

Toddies 2006 Review – which was your fave race?

You are packed into the Town Hall Square, Chamonix with 2000 other runners and with 5 minutes to go you can feel the anticipation, the nerves, the excitement. Then you're off and running through the evening, through the night, looking back from a col and seeing a line of hundreds of headtorches following, through several alpine villages where everyone has turned out to support 'Les trailers'. Through the next day and night, hallucinating, until 44 hours later you are running into Chamonix with crowds of people shouting "Courage, Bravo, Fantastique"....and it was.

Richard Leonard

Runner alive this was a Hot one, I ran this as a get me back into medium races running. So while the wiflet and our children sweltered on the 'Junior' runs all of us on the five punishing uphill north east of wardle did, many a dip in stream to cool the body, or submerge the head to cool and shudder was made, especially by me.

The water stops were fabulous manned by amiable sunbathing Mountain rescuers. Finishing was such a relief and Driving Dave Cummings Volksey camper van up to shore, after calming Henry and Jess down, topped a fabulous sunny day out... but that's a story for a fifth sentence...

Ben Crowther

My favourite race of 2006 was the Anniversary Waltz on 22 April. It was my first Lakes race (we'll forget Duddon 2005) and the atmosphere of the whole day was brilliant, no doubt helped by the 580 or so finishers, which I believe is a record for a fell race in the UK. A proper recce of the route 10 days before meant that I knew the summit of Robinson was just under half way and that it was all down hill from Catbells. It was just a great day out, and it got me out of going to the Trafford Centre!!

James Riley

Forget your Full Yorkshires or Peak Bogtrots or even your Lakeland Classics. The Full Tour of Pendle is a proper full-on Lancashire race, the Lancashire Classic in fact. A connoisseur's race with killer climbs, shoe sucking bogs, fast paths, kamikaze descents and yet more killer climbs. The 17 mile route forces you to ascend the Arctic plateau of Pendle Hill no less than six times, each climb getting steeper and steeper until you finally scramble up the aptly named Big End. It usually snows or hails. It's inevitably windy and cold. It's often claggy. It's always tough. What a great way to end the fell running season!

Phil Hodgson

My memories of the Tour of Pendle include: a rainbow at checkpoint 8, chatting with other novice long fell race runners, a dog running alongside me with a frisbee wanting me to throw it, the godforsaken hail storm, not feeling like I'd run 17 miles until I'd stopped running and tried to take off my walshes. This was my favourite race because these moments stick in my mind more than any other race.

Alice Heath

The Good Shepherd 15 mile Fell Race was not a good race to choose to re-start racing again, but I had volunteered to help with car parking, so why not run it? Well there is the long drag up to the Pike from Crag road, then the circle over rough heather and around the drain and down to London road, then the deja vu of climbing up the Pike again, then down to road again. Then a horrendous ascent up the 'other side' of Crag Vale road, and an interminable flat finish along the railway back to the Good Shepherd car park.

Yes, a real favourite, I'll be back next year!

Lee McCluskey

Blackshaw Head Fell Race

Not for the storm which blew away all but the beer tent in the fete field...

Not because of the great atmosphere with 100+ folk and a great band in said tent amid the carnage...

Not because Ben and I beat the bloke in the black top who cheated and cut the corner...

But because it's the only race where I have ever won a prize: and it was a box of chocs from Jane's cellar of which I was very proud - even though they were past the sell by date and had gone white!

See you there next year.

Roger Haworth

My favourite race for 2006 has to be the Anniversary waltz, it was my first race covering the most distance and accent (did not enjoy coming off Catbells though)

It was a great atmosphere as it was an English/British championship, I hope to do it again possibly next year

Sharon Godsman

Few races to choose from this year because of various injuries, so an apprehensive outing to the Paula Locketti race in the Road/Trail calendar turned out to be an unexpected delight. A lovely run on grass to the top of Brown Wardle, great fell running conditions and a personally satisfying downhill where I managed to pass a couple of runners. (No kidding - though it has been back to normal in subsequent descents). A very enjoyable race - this should be a permanent fixture in our Grand Prix Road calendar.

Dave O'Neill

For me it has to be Ironman France. Not strictly a fell race but it was a great event to be part of. Different to anything else I've ever done. I achieved what I wanted (finishing!!!) and, in retrospect, enjoyed every minute.

Simon Galloway

Manx Mountain marathon. Feeling fantastic racing off Snaefell. Getting cramp up South Barrule...straight back down to earth. Finishing in a carnival atmosphere after a full day on the fells and a great week's holiday. Constant reminder for the next fortnight as the skin on my legs, arms and face all peeled off.

Mark Harris

Coniston. My first proper outing on the fells for over a year. Came nearly last but felt so great to be 'back out there!' Staggered into the field to be greeted by the toddies cheers. Breastfed Jamie almost as soon as I finished - to which Jane Smith said "He's probably having butter".

Ali Richards

Coiners Fell Race

A local race of a perfect length for me. A good hard slog uphill and then loads of moor/field downhill with great views across this area that I love so much. Perfect finish - a long grassy field to sprint down. And a slate coaster to take home.

Peter Bowles

Herod's Farm Race. So - it's four weeks after my left eye's been lasered for retinal detachment, and three weeks after my birthday, and here I am in Glossop, and I push myself and dig in all the way up the hill (till we finally reach the grass and I start to walk like everybody else) and I get up and over the first hill, and then along a bit of track, and then we go past the old folks' home (and is this an omen) and then back up another hill and I manage to pass a few on the downhill

and then back to the track and I scamper down to the finish. And the second v60 is only 3 seconds behind. And the third v60 is ten seconds behind him. Anyway, it's the first time I've ever won a prize. So I'm all emotional & I think this race should feature in the Grand Prix. And two days later I have my right eye lasered for retinal detachment too.

Peter Ehrhardt

There is something about evening races, which makes them extra special - a midweek bonus!

The sun was dropping onto the horizon giving the moors a reddish glow and the temperature had dropped after a scorching May day. Loads of runners had turned up, lots of friendly folks to chat to. The course is great, lots of variety zig zagging over Ikley moor through tussocks and along grassy tracks with a roller coaster finish....the Jack Bloor race..put it in your diary!

Sue Roberts

Tebay fell race in mid June, another evening race, gets my vote, possibly because it's one of the lesser known routes in a quieter region [northern Howgills]. Friendly village atmosphere, good facilities [warm showers]. Beer tokens-food. Top event.

Martin Roberts

Difficult choice: I'm tempted to say the Good Shepherd, which I enjoyed as much this year as last (and, small field though it was, it's a rare pleasure to win the age group prize). But I'm opting for a trail race (veering towards a crypto-fell race) up and down the cliffs of Dorset called the Beast, which I've now run for four consecutive years, and each year bettered my time. Lovely claggy sea-mist this time meant road runners got anxious and I finished in the top quarter. Lousy t-shirt, though.

Andrew Bibby

Hades Hill

- 1) My only race (apart from Blackshawhead fell race)
- 2) Great to be running again!
- 3) Prizegiving in the local!
- 4) Defying death as faster runners pass slower runners on a twisty turny sheep rut.

Greg Elwell

BLUEBELL 10.

I have run this race the last 3 years and just love the variety. The start is through a bluebell wood, then canal, steep road climb, muddy descent (great for whooping past road runners!!) and more flat and fast along the canal to finish. The highlight is always the river crossing (at least over your knees!) at the end! This year round every corner there was another Tod vest to chase but still a great race!

Mel Blackhurst

My favourite race was the Stanbury Splash, first race at V50 finished 50th, in the prizes, and more importantly Roberts, Walker and Wigmore in my wake. After that we have had getting lost at Reservoir Bogs, DNF at Holme Moss, A and E after Turnslack, late at Shepherds and very late at Runners v Cyclists!

Dave Collins

I competed in six fell races this year and lack of fitness made them a bit of an ordeal. I had such a miserable time in the Carnival Race that I was determined to race again that week or I'd hang up my fell shoes for good, so on the Tuesday night I headed over to Rossendale for the Waugh's Well Fell Race. Luckily it coincided with a brief respite from the stifling heatwave and conditions turned out to be perfect, dry underfoot with a cool breeze. The course is short and fast (4 miles with 1250' ascent) and as I embarked on the stiff pull up to the plateau, I realised I felt pretty good for once and the friendly banter from the surrounding runners took my mind off the climbing, not to mention the poor guy wheezing "Oh shit I forgot my inhaler". A flat section followed then a fast descent to Waugh's Well and the reservoir. The second climb was shortlived and the pace of the pack

quicken as we rejoined the route at the highest point on the race. The final descent is a belter, it felt the fastest I'd ever run as gravity pretty much gets you to the finish line. There is also a good opportunity to practise your sprint finish on the short section of tarmac at the end and most runners seemed to hang around to cheer on those further down the field, before heading back to Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary for lots of tea and cake and the prizegiving. It's perhaps the most enjoyable short fell race I've done, so next year why not give it a go?

Helen Hodgkinson

My favourite race of 2006 was a race I did not even finish, the Duddon Valley. Despite injuring myself just before the Three Shires Stone and retiring it was a fantastic day out in the Lakes. The highlight was crossing the very swollen beck in Mosedale, then climbing up out of the valley and hearing the laughs of runners behind us equally surprised at its depth. My target for 2007 is to recce this race and then complete it.

Derek Donohue

Hot

Toddy

By finishing in the top half of the "Hot Toddy" I knew I must be getting quicker although not sure I should have overtaken Mel Blackhurst outside Lidl. Mel avoided eye contact with me for 3 months until she thrashed me in the Oldham half marathon! Also I nearly didn't run because of the icy roads and rang Jane Smith wondering whether it would be cancelled. Jane told me the race would be on and not to worry about it as there'd be loads of people in front of me anyway!

Jeff Anderson

Which race? All of them, none of them. I love the atmosphere, seeing friends, the views of all the races I do, and of course the post race pub banter.

Chris Preston

The Screes Fell race. Small field of runners. I good climb up. Challenging but runnable descent. Excellent local lamb dinner in pub after included in entry. Excellent pub in quiet part of Lakes.

Kath Brierley

Jura: The track, the swamp, the heather, tussocks, lochs and rolling acres. Then the Big Paps with the big boulders – ethereal and inspiring. Then Corra Bheinn with the Lucozade that only I enjoy. Then tear arsing down to 3 Arch Bridge. Then – oh *****, three miles of road.

Jane Smith

High Peak Marathon. This is a 42 mile race that starts at 11pm. Running together throughout the night a team of four is great as you get to know each other well! The scenery is fantastic, and if you're lucky you might see arctic hares hopping around! It's a real challenge but well worth it. And we won it!

Rachel Skinner

Stanbury Splash. Tussling for position all the way with Dave, Martin and Nick. Stuffing Nick on the final hill. But losing to Blue Hayward.

Jeff Walker

It has to be the OMM. On day one, finding the checkpoints in the mist. Getting the timing spot on on both days. Discovering at overnight camp that we were actually doing very well. Enjoying the craic. On day two feeling very strong. Winning the ladies team prize and yes beating Phil & Dave. The victory is still very sweet.

Mandy Goth