

CALDERDALE WAY RELAY – (A) TEAM REPORT

Another fine performance from the team who were in the mix with some top teams all the way round the 50 mile route. The superb weather was ideal for running and also spectating.

Andrew and Chris led the team away going from Copley to Cragg Vale, the early start didn't affect them and they came home in an impressive fourth place, just in front of a lone runner from Keighley. Shaun and Mark set off up the road to Withens Reservoir with a number of very fast teams just behind them so consequently they dropped a couple of places but they caught Calder Valley on the way down to Centre Vale where apparently their shouting to each other could be heard for some considerable distance.

Simon and Jeff completed the third leg up to Blackshaw Head, another good effort especially since the first Jeff knew he was running was when I called him that morning! Martin was stuck damping down a fire at the Bombay Mix factory in Bradford and couldn't get away. Jon and Alex powered their way to Wainstalls and had the fourth fastest time of the day for that leg, they couldn't quite catch Keighley who took a big short cut (ignoring Jon shouting out the correct route!) near Pecket Well.

Branny and me went well on the way to Shelf, we had Keighley in our sights but couldn't make any inroads. I have done this leg many times and well remember having a battle royal with Branny and Mark Anderton ten years ago, just before I joined Tod. and the one and only time I ran for Bingley A in the Calderdale (I usually ran in their D or E team!). Think this is the fastest I have ever done this leg so well pleased. Sean and Nick took over and comfortably kept the seventh position over the long leg to the finish – not like last year when Paul and Nick clung on to third with Horwich and Bingley closing fast. Nick was happy that the time for the leg was quicker than last year and was nearly as tired as Alex a couple of years ago when Simon had to just about carry him over the finish line.

Overall we were 5 minutes faster than last year – it could well be the quickest ever for Tod. A great day out and in my book the best event in the fell running calendar.

Dave C.

CALDERDALE RELAY A NOVICES REPORT

So there I was, completely off guard, ordering my second beer of the week in the Swan after a Wednesday night run. I was invited to run leg 3 of the Calderdale Relay with Dave O'Neill for the All Stars.

Not having my excuses book immediately to hand I had to break with a 22 year old tradition and accept the invitation to partake in the one type of event I really abhor, relays are by their nature "team" events.

Having finished my second beer of the week I walked home full of mixed feelings. Why had they asked me? Obviously hard up for runners in the All Stars team, or was it something more sinister? Perhaps Leg 3 is the Bogey Leg of the whole relay, every body else is in the know but the "New Boy". Perhaps I am being far too suspicious, it might be that it is the easiest leg and they really are being "nice" to me, an easy introduction into such events. Anyway time will tell as I said yes and my word is more often than not my bond.

Those who profess to know better might question my preparation for the event but running Leg 2 the next weekend with Clare and Gail did me no harm at all. This was followed the next weekend by a recce of Leg 3 with Dave, Jeanette and Laura. Earlier suspicions laid to rest, although there is quite a bit of climbing it is a short, sharp leg compared to Leg 2, what the other four legs are like I don't know but this seems a gentle introduction into this relay event. The next Saturday Dave was unavailable and I ended up running leg 3 on my own. For those who don't know I spent 22 years in the army navigating the world with deadly accuracy and intent, so why on a run from Tod park to Blackshawhead did I get so geographically embarrassed I did about 2 miles extra on a five mile run! This was a lesson I was to learn the very next day with the Sunday "Pathfinders". Never mind, on the day I will have a Dave to follow.

Race day, arrived early to get a parking spot, obviously not as early as the rest, and what a rest, somewhat surprised by the numbers the size of the event I realize that my leg might be short but it only means I have a shorter time to put in my one hundred per cent. Although this is just the (now re-named) Premier team, I have a sneaky idea that everybody in the team will have their own targets and ambitions.

As long as I can finish with Dave I will be able to turn up at the next run without fear of recrimination or horses heads in my bed (I have yet to see that film). I am beginning to focus on the run when someone asks where my Tod Harriers running vest is? Obviously it's in my ironing basket, but as I hadn't yet paid for it seemed somehow only fair to borrow a fully paid up item, thanks Sean.

The mass start, not what I had expected but at least you can judge your performance, to some extent, by those around you. Off we go, why is Dave so much quicker now than on the recce, or is it me, has my abstention from red wine on the eve of this event impeded my efforts. Too late for "what if's" it is time to apply some effort and keep up with Dave. By the end of the first major climb I can still see Dave, I still haven't found my rhythm but as the leg starts to flatten out I should be able to claw some ground back and lessen the gap between us.

We are gaining on a team they take a wrong turn (a shortcut) Dave finds the breath to shout at them and bring them back on course. Some minutes later they take another wrong turn, not a short cut, again Dave shouts but somehow not as loud, they don't hear him, away they go heading for Eastwood tip. As we leave the golf course we get encouragement from Laura and husband, Dave is still in front but I am feeling better, more confident of catching him and thus saving face at the handover. As we start to contour round the hill towards great rock the team captain is waiting to chivvy us along as he directs the traffic (who said men cant multi-task?).

Once we hit the tarmac it is now or never, I have to get in front of Dave before the next hill so he doesn't leave me too far behind on the run into Blackshawhead. The stretch of downhill has allowed me to get my rhythm and I am away, not that anyone else would notice but the gap is stretching, the pressure is off and i start to enjoy the run. At the top of Davey Lane there is more encouragement, Dave finds another gear and the pressure is back on, it's not far to the finish though so it's a brave face and a last effort. We hand over to the next leg and the job is done.

After a bit of mutual congratulation between the other Tod Harrier teams it is of home to wash my kit (and Sean's) and reflect on the day's endeavors. The pressures of being part of a team can be both a burden and stimulation. I find it both, which will win out I know, I will hopefully be fitter and faster by next year and look forward to the challenge.

Stuart Boulton

ARE YOU A CLOSET NUTTER ?

One Nutter, fresh from speaking to two Nutters in the Yorkshire Dales, speaks to another Nutter in the Todmorden Harriers. This Nutter (now the forth one) speaks to a further Toddy Nutter (are you following this ?). After a few beers the forth Nutter and fifth Nutter persuade themselves to do what all Nutters do. They must have been so convincing that a further two Toddy Nutters decide to join in.

Do we have a recent Nutter problem within the club ? - I think so.

Hence a little test for you ALL out there. See whether you, or rather Toddies, have a problem. Be honest with yourself and go to <http://www.ultratrailmb.com/accueil.php> and see what happens. If you find yourself interested, even in the pictures, stop and seek good medical advice. Do not take a cold shower – this could make it worse. Instead take a hot bath and pretend that you're on a Caribbean beach getting a sun tan.

DO NOT find yourself drawn into thinking that you too could complete the Tour Du Mont Blanc, you know the highest mountain in Europe. Comprising of tackling a 100 mile circular route around Mont Blanc, during which you pass through 3 countries. There is a cut-off time of 44 hours, but DO NOT think you are going to try to finish comfortably within 40 hours.

DO NOT ignore that fact that you have to climb, and descend, the equivalent of Everest from sea level (some 28,800 feet), of which half of it is done in the dark. DO NOT think that the numerous food/drink stations are going to help, and that this time the weather is going to be good.

And please, as it's in August 2006, DO NOT think that you've got plenty of time to train.

I fear it's too late for me. I've applied, and I've even had a doctor certify me.

If you feel, or know, you are a Nutter, and would like to spend time with other Nutters doing what Nutters do, then contact me, or use your skills to home in on a fellow Toddy Nutter – there's clearly plenty of them out there.

My name is Rhys, and I AM A NUTTER.