

CLENT HILLS JUNE JAUNTER - Thursday June 11th 2015

We could not have asked for a more glorious evening to be running over the Clent Hills. It was worth the trip for the views alone.

It was encouraging to attract some first timers once again: welcome to Leonie Clitherow, Andy Johnson, and the youngest Mitchells (Sebastian and Arthur), whose Mother, Kerstin, supported them round the course. It was a big occasion too for their older brother, Alex, who was making his first independent run . in a creditable time of 31.29. Robert Rose on his bike kindly accompanied Alex on the road sections in order to comply with the prevailing strictures concerning Juniors and public roads. There are some records of Juniors taking part in the distant past, when such restrictions did not apply.

There was a minor panic a couple of days before the run, when Sue Howarth (luckily) had been on Clent and discovered that the car park was now being locked closed to vehicles at 5.00 pm due to staffing difficulties. I thought the best solution was for us to park outside and run the %assembly+, start and finish from the usual benches inside the parking area. I think it worked out quite well, and it was nice to be free from the movement of cars and the dust which they create. The main downside was the need to negotiate a fence between the car park and the Walton Hill direction.

As usual, individual runners recorded a mix of faster and slower times.

This time, I ran clockwise for the first time in many years, and was pleased to be marginally faster than last year. This tends to confirm my suspicion that the course is faster if run clockwise.

Ian Hopkins was prevented from recording an official run by work commitments, but tells me that he went round in the afternoon in 26.12, recording 5.0 km and 244 m of climb. My only other record for Ian was 27.05 in 1997, so his legs are ageing well.

Veteran Jaunterer David Williams logged the best time at 26.05 . so nobody came close to beating the all-time record under 19 minutes set by Barry Parkinson a quarter of a century ago! I haven't checked all records to identify PBs etc, but Robert Rose must merit a mention for coming in second place on his second run, with a much improved time. Also, Leonie Clitherow deserves a special note, achieving third place overall (and first lady) on her first attempt. Finally, Russ Fauset will not let me hear the last of it if I do not congratulate him on a new record time for running with sticks! Well done, all.

If we are in the same situation with the car park next year, I envisage we might do the same again . though I don't fancy the idea of being out there in pouring rain and wind without a tent, and would more likely administer the event from my car outside the gates. Alternatively, we might persuade the National Trust to lock the gates at a later time especially for us . which would attract a charge. Another solution would be to run the event from the Walton Hill car park (which would need an additional control point in the Nimmings car park to maintain the integrity of the course). What do you think?

Once again, my thanks go to Marian White for running the Organisation while I went out for my own run, and to Andy Johnson, Andy and Marian White, and Sue Howarth for collecting the controls and saving my M70 legs a third ascent of the summits in one evening...