

Blackshaw Head Fete Fell Race 2006

The Race only took place due to the massive amount of help we had from:-

Toddies – Helen Hodgkinson, Claire Duffield, Margaret Blakeley, Pat Poulter, Jane Smith, Kath Brierley, John & Jack Crummett, Sharon & Ben Godzman, Nick Wigmore, Ian & Chris Morris, Trevor Smith, Rachel Skinner

Non-Toddies – Mum & Michael, Claire & Dave

If I've forgotten anyone please accept my apologies - it's not intentional. I'm still recovering...

The only survivors from the 2006 Fete were the Fell Race and the Beer Tent (complete with live band playing on like something from 'Titanic') - all in all a perfect Toddies event! But I'm jumping ahead.

10.30am on Race Day - everything that could be organised had been, and Andy added the final notice to the Race Information Board. The (now infamous) Met Office weather forecast : "Heavy rain at times will move away this afternoon with just a few showers."

By 11.30am the weather actually comprised sideways rain and a howling gale (with hindsight not unusual for BSH – perhaps we should have been more prepared!) Andy returned from the Fete Field (having gone across to ensure we had a tent for Registration and to deal with typical Race Day worries such as whether the toilets would be sited in the middle of the finish funnel) to announce that Race Registration had so far been moved 4 times. Locations 1 to 3 (which included the Punch & Judy tent and the First Aid tent!) had blown down.

By 1pm we were relocating Registration for a 5th time, shortly after Margaret cheerfully declared the 4th tent to be "safe as houses." Luckily we were able to salvage all the Race-related paraphernalia as Trevor had taken the precaution of standing next to Andy when Margaret made her assessment of the tent's safety and between them they held the tent up for long enough for us to empty it. The start time for the Race was delayed to 2.15pm whilst we relocated to the Chapel.

This was the second time Race Registration had been suspended. Earlier, a set of market stalls on the Fete Field had blown over trapping 3 people and it was all hands on deck to release the tarpaulin stall roofs which were now acting like a huge sail, trying to drag the stalls. Fortunately no-one was seriously hurt and the one injured lady was well tended by our very own First Aider, Rachel (despite professing only to be available in the event of injury to a good-looking runner!)

At 1.30pm Jane returned from a pre-race course check to announce that all the flags across Heptonstall Moor were missing. Andy was in favour of abandoning the race (even his good humour was wearing thin by this point), but with over 30 runners registered already (all of whom seemed totally unfazed by the weather) I was less keen. Fortunately John was on hand to both advise on kit requirements and also save the race by volunteering to run the section across the Moor and re-flag as necessary. He set off with red & white tape in hand, appropriately attired in his wellies!!

The run of bad luck and ensuing chaos must have expired around that time because when John got up onto the Moor he found all the flagging intact, there having been a misunderstanding between Jane and I in discussing the route (probably something to do with 5 barking dogs, but I digress...). The Race was underway by 2.15pm (despite a sticky moment just before the start of the race when Andy explained to the massed runners that the start of the route was straight along a track, followed by a right hand turn which would be marked by a marshal. Rachel, stood with her fellow sweeper Dave at the back of the runners, turned to him – "isn't that you?" Andy looked up to see Dave sprinting away in the direction of the aforementioned right turn!)

All in all it must have been one of the most eventful Race Days ever, but judging by the number of people who ran (50 compared to only 19 on the old Ragley Run route last year), the number of people who have already asked asking about the date for the 2007 Race, and the fact that all 4 non-Toddy helpers have already volunteered to help again next year, I think it could be described as a success. Perhaps not quite as much of a success as the Beer Tent, though, which post-race was full not only of villagers supporting the (remains of the) Fete but also of runners, most mud-splattered and still wearing their vests & race numbers! As I said, a perfect Toddies event!

Sarah & Andy Glyde