

On a very sunny Saturday 7th May, the 2022 Senior British Inter-Counties Mountain Race held place at Llanberis (North Wales) – we were running the ‘Llanberis Ridge Route’ and the race was held in conjunction with the open Ras Moel Eilio race.

For the Intercounties after climbing Moel Eilio (726m), Foel Gron (629m) and Foel Goch (605m) all participants were diverted left onto a very fast runnable trail back into Llanberis. This gave the runners at the welcoming finish line a grand total of 7miles with 750m of climbing in the legs.

The ladies team consisted of senior ladies Ciara Coffey, Karalee McBride, Debbie McConnell and Martsje Hell. And the younger crowd was represented by young talent 19yr old Rebecca Magee (U23 category). The age of the senior ladies is not to be mentioned, nor asked for by anyone.

Rebecca made her long way over by the beautiful rail network and the rest of the ladies all opted for sailing over the water to enter the country of the Welsh Dragon. An animal very symbolic for this beautiful part of the world, and happily referred to as ‘Big Dinosaur’ by mascot of the weekend: master Ebbe.

Main reason to take the ferry though, was the fact Ciara does not travel light. Wanting to appear in good appearance (at least at the start line) she opted for a whole range of luggage including not one, but two blow-dryers.

Debbie also travelled heavy, but more so as it was only less than a week when this lady smashed the Belfast City Marathon (yes – a road race!) – in an amazing time of 3hr and 7m.

None of this stopped them from having an absolute great performance on race day!

With not a single sheep in sight, Martsje was able to run without stopping to finish in 22nd position. Not long till the rest of the team followed with great strength and stride over the finish line, Ciara in 32nd, Debbie in 35th and Karalee in 36th position.

These individual performances gave the team an overall standing of 9th team overall, a very respectable place in a highly competitive field.

Unfortunately, Rebecca didn’t feel great and had the incredible wisdom and sense to retire from the race during the first long climb.

After the race it was just a short dander to get the ice creams sorted (anything to please the mascot) and cool the legs down in the lake of Llanberis (Llyn Peris). Well – Karalee succeeded in cooling just her toes as braving the cold water was not her forte. This did give the guarantee of rather funny facial expressions!

After wishing the men a safe journey home, the girls took it a bit easier and indulged themselves in a few celebratory beverages. And a brilliant obligatory recovery run up Snowdon early Sunday morning before returning home bound.

All in all, a great race, well organised, through the most stunning landscape.

