

RACE REPORT
HELVELLYN 25TH MAY 2008

Another low turnout of only 5 Helm Hill runners and no ladies for this the 3rd championship race. Perhaps due to The Hutton Roof crags race taking place the day before. Like that race there are plenty of tea and cakes at the finish and they are free to all runners.

As runners were being asked to make their way to the start and have kit checked Tim Murray was seen just pulling into the car parking field, he made it to the line in time and was still pinning his number on as final instructions were being given.

The route starts from Bram Crag farm, St Johns in the Vale, and follows a small path south for 500m before turning sharp left and straight uphill for the 500m climb to Calfhow Pike. This is just about the steepest climb you might find in a fell race and the route being an 'out and back' it is also the steepest descent. I was soon overtaken by Paul Tuson, striding passed in his usual easy style, but I kept pushing on not giving in to the urge to look back and see where the others were.

We were sheltered on the climb and it was warm. This was about to change. The breeze increased as we approached the first checkpoint at Calfhow Pike and after turning south to head for Helvellyn it became increasingly difficult to run. The wind blew across from the east but felt like it was always against you, occasionally forcing you to run sideways or be knocked off your feet.

My legs felt OK but I had no strength in them after doing the Old Counties Tops race the weekend before. So I settled into a steady pace and hoped I could keep my 2nd Helm Hill place (think of the points). After turning the summit it was not long before I passed Dave Appleyard coming the other way and then Patrick Willink and Tim Murray close together just another couple of hundred yards behind. Paul had a good lead by now and I knew I couldn't catch him.

Then it happened, I don't know exactly how but on the rocky descent off Lower Man I twisted my ankle. It wasn't the first time and some times it can be OK to carry on. It soon became apparent that this was not one of those times and it would be a long easy plod back to the finish, watching all the other runners pass me on the way.

Dave passed me on Whiteside and then Patrick on Stybarrow Dodd, the final descent was practically a walk and the last few hundred yards a painful hobble. I now knew that this injury would put me out of action for a few weeks. Hopefully I would recover in time for the next championship race.

That said; this race may not be one of the classic Lake District horseshoes races, but is excellent, with steep climbs, fast grassy descents, rock, scree and plenty of fast running. I for one will be back.

I wasn't the first Helm Hill finisher so this is an extra report, perhaps a few others could send in their reports to the website. I would be good to get different perspectives on races. And how about one from the ladies.

Results:

1st Jim Davies 1:43:03

45th Paul Tuson 2:14:53

68th Dave Appleyard 2:25:42

75th Patrick Willink 2:29:12

86th Russ Cannon 2:33:21

90th Tim Murray 2:35:51

Russ Cannon