

Ian Hodgson Mountain Relay 2014



"Don't worry Steph, we won't take the gully route and we'll stick to the path". With that cheery promise, we headed into the mist on Red Screens. 10 minutes later, I lost concentration and followed the runners in front - straight into the offending gully. Leg 3 of The Ian Hodgson Mountain Relay could easily turn into a wander in the clag.

The relay had started under leaden skies and passing showers at Patterdale. Will Horsley and David Armstrong led off on leg one for NFR. Despite both carrying injuries, they ran well, pausing only to say hello to Jane Saul at the Angle Tarn checkpoint. They were soon scurrying into the handover at Hartsop.



Dexter and Will

Here Scott Gibson and George Nicholson took over for leg 2 over High Street. Scott knows the route well and found the elusive Caudale Moor tarn straight away. George was running strongly on the descents, and they arrived at a cloudy and windswept Kirkstone Pass after 1 hour 28 minutes of running.

Steph Scott and I ran leg 3. Despite straying into the gully, we soon topped out on Red Screens. From here we didn't see a soul as we wound over way to Dove Crag in the mist. We endeavoured to follow the 'Hainsworth Trod' from Scandale Pass, with limited success. But with map and compass in hand, we were soon at the pile of stones on Dove Crag, and then enjoyed the descent into Dovedale.



John and Steph

Mark Clarkson and Andrew Higgins ran the anchor leg over Hart Crag, Fairfield, and St Sunday Crag. At the finish, we awaited their arrival, eager to know whether they had overhauled Tynedale on the last leg. Rosie Higgins commented that: "Andrew said he would run the leg in 1 hour 20 mins". Sure enough, with 1 hour 19 mins on the clock, Mark & Andrew rounded the corner and sprinted into the finish in fine style. In the end we finished in 34th place, over 15 minutes ahead of Tynedale. Saltwell Harriers came in a bit later - reporting fun and games on leg 3 route finding.



Andrew and Mark

At the sharp end, Borrowdale retained their crown for another year. They were pushed all the way by Calder Valley who were not far behind at Kirkstone. Borrowdale made their decisive break in the mist on leg 3. Calder Valley ran the quickest final leg, but could not overhaul the deficit. Borrowdale have been deposed at the FRA Relays, but continue to repel all challengers at The Hodgson. Maybe next year Calder Valley...

As always, the relay was a great day out, and superbly organised - for which many thanks. We all felt that we ran to our optimum ability and couldn't have done any better - so you can't ask for more. Roll on the FRA relays.

John Duff

More photos here:

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