

HODDER VALLEY SHOW FELL RACE REPORT - 2022

A special mention to outgoing Race Organiser, Steve Cox, for the past 22 years of great stewardship and also to his trusted helper Ian Roberts who, again after 22 years, is calling time on his role as a marshal.

Thank you both for all those years of loyal, selfless service to fell running and the Hodder Valley Show. The reins are now handed over to Declan O'Duffy and the BFR marshal section to continue the good work.

Thanks also to OMM who sponsored the winners prizes in the form of vouchers to use in their shop.

Speculation that the show might be postponed because of the Queen's death days earlier prove unfounded as part of the course runs through Duchy land. Instead we have a minute's silence to respect her passing.

At £15 per adult ticket it's actually a great bargain as you get the freedom of the show and a chance to stretch some legs. However, tightly clamped purses feature heavily in the fell running world and superfluous entertainment is great but only if it costs nowt.

Juniors from U8 up to U18 can take part as well at £5 ticket admission. You'd think with so many youngsters running around that there'd be a greater uptake than the six that take part. The juniors is an area of this show that could be developed nicely with a little more attention and promotion.

A nice touch comes from Gulliver Cox who arrives with drone and camera to film the race. His subsequent video is beautiful, showing off our lush and breathtaking countryside at its best.

44 runners register in one of the blue ribband events of the show with surprisingly only three females. After a professional instructor warms up the waiting runners, thank you Matt Donnelly, the new Race Organiser sets them off from the show-ring with countdown help from the spectators.

The course is fast out for a mile and then a severe ramp up to Mellor Knoll to get the blood pumping. Straight over the top, down and along the fields before the big ascent up to Totteridge trig, famed for its proximity to the geographical centre of the United Kingdom. A loop around the trig point at the top and then runners descend the way they come up. I make it sound very easy but the verdict is that it's a tough little nut and that first climb up Mellor Knoll is a shock to the system. The race is hotly contested at the front and local BFR runner Oli Heaton hangs on in front of new BFR member Sam Atkinson closely followed by Jos Addison of Helm Hill. Suzanne Budgett wins the Female race. Two standout performances happen further back with startling finishes from M55 Glen Goodwin of Accrington in 6th and from M80 Norman Bush, U/A, in 30th.

Many thanks to BPMRT for supporting the race with a big presence. Fortunately their area of expertise did not have to be called upon as everything went without incident. Their attendance though is vital and never taken for granted as their services have been used in earnest on many occasions for similar events throughout the north west.

The race is established as an integral part of the show and consequently has to run to the show's tight time constraints. The announcers play a pivotal part in mustering the runners and informing spectators about the race itself.

It's a great occasion where show and race organisers work well together to make it go without a hitch. We have to, there's a lot to do.

