

YOUR TIME IS RUNNING OUT

This weekend is your last chance to snap up tickets for the Salomon Trail Running Festival, which takes place in the Pentland Hills next Saturday, June 2.

The event, from 8am to 10pm, offers a range of activities including workshops and talks, timed races and guided runs, as well as a Kiddie Km for children under 14.

There will be yoga sessions, specialist products, advice, live music and a bar.

To avoid disappointment, organisers are advising you book online for the event at www.salomonrunfest.co.uk

VOLUNTEERS LEND HANDA

Volunteers needed two boats to remove all the litter from a large skip of a rubbish at Handa Island Wildlife Reserve, Sutherland.

Francesca Clair, Handa ranger at Scottish Wildlife Trust, said: "Sadly, large amounts of plastic waste are washed up on beaches all over Scotland's coastline and uninhabited islands like Handa aren't immune.

"Hauling tonnes of litter isn't one of the most glamorous jobs so I'm very grateful to the volunteers who have helped us."

The haul of waste included ropes, buoys and plastic items that can be traced to countries such as Canada, the US, France, Ireland and Spain.

During summer the island is home to tens of thousands of seabirds.

GEAR OF THE WEEK

AKU Libra and Libra GTX
The new Libra and Libra GTX, from Italian trekking footwear specialists, AKU, offer lightweight breathability for easy hiking, travel and leisure trips.

A natural feel is created with features such as a reduced heel drop and excellent flexibility.

The fabric is claimed to offer breathability of up to more than 11 times that of conventionally made textiles. Upper is made with recycled textiles and chrome free leather and the collar is Zero Impact leather. The sole is made with AKU's new Tenuta Grip.

The GTX version includes added Gore-Tex Extended Comfort elastic in the lining. Libra costs £129.95 and Libra GTX, £149.95.

■ For stockists see www.ardblairsports.com



ONLY WAY IS UP
Uphill runners tackle
Ben Nevis Race
PIC: JOHN O'NEILL

Have
you
tried?

Running up that hill



FIONA
RUSSELL

More and more runners are testing their fitness and enjoying the great scenery by tackling hilly and mountainous areas of Scotland

HILL RUNNING

What is it? Running – or moving as quickly as possible – in hilly and mountainous areas. It is known as fell running in northern England.

Tell me more: Hill running in Scotland began as a sport in the 11th century Highlands when King Malcolm III ordered a race to the summit of Creag Choinnich, overlooking Braemar on Royal Deeside. Legend has it the winner, Dennisbell McGregor of Ballochbuie, finished without his kilt after it was grabbed by his pursuing brother.

The spirit of that first race in 1064 defines the sport today. It is tough and tenacious but ultimately one that is inspired by a passion for Scotland's hills, mountains and wild places.

Famous hill running races: Scotland's flagship hill race is the Ben Nevis, dating back to 1895 when William Swan, a Fort William tobacconist, was the first person to complete a timed run on the mountain. Pausing for a Bovril on the summit, he was up and down in two hours, 41 mins.

Finlay Wild, a GP, also from Fort William, has won the last eight races, but is yet to challenge the 1984 record set by Kenny Stuart of one hour and 25 mins. See www.bennevisrace.co.uk

Another classic challenge is Ramsay's Round, named after Charlie Ramsay, who first completed the 60-mile route in 1978. It starts and finishes in Glen Nevis and contenders must visit 23 Munros within 24 hours.

A series of hill running races also take place in Scotland, from March to September, organised by the Scottish Hill Runners. See www.scottishhillrunners.uk

More recently, ultra distance hill runs have been introduced including Glen Coe Skyline, the Ring of Steall Skyrace, the Ochil Ultra and Jedburgh 3 Peaks.



ROUND OF APPLAUSE Jasmin Paris does fastest time on Ramsay's Round

Famous hill runners: In recent years, Jasmin Paris, a vet from Edinburgh, has transcended the sport. In 2016, she became the fastest to run Ramsay's Round, clocking 16 hours and 22 mins.

In the same year, she also ran the equivalent classic rounds in England and Wales, becoming one of eight people to complete the rounds within a calendar year. She also holds the fastest cumulative time for the three.

Five months after having her first child, Jasmin won a British Championship event in April.

Another heroine of the sport is Angela Mudge, a sports massage therapist from Stirlingshire. Born with her feet facing the wrong way, Angela spent two years of her childhood having her feet realigned. In 2000, she became a world champion, racing clear of the field in an uphill race in Bavaria to win the World Mountain Running Trophy.

Finlay Wild is another big name in hill running in Scotland. As well as the Ben Nevis race, he set a new course record for the Glamaig Hill Race in 2012. He has also won the Carnethy 5, three Goatfell races, three Isle of Jura races and became British Fell Running Champion in 2015. He also holds the fastest known time for a traverse of the Cuillin

Ridge on the Isle of Skye, completing it in 2:59:22 in 2013.

Who is the sport for? Hill running is for all ages. In many races competitors over 40 outnumber those under.

Carnethy Hill Running Club member Bill Gauld won the Seven Hills of Edinburgh Race as a 59-year-old and continues to run and race in his mid-80s.

What does it cost? The price of a pair of appropriate shoes. While access to the hills is free, races are club organised and many charge entry fees as little as £3.

What kit do I need? Hill runners need to be prepared for a range of weather conditions. Organisers of longer races will insist competitors carry spare clothes, a hat and gloves, as well as a compass, map and whistle. Shoes worn on the hills are studded and maximised for grip on rocky or steep terrain.

Find out more: The story of hill running is told in a new book, *The Mountains are Calling: Running in the High Places of Scotland*, by Jonny Muir. You can buy it on Amazon, Waterstones and other book shops. See sandstonepress.com for details.

Contacts: www.scottishhillrunners.uk, www.scottishhillracing.co.uk, www.carnethy.com, westerlandscoc.co.uk