

## Lake District Mountain Trial

The 54th Lake District Mountain Trial, was held on Sunday 10th September at Seathwaite in Borrowdale. It was a fabulous day, with a clear blue sky, hot sun and a good wind on the fell tops. The perfect day out, in a great location was enhanced by the excellently planned courses.

The Mountain Trial is held at different venues in the Lake District each year on the second Sunday in September. The Trial is one of the major events of the year for a certain 'type' of fell runner. What ever label we put on that 'type' they keep coming back, year after year and even though a few hips have been replaced and glasses worn to read the map, such is the sense of achievement that competitors travel from all over the British Isles, even France, in order not to miss the event.

Unlike most fell races, the competitors in the Mountain Trial don't know the course until after they have started and collected their map. The map is pre-marked with the controls each competitor needs to visit in order to complete the course.

There is little chance of following someone as the starts are at intervals of one minute, with one person from each of the courses, Mens, Womens and Short going off at the same time.

Competitors need to identify the best route and navigate their way to each of the controls, so quick decision making whilst on the run, is just as important as speed and fitness. The race is also a test of stamina and the runners' ability to ascend and descend over rough ground.

The joys of the Trial are visiting those magical, hidden spots that you'd never normally visit; finding a trod that you didn't know existed, to take you through some really rough ground; and discovering that the route choice you've taken has just put you in front of the person who started before you.

The post race meal provides the opportunity for competitors to discuss their choice of route and compare opinions on the course. This year, all those who finished were given a voucher to spend in The Climbers Shop, Ambleside, who are the sponsors of the Mountain Trial.

The Mens' course of 29km with 2,100m of ascent, visited checkpoints near Little Round Howe, Blackbeck Tarn, Mickledore, Crinkle Crag, Little Gill Head and Wrist Knott to the north of Glaramara, with a steep descent back to Seathwaite farm via a wall corner.

The Mens Trial was won by Jonathan Bland of Borrowdale in 3hrs 51minutes. 2nd was John Hunt, Dark Peak Fell Runners in 4hrs 07mins, and 3rd was Mike Fanning, Borrowdale, in 4hrs 10mins. This meant that with Andrew Schofield of Borrowdale in 7th place, Borrowdale were the obvious winners of the team prize.

Quentin Harding of Bowland Fell Runners won the Vet 40 category and Phil Clarke of Kendal won the Veteran 50 in 4hrs 28min. Gareth Bryan-Jones won Vet 60 and Joss Naylor won the Vet 70 in 7hrs 51mins.

The Womens Trial of 21km and 1240m of ascent, was won by Angela Brand-Barker of Keswick AC in 3hrs 54mins. In 2nd place was Kirsty Bryan-Jones of Dark Peak FR in 4hrs 03mins and 3rd was Susan Clough of Ambleside in 4hrs 11mins. Vet 50 was won by Debbie Thompson of Keswick in 4hrs 22mins.

The Short Trial (for novices and older runners) was 18km with 1320m of ascent.

For the second year this was won by Hector Haines in 2hrs 56mins.

The first woman in the Short course was Hannah Parkinson of Durham University Cross Club in 4hrs 36mins. Derek Ratcliffe of Rossendale and Jill Davies of Saddleworth Runners won the Vet 50. The Vet 60's was won by Carol McNeill and Chris Lates of Keswick. Vet 70 winner was Andrew Gregory of Macclesfield Harriers.

The LDMTA prizes were won by Sal Chaffey and Leigh Warburton

The YHA prizes were won by John Fleetwood and Katy Thompson

The Outward Bound trophies were won by Simon Patton and Ali Bramall

The greatly coveted prize of two nights B&B for two at the Wasdale Head Inn, was won by Carol McNeill.

The prizes were presented by Jane Buckley, who was the first woman to ever run in the Mountain Trial in 1956. This was groundbreaking stuff, with organisers who were rather unsure as to a ladies ability to take part in such an arduous event. Jane, who is now in her 80's captivated everyone through her accounts of fell running in her gym slip and dashing down the scree on Great Gable in her tennis shoes.

To view maps of the courses, the results and spilt times, visit the Lake District Mountain Trial Association website [www.ldtma.org.uk](http://www.ldtma.org.uk)