

Press report: Ennerdale Horseshoe Fell Race

A tough test awaited the Todmorden Harriers who journeyed to the remote north west of the Lake District to compete in the 23 mile Ennerdale Horseshoe Fell Race. The race, chosen as the 4th counter in this year's English Championships has a reputation as one of the toughest events in the calendar and a race for the purist fellsman.

The route climbs 7500 feet throughout it's length and travels through some of the most picturesque, if wild, country in England. Along the way it visits such imposing peaks as High Stile, Haystacks, Green Gable, and Pillar.

Although never a race for novices, this year the oppressive heat and extreme winds on the high fells combined in a 'double whammy' effect to pose a serious challenge even the most experienced mountain athletes. Indeed one athlete who completed the course summed up the 'Ennerdale Experience' in two words as 'Painful and thirsty', sentiments no doubt echoed by the inevitably large number of competitors who were forced to retire before finishing, suffering from dehydration and exhaustion.

The race was won by Simon Booth of Borrowdale in a time of 3:37, some 25 minutes outside the twenty year old course record, which was set by one of fell running's all time greats, Kenny Stuart. Second man home this year was Bingley Harrier Rob Jebb, whilst the ladies race was won by Christine Howard, of Matlock AC in a time of 4:20.

Todmorden Harriers were determined to continue to challenge the sports established elite clubs, ranked as fourth in the country before the race, the local team knew that it was important to score points in this race which was normally dominated by the Lakeland clubs. In the event, the local club did not disappoint, sending a strong team who collectively finished in 7th place, first home being Andrew Horsfall who ran strongly to finish in 46th position, five places ahead of team mate Jon Wright. These two were backed up by Shaun Godsman, Andrew Wrench, and Mark Goldie who made up Tod's 'counters' in the men's team competition. First Todmorden lady home was Lakeland specialist Kath Brierley in a time of 6:06 followed 15mins later by club mate and race veteran Jane Smith.

Press report: Hendon Brook

The latest round of the Todmorden Harriers Road Championship took the competitors to Nelson to compete in the Hendon Brook 13.5 miles road race.

This race is known as 'The Hot One' due to searing temperatures in previous years, although this year 'The Wet One' would have been a more appropriate label as the near constant rain drenched runners and race officials alike. The damp conditions seemed to suit race winner Brent Hoggan of Accrington, who dominated proceedings finishing in a time of 1.25.10, over two minutes ahead of his nearest challenger.

This race was last chosen as a Harriers championship race in 2003, on that occasion Keith Parkinson romped home as first Tod runner to finish. Three years on, Parkinson proved that nothing really changes by again being first Harrier home. This year his time was 1.39.32, a fine time, which gave him 23rd place, some thirteen places ahead of nearest chasing team mate, Paul Brannigan who continues to head back to full fitness after injury. First Tod lady home was Mel Blackhurst who secured 7th place in the ladies race with a time of 1.52.49.