

Darren Jones Clougha Pike Fell race (24 June 2024) – race report

This year the fellrace formed part of Quernmore Sports – the village fete – which helped provide logistical support, a field to park in and use of the village hall – as well as food and entertainment for all the family. Local villagers and the WI put in tremendous effort to make this all work. Also for the first time since Covid, Junior races were also added to the Clougha Race day, which was great fun!

A warm sunny day beckoned, and course flagging of the junior race routes meant an early start. Marshalls were garnered and the four U9s started promptly at 1pm, followed by the U11s (7), U13s (5), U15s (2) and U17s (4). There were 22 junior racers in total supported by a super group of parents and friends who cheered all the returning runners with aplomb! Excellent winning times from Sienna Thorley (U13 - Lanc & Morecambe) and Cara Bradley (U17 - Ambleside).

For the senior race there were 57 runners with the usual start seeing the mass of runners charge across the show field before heading to the higher pasture fields and the fellside (the route is fully flagged). All runners made the fellgate cutoff without issue and all returned without incident. A storming win for Matthew Knowles (U23 Lancaster & Morecambe) with a time of 37:56, only seconds behind Chris Arthur's 2016 record of 37:49. Will Chris's record ever be broken? – possibly, but the race route has lengthened ever so slightly with use of an alternative gate to exit the second field after the start. Super runs from Jenny Roberts (North Leeds) (1st Female) who held onto her win from 2023, Phil Mather (Lonsdale) 2nd overall and MV40 winner, Rebecca Crawshaw (Bowland) FV40 winner, Mark Chippendale (Bowland) MV50 winner, Sonia Woods (Bowland) FV50 winner, and Adrian Bramham (U/A) MV60 winner. Team prizes went to Matthew Knowles, Tom Bowman, Gareth Lee of Lancaster & Morecambe and Rebecca Crawshaw, Janet Regan, Sonia Woods of Bowland Fell Runners. We had our first barefoot runner who upon finishing declared the race route barefoot friendly! However, for the sake of the race organiser's nerves - everyone please try to bring fellshoes or similar for next year!

As usual, lots of folk to thank for another successful race. The landowners (Kelsall and Lenton family farms) for granting us permission to run on their fields as well as the Grosvenor Estate and Natural England for access to the fellside. Quernmore WI for providing lots of cake and endless teas and coffees. Bowland & Pennine mountain rescue who provide super support as well as reassurance in case things go wrong. James Gray of OMM who again donated OMM gift vouchers for BFR, as well as fluttery banners for the finish line. Finally, all the BFR club, particularly Chris Reade and Pam Farmer who provided tonnes of support as well as a pair of wise heads.

Cris Halsall – RO