

## **2015 Jura Race Report**

The 2014 report started: “Once again, the weather was fantastic. This just proves that luck run in threes. What does 2015 hold?” More exceptional luck, as it happened. Totally dire weather most days up to the race yielded to a brief weather window.

### **Race entries**

A big change this year was to try out on-line entries with card payments, instead of postal with paper forms and various means of payment. The SI Entries system we used proved as flexible as the paper system, once you more or less learned how to use it, and saved a great deal of typing into spreadsheets and paying in of cheques. It also made mass or selective emails to entrants much easier. The dynamics are quite different though. Entries came in very quickly and easily, but they all went on to a pre-selection list for vetting. Once vetted, entrants could be invited by SI to accept and pay. If they did, they went on to the entry list.

To allow for withdrawals, non-acceptances and vetting failures, the pre-selection list had to be extended well beyond the race limit of 250 so that people could still enter. The number of confirmed and invited entries was kept down to 250, with more invites going out when people withdrew. The trouble was, until about three weeks before the race not enough people were withdrawing, and then there was a rush, right up to the day before the race. This was usually too late for anyone on the waiting list or who had been put off entering to change their plans, and in the end we only had 214 starters. I blame myself: in order not to put people off withdrawing, everyone was offered a refund (unless they opted to donate their £20 to mountain rescue funds, which many did) right up to the day before the race. Refunding also costs money, so in future the cut-off for refunds will be a number of weeks before the race, and not in full.

Thank you to everyone who did notify withdrawal; it helped a lot. It might help, as well, if the entry list is initially allowed to go up higher than 250. As for the last two or three years, anyone qualified who was in the cooperage and wanted to enter on the day did get a race. A system was in place.

### **Another outstanding new record**

After weeks of horrible wet weather, the rain abated, visibility improved, and it was not too cold and windy. In places where water gathers – mainly on the initial ascent and final descent, the surface was wetter than average, but this did not slow the leaders down much.

Angela Mudge’s record of 3:40:33 had stood since 2008. In good conditions, on her first Jura, Jasmin Paris got 3:53:52, about a couple of miles behind Angela’s time on the road? This time, in sight only of the leading men, Jasmin achieved a brilliant 3:38:43, knocking 1’50” off Angela’s time. She was 6<sup>th</sup> overall, one second behind the 5<sup>th</sup> man, Chris Jones, and 2’20” in front of Konrad Rawlik, 7<sup>th</sup>.

The winner was Finlay Wild of Lochaber, in 3:13:27, which is the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest time ever, and comfortably ahead of the rest of the field. Of those present, Ian Holmes (3<sup>rd</sup> overall, and 1<sup>st</sup> V40) and Ian Ferguson have done it faster in their heyday. Holmes will no doubt be going for the V50 record in 2016. His time was 3:30:30; Stewart Whitlie’s 2013 record was 3:36:03.

Paul Cornforth of Borrowdale produced an excellent 3:50:04 to lead the V50s on his first Jura completion. The first FV40, and third lady, was Megan Mowbray of HBT in 4:36:05.

## **“Sub 4-hours”**

Since time immemorial any finisher achieving a time under four hours has been awarded a specially engraved whisky glass. Many people have wondered at the fairness of the 4-hour cut-off time being the same for both men and women. Careful statistical analysis of past years results shows that for a lady the equivalent time to four hours for a gentleman should be 4 hours and 45 minutes. These cut-off times are now being applied, so this year, the first three ladies all received a glass.

## **The higher echelons**

When Stephen Jones, Eryri, came in first V60 in 4:21:25, I made a quick move to see if he had beaten Kieran Carr's 2008 record, but had not gone two paces before Stephen stopped me. He knew he hadn't quite made it - eight and a half minutes short. Outstanding.

Roger Ashby was not able to threaten his previous V70 times, but not for want of determination, and was mercifully retired approaching CP6.

The first (and only) FV60 was Lesley Malarkey of Keswick in a very good time of 5:51:13. We could be looking at a future FV70 here.

## **Special prizes and trophies**

The winner of the Last Lady award is always thrilled to bits. The specially carved walking stick has, for many years, been made by Ian Cameron of Jura, who every year we think has surely become too old and frail to carry on with this – but once again he produced the goods. This year it went to Helen Cassidy from N Ireland, and she was far from last in the race, finishing nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour in front of the last man. To address the gender-bias, we need someone to donate an appropriate Last Gentleman trophy.

Incidentally, Jasmin has pointed out that there is a plaque with all past winners displayed somewhere, and which you are shown when you do a distillery tour. Never done that, so must do a distillery tour one day, and only buy a bottle of whisky if they promise to put the ladies' race winners up as well.

The first local home was the very keen local runner Grant Rozga, who is also often seen at mainland races, in a time of 3:58:11. Not an easy place to train, Jura.

## **Teams**

Another move towards addressing the shameful historic gender-bias of the sport was to abandon the idea of men's and ladies' team prizes, and just have team prizes. Very few clubs would ever have three ladies' in the race anyway. From 2015 a team is a club's first three runners, at least one of whom must be a lady. Past team performances show that the record was set by Bingley Harriers in 2008, by Rob Jebb, Ian Holmes and Sharon Taylor. For the records, all future men's and ladies' teams times will continue to be calculated, but will not get prizes.

The first team was Carnethy, and second was Dark Peak.

## **JOHN DARE SHIELD**

Awarded to the person(s) who in the opinion of their peers produced the most outstanding performance in the longer and tougher Scottish Islands Peaks Race the weekend before followed by running the Jura Fell Race.

This year it went to Alasdair Anthony who together with 2011 Jura winner, Es Tresidder, won the SIPR followed by second place at Jura less than a week later.

### **Bits and pieces**

We have a very few 2013 and 2015 T-shirts left over, a small lost and found bag which includes a small watch, all remaining 2015 certificates and certificates going back three or four years if you want them, and two or three 2013 medals.

### **Finally...**

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Jura what it is once again. Hope to see as many as can make it again in 2016. Oh, by the way, I shall not be organising the race after 2017, so if any keen person(s) would like to start thinking about taking it over, the 2016 race would be a good time to start talking about it. Ideally, a few months lead-in plus a dry run shadowing, and experience of competing would be good.

Graham