

Great Cumbrian Hellhole! - 2nd/9th October 2011

Great Cumbrian Run 2nd October 2011

I've thought about doing the Great Cumbrian Run before but never got round to entering. So with Katharine's number up for grabs this was a good opportunity.

I could have run the race as a girl called Katharine but decided, as the race finishes on a running track and they have a PA system, it would be better to do it properly. After ringing the race organisers all was sorted and I could run without wearing a skirt!

After the hot weather we've had recently it was nice to get up on Sunday to see a grey sky! The drive across to Cumbria confirmed that the weather would be more conducive to running than the previous few days.

Arrived at the Sands Centre in good time and wandered over to the castle to get the chip and confirm the change in name. Back to the car to faff, then back to the castle again for the start.

The race starts at the castle gates. The first couple of miles go through the city centre then a steady climb up and the general feeling of up prevailed for the rest of the race.

The route takes you through some picturesque villages around Carlisle. I found most of it ok but there was one or two hills around 9 miles which were hard work!

The flattest part of the race is on the approach to Carlisle United's ground and through Rickerby Park but at 11 ½ miles you leave the park up a final steep hill which really saps the legs.

The final stretch takes you round the Sands Sports Centre then through Bitts Park to the finish at the Sheepmount Athletics track.

There was a lot of support at the track and through the various villages which was very welcome and the marshalls did a great job. All in all I enjoyed it and was happy with a 1.52.47 finishing time. The improvement continues and hopefully will again at the Hellhole on Sunday.

Onto the Hellhole 10k - 9th October 2011

It was quite mild when I left home to head over to Stanley for this race. A bit of drizzle and the wind wasn't too bad so I was looking forward to an easier run than last year.

Met a couple of friends at the car park of the Louisa Centre and after a bit of the usual pre race faffing got ourselves to the start.

A couple of the Derwentside AC members I know were on marshalling duties and gave us the good news about the course change. A hill at just over 6 miles was no more. J

After a brief delay at the start, to allow the potential winner to take his place, we were off. It took a little bit to get into a rhythm as we covered the first narrow path and then a steep hill but after the 1k marker the route is along a cycle path which slowly descends into Hellhole wood.

I managed to keep a good pace going along here and into the wood itself, avoiding, the handily white painted, rocks and roots. The first three miles were comfortably under 8 min mile pace.

Then came the mud. The path (uphill) through the first field didn't seem too bad but this was short lived as it soon got too slippery to run. Once out of the field we were back on road and the water station before the next field which was much better than the first. At the end of the field I finally caught an Elvet Strider I'd been was stalking and we were back on tarmac again and the final 4k.

A cheeky hill had been added at about 6 ½ k which wasn't too bad. A loose shoe lace at about 7k allowed the Strider to pass but I caught him again soon after and then I was on my own for the last 2k and the run to the finish.

My Garmin showed 5.99 miles, as did others, so a bit short of the 10k but still happy enough with the 50.45 time, finished 36th out of 70. Collected the goody bag and tech t-shirt and headed home.

Really enjoyed it this year and I'm looking forward to doing it again next time.