

## CLUB WATCH

# HELM HILL RUNNERS

**Web:** [www.helmhillrunners.co.uk](http://www.helmhillrunners.co.uk)

There are thousands of running clubs up and down the UK, all doing great things for our sport. Here, in our new feature, you can find out more about them, their members and what makes them special

**H**elm Hill Runners is a small, but hugely popular, fell running club based in the town of Kendal, Cumbria. It is ideally situated in the North West of England for running up and down really steep hills, with both the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District mountains on their doorstep.

The Club was founded in 1990 by Ken Shuttleworth and Billy Proctor and is very proud of its family roots. "We have a growing membership of over 160 which includes a high proportion of juniors," says club chairman Tim Murray. "Our name comes from the hill on which we train during the summer, a promontory on the outskirts of the town with spectacular views across Morecambe Bay and the Lakeland fells."

According to Murray, right from the outset in 1990, the primary focus for the club was on the development of its junior runners and this is now paying off. It has had some notable successes with James Knox who won the U13 National Cross Country Championship in 2009 and Tom Addison who has represented England at International fell running events.

The club regularly has an impressive 60-70 youngsters who

turn up for Wednesday evening training sessions, who are usually accompanied by their parents and 30 or so senior club members. The club trains 52 weeks of the year (in summer on the fells and on the roads in the winter) and always tries to search out big hills to train on – "the steeper the better" according to Murray.

In winter, the club organises the infamous Kendal Winter League. This is a series of 12 races run on consecutive Sundays from January to March at various locations close to Kendal. These regularly attract 150 or more competitors from clubs all over the North West and it's not unusual to have over 60 runners in the U12 races. The age of the competitors typically ranges from 6 to 70. "A very modest £2.50 (£1 for Junior) entry fee gets you a Sunday morning blast up a hill, complete with lashings of mud and every possible variety of weather," says Murray. "All races are flagged so runners can't get lost and the feeling of satisfaction as they sit down for Sunday lunch comes free of charge!"

Murray says that wherever there is a fell race, you will generally find a good sprinkling of the green Helm Hill vests...particularly at races which start and finish at pubs! "We are pretty much up for anything," he says, "from the Coniston Gullies race which covers only one mile but includes 900 ft of climbing, to the epic 37 mile Old Counties Tops race which takes in Helvellyn, Scafell Pike and Coniston Old Man which is about 10,000ft of 'up'. We also have a growing number of Club Members who have completed the Bob Graham Round - 'Google' it if you want to be impressed!"

Fell running has a long tradition in the Lake District and is a fantastic way to enjoy the hills. Helm Hill Runners hopes that by encouraging new runners of all ages to the sport, it will help to ensure that it has a bright future. It certainly seems like it's doing just that.

➤ Each month we will feature a different running club. If you want your club to be featured, drop us a line at [rf.upfront@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:rf.upfront@kelsey.co.uk)



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