

## Glaramara (AS - 5mls; 2,100ft)

On the last occasion that I did this race, about 5 years ago, there was 2 inches of wet snow down to about 1,200ft, which caused a shortening of the route for safety reasons, and me to discover how terrifying Adidas Swoop shoes are when descending in wet conditions.

This year conditions were somewhat different! Blazing sunshine, 24° with very little wind, on the hottest weekend of the year so far.

The race is a cracker; a real Lakeland test, starting at the bottom of the Borrowdale Valley beyond Rosthwaite. It has a flat and fast start over a couple of fields and through the farmyard of fell running superstar Jonny Bland, who was there stripped to the waist shouting a mixture of encouragement to those he didn't know, and light-hearted abuse to those he did, including his cousin, and every bit as much fell running superstar, Gavin Bland. Gavin was running for only the second time this year, and carrying, in his own words, a stone too much. It was great to see such a legend prepared to turn out and race when clearly nowhere near his usual fitness levels. Many a less-talented runner would avoid racing like the plague in a similar situation; a lesson to us mortals – if you are able to do it, just get out there and enjoy it. It's more important than the finishing position.

Once the race ascent starts, after around 600 metres or so, there is no break until you reach the top. No place for even the slightest of breathers, which was made even more testing by the hot conditions. The ascent is a mixture of steep sections and some less steep, with rocky and grassy knolls and a proper scramble to the summit.

The descent is essentially by the same route, and is tricky to pick out line in places, with a multitude of possible descending options. I made the point of following Borrowdale-bred Colin Valentine on the ascent, with the plan to follow his local knowledge line on the descent, but I'd dropped back by 50 metres or so at the turn. This led to Colin opening a gap of over 100 metres on me by I'd turned, and he widened that to more than 200 metres by halfway down. This was enough for him to disappear over the rocky knolls and out of sight.



**“Come on jelly legs!”**

Needless to say, I didn't have a plan B and ended up taking a less favourable line too far to the left. I realised this when I saw 3 runners, that I didn't recognise, over to my right, who had overtaken me. I contoured round and managed to overtake 2 of them again by the bottom of the descent, but by then the heat was really taking its toll and jelly-legs were taking over across the flat fields to the finish. Fortunately the 3<sup>rd</sup> runner appeared to have even more-jelly-legs than me and I managed to pass him too. So my poor route choice probably cost me a bit on my time of 1.00.10 but didn't ultimately affect my final position of 10th. The race was won by

Danny Hope with Steve Birkinshaw in 3<sup>rd</sup> place.



**Much earned relaxation at the end. About as close to Colin as I got all day!**

It's a great race in a beautiful part of the Lakes. Well worth having a go because it is a true Lakeland-style race, but short, with no risk of getting lost, and whilst testing underfoot because of the variety and mixture of rock and grass, enables plenty of perfectly safe lines to be chosen if you prefer to be cautious coming down. Well organised, yet relaxed in approach, in typical Scoffer style. Highly recommended.

**Dexter**

[Results on FRA website](#)