

2015 British & English Championship

Lingmell Dash- 25th July 2015

- **Distance:** 7.2km / 4.5m
- **Climb:** 762m / 2,500ft

Wasdale Head Inn was the venue for the penultimate race in the both the 2015 British and English Championships. For a number of runners, victory in their category would guarantee the gold medal prior to the final race whilst for others a good result would strengthen their medal chances. Lingmell Dash combines fast flat running on the valley floor to pick up the main Brown Tongue path with a relentless climb up the 'Shoulder' to the summit of Lingmell, which lies in the shadow of Scafell Pike, followed by a plummeting drop back to the finish. Nearly 400 entries were received compared with the usual field of around 30, but only about half of these made it to the start line.

66 women set out at 1pm and Victoria Wilkinson (Bingley) took the victory in 50:35, 36 seconds ahead of Jasmine Paris and 9 minutes quicker than Hazel Robinson's course record set in 2012. Hannah Horsburgh (Keswick) took 3rd place just one second ahead of Clare Whitehead (Deeside) followed by Mel Price (Mercia) the leading v40 with u23 Sophie Horrocks (Rossendale) in 6th place. Helen Berry (Holmfirth) and Astrid Gibbs (Ambleside) were 2nd and 3rd v40s in 7th and 11th position and Judith Jepson (Dark Park) was again leading v45 in 14th place followed by Hazel Robinson (Ambleside) who was exactly 3 minutes inside her old record. Nichola Jackson (Preston) was 2nd u23 in 17th two places and only 19 seconds ahead of Bronwen Jenkinson (Eryri). In the v50s, Sally Newman (Calder Valley) led home Elizabeth Batt (Dark Peak) and Julie Carter (Keswick). The first three v60s, Wendy Dodds (Clayton Le Moors), Pat Goodall (Totley) and Ann-Marie Jones (Altrincham) were separated by less than 2 minutes and headed all the v55s. Lesley Malarkey (Keswick), Linda Lord (Clayton Le Moors) and Lou Lyness (Black Combe) were the leading v65s.

Ambleside dominated in the women's teams; Keswick and Eryri were 2nd and 3rd in the open teams with Dark Peak and Calder Valley taking the minor places in the v40s.

Ninety minutes later it was the turn of over 130 men with Finlay Wild (Lochaber), the leader in the British Championship, fighting for victory with the leader in the English Championship, Simon Bailey (Mercia). Simon triumphed in a time of 43:03, over 2 minutes inside the existing course record. Finlay was 37 seconds in arrears with v40 Rob Hope (Pudsey & Bramley) in 3rd over a minute further back followed by another v40, Rob Jebb (Bingley) the previous record holder, leading u23, Jamie Parkinson (Pudsey & Bramley) and Rhys Findley-Robertson in 6th, all of whom were inside the 2007 record. V45 Lloyd Taggart (Manx Fell Runners) was in 7th place closely followed by leading v50 Mark Palmer (Mynydd Du). Tom Saville (Dark Peak) and Oscar Meanwell (Borrowdale) took the minor placings in the u23s in 15th and 26th position overall whilst in the v50s those positions were filled by David Taylor (Dark Peak) in 25th and Paul Cornforth (Borrowdale) in 32nd. Mike Johnson (Bowland) was leading v55 and in the v60s Stephen Jones (Eryri) was 3 minutes clear of Steve Jackson (Horwich) and v65, Ben Grant (Harrogate) who were separated by only one second. In the v70s Graham Breeze (Wharfedale) headed John Owen (Barnet & District) and Raymond Brown (Penistone.)

After finishing 2nd, Jasmin Paris is guaranteed a gold after last year's bronze medal; however, a victory at the final race, Seven Sevens in Northern Ireland for Victoria Wilkinson (Bingley) will enable her to share the championship as she did in 2014. In the v40s Mel Price (Mercia) will need to hold off 2012 women's champion Lauren Jeska (Eryri) to better her 2014 runner-up position; Mel and Lauren are also contesting the minor medal positions in the open category with Sharon Taylor (Helm Hill) whilst three Ambleside team mates, Astrid Gibbs, Hazel Robinson and Lou Roberts, are fighting for the bronze medal with Shona Robertson (Shettleston) in the v40s. The v50 champion will be Julie Carter (Keswick) or Elizabeth Batt (Dark Peak) with Wendy Dodds (Clayton Le Moors) and Sally Newman (Calder Valley) also contesting the minor medals. Nichola Jackson (Preston) has retained the u23 title; Bronwen Jenkinson (Eryri) will take the silver medal and the likely bronze medalist is Sophie Horrocks (Rossendale).

For the third year in a row, Ambleside are British champions in both the open and v40 teams. The rest of the medal positions will be decided at the last race; 2nd and 3rd places are currently held by Eryri and Keswick in the open teams and Helm Hill and Clayton Le Moors in the v40s.

Finlay Wild's 2nd place secured the 2015 British Championship for Lochaber ahead of reigning champion Rob Hope (Pudsey & Bramley) who has retained the v40 title. Despite finishing 16th at Lingmell, Matthew Roberts (Calder Valley) still holds 3rd place overall in the open championship. The destination of the bronze medal will be determined at the final race, as will 2nd place in the v40 championship which is currently held by Gavin Mulholland (Calder Valley) and 3rd place held jointly by Kieren Hodgson (Helm Hill) and Mark Palmer (Mynydd Du) who sealed the v50 gold medal at Lingmell following victories at Y Moelwyn and Durisdeer. David Taylor (Dark Peak) is runner-up in the v50s but any of the runners currently in 3rd, 4th and 5th, Paul Cornforth (Borrowdale), Richard Houghton (Pennine) and Joe Blackett (Dark Peak) can take the bronze medal in the last race. Stephen Jones is v60 champion after three straight victories and as with the v50s, there are three men contesting the other two medals, Steve Jackson (Horwich), Tom McGaff (Cheshire Hill Racers) and Ben Grant (Harrogate). Tom Saville is the u23 gold medal favourite following his 2nd place at Lingmell with James Waldie (Carnethy) and Tommy Horton (Ambleside) currently in the minor medal positions.

In the British Championship, Dark Peak had a clean sweep in the men's teams: in the open teams, they were well clear of Pudsey & Bramley and Calder Valley but Calder Valley were pipped by only 2 points in the v40s, with Borrowdale in 3rd. Bowland and Pennine were 2nd and 3rd in the v50 teams. Reigning champions Dark Peak's victory in the v50s confirmed them as champions again with Pennine in pole position for 2nd place but Calder Valley still lead them in the open and v40 teams and the winners will be decided by the final race in Northern Ireland. Borrowdale's third place in the v40s secured the bronze medals whilst Carnethy are contesting 3rd place in the open category with Pudsey & Bramley and with Cheshire Hill Racers in the v50s.

Victoria Wilkinson (Bingley) confirmed her 3rd successive English championship by taking maximum points at Lingmell. Mel Price (Mercia) and Sharon Taylor (Helm Hill) are equal 2nd but Caitlin Rice (Glossopdale) is only 3 points in arrears and can still get into the medals. Mel Price and v45 Judith Jepson (Dark Park), who were 2nd & 3rd v40s in 2014, have

moved up to gold and silver in 2015; Hazel Robinson (Ambleside) is currently in 3rd place but v45 Nicky Spinks (Dark Park) and v50 Sally Newman (Calder Valley) are only 3 points adrift. Judith Jepson is unbeaten in the v45s, claiming her 5th consecutive English title; the other medals will go to Sally Newman and Nicky Spinks who are separated by only one point. 2012 champion Sally Newman has regained the v50 title with maximum points; reigning champion, Julie Carter (Keswick) will have to settle for silver this year whilst last year's bronze medalist, Rowena Browne (Bowland) is in 3rd place but can be overtaken by v60s Wendy Dodds (Clayton Le Moors) and Pat Goodall (Totley). Wendy Dodds and Pat Goodall are contesting the gold medal in both the v55 and v60 categories; the final medalist in the v55s will come from Julie Gardner (Macclesfield), Becky Weight (Bingley) or v60s Ann-Marie Jones (Altrincham) and Sue Haslam (Scarborough). Eight runners can still win medals in the v60s; Wendy Dodds and Pat Goodall currently share the lead but they are only one point ahead of reigning champion Ann-Marie Jones and three points clear of Lesley Malarkey (Keswick) who will be v65 champion although Lou Lyness (Black Combe) can still take a share of the title with a win in the final race; last year's bronze medalist, Beryl Buckley (Glossopdale) is currently in 3rd place, two points ahead of 2014 champion, Linda Lord (Clayton Le Moors). In the u23s, 2014 runner-up Nichola Jackson (Preston), and already confirmed as 2015 British champion, is facing a challenge for the gold medal from Sophie Horrocks (Rossendale) who is only 6 points in arrears.

Ambleside have retained the English women's open team championship that they won in 2013 and 2014; the other medals will be confirmed at Guisborough with Mercia leading Dark Peak and Calder Valley by 3 points. In the v40 teams, Ambleside can overhaul current leaders and champions for the last 3 years, Dark Peak, with a victory in the final race; Calder Valley and Helm Hill are in contention for 3rd place

With victory at Lingmell, Simon Bailey (Mercia) was crowned English champion for an incredible 7th time in the last 12 years. Simon was pushed all the way by Rob Hope who has secured the runner-up slot as well as retaining the British and English v40 titles, both with an unbeaten record. Rob Jebb (Bingley) is currently third in the open and in silver medal position in the v40s but there are a number of runners who can overtake Rob with good performances at the final race at Guisborough, most notably Calder Valley club mates, Gavin Mulholland and Karl Gray who are sharing 3rd place in the v40s. Karl Gray has secured at least a share of the v45 championship but Lloyd Taggart (Manx Fell Runners) can share the title if he scores maximum points in the last race. V50 Mark Roberts (Borrowdale) holds 3rd place in the v45s but as with the other categories, there are a number of contenders for the bronze medal. Mark Roberts, seeking his 4th successive v50 gold medal leads Richard Houghton by 4 points with v55 Mike Johnson (Bowland) in 3rd place but all medals are up for grabs at Guisborough as they could be overtaken by David Taylor (Dark Peak), Stephen Pyke (Dark Peak) and Paul Cornforth (Borrowdale) who have only scored in three races so far. Five years after winning the v45 title, Mike Johnson is v55 champion with maximum points; Tom McGaff (Cheshire Hill Racers) is in a solid 2nd place but can be overtaken by v65 Ben Grant (Harrogate) and v60s Chris Davies (Saddleworth) and Steve Jackson (Horwich) who share 3rd place. However Tom McGaff cannot be overhauled for the gold medal in the v60s; Ben Grant and Steve Jackson share 2nd place, only 2 points ahead of Chris Davies. Ben Grant has retained his v65 title, his 6th English title in the last 7 years; Robert Taylor (Pennine) and Adrian Dixon (FRA) hold 2nd and 3rd places but these positions could change at Guisborough, as could the situation in the v70s where Kieran Carr (Clayton) leads from Graham Breeze

(Wharfedale) and John Armistead (Dark Peak) who share 2nd place. Four u23s are contesting the medals; Tom Saville leads from Lingmell winner Jamie Parkinson (Pudsey & Bramley) with Felix McGrath (Westbury) and Oscar Meanwell (Borrowdale) sharing 3rd place.

English men's team champions in all categories will be determined at the final race; as in the British Championship, Calder Valley have a narrow lead over Dark Peak in the open and v40 teams but in the v50s Dark Peak are being challenged by Bowland. In the open teams Pudsey & Bramley and Helm Hill are battling for 3rd place, reigning v40 champions Borrowdale will have to settle for bronze and in the v50s Pennine are safe in 3rd place.