

## The 50<sup>th</sup> “Carnethy 5” Hill Race

15<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Often seen as the start of the fell running year I turned up with another 502 nutcases to take on the ‘50th Carnethy 5’ (6 miles, 2,500’ climb) in the Pentland Hills, just south of Edinburgh.

Yes, despite the severe weather warnings and the fact that Dennis the Storm had arrived the race was on – they are tough these Scots!



Morpeth Harriers had a strong connection to this race in the early years with Morpeth legends such as Jim Alder, Archie Jenkins, Walter Ryder & Peter Carmichael all taking part in this classic race over it’s 50 year history.

In fact Jim Alder was joint winner of the first race in 1971 when he crossed the line with Ian McCafferty who is another legendary figure from the great days of Scottish athletics. For those who have never heard of him he took part in one of the greatest ever 5000m races at the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. Have a look.....!!

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=commonwealth+games+5000m+edinburgh+1970&view=detail&mid=DC418F46C22FCBCFF13EDC418F46C22FCBCFF13E&FORM=VIRE>

Jim told me that he and McCafferty decided to run in together because the following week they were both running in the World Cross Country Championship for Scotland in France and they didn't want a bollocking from the team management! That being said they were determined to beat the guy in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Dave Cannon, who was the best fell runner of his day and later became a very good marathon runner and a member of Gateshead Harriers.

That's the history lesson over and as you will all know I'm not quite as talented as Alder, McCafferty, or Cannon & being Morpeth's flag bearer this year I felt rather pathetic nursing a sore calf but I figured that, given the conditions, I could get round as most people were going to struggle to do much more than jog. I was proved right because at times it was horrendous!

The previous Thursday the route had been snow bound but the snow was thawing which made underfoot really slippery. Add Dennis into the mix and it was somewhat challenging!

At times it really was hard to move but suddenly the wind was on your back and you were almost flying – until you fell over!



Anyway everyone finished without any serious injuries and it will be a 'race' I will long remember – one that was endured rather than enjoyed! The team of marshals and mountain rescue deserve medals plus fair play to the race organising team for giving it the go ahead – it is brilliantly organised!

I finished 368<sup>th</sup> in 1.33.55 and a dismal 22<sup>nd</sup> V60 – I'm blaming my sore leg!

Anyway back at the car park I did my good deed for the day helping to push a car that got bogged down only to be rewarded when the driver turned the wheels and put her foot

down covering me and her irate husband with mud! It was like a scene from a 'Carry On' film!

So – the upshot to this tale of fortitude, determination, resilience and total stupidity was that I **really** enjoyed my goodies from registration!



More details from Carnethy's excellent website here; <http://carnethy.com/2020/02/the-50th-carnethy-5-hill-race/>

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