HELM HILL RUNNERS NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014



CHAIRMAN'S BIT—TIM MURRAY



As another year draws to a close and it is time to celebrate another year of progress for the Club with the Presentation night .

There lots of different ways to judge the how Helm Hill is doing. It would be easy just measure our success by the number of races, competitions or trophies we have won. However, as a Committee we spend a lot of time talking about getting the fundamentals right..and we if we do this then hopefully the results will follow. These fundamentals include:

- Communication - making sure that we keep members informed through things like the website, Newsletter, AGM, committee meetings, Billy's announcements on a Wednesday etc
- Keeping track of our members and understanding why people join and seeing if we can learn anything from them if they leave.
- Looking at ways to develop our Coaches and encouraging more members to take coaching qualifications
- Providing support for our athletes in every way we can and encouraging juniors and seniors to represent the Club in races
- Encouraging members to get involved by helping out at races/events or attending Committee meetings
- Making sure that we create a safe supportive environment for our juniors to enjoy the sport.
- Keep looking at the ways in which other Clubs do things to see if there is anything we can do to improve.
- Having fun!!

We think that if we get these fundamentals right then we stand a better chance of being successful as a Club. If there are things which you think we can do better then let us know!

It was brilliant to be at the FRA Presentations in Telford last week. For the first time the Club had it's own table at the event and it was brilliant to see the Seniors pick up so many Gold and Silver medals. We were all very proud to be there..and it was great to see the seniors emulate some of the success which the Juniors had this year!!

2015 promises to be another exciting year, especially as we will celebrate our 25th Anniversary.....let's hope we can build on the success we had in 2014. Come on Helm!!

Happy Running, Tim

CLUB NEWS

2014 has proved to be Helm Hill's most successful year ever!

We can't start without mentioning the stand-out performance of Tom Addison becoming the English Senior Champion —a first for Tom and the club!

You can read all about Tom's achievement in many of the following pages. But the success wasn't limited to Tom! Numerous other juniors and seniors won national level championship medals and represented Cumbria, England and GB. And it doesn't stop there! HelmHill juniors and senior teams also picked up national medals. The club championships were more popular then ever and members were active in a wide variety of races at distances from 1 to 100miles.

Thanks for all the contributions to another bumper newsletter—Rick and Ali (newsletter eds)

KWL sponsorship deal! Local runner Robert Crawford's company is sponsoring this years Kendal Winter League. More on page 40

DIFFERENT STROKES
PAINTING & DECORATING

Club Shop

Dave Roelants has generously offered to take on running a club shop for second hand kit. If you have a pair of fell shoes or a vest that has been out grown (it happens!) pass on to Dave so he can build his stock and then if you need to upgrade to a bigger size hopefully he can sort you out with a decent second hand piece of kit.

A great way of recycling & keeping costs down.

LADIES CAPTAIN'S BIT—ALI RICHARDS



As well as being a momentous and exciting 2014 for Helm Hill overall, it has also been a record year for the Ladies. One of the highlights of my running life has got to be going to the FRA do and collecting our ladies team silver medals - thanks to all the ladies that made this happen, not just the medal winners but everyone else who also turned out to a championship race - it really was our strength in numbers and consistent performances that led to our success. Special thanks of course to Sharon and Lauren Munro-Bennett for their super speedy performances and turning out to the races. We were all cheering you on in spirit albeit out of breath and somewhere a lot further down the field!

In other events and races we had another consistent performance in the Ian Hodgson and FRA relays and it would be great to try and improve in these in 2015. Well done to Carrie for winning the club championships in her first year of racing for the club.

Next year I would really like to have another go at the English Champs and it would be FANTASTIC if we could get ladies teams out to the British races too - the ones in Scotland and Wales are really not too far away and we only need to get 3 ladies who are able/keen to go to Ireland in August to be able to complete the championships. With such strength in numbers in the club, I hope that we will be able to get a team to all the races without too much cajoling and persuasion! Please put the dates in your diaries and let me know which ones you are interested in doing. As well as a great senior ladies team, next year we will also have at least 10 vet40 ladies who regularly race (myself and Amanda included from January!) and this is another incentive for us to get out to the races and to aim for a medal.

Please don't ever think that you are not needed for the team - high numbers at each race is one of the key things that determined our success - getting in front of other clubs' runners and also providing that great team spirit.

Something else I am really keen to do next year is the Ben Nevis race in September. I have never done it and want to pick something new to do for my 40th year. My inspirational fellrunning friend Mandy Goth who runs for my old club (Tod Harriers) and was the person who originally got me into fellrunning, will (all being well) become the first lady to complete 21 Ben Nevis races for which you receive a special award so it should be a really good event and party afterwards. It would be great to have some Helm ladies there so let me know if you are interested and be warned the entries come out very soon in January and fill up fast!

I know that I am always keen to get people out to races but I do appreciate that with busy lives it is not always possible, that some people have other events they want to focus on and some people just don't like competing! It is still great to have you at training and I always say that is one of the best things about Helm that we welcome all runners to our club.

I was so touched and honoured to receive the Helm Hill Senior Female Athlete of the year. As many of you know, it has not been the easiest year for me in many ways, but the support from all my friends at the club has been amazing and running has been such a positive focus for me that I get so much out of, as well as feeling part of a fantastic team. The job of ladies captain never feels like a job when you have such great people to try and lead…..or keep up with in the case of racing!

Good luck with the winter training and hope to see lots of ladies at the winter league races - come and have a go if you've not raced before, and if you regularly race already it's the best way to get fit for the first English champs race on 7th March.

Thanks for a great year and here's to another fab year of racing, running and socialising in 2015 - watch this space for exciting 25th Helm Hill anniversary plans!

Ali



MENS CAPTAIN'S BIT—BEN PROCTOR



With the end of a long, eventful and successful season upon us, I am sure everyone is like me and planning just how we can get more miles and climbs in the legs before the 2015 season begins. Before we look back at my 'quick' highlights of 2014, I would love to share a few of my thoughts and plans for the male seniors in 2015.

Foreign travel: ok so maybe not warm weather training as a club (yet!) but with a long British championship race (seven sevens) in Ireland and a long English Championship race (Bradda Niarbyl) on the Isle of Man it would be great to prove all those who say 'helm don't travel well' so very wrong.

Carnethy: 2 mini busses? Entries open soon after Christmas.

English, British, (the world!):
In 2014 I asked all seniors to get on board with our aim of conquering the English Championships, and boy you got on board by the bus load! In 2015 it would only be right for us to not only attack the English Championships (again) but to also stamp our authority on the British Championships. This is not many more races to fit in, but would involve us hiring that fun bus for a few away days!

Dodge the dead cows at Whitestones!
Although there has been talk that Whitestones deserves to make it onto the English championship calendar in 2016, until then it will continue to be an integral part of the Helm Hill Runners winter league series. This series is one of the things that makes our club unique and it is a great opportunity for all seniors (new or old to racing) to get a good, tough training run/race in some of the best places the Lake District, south Cumbria & Gigglesswick has to offer. It would be fantastic to get as many new club members putting on the green vest as possible for the series, but just be prepared for how much improvement will be made throughout the winter!

Can we beat 31?:
Can we beat the entry of Helm seniors that was seen at Kentmere? I am not 100% sure this is achievable but out of respect for the Kentmere showing, I feel we would need to beat this figure at another important race to the club (especially on our 25th anniversary) - possibly the BOFRA Helm Hill race - where it all started!

The Helm Hill silver anniversary: The anniversary committee has been planning away for many months creating special events for members past and present to take part in. Picture parties, running, bbq's, camping and as ever a beer or 2! Exciting times!

Senior social events: For me this has been the best thing about becoming men's captain, providing our senior members with the opportunity to meet, chat, laugh and run with other members, whether English champion or brand new member. All are encouraged (expected) to attend! Early plans include 'more random orienteering', Tebay - Howgills - Tebay duathlon, and the HHR Weatherspoons loyalty 10% discount night!!!

And finally
Relays: Enough said!!!!

'Brief' Highlights of 2014 - the year Helm Hill didn't just put themselves on the map, but made the map! (reference to Dave Appleyard's handy work with the winter league mugs).

- End of championship season - FRA presentation fun! Hodder Valley with a special mention to 'soon to be' honorary member Morgan Donnelly!

- The Relays - Dramas at both the Ian Hodgson and FRA relays; fantastic runs from - Paul Aitkin, Lee Procter & Shane Ohly - debuts from up and coming juniors Matthew Senior and Chris Richards. The selection process, wow!

- Brave souls for 1st club champs race - Nine Standards with the rain, hail and high winds - what a race.

- Carnethy trip - No claymore this time but great numbers and the fun bus really did live up to its name.

- Adam Perry's challenge - unbelievable effort, keep up if you can, big support for next year's attempt

- Rick's Joss Naylor challenge - Fantastic achievement- did we ever doubt our man of the fells!

- The number of runners at both Kentmere Horseshoe and the Castle orienteering

- V50 English champions - well deserved

- Ultra Trail Mt Blanc - Lee and Paul - great achievement, we could all feel the pain with them both whilst tracking the race on the internet.

- Lee Procter's form during the season - very well deserved most improved & with it all recorded on twitter

Kieran's winning streak - our senior male athlete of the year in his 1st season at the club

Thanks for a great year.
Ben

JUNIOR COORDINATOR UPDATE

Helm Hill juniors have had another fantastic year! Have a read all about the success of winning the English Junior Team Championships and the English Uphill Team Championships in the Summer Newsletter.

Due to other commitments with the Junior FRA and International Junior Selection Committee, Duncan has decided to step down from his role. The club would like to express their gratitude to Duncan for the amazing job he has done over the last few years in bringing the junior section to where it is today.

Our new Junior Co-Ordinator is Lorna Askew and the club would like to say a big thank you to Lorna for being willing to take this on. Lorna brings with her a wealth of coaching experience and has many ideas for further developing the junior coaching at the club. Watch this space for details in the next newsletter! Behind the scenes, Lorna will be ably assisted by Helen Samson who has kindly agreed to continue to manage the junior waiting list (this job is bigger than it sounds and involves many phonecalls to parents) and also has volunteered to organise the club junior championship next year. Helen is promising a larger number of races to choose from, with the same races for each age category and it is looking like it will include some winter league races so again keep an eye on the website for when the list of races comes out and get them in your diaries!

The club is always keen to have willing parent volunteers to assist with groups and if any parent is interested in leading a group, there is usually funding available to attend the necessary course—let Lorna or Tim know if you are interested.

Finally we would like to congratulate all our juniors for another great year and good luck for 2015—keep training racing and having fun! And don't forget to ask Santa for some fell shoes.





HELM HILL AT THE FRA AWARDS













Helm Hill Runners picked up lots of awards at the Fell Runners Association Annual Presentation. Read on for more stories on this.



HELM HILL CLUB RACING COLOURS

And now they are here...the embroidered Helm Hill full and half racing colours. To earn yours this year, simply keep a record on the record sheet (see website racing pages) of any race you do representing the club, get your coach to sign it when you have reached either 12 or 24 races, and one will be yours.



Quite a number of juniors have achieved their colours already this year, well done to them for getting the races in and we'd encourage every junior to make a goal and have a go at getting a badge.

And finally some seniors, get their colours! >>>>



2014 Club Colours 12 Races – Half 24 races – Full

HALF colours:
Jacob Aubrey, Josh Roelants, Ollie Sanders, Rowan Baker, Maddie Sanders, Emelia Stevens, Matthew Wright, Lottie Beardwood, Ella Beardwood, Mollie Bratt, Clara Samson, Elliott Wren, Joe Clayton, Vaughan Samson, Mia Walsh, Maddie Walsh, Joe Connor, Mia Senior

FULL colours:
Alice Slattery, Jacob Aubrey,
Rowan Baker, Josh Roelants
Chris Schofield, Kieran Hodgson,
Karl Mason, Lee Procter



Lee Proctor & Karl Mason get their badges



2014 FRA ENGLISH CHAMPS MEDAL HAUL:



Tom Addison is the 2014 FRA Senior English Champion!

A previous multiple English Junior & U23 national champion, Tom has moved up through the ranks and secured the senior title after a fantastic season of close racing culminating in a nail-biting conclusion.

With 6 races varying in distance from 4 miles to 24 miles spread out through the season and across the high land of England this really is a test of stamina and dedication.

Read all about Tom's exploits in the following pages.

Well done Tom!! Everyone at Helm Hill is proud of you.

2014 FRA

ENGLISH U16

Chris Richards 1st

Matty Senior 2nd



Helm Hill's star juniors dominated the U16 championship with fantastic performances from Chris & Matthew who came first & second!

Imogen Burrow also had a great series and picked up a silver medal for coming second in the U14s, a fantastic result.



2014 FRA

ENGLISH U14

Imogen Burrow

2nd



2014 FRA

ENGLISH V55

CHAMPION:

Billy Proctor



Billy had some storming performances this year and becomes the English V55 champion. Not only that he was also 4th V50!

2014 FRA ENGLISH CHAMPS MEDAL HAUL:



2014 FRA ENGLISH V50 Rick Stuart 3rd

3rd

Sticking at it pays dividends! A 3rd place overall came from mostly 5th & 6th placings!

2014 FRA ENGLISH LADIES TEAM 2nd



2nd

2nd place in the English Team champs for the ladies!!!!
Managing to get a team out to every race proved to be the key to winning a silver medal. A record 9 ladies ran at Kentmere so Helm actually had two teams that gained points. Winning the team prize outright at Sedbergh was another highlight of the year, closely followed by getting a ladies team round Ennerdale. Can they repeat the success next year, and perhaps gain a medal in the v40 champs too?

Senior Performances 2014

In addition to the medal winners on these pages 2014 has been an exceptional year for individuals and teams representing Helm Hill seniors and vets. In fact if we only took the results outlined below as the club's achievements over the year we would be very pleased. It is not that many years ago when the club would have hardly had any individual or team top 10 placings within the English or British Championships.

Mens Senior team 6th English Championship, Mens over 40 team 4th English Championship, Ladies over 40 team 8th English Championship, British relay mens senior team 7th

Lauren Munro Bennett Under 3rd U20 English Championship, Sharon Taylor equal 6th ladies English Championship, Mark Addison senior men 6th English championship, Kieran Hodgson 2nd Lakeland Classics Trophy, Rick Stuart 13th over 50 British Championship, Brian Thompson 10th over 60 mens English Championship.

Hopefully if we target the championship races in 2015 we can further build on what has been an exceptional year for the senior and vet men and women individuals and teams of Helm Hill



2014 FRA ENGLISH MENS V50 TEAM 1st

Helm Hill's golden oldies improved on last years 2nd place by winning this year!

2014 FRA ENGLISH JUNIOR CLUB Helm Hill 1st

1st



HelmHill juniors being presented with the English Team trophy by GB and England Senior team member and club-mate Tom Addison

Congratulations to all Helm juniors for winning a fantastic FRA series in the most competitive English junior Championship series since it started in 2010.

A tough series of 7 races saw Chris, Imogen & Mia W were the scorers as Jacob, Robert, Matty, Maddie, Katie and Mia S combined to help us get the points we needed to win the title.

It's been a great turn out all season and all Helm juniors who have taken part in some challenging races should be rightly proud of this achievement. Every Helm junior who has competed a Championship race has contributed towards winning the title, and everybody's contribution matters



2014 FRA ENGLISH JUNIOR UPHILL CLUB Helm Hill 1st

1st

Helm Hill Juniors are also 2014English Uphill Champs !

In very wet, misty conditions, **Imogen Burrow** & **Chris Richards** won their races to become uphill Champions, **Clara Samson** won the up & down U8s and so with Mia Walsh & Tom Peel 4th, Kath 5th, Jack 7th, Jacob & Matty 8th we took the Team prize. Maddie Walsh (11th), Josh Roelants (17th), Emelia Stevens (6th), Lottie Beardwood (9th), Maia Doherty (15th), Erin Bagge (18th), Vaughan Samson (29th), Joe Connor (18th), Katie Thurlow (17th), Mia Senior (12th), Georgia Stevens (18th) meant a fantastic turnout in this tough race high up in the fells. Well done everybody.

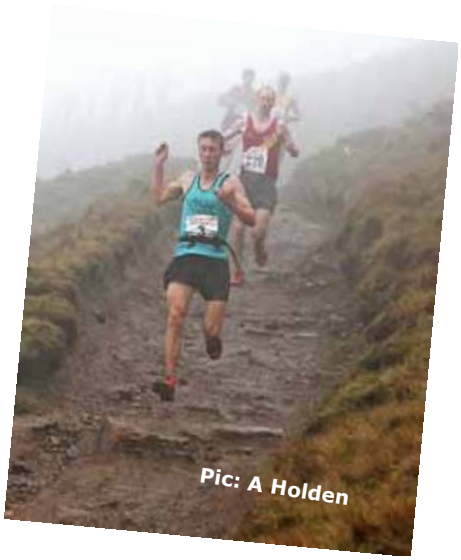
DIARY OF TOM ADDISON: 2014 FRA ENGLISH CHAMPION!

Thanks to **Inov8** for kind permission to reproduce this article


Pic: Inov-8

Pendle: – 7.3k / 457m ascent April 5
1 Tom Addison 32:55
2 Rob Hope 33:05

The day of the race I was really nervous because the week before I had totally messed up in thick mist at the opener of the British Championship (Donard Challenge). Toeing the start line at Pendle I looked around to see, as usual for the opener, that almost everyone in English fell running was there! I knew then that it was going to be really tough to get some good points on the board.


Pic: A Holden

The start was fast and furious with everyone battling for good positions at the front. I got myself into a decent position and stuck with the leading group on the initial trail out. As we hit the first climb Simon Bailey and Morgan Donnelly made their moves. I just sat in. I wasn't feeling that great at this point, so I continued to sit in. As the climb went on I moved my way through into first place. I had never led a championship race before so it was a bit nerve-wracking but I just tried to keep the pace fast. I opened up a small gap on the rest of the field on the descent down to the start of the 'Big End' climb. Once on the climb itself Rob Hope took over the lead. I hung on for grim death, and soon we were racing down the last descent.

Simon, as always, flew down the hill and as we hit the final few fields there was three of us together at the front. The battle was on! With one final sharp climb approaching, I made my move and attacked the hill as hard as I could. I did not let up until I crossed the finish line. I was shocked to have won but it was an amazing feeling to get my first-ever championship victory.

Coniston – 14k / 1065m ascent May 3
1 Tom Addison 1:07:57
2 Rob Hope 1:07:58


Pic: A Slattery

I had recced this route a few times prior to race day

and had all the best race lines firmly fixed in my mind. I was still on a high from my win at Pendle and couldn't wait for this, the second race in the championship.

I played it sensible and ran within myself up the first big climb to the summit of Wetherlam. From the top I tried a line that I had recced and it paid off as I opened up a 30m lead over Rob Hope and Morgan Donnelly. [Editors note: we're hoping Tom remembers it for HelmHill clubmates!] Both, however, had closed the gap by the time we started on the ascent to Swirl How. The three of us were now really pushing it hard over the steep, rocky outcrops. Along the skyline, Rob and I dropped Morgan and rounded the final summit of Coniston Old Man neck-and-neck.

I decided to play it safe on the long final descent off Coniston Old Man, following Rob's footsteps as we negotiated all the rocks and quarries. As the gradient eased I fought my way past Rob and kicked hard. Rob, however, was having none of it and, with both of us emptying the tanks, we flew down the track section. Approaching the final field I knew it was going to come down to a sprint finish. My legs and lungs were on fire but I wanted to win so badly. I put myself into a world of pain and just gave it everything I could over the final 50m. I beat Rob by the one second!



Wow. I was buzzing. I had given it my absolute all and it had paid off.

Ennerdale Horseshoe – 36.8k / 2290m ascent June 7

1 Rob Hope 2:52:16
2 Karl Gray 2:52:28

I decided not to run at Ennerdale and instead focus on my preparations for the European Mountain Running Championships.

Kentmere – 19.8k / 1006m ascen. July 20

1 Tom Addison 1:27:55
2 Rob Hope 1:30:24



Kentmere was the fourth race in the championship. I decided to miss the third race at Ennerdale, which Rob Hope won, so the pressure was really on me. Having had one of the best races of my life when coming 15th at the European Mountain Running Championships the previous weekend, I was fired up and raring to go at Kentmere.

This was a course I knew really well, having recced it to death over many months, so I felt confident. It was a red-hot day and, although not feeling great, I moved to the front on the opening climb up Yoke. Approaching the first checkpoint on the summit of Ill Bell my legs started to feel better and more bouncy so I put my head down and made it hurt. I didn't look back until I had reached the halfway point on the summit of High Street. I was surprised to see I had such a big gap. I was loving my running and enjoying the feeling of being a lone leader.

I kept pushing and pushing and extended my lead further on the run over to Kentmere Pike. I did, however, pay the price on the long run back down the valley to the finish as my legs were crushed! I had given so much to the race and was literally hanging on. Thankfully I had a strong lead, so I gritted my teeth and just kept it going. I was chuffed to

win by such a big margin but I also knew Rob would come back fighting in the next race.

Sedbergh Hills – 22.5k / 1830m. August 17

1 Rob Hope 2:06:10
2 Tom Addison 2:08:19


Pic: Holmfirth Harriers

This was going to be the decider for me. I knew that if I won at Sedbergh I would win the championship. If Rob Hope won – and I finished well back down the field – then it would give Rob the chance to win the title. I don't normally perform as well in long races as I'm still learning how to pace them and building the strength required, so I knew it was going to be tough.

I decided from the start that I would try and cover all the moves at the front and thus hopefully still be in contention ahead of the last big climb up The Calf. Rob led all the way with Morgan Donnelly and I sitting in behind. As we hit the The Calf it was, once again, Rob and I out in front. My legs, however, felt knackered and it was really hard watching Rob run away from me. I tried to go with him but I just couldn't. I managed to hang on to second place ahead of my cousin, Mark, who came third. It was bittersweet because although it was my best performance in a long fell race, I had handed Rob the chance to tie for the championship. A win for Rob in the last race at Hodder Valley, which I would miss due to running for Great Britain at the World Mountain Running Championships, and we would share the title. Despite that I took the positives out of Sedbergh, knowing that it had given me a platform from which to build on for future long races, especially as I want to have a crack at sky racing. It was a real learning curve.

Hodder Valley – 6.4k / 470m ascent. Sept 13

Tom (didn't race)
Result
1 Morgan Donnelly 32:44 (new course record)
2 Rob Hope 34:11

I was in Italy for the World Mountain Running Championships and woke up nervous – not only for my own race but also because the English Championship would be decided at Hodder Valley and I was not there to influence it. The pressure was on Rob Hope to win the race and in doing so grab a share the championship with myself. Rob had been in awesome form leading up to the race and was the man to beat. I checked my phone hundreds of times until eventually I found out that Rob had finished second in the race, with Morgan Donnelly beating him. Wow. I was English champion. I had achieved one of my boyhood dreams. Morgan ran a phenomenal race on the day, so thanks Morgan! It was a fantastic tussle all year with Rob, who is such a strong fell and mountain runner. I'm already looking forward to more of the same in 2015!



Tom, at photoshoot for this years 2014 FRA English Senior Champion's xmas card.

LAKELAND CLASSICS TROPHY:

This competition covers a series of six classic Lakel District fell races: Ennerdale Horseshoe-Duddon Valley-Wasdale-Borrowdale -Three Shires -Langdale Horseshoe

Recently crowned Helm Hill club champion **Kieran Hodgson** came **2nd overall** and is seen here at the Duddon Valley fell race.





Paul Aitken , Adam Perry, Kieran Hodgson, Rachel Slattery, Carrie Gibson and Marie Robson all had a grand day out at Borrowdale Horseshoe. Adam is pictured on the descent off Scafell down to the Corridor Route, Rachel is pictured on the Corridor Route by Andy Holden (from a somewhat safer position)

Lee Knight came home 20th at Three Shires in mid Sept.





2014 HELM HILL SENIOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

nine standards—high cup nick—middlefell—rivington pike— kendal 10k—fairfield—austwick amble—dockray gt dodd—skiddaw—ambleside guides race—shipman knots—scafell pike—langdale horsehoe—dunnerdale

And the winners are.....

Men:
1st Kieran Hodgson



1st

Ladies:
1st Carrie Gibson



Full results on the website



2nd

2nd Lee Procter

2nd Sharon Taylor





3rd



3rd Craig Burrow

3rd Rachel Slattery

Having taken-over the organising of this from Russell, my first task was race selection. Getting the right mix is not easy and I welcomed suggestions, of which there were a few, as I did not want it to be purely my own selection; after all, it is our Club Championship and we should all have the opportunity to input.

But there are some restrictions, not too many long races but, equally, not too many short; perhaps some road and / or trail races, try not to clash with Winter League series, FRA and Ian Hodgson Relays, some mid-week and avoid FRA Champ races too ! So although there are more than enough races to choose from, getting a good mix of races and spreading them throughout the year was harder than I had expected.

- 50 Helm Men and 26 Helm Ladies took part in the 2014 Championship.
- Only 6 Members (5 Men & 1 Lady) completed 8 or more races.
- 2 Members completed 11 races (Karl & Brian), 1 Member completed 10 races (Craig) and 2 Members completed 9 races (Kieran & Carrie).
- The most popular race for both the Men (20) and the Ladies (11) was Dunnerdale.
- Had anyone run all 14 races, they would have covered 156.2 km and climbed 8,600m.

But that said I came up with 14 races, 2 more than usual, and still only 8 to count; I also introduced a memento to all who completed 6 or more, an added incentive for members to commit to the Championship.

Congratulations to both Kieran and Carrie, both whom are relatively new to Helm; I would like to thank them both for the determination and commitment they have shown towards the Championship; also thank you to those taking up the challenge and completing 6 or more races; I hope you like your mementos.

Looking forward to 2015, I again welcome suggestions and ideas; I think having 14 races, with 8 to count, worked well and made it easier for members to take-part. Also, I hope the prizes and mementos were an added incentive.

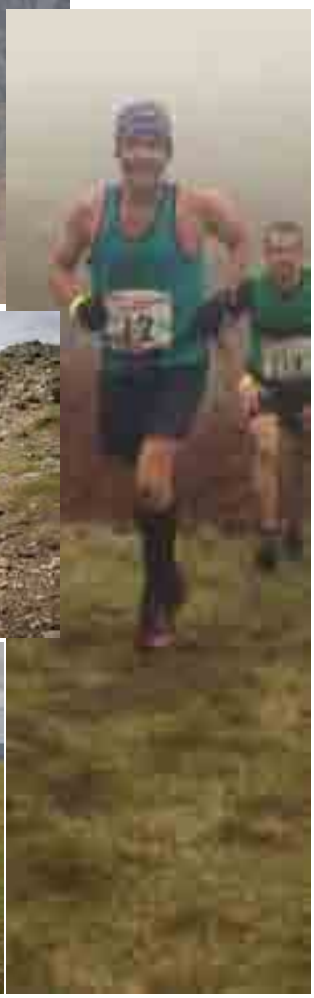
The race list will be published in mid-December; please do let me know your thoughts ahead of this.

David White.









The also rans.....

HELM HILL PRESENTATION NIGHT 2014









Top row from left:

Club Champs winners

U8 girl: Clara Samson, Boy: Charlie Clayton (no pic), U10 girl: Ella Beardwood, U10 boy: Ollie Sanders ,

U12 girl:(joint) Emelia Stevens & Mollie Brat,

2nd row, left:

U12 boy: Josh Roelant.s

U4 boy: Jacob Aubrey,

right, U14 girl:

Imogen Burrow

3rd row:, from left

U16 boy: Chris Richards, U16 girl: Katherine Lawson (no pic), Most Improved Runner: Katie Thurlow

Bottom row: left

Helm Hill Team of the Year: The Juniors!,

Right—

Racing Whippets

















From top left:

Runner of the Year: Tom Addison
Lifetime Achievement Award: Shaun Addison
Male Athlete of the Year & Club Champs Senior Man: Kieran Hodgson:
Coach of the Year: Anna Stevens
Female Athlete of the Year: Ali Richards
Most Improved Runner: Lee Proctor (by satellite link)
Cragrats: Ben P & Rick S (with existing Cragrats)
Club Champs Senior Woman: Carrie Gibson







Junior Training Session Up Heron Pike

BY ELLIOT WREN







Elliot (foreground right) with Helm Hill friends on Heron Pike summit

My final training session within the group led by Lorna was to be a special treat for filling in our warm- up log books and before the school holiday's began.
We met by Rydal church to do our warm up, we did a relay session up to the top of Heron Pike and then we all went to the Badger Bar.

The evening was really clear, perfect for running and our group were excited for what lay ahead Running, Running and MORE Running. We began with our warm up which after all my months in Lorna's group I finally was not embarrassed about and realised how important it is to warm up before the training session and races. I now know what to do during the warm up so it is part of my regular routine. We did jogging, high knees, skipping, arm circles, sprints to warm up our bodies ready for our run up the hill. I was feeling good, I have come to love my training sessions the older I have become, having the log book really did help me.

We then did a relay run up to the top of Heron Pike, we were put into teams of two or three.
An adult would mark a point we would have to run to, one person from each team would set off to the adult then when that person had got to the adult the next person would set off, then when all the team were there the first person would set off again to the next adult who had moved further up the hill. We did this to the summit of Heron Pike. On the summit we had a much needed rest we chatted to each other took some pictures and had all of Lorna's Jelly Babies, we gave her a couple!!

Then, it was time to descend we did the same routine on the way down but we did come down a different route, it was very steep and there was bracken as tall as me in places!! Gary and John showed us a great technique for descending, keep our arms moving or out to the side so as to keep our balance, it worked for me.

Now for the best bit…. The PUB… We all had JUNK… lots of Cola, Ice-Cream, Hot-Chocolate it was brilliant, it's a pity every training session does not include the pub after, may-be a suggestion for the future!! I had a great time and it was a perfect way to finish off before my summer holidays. Thank you so much Lorna.



Drinks afterwards 2" features left to right Elliot Wren, Thomas Russell, Joe Conner.



"Drinks afterwards" features Mollie Bratt, Lottie Beardwood and Ella Beardwood from left to right.

MORE RACE REPORTS:

Copeland Chase, Nov 3rd: Shane Ohly won the 19km mountain navigation race in north west lakes.



Ben Nevis

Well done the Helm trio of Sharon T, Dave W and Russ C who ventured North, especially Sharon who was 3rd







<u>Running for England</u> Well done to Chris Richards, Matthew Senior and Lauren Munro-Bennett for their England vests. They ran in the Junior's "Home International" competition on Saturday 20 September, in which teams from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales compete against each other.



Smarna Gora International Mountain Race, Slovenia: Mel Hyder went out to Slovenia to represent England and came 1st U23 and 7th overall! A brilliant performance.

Really Wild Boar:

A select group of 7 Helm runners turned up for this race, renown for often wild weather and fantastic spot prizes. Sharon Taylor won this fantastic trophy. Adam Perry won the fantastic spot prize— a week at Pyrenees



UK ATHLETICS FELL RELAY





The UK Athletics Hill & Fell Relays is the big event of the UK fell racing year and brings together the cream of UK fell and hill running clubs.

The location and routes vary from year to year and this years event was close by on the Middleton Fells near Kirkby Lonsdale, an unfamiliar area for most but possibly better known to Helm runners as 'the Barbon Fell race goes up one edge of it.

Helm Hill entered the maximum of six teams, the largest number the club has ever fielded made up of mens 'open', mens v40, mens v50, womens 'open' and a 'mixed team. Each team had 6 runners so 36 Helm Hill racers in total.

Being less than 15miles from Kendal gave us an advantage of a few reccies in the weeks beforehand and not having to get up massively early or camp in the cold.

Although we all know the Barbon route the area used was from the west, large and unfamiliar and proved to be tricky underfoot and navigationally.



Leg 1 was a fast 5 mile horseshoe and the pace was frantic from the start. With Leg 1 runners gone albeit only for 40mins, Leg 3 & 4 runners were happily tucking into bacon butties or having a snooze in the club tent.

With changeovers taking place in a transition lane placed in front of the main area all the runners were given a huge cheer on return and departing runners were subject to encouragement / friendly ribbing by all and sundry, including Howgill compere on the PA for the day, the fantastic John Richardson. "Security! Helm Hill & Kendal vets are both in the start pen together!"

Leg 2 was a long and arduous 9 miles which re-ordered all the teams a bit. This leg proved to be the deciding factor in the race as the navigation leg was shorter and with clear weather easier navigation than was anticipated.

Leg 3 is the navigation leg where teams have no idea where they are going until they are given a map as they run out the field. The level to which teams then have an idea of where they are going is then dependent on navigation skills, how claggy it is and how experienced they are in not following others who then get lost. This adds a level of unpredictability rather than the event being purely on running ability—just like much fell racing. The weather was fine and the route only about 6 miles long so this year however it had less of an effect on the race.



Leg 4 was a reversed Leg1 and last leg runners by now were making those bacon butties count standing around in the changeover zone in wind and heavy drizzle in a vest and shorts looking forlornly up the fell for returning Leg3 runners. Little did they know that Leg3 runners returned from a blind spot to the right, hence lots of last minute ripping off of warm clothes and general clothing entanglements.


Look out!! It's Karl's mega flapjack!
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THE LONG, LONG STUFF

After some of the exploits earlier this year you'd imaging that our resident long-distance-loonies would have been taking it easy just doing the odd 20 mile race for a bit of a rest. However.....

LEE KNIGHT: MONTANE ULTRA TRAIL OF THE LAKE DISTRICT 100



Two years ago Lee Knight came 19th at the Lakeland 100, his first 100 mile race. Lee significantly improved his performance this year to come an amazing 3rd overall in this high calibre, world famous race on our doorstep. Well quite a few peoples doorsteps given its 100 miles! Lee covered the 100 miles in 23hrs 21 mins.

Montane describe the route as 'The circular 100 mile route encompasses the whole of the lakeland fells, includes in the region of 6300m of ascent and consists entirely of public bridleways and footpaths.

The 100 route starts in Coniston and heads south before completing a clockwise loop which takes in the Dunnerdale fells, Eskdale, Wasdale and Buttermere before arriving in Keswick. From here the route heads to Matterdale and continues over to Haweswater before returning via Kentmere, Ambleside and Elterwater to the finish at Coniston.
The event is continuous in nature, competitors don't have to stop or sleep on the route and the winners are generally expected to finish close to the 23 hour mark.'

As far as we can tell there are now three Helm members who have completed this 100mile race (Lee Knight, David White and Adam Perry) and 4 who have run over 100 miles in one race (them lot plus Paul Turner). Amazing stuff. Must be the hill reps on the Helm on a Wednesday.

PAUL TURNER: ULTRA TRAIL DU MONT BLANC

29/08/14 - 31/08/14 Chamonix, France

The Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc is a single stage ultramarathon. It starts in Chamonix and circumnavigates the Mont Blanc massif covering 168km and an elevation gain of approximately 9600m. Starting in Chamonix, France, it passes through Italy and Switzerland then returns back to Chamonix. There were approximately 2300 starters.

My UTMB journey started somewhat unintentionally. Having done the Lakeland 100 in 2013, I realised that also completing the Ultimate Trails 100k in 2013 would give me the qualifying points I needed for me to apply. Once I did, I was surprised at how much it seemed to mean to me to get a place in 2014. I had understood there was less chance for a first time applicant, so I was somewhat over the moon when I was successful. This gave me a massive focus for the year. In the meantime I had also entered the L100 again. Although only 5 weeks separate the two events, I had not wanted to miss out on the L100 if I hadn't got in the UTMB and in some respects I thought, what better training could I have for the UTMB than a 100miler with 6300m of ascent? In hindsight, maybe the L50 would have been better, but who's to know, unless I try again!

I travelled out to Chamonix on Wednesday 27th. There



Paul Turner finishing the 100 mile UTMB in 35hrs 14mins. Next stop the Boulangerie ?..

were a few other UTMBers on the flight from Liverpool and then the transfer bus from Geneva was pretty much full of others doing the UTMB or one of the other events.

On Thursday morning I walked into the town centre to register. It was a lovely warm morning and it was exciting seeing everyone in the queue with their mandatory kit for inspection as I waited to head in.

On the Friday, I was pretty much left to myself as Led, Mannie, Rach and Sue all took off to do various activities. I wandered into Cham and met Gary. I've known Gaz for many years from Worcester and he was also running the UTMB. I sorted some food for lunch, headed back to the chalet and took it easy. Looking around Cham early in the day, I was surprised how many people were already in their UTMB gear and trying to hand in their drop bags. It almost looked like a number had checked out of where they were staying in anticipation of heading straight to the airport after the finish.

At about 3.30 pm I started to put my gear on, including kinesio tape to try and support my IT bands and reduce chaffing. As I get ready for these events, especially something like the UTMB, I get increasingly nervous. The girls all rushed about getting ready, then about 4.30pm I said I had to set off for the start. The nerves and anticipation really started to build as we walked to the start, but it was great walking down with Led, Mannie, Rach and Sue. It felt like we were in this together.

As we got nearer the start, more and more fellow competitors and their friends and family came into view converging on the square. We were directed from the very front of the start around to the back of the square in front of the church. There was a sea of people rammed in, all sorts of nationalities, colours, shapes and sizes. I'd arranged to meet Gary on the steps of the church and soon tracked him down. We all stood and chatted for a bit waiting for the pre-race briefing that was due at 5.00pm.

I can't really remember much of the briefing other than it was confirmed we would be running the full course at the scheduled start time. During this time, ominous clouds started to build down the valley and we started to feel the first drops of rain. About 5.15pm, Gary and I decided to head into the main square and get ourselves in amongst the starters. So I said goodbye to the girls who then headed down the course to get a better view of us setting off.

The square was really tight with people. It was funny looking at everyone in their gear. In particular the Japanese guy donning a lightweight sumo suit, including inflatable pillow!

Then just before the start, the ominous clouds delivered and the rain really started to come down. There was a scramble for waterproof jackets from nearly everyone.

Then we were into it! A countdown from 10 and we were off!

At least those at the front were, as I could see them streaming under the start. My brother had texted to say he could see me on the webcam, so I waved as we crossed the line. It was absolutely fantastic, but not much running. The barriers and then the crowd were just like the Tour de France and we were squeezed together preventing us from getting running, but there was so far to go it didn't really matter. There were a couple of false starts as we would get into a jog, but then a sudden slow down. I had no idea where along the route the girls were, but eventually I spotted them shouting and waving and they spotted me. It was brilliant and I stopped for a quick hug before being swept along.

It seemed to take a good 10 minutes or so before we actually got into some kind of a stride, but there were still people all around and it felt like being in the middle of a big city run rather than an ultra. I had deliberately kept my poles stowed to avoid stabbing anyone, but there was plenty of dodging of others to be done. Gaz and I stuck together for some way and at times I felt like Gaz was pushing the pace along. Once we were out of Cham and onto proper trail the numbers of people and the wet combined to create a right muddy track and I couldn't help but think of the Muddy Woody 6 race.

The first section is pretty flat through to the first checkpoint at Les Houches. I remember coming off the muddy track onto the road to climb up to Les Houches itself. There were still loads of people around and into Les Houches great crowds lined the streets cheering us through. One poor coach driver was caught up in it all trying to turn around with people lining the streets and runners pouring past. This first checkpoint was a proper scrum. Although only 8km into the race people dived for drinks and you had to pile in to get anything. I looked around for Gary, but there was no chance, so I headed on.

Soon out of Les Houches, I hit the first real climb up Le Delevret. It was a tree lined climb up the track and was pretty humid. It was still light at this time and there were loads of people about. I must have taken my jacket off at some point as I remember hiding under trees to put it back on when a heavy shower came through. People were in great spirits, especially when the helicopter came over us filming our climb. No idea if I made it onto TV or not! The climb up Le Delevret was just short of 900m. We topped out through a minor checkpoint and continued along the tracks around ski-lifts and cablecars. The descent was down gravelly, greasy, grassy ski-runs and it was an effort to stay up right. Some people came bombing past taking advantage of the slope, but I preferred to stay on my feet as far as possible. The steep descent hurt my toes and I thought I'm not sure I'm going to fancy 100miles of this!

Le Delevret: Time of passage: Fri 19:32 Race time: 02:00:21 Position: 1095 Distance since start: 13.8km Height gain since start: 868m .....

To see how Paul got on, read the full story in the web version of the newsletter!

RICK'S JOSS NAYLOR ROUND

Eleven hours and 4 mins after setting off I stood on Greendale Bridge shaking Joss' hand with absolute relief it was all over. I 'd just been 'guided' down off the last summit by Mike Robinson and if you've ever seen Mike descend at a KWL race you will know how painful that was after 47 miles across the high fells of the Lakes.

Ten mins later and after the adrenaline crash I was lying awkwardly across the front seats of my friends car with tingling lips and fingers, shivering cold, wrapped in a blanket with low-blood sugar and in desperate , desperate need of a mug of tea and a cheese and pickle sandwich. Cheese was produced. Someone suggested Joss may have some pickle….'yes, I need some..' it was important. Someone produced Bombay mix and this may have saved my life. I'm glad no-one had a camera as I must have looked quite pathetic. Oh...hang on, they did.



We'd set off from Pooley Bridge at 7am in a sea of calm having no idea how fast to go other than a memory that Rob Blyth said the start was 'brisk'. Brisk it was then. Andy Slattery had fortunately recce'd the direct route through the caravan park which went without a hitch (sorry!). We pretty much ran the whole long uphill slog to Arthur's Pike (and set a Strava segment best time!) expecting to get there about 5mins up on schedule to find we were only 1min up. Wow that was some pace as the first leg I'd left on the 12 hour schedule times. We settled into a fast but comfortable cruise over the next set of summits and stayed 3-4 mins up. Picking up the IH race route over Caudale Moor we inexplicably found ourselves 2 mins down but a fast descending contour down to Kirkstone brought us back on schedule.
The life of a road support helper is not an easy one. My triathlete friend and Adam Perry's landlady Emily, motivated by seeing how brilliant a job Adam's road support was, helpfully took on this role for me. I had to persuade her that it really wasn't necessary to run alongside me feeding me rice pudding and tea on the move before picking up broken pacers from the floor and feeding them before they crawled away to lie down and recover. She laid on a fantastic spread which, as anyone who's been on a long run knows, looks lovely but actually when it comes to it you cannot face eating anything and just feel guilty for all the effort thats gone into it.. However the mugs of tea and coffee were day-savers!





I set off up Red Screes with Lee, Billy and Emily's hubby Kris with rice pudding stored in my mouth for swallowing in the next 10mins and a sausage roll in my pocket in hope..



I was still feeling strong up the climbs and moving well and had only had two twinges from my dicky ankle which was good going given I had 32 miles to go. The weather was almost perfect with cool mostly overcast conditions and occasional drizzle and clag. Billy and Lee knew the route well for the 2nd leg to Fairfield and then I took over for the off-piste direct route off Fairfield which I'd gone down 6 or 7 times. I was therefore miffed when the clag really came down and I became unsure about the direct line. Being cautious we retraced our steps to the summit losing about 4mins before heading off on a bearing and coming to where we'd been 4mins before but now the cloud had lifted so all was obvious. We re-joined the main path briefly before heading off onto steep scree shouting 'follow me! I've recce'd it! you'll love this scree descent!'. Lee shouted a few questioning warnings about Grizedale Tarn and going too low but I was having none of it. The scree gets easier and faster lower down so I whooped off down and cut out towards the col to Seat Sandal feeling in good spirits. We were a few mins down but should gain this back with a fast climb up, over and down Seat Sandal.
My 8mins rest at Dunmail was cut to about 2mins but seeing as I couldn't face any food it didn't seem worth hanging around after drinking a mug of fantastic tea and then coffee. I took a sausage roll, cheese sandwich and a rice pud in my bumbag to please Emily. Anyway there was a whole coach party raring to go on the next leg! The entourage led off up Steel Fell which I feared the most out of the whole route. It was a merciless climb but much helped by having such a big bunch of supporters including the familiar and amusing collie combo of Alfie and Luna.

I started to find it hard going on the steeper climbs on this leg but was managing to still run the easier climbs ok so limited the time loss to 10mins behind schedule. Adam did his best to force-feed me food which, despite wishing he'd stop, I knew he knew what he was doing. I would dutifully put an apricot in my mouth and suck it for the next 10mins. On explaining I could only face drinking water he suggested eating a hydration tablet then drinking the water to get the salts etc back in. He then explained that he'd only had 3hours sleep. It dawned on me that his powers of reasoning weren't all they should be.

Hurtling down a tussocky descent I went over on my ankle and hopped the next 10m as Sally excitedly explained to some passing walkers that I was running 48miles in under 12hours. They may have assumed they'd misheard and she'd said 4.8miles. I was relieved to reach Great End but then on arrival in the clag remembered that this was the hardest and most technical descent and I hadn't been down it before, just up. At this point Richard, whom I 'd never met before but is Steph from Ambleside's partner, took charge and led me down the steep shoulder and then down an even steeper rocky gully pretty much at my long race pace. Reaching Sty Head was a relief as new pacers were waiting with a flask of tea. I was starting to feel really done in and it crossed my mind that I was setting off on the equivalent of the Three Shires race. In order to minimise time lost behind schedule the 4mins was limited to 3. The tea did the trick and I felt pleased that I was going so well with no knee pain, no blisters and confident that my ankle would be ok (I'd gone over on it 5 times during Jura and and it had recovered each time within 200m). I was setting off on the last leg! Yippee!

Jon and Craig were feeling the pressure as they set off. They'd hung around for the best part of 90mins in the cold discussing how unsure they were of keeping up with me. This didn't help when I turned up and Sty Head with just one of the 6 pacers and only another 3 visable across the valley arriving minutes later (the remaining 3 retracing their steps from Great End to Langdale). However they were both fine once their legs had warmed up slogging up Great Gable. Another good scree descent down to the col and up Kirkfell to pick up the Ennerdale route. A faultless line down to the steep gully then more scree and across to Black Sail pass where we found Hazel Robinson waiting to lead us over Pillar etc to Seatallan. By this stage I could only consume gels and although they tasted of wallpaper paste they kept me going. The clag had cleared over most the route but inconveniently came back around Haycock and the descent to the broad morass of land en route to Seatallan. A slow cautious descent on bearings at first cost us the minutes we had won back up Pillar (despite continuing to struggle on the steep climbs I was moving well on the easy uphills and running most of them). Hazel picked up a trod and recognised it as the trod to Seatallan which then reared its head in the mist and I remembered with a groan the steep descent off it on the Wasdale route that we were now reversing. Mike Robinson met us at the top and we set off for the descent to Middlefell knowing that we had a slim chance of getting the 9mins back before the finish.



The descent off Seatallan wasn't great for my ankle so I didn't save any time here but ran up as hard as I could and got to the summit 7 minutes behind. Ali and her son Jamie were waiting near the summit to cheer me home and along with the thought that only one last effort was required Mike Robinson's insistence on a fast descent seemed appealing. half way down it seemed less appealing when the tingling in the lips and fingers started, the quads were really burning and I could still see more of the roof than walls of Joss' house. Finally we were on flat ground near the stream and felt elated seeing a group of people waiting on the bridge, so much so that I cruised the last 50m to the bridge feeling completely fine. Well, until I reached the bridge, shook Joss' hand and stopped that was.







Short shorts Joss, that what you need



HELM PROFILES—ALASTAIR DUNN



When did you join Helm Hill?
1995. Blimey! I've just realised its 20 years next year. (Do I get a badge or something?) I remember seeing an advert in the Gazette and came along to see what it was all about. I must have enjoyed it. I still do.

When did you start fell running and how did you get into it?
When I moved here I started walking up the Lakeland fells but was getting a bit bored with how long it was taking to get up and down so started running them instead. I didn't know that the fell running scene even existed. I certainly didn't know there were races. My first race was at Arncliffe Gala. The kind of mad-dash sprint of a race that I would come to love.

What do you think is your biggest running achievement so far?
My biggest achievement in running has been to figure out what works well for me regards training, racing, eating and resting (and balancing it with everything else going on in life). I'm proud with the level of fitness I achieved given I often had limited time to train. I enjoy the process. You start off with a training and racing plan, but the knack is gaining the experience to learn when to tweak it depending how you feel, how you are responding to training, managing illness and injury and being bold enough to try different tactics in racing.
I'm proud of my consistency when I was at my best. I'll always value my 7 BOFRA wins and my 8 straight Alva victories. Tommy Sedgwick was getting worried that I might be challenging for his 12 win record at Alva, but that was always safe. I've always been glad to be able support the BOFRA / Guides racing / village show side of the sport. It is part of a wonderful tradition, and once one of those races goes, chances are it'll never come back.
It was Chris Hoy that said that there's not enough winning to make it all worth while. You have to enjoy all the bits in between too!

Favourite races?
Anything straight up and straight down. Wasdalehead Show, Alva or Coniston Gullies. I also enjoy longer races like Tebay and Rydal Round. I've always been more of a sprinter than a long distance racer.

Typical training week?
I tend to train every other day now, cycling as much as running. Cycling keeps me injury free but I lose some running specialization, especially my descending ability. I generally train from home so my running will be reps on the Helm or a loop of Scout Scar. For a fell runner I don't actually run up many fells. At the end of last year I had a quick run up Fairfield as I realised I'd not been up a decent hill all year.

Preparation for races?
Getting to know the route in advance is a big advantage. It takes away any stress of navigating on the day. Its only really possible on local races. Some people enjoy heading to lots of new races, but I enjoy trying to perfect the race line or pacing strategy on the same ones. I've been round the Tebay course something like 80 times. I think I've got the best tactics sussed now.
On race day I stop eating 3 hours before the start, stop drinking for the final hour. Get warmed up, have a drink just before the start and maybe a gel, depending on the race length. I've learnt a lot about race nutrition from cycling. It is different on a bike, but in fell running we tend not to eat or drink enough in races. You can't comfortably digest the same when running, but most fell runners would benefit from eating and drinking slightly more in races that they typically do. But I'm quite aware that logistically it isn't always possible.

A runner you admire or respect?
I love any runner who clearly puts the work in. It is hard doing it day in and day out. There are loads of people in the club I could mention, but clearly Billy, Tom & Mark are good examples. Follow there example, but figure out what works best for you.
There are two other runners in Kendal who I admire. One old guy who wears a hoodie all year whatever the weather, and a lady who shuffles round town. They are never going to win any medals but whenever I'm driving home, tempted to stay in and not train, seeing one of them makes me feel that if they can be bothered to get out and about, then so should I.

Your running ambitions for the future?
The older I get, the fewer races I'm able to focus on in the year, so now each year I pick a couple and try to hit them fully trained and tapered. Keeping injury free to enable me to train fully is a constant battle, but I'm not frightened in holding back for a couple of weeks as I know it'll do me good for the long run.

HELM PROFILES—LOTTIE BEARDWOOD



When did you join Helm Hill?
I started running at Helm Hill when I was 6 years old.

Why did you join Helm Hill?
My Dad inspired me because he was always running with Helm Hill and competing in races; I thought it would be fun if I gave it a try.

Since then I've kept on running with Helm Hill and have worked my way up to Lorna's group. Lorna has given loads of tips to help me improve and they have had a massive effect on my running.

Your running ambitions for the future?
I am currently working towards trying to beat my friend from Helm, Miya Doherty, and also staying ahead of my sister! I am also trying to complete the 24 races to get my full colours. I just have one race left to do!

I have just taken part in my first cross country race with QKS and I have found that running with Helm has made me a stronger runner generally and not just in fell running!

HELM PROFILES—JOE CONNOR



Joe Conner's sequel to Spring newsletter:

My running has been really successful this year coming fairly high up in my races for school.

Like in the English Schools Fell Running Championships (ESFRC) and a cross-country race in Barrow. The ESFRC was a tough race because it had a long strenuous uphill and a downhill which was hard because you were getting tired you needed to stay in control. It was exhausting because you were flagging but other runners were putting pressure on you so you just had too keep up a tough pace to maintain your position. The ESFRC was probably my best achievement this year.

During the summer holidays I went running with my dad which took me over quite a few fells and several Wainwrights which enhanced my stamina.

LAKE DISTRIC MOUNTAIN TRIAL—SAM GIBBS

Prologue – January 25th, 2014, Peak District

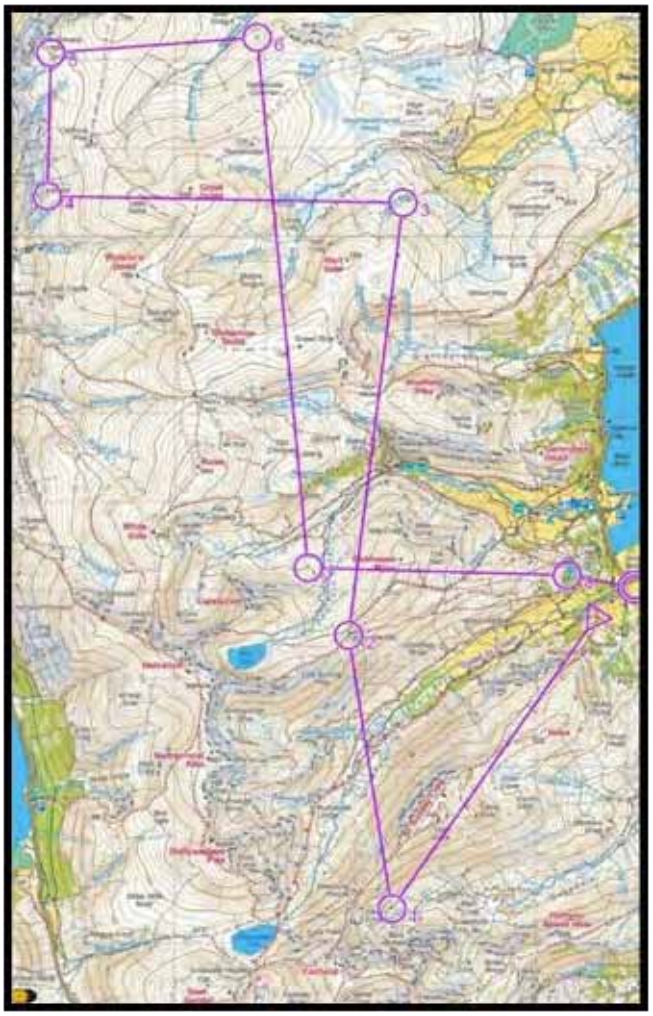
To celebrate my 40th year on the planet I decided to do the Kinder Mountain Trial in the Peak District. I'd competed the year before and thoroughly enjoyed it, and as it fell on my birthday this year it was a no-brainer. The weather was perfect, my navigation almost perfect and the fact I was designated race number 40 and came 40th on my 40th birthday made it a memorable, if slightly weird, day…

Fast forward a few months and whilst leafing through the FRA handbook the Lake District Mountain Trial caught my eye. Based on the assumption it would be similar to the Kinder Trial I decided to enter, and being a Yorkshire-born tight-wad I also opted for the 'classic' course – more 'bang for your buck', surely?

At the best of times my training could be best summed up as 'inconsistent', in fact I'm probably the only member of Helm Hill who has to train for training. I did a few longer runs leading up to the event and 10 days before ran around the LDMT course from 2010 when it was in Kentmere – this was when the enormity of the challenge hit me…

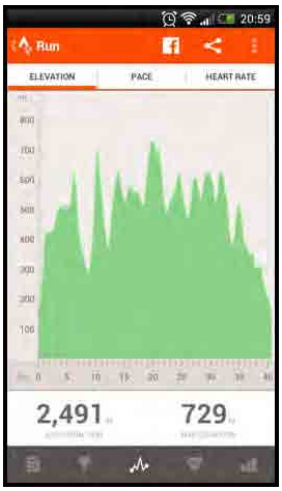
Race day arrived. The weather was overcast, but crucially it was dry with little wind. After the obligatory kit check I was off - a kilometre run up a road out of Patterdale. The wheezing and profuse sweating before I'd even got my map didn't bode well… The first control was the other side of St Sunday Crag. I opted to climb some then spent the best part of 5 kilometres contouring – save the legs for later. The second control was navigationally easy but physically brutal – a short, steep climb to Deepdale Hause then a long steep descent into Grisedale, followed by a long, steep ascent to Hole-in-the-Wall. It was on this climb that the leaders glided up past me. The feeling of going backwards was compounded when Steve Birkinshaw flew past on the next decent towards Glenridding.

A loop around the Dodds and Clough Head was followed by a long leg back towards Red Tarn Beck. A combination of dehydration, hunger and general knackeredness culminated in an abomination of a route choice. The ultimate indignation was climbing 150m up to the penultimate control only for the marshal (who'd watched me all the way up) to announce '*Sorry mate you've just timed out*'. I think (know) I swore – not at him, but at me – out of sheer frustration. I plodded the last few kilometres back to-



wards Patterdale. There were so few people left in the finish field it may as well have been the day after. I collapsed, commemorative glass in hand, knowing what I had to do (dib, download, eat) yet incapable of any. I have never known tiredness like it. The good news was that I was re-instated – and despite taking 8½ hours wasn't last!

I know it's not the Wainwright round or even a Bob Graham, but for mere fell running punters like myself it was a big challenge. If you're even thinking of doing this I would highly recommend it…just maybe do a bit of training beforehand. Strava put it at 42km and 2,500m climb and I think I've reached my limit. Hang on though, isn't a BG only about 100km and 8,000m climb? And don't you have a whole 24 hours to complete it? And I'm 42 in 2 years…hmmm.



PAUL SENIOR'S BEGINNERS GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A FIRST MARATHON

In December 2013, following several ales, a few bottles of red and a very fine Chinese meal life's realities were fading and a colleague and I had agreed to run a marathon. And, if a marathon was worth doing it needed to be the toughest one out there. It would require significant altitude climbing, because, as a Helm Hill runner, anything flat would be tantamount to cheating, and, have the potential for miserable weather and high winds.

Our choice, the Snowdonia Marathon in October with climbs totalling more than 2100ft.

A heady mix of charm and alcohol managed to persuade Sarah, my wife, that, it would be great for her to join us.

We decided that training would begin in May, follow a fairly haphazard routine, with a break over the summer holidays, increased mileage from August, culminating in the inevitable top 10 finish, much laughter and the insatiable urge to go top 3 the year after.

Early training went well and then four weeks out knee pain struck us both. I was unable to run more than 3 miles. Emergency purchases of knee supports, lifetime supplies of ibuprofen and every other legal pain blocker followed.

Sarah received regular sport massage treatment courtesy of John Bagge .I had to seriously consider dropping out. Unusually for me, I decided to "man up" and turned to physiotherapist and Borrowdale runner Jim Davies. Sadly my notion of hot stones, lavender oils and whale music was short lived as I was introduced to real pain

Three weeks out and training resumed, some pain but managed a couple of 20 milers with Sarah and we were good to go.

25th October arrived and we both proudly donned out Helm vests and headed to the start line in Llanberris. Quite a circus, 2,500 runners, fully televised with camera drones hovering over us prior to the countdown and gleeful announcement that we were about to start the "toughest road marathon in Europe" (clearly to settle our nerves) and at 10.30 we were off!

The race started with a fairly steady 4.5 mile climb up Pen y Pass. The weather was holding with winds gusting at 40 mph but no rain YET! The 5 and 10 mile markers passed, I was making good progress, passing several ramblers and an elderly lady dressed in purple (I was not going to be beaten by her!).



At 13 miles we were struck by a 15 minute, trench foot inducing, tsunami. We began the second climb up to Bedgellert and made 18 miles in 3 hrs 01. Then my knee went. Sarah stayed with me but the going was painful and slow all the way to 21 miles where we began the main climb up Bwlch y Grioes cresting at 24 miles. With the finish in sight, Sarah took off to pick off 52 people on the descent. My knee, increasingly debilitating forced me to spend most of the steep downhill in some kind of backward facing Michael Jackson "moonwalk" descent. I reached the finishing straight lined with thousands which was totally inspirational and emotional (seeing Sarah as I crossed the line finished me off).

We had done it, somehow. What an amazing experience, the scenery was stunning, the crowds outstanding, the organisation perfect and the times irrelevant…..go on then…..I did it in 4hrs 52 and Sarah in 4hrs 44. (but we don`t need to shout about that or the fact that the "purple lady" waltzed past me in the last mile.)

Paul Senior

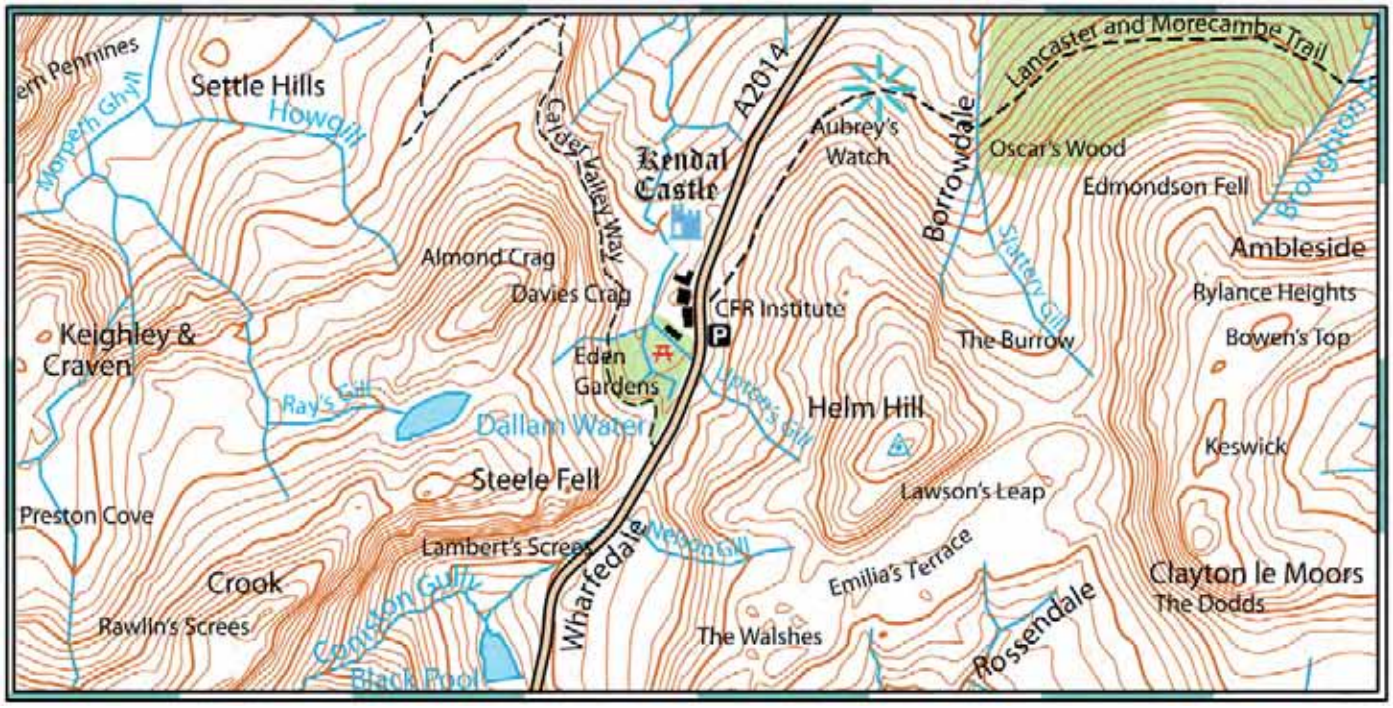
KWL MUG





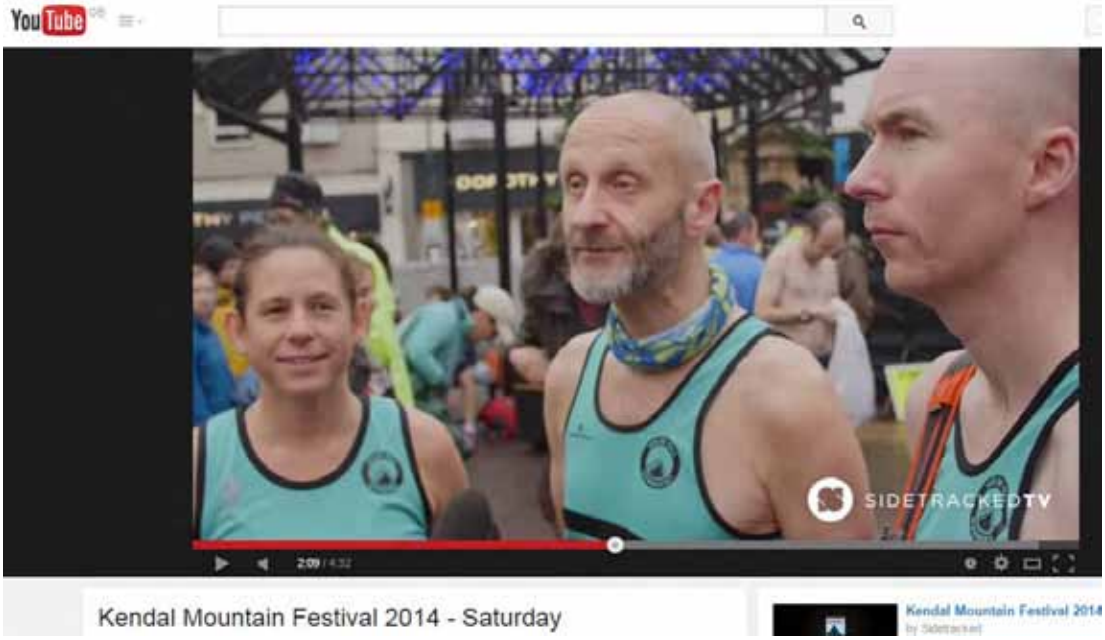
Thanks to all those who noticed that the 'Winterleagueland' map on the mugs and bottles this year is not an accurate map of the Helm. However the contours represent a real place on this island but it is not Scotland or Cumbria. If you can email us the correct location, your name could be on the next one. Apart from participating club, this year's names where chosen with the following random criteria on a last minute basis.

1. Does the name sound like a landscape feature?
2. Do they run so much they can be considered a feature in the landscape?
3. Did they win?



FILM NEWS

Amanda Burrow.... Bill Coupe....and Karl Mason.... star in a tale of Pain. Suffering. Greggs pasties. Cows. A man in red doing a funny knees-up dance.



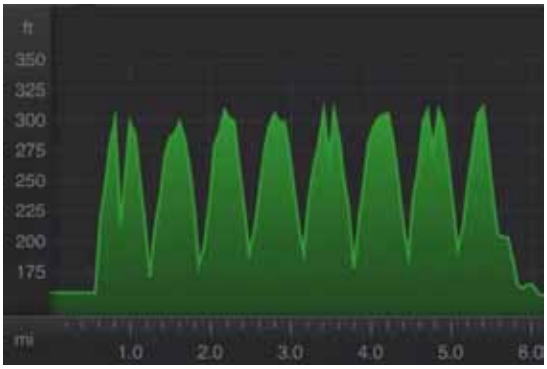
MONDAY NIGHT ART GROUP

The Monday night community art project sessions have been productive with a whole host of geeky GPS tracks and heart rate monitor logs turned into over-priced ‘art’ although no-one has yet to produce the ‘Mona Lisa’ of GPS tracks: the Helm Hill badge, but they're working on it.



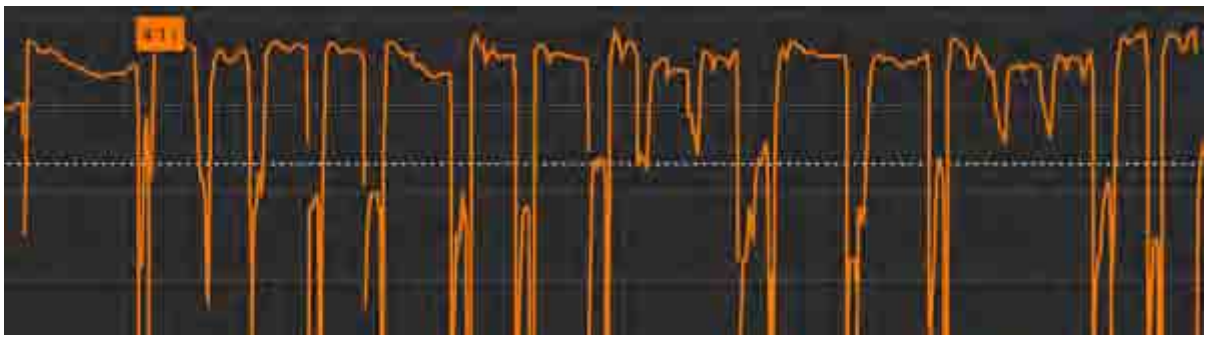
Guys I’m just going for a wee by the green dot

By Lee Proctor



The Green Flames of My Burning Legs

By Bill Coupe



Ooh I can see a ghost

By Karl Mason

WHEN ONE SPORT ISN'T ENOUGH

Three Helm Hill runners took part in the insanity known as the Three Peaks Cyclocross back in late September. Such is the trepidation that experienced adults have for this event, seven times BOFRA Open fell champion **Alastair Dunn** left it till now to make his 3pks cx debut. Similarly **Karl Mason** had been building up his fell running experience after last years 3peaks debut.. By way of contrast 17 yr old **Charlotte Milligan** jumped right in there and gave it a go! All survived to tell the tale (well with a few stitches). Roll on next year!

Read on to hear how it was for Karl.....



Alastair enjoying himself before the incident with his handlebar stem

The 3 peaks cyclocross race 2014 – Karl Mason

First I suppose I should explain for those of you that don't know what the 3 Peaks cyclocross is.

'The peaks' as its called amongst those in the know is touted as the hardest cyclocross race in the world. In simple terms it involves dragging yourself and your bike up and over the 3 summits of ingleborough via simon fell, whenrside and pen y ghent. When I say bike some of you may have visions of a sturdy mountain bike, many would wish for one, but to comply with the rules, designed to keep it similar to the early days, you have to ride essentially a road racing bike similar to something that would be used in the tour de france. Knobbly tyres ate allowed (but not too wide) and in recent years disc brakes have become legal. However no amount of knobbly tryes and disc brakes will prepare the uninitiated for the bone-shaking filling-loosening that is the 3 peaks!!!

If you want to know more take a look at 3peakscyclocross.org.uk or look on you tube. Even better go crazy and enter the race.



Karl enjoying himself before his legs realised what was happening

Total distance: 61kms (38 miles)
Road: 28kms (45mins – 1hr 5mins)
Unsurfaced: 33kms (2hrs 15mins – 4hrs 40mins)
Unrideable: 6kms – 8kms (dependent on individual ability & prevailing conditions)
Total climbing: 1524m (5000ft)



Charlotte enjoying herself climbing Simon Fell, the 1st brutal climb

This year for the second time I embarked on this great race. I learnt a lot from my first race in 2013 or so I thought ….

In the weeks before I had been preparing hard with hill

reps, carrying practice and riding the most brutal bone shaking descents I could find. Tinkering with gearing in pursuit of the perfect gear ratios to allow the final climb of Pen y Ghentto be survived whilst at the same time allowing warp speed on the flats. I probably spent as much time in the shed tinkering as I did training at one point. But after much gear tweaking, saddle swapping, weight worrying (bike not me) and an 5 day epic battle with tubeless tyres the bike was ready, I was ready and race day had arrived…..

the bike was ready, I was ready and race day had arrived…..

Arriving at the start with my director sportif for the day , Helm Hill's ultra distance lunatic Lee Knight I was feeling confident, I'd had a sore throat for a couple of days but I wasn't going to let that worry me after all I was a hardy fell runner….

I registered and did a short warm up , bike felt good and the legs felt good. The weather was perfect cool, still and dry and the ground was perfect given the previous months low rainfall. There was even talk at the start of it possibly being a record year for the 3 peaks legend that is Rob Jebb.

At 09:30 we were underway on the first road section behind the neutral car, and I can assure you it was anything but neutral as the speed slowly wound up to 25mph at the front. As soon as the road started to undulate approaching the first offorad section I knew something was wrong as my legs started to slow. Before I had time to work out why, Simon Fell appears looming in the distance. Simon fell is the warmup act to ingleborough and the start of the days offroad climbing and carrying. And when I mean climbing and carrying imagine the steepest winter league climb but with your bike across your back. By the time you get to the top after what seems like an eternity of trudging and clawing at tussocks to aid yourself upwards the prospect of the ride/carry up ingleborough seems like a pleasant prospect.

.....imagine the steepest winter league climb but with your bike across your back....

A quick dart over the fence and its back on the bike before another carry and scramble over rocky slabs before the ummit plateau of ingleborough. I quickly force a gel down as I see the marshalls at the summit and now the terrain pints downward and despite my tired legs the tables turn in my favour for descending. I manage to pull back tens of places on the descent when I get opportunity to pass but the frustration sets in as I end up stuck behind people unable to descend at anything other than a snails pace pass but again the opportunity comes and I drop another 5 people just before the service area. I stop quickly to pick up a bottle and a gel from Lee and I scoot off to his shouts of "GO,GO,GO" On the road now I know what's coming next the long drag of Whernside so I endeavour to fuel on the road and go as hard as I can but keep out of the red zone. Unfortunately the red zone would appear to be at any speed approaching normal cruising. As I get passed by rider after rider I know I just need to dig in and keep the pedals turning despite how weak my legs feel.

As I turn off the road to approach whernside I ditch the empty bottle I have necked on the road section and begin the climb. Pretty soon I have settled into a rhythm and am making reasonable progress uphill and soon arrive at the rideable section of the ridge except I cant ride it, I mount the bike but my legs are like treacle and the cranks wont turn so once again I am pushing on foot. I finally find some strength just before the descent and start to feel alive again. In no time I am overtaking people again when opportunity allows, hopping rocks and draining bars chasing every second, If I cant give it anything up hill I will give it everything downhill or die trying!! I hit the lower slopes and I've overtaken as many as I can before the section starts to level out to cross a few dry river beds. A good opportunity to practise my high speed dismounts. For high speed dismount try to visualise dismounting and then dismounting at running speed to cross an obstacle and throwing yourself back on the bike and pedalling immediately. Get it right and you save time, get it wrong and the result can vary from a faceplant to castration!! As I remount the bike I can see Ribblehead viaduct in the distance and I know I have at least made it half way round.

Get it right and you save time, get it wrong and the result can vary from a faceplant to castration!!

As I arrive at the second service area Lee passes me an opened gel and is surprised I took so long getting there. I mumble some feeble excuses about being weak and he fills my pockets with gels and gives me a push down the road as I head off to face the final challenge of pen y ghent.

You can see Pen y Ghent for some distance as you approach, the climb is the most rideable out of the 3 and with good legs and the right gear ratio it is manageable. I know if I reach the top in a reasonable time I can pull back some more time and limit my losses on the descent but every time I push on the road section my right hamstring cramps so I once again I am forced to ease off . I hit the bottom of Pen y Ghent lane and I dig in hard, its lined with people and they provide much needed encouragement. There are even some helm runners who our out supporting other riders. I even see Tom Addison who for the day appears to be someone's wheel bitch. But I'm not even halfway up the rideable section and my legs have blown, I have nothing yet I can normally ride this section so again it's off and pushing/carrying. As the gradient steepens my

pace falls further. I start to question myself ,there is no way I can break my 4 hour goal now as I look at my watch, I have nothing in me and I am not even at the top yet. Tears start to well and I wonder if have I ever felt this low in a race but I know I must keep trudging on. Now the then top is in sight and I hear someone shout my name from behind and look to see Alastair Dunn complete with knee bandage shouting encouragement at me. It is enough to snap me out of the dark place I have entered and I pick up my pace to make the final dib at the top of PYG and then turn and disengage my brain for the descent. From here its just a short descent of Pen y Ghent then back onto the road to the finish and my suffering will be over. I push hard on the steep technical upper section, riding as hard as I dare passing riders where I can but again I am stuck unable to overtake but then the rider in front crashes out missing the corner and once again I can open up. As the gradient eases the path becomes rockier I find some energy and strength from somewhere and I drop into the biggest gear I have get out of the saddle and blast downhill overtaking as I go. If I crash at this point it isn't going to be pretty but I am pulling back vital minutes lost on the way up. I takes me 14 minutes to descend PYG compared to 47 minutes climbing it.

.....its only 2 miles now but it feels like twenty

.....I wonder if have I ever felt this low in a race but I know I must keep trudg-

I hit the road and I know I just need to fend off the cramp and finish, its only 2 miles now but it feels like twenty. Every slight incline in the road brings on the twinge of cramp in my hamstring. But I'm nearly there, just one more bend in the road and the finish comes into view. I finish in 234th place out of 530 with a time of 4:09:58. I instantly compare this in my mind to 2013 when I finished in 4:46:26. I am gutted ,you might think 37 minutes off a pb is excellent but in 2013 I crashed badly and rode from Whernside with my knee cap hanging out so today 37 minutes doesn't feel like a victory.

Today wasn't to be, I had trained hard, the bike was setup perfectly and the weather was perfect. It turns out you can train as hard as you want, prepare your kit as much as possible but in racing there is always something out of your control. At that point I wasn't sure the what had taken the edge off me but I knew I definitely wasn't 100% Its pretty normal to finish a race feeling knackered but not to feel that way from the start.

At the finish I chatted with my mates who had all finished in front of me. 2 had a great race, with new pb's. One had crashed badly and dislocated his shoulder before replacing it and finishing. It was then I found out where I had gone wrong in my preparations. I had forgotten about the dirty disease ridden creatures residing under my own roof, you may even have some of your own. Children ! They go to school congregate then bring home germs and virus to wipe out all your hard work and training. Next year I am considering following my friends example .He effectively quarantined himself from his family for the weeks before the race allocating his family access to the house via a different door to himself. The next 2 days as I lay shivering in bed with a virus pondering segregation I realised that the tickle in my throat the days preceding the race was my undoing.

TRAINING

Strength Training for Runners: John Bagge

What's this about?

It's about developing both core strength and the strength of specific running muscles that running alone doesn't develop. It's also about balancing the strength of the muscles on both sides of the body, so that you don't have weaker muscles on one side, which can lead to poor form.

What are core muscles and why are they important?

Core muscles include the postural muscles, which include the muscles of the back, stomach, and hips. These muscles help us stand upright, transfer energy, and distribute the stress of bearing weight on two legs. The majority of the core muscles are deep tissue muscles rather than those at the surface.

Improving muscular strength by developing the postural muscles will reduce your risk of injury and improve your running performance. The stronger we are, the longer we can hold running form, which naturally translates to improved performance.

Ultimately, the more developed your core muscles are, the better your body will be able to respond to demands placed upon it.

(continued on right.....)

IT IS THE TAKING PART THAT COUNTS! - MARIE ROBSON

I joined Helm Hill in March 2013 and I can honestly say it was one of the best things I have done .



I was nervous when I turned up for the first time on Helm not knowing anyone but that was short lived - Everyone was so friendly and encouraging that I continued to turn up and joined the club. I then started to do a few races which I really enjoyed ....even if I was near the back - it was great to feel a part of a team where everyone was so enthusiastic and encouraging.

During 2014 Ali was a driving force for the women and always tried to get as many of us as she could to turn out for the English Championship races which we did and to her credit Helm Hill Ladies Team came second in the English Championships. I feel really proud to have been one of the counters for English Championships and it was great to receive a medal at the FRA Dinner .....it just goes to show that no matter how slow or fast you are ....in my case slow !....it is the taking part that counts and I never expected that I would ever receive a medal for my fell running and feel really chuffed ! This is all down to the hard work and enthusiasm of the coaches and captains in the club and it is great to be a part of such a wonderful club - so the thank you !

It really is the taking part that counts!

Here's Rowan Baker after the first of many muddy falls at Withins Skyline Junior Quarry Runs this year. A quality/fun race and one for Helm Juniors in future. It's worth it just for the goody bag!

Halloween fancy dress optional.



TRAINING Cont....

Why do I need to do strength training, I'm a runner?
As outlined left specific strength training will improve performance and reduce the likelihood of injury

When does the class take place?
On Thursday evenings, 7-8pm £5, at Queen Katherine School gym, Kendal.
The one hour session focuses on developing strength in muscle groups important to running performance. This will help reduce risk of injury and improve running performance.

The session is divided into four areas:
1. **Warm up** usually including agility ladder drills to develop foot work and co-ordination; dynamic stretching
2. **Core strength**exercises to develop supportive muscles including; plank, side plank, bridges and others
3. A **continuous circuit** involving shuttle running, with running specific strength exercises after each run (including; burpees, mountain climbers, squat thrusts, lateral jumping, forward jumping, press ups and others). A number of 'sets' are included with between 4 and 6 exercises within each set.
4. **Stretching** specific running muscles.

A look ahead to....

2015

Winter is here and that means one thing!!

The Kendal Winter League!!

Sponsored by: DIFFERENT STROKES PAINTING & DECORATING

Coming soon to a windswept fell near you!



It all kicks off Sunday 4th Jan 2015 at Scout Scar. Full schedule on website soon.

Junior and senior races from noon every Sunday till March. These races are an excellent way to get into fell racing or build your early season form ahead of the English champs race on 7th March, whether you do one or them all.





KWL sponsorship deal! Local runner Robert Crawford's company is sponsoring this years Kendal Winter League.

DIFFERENT STROKES
PAINTING & DECORATING

In a sitting room in the north of England...

"Honey. Have you seen my x-talon 190s?"

"Your what? You're not going out running again are you?"

"Well, errr it's the next winter league race – it's only short…"

"But didn't you do that last weekend and the weekend before?"

"Well yes but, it's a league and I can't afford to let Tim/Patrick/Ali/Kath/Garry/A N Other get too far ahead. Besides, I feel this one suits me better – there is less running involved."

"But you promised to help decorate the bedroom in these long dark winter months."

"Hmm, I suppose, but I've been thinking it doesn't really look that bad, especially as the bulb's gone anyhow…."

"B%!!@*#!!"*

Now, if this is familiar, never fear because help is at hand. This year, Helm Hill's Winter League is being very generously sponsored by local decorating firm Different Strokes.

For those runners who complete the series, two spot prizes will be drawn on the presentation day for decorating to the value of £500 - one for competing seniors and one for the juniors. So juniors – one of you will get your bedroom decorated professionally – free of your parents efforts.

And…Different Strokes have also offered 'free paint' to any runner commissioning them to decorate during the period of the Winter League.

Helm Hill Runners 25th anniversary year

Lots happening, keep an eye on the website

FRA CHAMPIONSHIPS 2015

The Fell Running Association organises the English & British championship series. The season-long English series consists of 6 different races each year, 2 at each distance: Short (< 10km), Medium (10-20km) and Long (>20km) with 4 races to count but must include 1 from each distance. The British series is 3 to count from 4, again one at each distance.



2014 was the clubs best ever performance in the FRA English champs. Not only did we have multiple medal winners but we also had fantastic turnouts from the whole club (see pic left at Kentmere) which importantly helps to increase valuable team champs points and really raise the Helm Hill profile.

HelmHill is affiliated to the FRA so paid up members do not need to be individual FRA members to qualify for champs (although you do get a quarterly mag if you are). Lets make 2015 even better!

Get your diaries out, here's the official FRA champs races:

English Champs 2015:

Distance	Race	Date
Short	Flower Scar	7th March
Medium	Stretton Six Summits	9th May
Long	Duddon Valley	30th May
Long	Bradda, Isle of Man	11th July
Short	Lingmell Dash	25th July
Medium	Guisborough 3 Tops	6th Sept

British Champs 2105:

Distance	Race	Date
Medium	Moelwyn Peaks (Welsh)	18th April
Medium	Durisdeer (Scottish)	13th June
Short	Lingmell Dash (English)	25th July
Long	Seven Sevens (Irish)	15th Aug

British Relay Champs: Barley near Burnley. 17th Oct

HELM HILL CLUB CHAMPS 2015

Helm Hill Senior and Junior Club Championships—similar format to this year, details on the website soon.

BOFRA 2015

The British Open Fell Runners Association organises a series of short, steep, traditional fell races, often at shows and shepherds meets. This years BOFRA championship comprised 15 junior races and 16 senior races. The 2015 races are not published yet so keep an eye on the bofra website. Whilst non-members are more than welcome to enter these races, you must be a fully paid up member of BOFRA to claim championship points.

LAKELAND CLASSICS 2015

The Lakeland Classics Trophy recognises performance in a series of 6 classic Lakeland races. http://lakelandclassicstrophy.org.uk/

Super Long A: Ennerdale Horseshoe, Duddon Valley, Wasdale, Borrowdale

Long A: Three Shires, Langdale Horseshoe

Best 3 performances to count, that must include a minimum of 2 Super Long races plus any other of the six races. Points scoring based on finish times rather than positions

"I'VE RECCE'D IT, FOLLOW ME!"

Keep those misendeavours rolling in!

Our yearly points competition for less-than-perfect efforts.

2013 Defending Champion is Billy

Leg1 Ian Hodgson Relay: Helm Hill A team set off at a gallop with eyes on deposing 9 times winners Borrowdale. 'I'll be alright, its just a few stitches in my knee, shouldn't slow me down' says Alastair Dunn just before the start. Erm…..right. .5pts Alastair.

Leg 2 Ian Hodgson Relay: Undaunted Tom and Mark Addison set off at a gallop, a little further back than hoped, with eyes on deposing 9 times winners Borrowdale etc. 'Erm….now where's that wall gone?' 5pts Tom and Mark

Limone Sky Race- Tom got a front seat ride on the hotel-airport transfer from Limone Sky race. They gave him a nice momento bag as well. They know how to treat English Fell Running Champions. Oh hang on…. turns out they thought he was going to throw up after the post-race celebrations! 5pts Tom

Airport stowaway:
After an uneventful journey to the airport from Limone Skyrace, asked for his boarding card, Tom frantically searches his pockets and says 'its somewhere inside Bergamo Airport. Helpfully he was asked to wait while all passengers boarded. Sweet talking Cumbrian Tom turned on the charm of an English Fell Running Champion and was finally bussed out on his own to the awaiting plane with a free replacement boarding card.

Relay Tentpole debacle - lashing rain, 8 people whipping tent down in a hurry, all eyes on Bill decoupling the final pole. Its just a simple slide-down-and-twist plastic sleeve affair. 6 of them came off without any hitch already. Bill steps forward to release the last one. It won't budge. Bill swears.The rain lashes down. Bill struggles applying more and more force, more and more frantic twisting. The rain lashes.People are thinking 'come on Bill, time is running out, the parking field is turning into a quagmire as we stand here watching you fumble'. Bill swears. Bill applies as much force as he can first in one direction and then in the opposite. Still it won't budge. Bill swears...From nowhere a hand appears and a deft gentle twisting of sleeve between delicately applied thumb and forefinger releases the pole. We are saved. 5 pts to Bill

Relay Thermal Debacle
In the midst of organising taking down the tent, Billy scooped up a few bits of 'lost property' and put them in the Dave White's bag for safekeeping. Dave then kindly tried to relocate the owner of a thermal by putting an announcement on the forum. In the meantime Billy realised he may have been a bit remiss in actually putting his own thermal into Dave's bag as lost property and subsequently replied on the forum to say it could be his. At the next training night Billy then asked Dave about the same thermal. Dave had to report that Bill had also thought that the thermal might be his so Billy had another thorough look at home in case. As he still couldn't find it he approached Bill next time he saw him. Total blank looks from Bill who said he had no idea what Billy was talking about, he hadn't lost a thermal and he hadn't posted on the forum. Suddenly all was clear. Billy perhaps change your forum name from Bill to Billy. And maybe check that' lost property' that you collect for people too. 5 points Billy and Dave

Relay Leg2 debacle - Dave and Bill's double recce of Leg2 was useful. At least they actually know what the correct route of Leg2 looks like as on the day they didn't quite manage to locate it. 5pts each Bill and Dave A.s

Relay Leg4
Thrust into Dave Appleyards HelmHill All-star XI for the UK Relays, Bethan promised that the lack of any racing in 2014 due to injury would not be a handicap. She'd turned the injury corner and promised to prepare meticulously for Leg 4, the last leg, bringing-it-home-for-the-club, all-eyes-on-you leg, no-pressure-then leg. Getting trollied at a wedding the night before and stumbling out of the van looking as green as her Helm vest probably wasn't the kind of prep she'd planned. However, Bethan redeemed herself by storming round the leg in a great time. The large smile on her face as she cruised up the finishing straight said 'look! I didn't even have to stop and throw up!' (she'd planned ahead and thrown up earlier in the day) 5pts Bethan

The OMG OMM
HelmHill long-distance specialist Adam Perry teamed up with 7 times Elite winner and all-round ultra running legend Steve Birkenshaw for this years OMM. Tipped for a podium place the other teams clearly had their work cut out. They needn't have worried. Somewhere on the Cheviot Hills lies Adam & Steve's dibber which dropped off

Adam's wrist whilst they were 'in the lead'. Or so they say.

100m sprint training
In preparation for Garry Beardwood's change of running discipline from fell racing to 100m track sprinting Garry has set himself the task of beating Alastair Dunns many Strava segment King of the Mountains fastest times. Well, when we say 'segment' read 'micro-segment'. Garry's latest triumph was the snippet of land between Gates 1 & 2 on Scout Scar. 5pts Garry.

Broughton Village Hall antics pt1
A packed village hall post-race and Garry Beardwood frantically crawls around the floor, between legs, under chairs, fruitlessly searching for his fellshoes amongst a sea of wet kit. He returns later dejectedly asking if anyone has seen his fellshoes in the now empty hall. They clearly hadn't as they were in the boot of his car where he's left them earlier, before the crawling around the floor episode. 5pts Garry

Broughton Village Hall antics pt2
A packed village hall post-race waited with baited breath for the results. Moments later Craig Burrow's turn to the crowd with clenched fist salute following the announcement that he'd won…….. 3rd v40 at Dunnerdale. If only it had been the 2012 Olympic stadium and not Broughton village hall. 5pts to Craig for melodrama

Oops, watch that typo
It was a double take on reading an announcement on the website from Captain Ben that "Me and Ladies are doing brilliantly so far this year" 5 points

And what sort of club is it?
Caroline spotted Dave A on a busy Saturday in Kendal High street and called over to him to say hello. Dave initially looked blankly around wondering who was talking to him. Passing shoppers were rather shocked to hear Caroline retort "Don't you recognise me with my normal clothes on?" 5 points Caroline

Another Helm Hill Medical Expert Consultant
Following on from Nurse Jayne's assessment of Lindsay's not-broken leg last year we were all dutifully concerned by the writhing agonised groans from Lee on completion of the final leg of the FRA. Concerned onlookers started talking about doctors, ambulances and the like. Mum Yvonne was called over to help her son in distress. Going on the "Mum knows best" mantra, everyone soon dispersed as firm words of "Get up, you're fine, get some clothes on, GET UP Lee" was the verdict.
(Postscript: ongoing medical assessment for possible hernia….get well soon Lee!) 5 points Yvonne

Leg 3 Ian Hodgson Recces
Rowan and Jayne met in separate cars at Kirkstone for the usual car-shuffle. Engrossed in conversation about the route, they both then got into Rowan's car and drove down to the end at Sykeside……before realising they now needed to drive back up to get Jayne's car……. to drive back down again….. to leave a car at the end and then drive back up…... to finally start the reccy up Red Screes. Halfway up Jayne just thought she had better check with Rowan that she had got her car keys…...a quick trip back down and back up sorted that one out. Probably quicker to jog back up Kirkstone ladies. Double whammy 10 points each

Garry and John however managed the car shuffle successfully and set off keenly on their recce. Speed was the order of the day as light was fading fast. Garry checked the time on his phone at the top of Red Screes, yep it was definitely getting dark. So dark in fact that the descent reccy proved a bit futile as they could barely see where they were going, let alone the best line. Aah well, at least they'd done the car bit right and John drove Garry back up Kirkstone to his car. Hang on though where were his car keys? Last seen in his pocket with the phone - now most likely in the pitch black at the top of Red Screes. The second recce whilst successful in finding the descent line, did not find the missing car keys. And John didn't actually do leg 3 in the end either as he went over on his ankle 5 points John and 10 points Garry

Alcohol Awareness
Following on from several previous concerns over certain members' partiality to a tipple or 2, concern was raised when on the start line at Sedbergh Hills Adam declared his fitness for the race with "At least I'm sober". Similar dedication to the cause came from Helen Samson, who, on trying to arrange an evening run with the ladies announced she couldn't go after 7 on a Friday as that was most definitely "wine o'clock" (5 points Helen and Adam)

Lee took the racing line for the final descent into the finish at Shipman Knotts and sprinted for the line to keep his placing. The huddle of people at the finish cheered and clapped…...and watched Lee sprint past everyone including timekeepers Lindsay and Russ and disappear at speed down the lane. " I was just checking that the finish wasn't at the start" he reported as he jogged back up. 5 points Lee

Chat up Line Tips
Late into the night at the FRA dinner, Lee was approached by a top female fellrunner whose opening line to Lee was "Do you do any running?" Slightly put out, Lee tried hard to think of an impressive running feat and was seen to puff out his chest as he proudly announced "I was 38th at Kentmere!". Not sure the conversation lasted much longer. 5 more points Lee

"And the 2014 English FRA Champion is……"
oh hang on a minute he's in the toilets.
5 points Tom

Twitter Announcement
A photo of Garry (aka @Custardpowder) was posted on twitter. People were a little surprised by the reply of "That's not me, I'm a woman!" although they may have been too polite to say so. (The observant few however managed to notice the almost identical username of @custardpower, may take a while to live it down though) 5 more points

And after the best year ever in this competition the **2014 I've Reccied It champion is**…….. **GARRY BEARDWOOD!**

It was a slow start but with a flurry of success in the last couple of months, Garry timed his performance to perfection.
Congratulations Garry, it's better than winning the club champs anyway!
Garry is pictured (below left) with 100 volunteers on a systematic search for his lost car keys. And being presented with the fantastic lego trophy on right ——>





Good luck everyone for next year - remember points mean prizes, don't forget to let us know what everyone else has done to prevent yourself winning the coveted award.

WEB STUFF

HelmHillRunners website - Don't forget www.helmhill.co.uk is the place to go for uptodate news & events, membership info, training info, race pictures, reports, results, sales and wants, forum etc of Helm Hill Runners . **HelmHillRunners Forum** - really uptodate race updates, reports, recce's being organised, lifts to races, musings etc. No need to login to view, only to add/reply. Link off main website

Other fellrunning sites: Fell Runners Association http://www.fellrunner.org.uk (including FRA Forum), British Open Fell Runners Association http://www.bofra.co.uk

Latest wider fell news online: fell, mountain, trail and xc at www.mudsweatandtears.co.uk , local fell stuff at fellrunningbriefs.blogspot.com ,

Twitter: @HelmHill Live reporting from fell races and various other updates: @fellrunninbrief #fellrunning @mudsweatandtears .

FELL FASHION

An unexpected colour combination can make a major statement.

Apparently.

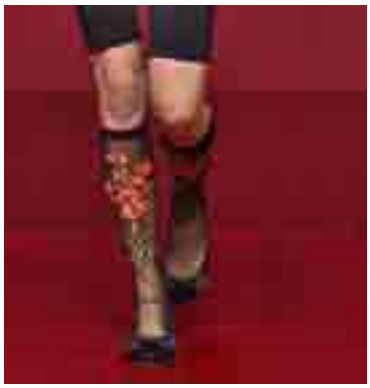
On one side of the Atlantic savvy Reese Witherspoon paired a Rory Beca dress in hot pink and red with matching red sandals. Yes really!



Meanwhile our two fashionistas at the BA Fell Relays, in trend-setting Middleton, wore .....erm. ...vibrant salmon-pink long-socks paired with garish cerise gloves, offset with mustard shoes and topped with washed-out pink/blue buffs.

Next edition: what's cool this winter

Fashion loves adopting the practical and making it cool. Compression socks have been prancing around the fells for a good few years now and AT LAST on the runways this summer, or at least fashion versions of them were. Knee-high, sometimes medical-looking socks appeared in collections ranging from Jil Sander to Dolce & Gabbana.



Our two fashionistas seen here at the relays confided just before setting off that rather than being about health, performance, not having to wash mud off lower legs, less heather/bracken shin-slashing induced whincing torture in the bath, this is really just the newest incarnation of the socks-and-sandals look pioneered by Prada and seen at the relays in North Wales last year..

LOST & FOUND

LOST:

Little plastic fancy ring thing. Somewhere in the Cheviot Hills on Saturday 26th Oct. Maybe in the heather. Or in a peat hag. Or possibly in a beck.

Sentimental value. Contact Adam Perry



Lost & Found
We are delighted to say that the two lost HelmHill ~~cousins~~ runners at the IH Relays finally turned up





Reasons to run with Helm Hill no.1: We know what trophies are for

The Helm Hill way....

√





X

The other way....



COMPETITION CORNER

A fabulous new competition to while away the winter.....

101 uses of a used fell race number!

Entry No. 1: For when you're a little peckish after a long hard ~~race~~ sleep. Jasper Stones, aged 4 months.



Send your entries to newsletter@helmhill.co.uk. The best entry will win a bespoke, state of the art, proven race product.

MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations to Victoria & Paul Upton on the birth of Matilda.

Membership form is in the post.



Remember membership information and forms are available from the website or see Bethan Proctor on a Wednesday night





Winter Caption Comp :entries to newsletter@helmhill.co.uk

Wildlife Corner



Coming soon: True Adventures of Alfie The Permanently Hungry Ultra Running Fell Dog



Autumn Caption winner:

"Lee! How long did dad say we had to hold this core strength position for?"

Favourite races send us an article—as short / long as you like!

Race reports—send us an article, as short / long as you like!

Want to see something / contribute something?

Recipes/Misendeavours/Poetry……..

All suggestions / contributions welcome.

Send to: newsletter@helmhill.co.uk

Deadline: end of March

"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by." Douglas Adams

NEXT EDITION: OUT END APRIL

Pics

As well as the Helm Hill Gallery check out the following for excellent race pics:

RacingSnakes: racingsnakes.com

Dobo: Fellrunner.net

Woodentops: Woodentops.org

PAUL TURNER: ULTRA TRAIL DU MONT BLANC

The full article!

Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc 29/08/14 to 31/08/14
Chamonix, France

The Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc is a single stage ultramarathon. It starts in Chamonix and circumnavigates the Mont Blanc massif covering 168km and an elevation gain of approximately 9600m. Starting in Chamonix, France, it passes through Italy and Switzerland then returns back to Chamonix. There were approximately 2300 starters.

My UTMB journey started somewhat unintentionally. Having done the Lakeland 100 in 2013, I realised that also completing the Ultimate Trails 100k in 2013 would give me the qualifying points I needed for me to apply. Once I did, I was surprised at how much it seemed to mean to me to get a place in 2014. I had understood there was less chance for a first time applicant, so I was somewhat over the moon when I was successful. This gave me a massive focus for the year. In the meantime I had also entered the L100 again. Although only 5 weeks separate the two events, I had not wanted to miss out on the L100 if I hadn't got in the UTMB and in some respects I thought, what better training could I have for the UTMB than a 100miler with 6300m of ascent? In hindsight, maybe the L50 would have been better, but who's to know, unless I try again! J

I came out of the L100 feeling really good. Although it was super tough with the heat and I had experienced some real low points in the middle of the race, I had smashed over 5 hours off my 2013 time and finished in 28:40 and 27th place. I felt miles better than I had the previous year and thought I'd recovered pretty quickly. I was out on my roadbike the Tuesday after and then running my 12 mile route from Kentmere the following Sunday, even though this took me about 30min longer than normal! Essentially the 5 weeks between the two events were about recovering and maintaining shape. There are plenty of guides out there as to how to train to run a 100miler, but nothing as to how to do another one 5 weeks later. I guess there's a reason for that.

So no sooner had I done a few runs than I was tapering again, although the start of tapering did include cycling Stage 1 of this year's Tour de France; a completely separate adventure involving gale force winds! Again though, my legs felt great at the end of this and it gave me a lot of confidence that I was in good shape.

My friends Emily (Led) and Helen (Mannie) had arranged their two week holiday with Rachael and Sue to Chamonix over the weekend of the UTMB. They had kindly said I could stay with them whilst I was there, which was absolutely brilliant. I travelled out to Chamonix on Wednesday 27th. There were a few other UTMBers on the flight from Liverpool and then the transfer bus from Geneva was pretty much full of others doing the UTMB or one of the other events.

On Thursday morning I walked into the town centre to register. It was a lovely warm morning and it was exciting seeing everyone in the queue with their mandatory kit for inspection as I waited to head in. The registration process was pretty slick and it didn't take too long for it to be my turn. Passport shown to confirm who I was, kit inspection was next with a random print of items to have inspected: my coat, bandage, mobile and headtorches. My coat got a long look over, but the problem came with my batteries for the spare torch – I had left the spares for that one behind! The solution was to borrow some from a fellow competitor, then give them back immediately after the check - I did the same for someone who needed a water bottle!

Then it was on to envelopes with tags. First was wrist tag, then a tag for my bag as well as my race number. All 3 could be needed at a checkpoint. Then, finally, were the official race t-shirt, drop bag and rubbish collection bags. And that was it, done and registered! There was nothing left to do other than chill and wait for 5.30pm on Friday.

On the Friday, I was pretty much left to myself as Led, Mannie, Rach and Sue all took off to do various activities. I wandered into Cham and met Gary. I've known Gaz for many years from Worcester and he was also running the UTMB. I sorted some food for lunch, headed back to the chalet and took it easy. Looking around Cham early in the day, I was surprised how many people were already in their UTMB gear and trying to hand in their drop bags. It almost looked like a number had checked out of where they were staying in anticipation of heading straight to the airport after the finish.

At about 3.30 pm I started to put my gear on, including kinesio tape to try and support my IT bands and reduce chaffing. As I get ready for these events, especially something like the UTMB, I get increasingly nervous. The girls all rushed about getting ready, then about 4.30pm I said I had to set off for the start. The nerves and anticipation really started to build as we walked to the start, but it was great walking down with Led, Mannie, Rach and Sue. It felt like we were in this together.

As we got nearer the start, more and more fellow competitors and their friends and family came into view converging on the square. We were directed from the very front of the start around to the back of the square in front of the church. There was a sea of people rammed in, all sorts of nationalities, colours, shapes and sizes. I'd arranged to meet Gary on the steps of the church and soon tracked him down. We all stood and chatted for a bit waiting for the pre-race briefing that was due at 5.00pm.

I can't really remember much of the briefing other than it was confirmed we would be running the full course at the scheduled start time. During this time, ominous clouds started to build down the valley and we started to feel the first drops of rain. About 5.15pm, Gary and I decided to head into the main square and get ourselves in amongst the starters. So I said good-

bye to the girls who then headed down the course to get a better view of us setting off.
The square was really tight with people. It was funny looking at everyone in their gear. In particular the Japanese guy donning a lightweight sumo suit, including inflatable pillow!
Then just before the start, the ominous clouds delivered and the rain really started to come down. There was a scramble for waterproof jackets from nearly everyone.
Then we were into it! A countdown from 10 and we were off!
At least those at the front were, as I could see them streaming under the start. My brother had texted to say he could see me on the webcam, so I waved as we crossed the line.
It was absolutely fantastic, but not much running. The barriers and then the crowd were just like the Tour de France and we were squeezed together preventing us from getting running, but there was so far to go it didn't really matter.
There were a couple of false starts as we would get into a jog, but then a sudden slow down. I had no idea where along the route the girls were, but eventually I spotted them shouting and waving and they spotted me. It was brilliant and I stopped for a quick hug before being swept along.
It seemed to take a good 10 minutes or so before we actually got into some kind of a stride, but there were still people all around and it felt like being in the middle of a big city run rather than an ultra. I had deliberately kept my poles stowed to avoid stabbing anyone, but there was plenty of dodging of others to be done. Gaz and I stuck together for some way and at times I felt like Gaz was pushing the pace along. Once we were out of Cham and onto proper trail the numbers of people and the wet combined to create a right muddy track and I couldn't help but think of the Muddy Woody 6 race.
The first section is pretty flat through to the first checkpoint at Les Houches. I remember coming off the muddy track onto the road to climb up to Les Houches itself. There were still loads of people around and into Les Houches great crowds lined the streets cheering us through. One poor coach driver was caught up in it all trying to turn around with people lining the streets and runners pouring past. This first checkpoint was a proper scrum. Although only 8km into the race people dived for drinks and you had to pile in to get anything. I looked around for Gary, but there was no chance, so I headed on.
Soon out of Les Houches, I hit the first real climb up Le Delevret. It was a tree lined climb up the track and was pretty humid. It was still light at this time and there were loads of people about. I must have taken my jacket off at some point as I remember hiding under trees to put it back on when a heavy shower came through. People were in great spirits, especially when the helicopter came over us filming our climb. No idea if I made it onto TV or not! The climb up Le Delevret was just short of 900m. We topped out through a minor checkpoint and continued along the tracks around ski-lifts and cablecars. The descent was down gravelly, greasy, grassy ski-runs and it was an effort to stay up right. Some people came bombing past taking advantage of the slope, but I preferred to stay on my feet as far as possible. The steep descent hurt my toes and I thought I'm not sure I'm going to fancy 100miles of this!
Le Delevret: Time of passage: Fri 19:32 Race time: 02:00:21 Position: 1095 Distance since start: 13.8km Height gain since start: 868m
I think I was pretty relieved to arrive in Saint Gervais and the bottom of the hill. I don't remember too much about Saint Gervais itself other than it was still an almighty scrum for drinks and food. There were tables of cheese, meats and cakes and I grabbed a few pieces of cheese, slurped on a few pieces of orange quarters and took a little bit of stock in amongst the madness. There was nowhere to sit, so once I thought I'd shovelled down enough food, coke and sparkling water, I donned my head torch and got going again.
Somewhere around Saint-Gervais it must have become dark. I'm not exactly sure where and I really don't remember the next sections through the dark that well.
Saint Gervais: Time of passage: Fri 20:29 Race time: 02:57:26 Position: 1073 Distance since start: 21.0km Height gain since start: 951m
The next checkpoint at Les Contamines was the first one where assistance was allowed and a person with an assistance ticket could come into the checkpoint with you. As I approached Les Contamines I could hear the music and see the lights. People also came down the track to greet runners coming in. Through the fantastic cheering and support I managed to hear a text from Led saying my eta was 10:35 and they were planning to arrive at 10:15. I replied saying I was about 5min away at 10:00! As I checked in, I looked for the girls, but I couldn't spot them in the crowd. I filled up my water bladder from the taps, then headed into the food tent to shovel in some more cheese and cake. I got a text saying "I can't see you!", to which I replied "In tent" and then saw Led's face poking through the side of the tent curtain! I filled up my food and headed out to meet Led. There wasn't much assistance she could offer, but mentally it is fantastic to see people you know. Just beyond the barriers was Mannie too. Mannie had Gary's assistance ticket, but the system is clever enough to know if your runner hasn't arrived, so she wasn't allowed inside the barriers. It really lifted me to see them and have them supporting me.
We spoke about how I was going and feeling. No doubt I said it was tough, but other than feeling damp, I seemed to be going pretty well. I headed out of Les Contamines checkpoint and saw Mannie again who'd run up the road, then Rachael and Sue. I spoke to them and gave them all a hug and they sent me on my way into the night. The next time I would see them would be Courmayeur in Italy!
Les Contamines : Time of passage: Fri 22:05 Race time: 04:33:22 Position: 812 Distance since start:

30.7km Height gain since start: 1486m
Out of Les Contamines, it was by now properly dark and I was about to start onto the long pull up to the Croix du Bonhomme at 2439m. All I really remember from the next few sections is the amazing view of long lines of head torch lights ahead and behind like a motorway. It would have made a brilliant photo. I'd seen similar on the L100, but with the numbers of people this was something else. The race briefing warned there may be some fog on the summits, but other than giving a strange glow in the light of the head torch, there wasn't too much to bother about as the track was so clear. It was never particularly cold during the night and the most I needed to do was keep my waterproof coat handy. In fact, I think I went through most of the first night just wearing my t-shirt.
Refuge de la Croix Bonhomme : Time of passage: Sat 01:06 Race time: 07:35:13 Position: 646 Distance since start: 44.2km Height gain since start: 2823m
I struggle to particularly remember the order of the checkpoints too. As they are generally so similar in what they offer to eat and drink, nothing particularly made any stand out and be memorable. This is in contrast to the L100 where each team tries to add an individual twist. If I'm correct, La Balme did stand out with rows of tents up the hill side, plus loads of runners warming and drying themselves by a sizeable bonfire. It was tempting, but I thought best to keep moving. I do remember bumping into a fellow British guy at a few of the checkpoints along the way. Generally he was just leaving as I was just arriving. We had spoken briefly on the trail about various events and hoped-for times. I'm also pretty sure Lac Combal was a large marquee out on the hillside. I took the chance for a sit on the bench and can also remember my poles being stepped on by someone in the dark.
Lac Combal: Time of passage: Sat 04:51 Race time: 11:19:56 Position: 591 Distance since start: 64.1km Height gain since start: 3781m
I'm not too sure when the sun started to appear again, but it must have been before the Col Checrout checkpoint. I do remember this checkpoint for the honey on bread that I was pointed in the direction of. By this time my legs were certainly feeling the course and I remember being overtaken by a few runners on the descent toward the checkpoint. Again I made sure I ate and drank and didn't hang about, as there wasn't that far to Courmayeur and a chance to sort myself out with access to my drop bag.
Col Checrout : Time of passage: Fri 06:39 Race time: 13:08:12 Position: 542 Distance since start: 73.3km Height gain since start: 4249m
From Col Checrout, Courmayeur seems tantalisingly close being only 4km away. But it is a super steep descent which really bashed my thighs as the trail kept winding steeply down the hill. I was really pleased the trail had dried out a fair bit from the overnight rain as much more mud would have made it so tough to stay on my feet. I had fallen at one point during the night, which grazed my knee and put a small tear in my jacket, but thankfully during the course of the whole event that was about it.
The descent into Courmayeur really pounded me and I was so glad when the tops of the houses got closer and I got onto a proper track. Then I was in amongst the houses and down towards the centre. I received a text from Led saying they would be in Courmayeur and as I got towards the Sport Centre I could see Led and Mannie on the side of the road cheering me on. This was about 7am in the morning. Led and Mannie had got up really early to catch the coach through the Mont Blanc tunnel to meet me. This was amazing!
They ran with me down to the Sports Centre where I momentarily peeled off to get my drop bag. Mannie then appeared in the funnel into the Sport Centre with Led on the outside of the fence this time. Inside the checkpoint was rammed with fellow runners and their assistants. Mannie found us a place to sit and we set to sorting me out.
I can't remember exactly in what order these things occurred, but I cleaned myself up with wet wipes and changed my top for team orange colours! I drank two bottles of chocolate milkshake and refilled supplies in my running bag. Most importantly I cleaned up and sorted out my feet. They had been feeling sore in some strange places, but I worked out it was my usually trusty Salomon insoles that were pinching them. Fortunately I had put spare insoles in the bag. I also went for thicker Injini toe socks with Drymax over them and suddenly my feet felt in a whole lot better place!
As we sat there chatting about how I was, and the various other people around me, the guy next to me tapped me and pointed to his shorts. I warned Mannie what I thought he was about to do, but he didn't hang about and whipped them off in front of her! I'm not too sure what Mannie got to see and if she did what state it was in!
It is quite reassuring to see how others are doing. I knew my thighs were smashed, but I had no blisters, I was eating and drinking pretty well and every time I'd had a break at a checkpoint I'd felt good to go again. Others had tape all over their feet, already looked shot to pieces and I could see there was a danger they would struggle to get moving again.
It seemed a slightly strange set up in Courmayeur as I had to leave Mannie to go upstairs into the main hall for food. Once I was happy I'd sorted myself out I headed up and tried to get plenty of the tea, coke, pasta and cake down me. But it felt a bit strange leaving Led and Mannie outside when they'd come so far to see and help me. I rang Led who told me to get on eating, but to see what food I could steal for them! There were also mattresses laid out and I smiled at the runners taking a chance to get some sleep. I can't imagine what it must be like to stop, sleep, and then get going again.
I was somewhat wary of how long I was taking at Courmayeur, however I knew that the cut-offs were far more relaxed from here on to the finish and I was already 4 hours up. But I had to get moving again. So I

grabbed my drop bag and headed to the exit where I handed it back in again, to be reunited in Chamonix.
Just off the steps were Led and Mannie. I handed them the stolen cake then walked with them out of the checkpoint. They set me off on my way out of Courmayeur and up the next climb. I wasn't sure when I'd next see them. It was fantastic to be together and I can easily see how runners could spend a long time in a checkpoint when their family or friends are there.
It was hard work to get going again and I hadn't actually even reached the proper half way. There was still plenty more to come, but the sun was shining and it looked set for a stunning day. There was a fair bit of road up and out of Courmayeur, but I also remembered a chap who'd said to me "If you can get out of Courmayeur ok you'll make it".
Courmayeur : Arrived: Sat 07:24 Dep: 08:06 Race time: 13:52:44 Position: 536 Distance since start: 77.1km Height gain since start: 4249m

I don't really remember the climb up to Refuge Bertone, but I do remember the next section through the Refuge Bonatti and Arnuva checkpoints as there was a lot of great trail running and the landscape was stunning. I had the most amazing views of the Italian side of the Mont Blanc range and just marvelled at what was around me. What a place to be running in and how lucky was I.
Refuge Bertone: Time of passage: Sat 09:30 Race time: 15:58:32 Position: 519 Distance since start: 82.0km Height gain since start: 5065m
I have never before seen so many runners asleep on the trail! You would spot them just off to the side of the track lying down, often wearing their waterproofs, soaking up the sun. One chap even had his mobile phone laid across his face. I think this was probably set to ring and wake him up at some appropriate point!
Somewhere towards Arnuva I was surprised by a runner blasting past me. He was properly flying along. Then I recognised him as Stuart Mills, winner of the L100 in 2013 and a high placer in this year's L50. I couldn't work out why he would come blasting past me as I imagined he would have been somewhere in the top 100 or even top 50.
Arnuva was a nice mountain café checkpoint and I took time to refuel and soak up the views. I was feeling pretty bashed but in good spirits and knew I could keep going. The checkpoints are a real treat. They really help to break up the race and give you a nice short term focus to aim for, rather than looking at everything that is left to come.
Arnuva: Time of passage: Sat 12:04 Race time: 18:17:42 Position: 505 Distance since start: 94.5km Height gain since start: 5450m
From Arnuva I climbed to the highest point of the whole race, the Grand col Ferret and also into Switzerland! It was a beautiful climb, in fact the whole of this section was stunning. I was by now looking towards the northern end of the Mont Blanc range and the peaks of Aiguille de Argentiere. It really did feel like I was making progress around these mountains. I tried to take a couple of photos with my mobile, but none of them would do the scene justice. The climb was another steep ascent, but in reaching this I knew there was a long descent to follow, then what would effectively be just three more climbs. I still had 60km to go but it is amazing how, on these events, things start to feel like they're coming into place.
Grand Col Ferret: Time of passage: Sat 13:26 Race time: 19:54:31 Position: 484 Distance since start: 99.0km Height gain since start: 6204m
Descending from the Grand col Ferret into Switzerland really did feel like I was entering another country as I dropped into a new valley with a very different feel. I was now on a general descent for about 20km and whilst there was some steep stuff that kept attacking the thighs, it was mostly on good trail and I felt like I was moving pretty well. On the descent, I was even more surprised to recognise Stuart Mills walking along the track ahead of me. After his earlier passing of me at high speed, I thought he would be away and gone. As I passed, I gave him a brief word of encouragement which he smiled at, but he didn't look great and I wasn't sure whether he would finish or not.
As I dropped toward Praz de Port I started to feel some pain in my left shin. I'm not too sure what it was, but there was no way I was going to let it stop me now. These were proper Swiss alpine scenes I was passing through and beautiful villages. There were plenty more cheers and support running through Praz de Fort, including some car horns and then it was soon up for the relatively small climb to Champex-Lac.
I ran into the Champex checkpoint to great support and especially good cheers from fellow Brits. The Brit supporters around the course were great. The little flag on your race number enables everyone to see which country you're from and the encouragement you get from other British people is fantastic. – "Go on Paul! Do it for Britain!" being a particular favourite cheer. Into the checkpoint I took the chance to pile into the food and take a good breather. I also managed a dump at Champex and felt much better for that too. There was some lovely dessert to be had as well as the usual cheese and meat!
Champex-Lac: Time of passage: Sat 18:03 Race time: 24:03:04 Position: 423 Distance since start: 122.4km Height gain since start: 6907m
Out of Champex, I felt in good spirits and knew there were just 3 climbs to go. It is funny how you can break it down as each of the remaining 3 climbs were higher than most Lake District Fells, but having done what I already had, what was left now seemed to pale in comparison.
As I left the village an old chubby guy started running alongside. His friends were laughing, so I took off my running belt and race number and offered them to him. His friends thought that was hilarious!
La Giete was a toughish climb and seemed to go on. I certainly felt like I was slowing with others passing

me. As we climbed, I thought we must be approaching the checkpoint as the sound of constantly clanging cow bells grew ever louder. I had become so used to hearing them being rung by supporters, it was almost a surprise to see them actually being worn by a herd of cows. Every cow was wearing one. I have no idea how that noise doesn't drive them mad!

La Giete: Time of passage: Sat 20:30 Race time: 26:58:46 Position: 388 Distance since start: 134.0km Height gain since start: 7726m

As I dropped into Trient in the darkness, I found myself going along with a talkative French guy. As we approached Trient down through the woods he kindly warned me to watch my step and go careful, as the route was so steep. He also told me how fast Kilian Jornet had descended the section and that you could get wine and beer at the checkpoint!

Into the checkpoint, I started to recognise some of the faces I had seen in other checkpoints. Again I took what seemed a fairly quick stop, taking on some food and drink and then getting moving. Pepsi and mineral water had become my drinks of choice and I was really enjoying savoury snacks, whilst the thought of the flapjack I had made in my bag made me feel queasy. In the CP there were plenty of people enjoying wine and beer, but I think they were mostly supporters!

Trient: Time of passage: Sat 21:37 Race time: 27:51:45 Position: 376 Distance since start: 138.9km Height gain since start: 7802m

From Trient, there are less than 30km to go and I knew I would do it. Just two more climbs and only one to Vallorcine and seeing everyone. By now I was into my second night, but I felt good. I hadn't had any hallucinations and other than getting a bit chilly at the checkpoints I was comfortable. As I descended into Vallorcine, I thought I could hear someone shout my name, but wasn't sure. I broke out of the trees and descended over an open field toward the lights of the village and the checkpoint. As I descended I think I heard the girls before they spotted me! It was great to see them again. I'd had a text from Led saying my estimated time of arrival had surprised them, but were racing to make it. It wasn't far into the tent of the check point and Led came in with me. Again Led wasn't allowed to do much for me, I had to get my own drinks and food. Happily we could sit over by the barrier with Mannie, Rachael and Sue and talk with them all, whilst I ate soup, bread, cheese and meat again. As I mentioned earlier, it is so tempting to hang around when your friends are there. You almost feel bad that they've come to see you for such a short time before you disappear again. But they encouraged me out of the CP and on my way and the next time I would see them would be the finish!

The girls told me I was now in the top 400 and was moving through the field! I suspect that my quicker times through CPs may have been the answer as I certainly didn't feel a world beater on the climbs.

Vallorcine: Time of passage: Sun 00:30 Race time: 30:41:06 Position: 342 Distance since start: 149.2km Height gain since start: 8651m

I now had less than 20km to go. I started to imagine getting it done, but the final climb is tough and makes you know about it. It is a really rocky, gnarly trail involving some scrambling, and, of course, this comes when you've already done over 150km. However I found that if I got into a nice pace behind people or on my own, I could keep going all the way to the top of the climbs. I preferred not to have people following behind me wherever I could help it. Topping out at Tete au Vents was a massive relief, but the trail did not stop its punishment there. What looked like it should be a nice descent to La Flegere was a rocky trail that tried to trip me and turn my ankles just when I was near the end and also at my most tired. I thought how ironic it would be to break my ankle now when so close to the end and was determined not to let that happen. I was especially determined after a small fall when, fortunately, I was wearing my gloves and didn't have the pole loops on.

Over this flatter section, I took the chance to get away from a number of runners. During the course of my UTMB I had not really got running with anyone. I spoke to nearly everyone who went past me or I went past and struck up a few conversations, but never got into any long sections with anyone. It was noticeable that my fellow runners seemed somehow less friendly than at other events. Whether this is because there is a real mix of nationalities or because race numbers and names are worn on your front so runners coming from behind can't see your name, I am not sure. I went past the British chap I'd met earlier in the event at a few checkpoints. He seemed to have hooked up with a Japanese guy and whilst I followed them up the climb I decided to try and get away over the flat and the descent into Chamonix. I wanted to beat him to the finish, but I can't particularly remember the reason why!

La Flegere: Time of passage: Sun 03:38 Race time: 34:07:06 Position: 310 Distance since start: 159.9km Height gain since start: 9733m

To get off this trail at La Flegere was a great relief. I tried to push on and get away from those behind me. I was feeling really good and determined to finish strongly. I got into the checkpoint, where to my great surprise they had crisps! I'd been craving them and nowhere had them until now. I took on a few glasses of coke and without sitting took off on the last 8km towards Chamonix!

The first bit out of La Flegere is a steep descent down a ski run and then onto a gravel track. I remembered the wide gravel track from years ago when I'd been on a Conville Trust Alpine mountaineering course with Led. I belted downhill as quickly as I could. It was now all downhill from here. Off the track into the woods and I kept moving as well as possible enjoying the fact there were less rocks to bash my feet. They were sore by now and I had the makings of a good blister under my right forefoot, but I wasn't going to

slow for it. As I descended I started to think about the finish, I wanted to have a good time gap between me and anyone in front or behind so that I could enjoy the finish to myself. I had gone past the guy I'd left the CP with, but I was now gaining on someone else ahead and didn't really have any idea how close I was to the finish. So I pushed on to try and overtake. I'm not sure how many people I overtook down through the trees, but it was a good few. Many were struggling to move and I had no problem going past them.

To come out of the woods into Chamonix was just brilliant. With the light of the street lamps, I turned off my head torch, but that stopped me from seeing the luminous markers and I turned it back on to follow the route. I followed the route down toward the river and the run in to the finish. As I got near the river bridge I could see Led, Mannie, Rachael and Sue waiting for me. I ran in with a huge lift and I think just carried on running toward the finish with them all running alongside me and Jigsaw barking – absolutely brilliant!

We ran up in towards the centre, where they took the shortcut to the finish line and I took the loop around. I came around the back of the buildings and up toward the church and the finish.

Wow, what a feeling to run up to the finish and over the line. Led, Mannie, Rachael and Sue all came out onto the finish to celebrate with me. I remember giving Led a massive high five in celebration. Loads of hugs and I was almost in a daze.

I had finished the UTMB in 35 hours and 14minutes in 303rd place!

Chamonix: Time of passage: Sun 04:46 Race time: 35:14:38 Position: 303 Distance since start: 167.7km Height gain since start: 9796m

Eventually I gathered myself together and went around to get my finishers gilet. I stood by the Finishers sign for a few photos and got changed into my UTMB t-shirt and the gilet. I didn't feel like anything to eat, but took a can of beer and cracked into that!

It is a brilliant adventure and one I will definitely do again in the future.

