

Buckden Gala Fell Race

For over thirty years, the fell race has been held in conjunction with Buckden Gala and has become a “Classic” in the fell running calendar. It is so well thought of in fell running circles that every few years, it is a Championship Race, attracting top runners from all over the UK.

The race is only just over 4 miles in length, but in those 4 miles, the runners have to ascend and descend 1,500 ft. The race starts by the village green and makes its way through the car park, before turning right to the beck. After crossing the beck, the runners have to make the steep ascent to the fell gate and at this point, they can be clearly seen from the gala field. They then go out of view, but continue climbing for almost two miles until they reach the Memorial Cairn. Having stopped climbing, they turn left across Buckden Gavel towards the summit trig, before making their descent past the old mine workings. Eventually, they come back into view and what was an energy sapping ascent becomes a treacherous descent, especially if there is strong competition between runners or if it has been raining.

Having crossed the beck again, they enter the car park, but this time, they have to jump the wall, to cross the road and onto the Gala Field and the finish. Over the years, the race has attracted some top runners and although a few have come close, none have beaten the record of 30:51 set by Colin Donnelly in 1988.

In 2006, the future of the race looked to be in jeopardy, as Peter Jebb, the course designer and original race organiser felt that after 25 years, he wished to terminate his involvement with the race. However, the organisation of the race has been taken on by Barlick Fell Runners, a young and enthusiastic running club based in Barnoldswick and the future of the race looks assured into the foreseeable future. This is good news, as it would be a shame not to see the top runners in the Country coming up to Buckden to do battle on “The Pike”.