



# Al Andalus Ultra Trail

230km - 5 days - July 12th to 16th

Poniente Granadino, Andalucía, Spain

A team of four Ripon Runners flew out to Southern Spain to take part in the Al Andalus Ultra Trail. A semi-supported run of 230km over five days in temperatures of between 35-45C. The course proved to be very demanding and numerous tough climbs. 90% was off-road mountain and desert tracks.

The team consisted of Bill Foreman, Nick Wilson, Paul Morgan and Ray Raper accompanied by Lynda Wilson and Iain Wallace, who had volunteered to help on check-points during the course of the race.

The field of competitors turned out to consist of some world class runners, including the Moroccan World Champion Ultra Distance runner, Lahcen Ahansal (winner of eleven consecutive Marathon des Sables 1999-2009), Joe Symonds (son of Hugh Symonds International fell runner & author) who has represented Great Britain at both Commonwealth & World Mountain and Ultra Distance Running. Other professional international runners also lined up on the start line. Undeterred by the opposition our four lads – now known as “Team Ripon” – lined up amongst them and put up a brilliant performance over the five days. The distance ran each day varied with Day One 37km, Day Two 42km, Day Three 42km, Day Four 61km and Day Five 34km.

“Team Ripon” finished in second place overall, out of ten competing teams, with their cumulative times being five hours ahead of the third placed team. Individual performances were also very credible especially in such a high class field. Nick Wilson 9<sup>th</sup> overall in 22hrs 46min 14sec, Bill Foreman 10<sup>th</sup> in 23hrs 41min 04sec, Ray Raper 16<sup>th</sup> in 25hrs 25min 44sec and Paul Morgan 19<sup>th</sup> in 25hrs 49min 04sec.

It was a great race to be involved in, great runners, great organisers, great medical staff, and a race well worth doing if you get the chance. Surprisingly very few runners needed medical attention, which goes to show how well they were all prepared for the conditions. The grit and determination shown by all the runners was second to none, and the privilege of taking part in a race with such world class runners was an experience not to forget. “Team Ripon” certainly put Ripon Runners and themselves well and truly on the map.



