

# **Race Reports**

## **Races reported recently in the local press**

### **Radcliffe 12**

The Todmorden Harriers' Grand Prix moved on to the Radcliffe 12 mile trail race last Sunday. The event proved popular last year and was therefore included the club's calendar for the second consecutive year, this in itself is a testament to the quality of the race route and efficient administration.

The course route makes its way through the old industrial heartland of the area now landscaped into nature trails and riverside walks before finishing on the old Bury canal

Despite snow in the Calder Valley on race day the nineteen travelling harriers were greeted with crisp sunshine when arriving in north Manchester for the start of the race. Although despite these ideal conditions the ground remained very heavy and slippery due to recent rain, causing more than one harrier to 'come a cropper' in the mud.

The race was won in record time by Michael Aspinnall of Lancaster and Morecombe AC. Andrew Horsfall led the local club home making a rare foray from the fells to finish in ninth position and first veteran 40. Other notable performances came from Derek Clutterbuck who scooped the veteran 70 prize and a host of Todmorden ladies who seem to be fashioning themselves into a force to be reckoned with, although on this occasion no team prizes were awarded.

### **Roddlesworth Roller**

There was another bumper turnout for the third race in the 2005 Todmorden Harriers Grand Prix last Sunday. The Roddlesworth Roller is a six-mile trail event run from Abbey village, near Chorley. Its' an aptly named course, continually rising and falling as it rolls along woodland trails, stone tracks and minor roads.

The wind which often whistles around the course dropped slightly this year making for perfect early spring running conditions and allowing fast times. This year's winner, Neil Tattersall of Pendle AC shattered the course record by over a minute to finish in 29.54, nearly three minutes ahead of his nearest challenger.

First Harrier home was Sean Willis, finishing in seventh place with a time of 33.51 despite turning an ankle on a slippery woodland descent. He was followed by Paul Prescott who clocked 35.35 on his return from a lengthy spell sidelined due to injury. Last years Club Champion, Paul Brannigan was third local man home in 36.23.

Todmorden Ladies enjoyed another successful day with Melanie Blackhurst (86<sup>th</sup>) , Sarah Glyde (88<sup>th</sup>) and Rachel Skinner (94<sup>th</sup>) making up the fastest ladies team. Melanie Blackhurst also scooping the ladies V35 prize.

### **Fiensdale**

Last Saturday, 23 Todmorden Harriers made their way to the Trough of Bowland for the Fiensdale fell race which had been selected as part of the club's Grand Prix championship. The race was also a counter for the English Fell Running Championships, so the travelling locals were competing with the cream of fell running over the 9 mile course which took in 2600 ft of climbing.

The race is noted for its emphasis on the competitors' ability to choose the correct route and to navigate around the remote checkpoints, in past years simple navigational errors have cost many front runners dearly. This year proved no exception as several fancied runners became confused by the difficult terrain and lost vital minutes getting themselves back on the right track after errors.

This year the large field of 400 runners taking part also proved to be a factor with some runners failing to get off to a good start and finding themselves unable to overtake other runners on the narrow moorland tracks.

The men's race was won in fine style by reigning national champion Simon Bailey of Staffs Moorlands AC in a time of 1:15:48, almost three minutes ahead of his nearest challenger, Rob Hope of Pudsey and Bramley AC.

Sally Newman of Calder Valley Fell Runners won the women's race in a time of 1:34:54, finishing 101<sup>st</sup> overall and establishing her claim to be many people's favourite to take the ladies' national title this year.

Todmorden Harriers were led home by Andrew Wrench (32<sup>nd</sup>) in a time of 1:25:11 with Chris Smale and Jon Wright hot on his heels in 41<sup>st</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> positions respectively. First Todmorden lady over the line was Jane Smith in 291<sup>st</sup> position overall. Moyra Parfitt scooped the first prize of first in her FV60 category.