

The 53rd Lake District Mountain Trial, sponsored by the Climbers Shop, Ambleside, was held on Sunday 4th September. The venue was Tilberthwaite Farm, Coniston, which provided excellent field and barn facilities for the start and finish, where prizes were presented by Ben Lyon of The Climbers Shop.

The Mountain Trial is an annual event held at different venues in the Lake District. It is considered to be one of the major events in the fell runners calendar. The mens and womens courses are severe tests of route choice, navigation skills and stamina in difficult mountain terrain. Runners collect their maps with pre-marked routes after their start that show between 6-8 controls to visit in order. Starts are at intervals of one minute, so there is little chance of following other competitors. The post race meal provides the opportunity for competitors to discuss route choice and recount tales of their decision making, or lack of.

The mens course visited checkpoints south of Tillberthwaite Ghyll, Black Sails, quarry south of Old Man of Coniston, crossing the Duddon valley to the north west of Harter Fell, to a control on Hardknott above Lincove Bridge. Their return route crossed the Wryonse pass road and took them to a gully south east of Wetherlam and finished with controls on Blake Rigg and the bottom of Tilberthwaite ghyll. The technical nature of the navigation and extremely hot weather meant that the course of approximately 20 miles provided the men with a significant challenge. The mens course was won by Ifor Powell in 4hrs 51minutes. Gavin Bland, Andrew Schofield and Chris Hope, of Borrowdale were 5th and 7th 8th. Andrew Davis won the Vet 40 category and Phil Clarke of Kendal the Veteran 50 in 5hrs 52min. Joss Naylor was second in the Veteran 60 and the team prizes were taken by Borrowdale and Kendal.

The womens race of approximate 14 miles was won by Pippa Whitehouse of Dorking and Mole Valley in 4hours 20mins. Rebecca Cash of Borrowdale finished second and Jane Rigby on Helm Hill was 4th in her first ever Mountain Trial. At the other end of the age and experience spectrum, Carol McNeill, Veteran World Champion Orienteer, won the Veteran's 60 prize in 6hrs 24mins and announced that this would be her final Mountain Trial. The women's team prize was won by Ilkley.

The Short Course of approximately 10miles for novices and older runners was won in 4hrs 3 mins by Hector Haines, son of Pete Haines, who this year completed his 22nd Mountain Trial.

Other long standing sponsors of the Mountain Trial are Pete Bland Sports, Wasdale Head Inn and the Youth Hostels Association.

Next years Mountain Trial will be held on the traditional date of the second Sunday in September.