

2014 FRA Relays

A Brief Account

A Cloudy but mild Sunday morning on the 19th October saw 12 of BFR's finest travel even further 'up North' to participate in the annual FRA Relays. We took along a very keen and eager mixed team pulled together by Rachel Lowther and a slightly less keen and eager Veterans Team (with the exception of 'I'm more fidgety and excitable than a puppy' Lucas Payne!) which was organised by Sam Wadsworth.

Upon our early arrival we were greeted to a well-organised event by cheerful marshals co-ordinating proceedings well. The weather took a turn for the worse and the wind really picked up making it feel a little more chilly, we all wrapped up to keep warm during our wait, all of us but for the mighty Bob Jackson who donned his shorts and open-toed sandals – bless him his feet were straight out of The Hobbit.

Once the obligatory kit-checks were made and registrations completed we were all ready to get up on the fells and prove our worth, one notable piece of exemplary pre-race preparation came from Mr Andrew Carson who carefully mixed a fluid commonly used by all the fell-running greats; 'Enrage' power supplement! Once he had consumed his chemical concoction we expected him to turn Green, grow bulging muscles and shred his clothes.....it's safe to say we were all disappointed, especially our female members.

At 10am leg 1 blasted away up the fell to the sound of a lone bag-piper, I knew we had gone up North but I was fairly sure we hadn't gone that far? Anyway, Rob Hope of Pudsey led the way on the ascent with James Hall of Wharfedale trying to hold on to him, Andrew Carson and Jean Rawlinson were the leg 1 runners for the 2 teams and both looked to be pushing hard up the climb as we cheered them on and took some snaps.

It has to be said that while we were all at the race centre awaiting the return of the Leg 1 runners the MC (a guy from Howgill Harriers) was a pleasure to listen to and really 'made' the event. He managed to take the mick out of most folk, seemed to know everyone and kept the crowds well-informed too. His first notable 'funny' was when a young lad in a Bingley vest decided to jump out of the holding pen to pop for a pee against a wall (as many other runners were doing too). The MC jumped straight on this and announced to the 1000+ spectators/runners "Jonny Brownlee, you know your back at a fell race now your p**sing up a wall, you don't get that in your bloody triathlons do you?" This caused 2 reactions, immediate jeers and clapping from the huge crowd as we all watched him taking the said p**s, and a photographer who ran over with his large camera to capture the moment!

Shortly after this the MC starred again as Ted Mason and Sam Watson set off on leg two his quip was: "There they go, the Neanderthals of Fell Running, they'll be eating sheep and cows up there them two!" Again this amused everyone and kept up the good spirits.

Leg 2 for BFR saw Jen Hird and Rachel Lowther head out for the mixed team followed around 12-13 minutes later by Lucas Payne and Jock Boothman for the Veterans. There was a real rivalry here as the guys wanted to reign in the girl's lead so as not to be 'chicked'.

They succeeded after having a strong run. Rachel and Jen also had a great run and handed over with the mixed team sitting in 3rd in their category.

Leg 3 was left to myself and Sarah Tipler for the mixed team and Andy Hirst and Dave Halliday for the vets. Both teams had good strong runs but there were 'issues' with checkpoint C which weren't confined to BFR runners, as other teams had problems too.

Finally leg 4 saw the impressive Sam Gibbs blast off and the 'interesting' Bob Jackson kind of blast off, in his own special way. The guys both did well (but especially Sam who's time was impressive) and brought both teams home safely.

Once the racing was over we partook in a beverage or two (would be rude not to) and we also sampled the complimentary post-race food which was welcomed by all. Wharfedale very kindly allowed us to pitch up (pardon the pun) in their tent during the day.

All in all it was a great event in a great location and our teams did the club proud. Well done to both teams and especially Sam and Rachel for coordinating. Up the BFR.

Andy Berry