

## 2014 Jura Race Report

Once again, the weather was fantastic. This just proves the maxim that things run in threes. What does 2015 hold, we wonder?

Patterns are hard to forecast. Thank you to about 55 entrants who e-mailed their withdrawal before race day. Expecting about 20-30 no-shows on the day, there was only approximately one, plus quite a few pre-agreed and valid EODs, so again there were over 220 starters. As last year, everyone who earlier had been on the waiting list and who was there got a race.

Earlier in the week, the going on the course had been unusually wet, but three days of dry weather had done their job and the conditions appear to have been spot on. Visibility was good, and the temperature just right.

Hence:

### A new course record

Mark Rigby's record of 3:06:59 had stood for twenty years, and most thought they would never see it broken. There were at least five guys on the start line who were in the zone to win, so it was going to be a very good race. As reports came back from each checkpoint, we began to realise that something special was going on. For example, we estimated that at record pace, the leading runner would probably not be passing CP4, Beinn a'Chaolais, before 12:00. Then word came through that the leader had gone through a couple of minutes before twelve. The number of minutes between the leader and the next runner increased step by step, checkpoint by checkpoint, and when Hector reached Three Arch Bridge, a glance at the race timer gave him something like 22 or 23 minutes to cover the 3.3 miles of road for the record.

He was about half way along the road when we heard that no less than Finlay Wild had just passed the bridge in second place.

At the bridge, Hector pulled off his Walshes, pulled on his road shoes, with quick-draw laces – and cramped. But only a little bit, and he was off, with the need to average at least nine mph. Then, apparently, he was called back to tidy his fell shoes up, which he did, and set off again! He came into view from the finish line at a point which takes about 1½ minutes to run, and with about two minutes to the record. There followed a final flat out burst, and flat out collapse on the tarmac. Time: 3:06:30.

In 2008, three times winner Rob Jebb came close with 3:07:49. He said that he had cramped up for about a minute at Three Arch Bridge while changing into road shoes, and this decision had been the biggest regret of his running career. Who knows? Nearly everything has to go just right on the day. This year he was recovering from a chest infection, and strolled in at 7<sup>th</sup>. Six times winner Ian Holmes, at a ripe old age, was fifth. His plans to get his 21 races and the V50 record in his V50 year were dashed in 2012 when he dropped out early on with a knee injury. He still did his best time since 2008, and on current form that record looks under threat once again.

Andrew Fallas and Rhys Findlay-Robinson photo-finished at third equal. What gentlemen. I don't know the story.

The ladies' race again went according to form, with Carnethy club-mates Jasmin Paris and Helen Bonsor producing sparkling performances well under four hours. There were the usual stories of Jasmin thinking Helen must either be up there ahead somewhere, or snapping at her

heels. Watch out you two, Angela Mudge says that she intends to be back injury-free next year. Third lady was Diane Baum from Lochaber in a fantastic 4:12:19. (Diane has just won the almost equally long and uphill Trotternish Ridge race in Skye).

The 'furthest travelled' walking stick went to Andrew Lonie from New Zealand, and no one else came close. This must be a record. The stick will be heading back in June. Ian Cameron, who has carved and made the sticks for many years, is now quite infirm, and he is always interested to know where his stick has gone, and was thrilled this year.

Possibly our youngest competitor ever, Bethan Nadin, finished the course, as did her mother Louise, for whom, as with so many others on the day, this was a thrilling and major achievement.

Sarah Clark from Islay became the first Islay lady ever to complete the race, and, as is her wont, she helped and encouraged a Norwegian competitor to get round within the cut offs, for which he was very grateful. And that is not all: two Jura ladies, Rhowan Rozga and Jan Snell both completed the course in good times – brilliant.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Jura what it is again. 'What it is' is 'what it is', and do not be concerned that there are any plans to run it backwards. We did recce it, but that was just for fun. Check the news items again next April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Graham