

The 31st Three Peaks took place on Sunday 13 April 2014

Weather conditions:
Partly cloudy with cold North Easterly winds

26km



Defending champion Stafford Thompson won in 2 hours 3 minutes 29 seconds, second was the first MM35-49 runner Geoff Williamson in 2 hours 9 minutes 31 seconds and third was the second Open Men's runner Neale McLanachan in 2 hours 13 minutes 19 seconds. The second MM35-49 runner was Andrew Lonie who came through in overall fourth place in 2:16:28. The third Open Men's runner was Jonah Smith who finished in fifth place overall in 2:18:27, then the third MM35-49 runner Romain Miroso followed in sixth place in 2:19:10. In 12th place



overall came the first Master Men's 50+ runner Chris Sole in 2:24:37. Open Women's runner Sarah Chisnall was the first woman to finish in 2 hours 26 minutes 35 seconds with MW35-49 runner Louisa Andrew being the second woman in 2 hours 28 minutes. Third woman across the line was Open Women's runner Dani Nicolson in 2 hours 41 minutes 22 seconds. The first Master Women's 50+ runner was Sandy McKirdy in 3:31:52.



First to Swampy and to also finish the full 26km race:
Town Garage King of the Mountain Stafford Thompson 55:36
Town Garage Queen of the Mountain Louisa Andrew 1:06:27

Three Peaks Teams 26km Race



The women's team of Deborah & Susanna Lynch blitzed the teams field winning in a combined time of 2 hours 30 minutes 7 seconds. This the first time a women's team has won the overall team's race. The second team in was also an all women team consisting of Sasha Antunovic and Amanda Rowe who were not too far off the pace in a combined time of 2 hours 32 minutes 25 minutes. The third team across the line was the first men's team of Mike Tannock 1:07:31 and Chris Hasler 1:26:19 for a combined time of 2:33:50. In fourth place was the first mixed team of Bella Bloomfield 1:14:24 and her father Stephen Bloomfield 1:21:23 for a combined time of 2:35:47.

11km Race the Summit

The Race the Summit Champion for 2014 is Open Men's runner Allister Meffan who got to the top of Swampy in 65 minutes and 8 seconds. Second was Greg Thurlow (Open Men's) in 67 minutes 41 seconds and third was Brandon de Graaf (Open Men's) in 1 hour 12 minutes 30 seconds. The first woman to finish was Holly Todd in 1 hour 17 minutes 12 seconds. Second was Masters Women 35 runner Helen Beattie in 1 hours 20 minutes 26 seconds. Third was Victoria Stott (MW35) in 1 hour 23 minutes 29 seconds.

11 km Recreational Walk

The first recreational walker to finish was Rosemary Connolly who finished in 1 hour 52 minutes 13 seconds. Second walker home was Chanel Gardner in 1:56:53 and third was Louise Trevena in 1:58:09.

Thompson runs away with Three Peaks title

Article By Wayne Parsons (ODT online)

Stafford Thompson negotiated mid-shin deep mud and a successful slide under a fallen tree to successfully defend the Three Peaks Challenge title yesterday.

Thompson (33), a Dunedin physiotherapist, made his intentions known early to the 260-strong field, as he overcame the rush of blood at the start from a few of the competitors, to take control of the race at the beginning of the Pineapple Track, leaving the field beginning to spread out behind him. Thompson said that despite the cold overcast conditions, he didn't feel any chill, and that conditions were not as bad as they first appeared, but praised the organisers' emphasis on thermal safety gear. "Normally I'd just wear a short-sleeved thermal, but today I wore a long-sleeved thermal and hat and think I was better for it." Holding a significant lead at the top of Flagstaff and Swampy, Thompson found himself well over his ankles deep in mud on the decent from Swampy, and then took the option of sliding under a fallen tree across the track to maintain his momentum for the long haul up to Mt Cargill. But navigating his way through the plantation area, he had to negotiate his way through another area of deep mud before reaching the road to the summit and firmer footing. From there on it incident free on his way to crossing the finish line on Chingford Park in 2hr 3min 29sec. A time 3min 27sec faster than his winning time was last year. Thompson, who also won the race in 2005, broke a wrist when tripped by uncontrolled dogs 2km out from the finish on his way to victory last year, was full of praise for the work organisers had put in to competitor safety.

"It's just fantastic. It's so well sign posted," he said, speaking of people using the Bethune's and Mt Cargill Walkway areas in particular being aware of the competitors. "This is just such a fantastic event. I don't think there is anything else like this in the country. And it's all on the city's doorstep. It's just such an amazing race."

Thompson said that the technical nature of a course such as the Three Peaks added another dimension which adds to the interesting nature of the race.

Otago duathlon champion Geoff Williamson finished second in 2hr 9min 31sec, while Peninsula Challenge champion Neale McLanachan got the better of a see-saw battle with Andrew Lonie to claim the third podium spot in 2hr 13min 19sec.

Sarah Chisnall made a successful return to the course, following a four year absence, to win the open women's title in 2hr 26min 35sec. After a year of broken bones, Chisnall (30), a health promotions co-ordinator with the Cancer Society in Invercargill, said that it was a case of getting out to just see if she could still do it. Chisnall, who set the open women's record on the old 25km course in 2009 of 2hr 9min 3sec, and then the open women's record in 2010 of 2hr 19min 56sec on the present 26km course, had a year that she would rather forget last year.

On a training run in Bethune's Gulley on Good Friday last year she fell and fractured ribs, then returning to jogging eight weeks later competed in a mud fun run in Invercargill and injured her neck and dislocated her collarbone in an encounter with the giant mud slide at the end. Then just over two months later went tramping and got a stress fracture in her pelvis. But with a recent return to running Chisnall, who took a conservative approach to her start yesterday. Setting a series of milestones throughout the course based on distance and not time. But finding that she was beginning to weave her way through the field on the run over to Swampy thought she'd give things a crack on the descent.

"I went pretty gung-ho on the shute," she said of a steep part of the course on the decent to Leith Valley Rd. Chisnall finished in 2hr 26min 35sec, which was 1min 39sec clear of defending champion Louisa Andrew in second place.

Lisa McGonigle talks about her experience of this year's race



This is another humorous and interesting article from Lisa McGonigle about her experience of this year's Three Peaks Mountain Race - seen here on the left in photo, finishing very relaxed looking despite the rigours of the tough Skyline Challenge. A former Dunedinite and self-confessed sedate plodder, Lisa wrote an article about last year's race too and this one continues in the same vein giving those who haven't competed in this event a unique insight into one runner's experience in traversing those daunting summits of Flagstaff, Swampy and Mt Cargill in sometimes less than amicable weather conditions.

Lisa McGonigle -

On the morning of Sunday, 13 April 2014, Dunedin played host to some very esteemed and distinguished visitors who were in town for a classically Kiwi sporting event. I refer, of

course, to the over 200 athletes who gathered in Woodhaugh Gardens for the 31st annual Three Peaks Mountain Race (Oh and I believe there were some royals around town or something as well).

The event incorporated a variety of distances: an 11km walk, a two-person team event, the 11km Race the Summit, and, for those of us who don't like to make life easy for ourselves, the full 26km Three Peaks shebang.

I'm very much a sedate plodder, so opted for the 8.30am early start, leaving the regular 9.30am start to the competitive and club runners (half-human/half-mountain goats). This was my third year taking part in the Three Peaks, and the past few years have seen a 'Goldilocks' run of conditions: too hot (the beating sun of 2012), too cold (last year's torrentially wet and blustery event) and, this year, just right. It was a cool and overcast morning, with just enough of a chill in the air to start getting exciting about the imminent arrival of ski season, and just a touch of breeze. You couldn't have asked for better.

As a former Dunedinite now living in Christchurch, I've traded in the Three Peaks for the Port Hills, alas. As such, the race was a trip down memory lane – or indeed up memory mountain – for me. The lush greenery of the Ross Creek reservoir is a reminder of just how first-class the trail running is in Dunedin, and so close to town. Emerging from the Pineapple Track and heading into the tussock over to Flagstaff, I gave a fond smile to Dunedin to one side, and the Taeiri plains to the other. Otago, it felt good to be back.

Up to Flagstaff and back over to Swampy Summit, where the preceding days' rain left the ground clay-like underfoot. Dropping back down from Swampy Summit to Leith Valley, where it looked like the race organisers had gone gung-ho with some machetes to clear the course, the real shoe-sucking muddiness started. The race leaders started to fly past through the mire and we mere mortals just kept plodding on.

Back up the road to Mt Cargill. The clear cut near the summit had seemed like an endless suffer-fest in last year's driving storm: a trudge through grey and brown and rain and a bleak lifeless landscape of fallen trees. This year, by way of contrast, it was quite pleasant, with the sky even started to clear a bit. Having knocked the final summit of Mt Cargill off, down it was to the finish line at Chingford Park where the showers were hot, the sausages were sizzling and the spot prizes were plentiful. Another great year of the Three Peaks, and already looking forward to next year's event. Particularly heartening has been the growth in novice runners taking on this race: come! Come swell our back-of-the-pack numbers! It's fun at the end, I promise! With a bit of training and determination, the Three Peaks is an achievable and rewarding event which deserves to be on anyone's race calendar. **Note:** *Lisa finished the course in 3 hours 55 minutes 27 seconds*



Amy Smith's Experience
A first time competitor in this year's race, Amy Smith had this to say about her experience

Amy Smith.....

"This year I competed for the first time in the Three Peaks mountain race, and it was one of the best decisions I have made. The race was a huge challenge but equally rewarding. I loved the collegial spirit of all those involved and the two "induction runs" made race day much less daunting. I would recommend this race to anyone who is interested in running and wants to challenge themselves. You don't need to be the biggest or the best but just happy to put your all into it and be prepared to get your feet wet (and muddy if you're lucky). Thank you so much to everyone who organised it. Couldn't have imagined being so enthused after such a hard run!"

In Ending

We would like to thank all the organisers, helpers, marshals, timekeepers, athletes, family and supporters and our sponsors for making sure that this wonderful event was a success for all