

## Race Report, Mt Haig Trail Race, Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup> 2014

After weeks of unseasonably drizzly weather, the sun finally emerged for the fourth year of running of the Mt Haig Trail Race. As in previous years, runners competed over four distances; 5km, 10km, 21km and Ultra Marathon (this ultra was run over 43.0 kilometres after road closures forced several changes to the original course).

Ultra runners started appearing in the early morning twilight at the Kauri Creek Day Use Area in preparation for the 7.30am start. As usual, the unflappable Janette Jacob was there to register this year's 22 starters. Rosie Ball arrived soon after to look after timing and registration. Many thanks, ladies!

The hooter sounded and they were off! Including 21 km runner Alvin Wilson. Luckily for him, Brenda OBrien realised his mistake and shot off after him in her car, bringing him back to the start line and saving him a potentially very wearying 21 extra kilometres!

The first 5 kms were probably the worst underfoot for all runners in all races, with recent rain and vehicle traffic producing areas of mud and slush. However, beyond that, the road surface was drier but still rough in places. At higher elevation, a new threat lurked beside the road; large numbers of Stinging Trees.

After 13 kms of constant climbing, the ultra's then began the free-wheeling descent to the 21.5km halfway checkpoint, descending from rainforest through Wet Sclerophyll forest, She-Oaks and finally into Eucalyptus woodland.

Such was the speed of the front runners that the checkpoint man, Dave OBrien, was still setting up when race leader (and eventual winner in the amazing time of 3:34:05 ) Glenn Robinson, flew down the hill towards him. If you want a decent photo of yourself, Robbo, you'll have to slow down, mate!

Close behind were workmates Damien Coad and Jeff Herbert who staged an epic battle for second and third. Jeff's generous donation of salt tablets to Damien enroute led to a rejuvenated Damien overtaking him to claim second place in 3:52:35 with Jeff less than 2 minutes behind in 3:54:00. Your generosity will be rewarded in the future, I'm sure, Jeff!

Girl power was evident on the day with six women starting and all finished. Well done ladies! First home was powerful runner, Sara Winter, in a great time of 4:28:35, followed by Debbie Ord in 5:23:10 with Heidi Sweeting (watching her cadence!) rounding out the podium finishers in 5:40:41

The 21km course was the same as last year and a field of 16 contested this year's event. Alistair Spence tore up and down the track, finishing in 1:38:35 just 1½ minutes outside the course record set in 2012. Great run, Alistair!

Belgian visitor Tom Van Suetendael was just 4 minutes behind in 1:42:13 in taking out second place for the men. You've travelled a long way to come and run with us, Tom! In 3<sup>rd</sup> place was Patrick Shannon with a time of 1:47:23.

The Shannon family, representing Burdekin Road Runners were out in force on the day with the men contesting the 21km event and the ladies active in the 5km. In the former race, father Evan had his colours lowered by his faster son. Evan has issued an invitation to all of us to join him in contesting the Burdekin Sugar Rush on Sunday, May 17th next year. Check out the website.

([www.burdekinsugarrush.com.au](http://www.burdekinsugarrush.com.au))

For the women, Liz Maguire blitzed the field (including all but the winning man!) Her time of 1:39:13 (yep, I had to check it twice) absolutely smashed the previous record of 1:52:19 set in 2011. Unbelievable! Second placegetter, Dawn Romanella was almost as impressive, also breaking the previous record in recording 1:50:26. Well done! Janette Jacob put down her Registrar's biro and put on her running shoes to run into third place in 2:18:26. A real evergreen!

The 10km runners probably had to put up with more mud per kilometre than any others! However, it didn't deter them and for the men, Paul Lim navigated the slippery sections best to finish in 46:42, He was followed by Gerry Maguire in 49:11 and Mark St Amand in 53:35.

Michelle Farkas crossed the line with Mark St Amand to take out first place for the women. Only a second separated the next two ladies with Patricia Cannon (57:54) just ahead of Tanya Bassford.

The 5km race was an all women event and Kate Hammacott (28:45) taking the honours from Nikki Paul (31:18). Mother and daughter Emily and Kristy Shannon crossed the line together in representing the Burdekin Runners.

And now a huge THANK YOU from me (and I'm sure from all of the runners) to the volunteers who helped make this day happen. Before the starter hooter sounded, Jo van Gorp had looked after the on-line registrations and Janette Jacob had done the shopping. Thanks heaps, ladies! Janette turned up at the start early to check the ultra runners in and Rosie Ball arrived to look after the timing. Jo braved the potholed Danbulla Road in the vangorpmobile to help out on race day as well as transporting some of the runners.

Alison Smith directed traffic (runners and vehicles) on Danbulla Road and later became a Sweep, riding up and down the Kauri Creek track on her mountain bike. Thanks also to Martin and Katy for your help at the Start/Finish area. This was my first time volunteering as director of a multi-race event, including an ultra-marathon. It can be a thankless position at times but I would welcome your feedback and ideas. Please take a few minutes to email me at

[trailrunning@roadrunners.org.au](mailto:trailrunning@roadrunners.org.au) Thank you, everyone! Dave

