

The Haworth Hobble

This race has a special place in my heart. Not only is it the first 'proper' race of the season for many of us it was also my first ultra. It is hard to believe it is 6 years ago that I was taken to the race by a friend and club mate. Now it was to be the first race in the 'new' Run Further series. My points from the race almost never count as I am too slow over the shorter distance and so early in the year but it is always well organised and friendly. Yesterday was no exception. The caretaker greeted us before 6.30, let us park in the school car park and we put up the flags.



Andy handed over Clif Bars so that all who registered would receive one and then he settled to sign up new members and distribute unclaimed prizes. It is a popular race and the huge turn-out meant a queue at registration and a slight delay to the start so there was plenty of time to catch up with friends.

Down in the town it seemed mild but we had spent the

night on Penistone Hill rocked by the wind so I set off wearing plenty. After a few yards of walking the field spread out as we headed for the moors. I tried not to let the excitement make me set off too fast and steadily climbed up to Withens. It was into the wind all the way and tough going. The flag stones have been extended and it was an easy run down towards the reservoir. I am never sure whether the best route is to cross the first dam or stay on the moor. I suspect there is little in it. I walked more of the road up to Widdop reservoir than I am proud to admit and some I had been running with got ahead. I refused to be disheartened and consoled myself with the fact it was a long way yet. It was to be a game of cat and mouse with the same runners for much of the day.



At Long Causeway we thankfully turned and had the wind on our backs. I refuelled with a tuna wrap and set off up the road dreading the swampy path down to the next farm. The next CP had an array of food and I grabbed a dounut. I like the next section of race as we contour above Tod and the ancient worn gritstone flags always make me wonder just how many feet have passed that way. The pull up towards Mankinholes did not seem

as bad as usual- perhaps I was going much more slowly! I probably should have eaten but most bits of me hurt and I was concentrating on just keeping going. Fortunately I climbed Stoodley with 3 others and I was determined not to be dropped. The initial drop off the moor is fine but by the time we were at Callis Woods I was struggling again and dreading the drop into Hebden and climb up to Heptonstall.



Every year I dream of a zip wire across the valley. Climbing out of Horse Bridge I was overtaken by some but also managed to do some overtaking myself as I concentrated on trying to wind people in one by one. The moors were less muddy than I remember – not so dry we kept dry feet of course. Suddenly we were at the Top o Stair and I knew it wasn't far. I wish I had taken note of our start time but trying to do all the mental maths took my mind off the discomfort. It might be a PW but please let me keep the time under 6 hours became my internal chant. I was lucky to have a companion who was about the same speed and this pulled me along. I lost him as we came off Penistone Hill but then caught him up as he was not sure of the best way through Haworth.



Bob had come out to take a photo and I staggered into the school for food and recovery. Waiting for our committee meeting and then taking down the flags meant masses of time to chat and sign up new members for RF. I even ended up with a bottle of wine. All in all a good day out so thank you Brett and team. Normal service with a race report and photos will be resumed when Nick returns to the UK ;)