

Haworth Hobble

10 March 2018

By Lorraine Slater

Ten Barlickers headed over to Haworth to take part in the Haworth Hobble – 32 gruelling miles with 4,396ft of climb! Having run this race last year, when it was an ultra marathon selection race, I knew potentially what I was letting myself in for, but was nervous, as I knew that the weather report wasn't good and I really wanted to test myself, to see if my training was paying off. My longest run this year was 20 miles, so another 12 miles would be a challenge.

We all gathered on the main street in Haworth and this year, I was determined not to start at the back of the runners (too busy talking last year). As we set off in the rain, I was conscious that I didn't want to set off too fast, as there was a long way to go. Gary Bradley gave me words of encouragement about settling into a steady pace as I tried to follow Tom Beebe. Amy Freeman ran past me as we headed onto the moor and I tucked in behind her. As we ran along the slippery flags, there was a long line of runners and Amy switched onto the grass which meant that I overtook her. I realised then that I was probably leading lady with still 30 miles to go - not a position that I thought I would be in. It wasn't long before the heavens opened and we were all like drowned rats. I decided to focus on running with a group of men, Tom included, and pace myself off them. There seemed to be to-ing and fro-ing between me and Tom, but generally we were about the same pace. At about 12 miles in I was desperate for a wee and realised that this was preventing me from drinking fluids. As we approached a gap in the wall (the same gap that I used last year), I decided to nip behind it to do the necessary, closely followed by a group of 5 men who all thought that was the route. I quickly corrected them and heard them all run off laughing. Once sorted I passed some marshals, thanked them for their time and ran onto the road. I could see Tom in the distance and gradually started gaining on that group. As I was running back alongside Tom and some others, there was a brief discussion about the route. Looking at my Suunto, a God send in this race, I was confident with where we were going and led the group on. As we approached Mankinholes, I slowly started to pull away from the group that I was running with. I realised that I had only eaten 1 gel and searched in my pocket for my jam butty, only to find that it must have fallen out of my running vest. I grabbed a bite of flapjack and pushed on towards Stoodley Pike. As I started to ascend, the Pike was covered by the clag, so I just put my head down and pushed on up the hill. Before long, I was running solo and knew I had to keep aiming for runners in front to keep me focussed. I was concerned that I wouldn't be as strong in the second half and that I would be caught by other ladies (or other Barlickers) but I still managed to pass runners through Heptonstall. With about 6 miles to go, there were snow drifts across the track which I scrambled over with heavy legs. That was almost as cruel as the steps in Heptonstall. As I turned left to go up the final road before Penistone Moor, I could see another runner who was jogging then walking, so I carried on running up the hill and onto the moor and managed to catch him just before the left turn to the church. Not wanting him to pass me back and knowing the end was near I speeded up down the path to the church, turned the corner and slipped on the flags, right in front of everyone at the top of the main street in Haworth. Well it wouldn't be a race if I didn't fall, would it? I picked myself up and raced into the finish, making sure I

wasn't passed. I finished 1st lady, 14th overall and 1st Barlicker and to be honest to say, I was pleased is an understatement.