

## 3 Peaks Race Report for 2015

Report on the 2015 Three Peaks Race held on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

It was a tough weekend for firefighter Ricky Lightfoot. He worked a nightshift, drove from Cumbria to the Yorkshire Dales, won the Three Peaks Fell Race, apologised that he could not stay for the prizegiving and headed back to start another night's work.

It was the second Three Peaks win in succession for Lightfoot, 30, who lives in Maryport and is a member of the Salomon International Team, run by the mountain sportswear company which is the main sponsor of the event. He claimed a £200 first prize and a Suunto watch in the 61<sup>st</sup> race, which is billed as the "marathon with mountains".

Lightfoot's time of 2hrs 51mins 42secs was 1min 34 secs quicker than his 2014 time and the fastest anyone has run the race since the current record was set by Andy Peace, of Bingley Harriers, in 1996. It was an excellent time in the weather conditions, but failed to beat Peace's record of 2hrs 46mins 3secs, which would have earned him a £500 bonus prize.

Second place went to Welshman Andrew Davies, of Mercia Fell Running Club, a former semi-professional footballer in the Welsh Premier League, who was World Long Distance Mountain Running Championship silver medallist in 2013.

Davies, who qualified to represent Wales in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow last year, set a time of 2hrs 53mins 53secs after snapping at the heels of Lightfoot around the 23-mile course over Penyghent, Whernside and Ingleborough, which includes 5,279ft of ascent.

After a relatively dry week, there was heavy overnight rain, which turned to snow as the later runners reached the summits of Whernside and Ingleborough where race marshals, electronic timing kit operators and radio teams were in place for up to six hours.

Lightfoot, who won the International Athletics Union Trail World Championships held in Wales in 2013, reached the summit of Penyghent in 28mins 11 secs – only seven seconds faster than Davies. There was an 11 seconds gap on Whernside, but Lightfoot stretched his lead to one minute six seconds on Ingleborough.

Third place was claimed by Andrew Fallas, of Carnethy Hill Running Club, in a time of 2hrs 57mins 51, pushing four times Three Peaks winner Rob Jebb, of Bingley Harriers, into fourth place. Jebb, 40, who was third last year, finished in 2hrs 59mins 32secs. His time beat Karl Gray's Veterans' Over 40 record, set in 2013, by 18 seconds.

Joe Symonds, another Salomon International runner, was returning to the Three Peaks after a year's absence in the hope of equalling his father, Hugh, of Kendal Athletics Club, who won in 1984, 1985 and 1987. But the paediatrician from Raigmore Hospital in Inverness, the winner in 2012 and 2013, will have to come back another year after finishing in 12<sup>th</sup> place with a time of 3hrs 9mins 57secs.

A £500 bonus prize was also on offer to a ladies' race winner who beat the female record of 3hrs 14mins 43secs set by Anna Pichrtova when the Three Peaks hosted the World Mountain Running Challenge in 2008. It was not claimed when Helen Bonsor, of Carnethy Hill Running Club, finished in 44<sup>th</sup> place overall in 3hrs 27mins 24secs.

Anna Lupton, of Black Combe Runners, was second female in 3hrs 34mins 46secs, and Caitlin Rice, of Glossopdale Harriers, was third fastest lady in 3hrs 39mins 3secs.

Kieran Carr's 4hrs 44mins 28secs was a new Male Veteran Over 70 record - beating the previous best, set in 2010, by 13 mins.

A surprise presentation was made to Dave Scott, who completed his 48<sup>th</sup> Three Peaks in a time of 5hrs 45mins 50secs. The Clayton-le-Moors Harrier, who will be 72 on Tuesday (April 28), was the first recipient of a new trophy to be presented annually to the oldest person to finish the race. It was arranged by email by Dave's daughter, Justine, of Denver, Colorado, and will be known as the Dave Scott Trophy.

The prizegiving also saw Race Director Paul Dennison presented with an inscribed glass tankard to mark his 40 years involvement with the Three Peaks Race. He began as a summit marshal on Ingleborough and Penyghent before marshalling at Ribbleshead checkpoint and being promoted to Race Director 32 years ago.

The race had a maximum entry of 1,000 and 802 runners started, which was a race record. There were 701 finishers – three short of the record set in 2014.

### **Team prizes**

Men's Open: Mercia – Andrew Davies, William Neil, Paul Jones and Tim Werrett. Veteran Men's Over-40: Wharfedale Harriers – Spencer Riley, Nicholas Charlesworth and David Haygarth. Men's Over-50 Bingley Harriers – Paul Mitchell, Stephen Fry and Dave Stephenson.

Women's Open: Todmorden – Pauline May, Lucy Hobbs, Kaye Mansell.

### **Brian Dooks**

### **Three Peaks Race Committee**