

Great Hameldon Hill Fell Race

by
Andy Berry

A cloudy, but warm and dry Peel Park in Accrington was the venue for the 35th Anniversary of the Great Hameldon Hill Fell Race. 11 BFR runners gathered on the playing field before the race, with several 'first-timers' anxiously discussing what they had let themselves in for. There were some nerves on show! The race started on the playing field with a quick dart from the start line round the top of the field before turning sharply onto a brief and steep Tarmac chicane. The route then continued a long straight climb on a gravel trail up through the forest emerging on to the first hill top into a still and warm flat section. The racers then dropped steeply down and passed underneath the motorway before climbing again, by now we were roughly 2 miles into the 6 mile race. There was then a mix of fell, bogs and farm track along with a handful of stiles and gates to contend with as we snaked toward the Trig point. A momentary glance as we turned around the Trig was all that could be afforded before the 3 mile return blast began. Some of the return route covered the same trails as we did going out and other parts varied slightly. One of the most rewarding sights of the race was to see so many BFR vests and new faces out racing and we all encouraged one another as we passed - some true team spirit. A special well done to the ever-improving Sarah who won the ladies race today and knocked the spots off 2nd and 3rd placed ladies, not by mere seconds but minutes! Also Jimmy Craig who battled hard and secured 3rd place just a week after thrashing round the 3 Peaks in a cracking time. It was also testament to our club and our members to see a good range of abilities and ages out today, from our Tabitha at 7 to some of our more distinguished members in the Veteran categories. Finally, we all collected our complimentary bottle of 'Anniversary Beer' (much welcomed by all and a nice touch) and then resided to the pub for some liquid refreshments and to revel in a well organised race enjoyed by lots of BFR runners.....Well done and up the BFR!!