

# Hill and Dale Race 9, The Meels

## Race Report by Hill Runner

Standing in the car park at Meelmore Lodge before registration opened we could clearly see the route of the first climb up onto Spellach. With the threat of rain never far away being brought in by the high winds all we could hope for was that it remained dry and for all the summits to remain visible. Luckily this is what happened and the only thing reported by the summit Marshalls was that there were strong gusts on top.

Due to parking issues, this year's race saw a new start location at Meelmore Lodge and a new route too. Beginning at the stile at the top of the lane the first checkpoint was on the summit of Spellach, this is accessed by one of three steep gullies leading to it and great discussion began between runners to ascertain the quickest way. After Spellach, runners followed a well trodden path to the summit of Meelmore before continuing on the old route to the Meelbeg summit, staying high on the ridge before dropping down to the river/stile junction and checkpoint 4. From here, it is one mile along the wall back to the gate beside the starting stile and then down the lane to finish at Meelmore Lodge.

At 7:30 sharp Franks whistle blew and off they went. Back at the finish, tea was poured and finish times estimated, and before we knew it the lead runners were coming down the lane. First over the line was NAC's Tom Crudginton in 44:31 quickly followed by Mourne Runners' Jonny Scott in 44:52 and finishing the podium was Joshua Magee in 45 dead. The ladies race was a very tight finish indeed as Dromore's Diane Wilson and Newry AC's Esther Dickson came neck and neck along the lane, with one last push Esther pipped Diane to take the win in 51:01, 3rd lady was Mourne's Sarah Hanna in 56:06.

Category winners were: MV40 Gary McEvoy, MV45 Colum Campbell, MV35 Jonathan McCloy, MV50 Pete Grant, MV55 Deon McNelly, MV65 Dominic McGreevy, MV70 Peter McGuckin, MV60 Horace de Courcey Wheeler, FJ Rebecca Magee, FV55 Hazel Sutherland, FV45 Karen Wilton, FV40 Ciara Coffey, FV60 Patricia Shields.

A big thanks goes to all the marshals and registration team, the staff of Meelmore Lodge and of Greenan's pub where everyone went back to for refreshments.

Next week sees the last race of the series, Drinnahilly, starting in Donard Park, note this race is on Friday evening.



Tom Crudginton, Joshua McAtee and Jonathan Scott