

Recent Press Reports

If you have done great deeds, or little ones, that you'd like in the local paper talk to Colin Duffield 01422 846593 (email claire.colin@virgin.net). And remember...

"The press should be not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organizer of the Harriers"
-Vladimir Lenin (Almost)

Ilkley Moor Fell Race (*Heavily Edited Version Press Date 02/03/07*)

Alex Enjoys Himself on the Fells

Todmorden Harrier Alex Whittem had an excellent run to finish second in the prestigious Ilkley Moor Fell race last Sunday, showing that his persistent back injury is well and truly behind him.

Alex was one of ten Todmorden Harriers who travelled into deepest Yorkshire for the 17th running of the 'Ilkley'. The race is a compact 5 miles long, but the shortness of the route is off set by the arduous climbs as the competitors set off from the outskirts of town and climb onto the famous moor, before dropping down into the Rocky Valley, only to be faced with another sapping climb back up on the high ground. From here it's then a giddy charge down to the finish.

Leeds University student, Joe Symonds led the charge to win the race, in a time of 37.46, with Whittem two minutes adrift but in turn comfortably ahead of third man, Ilkley Harrier's Graham Pearce.

Slightly further back in the field, a Todmorden trio of Nick Wigmore, Mark Goldie, and Martin Roberts were engaged in their own, 'race within a race' crossing the line in 70th, 71st, and 72nd respectively, with less than twenty seconds between them.

There was also local success in the ladies race, with Calder Valley runner Jo Waites first lady in a time of 46.08. First Todmorden lady was another runner returning from the physio's couch, Jane Smith who finished in a time of 58.52, giving her 16th place amongst the women.

Full Todmorden results for Ilkley Moor;

2) Alex Whittem (39.47); 70, Nick Wigmore (48.23); 71, Mark Goldie (48.27); 72, Martin Roberts (48.42); 84, Dave Collins (49.28); 197, Jane Smith (58.52); 231, Jeremy Godden (61.43); 243, Peter Ehrhardt (63.06); 265, Sue Roberts (66.52); 268, Jenny Ehrhardt (68.27).

Noonstone/High Peak Marathon (Press Date 08/03/07)

Harriers Take Noon Stone Title

The fell running world gathered in Lumbutts last weekend as Todmorden Harriers hosted the prestigious Noon Stone Fell Race. The race is a tough 9.5-mile tour of the moors surrounding Stoodley Pike, cramming in 2,300 feet of climbing over some of the harshest terrain in the area. If the distance and intense amount of climbing isn't a tough enough proposition, the route is often without the benefit of tracks or paths, making the ability to choose the optimum route essential.

Conditions were cold but fine as the 200 competitors lined up at the start, with none of the laying snow that often accompanies this race. These ideal conditions and the high quality of the field assembled, including several international runners, led a few to speculate that the long standing course record, held by Todmorden's own Andrew Wrench may be broken after 13 years.

As the starting signal sent the runners on their way, Dark Peak's Lloyd Taggart showed his intentions by snatching the lead on the first steep climb up Heely Hill. Then, as the field spread out along the skyline, Taggart and Pudsey's Nick Leigh opened a gap on the rest of the field that would last the whole race. In the ladies race Janet McIver, also of Dark Peak, was also putting daylight beside herself and her nearest challenger Sally Newman of Calder Valley.

As the race progressed, the sun started to peep through the clouds and after half and hours worth of hard running the competitors started to arrive at the navigational section on Holder Stones Moor, with Taggart and Leigh still leading the way and faultlessly finding their route across the largely trackless terrain. As the field behind them

broke up further, a small chasing pack emerged comprising of the best of the local talent, including Todmorden's Andrew Wrench, Jon Wright, and Alex Whitem, along with Calder Valley men Karl Grey and Ben Mounsey.

At the conclusion of the race Taggart proved too strong and pulled away from Leigh on the last descent back down towards Lumbutts and crossed the line first in a time of 1.09.11, five minutes outside Wrench's record. Leigh followed a minute later followed by first local Karl Grey and first veteran Andrew Wrench. Amongst the women, McIver was never in trouble and finished in a time of 1.18.23, setting a new record for the ladies. Second lady was Sally Newman who also took the prize for first lady veteran 40.

Team prizes went to Todmorden in the men's section and Stainland Lions in the ladies.

After the race organiser Andrew Horsfall thanked the runners who continue to attend year after year, keeping the race in the headlines. He also thanked the landlord and staff of the Top Brink Inn for their excellent hospitality throughout the day and the Langfield Commoners for their assistance in staging the race.

With the bulk of the Harriers either competing or helping to organise at the Noon Stone, a number of Harriers travelled to Derbyshire to compete in the High Peak Marathon. This event is for teams of four people and involves running and navigating approximately 40 miles around the Peak District throughout the night. Tod Harriers fielded two teams, one in the men's section and one in the ladies'. The men's team finished in 17th place overall, but it was the ladies team made up of Kay Leigh, Chris Preston, Mel Blackhurst, and guest Sally Ward, who stole the limelight, scoring a tremendous victory in the women's section for the second successive year.

Wuthering Hike/Half Tour of Pendle (Press Date 15/03/06)

Chris Defends Epic Title

The upper Calder Valley had double reason to celebrate after the Wuthering Hike Fell Race on Saturday. Calder Valley's Adam Breaks was won the solo men's class in a record time of 3.43.24, whilst Todmorden Harriers' Chris Preston was won the solo ladies' class for the second successive year, in the teeth of some class competition.

The race is mammoth 31-mile circuit of the Bronte moorland, setting off from the outskirts of Haworth and visiting Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Heptonstall before returning to Haworth via Crimsworth Dean. The race is a favourite of many local runners who favour longer challenges, and can be relied upon to provide a testing day in the hills for even the most experienced of athletes. This years successes are all the more impressive considering that the race was a counter in the 2007 Montrail UK Ultra Running Championships, which swelled the field to over 300 runners and brought out the cream of the country's long distance enthusiasts.

Other notable Tod performances came from Phil Hodgson who was the first solo competitor in the veteran 50 class in a time of 4.42.39, and Rhys Watkins who took a whopping 30 minutes of his previous best time for the race, stopping the clock at 5.01.16

In the parallel pairs event, which tackles the same course, but with runners taking part as a team, best placed locals were Rob Sharratt of Calder Valley and partner Naomi Sharratt of Stainland Lions, the duo finishing in 5.24.06. The pairs event was won by Andrew Orr and David Norton of Clayton-Le-Moors Harriers in the men's rankings, whilst first ladies were Carnethy's ultra running legend Helene Whitaker, partnered by her Cath Worth.

Other Todmorden Finishes for the Wuthering Hike were:

84, Jeff Walker (5.17.58); 98, Colin Duffield (5.27.00); 109, Andrew Bibby (5.36.54); 128, Richard Leonard (5.49.18); 167, Mandy Goth (6.38.53).

On the same day as the Wuthering Hike, another highly regarded race was taking place, this time over the Lancashire border on Pendle Hill.

The Half Tour of Pendle is a shortened version of November's 'Full Tour' race, visiting much of the same ground as its sister race and cramming a tough 2250 feet into its 9 miles length. The race is ever popular and this year attracted a massive field of 243 entrants.

First amongst the travelling local runners was Todmorden's Shaun Godsman who finished in a very creditable 4th place in a time a 1.09.19, just over three minutes behind winner Lloyd Taggart of Sheffield club, Dark Peak Fell Runners. In the ladies' race Candice Leah of host club Clayton-Le-Moors took the honours, pipping Calder Valley duo Sally Newman and Jo Waites. First Tod lady home was Alice Heath who finished in 14th place, five places and five minutes ahead of clubmate Jane Smith.

Other Todmorden Results for the Half Tour of Pendle were:

96, James Riley (1.27.00); 113, Ben Crowther (1.28.25); 220, John Lee (1.45.46); 239, Derek Clutterbuck (2.02.55).

Edale Skyline (Press Date 22/02/07)

Jon Conquers Conditions but a Quarter Quit Race

This year's English Fell Running Championships got off to a gruelling start last Saturday with the Edale Skyline Fell Race. The race is a classic 21 mile Peak District slog which ascends 4,500 feet and takes in the summits of Win Hill, Loose Hill, and Mam Tor before taking competitors around the edge of the Kinder plateau.

15 Todmorden Harriers made the trip, and were rewarded by battering winds, intermittent snow blizzards, and hailstorms, which at times made the ability to keep going of more benefit than flat out athletic speed. These extreme conditions were sufficient to cause a quarter of the four hundred starters to retire before the finish and one experienced fell runner to describe the race as 'about as tough as it gets'.

Fortunately the race organisers, dark Peak Fell Runners, had put in place rigorous and effective safety measures which included the services of three different mountain rescue teams on different parts of the route ensuring all the competitors got down from the hills safely.

One person unperturbed by the conditions was in form Peak District local Lloyd Taggart who braved the elements to finish in a time of 2.44.29, almost five minutes clear of second man, Simon Bailey of Mercia.

First Todmorden runner home was another competitor unintimidated by the harsh weather, Jon Wright who crossed the line in eleventh place with a time of 3.06.11. He was flowed home by team mates Andrew Wrench (47th), Shaun Godsman (51st). A little later in the field, Mark Goldie (137th), and Phil Hodgson (139th) made up the Harriers team for a collective 7th place, some three team places behind local rivals Calder Valley.

The ladies' race was won by Janet McIver, of Dark Peak, with Eryri's Jackie Lee following in 2nd place. On a day when many clubs failed to get a ladies' team around the course, a strong showing from the Tod women gave them their best team result for a considerable time, finishing in a provisional 5th place. The glory of first female Harrier home going to Ali Richards in 236th place, followed by Alice Heath and Kath Brierley in 264th and 267th places.

Ackworth Half Marathon (Press Date 29/03/07)

Harriers Take to the Tarmac

A team of Todmorden Harriers took to the tarmac last weekend for the Ackworth Half Marathon. The ever popular race is regarded as one of Yorkshire's best races over the distance and always sells out long before the day of the event. Places were further in demand this year as the race decided the Yorkshire Half Marathon championships.

On the day the pick of the Tod runners was again Paul Brannigan who finished in 73rd position amongst the huge field of 600 runners who tackled the undulating course that toured the byways of the countryside around Pontefract.

The race was won in good style by Ian Fisher of Otley AC in one hour and seven minutes, with first lady Lisa Mawer of Bingley Harriers following in one hour and twenty minutes, edging Halifax's Jo Buckley into second place.

Other notable Harriers performances came from Andy McFie who pushed Brannigan all the way for the first Todmorden finisher, finally coming home just 20 seconds behind his club mate. Greg Elwell made up the Harriers' team, crossing the line in one hour and twenty nine minutes, and in the process landing the club a creditable 15th place in the team rankings.

Alice Heath was also in attendance to make sure that the Tod presence wasn't an exclusively male one, finishing in a time of one hour and forty five.