

## 2014 Hoka One One Highland Fling

53 mile ultra trail race

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April

A 6am start at Milngavie required a very early start for the Lanarkshire division of Carnethy for the Hoka Highland Fling race. Of all the Carnethy racers, only Steven McFarlane had never done it before (and he nearly never got to, at registration with a can of 'Monster' in hand, the marshall thought he was a late night reveller!). After the usual nervous chatter and rituals the gun went and we were set off from the famous underpass in Milngavie, all 566 of us.



The route to the first checkpoint is fairly fast and flat (half marathon distance). There are lots of gates, and other runners to negotiate but lots of nice touches too, such as a Ceilidh fiddler playing some upbeat tunes. Up, and over misty Conic hill and the muddy descent to the first bag drop at Balmaha. Loch Lomond then becomes your constant companion for the next 20 miles or so and it is quite technical trail in places and one runner fell here breaking her jaw in 5 places, ouch!

The weather is still holding with only a few brief showers to cool us down. And we all make relentless forward progress towards the finish at the end of another half marathon stretch beyond Beinglas farm checkpoint, up through the infamous 'coo poo alley'!



My plan was simple run fast to get a hot shower / soup / beer (with Stewart Ward who ran 10:43). Murdo and Steven Yule ran great despite recent injuries, while Steven McFarlane made it round in one piece and savoured the experience. Ally didn't have a great day and pulled out at Balmaha, but did manage some consolation beer at the end (noted).

The finish must be one of the best in any race, pipers / flags / red carpet / cow bells, the lot.

<b>Carnethy runner</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Time</b>
Gregor Heron	14 <sup>th</sup>	8:33
Graham Nash	28 <sup>th</sup>	9:02
Phil Humphries	47 <sup>th</sup>	9:29
Murdo McEwan	139 <sup>th</sup>	10:29
Paul Nash	171 <sup>st</sup>	10:47
Steven Yule	241 <sup>st</sup>	11:22
Steven McFarlane	242 <sup>nd</sup>	11:22
Tim Doyle	279 <sup>th</sup>	11:45
Ally Robertson	DNF	

Thoroughly recommend it, great value, well organised and a fantastic, varied route with a bit of everything! Can't wait to do it all again in June (with another 40 odd miles added).

Gregor Heron