

Recent Press Reports

If you have a race exploit that you'd like reported in the local press talk to Colin Duffield 01422 846593 (email claire.colin@virgin.net).

Go on, blow your own trumpet! You know you've always secretly wanted to.

BTW, No, I don't do the headlines.

Press reports usually appear in the *Todmorden News*, so if you're foolish enough to buy a HB Times and then find yourself reading an inferior race report, you've only got yourself to blame.

Stanbury Splash / White Holme Circular (Press Date 01/02/07)

Goldie Makes Early Mark on Club Championship

Todmorden Harriers 2007 fell championship got off to a wet start last weekend when 28 Harriers made the short trip to Penistone Hill, Oxenhope for the 'Stanbury Splash' race. The race, run over a fast 7 miles with 1500 feet of ascent always attracts big fields and this year was no exception, with 230 runners lining up on the starting line, before embarking on a route which toured the rough tracks and moorland paths around Haworth moor, incorporating three river crossings on the way. This year cold, squally rain emphasised the somewhat aquatic feel of the event and ensured that the runners were well and truly drenched before reaching the finish line.

The race was won by former British Fell Champion, Ian Holmes, who has dominated races in the area to such an extent that he has frequently been called 'The King of Haworth Moor'. On this occasion he coasted to the finish in a time of 44.29, a full half a minute ahead of his nearest challenger, Ricky Graham, of Horwich.

Amongst the Harriers best placed was Mark Goldie who finished in 15th place, some six minutes behind Holmes. Next Todmorden man home was Paul Brannigan, who crossed the line in 22nd place with a time of 53.17.

The loudest cheers of the day came from the Todmorden ladies, who put eleven competitors into the field and were rewarded with an emphatic team victory after packing the ladies' higher placings with Ali Richards confirming her return to form by finishing 3rd. Recent signing and Oxenhope local, Chris Preston followed her home in 5th place just one place ahead of the rapidly improving Sharon Godsmen.

Whilst the massed Harriers were competing at Stanbury, two of their number chose to compete in a new race to the fell running calendar, the White Holme Circular Race. Ran from Summit this race took the competitors on the reservoir paths around Warland and Blackstone Edge. As at Stanbury, the blustery weather made for a wild experience for the athletes as they battled over the exposed moorland.

One competitor not fazed by the conditions was Todmorden's own Andy Wrench who was peerless in his domination of the race, winning in a time of 1.18.01 which was over three minutes head of next man home, Brendan Bolland of Horwich. The other competing Todmorden runner, Chris Smale, also scored a top ten finish, coming in in 8th position in a time of 1.27.18.

The next event to occupy the Harriers is the Pennine Bridleway Relay on the 4th February. This is a tough 47 miles relay event organised by Rossendale Harriers. Todmorden are fielding five teams, with 10 runners in each team. The elite mens' team will be hoping to repeat their success of last year when only two minutes and three places separated them from winners Bowland Fell Runners.

Pennine Bridleway Relay (Press Date 08/02/07)

Wine Flows as Teams Rise to Challenge

Todmorden Harriers had reason to be pleased with their efforts last Sunday after a successful day in a major local off road relay race. The Pennine Bridleway Relay is run around a 47 mile loop mainly on paths and tracks traversing the hillsides and valleys around Rossendale, Burnley, and the Calder Valley. The route is split into five legs, with teams fielding two runners on each leg.

The event, organised by Rossendale Harriers, now in its fourth year, has become a steadily more popular event on each running. The 2007 event could boast 68 teams competing from the length and breadth of the North of England and representing the cream of fell running clubs. Hot pre race favourites were Horwich RMI, who along with Cumbrian raiders, Borrowdale Fell Runners looked the strongest on paper. Other fancied teams included last year's winners Bowland Fell Runners and local clubs Calder Valley and Todmorden Harriers who were both determined to uphold the honour of Upper Calderdale and give the outsiders a run for their money.

In the ladies section, previous winners Clayton le Moors looked the team to beat, along with Calder Valley if all went to the form book, although host club Rossendale Harriers had a strong female squad and were regarded by many as 'dark horses'.

Apart from the Senior Men's and Ladies' Teams, Todmorden also fielded a Veterans', Men's B, and a Mixed Team, making them one of the best represented clubs in the competition.

The competition began as dawn broke over Waterfoot. The sounding of a hooter heralded the release of the first leg runners as they set out from Fearn's School for the 8.5 mile first leg. The bitter cold and frosty ground did nothing to subdue spirits and Horwich's men showed their intentions from the off, gaining a significant early lead. By the time the runners had started to reach the first changeover at Kebs, the men from Bolton were three minutes to the good of their nearest challengers, with Clayton and Borrowdale the closest of these pursuing teams. Meanwhile the ladies' race was developing into a dogfight with the lead changing hands several times, Clayton ladies narrowly leading at the handover, followed by Rossendale. Todmorden handed over in third after a strong first leg by Rachel Skinner and Sharon Godsmen.

Leg Two, at 12.5 miles, is the longest leg of the race and where many teams chose to play their strongest hands. The Todmorden teams were no exception in this and their men's A Team pairing of Shaun Godsmen and Andrew Wrench gained a massive five places as they pulled their team into 4th place on the slog over Widdop Moor, before dropping through Colden and handing over at Callis Bridge. Elsewhere, interesting battle

was developing between Todmorden's other teams, the Veterans having slightly the better of things at this stage, with the Ladies and B Team snapping at their heels. Meanwhile, another notable performance on this leg came from Jo Waites and Jo Buckley, running for Calder Valley Ladies and gaining a full 18 places to bring the Mytholmroyd club back into contention for the ladies' prize.

Leg Three saw the runners going up through Callis Woods and eventually over to Warland via London Road and Salter Rake. All the Todmorden pairings seemed to enjoy themselves on this leg, making time and places as they relished the opportunity to compete on home ground. Particularly at home were Todmorden's Alice Heath and Lisa Parsons who ran the 2nd fastest ladies' time and gained valuable places for their team before handing over the baton at Calderbrook.

At the Leg Four changeover, Todmorden's senior pairing of Alex Whitem and Team Captain Mark Goldie took over just three places behind leaders Horwich, with big gaps appearing between teams. The Tod ladies were now in 3rd place, some five minutes behind the leading female team. Again Todmorden's teams ran well as they traversed the moor to Whitworth and the fastest section of the route, although the B Team suffered from a logistical mishap at this stage that scuppered their chances in the entertaining battle with their lady club mates.

At the beginning of the final leg, which starts at Lobden Golf Club and travels back to the start in Waterfoot, Horwich were unassailable and barring disaster were sure to take the title. Despite the best efforts of the chasing teams, including Todmorden and Calder Valley, this proved to be the case and their last men, Brendan Bolland and Chris Heys, crossed the line in a time of 4 hours and forty eight minutes. Todmorden's senior men followed in 4th place, with Jon Wright and Chris Smale running a solid final leg.

First back to Waterfoot in the ladies' race were Clayton, although only after a tremendous battle with Todmorden's women, whose second place in the ladies' rankings and 32nd overall, is a tremendous achievement and is easily the best result ever for a female Harriers' team.

Todmorden Veterans came home in 27th place overall, and 8th veterans team, with the B Team recovering somewhat from their earlier problems to finish 49th. The Mixed Team gained 53rd place after a fast final leg from Captain Peter Ehrhardt, partnered by former English Veteran Fell Running Champion, Moyra Parfitt.

Calder Valley Senior Men, missing some of their big guns finished in 12th place, whilst their Ladies came in 6th female team and 46th overall.

After the race Todmorden's Senior Team's Captains both declared themselves well pleased with the result. Ladies Captain Kath Brierley said, 'Remarkably all the Tod Ladies broke our club records for each leg. Before the race I promised a bottle of wine to anybody who did this, so that's ten bottles of wine I owe. Although I'm so pleased with the result I'm not bothered!'

Liversedge Half Marathon (Press Date 15/02/07)

The Sun Shines on the Evergreen Derek

The Todmorden Harriers 2007 Road Championship got off to a sun drenched start last Sunday at the Liversedge Half Marathon. The notoriously tough race is generally acknowledged as a true Yorkshire classic of its' kind, and boasts on route views of Kirklees Hall and the historic Hartshead Church as it tours the furthest reaches of Kirklees district. From a running perspective the race is dominated by repeated arduous climbs, culminating in the notorious 'Hill from Hell' after nine miles where many a runner has been found lacking.

Amongst the 400 finishes this year, it was race winner, Rickie Wilson of Scarborough AC who dealt best with the course, romping around the route in a time of 1.13.56, over a minute clear of second place Richard Pattinson of Pudsey and Bramley AC. In the ladies race Keighley's Amy Green came home first in a fine time of 1.27.32.

The travelling Tod athletes were brought home by Andrew Bibby, whose time of 1.39.44 saw him narrowly outside the top hundred. He was followed home by Mel Blackhurst who finished in 1.40.17, giving her a prize as 2nd lady veteran 40.

Also noteworthy for the Harriers was another remarkable performance by the evergreen 74 year old Derek Clutterbuck, who took the prize for first male veteran 65. Derek, who lives in Whitworth, was making one of his occasional forays onto the roads after many years' success in the fell running world.

The Harriers' next Championship race will see them brushing off their trail running shoes for the Radcliffe 12 mile Trail Race on Sunday 18th February.

Radcliffe Trail race (Press date (Press Date 22/02/07)

Dave hits the Long Trail to Victory

Winning prizes is becoming a habit for Todmorden Harrier Dave Collins, who added the Radcliffe Trail Race to his recent spate of veteran 50 victories.

Collins was one of 13 Harriers who 'hit the trail' in Radcliffe last weekend when they competed in the 12 mile Race, which tours North Manchester's post industrial hinterland and takes in an old railway which has been converted to a nature walk, Bury Old Canal, and footpaths around the muddy banks of the River Irwell. Despite the slightly urban feel of the route, Todmorden's higher placings came from names more associated with the world of fell running.

In addition to Collins' success, Alex Whitem ran well to finish in 7th place in a time of 1.13.55, just two and a half minutes behind race winner, Ken Chapman.

The ladies race was won by Mytholmroyd's Sue Beconsall, who runs in the colours of Bingley Harriers. Amongst the Tod ladies, Sarah Glyde was pick of the crop, finishing in 89th place overall and 12th lady, she was followed home by second lady Harrier, Claire Duffield.

After the Radcliffe race, the organiser thanked Todmorden Harriers for their continuing support of events organised by Radcliffe AC and commented that he hoped the support would be reciprocated at the upcoming Harriers promotion, the 'Noon Stone Fell Race' to be held on Saturday March 3rd.

This race starts at the Top Brink at 12.00 and is a classic, tough, fell test for which full FRA kit and the ability to navigate are essential. Further details of the Noon Stone can be found on Todmorden Harriers website at <http://www.todharriers.co.uk>