
last glance back to Ennerdale
down Greendale's sleeping boulders.

A tiny climb to Eskdale
grows massive in the heat.
By the road to Devoke,
snakes bite in my feet.

But a working mother meets us,
I'm humbled by her care
and I know tomorrow
at the finish, we'll both be there.

A mile of warmth and humour,
with a shepherd, a poet and me.
A memory I'll treasure
Before things, again, get steep.

Then the heat awakens;
it beats and burns our skin.
There's little shade to shelter;
I find my pace and settle in.

Goats, Lowe and Levers
Then the pain of down once more.
Coppermines is burnt gold grace

where once they mined for ore.

Then, pause.
I'm a mother again; eyes quiet teared.
Soft skin; bare grubby feet;
small hands grab as much of me as they can,
and pride is held in little eyes.
Already they understand.

I linger longer than I should, there wells a sense of loss,
and though my heart is pulled, I'm driven on, to touch the water with Joss.

Through lands of a great lady,
who left us special gifts
A picture perfect village
That smells of beer and chips!

Light is gone at Elterwater;
like a girls night out to Waterhead.
Giggles on Garburn pass.
Skeggles sky is bloodshot red.

Kendal's reservoir is licked
by tongues of sentry giants
as we sweat Nan Bield, hands on thighs,
starred sphagnum springs footsteps quiet.

And I dream I can lie in that cool soft moss
But I don't so I might touch the water with Joss.

It's a night of knives and daggers;
stabbing my feet, knee and heart.
But the burning is softened by stars and my wonder.
It's friendship that pulls me through the dark.

Mardale; first light; ghost village farms;
now Manchester's water forever;
up past Golden eagles and deer,
through wildflowers and smokey heather.

Bleaswater mists are still; hung peace.
Rugged Riggendale is wincing descent.
No escape on rough bogged ground
from pain that doesn't relent.

Shaded paths give respite,
as sheep watch in lazy morning dew.
I touch Brother's and Ullswater
and set my eyes ahead, hope renewed.

Sticks Pass, nature's wild has reclaimed
from Glenridding's industrial mines.
The weather blesses me some relief
as clouds gather on the last climb

And I'm down on my knees in a deep riven trough
But still, I long to Touch the Water with Joss

Busy fumed road shock
to Keswick and Derwent's shore.
At Bassenthwaite a light in my heart sings
Keep going, only one more!

But there's a sting in the tail to Overwater
Through heat that has never rested
This final stretch, my body gives up;
here I am truly tested.

But friends join, a strong hand to hold;
on the road, a figure waits
and I know I'm blessed to walk last steps
with Joss Naylor by my side to pace.

This beautiful land I have hauled me across
And now it's my time to touch the water with Joss.

The South Mynd Tour, a confession and an apology—

James Leigh Baron



I planned to follow the English Champs races this year and made a bit of an effort to have a look at the race routes local to us. Of the two races out of our area I didn't think navigation would be an issue at Alderman's Ascent; it may have been a marked route but I never actually noticed if it was flagged, funny how blinkered you (I) can be in a race. The problem at Alderman's was the stifling heat and Craig tearing off leaving me for dead! The race at South Mynd did look like it would require navigation skills, the organiser had given a couple of route choices and it was an area I was totally unfamiliar with; I needed a plan.

At the Sedbergh Hills race the seeds were sown for my plan for navigational excellence. After a nice steady start I was going up the initial climb onto Arant Haw and caught Darren Fishwick; a short conversation followed: '' who's ahead of us in our age group'' ''John Hunt'' ''can I beat him'' ''no he's a big mileage man'' ''he might get lost'' ''he won't''. I think I suffer from a form of oppositional defiant disorder as having been told I couldn't beat John I though perhaps I could so caught and passed him; Darren was right, he didn't get lost and he did beat me. My post-race assessment was that John was a good reliable runner and excellent at navigation but he did have a chink in his armour- he was not that quick downhill. The plan for South Mynd was simple all I had to do was keep John in my sights by playing catch up on the downhill and trust to John's superior nav skills. I had a test run of the plan at the Black Combe Dash, it worked and I finished three seconds behind John.

On the day of South Mynd the weather was excellent with good clear visibility and as is customary with me I had a nice steady start and could see John not too far ahead. After a couple of miles I passed Sharon Taylor on one of the downhill sections; I didn't really want to pass her as she usually keeps a good pace but I was sticking to the plan and had to make sure I caught John on the descent. Sharon repassed me on the next climb and I concentrated on my pace and keeping John in sight. Everything was going well, it was good running through woods, over open moorland on good paths and then we got to a check point on top of a hill. I dibbed the dibber looked up and all I could see was Sharon heading off down the hill alone! The others had disappeared; it was like some kind of Paul Daniels trick.

At moments like this I feel it's some kind of divine retribution for an act of childhood cruelty. When we moved from primary to secondary modern boy's school there was one boy that probably should have been at the Grammar School; unfortunately for him one of his parents was a teacher at our school, so here he was. At primary school he had not really bothered with us as we lived on the estate over the railway line and were the kids the parents on his new estate had warned their kids to stay away from. Now in secondary school we thought his motive for friendship was driven by the idea that by hanging out with us he was less likely to get a kicking if the other reprobates found out his parentage. I have to confess that at lunch time we would quickly scoff our food and hide at the top of the school building and watch the poor kid desperately searching round the yard looking for us. That was how I now felt alone on a hill desperately looking for safe people! I feel especially bad about how we treated him as it turned out he was a pretty decent kid and we did become genuine friends.

Pretty soon some other runners appeared and Sharon back tracked. I started to get my homemade race map out; to be honest I had absolutely no idea where we were as I was not even taking note of which check points we had visited. Luckily Sharon must have spotted runners on the track down be-

low and off we went again; the plan had slightly unravelled.

All was not lost, on to the next check point and my next mistake. I'm not sure how I managed it but the lanyard on my dibber got wrapped round the SI box! Other runners kept dibbing the box as I faffed about trying to get the lanyard free. Once I had got going again the group I was with had gone but at least I could now see a few people ahead. The next climb was one of those low points where you drop your head and can easily go into a sulking death march. At the top of the hill there was a check point and I could see a Horwich RMI (Railway Mechanics Institute) runner from earlier in the day; this lifted me and I started back in pursuit mode.

We ran down a good path past the glider club (about the only feature I could remember from my hasty look at the map on the organiser's web site), over a road and here was Sharon asking for directions on an open fell with a choice of paths. I got my map out, at this point I realised you would have needed a pair of glasses with lenses like jam jar bottoms to have sufficient magnification to see the compact map I had printed. Luckily a local Mercia runner passed us and confirmed the route.

There were no further mishaps and soon the race was completed. After the race I never got chance to apologise to Sharon; in her hour of navigational need I was about as much use as a one legged man in an a**e kicking competition. Sorry Sharon.

What have I learned from this, wrap your lanyard firmly round your hand and under no circumstances whatsoever lose sight of John!

Regards JLB



HELM PROFILES—LEE PROCTOR



Pic: granddayoutphotograpgy.co.uk

When & why I joined Helm?

1990, I'm a Procter, I didn't get a choice! All seems a VERY long time ago. Amazing to think the club is now 31 years old, wish I was!

Greatest achievement so far?

Ermmmmm, Sedbergh Gala under-12s winner, Bob Graham Round hobble, beating Adam Perry once, being the third best fell runner in my family. Got to be the Sedbergh Gala win, definitely.

Favourite races?

Anything that involves a good walk! Big fan of races incorporated into traditional Lakeland shows.

Typical training week?

Depends what the latest injury says! When my body's not having a tantrum, I try for 3 to 4 runs a week, sticking to the fells as much as possible. Very rarely do I dare run 2 days in a row!

Embarrassing moments?

Running a good mile past the checkpoint having forgotten to dib at the British relays in Wales (sorry, Paul A). Cramping in both hamstrings at the same time upon crossing the finish line at Langdale Horseshoe, much to the amusement of everyone else. Breaking the record for the number of toilet stops on Leg 3 of the BG.

Future goals & ambitions?

Would love to do a Frog Graham, get back to racing (& training sessions!) a bit more, and tick off the remaining Lakeland Classics still on my list. Honestly though, probably just hold off the injuries long enough so my son can see me race and (hopefully) be proud.

People I admire at the club?

Buzzer (Craig Burrow) for winning the Kirkby Stephen Sports three-legged race with Amanda and Paul Reily for his MBE. Joking aside, I admire all those that have put so much into the club over years and continue to wear the vest with pride.

Tips for younger runners?

Enjoy running - and generally just playing - outdoors. Don't worry about things like mobile phones, there's plenty of time for those when you're older.

HELM PROFILES—RUTH NELSON



When and why I joined Helm?

I joined Helm in 2002 after meeting Yvonne at an exercise class I had started attending, trying to get back into shape and fitness after the birth of my son. She invited me to join the Monday social runs. It was a small friendly group, and I soon became a regular getting to know the local tracks and trail

Greatest Achievement so far?

Every time I put on a pair of running shoes, I feel it is an achievement at the moment, but in my younger days I am proud of the long-distance events and races I participated in without really realising their significance, such as my Bob Graham, The Scottish Isles Race, the Three Peaks, Old County Tops, 2-day Karrimor and Saunders Mountain Marathons etc. At the time I didn't really realise how fit one had to be, to even contemplate entering such events!

Favourite Races?

Any race which I chose to run more than once I deem to be a favourite. It would probably be those with the most outstanding views as the buzz for me is getting to the top and seeing something! I realise that my racing days are over, but I enjoy watching others taking part and the camaraderie it brings.

Typical Training week. (Despite, the fact I don't race but have to keep fit!)

Monday - Night Social Run
Tuesday - Social walk
Wednesday - Green Group
Thursday - Social Walk & Pilates
Friday -Spin Class
Saturday - Fitball
Sunday - Longer Social Run

Embarrassing Moments?

Such events I choose to forget unless reminded!

Future goals and ambitions

To avoid disappoint I prefer to live for the moment but hope to continue to enjoy my time in the hills

People I admire at the Club

Billy has to be my hero because he continues to run races despite all his aches and pains. If only I was so strong minded.

Tips for younger runners

Learn to navigate.

FORWARD LOOK 2022





JANUARY—APRIL 2022 It's happening!

Dates and venues to be announced soon on web-



The KWL 2022—by Series Organiser John Bagge

I'm starting to look forward to the Winter League series of races for more reasons than usual this year.

Firstly planning is well under way for another fantastic series of races. There are likely to be a couple of changes to race dates and possibly race venues which we are still finalising as this involves contacting land owners for permission each year. We can definitely tell you that the Giggleswick race, usually the second race of the series will be on Sunday 16 th January and that the Arant Haw presentation (of chocolate, trophies and prizes) race at Sedbergh People's Hall, will be on Sunday 3 rd April. News of all other races will be on the club website or Facebook page as soon as they have been confirmed.

Secondly I've moved up an age group and will now be racing with a very competitive V60 category. With two of the best male fell running V60's in the country as helm Hill members (Billy Procter and David Griffin) I'm going to have to put in some serious hard work not to be looking at their backs at every race.

Thirdly the Winter League is really important for introducing juniors to fell running and it's great that Helm Hill make such a big contribution to this. The Winter League is the start of many juniors fell running careers both from Helm Hill and other clubs. You can't get more grass routes than local races for juniors. Helping out at a race is one of the ways that senior club members can support juniors in the club. If you would like to help at a race please turn up at a race early and speak to the race organiser who will be very pleased to see you.

I'm really pleased that we've got quite a number of new race organiser assistants and offers to help with race results and registration. There's a lot of organisation behind any fell race but a twelve

race series such as the Winter League requires people to co-ordinate it, individual race



organisers who are prepared to take on the responsibility, people to help with registration, results and marshalling. It's a brilliant testament to the club that we have the capacity to put on such a great series of races

Fourthly I am really grateful that Richard and Jo Cater are helping me with behind the scenes planning and co-ordinaton of the series as it's much easier to share the workload and to have fresh ideas.

Registering for the Winter League will be available on line before Christmas and payment for races will be on the day with cash. We may trial the use of a card reader for payment but this has not yet been finalised.



I'm looking forward to the race routes, the pre-race buzz, the mud, the familiar smiling faces, the friendship, the after race shower and being part of a great club The Mighty Helm Hill.



Whether you're a seasoned fell racer or compete beginner, the KWL series of races have something for everyone with short races ranging from fast & furious gnarly xc to full-on steep fells.

Want to try racing? These friendly races are a great way to start racing with support from friends in the club.

Want to experiment with racing? A great opportunity to try out different approaches ahead of the main season. Is it best to go off fast and give it everything (they're short races after all!) and see how far you can hang on and hope to surprise yourself by keeping going when you thought you couldn't? Or set off comfortably, then speed up and pass clubmates, who have gone off like lunatics and are now paying the price, with a smug grin and fast finish ...only to then wonder in the finish funnel if you left it too late and could have gone faster?! See what works best for you.

The (Continuing) Great Carnethy Battles: Bring on 2022! (and bring yer thermals)



FEBRUARY 2022: The Carnethy Five Hill Race, held in the Pentland hills just south of Edinburgh, always attracts a top class field tackling a gruelling 10km course that involves 760m of ascent over five heather-clad summits, in February when the weather is usually arctic. Bagpipes, a pistol, snow, wind, school dinners, the chance to win swords ⚔ and best of all a night on the pop in K town afterwards make it a must do!!

The race perhaps acts as a mirror of the clubs development and ascendency from the early days when a car-full of short-race specialist guys made the annual trip, to a minibus load of men & women with the mens team mixing it with the best and in good years winning, to 2 whole minibus loads and the womens team becoming a dominating force.



Dave Appleyard's account of the wild and windy 2020 race:



'It is difficult to explain the appeal of this event at times, after all it's a long drive for a short race and the weather is usually grim. However as an early season measure, the coolest prize in fell running, and the now long tradition the club has of making the trip, means the day never disappoints. 2020 was no different with storm Dennis gathering strength throughout the day, the knowledge that it would probably go ahead (after all 2016 was a blizzard), all adding to the apprehension and excitement. After the initial climb to Scald Law we were in the full blast of the storm making our way to the turn at West Kip and at times it seemed faster progress could be made on all fours. The ladies of course were defending their title and with an amazing run Hannah came home first, Sharon second and Kelli fourth. The men managed second team with Rob 8th Mike A 10th, Adam P, and Josh J. Rob was 2nd v40, Sharon 1st v40 and Bianca 3rd v40. Results. Thanks to CarnethyHRC and their marshals whose ability to stand upright is remarkable.'



Helm Hill were instrumental in pushing for a Womens trophy to match the means and in 2017 to their lasting credit, Carnethy commissioned one. 2019 Helm women won the women's team trophy and returned it to the place of it's inception. In 2020 Helm women laid further claim to it by winning it again!! 2021 race was cancelled so....2022 Raaaaggggghhh!!!







British Fell Running Championships



Date	Category	Race
09-04-22	AL	Seven Sevens, Northern Ireland
18-06-22	AS	Buckden Pike, Joint English/British counter
02-07-22	AM	Druisdeer, Scotland
17-09-22	AL	Black Mountains Race, Wales

Always a belter of a weekend at this race. We'll be arranging a minibus and group accom. Any volunteers to coordinate talk to Adam or Michael. Get training straight away—it's a monster!!



ENGLISH FRA CHAMPS 2022

FAQs here https://www.fellrunner.org.uk/FAQ-about-the-championships.php

30 April - Guisborough Three Tops - AM

21 May - Lower Borrowdale Skyline - AM

18th June - Buckden Pike - AS

23 July - Old Crown Round - AL

13 Aug - Bradwell -AS

8 Oct - Langdale Horseshoe - AL

See https://www.fellrunner.org.uk/championships.php



Coming in the next edition.....



HHR Lifestyle Supplement

Many thanks for all the contributions. Keep them coming for the next one

Send to: newsletter@helmhill.co.uk