

# The Scree Hill Race

[13 April 2013 - 4 miles; 1,300ft]



I was faced with one of life's great conundrums for the weekend. Should I do this race on Saturday or the new, closer, Cheviot Summit long race on Sunday?

Then I heard the Newcastle v Sunderland match was on TV and would clash with Cheviot. Mmmm? Then Cheviot was cancelled. Ah hah! And the Dumfries Running Club blog said Scree Hill was a guaranteed sunny day ... and after the last 5 months in miserable Northumberland I would have travelled a long way for a guaranteed sunny day. So I did! Job sorted. Race Saturday. Match Sunday. Brilliant!

I realised as I headed along the A69 westbound that I foolishly hadn't paid any attention as to how to actually get there. It was somewhere in Dumfries & Galloway! I had the race map printed off, but that only covered the route! Fortunately, as I checked it at my inevitable wee stop, there was a tiny bit of red road at the edge of the map and the number 'A711' could be seen. So I hoped for the best. That road was on my AA Road Atlas and ... well, I'm a fell runner ....

Fortunately it proved very easy to find. The registration tent could actually be seen from the A711 and Scree Hill is quite an obvious hill, so my dubious navigation skills were spared an embarrassing test.

And it was indeed a sunny day. It was beautiful in fact, with a nice warm breeze. Just what was needed to lift the spirits after a bleak never-ending winter of wet, mud, snow and icy winds ...

It proved to be an excellent little race. Quite low key, and about 4 miles with 1,300ft of ascent. And given it was an "out and back" route (well a slight variation on the initial decent from the summit) that ascent was pretty much in 2 miles. There was a great variety within the race too. It started with a stretch of forest road for about 500yds, just to make you start off too quickly uphill, then a technical track for a bit, followed by a nice forest path with some more technical bits, and after just over a mile or so you hit the hill proper, which was like any rough Lakeland top, with testing fell terrain for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to the turn. You turned sharp left at the top to return by a slight variation over the main hill, and the views across the Solway as you did so were majestic (as seen above). Then it re-joined the ascent route after  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile or so and the rest of the decent back through the woods was fast and technical, and the forest road was great for proper athletes to open up to the finish (or so I'm told!).

No results have appeared yet, so I'm not sure about the detail. I do know for certain that I didn't win my category! The 1<sup>st</sup> V50 was 2<sup>nd</sup> overall, so that's a bit out of my league! But I picked up a bottle of wine for 2<sup>nd</sup> V50, so that was OK. Possibly finishing around 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> ish? Out of maybe 50 – 60 runners?

So well worth the drive over ... for bit of nice warm spring sunshine ... some lovely views ... a very friendly and enjoyable race ...and a bottle of wine.

And then it was Sunday. And the least said about that the better .....

Dexter