

DAVID MILTON AN INPIRATION TO US ALL



David Milton - Race No 210

Club member - David Milton (Race Number 210) competed in the 2024 Montane Winter Spine Race, which he completed. All the competitors wear a tracking device, provided by Open Tracking, which provides a 'Live' GPS Tracking Service, so 'The World' can see how they are all getting along. Below is a link of Dave's 'taster' session in 2023, which you may find of interest:

Click [HERE](#) for Dave's account of his 108 miles Challenger South race in January 2023 - Edale to Hawes.

THE WINTER SPINE RACE:



Gregs Hut - A 2023 competitor who had come Over Cross Fell, at night, in a blizzard

The Montane Winter Spine Race is a very big undertaking, as an 'Ultra Running' event along the full length of The Pennine Way (268 miles). This race is the brutalist and toughest race in the UK, attracting competitors from all over the world. There are other much shorter races happening at the same time on various parts of The Pennine Way. A lot of money is raised for numerous charities and good causes by many of the competitors being sponsored. The Spine Race organisers gave £10,000 towards the £100K refurbishment of Gregs Hut, on Cross Fell, last year.

The full Winter Spine Race started at 8am on Sunday 14th January at Edale and finished at 8am on Sunday 21st January in Scotland at Kirk Yetholm (7 days). The 'clock' never stopped for the total 168 hours, so the strategy plays a big part of the race - When to eat, when to sleep, when to rest and what sections of the route to be run at night? Also the weather plays a very big part?

During the 2023 Spine race the wind chill was recorded as -26°C on Cross Fell (893 mtrs / 2,930 ft) the highest hill on the Pennine Way. However, the conditions on Cross Fell, and anywhere else on The Pennine Way, can change rapidly?

YOUTUBE VIDEOS OF THE MONTANE SPINE RACES:
(These show the pain, the drama and the sheer guts of the runners)

* Shows an interview with David Milton (210)

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 1

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 2

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 3

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 4

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 5

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 6

* Click [HERE](#) for Episode 7 *

Click [HERE](#) for Episode 8

FIVE PHOTOS DEPICTING THE REALITY AND BRUTALITY OF THE RACE
(Photography courtesy of www.andrewhendry.com)



Outside St Margaret's Church at Hawes



John Bamber head of the safety team at Gregs Hut on Cross Fell



[Check Point 5 - Alston Hostel](#)



[Taking refuge in St Francis Church at Byrness](#)



[The last push over The Cheviot Hills on a very snowy night](#)

THE STORY OF DAVE'S HEROIC RACE:



COWLING

Monday Morning (Day 2)



MALHAM

Monday Afternoon (Day 2)

'CLICK' the above photo to see Trudie's interview with Dave at Malham



GREGS HUT (Cross Fell)

Thursday Morning (Day 5)

'OFFICIAL' WINTER SPINE RACE PHOTOS AT THE FINISH

(Thank you to Montane for the use of their photos)



Dave cuts a lonely figure,
as he heads into Kirk Yetholm



Dave crosses the finishing line
to a heroes welcome



What a man, what an achievement
A Super Hero, A Legend



The 'true' finish at 'The Wall'
The Border Hotel



The hard fought medal,
showing his sheer guts and tenacity



Dave's messages of encouragement
from around the world

Record Winning Time by Jack Scott - 72 hrs, 55 mins, 5 secs
Beating the record by 10 hrs, 17 mins, 18 secs

The 'Real Winners' Time (Dave Milton) - 166 hrs, 21 mins, 48 secs

TOTAL DISTANCE - 268 Miles
MAXIMUM TIME - 168 Hours
APPROXIMATE DAYLIGHT HOURS - 8 Hours
NUMBER OF STARTERS - 164
NUMBER OF FINISHERS - 92

Dave, what a man, what a super hero, what a legend for entering the race in the first place and competing, never mind finishing the race. We are all so proud and admire his achievement at Hill and Mountain Walking Club. However, we suggest that he take his one week's holiday in The Mediterranean, not The Pennines, next year – We've no nails left?

Dave was never going to win the race or even come close, so his strategy was to get as much sleep and rest as possible, to complete the race and he timed it to perfection.

Dave started at Edale in 99th position, but was soon dropping back down the field and at one time was 122th. However, he steadily climbed back up the field as runners dropped out and he also did quicker times than some others, between check points. 'Dot 210', Dave's dot, made steady progress and many were willing his dot on. There were some friends and club members cheering him on at various parts along the course, but any support whatsoever or even walking with a competitor means disqualification if caught?

Dave had some long walking days and nights, without much rest or sleep - Hebden to Hawes was about 28 hours, without many stops! After a 5 hour stop at Hawes he set off again in a raging blizzard, which hadn't improved by Great Shunner Fell (716 mtrs), so he was ploughing through waist high snow.

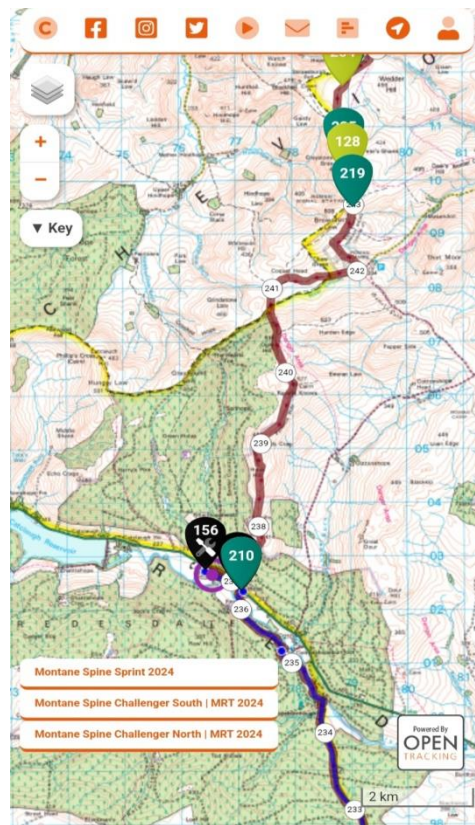
The weather from the start was very cold, with estimated wind chill between -10°C and -18°C. The snow and ice had turned the paths from the usual bogs to very hard, which gave some competitors shin splints and falls.

Dave left Dufton at 3-15am for the Cross Fell (893 mtrs) ridge. Fortunately, it was a cold dry night, apart from a little mist on the summit. However, there was snow and ice underfoot, which was lethal. He arrived at Greg's Hut looking very fit and focused, but sleep deprivation showed clearly on his face. A short stop for a cuppa and a bowl of Chilliwhack Noodles, made by the infamous John Bamber, who had been head of the safety team at the hut for the past 12 years. John and his team stayed 5 nights at Greg's Hut tending to the competitor's every needs.

Disaster nearly struck on Hadrian's Wall, when Dave had an impromptu bivvy, due to tiredness, and woke up with a stiff neck, which he endured to the end - Lesser men would have given up at this point.

As Dave arrived at Byrness for a rest, Storm Isha was blowing in. The 'dot watchers' held their breath. It was like being at The Colombes Stadium, in Paris waiting for the England football team to emerge for the second half (Film - Escape to Victory). Would Dave appear or would he retire? The last leg of the race was 26 miles across the wilderness of The Cheviot Hills, albeit with huts 1 and 2, manned with safety teams in both. The weather was horrendous, torrential rain and mist, with wind gusts of over 70 mph. The midnight deadline arrived, but no sign of 'Dot 210'?

Eventually Dave emerged from the check point, to a sigh of relief from around the world. However, Dave was in last place and over 5 miles, behind the 2nd last competitor. Was Dave alone, probably not and unbeknown to Dave, I suspect the safety teams shadowed him across The Cheviots, to make sure he didn't succumb to the awful weather.



['Dot 210' emerging from Byrness](#)

On The Cheviots, on two separate nights two competitors succumbed to the cold and were utterly exhausted, so had to retire from the race. One needed the services of The Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team.

Most 'dot watchers, left Dave battling across The Cheviots about midnight, to resume about 6am to see Dave's last steps into Kirk Yetholm and a hero's welcome. He was in a lot of pain from his stiff neck and sore feet. Dave had battled the brutalist of weather over nearly 7 days and 7 nights and to many the last runners are the real 'winners'.



['Dot 210' approaching the finish](#)

In the closing hours of the race and since it ended, Dave has had many messages (530 in total) left on the 'Spine' message board, many from strangers - 3 messages are below:

* "Hundreds of us strangers, yet friends, all watching your dot and willing you on."

Coxy, Somerset 21 Jan 24 01:35

* "Watching from Brisbane, your so close to the finish, inspirational watching your progress."

John Appleby 21 Jan 24 05:41

* "Who'd have thought that watching a total stranger would be enough of a draw that I'd set an alarm for 05:30 on a Sunday. And it's absolutely worth it! Well done."

Julio 21 Jan 24 05:47

There have also been many messages left and 'likes' on many Facebook pages, such as the Montane Spine Race, TGO Challenge, Hill and Mountain Walking Club to name, but a few.

What a man, what a race. **PHEW?**