

2013 Jura Race Report, the 40-30 anniversary

This was the 40th anniversary of the original race founding by George Broderick, ably assisted (according to George) and denied (Jim) by Jim Smith. The race lapsed, and was resurrected 30 years ago by Donald Booth, also one of the original small band of competitors.

Everything miraculously came together on the day for this 40-30 anniversary race. The sun shone all day, with a cool S breeze, no midges, and soft to dry going. I.e., perfect. There were a record 225 starters. Thank you to everyone who let us know they were not able to start, even the day before – in the end everyone on the waiting list who turned up did get a race.

We were delighted to welcome the finest and longest-playing piper anyone had ever heard, Cailean Hall-Gardiner, from Culloden, near Inverness, who piped in all finishers, and was, so I am told, still going strong even after the ceilidh. He is the son of a tree surgeon who was recently over our way lopping my brother's trees in Lochcarron.

I started with a wish-list of stars from the past who it would be nice to see, and every one of the special 'old-timers' on the wish-list turned out and contributed to a brilliant occasion. They included the original and resurrection race founders George Broderick and Donald Booth, the first three finishers from 1973 – Bobby Shields, Jim Smith, and Donald, all previous race organisers – so Ann and Andy Curtis and Phil & Mandy as well, and guest of honour Joss Naylor. Many memories were shared. Donald and Bobby were going to run, but both were put out of action by broken bones from falls.

Hector Haines from Ilkley, now HBT, extended a family tradition of fell racing, and – free from orienteering commitments - won the race on sight. His father introduced me to fell-running (1985) when they moved to Ilkley, and his mother was one of only five ladies to have sub-4-houred (1988) before 2013. He is now resident in Edinburgh.

Raynet – the volunteer radio controllers, whose service just gets better every year - had a live display of the first five numbers, and first lady, at each checkpoint, and produced a log of all radio traffic. The order of the three leaders, and the leading lady, was the same at all checkpoints, but the order of the leading group might be of interest. First, from the start list and the radio log, here are some runners' numbers and their positions at each checkpoint:

160	Hector Haines
147	Andy Fallas
182	Ian Holmes
131	Joe Mercer
36	Tom Brunt
85	Neil Northrop
97	Alasdair Anthony
CP1	160 – 147 – 182 – 131 – 36
CP2, CP3	No change
CP4	160 – 147 – 182 – 131 – 85
CP5	160 – 147 – 182 – 85 – 97
CP6 to end	No change

Haines, Mercer, Anthony, Jasmin Paris and Helen Bonsor have contributed interesting accounts of how their own race panned out. Here they are in full:

Hector Haines

Having never run the race, or route, or even been on Jura before – I was a little apprehensive of what lay ahead. I had of course heard all the stories, mainly from my parents and their close friends. The (often epic) nature of these tales meant I decided to take it steady at the start and see what unfolded during the race. However, I must of been feeling good, because the pace at the beginning felt quite slow, and I found myself pulling away from the pack on the first climb. Having got a gap, I wasn't about to let that go – so I got my map out and decided to go for a time instead. Navigation was fairly straightforward – especially with the weather being so good. It wasn't until the first pap however that I decided to really push the climb. This is where I managed to stretch the gap to Andy behind (or so it seemed). I took it fairly easy on the descents, focussing on agility rather than recklessness and pushed pretty hard on the remainder of the climbs. I started to feel a bit tired off the last pap, and the sapping bog before the road was probably the bit I felt worst. The road at the end was ok – I got into a good rhythm and just blanked everything out. A short bout of cramp slowed me for a minute or so, but I got through it and came home feeling pretty good.

Joe Mercer

Race story for me was definitely one of 2 halves, Hector and Andrew set a strong early pace but a few different route choices to check point one kept Ian, Neil, Tom (and others) and I in touch (ish). I think Ian and I got a bit of a gap descending to the base of the first pap and on the ascent but by the foot of the second the gap was closed and my purple patch ended. I dropped of Ian's pace soon to be overtaken by Neil, Tom and others, gradually sliding down the field to about 11/12th by the time we hit the road.

Apologies for lack of further details - it all seems a bit of a haze looking back!

Alasdair Anthony

From what I can remember: Hector and Andy soon got out in front, followed by Holmes and I think 4 others. I was in the second chasing group with Stewart, Mark Harris and possibly a few others just behind. The focus for the first part of the race was to make sure I stayed on route and drank lots at the burn going up the first pap. I had a good descent off the first pap and started to catch some of the stragglers from the Holmes group. Going up the third pap I got fairly close to Neil and Holmes. I tried a slightly different line to them off the third pap but didn't gain anything. So I tried a slightly different line up Corra Bheinn as well and probably lost a little time. Felt OK at the 3 arch bridge but with a big gap in front and behind it was just a case of getting down the road as fast as possible without blowing up.

Jasmin Paris

Having struggled with the heat during my first Jura experience (2012; 4 hours 17), the aim for 2013 was to try and break 4 hours. Perfect sunshine and a cloudless sky on the day of the race promised excellent visibility, dispelling fears of navigational miss-haps, and a light breeze made for cooler running conditions (although still a little warm for me!). As before, the length of the first climb (Dubh Bheinn) surprised me, but the next two tops (Glas Bheinn, Aonach Bheinn) were easier as I found a rhythm. Running over the 3 Paps with a group of familiar runners and good friends I was having fun, and although I didn't stop to look back, the certainty that Helen Bonsor would be hot on my heels provided an added impetus whenever I started to drop back. Arriving at Corra Bheinn in 3.08, the possibility of a sub-4 hour finish spurred me on, despite the warning twinges of cramp on the descent to Three Arch Bridge. Fantastic support cheered me along the final (never-ending) road section, and a sub-4 hour finish for both me and Helen made for a perfect ending to what is a truly classic race.

Helen Bonsor

Conditions on the day were as close to perfect as you could hope, and made for a great race. After negotiating the ever present man-eating bog at the start, with greater or lesser success in some parts, the dry conditions gave fast paced running over the ridge line of first 3 hills. For me, this bit was all about 'hanging on' and the race really began from the base of the climb up the first pap. Jasmin was always a couple of minutes ahead, always in sight, although I could never quite close it! It gave a good chase over the Paps however, and coming off the third pap I was feeling strong. I didn't look at my watch until hitting the road at the 3 arch bridge, and got a shock to see 3:34. Jasmin out of sight by this point after the last descent, but I realised a sub-4 might be possible for both of us if I got a move on! Passing the 1 mile mark into Craighouse I knew I had time to do it, although I didn't dare believe it, and I still couldn't quite believe it even when I crossed the finish line, where Jasmin was waiting having finished a few minute ahead. A great race in a fantastic place; hill running at it's very best.

Jasmin achieved personal satisfaction by beating Angela Mudge's 2012 time, and less than 15 minutes off the Ladies' record. Stewart Whitley smashed his own V50 record, set the previous year, and had the pleasure of talking to previous holder Joss Naylor about it. Roger Ashby became the first V70 to complete the race. So, two records this year. Joss intends to be the first V80. The male team prize was won by the Scottish club, Carnethy in 10:52:27, with Dark Peak a very close second in 10:58:08. The ladies team winners were Carnethy in 13:26:52.

23 runners achieved sub-4-hours, including Jasmin and Helen, who brought the total ladies who have done this from five up to seven.

Congratulations to all who completed the course, and had a good time.

The race was a success due to the tremendous efforts made by so many people and organisations – all of whom it would be good to thank personally, if that were only possible! As this is not a club race, and more of a gathering of like souls from near and far (mostly far), it is just brilliant to see how many people – and many of them year after year – join in, help, and just get things done.

Graham