

3 Peaks Race Report for 2009

Report on the 55th Three Peaks Race held on Saturday, April 25th

Rob Jebb as good as led from start to finish in this years Three Peaks Race, finishing more than three minutes ahead of Ricky Lightfoot in a time of 2.54.53, but well outside Andy Peace's record on this course of 2.46.53.

Rob made up for his disappointment last year when Jethro Lennox took the honours with a prestigious win in the World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge. Incidentally, the WLDMRC is to be held this year in the Austrian Tyrol in conjunction with the Kaiser Marathon in October.

Anna Lupton won the female category in a time of 3.36.31 (42 overall) with Hazel Robinson a distant second place but with a respectable time of 3.53.24.

Conditions were ideal, with dry underfoot conditions and a bright mainly sunny day marred only by a breeze which was strong on the higher parts of the course.

The race was again on a Saturday. The change to a Saturday last year seemed to go down well with most competitors and once again gave the Three Peaks Race Association the opportunity to add to the competitive atmosphere of the race with very convivial under-cover bar, food, live band and prize presentation.

The number of entries was nearly 900 with just under 700 starting on the day (many first time entrants); still an impressive number and with good running conditions, a competitive race was anticipated.

By the summit of Pen Y Ghent, Rob Jebb was already ahead, with V/40 Andy Peace, not far behind, Anna Lupton also started to make her mark in the ladies' category, being already comfortably ahead of Helen Berry. On the long run across to Ribblehead, Ricky Lightfoot gained second place with Karl Gray not far behind. Emma Barclay V/40, moved in to second place behind Anna, Helen dropping to third.

By the summit of Whernside, the leading men's and ladies' places remained the same. Andy Peace retained the leading place in the V/40 category with John Hunt a few minutes behind. Jackie Winn was building up a good lead on John Ewart, Ian Rowbotham and Brian Horrocks in the V/50 category and Neil Scruton led the V/60 category. Maureen Laney led Wendy Dodds by about seven minutes in the FV/50 category.

With a fast descent to Hill Inn checkpoint and the course then starting to bite with the steep ascent of Ingleborough, anything could happen. By Ingleborough summit, Rob had opened up a wider time gap on Ricky with Karl a couple of minutes further behind and these three drawing away from the rest. Anna remained well clear, but a battle was developing behind with Emma, Hazel Robinson and Helen in that order, all within a minute and a half of each other. The V/50, V/60 and FV/50 category positions remained the same. Emma Barclay, in contention for the first three ladies' places, also maintained her lead in the FV/40 category, staying comfortably ahead of Nicky Spinks and Lynne Clough.

With the leading category places pretty well established, the descent to the finish was unlikely to upset these positions and, sure enough, Rob, Ricky and Karl finished in that order. Anna easily won the ladies' category with the faster finish from Hazel enabling her to take second place from FV/40 Emma, with Helen fourth. Nicky and Lynne finished second and third in the FV/40 category.

In the men's MV/40 category, John Hunt with a very fast descent from Ingleborough, passed Andy Peace for a well deserved second place and Matthew Nuttall, also finishing fast, nearly caught Mike Fanning for third and fourth places.

In the V/50 category the finishing order was Jackie, Ian and John, all within three minutes and in the V/60 Neil won easily from Graham Arthur.

Great credit must go to Dr Jenny Vesey, who won the female FV/60 category, and who is the first and only lady in this category to ever complete the Three Peaks Race.

In the female FV/50 category the first and second places went to Maureen and Wendy respectively, with Pat Goodall third.

The prize presentation was well attended and a general rule was applied by the Association of only one prize per competitor and prize recipients should attend the presentation or forfeit their prize.

Many competitors, spectators and marshals stayed on to enjoy a pleasant and sociable evening with a drink, listening to the band and catching up with the day's news.

Many thanks to all the marshals, voluntary organisations, Horton Playing Fields Committee and a host of others who gave their time to support the event and without whom the race could not take place.

The race does now seem to be settling in to a Saturday slot, so next year the likely date will be the last Saturday in April.

David Weatherhead