

Fiensdale Fell Race – Saturday 19th March 2011

Once again the whole issue of access and whether or not we would even be able to hold the race over shadowed Fiensdale. We are now on the fourth different course because of the restrictions placed upon us in recent years by the landowners and Natural England. In spite of the fact that we have had to change the route four times it is still a popular local race. However, because we have to insist on pre-entry to make sure we keep within the limit on numbers, it seems to keep entries fairly low. This year just 68 runners started the race with only four female entries. We were blessed again this year with lovely weather and clear conditions, which meant the course was dry and fast giving some good times and no serious navigational gaffs. Once again the mountain rescue were in attendance manning most of the checkpoints and making use of the race as a training exercise. Their expertise was called upon in this year's race when one runner suffered a suspected fractured ankle on the descent into sheepfold. This later proved to be no more than a serious sprain but the presence of the mountain rescue team meant the accident was dealt with quickly and efficiently.

As for the race, the senior men's title was won in a new record time of 54:05 by Shaun Godsman of Calder Valley three minutes ahead of second place Andy Brown from Clayton in 57:04. First Vet 40 was Mark Chippendale from local club Bowland in a time of 59:48 and further success from Bowland came when Leigh Warburton picked up the first Vet 50 prize with a time of 63:02. First Vet 60 was Kieran Carr from Clayton in 70:45.

The first of the four ladies back was Caroline Holden of Helm Hill who was 42nd overall in a time of 78:37

Thanks as always to the Pennine and Bowland Mountain Rescue for their presence, who take off a good deal of the pressure by manning the checkpoints and also to the members of Bowland Fell Runners who take time out to help on the day.

This year founder and original organiser of the race, Brian Jackson took part and agreed to present the prizes when we retired to the local pub in Chipping. All told it was a fabulous day in spite of the low numbers.

Next year is the 25th anniversary of the race and hopefully we will be able to attract a few more entries and make it a special day in the history of the Fiensdale Fell Race.

Andrew Farmer