

Yomp Mountain Challenge June 3rd 2012 - Report

After the unseasonal conditions experienced during the 2011 event, we were due for a break this year. It didn't come! This year's rain was only light and very patchy, and the cloud level not too low, but with winds of 35mph blowing over the tops and air temperature as low as 3 degrees on the highest points, this was the exact opposite of 'flaming June'. The marshals on the check points above 600 metres had a particularly hard time, with one tent disintegrating on High Pike!

The first innovation this year was the introduction of electronic timing. Each competitor was fitted with a time recorder on their wrist, which was then used to record their times to the nearest second, not just at start and finish, but also at key checkpoints around the courses. Last year Carl Bell, of Howgill Harriers, broke the Full, 23 mile, course record in 2hrs. 43 minutes. This year, equipped with the new timer, he set off at the latest starting time of 10am, and raced round the course in 2hrs. 48 minutes and 34 seconds. – The second fastest time ever recorded, and only the day after he had finished another gruelling fell race at Sedbergh. Second was Gavin Allen, running as part of the Halstead Badgers team, in 3:24:59, with Patrick Hanna of Howgill Harriers, third (and first local resident) in 3:33:55.

Adele Roche and Pauline Tyson, both of Howgill Harriers, tied for first female place in just seconds over 4 hrs. 22 minutes. Steven Saunders took the over 60 veteran prize in 4:49:38, and the fastest 16 and under was E Thomas, in 4:52:29. Bill Barr, upholding the long-standing tradition that the President of the Upper Eden Rotary Club should compete, did so in style, finishing in 5hrs 53 minutes.

First team prize went to Howgill Harriers (Bell, Hanna, Moffat) with a combined time of 10:02:24, runners up were Halstead Badgers (Allen, Davies, Wolton) in 12:42:54.

With the Mallerstang Yomp established in memory of the wartime yomp across the Falklands thirty years ago it was fitting that we should have a veteran of that campaign, David Coulthard (42 Commando RM) also taking part, finishing in the creditable time of 6 hrs 56 minutes. Teams from the Forces are an integral part of the Challenge.

E Company 7th. Rifles took the Roman Fell Cup for Volunteer Reserve units (Holland, Harding, Ahn,). First Regular Services Team was Team Lynx, winning the Warcop Cup, completing the course in fine order, Union Jack flying the entire way.

The second innovation for 2012 was a significant course change for the Half Yomp. The new route eliminated over a mile of road running, replaced by a new route via Thringill straight onto the fell. All the 'old course' records are thus retained, and this year we start with 'new course' times and records. Brothers Peter and Paul Brittleton came first and third respectively, in 1hr 31:47 and 1hr 39:33, split by Alistair Hanna in second place in 1hr. 34.43. First female runner was Jenn Mattinson in 1:48:23. First over 60 veteran was MP McKenna in 1:56:21. In the Under-16 category Hal Cowling was first boy home, in 2:54:52, with Shona Haston first girl, 3:48:09.

Short Course entries were well down this year, because of the weather. After registration at Kirkby Stephen Grammar School the competitors were transported up the hill to the Tailbrigg start in a double decker bus, courtesy of Cumbria Classic Coaches. Despite the drop in numbers the event was very keenly contested by our younger competitors. First home was JA Oakley, competing in the Under 16 male class, in 47 minutes and 50 seconds, followed in second place by Sarah Atkinson, under 12 female, in 52:49. Two young runners with enormous promise for the future! Alistair Barr, Isaac Robinson, B Ivinson, and O Rose from Kirkby Stephen Primary School won the Pendragon Cup, awarded to the fastest primary school team.

The Rotary Club of Upper Eden has organized this community event every year since 1982, raising funds for charities nominated each year. This year support has gone to Hospice At Home,

Leukemia research, and Vision Aid. In addition participants raise significant sums for their own chosen causes.

Without the help of many individuals, and Kirkby Stephen Mountain Rescue Team, Kirkby Stephen Scouts, St. Johns Ambulance, and the generous sponsorship of J T Atkinson, Builders Merchants the Yomp would not be possible, and our grateful thanks go to all our helpers and supporters.

Ben Lyon
Yomp Committee Chairman,
Upper Eden Rotary Club.