

Race Director's Welcome

Welcome to the 68th Three Peaks Race - "the Marathon with Mountains".

Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough stand before you and the 37.4k (23.3-miles) route with 1,609 metres (5,279ft) of ascent and descent await.

The Three Peaks is an icon in British fell running. We have come a long way from the first races – with Fred Bagley, of Preston Harriers, our first male winner in 1954 and first female winner Jean Lothead, of Airedale and Spen Valley AC, in 1979.

One of our biggest achievements to date came in 2008 when the race became the first in the UK to host the World Long Distance Mountain Running Championships.

An unexpected route change on the approach to High Birkwith means we are forced to re-route along the Pennine Way via Old Ings farm. This adds about 0.6 of a mile (1km) and 20 metres extra climbing. To compensate, we are extending cut-off times. Ribblesdale is now 12.50 and Hill Inn 14.10. I apologise for late notification, but we only found out at the end of March.

Record time over the current route is held by Andy Peace, who set 2hrs 46mins 3secs in 1996. Another Bingley Harrier, Victoria Wilkinson, established the women's record of 3hrs 9mins 19secs in 2017.

It is not just the organising committee and you entering which ensures there will be a race each year. It is only possible through the support of all our sponsors.

This year they are: inov-8, one of the world's leading sports footwear, clothing and equipment brands; Hanson UK, operators of Horton-in-Ribblesdale quarry; CSH Transport, of Blackburn; Intack Self Drive Hire, of Blackburn; Pete Bland Sports, of Kendal; Northern Monk Brewery, of Leeds; Agrispare, of Barnoldswick; the Three Peaks Bunkroom on the slopes of Whernside; the Subaru and Ssang Yong specialists, Dales Automotive, of Kelbrook, Barnoldswick; and Denise Park, Chartered Physiotherapist, of Clitheroe.

I must thank the race organising committee, 200 volunteer marshals, 35 RAYNET radio operators, our medical team, Horton-in-Ribblesdale Playing Field Committee, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and farmers and landowners, without whom it would not be possible to put on this event.

I have had the pleasure of being part of the Three Peaks Race for 48 years. In fact, my first daughter, Hannah, arrived on race day on the 30th April, 1989 - but I still made it to the event.

Hannah often has to share her birthday with the race. But this year I have the pleasure of introducing my first-born granddaughter. Emily will be 10 weeks old on race day! I can now boast three generations of my family being involved in the event. I am immensely proud.

We want you to really enjoy today's race and would like to remind you that we don't have exclusive rights to the route, which is still open to the public. So, take care, be kind and keep those around you safe as well.

Paul Dennison.

Race Director and Three Peaks Association chairman.