

THE INSPIRATION FOR ARMISTICE RUNNER

When Tom is writing, he finds inspiration in lots of different places. Here are the ten things that inspired him to write *Armistice Runner*.

ONE

Tom likes fell running, which is running up and down hills and across moors mostly in the north of England. He's been doing it for a few years now and often competes in races, usually towards the back. He did finish 22nd in a race once, but that was because the first 50 runners went the wrong way and were disqualified.

TWO

Fell running has an amazing history. It originated when villages had their annual fair and those who were willing raced up and down the nearest hill or mountain to see who was fastest. Fell running is most popular in the north of England. There are several fell-running clubs in the UK. You can find out more at www.fellrunner.org.uk.



THREE

Tom's daughter likes to fell run too. She is much faster than her dad. A lot of *Armistice Runner* relates to children and teenagers fell racing. The storyline was inspired by Tom's daughter and the other runners she races with.

FOUR

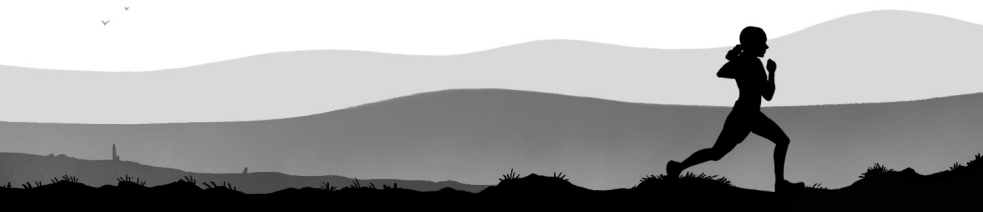
Fell runners have to be able to run up and down sometimes steep hills and be ready to deal with a lot of mud. They recce routes just like Ernest does in this book, working out the best way to leap over stiles and the safest path through running water or a sodden moor.

FIVE

When the First World War broke out, many fell racers volunteered to fight. Tom read about them in history books and Ernest Dalzell in particular was a big inspiration to him. He was famous for insanely speedy descents and for cycling a hundred miles to get to and from a venue on race day. Sadly, Dalzell was killed in the war.

SIX

One race that Tom has run is the Burnsall Classic Fell Race, where Ernest Dalzell broke the record in 12 minutes and 59 seconds. That record stood for nearly seventy years.



Tom wanted to do the race to get into the mind of a man like Dalzell, although with a time of 26 minutes 35 seconds he didn't threaten the record. But he was still proud of himself.

SEVEN

Tom has written books about the First World War before: *Over the Line*, *The Last Try* and *Fly Boy*. While researching those books, Tom read about the Armistice and became fascinated by the last days of the war and how it was possible to stop everyone waging war all at exactly the same moment.

EIGHT

Tom read about the impact the First World War had on the Lake District communities. One account was about a man who refused to go to war and hid among the fells, living in shepherds' huts. This was one of the true stories Tom grafted into *Armistice Runner*.

NINE

When Tom was a boy, he visited the Lake District twice a year for camping holidays with his mum and dad. He came to love the fells and lakes, spending hours walking and canoeing.



Tom has continued to visit the Lake District with his wife and daughter, who both love it there too. Tom tries to arrange school visits in Cumbria as an excuse to go back as often as he can.

TEN

When Tom goes to First World War cemeteries, he always visits the German graves as well as the British and Commonwealth graves. Young men on both sides had little choice but to fight in the First World War. With this in mind, Tom wanted to end *Armistice Runner* with a friendship between a British and a German soldier.

Tom has created a webpage with lots of interesting extra information about *Armistice Runner*, including videos, blogs and quizzes, on his website:

www.tompalmer.co.uk/armistice-runner

You can also contact him there if you have any questions about this or any of his other books.

