

The Esker – Winter Warmer +!

Esk Valley Fell Club's Blog



Pic courtesy Tall Guy Flickr

Fog hangs in a North Yorkshire Valley

The Winter Series really cranked into gear with two cracking races run-off in terrific conditions. **The Three Tops** a deceptively tough race 'A' rated medium race where the running is never easy, and our latest 'A' rated short race after a remeasure, over a much loved racers route **Clay Bank West**. The Winter series continues a pace with the tweaked **Eskdale Eureka** this weekend, then our classic Christmas and New Year trio of; **Guisborough Woods**, **Captain Cook Races** and **Clay Bank East**.

Racing/Training dates

The nights have closed in and there's a chill in the air, the training doesn't stop though and who needs the gym? When head-torch runs are an absolute joy, slightly surreal, mostly fun and could be your key to winter and summer series racing success. The December round of Headtorchers begins with our first Tuesday social at the Royal Oak on High Great at Great Ayton, it would be terrific for a big turnout for an early Christmas outing.

For anyone new to night-time running or if your candle lamp is failing a tremendous value head torch the 'Gamma' is available from **Alpkit**, (other head torches are available!).

Sunday **04/12/2011** 10.30hrs – **Eskdale Eureka** – 9.1ml/1542' – **New Venue** – Car Park above Dibble, west of High Castleton, GR NZ 670077. This is race 5 in the Esk Valley/NEHRA/Northern Runner winter series. Enter on Day £6.00, no junior races, **Full Kit must be carried**.

Tuesday **06/12/2011** 19.00hrs – Training – Tourist Information Car Park, High Green Great Ayton – Its that time again - Royal Oak P.H. Afterwards for drinks and chips social.

Tuesday **13/12/2011** 19.00hrs – Training – Bank Foot, (park by farm), approx half mile east of Ingleby Greenhow, GR NZ 592061

Tuesday **20/12/2011** 19.00hrs – Training – Church, Ingleby Cross, start of Ossy Oiks race, just off A172, on east side of road, other side from Ingleby Cross village. GR NZ 452003. As its Christmas the Blue Bell P. H. is on hand after training.

Tuesday **27/12/2011** 11.00hrs – **Guisborough Woods** – 5.5ml/1222' or 8.8km/376m Venue - Guisborough Rugby Club, Belmontgate, Guisborough, Cleveland, GR NZ 616155. £6.00 - Enter on the day. **Full Kit may be required** Junior race for U14/U16/U18 over one lap of the course 1.8ml/407' or 2.9km/125m, £3.00 EoD. This is race 6 in the Esk Valley/NEHRA/Northern Runner Winter Series, a testing three lapper, you are never too far away, there is terrain to suit all tastes, come-on did you eat too much Christmas Pud?

Sunday **01/01/2012** 11.00hrs – **Captain Cooks Races** – 5ml/1033' or 8km/318m. Venue – Royal Oak P. H. High Green, Great Ayton, North Yorkshire, GR NZ 563107. Our Charity fund raiser, £6.00 Pre-enter or 2011/12 Winter series entrant or £7.00 Enter on the Day. **Full Kit may be required**. Junior Races U12 – 3.1km, U14/U16/U18 – 4.1km £3.00 Enter on Day. Race 7 of the Winter Series and Race 1 in the NEHRA 2012 Junior Fell Race Series. Start your running year with the classic CCR's

Advance Entries

Loftus Poultry Run – Sunday 18/12/2011 – 11.00hrs – An 8 mile multi-terrain festive favourite, a drink and a mince pie for finishers, poultry prizes and the band plays, organised by **Loftus and Whitby AC** entry form [here](#).

Old Monks Race – Sunday 08/01/2012 – 11.00hrs – A 5.5 multi-terrain race, back to its regular New Year slot, organised by **Hartlepool Burn Road Harriers**, entry form [here](#).

Hardmoors Series – There are now 4 events in the Hardmoors series, 30, 60, 55 (half Cleveland Way) and 110 (full Cleveland Way). For you Ultra fans! the series opener, the 30 is held on New Years Day, link to site [here](#).

Safety in Races

All Winter Series competitors are reminded of their safety obligations. The Fell Runners Association safety requirements for Fell Races rule 9 states:

Competitors should arrive at races prepared to carry any or all of the following equipment:-

- Windproof whole body cover
- Other body cover appropriate for the weather conditions. (i.e. Waterproof body cover)
- Map and compass suitable for navigating the course.
- Whistle
- Emergency Food (Long Races)

These requirements constitute 'best practice' and are mandatory at all Category A Long and Medium races. The Winter series fell races are held in sometimes remote locations, at a time of year when weather conditions can change rapidly and become adverse. So look after yourself in races and whilst training.

Race Results

There have been some cracking performances outside of the Winter Series races this Autumn. Kendra White and Adrian Martin tackled the **Kilburn Kanter** (05/11/2011). A Long Distance Walker's Association (LDWA) challenge event, but don't let the organisation's title fool you, these are terrific events for runners and walkers alike. The new incarnation of the **KK** was a near marathon 23.5 miles long, a not insubstantial 3525' of climb, with the route starting in Kilburn and taking in Cold Kirby, Hawnby and Sutton Bank before its return to Kilburn. Winter Series regulars Andrew Minister and Neil Ridsdale shared the best time of 3 hours 30 minutes, Kendra came in 9th overall, unsurprisingly gained first lady in a time of 4 hours 37 minutes, Adrian was no slouch coming 16th overall in a time of 4 hours 52 minutes, from 80 finishers.

Joe Johnson tested his legs over one of the now classic autumn races, **The Tour of Pendle** (19/11/2011), a 16.8 mile and 4830' of climb race based on Pendle hill, with multiple climbs of the hill and some unseasonably clear weather Joe got to know the hill quite well, here is Joe's report.



Pic courtesy of badwitch

Pendle Hill under snow

An early start and a two hour drive across the dales in thick fog did not inspire my confidence for this first test at the tour of Pendle. The fell gods were gracious though and burnt off all that clag to make one of the best days racing conditions of the year, much to the annoyance of the guy who parked next to me who had completed nine of these and was hoping the mist would mess people up, how unsporting! A record turnout was announced for this years race and they set us off on the 17 miles and 5000 feet of Pendle hill.

Top fells-man Carl Bell shot off up that first hill with two others and were soon well out of sight, its amazing how quickly they ascend. Views from the top were spectacular although head and eyes were firmly down as we traversed the boggy and tussocky open moorland. Not so for a dark peak runner who was busy talking to me and ended up flat on his face, no harm done this time. Lots more fast running then it was back to the top again and an exhilarating descent down to the next checkpoint, fast and furious and the best bit of the course as far as I'm concerned (see tour of Pendle 09 on you-tube). Jelly Babies and water now because I knew I still had three killer climbs to go, especially the last. The first one was OK and I lost only eight places the second one much tougher and longer on my tiring body and the group behind had closed right up and then the last one loomed into sight. It was a beast! A sheer face of grass and rocks with tiny dots on the summit in the far off distance. With no path to guide you because people obviously don't go up Pendle hill this way it required all of the limbs and all of the will to get it done as the serious climbers shot past me with apparent ease. The summit is reached finally then another fast descent towards the flat track at the bottom and the stagger back in, no racing now, just surviving, and across the line in 3-03.

A great varied race considering its essentially 5 ascents and descents of just this hill. Lots of fast running, a typically good atmosphere, and great Moorhouses ale at the end in the Pendle inn. Its a classic al-right!

For the record, Joe came in a brilliant 81st from 322 finishers in a new club record time of 3 hours 3 minutes 18 seconds. The winner was Carl Bell who up until 18 months ago was a footballer, following a suggestion from a friend, he tried fell-running, won his first event and has never looked back, with his name near the top of any race result sheet.

The lady Eskers continue to make their presence felt at the **Albert parkrun**, with Kendra White placing best lady at event 181 (12/11/2011) in a 21 minutes 29 seconds for the 5km course. Adrian Martin not to be outdone, posted a PB of 21 min 49 sec. Alison Rolfe achieved a new PB event 182 (19/11/2011) of 22min 20sec and in the same event Ruth Hodgson PB'd with 26min 44sec. Terrific performances all.

The Three Tops (30/10/2011)

Blue skies and sunny autumn weather greeted **Three Tops** competitors and with only a light wind, there was a sniff of course record setting conditions. With the Fell race calendar becoming fairly lean and terrific weather there was a terrific turnout and 147 finishers. Some mild confusion at the race start with only the field seeking to steal a march by rearing themselves for the start up the hill, Dave was heard to say, well its only started up there once. I won't mention the race map.

The Three Tops route is a deceptively tough route, starting with a climb upto Highcliffe Nab, a not to be underestimated moor crossing followed by the ascent of Roseberry Topping. The descent of Roseberry and route to Hanging Stone (the third top) caught out a few on route choice, next up was a return crossing of the moor to the trig point and high point of the race (324m) east of Highcliffe Nab, all finished off with for some a navigation conundrum the descent through Guisborough Woods to the finish.

On the day, records were broken with Lakeland visitor **Mike Fanning** of Borrowdale taking victory in a new record of 65 minutes 21 seconds, apparently Mike was uncertain of the Roseberry – Hanging Stone route, so waited for a back to form Charlie Stead to show him the way, that sorted Mike went onto beat Charlie by 40-odd seconds.

It was a record turnout for home club Esk Valley, 25 making the finish line, matched by some terrific performances. For a third time in Three winter series races, Esk Valley A took the team prize, leading home in 4th place and a new club record of 66 minutes 32seconds was **Cameron Taylor** who has lifted last years excellent performances up a notch or even two. Supporting Cameron in 9th was Dave Smith in an M40 record of 70m 38s, Joe Johnson in 13th and Simon Greenwell (late again and gave us all a headstart!) in 20th. In a highly competitive team competition Esk Valley B, came in 7th and second of the B's with Carl Forbes 28th, Dominic Barry 36th, Phil Conner 40th and Stuart Backhouse 50th.

Over in the ladies competition, not to be outdone, Kay Neesham of New Marske Harriers (35th overall) claimed a new ladies record of 79m 24s and led NMH to team victory. Esk Valley ladies fielded a full team to claim 5th, led in by Kendra White in a club record time of 93m 58s and backed up by Gill Jones 113th and Jenny Owst 137th Marvellous!

The remaining Eskers to complete were Dave Dedman 53rd, an improving Richard Lindsay 61st, Richard Clark 63rd, 'The Blog' 73rd, new member Steve Potter 76th, Jason Ellis 97th, Chris 'ever-present' Jamieson 114th, Adrian Martin 115th, Joe Williams 122nd, Martin Hunt good to see back from injury 130th, Sid Bolland 136th and Ian Robinson 140th, Absolutely brilliant! Well Done all.

Clay Bank West (20/11/2011)

Clay Bank West I think is quietly becoming a classic, its status as a race was heightened after a remeasure for the FRA's metrication of race distances meant 5.5ml/900' has become 4.16ml/1190' or 6.7km/366m, so its now 'A' rated. The race route starts just below Clay Bank Car Park, the outward leg takes in a deceptively long start climb a treacherously slippery at times undulating track to the bottom of Cold Moor. The return leg includes two climbs, two descents Cold Moor and Wainstones and what was on the day icelike slabs.

The event was won for home club Esk Valley by **Cameron Taylor**, last year he paid for his quick start, this year against a quick start, though this time around the extra year of training and maturity meant he maintained his lead to race home is a new club record of 30m 38s. The Cold Moor and Wainstones descents were key in this race, with Esker Dave Smith making big gains after a relatively steady start to take 2nd overall and new M40 club record of 31m 04s. Team prize on the day was awarded to Esk Valley Fell Club which would of meant four team victories on the 04s, a countback later revealed that Durham Fell Runners had actually taken the Team prize with EVFC in second. I'm sure Dave will remember at the next presentation! Making up the not quite so triumphant Esk Valley team were Simon Greenwell in 18th, and Simon Ashwell back to racing in 21st.

Esk Valley were again able to field a ladies team for a third event out of four winter series events so far. With a good turnout all-round the Eskers ladies team placed 7th, **Alison Rolfe** led home in 111th (16th lady) and a time of 50m 29s, supporting were Louise Campbell in 129th (27th) and Ruth Hodgson in 130th (28th). The ladies race was won by Scarborough AC's youngest Bronwen Owen who claimed 7th overall in an excellent time of 33m 25s.

Back to the men's race, Esk Valley B team placed 7th with Mick Quinn in 33rd, Clive Thornton 34th, Phil Conner 41st and Dave Dedman 44th which is great and shows good strength in depth. Nearly matching the Three Tops turnout, 21 Eskers completed CBW, next up was Richard Lindsay 47th, Keith Westerman 50th, Dan Prince 52nd, Dave Minchin 63rd, James Meadows 69th, Neil Byron 76th, Ian Harmer 83rd, Ian Moody 92nd, Bob Lillie 109th (EVFC M60 record) and Ian Robinson 117th, 132 completed the event.

English Fell Championships

The 2012 Fell running calendar is now on the [FRA Website](#) and the English Fell Championships for 2012 are;

17/03/2012	Lads Leap	5.9ml/1700'	Peak District
14/04/2012	Coledale Horseshoe	8.5ml/3000'	Lake District
16/06/2012	Great Lakes Race	13ml/7000'	Lake District
04/08/2012	Borrowdale	16.2ml/6500'	Lake District
18/08/2012	Weasdale Horseshoe	8.7ml/2000'	Yorkshire Dales
29/09/2012	Kielder Blast	5.9ml/1600'	Northumberland

Some classic races included in the selection and good to see a North East, event, though its' location is just the English side of the border, and its first time I think since Lord Stones in 2006 for the North East area. The Kielder Blast is a new race route, initial route details are on the [NFR website](#), would be good to support the event.

Next Time

Club Championships round-up, early winter series positions and a preview of the all new NEHRA Junior race series 2012.



Fell Pic courtesy Katie Thornton

clive@esksvalleyfellclub.org