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WINTER 2019
ISSUE 109

george fisher



Inspiring Adventures since 1957 | Keswick, The Lake District



Image: Tom McNally

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WIN!

A LUXURY WEEKEND
BREAK AT THE
LODORE FALLS HOTEL

Worth £1000



WELCOME TO THE WINTER ISSUE OF OUR GEORGE FISHER MAGAZINE

Your guide to what's new and exciting this season, plus plenty more to inform and entertain. Like the store itself, we like to think that The George Fisher Magazine is a celebration of adventures in the great outdoors both in the Lake District and around the world.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS



LISA BERGERUD GEORGE FISHER APPAREL AND FOOTWEAR BUYER

Lisa has been at George Fisher for over 30 years, starting on the shop floor she is now our apparel and footwear buyer. Lisa has travelled throughout the world, and is a passionate skier, runner and enthusiastic cyclist. You may recognise her feet from Instagram @lisa_bergerud where you will get daily pics of her adventures.



RACHEL KEARNS GEORGE FISHER MARKETING MANAGER

Rachel started at George Fisher in 2017, finally landing her dream job as Marketing Manager here at George Fisher. She's so proud to be working for this iconic Lake District shop. Loving the history, the ethos, the extensive product range, and everything else that makes us so popular with its staff and customers.



ANDY AIREY

Well-known to Keswick locals after 26 years at George Fisher, Andy now works with various event companies and on the Lake District Pound, Andy is also a trustee of the Lake District Foundation and is regularly to be found on the Lake District fells. Since losing Sophie, his daughter, to suicide in 2018 he is now an advocate for PAPYRUS, the suicide prevention charity.



JENNIFER GRANGE

Jen originally worked at George Fisher; her career has seen her move from outdoor instructing to conservation and ecology, with 7 years as an army reservist. She now focuses on well-being and inspiring people to connect with nature, through working for Natural England and running her own business, Lakeland Well-being. You'll find Jen on Facebook @lakelandwellbeing



ATHENA MELLOR

Athena is a writer, photographer, climber, hiker, and all-out fanatic for spending time in the great outdoors. In 2018 we worked with Athena alongside Patagonia where Athena produced our fantastic 'Best of Borrowdale' blog. Over the course of the year, she will be sharing her passion for living a life inspired by the outdoors. Follow Athena on Instagram @athenamellor



KEITH RICHARDSON

Keith is from Keswick and was a journalist on newspapers and magazines before setting up publishers River Greta Writer. He has written a number of award-winning books including "Ivver Sen" on Lakeland shepherds; "Jack's Yak" on Cumbrian trees; "Joss" about legendary fell runner Joss Naylor, and "The Greta" on the river that flows through Keswick and the lives of its people. For further information go to rivergretawriter.co.uk



RICHARD SMITH GEORGE FISHER DIGITAL MARKETING

Richard grew up in the north east of England and moved to the Lakes to follow a passion for the outdoors. He has worked as an outdoor instructor, photographer and on digital marketing. Rich loves climbing and walking, and also volunteers for the local mountain rescue team. Follow him on Instagram @richsmith_



MARK SEATON

Mark is an international mountain guide, a member of both the French and the British Mountain Guides Associations and has written about his climbing adventures for George Fisher for many years. He has lived in Chamonix for over 25 years, climbing and skiing with people from all walks of life, ranging from small children to experienced alpinists.



PETE BARRON

Fell running, cross country ski racing, ski touring, 20 years with Keswick MRT, 10 years with a search dog and now on the bike. Working for the John Muir Trust in Lakeland following 23 years as a National Park Ranger in the Lakes, he has been fortunate to work with upland and wetland habitats and species, landscape scale projects and, most importantly, local communities.



FRANCESCA LEE

Francesca is a Keswick-based skier who we have supported for a number of years at George Fisher. Francesca is a member of the England Under-21 alpine ski team; she was the overall British Indoor Champion in 2015, and the English Under-16 Alpine Champion 2014. We're proud to continue to support Francesca and follow her ski-racing journey. Instagram @francescaleeski



CARMEN NORMAN

Carmen is a talented photographer and keen outdoor enthusiast based in the Lake District. Working alongside Carmen, we will be hosting photography courses and sharing the natural beauty of the Lake District through Carmen's photography throughout the year. Follow Carmen on Instagram @carmennormanphotography



DAVE TROMAN

Dave has a degree in sports science and a background in teaching sports psychology. A GB international orienteer, he has subsequently raced on the roads, cross country, trails and fells with podium finishes in some of the UK's toughest ultras and mountain marathons. Dave is a run coach based in Keswick, offering advice on psychology, how to get past injury, progress as a runner and finding motivation when it's lacking. Follow Dave on Instagram @dave_troman1

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There are several options: pick up a copy in store, read it on our website, sign up for our email newsletters, or check out our social media. If you'd like to receive The George Fisher Magazine by post - contact us on the number below, email george@georgefisher.co.uk or send us a message on Facebook. We publish quarterly in March, June, September and December.

WINTER WONDERLAND

Our Apparel and Footwear buyer LISA BERGERUD tries skiing with a van



I've just been in the snow, so it must now be winter. There's something totally satisfying about hunting for snow, whether it's for an energy-sapping run or an adrenaline-filled ski. Much as I enjoy the warmth of summer sun, I love the winter.

It's always difficult in the Autumn trying to remember your preferred winter layers and imagining how cold it can be in the wind on the tops when the valleys are warm. Some days I seem to have too many clothes and others not enough. It's easy really: always remember layers, and you can never carry too many gloves!

As I write in November, we've had a great few weeks of weather and I've already managed to find some snow and frosty conditions. Although not enough snow yet for skiing, I have needed my Kahtoola Micro Spikes for safe running along from Scafell Pike to Esk Hause. I've just got in from a windy icy Helvellyn, I didn't need Micro Spikes but I was glad of my ski goggles, extra layer and Leki poles.

Like all winters, for me the highlight is a ski holiday.

Last year wasn't any different. The Lakes skiing hadn't been great, I'd ended up working on all the good snow days, we'd had an early trip to the beautiful Dolomites but I still hankered more snow. Over the years skiing in Europe we'd seen people camping in vans at the resorts and wondered how they coped with the cold and drying everything in such a small space.

We had recently got a van, so if we didn't try now, we would never know. A plan formed for a van spring ski trip. The advantage of being in the van meant we could hop between different resorts; we

"OVER THE YEARS SKIING IN EUROPE WE'D SEEN PEOPLE CAMPING IN VANS AT THE RESORTS AND WONDERED HOW THEY COPE WITH THE COLD AND DRYING EVERYTHING IN SUCH A SMALL SPACE. WE HAD RECENTLY GOT A VAN, SO IF WE DIDN'T TRY NOW, WE WOULD NEVER KNOW..."



would start in Switzerland and then move to France. I found campsites that were based near lift systems, and that had heated facilities and drying rooms. We hadn't anticipated 75cm of fresh snow in the valley

bottom on our arrival! Happily this was never a problem, only a pleasure, and the Aletsch glacier was a delight. Grimentz, not only more fresh snow, but the best black run ever down from Zinal. Plus good cakes.

We then moved over to France and Samoëns for sunshine and spring snow. Here we actually sat outside drying off in the evening sun until it went down and the temperatures plummeted. I think our success was not to take too much clutter, which is easier said than done when you've ski boots, helmets, goggles, glasses, gloves and associated ski clothing! We used Eagle Creek packing cubes for all our clothes, and I made sure I had easy-to-dry layers of merino that could last for days. The cubes are different colours, so as long as you can remember which is yours and what you had in each cube, the system is great.

At night we left the skis in lockers at the ski stations, or dried them off in the last of the evening sun, then fitted them in the back of the van alongside the boots and helmets. Boot inners went into the warm cabin with any clothing which dried overnight. We seemed to eat like kings, with an abundance of fresh pastries and coffee in the mornings and an extravaganza of two pan meals and wine in the evening. We were never too cold under our winter duvet, but always kept a hat handy just in case.

The rest of this winter's dark nights (when I'm not out enjoying torchlit winter runs) I'll be planning another van spring ski trip or looking at maps of the Lakes and trying to plan routes over ground I've never been on... and hoping for some home-grown snow adventures.

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FIVE WAYS TO BE MORE ECO-FRIENDLY ON THE TRAIL

Ideas from George Fisher ambassador ATHENA MELLOR



Environmental crisis' is quickly becoming a household phrase. It seems that more and more people are becoming aware of the impact we have as humans on our planet, and how important it is that we all do our bit for the earth; no matter how small an act it may seem.

As an avid outdoor lover, I have seen the effects of climate change first-hand; from receding glaciers in Chamonix to hot, dry summers in the Peak District. It seems only natural that those who love spending time outdoors should want to protect it, and one of the simplest ways you can 'do your bit' is by making as small an impact as possible - whether that's hiking, mountain biking, climbing, wild camping or swimming.

Last weekend, I went out wild camping in the Lake District and that time spent on the trail and in my little tent on the banks of Angle Tarn had me reflecting on ways to be eco-friendlier and more sustainable on the trail. Below are my top 5 tips that I think we can all put into practise when visiting our favourite National Parks:

1) Zero Waste Meals

When you're packing or purchasing your lunch for a day or night out in the hills, think about how much plastic and packaging you are wasting and what you could do to limit that. For wild camping, I try to package my food in little reusable zip-lock bags or using beeswax wrap which you can pick up in many stores these days. Then I use a Hydro Flask for some hot tea on the trail in winter, and a hydration pack for the bulk of my water when wild camping. I also like to bake my own trail snacks whenever I can, so I'm not throwing away lots of plastic cereal bar packets!

2) Buy Sustainably

I'm a big believer in wearing your clothes to their death, however I also know that it's sometimes safer and more comfortable to have new, technical gear when outside in the hills. Therefore, I try to balance my want of the latest technical gear by buying from sustainable brands who are giving back to the planet. My go-to brand would be Patagonia, for the multitude of sustainable, recycled and ethical products it creates, as well as for being a 1% For The Planet company. However, it's amazing to see how many other outdoor brands are now doing their bit too! Something else I would recommend is trying to sell (or buy!) your old gear on Outdoor Gear Exchange (Facebook Community Group) so someone else can get the love out of a product that still has life in it.

3) Use Kind Products

It's important that we think about our waterways and habitats when using certain products in the Great Outdoors. For washing up when camping, try to take a biological washing up liquid with you like eCover or Dr Bronner's; when reproofing your waterproof clothes and tent, use a product that is kinder to the earth like Granger's; and in the summer months when the midges come out to play, spray a natural insect repellent. You could also try to make your own natural cleaning products that are both kind to the earth and zero waste.

4) Ditch the Car

Traffic in the Lake District can be notoriously bad; I'm sure we've also been stuck on the road somewhere between Ambleside and Windermere at some point! Yet bus and train links in our National Parks are getting better and better, so why not take advantage

of them? Something I think we could all try is not touching our cars once we're at our destination. So endeavouring to take all trails by foot, or catch a local bus if we want to do a walk from another part of the National Park. The amount of pollution that comes from our vehicles to the environment we are driving through has such a huge and direct impact yet can be easily avoided by lacing on our hiking boots and simply walking instead.

5) Leave No Trace!

This may seem like an obvious one, but also something that we should all be reminded of now and again. When we spend time outdoors, we should really try to leave no sign of our impact on the environment. This means sticking to designated walking trails, leaving our campsite just as we found it, taking all rubbish away with us, and respecting the natural environment from the minute we leave our door to the minute we return home.

Those of us who love the outdoors have probably already implemented many of these tips into their routine. Though they may seem small, I really believe that every simple act counts and caring in this way usually leads to us wanting to do more and trying to find further ways to support our planet. Why not connect with your community to work on ways you can look after your local environment? Plastic-Less Keswick on Facebook is a great community group, while lakedistrict.gov.uk has lots of insightful information on initiatives to make the Lake District more sustainable for visitors.

Shell, Yeah!



Photo: BERND ZEUGSWETTER
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WHICH WATCH?

Equipment and Accessories buyer JON WICKHAM on the latest tech wristwear



The Smart Watch market has exploded over the past few years, with players from both the outdoor industry and mainstream tech giants vying for your money. As the number of features have multiplied, the confusion about which watch is best has only grown. Here is some guidance on what is right for you.

Though there are more players in the sports watch game than ever, George Fisher has continued to stick with Suunto and Garmin. Both brands' heritage is firmly rooted in outdoor sports and navigation, so we feel they continue to better understand our customer than any of the rivals. Often customers ask which brand is best; the simple answer is that both are good, and many of their watches very comparable.

Usage: Navigating, training or both?

It is important to consider what you want to use your watch for. Broadly we can separate uses into two categories: Navigation and Training. Many watches sit in both camps, but this is a good place to start. All of our range (apart from the Garmin Forerunner 35) can supply you with an OS Grid Reference, so can be used alongside a map to give you your location. Only the Garmin Fenix series can display OS maps, so this may sway you in that direction.

If your interest lies more with training, then it's a more complex choice between Suunto and Garmin. The standout differences between the two brands are:

Watch size

Some good news is that the size of these watches has been reducing. This is down to the continual improvement in battery technology, driven by mobile phones. Lower profile watches tend to be much more comfortable for people with slim wrists. So, if you have been put off in the past by bulky sports watches, then it's worth taking a look at our current range. In particular the Garmin Fenix 6S and Suunto 5 models are much lower profile than older watches. At the other end of the spectrum is the Garmin Fenix 6X which has the largest body and face, which allows a lot of information to be displayed and is best for displaying mapping, but not everyone will be comfortable wearing a watch of this size. The best thing is to come in and try some watches on to see if they will be comfortable for you.

Battery Life

Although most of these watches will last for weeks in 'regular' use, as soon as you turn on the GPS the battery begins to drain more quickly. If you are away from an external power source for some time or undertaking long challenges, then battery life could be key. It's important to note that most of these watches have a variety of settings that can reduce various aspects of the watches performance but increase the life of the battery. Finding a trade-off that is right for you is essential if you want to eke out maximum battery life. The best comes from the largest watches (9 Baro in the Suunto range or Fenix 6X from Garmin) as they accommodate larger batteries.

Software

Both Garmin and Suunto produce their own cloud-based software and interfacing apps for your smart phone. These allow you to review activities that you have completed in much more detail, with the ease of a bigger screen and keyboard. It's free to create the accounts (Garmin Connect and Garmin Explore, and Suunto Moves Count and the Suunto App), so it may be worth playing with them before you purchase to decide if you prefer one over the other. Both options will automatically sync with a number of other apps like Strava, so if you prefer using those, you won't be forced to change. They will all also sync with social media accounts, so if you want everyone to know how active you are, they will know!

Controls

The Suunto 5 and 9 Baro use both touchscreens and physical buttons. The touchscreen can be nicely intuitive to navigate through menus, much like on a smartphone. The downside to touchscreens is that they are harder to operate if the face gets wet from rain or sweat. However, Suunto menus can be navigated purely through the buttons, avoiding touchscreen difficulties. Garmin doesn't use touch screens in its outdoor series, purely physical buttons.

The menus differ between both brands, and it is very much about learning how to use them, so they become intuitive. With the more featured watches like the Suunto 9 Baro and Garmin Fenix series, this can take some time.

A VERY BRIEF GUIDE TO THE MODELS WE STOCK:

GARMIN:



Forerunner 35

A simple watch for runners and cyclists. If you just want to see how far you have travelled, your speed and some heart rate information then this is the one for you. All in a sleek, small package.



Fenix 6 Series

This is Garmin's top-end watch, with most features from their other watches incorporated. Great if you want to record training from any number of sports, but also offers the best navigation performance with OS maps that can be downloaded to the watch. With three different sizes of watch ('S', standard and 'X') it is likely to fit more people, and you have the option of larger screens and longer battery life by selecting a larger model.



Instinct

The Instinct is an all-rounder with both navigation and simple training features. Its advantage over the Fenix series is that it is much less expensive, but its aesthetics will polarize people. Some will love it, some will hate it.

SUUNTO:



Traverse

Best thought of as a simple GPS in watch form. There is no heart rate sensor (though it can pair with a strap) so this isn't ideal for training with. It will tell you where you are with an OS grid reference, and can record a route, giving you details like speed and distance, but there is no mapping.



5

This competes with the Garmin Instinct as a great value training and navigating tool. It will do most of what the 9 Baro can do, but with a shorter battery life and no barometric altimeter. Its more compact size may fit some users well, plus it has a touchscreen.



9 Baro

The new 9 Baro is the successor to the Suunto Spartan Ultra. This is Suunto's premier watch and ideal if you want maximum battery life and a larger display than on the 5. The barometric altimeter is ideal if you are using it in hilly terrain and want the most accurate ascent/descent data.

There are many more functions in these watches than I have been able to cover here. If you would like to know more, then it's a great idea to pop into the store so our staff can answer questions and you can see the watches for real. Alternatively, have a look at our new website, and contact us by phone or social media.

If you are upgrading from an existing watch then sticking with the same brand can be a good idea. The menus will have similar formats, and different functions will have the same names, so it will probably be more intuitive for you straight away. Switching between brands can be a bit of a pain but persevere and you will get there.

We have working watches on display in the shop, so we would suggest you try navigating some of the menus to get a feel for them.

Sapphire Glass Screen (Fenix and 9 Baro)

It's worth mentioning that the Suunto 9 Baro and all Garmin Fenix 6 watches, are available in 'Sapphire' versions. These swap the standard mineral glass screens for sapphire glass, which is more scratch resistant. Although you're looking at about £100 extra for the Sapphire glass, we would suggest that it is worth it; as you are already investing quite a lot of money in one of these watches, it is worth spending a little more to ensure that it does not get damaged.

THE BEAR NECESSITIES

Lakeland author KEITH RICHARDSON on a KE Adventure Travel walking holiday in Croatia



The KE Adventure group to Croatia with our guide Hrvoje (front left) providing the selfie image.

AT the back of my mind I was mildly concerned at the prospect of encountering bears, wolves and the nasty-sounding horned viper, the most venomous snake in Europe, during a walking holiday through the wilds of Croatia. I need not have worried.

Wolves and vipers were nowhere to be seen, and my worst nightmare of a 'The Revenant' style experience (Leonardo DiCaprio being savaged by a bear in the film of that title) went unrealised. In fact, the nearest we got to a bear was leaving the foothills of the Paklenica National Park in the minibus when our mischievous Croatian guides, Hrvoje and Luka, excitedly pointed out a bear on the skyline. We were reaching for cameras when we realised that the bear had not moved and was, in fact, a sculpture!

Our eight-day walking holiday with KE Adventure to the world heritage sites, mountains and national parks of Croatia (Plitvice Lakes, Velebit, Paklenica and Krka) was a marvellous adventure that also took in three cities; Zagreb, Zadar and Split. The trip, sunshine all the way, was packed from beginning to end with a rich variety of walking, wildlife and history, ancient and modern. And all in the company of a fun-loving, like-minded group of 14 travellers, mainly from England but some from America who all got on famously and gelled under the expert leadership of our guides.

Our route from Zagreb to Split took us through a dizzying array of mountain, karst landscape, forest, by turquoise lakes, rivers and waterfalls, through woodland and over pasture and along the coast with magnificent scenery at every turn and, on a wind-blasted evening with the gusts whipping up waterspouts at sea, a blood red orange sunset that had to be seen to be believed. It was unreal in its intensity.

While there was still evidence, bullet and shell holes on building exteriors in some townships, of the bloody 1990s conflict with Yugoslavia, this is a country that has moved on and relies heavily on its tourist trade. The people we met were friendly, welcoming and full of character and the food and wine were excellent. Culinary highlights included a visit to a goat cheese-producing farm at a place called Golubic, situated above a deep river valley where a snaking many-arched bridge, built at the turn of the 18th century, spanned the Krupa River and from which an angler was returning with a basket of trout.

The farm was a small, white-washed building that I could readily imagine in Borrowdale circa 1880. At one end was a pen packed with goats while free range hens roamed out the back. The whole place stank of goat - although you got used to it after a while - and to complete the rustic scene was a tumbledown wooden outside toilet that had seen better days; but not many.

These were the most welcoming people on the planet, and on an old trestle table they served up a meal fit for the gods: a round slab of their goats' cheese, homemade bread and a jar of honey, the latter from hives just up the road. The combination of the three was out of this world; pure nectar. Similarly, the goulash made by our organ-playing host at the preserved old house, Ramica Dvori, high in the Paklenica mountains where the main form of transport in this mountain fastness (apart from your feet) was donkeys. The attractions included boules and, after a hearty meal, we drank wine and beer and sang loudly and very badly into the night. The sound of 'Bohemian Rhapsody' (mamma, just killed a man) bouncing off the limestone cliffs of Croatia is not something you hear every day, or night.

The walking was superb and reasonably gentle with days varying from four to six hours. You pay a small fee to enter all national parks in Croatia (take note Lake District) but the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service is totally in line with its Lake District counterparts in that it is voluntary and free.

Just beyond the entrance to Paklenica National Park is a canyon that provides some of the most attractive and accessible rock climbing in Europe. Lots of climbers were on the rock as we walked through, and it was great to watch; reminding me of my occasional forays onto Shepherd's Crag in Borrowdale with Keswick's Paul Ross. Some of the routes looked daunting, not least on the 400m Anica Kuk wall from which Croatian climbing pioneer and legend Dragutin Braham fell to his death in 1938.

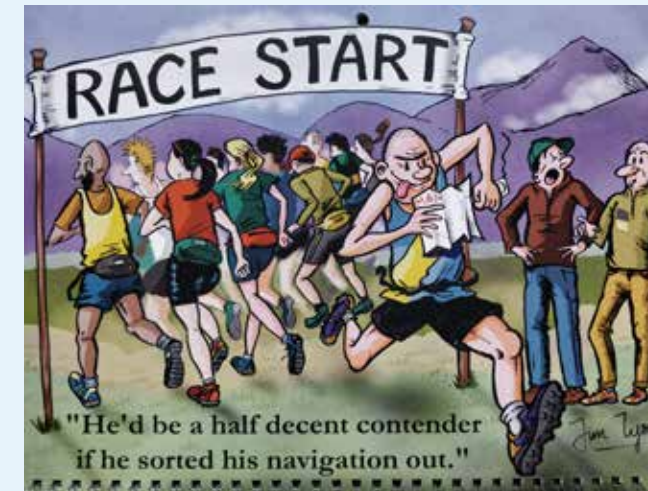
Away from exploring the mountains, we had plenty of time to see Zagreb, Zadar and Split. All are brilliant but I was particularly impressed by the Roman architecture and influence of Zadar and Split (the Diocletian's Palace) where there is a unique blend of ancient and modern; witness the impressive Sea Organ, tidal music created by pipes within the harbour wall, and the Sun Salutation (solar panels powering a light show at night) on Zadar's waterfront.

This was the latest in a number of holidays I have taken with KE Adventure, others being Everest Base Camp (I have since become an exclusively hot house plant) Sicily and the Aeolian Islands, Madeira, the Cinque Terre, most recently Croatia and I now have my sights set firmly on others, not least Costa Rica and Sri Lanka. Watch this space!

Keith Richardson's views on KE holidays are totally objective (he pays his way). KE Adventure is just down the road from George Fisher, check out keadventure.com

CALENDAR COMIC

JIM TYSON on his fell running calendars



I'm not sure that the world was exactly crying out for the unique combination of cartoons and fell running, yet in recent years I seem to have carved myself a bit of a niche doing exactly that. I am now onto my fourth Fell Running Cartoon Calendar and I haven't run out of humorous ideas on the subject... yet!

It helps that I know the fell running scene quite well. The ideas for the cartoons come from my experiences on the fells; running, racing and knowing the people and quirks particular to this beloved minority sport, coupled with my love of cartoons, humour and comic art.

I live in Ambleside with my wife, Karen, and young sons, Joss and Barnaby. I am a self-taught illustrator and cartoonist and have provided illustrations for the Kendal Calling festival, The Fell Runners Association, a host of local businesses and national running clubs and events, as well as publications such as The Fellrunner Magazine and Athletics Weekly.

As well as racing in many fell races for my club, Ambleside AC, my running achievements include running every day for a year in 2015 for Parkinson's UK in memory of my Dad, who lost his battle with the disease the previous year, a successful Bob Graham Round in 2016, and completing George Fisher's very own Abraham's Tea round in July this year (despite a very slow second half due to persistent cramp - it was a very hot day!).

Look out for more fell related cartoons on cards, T-shirts and other assorted merchandise in 2020.

See you on the fells!

The Fell Running Cartoon Calendar 2020 is on sale now at George Fisher's for £9.99.

Follow Jim on Twitter @JimTyson73 and Instagram @jimtyson_



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DESIGNED FOR CLIMBING



LEARNING THROUGH OUTDOOR PLAY

JENNIFER GRANGE explains how Forest Schools makes a difference



This summer, I was lucky enough to start my Forest Schools Leader training. I run a nature club for my children's school, Braithwaite Primary, on a Friday afternoon and am always looking for new ways for the children to engage with nature. The school has an ethos of outdoor learning and was successful in securing funding to develop a Forest School area in the grounds and put some of the teachers (and me) through the Forest Schools training this summer.

To be honest, before my training I thought Forest Schools was just playing in the woods and lighting fires, but it's so much more - as I discovered in my week in the woods!

Forest School is child led and allows the group to learn in a very experiential way. It teaches social skills, communication, sharing, kindness, maths, literacy, drama and engineering - all through being in the woods.

Nine teachers and I rocked up on the Monday morning, not knowing quite what to expect. Simon, our instructor, was a straight-talking Yorkshireman and soon had us working together in groups to get to know each other.

The wonderful thing about this training is that we learned through experiencing all the activities ourselves, then discussing and analysing the benefits. As the learning is child or person led, we were able to make choices ourselves, which felt very empowering. Imagine how it would feel for the children!

Days 1 & 2 saw us learning knots and introduced us to tools; we chopped down a small tree and learned sawing and splitting skills with bowsaws and bill hooks. Through this we engaged our communication and social skills; trust, spatial awareness and appropriate eye contact. From the wood we made mallets and pegs to build our shelters the following day.

The pyromaniac in me felt very excited when we moved onto fire lighting. Fortunately, the weather was beautiful and there was plenty of dry wood; I doubt I will be so successful on a wet and stormy day! As not all of us could have a drink from the Kelly Kettle at once, we learned negotiation skills (who would go first): patience and compromise, all from a kettle!

Everything was brought together at the end when we got to practice all our skills in our own way, allowing us to make decisions, empower us to take responsibility and work together as a group, pairs or individually. We had a choice! We worked together to put up shelters, light fires, cook some delicious food and we even made stools to sit on.

The training was absolutely brilliant, profound and insightful. I learned so much about myself, my teammates, about how children learn and how we can adapt forest school sessions to allow them the freedom to choose.

I still have a portfolio and assessment to complete next June before I am qualified, but I can't wait to start working with the children and observing the differences that it can make.

I am so pleased that my children will get the opportunity to learn outdoors in an experiential way, to gain physical and emotional confidence and hopefully become well rounded and happy young people. In this day and age where iPhones and tablets are the norm, it is so important to have some time out in nature, exploring, playing and just being - not only for children, but for grown-ups as well!

SCOTTISH ISLAND BAGGING

Book review by WENDY KNOX



I have to admit to getting squeaky with excitement at the prospect of reviewing this book.

I have always been a bit of a 'bagger' (Wainwrights, Munros etc) and can't resist a tick list. My husband Chris & I go to Scotland at every opportunity, so as soon as I saw the cover I was keen to look inside.

I wondered how anyone could decide what does, or does not count as an island? They have decided to count all the islands which are reasonably accessible, ie. with regular trips to them (99 islands). Plus a further 55 which are either large enough, or have something really interesting that would merit a visit. This had me hooked straight away, and so turned to the tick list at the back. A quick tot up; been to only 30. OMG, better get started, lots to do!

This book really whets your appetite, with information about how to get there, and ideas about things to do and see and places to visit, but still

with plenty left to discover when you do. It has ideas for walks and cycles, castles and ancient monuments, bird watching, natural features, not to mention cafes and restaurants.

It is divided usefully into 12 areas so you can plan a little island bagging into your holiday plans. Oh, and did I forget to mention the photographs? If this book doesn't make you want to visit Scotland then I don't know what will. (Maybe the authors were sponsored by the tourist board?) The book is full of beautiful pictures to tempt you to explore, although strangely enough all these glorious places seem to be enjoying fantastic weather and not a spot of rain or a midge in sight (no doubt all blown away into the ocean!)

I really liked this book, for so many reasons. Logistically it is helpful to know about transport, ferries and about which islands might be bagged in one visit. It is easy just to dip into and dream, when time is short and it's a useful reference book. However, it's like getting to the top of a hill and



seeing more and more mountains stretching away behind it. It makes you want to visit them all. I also now realise how close we have been to some which we missed the first time around, so some planning is in order. Next time we go I will consult the tick list.

On a personal level it brings back so many wonderful memories of holidays past. Top of my list so far has to be St Kilda. Thank you for letting me read it (only 124 to go).

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MY FIRST JOB: AVALANCHE STOOGES

Our man in Chamonix, mountain guide MARK SEATON, gets buried in the name of training

Back in 1983 I was one of the first people to be employed on the Night Watchman's scheme at The Scottish National Outdoor Training Centre at Glenmore Lodge. Essentially, it was an opportunity to gain qualifications to become an outdoor instructor.

Over the last 35 years the scheme evolved and became the launch pad for several British Mountain Guide careers. Nevertheless, back then, the job was quite basic - I was paid £10.00 per week plus my board and lodging, and in return for locking the Centre up at night and being on call in the event of an emergency, I could join most of the courses. I was also expected to work two days a week with the maintenance team. In effect I was at the bottom of the pecking order, given the worst jobs and was generally treated like Blackadder's Baldrick.

One day in January, there was to be a demonstration of how quickly dogs find people buried in avalanches. I was volunteered to be the victim. I was to be buried in the snow, in a coffin-like cave. The dog would be set off and would come and find me.

In essence it was all quite simple, apart from one major issue: Rocky, the giant Search and Rescue Alsatian. Seemingly, everyone at Glenmore Lodge knew about Rocky except me. The thing was, Rocky had two jobs. His principle job was breaking up fights in the bars of Aviemore. In the 1980s there were more fights than avalanches, and Rocky was exceptionally good at his job. Only slightly less scary was Rocky's handler, Sergeant Jimmy Simpson, a formidable and tough Highland copper.

As the day approached, people who already knew Rocky and Sergeant Simpson took delight in winding me up. Yes, Rocky would find you, but he might equally rip you to shreds.

The day arrived. It felt like I was being led off for execution. We drove up to the Cairngorm Ski area car park. Not far away, Scotland's foremost expert on avalanches, Blyth Wright, had prepared a roughly 100m² area to look like the aftermath of an avalanche. My coffin had been dug just to the middle of the area.

As far as my preparation was concerned, I had borrowed a giant industrial chemical rubber suit which I had last used when it was my job to swim around in Glenmore Lodge's septic tank and unblock it. Just before I headed out of the door, Marilyn (who worked in the kitchens) pressed a bag into my hand. "Sausages" she said, with a knowing wink.

Sergeant Simpson duly turned up in his blue Ford Escort police van. The sides of the van bulged and rocked as something very boisterous bounced off the walls. When Sergeant Simpson let Rocky out, my worst fears were confirmed. He was without doubt the most frightening thing I had ever seen. He immediately jumped up and put his paws on Sergeant Simpson's shoulders and gave him a big kiss. They loved each other.

I took the sausages and shoved them up the sleeve of my jacket. I was then led off to be buried. My cave was closed in, and I was wished good luck by my sniggering 'mates'. Silence. I just lay there, clutching the sausages in my hand. Suddenly, there was this big monster breathing and spraying spittle in my face. It did not appear to want to kiss me. I rammed the sausages into its mouth, and, during the momentary distraction, I made my escape.

I was quite pleased with myself. I had got away without being eaten by Rocky. Sergeant Simpson, on the other hand, was not pleased with me, not one little bit. Although wrapped up with lots of expletives, the general gist of what he had to say was that if I ever fed his dog sausages again, he would make me into dog food. Quite reasonably, the dog should not expect to receive rewards like that when he rescued real victims.

It was several weeks later that I learned that there was to be another dog avalanche search demonstration for a bunch of dignitaries. Rocky was to be the star, and he was to try and find the same victim.



Not Rocky; this is SARDA alsation Hugi with his handler Theodor Bjamasen

This time Sergeant Simpson got out of his police van, took one look at me and said, "Just remember wee laddie... you will be Pedigree Chum if you play the same trick again".

Having suspected as much, not only did I have my big chemical suit on, but I was also wearing 1980s Koflach plastic climbing boots with Berghaus Yeti Gaiters. To top the outfit off, I had a full-face motorbike helmet complete with visor.

Everything pretty much went as before, until the point that Rocky found me. This time, however, he uncovered my boot first. Maybe disappointed to not find sausages, he sank his teeth into my boot and proceeded to pull me out of my cave and drag me down the hillside like a rag doll. To my mind, it took rather longer than necessary for the command "Leave" to be issued, and for Rocky to return to his handler.

Epilogue

Rocky and Jimmy Simpson were famous in the Highlands. Not long after my dealings with Rocky, there was the incredible story of Jimmy and Rocky out on a rescue when Rocky was blown over a cornice in the Cairngorms, on a search for two missing climbers. Rocky was located next day by Jimmy, after a terrible night on the hill, outwardly unharmed but covered in ice. Sadly, Rocky had been traumatised and never worked as an attack dog again, and by all accounts became quite docile and never again ate anyone he saved.



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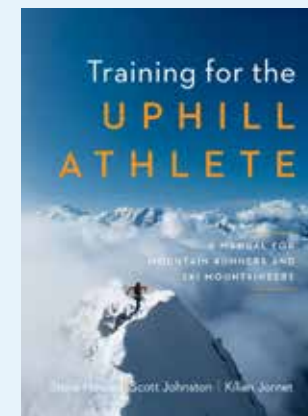


Based in Chamonix below Mont Blanc, Mark Seaton offers guiding services for all mountain activities. These include alpine mountaineering in the summer season, and off-piste skiing and ski touring in the winter. With over 20 years experience Mark offers options from single day one-to-one instruction, to multi-day programmes for small groups.

Email: markseaton@wanadoo.fr
www.markseaton.com

TRAINING FOR THE UPHILL ATHLETE

Book review by DAVE TROMAN



As a mountain runner and running coach, I spend much of my day either running, reading about running or thinking about running in one form or another.

For those of us who spend their time in this bubble, there was a fair degree of anticipation while waiting for the release of this book. I mean, come on, if we can pick up a few nuggets from the legend that is Kilian Jornet, it's got to be worth flicking through, right?

The first thing I would say is DON'T flick through; read it. Take in the science that underpins training, understand not just how to train but why a particular session works and what element of performance it will develop, develop your understanding of periodisation throughout a year, enjoy the inspirational vignettes from elite athletes and make use of the numerous training plans. There is so much packed into this tome.

I'm coming to this review from the angle of a mountain runner, I have no experience as a ski mountaineer, though the book shares its focus between the two disciplines and there are, without doubt, lessons to be learned from each sport. The book divides into a number of sections, initially focusing on the physiology of endurance training. I know the majority of athletes will jump this and go straight to the training plans; we are runners and therefore we run, but you'd be missing out on the background knowledge that is vital if you are to understand why you are training in a specific way. Rest assured, it's written in a user-friendly style which gets the details across without blowing your mind.

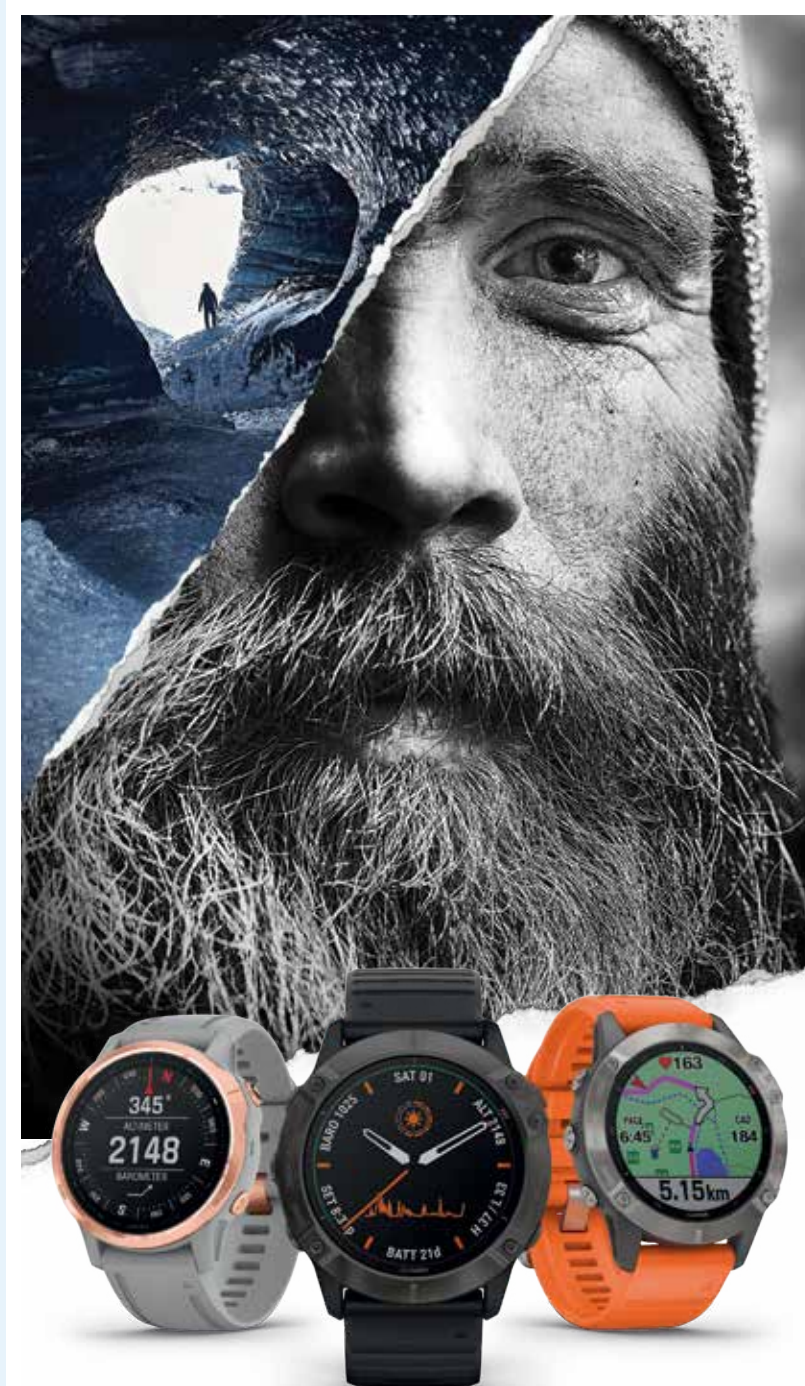
You then delve into the methodologies of training including the terminology, how to monitor your progress, training load and long-term planning, all interspersed with insight from elite athletes. Section three, quite rightly (coaching hat on) explores the importance of strength training for the uphill athlete; a much-overlooked element of an endurance athlete's programme.

Finally, you have the How to Train section; how to plan training, how to plan a race season, special considerations for both runners and skimo athletes and, of course, those all-important training plans aimed at a variety of different abilities.

What strikes me is that you can take what you want from this book, regardless of interests, ability or experience. You want science? You want inspiration? You want awe? You want knowledge? You want guidance? You want to be a better uphill athlete? Buy this book!



Join our George Fisher Run Club on Facebook to get the latest on events, new kit arrivals and great reviews like this.



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TRAVELS WITH MY CAMERA

George Fisher ambassador CARMEN NORMAN heads to the Dolomites



Day 6

It's October 2019 and I'm in the Dolomites on a photography tour. At such a high altitude it's cold at night, but you want to be comfortable during the day, so it was important to have the right clothing. Plus being out all day, walking in the mountains with a heavy bag, I needed to be comfortable and have the flexibility of layers.

Day 1

We drove into the mountains and would be shooting as soon as we arrived, so I wanted clothing that was comfortable for the drive but also suitable for shooting by a lake. There is no better choice than Fjallraven Abisko tights; so comfortable, and with reinforcement on the knees and bottom so kneeling or sitting on rock isn't an issue. It wasn't too cold on this first afternoon, so I used a Patagonia down vest for a bit of warmth.

Our first location was the stunning Baita Segantini with the backdrop of Cimon della Pala.

Day 2

In the morning we headed to Passo Sella and then took a cable car ride to Sass Pordoi. The evening was a visit to Alpe di Siusi. Again I chose the Fjallraven tights, but as we would be going higher I needed to be warm and carry a waterproof, so I wore a Patagonia Micro Puff jacket and took the Haglofs Roc Spire Gore-Tex jacket. It was misty at the top of the mountain, so I wasn't able to do any photography but the cable car was fun as it headed up to the clouded summit and zero visibility. Passo Sella was stunning and the mountain view there is spectacular; the pass is high with tremendous views over the Dolomites. The evening was a trip to Alpe di Siusi, the highest alpine meadow, and with the sun going down it was getting very cold so I was glad to have my warm jacket.

Day 3

There was snow overnight which meant our trip up to the Seceda summit would be spectacular as the summit has an amazing ridgeline of nine towers. It takes two cable cars to reach the top. The towers were covered in snow and the cloud

was clinging on, making the dramatic ridgeline even more imposing. Definitely needed my warm jacket and waterproof for this day!

From Seceda we headed straight out for the evening to Santa Maddalena, a village nestled in front of the jagged and imposing mountains. As we waited for the sunset, the temperature dropped, so more and more layers came on; when you spend time standing around it is definitely a good idea to have layers that you can keep adding. The sunset arrived, the moon came up and the view was very special.

Day 4

Another long day planned, with a cable car trip up a mountain in the morning and then an evening climb to Cinque Torri. Walking at altitude can be tough and even though the temperature is cold, you can get very warm. So layers and quick-drying clothing is important. The Smartwool merino base layers and Patagonia t-shirt were perfect for the walk; my Patagonia jacket packs down very small, so it isn't a problem to carry that for the warmth once up the top of the ridge.

We were looking down over the valleys watching the sun set over the dramatic peaks of Cinque Torri which turned red in the dying sun.

Day 5

A very early and cold start to reach the top of Passo Giau. It was foggy but, as we kept climbing, we found we were above the clouds and looking down on a full inversion in every direction. The sun arrived and the whole scene was magical. The fog was cold and swirling around, rising and falling, which meant the air was damp at times and I was grateful for the waterproof.

Day 6

Today we visited Tre Cime di Lavaredo; the three distinctive, spectacular battlement-like peaks. It requires a walk of around seven miles at altitude, climbing uphill, and carrying a heavy bag. But so worth the trip; we made our way to an iconic view over Rifugio Lavaredo, a mountain lodge with 360-degree panoramic views. We climbed up to ledge to get a view over the lodge, the lakes



Day 2



Day 3



Day 3



Day 4



Day 5



Day 7

and the towers, and waited for the sun to go down. It got very cold as we waited so I was very happy to have lots of additional layers; I think by the end of the evening I had six layers on, discovering that Smartwool base layer leggings are perfect under trousers!

It was breathtaking seeing the light change, the moon rise, and the evening colours develop. We waited until well after the sun went down, which of course meant we had a long walk in the dark. But it was a fantastic evening, one I will never forget.

Day 7

Another cable car trip this morning, to the snowy summit of Mt Lagazuoi. I was prepared for the cold with my Patagonia jacket, but the sun was very warm and actually I ended up just wandering around in a T-shirt. From here we were heading back to Venice, with a stop at Baita Segantini for sunset. Cimon della Pala turned bright red, and we were delighted to have uninterrupted views of the mountain as the light faded and the mountains gained their glow.

It was a fantastic trip, led by Nick Watson Photographic Tours, a full and fun week with every moment packed with photography (which is what a photography tour should be!) I loved the Dolomites and I think I will return.

Carmen uses a Nikon D850 camera with Nikon 14-24, 24-70 and 70-200 lenses, Gitzo Mountaineer Tripod and LEE filters.

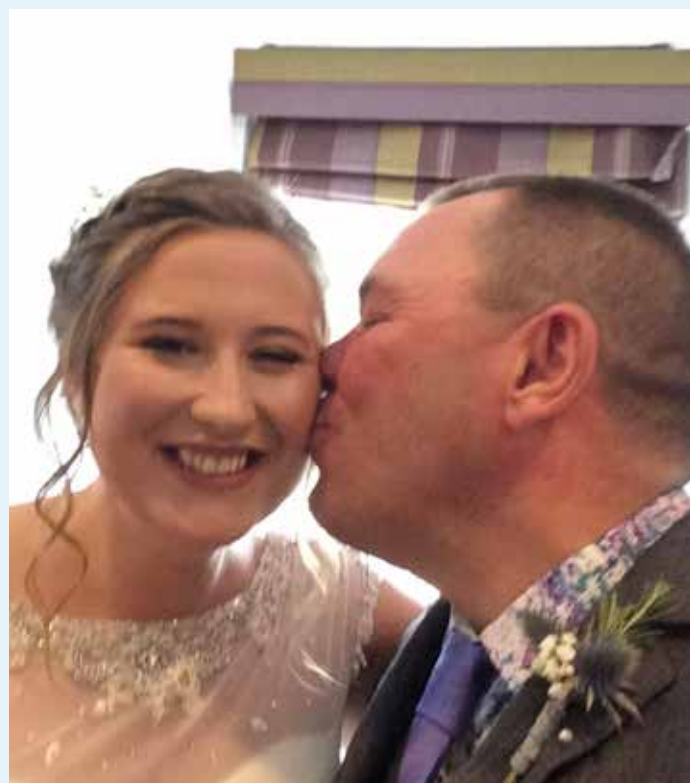


RUN FOR SOPHIE

In an instant, ANDY AIREY's life was turned upside down.



Finishing the EnduranceLife half marathon



Andy with Sophie

So, how does a chubby middle-aged chap become a sponsored athlete? In January, my friends at George Fisher supplied me with a pair of HOKA running shoes to support my training for the EnduranceLife half marathon at Bamburgh. It was a half marathon I'd never intended to run. Our daughter, Sophie, had tried to get me interested in it as she had entered with one of her friends, Laura, but I'd decided I didn't need to run another half marathon after running several in my 30s and 40s.

Everything changed on December 19th when Sophie took her own life; we knew that she was a bit low but hadn't realised that she was considering suicide. We were devastated. In the immediate aftermath of Soph's death we decided that come what may we had to create something positive from this catastrophic situation... but what?

At some point my thoughts turned to the half marathon and the fact that Laura was still planning to run; I couldn't just sit back and do nothing. I initially decided to go across to cheer her on but realised that that was not really doing the job properly; I had to run it myself. On looking at the website I discovered that the event was full!

There was only one thing to do; I contacted the organisers and explained the situation. Once they had established I was telling the truth, they transferred Sophie's entry to me. I was going to run the half marathon in Sophie's place.

When planning Sophie's funeral, we looked around for an appropriate charity to support, and a friend pointed us in the direction of PAPYRUS, prevention of young suicide. They turned out to be the perfect fit; they are not about picking up the pieces post-suicide but aim to prevent suicide in the first place. As well as running HOPELINEUK, a helpline for those in crisis, they also run training courses aimed at equipping young people with the skills and understanding that help them to help themselves and others.

I had to run the half marathon to help raise funds for PAPYRUS but, as a lapsed runner, I knew that the short time I had to train was going to hurt. I needed to find equipment that would help me along the way. As ever, the most important piece of kit for a run are the shoes you wear; having used several pairs over the years I knew that HOKA running shoes would offer some benefits that would significantly help me with my drive for half-marathon fitness.

“SOPHIE’S SUICIDE TURNED OUR OWN LIVES ON THEIR HEADS. WE ARE ON VERY DIFFERENT TRAJECTORIES THAN WE COULD EVER HAVE IMAGINED. I PLAN TO KEEP RUNNING AND KEEP SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT THE LIFE-SAVING WORK OF PAPYRUS.”

When I originally saw HOKA shoe several years ago I really wasn't sure what I was looking at; the bulbous design and extra wide sole was something completely foreign to me when I had been looking at alternatives that had become progressively slimmer and lighter looking.

As ever, the proof of the pudding was in the eating; having plucked up courage to try HOKA shoes the difference was immediately apparent. When using the shoes on roads and trails the wide sole unit gave extra stability and cushioning from the bumps and lumps on the path; the way the upper nestled into the sole gave a frame into which your foot naturally sits. Having worn orthotics in running shoes for many years, I found that the HOKA shoes gave the most stable platform so my orthotics were given the optimum chance to stabilise my gait.



Press coverage

Lisa, the footwear buyer at George Fisher, has regularly reminded me that HOKAs are a great choice for runners with a fuller figure (I think she means me!). Knowing what I was planning to do, George Fisher and HOKA came together to supply me with a new pair of HOKA trail running shoes.

So, where have these shoes taken me?

Firstly, I trained for and ran the EnduranceLife Half Marathon at Bamburgh in Sophie's place. Having completed that without too much difficulty, I signed up for the Kirkby Stephen YOMP (a 23-mile route around the Upper-Eden fells) and am just about to run another EnduranceLife half marathon on the North Yorkshire Moors. The impetus that Sophie's suicide has given me has meant that I can't find easy excuses NOT to run - I have to get out and keep going.

Whilst training for and running these various events I've recorded my thoughts and emotions in a series of #RunforSophie YouTube videos. As well as appealing for funds for PAPYRUS I realised early in the process that raising cash was a by-product of the key objective - to introduce PAPYRUS and HOPELINEUK to as many people as possible. Since starting on this route (and continuing my running adventures) we know of very many people who have reached out to PAPYRUS. Over the last 10 months I know that we have managed to save lives.

Sophie's suicide turned our own lives on their heads. We are on very different trajectories than we could ever have imagined. I plan to keep running (in HOKA running shoes) and keep spreading the word about the life-saving work of PAPYRUS.

PS: George, Sophie's mum, bought a pair of HOKAs from George Fisher earlier this year then used them to walk the 800km Camino di Compostela trail. She says they were the most comfortable footwear she could have hoped for!

SUICIDE, AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

In 2018, 1,866 young people under the age of 35 took their own lives in the UK. Sophie was one of these statistics.

Suicide is the biggest killer of young people in the UK. PAPYRUS believes that many young suicides are preventable; the charity runs HOPELINEUK (0800 068 4141) a confidential helpline for professional support and practical advice for people suffering from suicidal thoughts or those who are concerned about friends and loved ones.

What difference will your donation make?

£5 can help pay for one call, text or email to HOPELINKUK

£65 can keep the helpline running for over one hour

£165 can cover the cost of training someone in Applied Suicide Intervention Skill (ASIST), a 2-day course that prepares caregivers to provide suicide first aid interventions

£1,200 would help PAPYRUS deliver five mental health and suicide awareness sessions to young people

£5,000 would enable 30 members of the community to be trained in ASIST

More at: papyrus-uk.org



This entertaining and informative book contains 120 stories of people who knew or met Alfred Wainwright. Together, these stories show him as he really was and are essential reading for anyone interested in this iconic author and artist.

All profits go to Animal Rescue Cumbria.

Available from George Fisher, Keswick, other outlets in Cumbria and from The Wainwright Society.



www.wainwright.org.uk





ABRAHAM'S TEA ROUND

Latest developments from our fast-becoming-famous 30-mile fell run challenge



Since the last magazine we've had some exciting developments! We have a **NEW** record men's solo round: James 'Pup' Harris from Ambleside AC came in at 5 hours 41 minutes, congratulations to him. Max Wainwright (Dark Peak), also on a solo round, got close but was pipped by three minutes - 5 hours and 44 minutes. Brennan Townsend has since taken his title back and the record is now 5 hours 30 minutes, what did he do for 24 minutes last time he ran it? Plus, news that our Harvey's map is in production and about to arrive as we write - watch this space!

Notable ATR rounds:

Stuart Davison walked the ATR in 16:57, with Sam the black Labrador.

Mark Burley did the fastest 'reverse round' in 7:26 which happened to be his third round in four weeks!

Alison Love did it twice; anticlockwise with Mizzle and then clockwise with Jennifer Grange - our first George Fisher Ambassador to complete an ATR!

Kevin and Mike V60 athletes.

Robin Regan - the youngest completer at 16 years old, in 6:29.

Espresso achievements:

Ross Jenkin made the first Double Espresso.

Rob - staff member - has the latest record time in 2:05. We expect it to be done in a lunch-hour soon...

Jon Wickham - staff member - walked the Espresso and camped overnight, and fellow Rich Smith staff member also got round.

Rob Humphreys (who has already done the ATR), did an Espresso with his wife and their 12 year old.

SARAH GERRISH: A WEEKEND OF TWO HALVES

ATR date: 27 October

Day 1 The Abraham's Tea Round

4am alarm, after (at most) four hours sleep. The first 15 miles were really tough; 2.5 hours in the dark and rain. It wasn't until Robinson that the light started to come through the clouds. The rain had made any rock super greasy and slippery, and a whiteout at High Stile (including falling snow and freezing air temperature) meant a wrong path and a minor freak out! After Red Pike it was a horrendous descent down to Buttermere over a relentless and lethal path of stone pitching, I thought it would never end. Many a slips and slides; a frustratingly tense and slow section.

A quick stop in Buttermere for some food and then it was up to Whiteless Pike. Jeepers, this is one heck of a climb from the Buttermere side, especially on tired legs and a fatigued body! Once up though, I felt a second wind as the weather cleared and I started on the 'way home'. I'm very familiar around Hobcarton, Grisedale Pike and Eel Crag so I tried to relax a bit. The route also takes in part of one of my favourite fell races. Once over Sail it was an out and back section over Causey Pike and Rowling End (again I thought this bit was never going to end!) - two new fells to me. Chased by an angry bird that must be nesting and then the final summit Barrow, before heading back to Keswick, dodging walkers and shoppers thinking about tea and cake... only to find the cafe had shut. Fortunately, the friendly man behind the counter must have sensed my utterly broken demeanour and took pity, giving me a takeaway brew and biscuit. Feeling utterly defeated I sat on the floor outside George Fishers and gathered myself.



STUART DAVISON

ATR date: 26 August

Better late than never! Amazing day in the hills from sunrise to sunset, on a Bank Holiday Monday. I am definitely not a fell runner, but as a fairly accomplished walker I decided why not and give it a go as a walking round with Sam my black Labrador.

Stunning cloud inversion on the first summit Catbells. Difficult descent from Robinson, followed by a hard ascent to High Stile. I see what everyone means by no idea which or where the best route option is! By the time I got back to Buttermere, I realised how difficult this was going to be to complete so went to the pub for lunch at the Bridge Hotel.

After climbing Whiteless Pike I had it in my head that I just had half the Coledale horseshoe to complete. How hard can that be? The answer is; probably the hardest thing I have done in my life. A combination

of slow ascents due to tired legs, and a slight knee niggle make descents just as slow, made for very slow going. I could not face the scramble up Crag Hill so went around the back and eventually made it to Rowling End. Finding a direct route to Barrow is difficult so I ended up lower down the track. It was now nearly 8pm so I gave myself an hour to get up and over Barrow. Watched the sun set from the top before walking off in the dark.

Got back to Portinscale and decided that after been out for so long, another half an hour wouldn't matter and went to the Farmers Arms for a pint. Got back to Keswick in darkness after a memorable day out in the mountains. The Abraham's Tea Round is a fantastic round, and as a walking round it is not to be underestimated. It certainly is a real challenge!



One of the hardest days out I've had in a while. Fatigued and lacking energy from the start. Hard weather conditions and a constant mental battle with the negative winning out for the vast majority of the day. Huge thanks to Bex for putting me up and cooking me tea! Lifesaver!

Day 2 The Espresso Round

This one is classed as the "little sister" of the Tea Round, with four summits being the goal rather than eight, with around half the mileage and a quarter of the elevation gain. An early night and an extra hour (thanks to the clocks changing) meant for a more leisurely start - breakfast and a brew with Bex and a start time of 9:30am.

The day started with more of a shuffle but by the time I was outside George Fisher I was walking relatively 'normally'. The weather could not have been more different from the morning before, so I set off with a spring in my step in the sunshine. First stop Barrow. Some blustery conditions but the bonus of a rainbow kept spirits high. I also had the company of Luna which always helps! Then over to Causey Pike and Rowling End... again with an unwelcome squawk from an angry bird, before a tricky descent down to the village of Stair. There were lots of folks out on the fells who were keen to chat, which was nice.



Then the final ascent up Catbells to mingle with the mass of friendly Sunday walkers. Some minor traffic jams as people scrambled up and down but made really good time and got a PB on the descent! Whoop! Then a trail run back to Keswick to finish ahead of schedule. Happy days.

I had started the weekend with the intention of doing a double Tea Round attempt but sometimes you have to readdress your goals and do what's right given the conditions. A total of 46 miles covered over the weekend with over 15,000ft ascent... All in aid of Dean Barwick Primary School and Place2Be.

I am still quite a way off my fundraising target. Any donations are really gratefully received, and a HUGE thank you to everyone who has supported me this far - whether that's been event support, hugs or cash money donations!

Support Dean Barwick Primary School
[justgiving.com/crowdfunding/sarah-gerrish](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/sarah-gerrish)

Support Place2Be: [justgiving.com/Sarah-Gerrish](https://www.justgiving.com/Sarah-Gerrish)



WARREN RENKEL

ATR date: 6 September

It was four or five weeks since the Paddy Buckley Round, and I felt pretty good. Then the buried fatigue came out and I realised it was going to take time to recover properly. So, I decided on lots of long mountain days, and fancied the Abraham's Tea Round. I had a couple of days off work and I thought "Why not?" Solo days in the hills are therapeutic for me and my crazy unbalanced brain as I find all the noise and all the 'stuff' goes quiet and I can live in the moment in the hills.

The plan was to just plod out the whole 30 miles 'steady eddy' in a day and then do something light the day after. So, after arriving at the YHA In Keswick, I checked the forecast again - it had been OK all week, but had now totally changed... rain, 30-40mph wind and low mist! Fabulous.

I set off 7am from the cafe, having not done any of these summits before it was set to be a good day. The morning weather was OK, the view back to Keswick off the summit of Catbells was lovely and it's a really nice climb to the summit. Pretty easy nav from there taking a descent off and into a valley and some road which seems to drag a bit.... Back into a nice valley and heading towards the climb for Robinson, a bit finicky and couldn't really see an obvious trod so I just went straight up and the moment I got above a few hundred metres, the rain arrived in fine fashion! I could see the swirling mist up on the first col where I would be bearing right to go the summit. I knew the moment I popped up I was going to get hammered... and I did! It was lifting me off my feet at times, a howling wind with sideways rain when all you can hear is your hood flapping against your face.

Summit of Robinson, no view, didn't even stop, just tapped the cairn and kept moving. Again, not an obvious descent and I ended up a few hundred metres down the road when I got to the bottom. Hit the lake, and it's a plod around the side and then back to climbing again up to High Stile - it's a big mountain and I was looking up at it and it was black like something out of a film and it looked nasty up there. I had no idea of the terrain, just what the map told me, so I knew it was a steep climb, craggy at the top and then a run around the ridge to Red Pike and down.... simples!

JENNIFER GRANGE WITH ALISON LOVE

ATR date: 19 October

So today I completed one of the hardest things I've ever done - the Abraham's Tea Round, 30+ miles with 12,000 feet of ascent.

Alison Love and I set off at 06.40 and made it back at 18.38. We had a wonderful start up to Robinson then unfortunately the weather came in a bit so the views for the second half weren't quite as beautiful and it was a bit cold, wet and windy! (definitely type 3 fun!) but I'm so chuffed to have completed it, it's been on my radar for ages!

Thanks to Ally for getting me round and being a fab running partner (can I point out that Ally did it anti-clockwise last month in a great time and she looked fresh as a daisy at the end of today). Thanks to Rachel Kearns for inspiring me to do it and being there at the finish! Thanks to my brilliant coach Dave Troman (Love to Run Coaching) for preparing me for it.

But the biggest thanks go to Becx Carter who has looked after the kids for me today and many Saturdays when I have been out on my long runs and

The rain is bouncing, I can hear the wind whistling again, it was horrific; the rain and wind combined was absolutely smashing me to pieces, I'm in the right gear as well. The nav on the top wasn't that easy, it was just fog so I'm just keeping the ridge on my right and working around after the summit and spotting the odd cairn, I'm running compass out NW, until I hit the next summit so I can't really go wrong. Summit appears, no view, total anti-climax after such a big climb, but that's life in the hills...

I'm really liking the feel of the northern fells in comparison to Helvellyn and Fairfield where the paths are like motorways. The descent off Red Pike, on a summers day probably very nice but today; no! Slippery rock steps all the way down into Buttermere, it took a lifetime and the rain and wind was just eating away at me and my positivity started to wane a little, especially being out solo with no banter or chat.

Dropped Into Buttermere and a cafe appears, a sign outside 'come and get warm', vegan cakes SOLD! I go in to warm up, I knew the moment I sat down that was it; I would convince myself it's OK to do it over two days and just enjoy it... Two oat lattes later and a piece of vegan flapjack, the decision was made... bus back to Keswick!

So, Day 2. Up early and grabbed a coffee at the hostel, packed some bars and got myself on the bus back to the cafe at Buttermere. Around the corner and straight into a big climb.... Whiteless Pike the first summit then passing through Whiteless Edge. Sounds exposed, it wasn't, but in all honesty it was a total white out, mega winds again and rain, not quite as severe but generally rubbish! But a great climb and a great run. Now, here is where things went off - I'm navigating with the map and aiming for Sand Hill, I go across a junction and all of a sudden I'm on a ridge and I shouldn't be on a ridge. On a clear day this would be obvious, when you're running through wet cotton wool not so much. Check the compass; I'm running NE, ridge to my right and I've hit a summit. Yep, I've missed a turn and I'm at Crag Hill meaning I've chopped a section out. I can backtrack, or attack the summit, but looking at the map from where I am the route up Eel Crag looks craggy and rocky and I'm solo and I'm also soaked.

On a sunny day I'd have gone back; today I just cracked on and headed for Causey Pike, a really nice run across the tops and I had to move to stay warm as the weather just wasn't relenting at all. Then... the sky's cleared as I dropped down a little lower and the run over the tops to Rowling End was lovely and now I'd finally got a view - still chucking down, but some scenery was a welcome boost.

Seems most people go out and back here. I tried to be smart and try a different line by going off and curling around the bottom. Note to self; look at the contours



made the most fantastic rocket-fuel chocolate flapjack to see me round!

And, of course, to my long-suffering husband Rob Grange who probably raises his eyebrows every time I go out for a run (which is quite often) but always supports me in my madness! I'm feeling a little bit broken now but happily munching anything with lots of salt in!



BEN THOMAS

ATR date: 27 August

The morning dawn kissed the fell tops with a fiery glow, and, as the sun crept over the horizon, the breaking light sparkled on the distant shore; the promise of adventure, the herald of a new day.

This run delivers so much; the quiet serenity of the empty fells, the singular peace that comes with running distance alone, the heady feeling of topping out, time and again, pushing your limits, and each time rewarded by a new vista, rolling out into the infinity of a deep blue, empty sky.

This is a run that feeds the soul and quickens the pulse, in a way that only runners feel, when the trail opens up ahead, just whispering your name, that hunger that draws you on, and on, and on, that need to see what's just over the next hill, and the next.

I'm no fell runner, just a back-of-the-pack plodding Ultra type, but this informal challenge is really special - no big send-off, no big welcome home, just a few raised eyebrows as you trundle through Keswick on a busy Saturday evening, some kind of dishevelled alien creature, drained and exhausted but with a wry secret smile that says YESSS!! I DID IT!

I tried earlier in the year the right way round, and couldn't find the right way up to High Stile, and overall I think underestimated the scale of the challenge, bailing at Buttermere. This time I ran it in reverse (in 78-degree heat) and would say that other than Robinson, it is the better way, as you tick off some of the bigger ones first, but maybe that's just me.

Struggled both ways to find the route up or down High Stile, I always seem to end up in the boulder field or full-on climbing! Also the way up to Causey Pike through the heather; bloody hell! I think going down the valley and up the track would make more sense, (again, I'm no fell runner).

All in all then, a relatively short but seriously challenging jog out, not to be underestimated... trail, scree, nav, and plenty of ups and downs. Good luck if you're doing this and mahoosive respect to all those 7-hours types, just amazing!



DUANE ROBERTS WITH JENNY HELLIER

ATR date: 30 September

Abraham's Tea Round - we knew it was going to be tough when the first hill gave us over 900ft of climb.

The hills continued in this vein for the remainder of the day. One hill in particular climbed for over 1,500ft, it was relentless in its ascent. At one point, with hands on my knees, I asked myself why, why was I doing this? This hurts so much! If I stop, then the pain will stop. If I stop, then I would have failed, if I fail then Slovenia is not happening. I am not failing, I am not giving up on me.

Michael pushed himself to a point where he too was close to chucking his hand in. Once again, he dug in and cracked on, once again he drew on his mental strength to get the job done. The pain is part of the journey, the pain has to be accepted, the pain comes hand in hand with the pleasure of succeeding.

The day was a combination of running, walking, scrambling and falling. The latter came to both of us, thankfully without any serious damage. We had aimed for a sub 10-hour completion time, which would have meant we would make it before the Abraham's cafe closed. We missed it by 10 minutes! Disappointing, but really happy that we completed the 30 mile/12,000 feet of elevation, Abraham's Tea Round.

Michael and I, once again, worked well together. We looked out for each other, we laughed and moaned together about the same things, we wouldn't let each other stop, we were finishing this together, no matter what.

We have already spoken about returning to run this again. On Saturday we ran it clockwise, it would be rude not to have a crack at the anticlockwise route. Great to see Steve, Sally, Ben and Jenny along the route.



Thanks to Smartwool Sock who sponsored the Tea Round by giving everyone socks and a copy of Chris Brewers Map in October and November.

OUT OF THE BLUE

One minute, George Fisher ambassador and ski-racer FRANCESCA LEE was competing. The next...



Just before the accident



Just after the operation

The 20th of February had been a normal race day in Bormio, Italy. There had been a delay as the timing wasn't working, so I was waiting and warming up for longer than usual, chatting to friends and team-mates as I went through my warm-up routine for the umpteenth time. Then the race started, and it was time to refocus.

I don't really remember that much about the crash, and actually on video it wasn't quite as spectacular as I thought. It turns out I didn't tumble like a gymnast and crash into two gates, but rather a mere 30mph pirouette which I nearly recovered... but not quite! I wasn't in much pain immediately after the crash, but the agony started to hit after I'd been stretchered off and the 70-year-old lift station first aiders were warming my frozen plastic race boots with a hairdryer to release my foot before I was taken away in the ambulance. The pain made me go a little crazy and embarrassingly I remember singing (not my forte at the best of times) as a pain distraction technique!

The hospital visit was quite dull. We were there for about seven hours, in which time I had X-rays on my leg and knee, a head scan, and a visit to the consultant. Praying not to leave the hospital plastered from head to toe (after all, I did have head and leg scans), I was relieved when I was told they thought I had sprained my MCL, so 'only' had to have a bandage seven layers thick from hip to ankle. Then I was finally out of hospital with seven days of heparin injections, a headache, and a prescription for crutches.

During the rest of the week I slept a lot, cheered on team-mates in the races and got some upper body gains from using crutches. I managed to arrange an MRI for when I was back in the UK, and I can't be thankful enough that this was done within 7-10 days. Once home and MRI completed, it was agony waiting for the results because so much rested on the outcome. A relatively simple sprain would mean three to four weeks off skiing, whereas a torn ACL would mean nine months off skiing post-surgery. I rang up every day to see if the results were back, and when they finally arrived the adrenaline kicked in to know what I'd done. Nerves fluttered around my stomach as I entered the doctor's room and after requesting my results, I glanced at the screen and saw it immediately: "complete ACL rupture".

There were tears in my eyes before the doctor had even officially told me what I'd done. I was devastated. I had big goals for that season and even though I knew that I was skiing well enough to achieve them, I had yet to put everything together in one race. I was also hoping to achieve my goals and then go to university in America on a skiing scholarship, something that was pretty much impossible now.

I started writing to consultants immediately. Time was of the essence because if you leave ACL injuries for over 3-4 weeks, the chances of being able to repair what is left diminishes as the body fluids dissolve the broken ends of the ligament. I chose Professor Mackay in Scotland, after numerous recommendations within the skiing community. By now my knee had become extremely stiff, which hinders the success of the operation. However, within a week I managed to bend my leg 90 degrees, which was good enough for the op to go ahead. Fifteen days after being told I had completely ruptured my ACL, I had a reconstructed one from my patellar tendon, two internal braces were put in to make my knee as stable as possible, and my cartilage had also been repaired.

I spent six weeks on crutches after the op. The first week was mainly taken up by sleep, and a trip to the hospital after I fainted and then threw up, a side effect of the painkillers I was on. After a week or two of not doing a lot, I decided to make the most of it and started going to chess club, playing bingo, knitting, and playing the guitar. I treated it as "my time to be lazy", and actually started to enjoy simple physio exercises and the laid-back lifestyle. My American university offers came in, but without a ski scholarship it was just going to be too expensive for me to go. I wasn't sure what I would end up doing, but I made the big decision that I was going to enjoy it to the max and focus my energy on the best rehab possible.

Slowly but surely, I started to hit milestones and it was so satisfying to see my hard work starting to pay off. The first of these came on my birthday, just over a month in, when I was able to swim and do the first activity with my leg for over two months; I loved every minute I was in the pool.

At two months post op (three months post injury) I was starting to think about getting on a bike. My range of movement wasn't quite there, but I persisted through the pain to a point where I was almost able to do a full pedal cycle. Then, after seeing the surgeon again, I had a second op to get my leg moving more. I think this was the best thing that happened since the injury.

Straight after the second op I was able to cycle, thanks to the increased range of movement. This was a huge milestone, and I ended up cycling every day for over a month! Alongside this, my physio exercises have progressively got harder which helps me to feel like I am back on track and training again.

Currently (four months post op) I've started to run (although it's a lot like a granny jog at the minute) and I can't wait to hit the next few milestones. I've learnt to accept that everybody's healing process is different, and even when you can't see the bigger picture, it is good to know that my knee is slowly, but definitely healing, and that sometime around Christmas I'm aiming to be back on skis!



PATAGONIA WOMEN’S MICRO PUFF HOODY

Review by ESTHER FOSTER

I’ve been wearing the Patagonia Micro Puff Hoody throughout this summer. It’s been used for work and play; in the Scottish mountains, the Lake District crags and fells, the high mountains of the Alps, and more recently during a sport climbing week in beautiful Kalymnos.

I’m a slim size 8 usually, and this size Small hoody is comfortable, allowing space underneath for extra layers. Often when buying outdoor jackets and coats I’ll size up to allow room for other layers and allow for maximum movement. There’s nothing worse than climbing and mountaineering in clothes that are tight around the shoulders or underneath the arms. This hoody feels equivalent to a size 10; Patagonia is a US brand, and in my experience their clothing has felt slightly larger compared to the equivalent UK sizes.

The women’s fit is slightly tapered around the waist, but not overly so. It has a long body and long arms, great for climbing and enabling unrestricted movement without letting cold air in. Patagonia jackets have an attractive range of colour choices, and always manage to look great out and about in town as well as in the hills. The Micro Puff boasts the best ‘warmth for weight’ of any of Patagonia’s products; it looks, feels and compresses like a down jacket, but being synthetic filled has a much greater warm-when-wet performance.

This jacket has been my ‘go to’ insulated layer for a large proportion of the year. It has the warmth of, and looks like, a mid-weight jacket when worn, but weighs and packs down like a much smaller layer. When climbing and mountaineering in the UK it has been the first thing in my rucksack, taking up very little space and weight, and being used when static at lunchtimes, evenings or on cold belays. When the weather is really cold, it still allows enough movement to climb and hike in. I’ve worn it often during my outdoor work, if I’m not moving around much, and it fits well underneath a waterproof. In the Alps this summer conditions were unseasonably hot, and it was only used in the evenings when staying up high in the mountains. The long and committing Cassin route on the Piz Badile involved climbing 24 pitches carrying all of our kit, and the Micro Puff was my light, super warm layer if the temperatures dropped or we were out longer than expected. On a contrasting trip, this jacket was regularly used in the evenings and when belaying or teaching in the shade while coaching climbing in Kalymnos, Greece. The attractive colours and smart design of the Micro Puff also often made it my jacket of choice for walking around town.



For really hot, stable weather when I know I’ll be moving and staying warm I have often left this jacket at home. And for cold belays in Scottish winter, or when out in the cold if weight and walk-ins aren’t an issue, then I’ll be taking a heavier, warmer insulating jacket. For those of us that work and play outdoors, we do end up with a lot of jackets! The bottom line is that out of all of the synthetic and down jackets I own, the Micro Puff is the one I use most often.

The one negative for me is the lack of a zipped inside pocket. Personally, I find this to be a really useful feature on any jacket, and I struggle to see how the two inner ‘slip’ pockets are more beneficial. They could be used for gloves or a map, but most of the time I just forget they are there. The Micro Puff packs down inside its pocket, it’s not necessary to always store it this way in a rucksack but great to have the option. The hood is snug and the jacket zips up just above the chin, important for cold, windy weather. The Micro Puff is water resistant, though this does not mean I would wear it outside for several hours in proper UK rain by choice. Light showers will not soak in instantly, the synthetic inner will not lose much warmth if it does get very wet, and it will dry quicker and better than down equivalents.

It’s worth noting that Patagonia has an excellent ethical and environmental reputation. They recycle used Patagonia products and repair to a high quality; the ‘Worn Wear’ van is often found outside the George Fisher shop (although personally I think a few duct tape patches on a jacket tells of many more adventures than something pristine!). Although priced higher than some other outdoor brands, Patagonia items are built to last and their incredibly high standards of consumer care and ethical business practises should leave you confident in your purchase.

ARC’TERYX NORVAN VT

Review by RACHEL KEARNS



At Arc'teryx, VT stands for ‘Vertical Terrain’ and these bad boys were certainly designed for technical terrain on hills, mountains and fells. They started their life with me much coveted, because they are so beautiful; green, sleek and stylish. Too good for mud, rock and scuff territory!

So, they came to work and were very comfortable all day. They went to New York, great for around the shops, pavements and visiting architectural delights. They walked the dog. They went to Parkrun in Stockholm and performed superbly on hard packed trail.

Finally, though, I released them into their natural habitat, and we went onto the fells. They were sublime; feeling supportive and light, they gripped grass, rock and gravel descents, they kept my feet comfortable, not too hot, not too cold and then when it was all over... they cleaned up easily and (phew) no scuffs!

Being a bit of a Salomon girl when it comes to my running shoe of choice, deciding to forego the snazzy Kevlar lacing system was probably the hardest move. I lost faith in and hate the faff of old-style laces in my running shoes, but hallelujah, praise these flat non-slip beauties; my faith has been restored. It helps that once you’ve easily pulled, tensioned and tied, they have a snazzy little ‘pocket’ for the whole lot, making them look even neater but also helping prevent laces loosening mid-flight. Well done Arc'teryx, well done indeed.

SMARTWOOL SPORT 150 MERINO TEE

Review by FRANCESCA LEE



The Smartwool Sport 150 Merino Tee is a comfortable, versatile T-shirt crafted of “highly engineered hybrid merino” (all sounds very smart!). Its composition is 56% merino wool and 44% polyester, giving the softness and performance of merino with the durability and drying speed of polyester. The tee-shirt can sit next to skin, or as part of layers, utilising the natural wicking ability of merino wool, making it an ideal top for all year around.

One of my favourite features of this tee is its resistance to smell. Merino is a fantastic natural fibre known for its odour resistance. I was actually really surprised at how effective it is... I even used the top for seven (yes seven!) sweaty bike rides in a row without washing and it still didn’t smell. My other sports tops (which don’t contain merino) would maybe last one or two sweaty rides before hitting the laundry basket, so the Smartwool top is in a league of its own. Even though seven sweaty uses is a bit extreme, it definitely needs washing less frequently, which is a great thing.

The other component in the T-shirt is polyester, making it more durable and reducing its drying time. So even if you do want to wash it every time you use it, you can. This top certainly seems like a top for life: it washes well, no matter how covered in dirt it is, and it seems to get softer every time I wash it too. It has moved up to one of my top tees for comfort and has a super soft feel next to my skin.

The fabric is really stretchy, so can move with you when you move, making it completely unrestrictive. The length is longer than most sport T-shirts, and it actually goes to the top of my legs so does a good job of covering up. If you prefer a shorter look, it can be easily and comfortably pulled it up a little, or you can tuck it in to create the style you are looking for. It doesn’t look like a dedicated sport specific top either with a cool design on the front, making it the perfect top for any situation.

Overall this T-shirt is a super comfy, high performing technical tee, with great resistance to smell! It’s great for sports and everyday use, as well as travelling, camping or any occasion due to its versatility and durability. So, whether you are planning on heading out for an epic expedition, climbing Catbells or Napes Needle, playing sport, or simply heading into town, this is the perfect top for all!

HILLEBERG KAITUM 4

Review by Jen Grange



We were very excited to try out the Hilleberg Kaitum 4 on our family cycle touring trip around Kielder Water at the end of the summer, and OMG we love it!

Firstly, it is very lightweight for its size, just over 5kg - only a bit heavier than our three-person tent which is now too small for our family. It felt a bit bulkier than our other tent, but fitted perfectly in the foot of our bike trailer and would have sat nicely in a drybag over the top of our panniers.

We were delighted (and slightly relieved) that it was really easy to erect as we hadn’t practiced before our trip. There are only three poles to put in; the kids enjoyed snapping them together and knocking the pegs in with a shoe.

It had loads of room in the vestibules for our panniers and shoes. One of the best features is the side opening zips on the door, so you don’t have to reach down to unzip in the morning and do battle with the condensation dripping on your head; a great idea!

Once inside we were impressed by how spacious it was. There was plenty of room for four Thermarests, loads of headroom (even for Rob at 6’4”) and a pocket in each corner to put our head torches, collection of soft toys and bits of Lego! We put the kids in the middle as we were worried about them getting cold; they ended up sleeping at right angles to each other and there was still plenty of room for Rob and I.



Overall, we found it a brilliant tent for family cycle touring - lightweight, spacious and very easy to put up!

SMARTWOOL PHD RUN SOCKS – NOT JUST FOR ATHLETES!

Review by FRANCESCA LEE

As many athletes will know, the difference between winning or losing can be down to the smallest of margins. Every piece of equipment matters; including socks. Having the correct support, cushioning and breathability can be advantageous, so it’s an obvious answer to choose high performance socks such as these Smartwool PhD run socks. But for the non-elite, fitness and fun runner, do they actually make any difference?

I’m currently rehabilitating my knee after an ACL reconstruction earlier this year. My running is currently a slow jog/plod and I’ve been testing out the Smartwool PhD socks to see what all the hype is about. The socks claim to have “women’s specific fit”, providing “extraordinary comfort” and “exceptional

fit”. It’s fair to say that they do NOT disappoint one bit. From the second I tried them on, I could tell the difference between all my other sport socks. These socks supported my foot incredibly well, it was like putting on the perfect ‘foot hug’. I’m not too sure why foot hugs feel so good, but it almost took away any dullness in my feet instantly, giving my feet another burst of life.

Another factor that really impressed me was the amount of cushioning that these socks provide. The cushioning is located under the heel and ball of the foot and is substantially thicker than my other sport socks. It acts like a little pad between you and the ground so the impact hitting the ground is slightly reduced. Despite the thicker soles of the socks, the

top part is a lot thinner and breathable, helping your feet to stay a nice temperature for the whole run, regardless of how sweaty you get!

Irrespective of how smart these socks are, they have stayed at the top of my sock draw since I got them, simply because they are so comfy. I look forward to every opportunity I get to use them, and it actually motivates me to go for my plod/runs when I see them ready, waiting for me in my drawer. So, if you are looking for a little extra motivation, to treat your feet, and keep your feet happy whilst you’re running or working out, I think a little extra money for a pair of socks is worth it, don’t you?



HIGH-LEVEL HANWAGS

Staff member ERIKA heads to the Zugspitze, courtesy of bootmakers Hanwag



Late on a Monday afternoon, sat lazing on my sofa, suddenly my phone lit up. A message from Rachel, our Marketing Manager; would I be interested in going to Germany to climb Zugspitze, which at 2,962 metres is Germany's highest mountain, with bootmakers Hanwag? Without a moment of hesitation, I messaged back: "Yes!"

Fast forward two weeks and a considerable amount of excitement later, I stepped onboard a bus which took us from Munich Airport to Hotel Eibsee, situated by the beautiful Eibsee lake right at the very foot of Zugspitze. We were a mixed but excited bunch of retailer staff and competition winners who sat down that evening to listen to the details about the four routes we were to spend the next couple of days on.

After a restful night's sleep in a very comfortable hotel bed we devoured our breakfasts and met up in the hotel lobby, bags packed and wearing the fantastic new Hanwag boots we had been given the night before. I normally struggle to find footwear that fits my awkward feet, but I was quietly optimistic I would not end up too badly blistered...

Another bus journey took us, via the beautiful town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, past the old Olympic stadium to the start of our route - the Reintal. We had been told this route was the most beautiful one, and sure enough - right from the start - wandering through the beautiful Partnachklamm gorge, a deep ravine with a lovely mountain stream running through it, we all marvelled at the landscape. Once out of the Partnach gorge we travelled through a forest and saw the steep, awe-inspiring limestone mountains tower up around us. After some 16 kilometres of walking we arrived at our home for the night - the Reintlingerhütte - where we dipped our feet in the icy cold waters of the Partnach. In the evening, we were treated to good food and even better beer; it was Oktoberfest-time, after all. The hut staff played music and sang, and it was not without a great deal of reluctance we finally went to bed - tomorrow was to be a big day after all - with nearly 1,600 metres of altitude gain to reach the summit.

We were lucky enough to have fantastic weather for both of our walking days - at valley level it was around 20 degrees C - and having had an early start (well 7am, can you tell alpine starts aren't my speciality?), we got to watch the sun rise over the mountains as we made our way higher. As we gained altitude, vegetation became scarcer and we found the odd patch of snow. Not long after stopping for some refreshing apple soda at Knorrhütte, we neared what

proved to be the toughest bit of our hike; the scree slope which took us past the observatory. It was a case of two steps forward (if you were lucky) before you slipped back one step. Still, with our trusty Hanwags (still not a blister in sight) and a good pair of walking poles, we eventually made it past this section. Swapping our walking poles for the cables on this higher part of the route, we marvelled at the view - we were now able to see the alpine peaks stretching out into the distance.

The last bit before we reached the summit platform was fantastic, with unbeatable views and a short ridge walk, part of it with one foot in Germany in the other in Austria which was quite fun! Having spent the last couple of days on the trail, it felt really quite strange to arrive at the incredibly crowded summit area, with cable cars taking tourists up, a souvenir shop and a cafe. Still, we made our way across the platform to claim our well-earned summit! I will readily admit I was quite emotional to arrive at the top. Making our way back to the cafe we met up with the groups that had done the other routes and then rewarded ourselves with beer and apfelstrudel; lovely!

We had the luxury of not having to make our way down on foot, but rather on the cable car, for which my knees are eternally grateful. Once back at the hotel we all slunk off to our rooms for a shower and a well-earned rest before dinner. Mustering up the energy to go to the buffet being put on for us at the Eibsee Alm, a short walk from our hotel, was a challenge, but I'm very glad I did; we ate, drank and rather tone-deafly (well, at least in my case) sang along with the fantastic Bavarian folk musicians, and of course, shared stories of our respective routes.

I was quite sad to leave this beautiful part of the world the next morning, but I know I'll be back. Thank you to Hanwag and our guides from Mountain Elements for an amazing experience!

Kit I brought and wouldn't have wanted to be without:

- My sturdy but lightweight Leki Micro Vario Carbon poles
- My Camelbak bladder - I find hydration bladders make it so much easier to stay hydrated on the trail, as you can have a drink on the go, without having to stop or take your pack off.
- Some fresh, new hiking socks.
- Sole insoles - my flat feet wouldn't want to be without them!

WIN! A BREAK IN THE LAKES WORTH £1,000



Nestled in the heart of the beautiful Borrowdale valley for over 200 years, this rejuvenated hotel features charm aplenty. Lake views that will take your breath away, award-winning dining experiences and calming lounges that inspire you to unwind.

Dine on delicious menus, enjoy blissfully comfy bedrooms and feel pampered by the friendly team. From lazy lakeside strolls to adventurous excursions, bracing walks and dramatic scenery, you can experience it all at the Lodore Falls. Elegantly offering the perfect combination of romance, luxury and lakeside adventure - this Lake District Hotel & Spa radiates countryside sophistication.

Complete with a doggie friendly space for cultured canines, every room in the Lodore Falls Hotel & Spa is stylish, homely and comfortably chic.

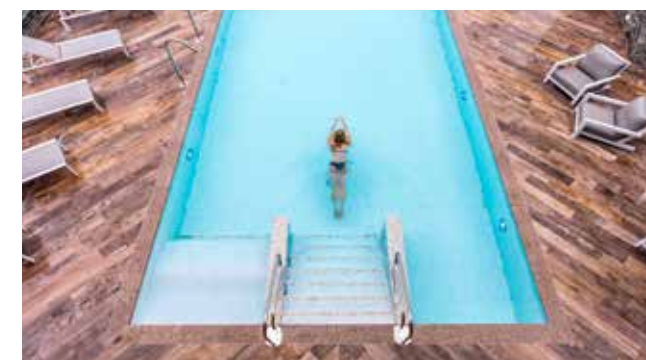
Lodore Falls Hotel & Spa has teamed up with George Fisher to offer a fabulous dinner, and bed & breakfast stay in the Hotel with spa access, plus free boot hire and £500 to spend at George Fisher.

THE PRIZE INCLUDES

- One night's accommodation in a luxurious spa suite at Lodore Falls Hotel & Spa
- Full Cumbrian breakfast
- Four course dinner in the 2 AA Rosette Lake View restaurant
- Spa access at The Falls Spa
- £500 to spend in store or online at George Fisher

Competition entries are online at georgefisher.co.uk just navigate to Discover > Competitions where you'll find the entry form and terms and conditions.

Entry deadline is 13th February 2020.



ENTER ONLINE AT GEORGEFISHER.CO.UK

WHAT'S ON

Latest news on George Fisher events in and around the Keswick area

KESWICK LIVE ADVENT – FISHER'S FESTIVE FUN

Date: 3 December
Location: In store
Keswick Tourism Association, supported by Allerdale Borough Council, organises Keswick Live Advent. Throughout December, a festive themed window is illuminated in a business each day around Keswick. We're up on Tuesday 3rd; pop in from 4pm for mulled wine and mince pies!



ALPINE CLUB LECTURES

Date: 3 December, 18 February & 17 March all 19:00
Location: The Greta Suite, Skiddaw Hotel, Keswick
Tuesday 3 December
Mick Fowler: 'No Easy Way, the challenging life of the climbing taxman'. Mick is one of the most successful British climbers and alpinists of all time. 'No Easy Way' is Mick's third book, featuring tales of amazing Himalayan climbs, extreme dog walking, work-life balance challenges... and much more.
Tuesday 18 February
Julian Freeman-Attwood lecture, with details to be confirmed.
Tuesday 17 March
John Porter lecture The Beauty of Risk, details to be confirmed.

THE ART OF ADVENTURE WITH JULIE CARTER

Date: 13 December
Location: In store
Keswick fell runner, climber and doctor Julie Carter hasn't stood still since the success of her books, 'Running the Red Line' and 'Is It Serious?' and continues to use her adventures as inspiration. This year she became the first woman to complete an extended Bob Graham Round of 55 peaks at the age of 55. Join Julie at the Abraham's café for stories, poems, pictures and music. Tickets £10 with money going to Derwent Hill, supporting young people and providing access to outdoor education opportunities.

NAVIGATION FOR NIGHT RUNS WITH NAV4 ADVENTURE

Date: 14 December, 16:00
Location: George Fisher
A session to brush up your night-time navigation skills, led by Joe Faulkner, (mountain guru and very experienced runner and pro-tutor) we'll explore the trails and open fells around Keswick - route dependent on weather. Meet at the store at 4pm for a quick brew in Abraham's Cafe, along with a revision of nav theory basics, head torches and other essentials. Then a 10k night run focusing on navigation advice and learning. We'll aim to finish around 8pm, and hopefully adjourn to a nearby pub for hot or cold refreshments. Maps and compasses provided. Small group size, 4:1 ratio, places limited. Cost £40 per person. Bookings via email only, direct to Joe - nav4adventure@gmail.com



GEORGE FISHER NIGHT RUN WITH PETZL AND HOKA

Date: 15 January
Location: George Fisher
The teams from Petzl and HOKA are bringing their test pool of shoes and head torches to George Fisher on 15 January. If you've ever wanted to try a pair of HOKA shoes, Petzl head torch, or want to have a chat about what you need to make your trail runs more enjoyable, come and join us. We'll be doing a trail run though some beautiful terrain here in the Lake District, it doesn't get much better! Collect your Petzl and HOKA test products at 6.00pm before the run starts at 6.30pm from the shop.
Book your space now by calling George Fisher on 017687 72178 (during Opening Hours) or say you're 'Going' on our Facebook Event spaces are limited to 40 people.

PRIZE WINNERS

Main Competition Congratulations to Lisa Shekells from Warwickshire who is the winner of the Smartwool competition in issue 108.

Walk Plan Winner Staying locally? Ask your accommodation provider for a George Fisher Walk Plan and you could be a winner. The winners of the latest 'Walk Plan Draw', are Anne and Mike Ramsey who were staying at Mosedale End Farm. Anne and Mike and the guesthouse owners get £50 George Fisher vouchers.

SHINRIN-YOKU

Date: 21 December, 14:00 to 17:00
Location: Keswick
Shinrin-Yoku, or Forest Bathing, is a natural wellbeing therapy originating from Japan, proven to reduce your stress levels, boost your immune system and enhance your mood. Jenny Grange will gently lead you to open up your senses and engage with the sights, sounds and smells of the forest; tuning into nature and your inner self through guided mindfulness, connecting with the forest, and ending with a warm welcoming fire and traditional tea ceremony. Session includes gentle mindful walking, breathing exercises, opening awareness, tea ceremony and reflections. Moderate level of fitness required, plus bring sturdy footwear, warm clothes and a hat (you will be spending some time sitting still) waterproofs, water bottle and snack.
£25.00 per person - book via Lakeland Wellbeing: jen@lakelandwellbeing.co.uk or Tel: 07810 890528



'REBOUND' WALKING CLINIC

Dates: 7/8 February, 6/7 March, 3/4 April, 1/2 May, 5/6 June, 10/11 July, 7/8 August, 4/5 September, 2/3 October, 6/7 November
Location: George Fisher
Our walking health clinics continue to be a huge success, with customers benefiting from the advice of podiatrist Andrew Stanley from the Rebound Clinic in Settle who runs our in-store clinics. Andrew runs normal treatment clinics all day Friday and Saturday mornings and free advisory consultations on a Saturday afternoon in our boot room. To make an appointment for the Friday and Saturday morning clinic ring 01729 825900 or call the shop to make a free 15-minute consultation appointment on 017687 72178.
Note: These free consultations are purely advisory and do not include any treatment, services, equipment etc.

GETTING CLOSER TO HELVELLYN

PETE BARRON, John Muir Trust Property Manager, gives an insight into this precious environment



Bog Asphodel flowering on Glenridding Common



Red Tarn



Rare willow grown locally from a cutting and planted onto the crags

I live locally in Borrowdale, and have a keen interest in all aspects of Lakeland life, but in particular the landscape and natural environment. Having had the good fortune to have been a National Park Ranger for over 20 years, with the opportunities to get close to, gain an interest, learn and help to foster the wellbeing of some of our local flora and fauna, I hope to be able to highlight some of our wildlife and some of the management issues associated with them.

I'm now working for the John Muir Trust, a charity founded in 1983 to protect and defend wild land, enhance habitats and encourage people to connect with wild places, especially local communities who live and work in the uplands.

In the Lake District, the John Muir Trust is managing the area of Glenridding Common (basically most of Helvellyn) and I'll give an insight into the species that live there, plus other upland areas of Lakeland, and what management and conditions they need to continue to inhabit and thrive in our area. You may be surprised at the variety of life in this 1,100-hectare area, which rises from 300 to 950m.

RED TARN AND CRAGS

The Fairfield and Helvellyn area is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), this being our national designation of importance for both biological and geological features. The area has both of these designated features, notified by Natural England, the conservation advisor to the government. To add further to this national designation, the area is also a Special Area of Conservation under the EU Habitats Directive and so adds an international importance to the species and habitats of the area.

Various habitats of National, English and Cumbrian importance have been identified and are listed as Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sites (we can't avoid a bit of jargon) which are specifically targeted for protection and enhancement. On Glenridding Common we have: blanket bog, inland rock and scree, mountain heath and willow scrub, oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes (low nutrient and generally acidic in nature), plus juniper woodland.

The Helvellyn ridge through to Fairfield is the most important area in Cumbria for its mountain flora, found on the extensive cliff ledges and stony flushes of the high-level corries. On ledges with moist, basic soils, species-rich tall herb communities, more typical of woodland or northern meadows, have developed. Plants such as wood cranes-bill *Geranium sylvaticum*, wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, water avens *Geum rivale*, great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*, and occasionally globeflower *Trollius europaeus* along with numerous other species.

A number of rare arctic-alpine species occur very locally, representing the last remnants of populations which have declined since the last glaciation. These include the alpine cinquefoil *P. crantzii*, alpine mouse-ear *Cerastium alpinum*, and downy willow *Salix lapponum*.

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also available: *Fell running in the Lake District*
Cicerone guides are available in George Fisher, Keswick

cicerone.co.uk






abraham's café

With spectacular mountain views, Abraham's cafe in George Fisher is the perfect place to relax, unwind and plan your next adventure.



Photo: Richard Smith | Climbers: James Gibson & Jack Oliver

Order online, latest news, blogs and stories from George Fisher at georgefisher.co.uk

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