

## **Presentation Night**

When the fireworks fizzled at their End of Year Presentation Night last week, Todmorden Harriers had good reason to celebrate. The success and growth of the club which took some by surprise in 2005 has emphatically continued in 2006.

This success has perhaps been most evident in the fell running world and has been evidenced by several solid, year-round performances. The mens' elite team being one of the most prominent, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> in the national rankings, with the men's' veteran team one place higher in the separate veteran's table. These team performances place the club firmly inside the cream of the crop in the fell running world and are a remarkable achievement for a club that retains strong links with the community, primarily attracting members from the upper Calder Valley and nurturing local talent.

Individual star performances in the national fell championships have come from Chris Smale and Andrew Wrench in the veteran men's individual standings, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respectively. In the ladies competitions, Jane Smith finished 9<sup>th</sup> in her national category and helped the Todmorden Ladies to a creditable 10<sup>th</sup> place with an emerging team that should improve on this next year. Todmorden's only medal winner was the unstoppable 75-year-old Derek Clutterbuck, who took a silver medal in the English Veteran 70 competition.

Away from the national scene, the keenly fought Todmorden Harriers Club Championships finished in wins for Andrew Wrench and Alice Heath in the fell competition and Mel Blackhurst and Paul Brannigan and in the road series, a remarkable third successive win for the man from Higher Eastwood. Mark Goldie proved himself on both fell and road to scoop the prize for overall Club Champion. In the Club's Grand Prix Competition, which differs from the other awards by nature of its handicap system, Alex Whittem took home the converted shield, topping off a good year for the man often referred to as the 'flying postman'.

In addition to the championship awards, the club also have annual prizes for the 'Club Person of The Year', won by Chairwoman Mandy Goth, and 'Most Improved Runner', won jointly by husband and wife, Shaun and Sharon Godsmen.

Elsewhere in the club several other achievements were recognised, including two major successes in the world of triathlon. Firstly Lynn Griffiths rose to prominence in the 'tri' world by being selected for the British Age Category Team in the World Championships. Lynn followed this only a few months later by being crowned Welsh Ladies' Champion in her age category. The other triathlete honoured was Simon Galloway who became the third Harrier to join the 'Iron Man' club, having completed the monumental task of a triathlon that consisted of a 2.4 mile swim, followed by a 112 mile bike, then finished off with the small matter of a full marathon.

Other successes in the world of extreme endurance were a team of four Harriers who became Todmorden's first ever finishers in the legendary 100 mile Extreme Tour Du Mont Blanc Race, and closer to home, Mandy Goth and Kath Brierley became Tod's first ladies to complete Lakeland's infamously gruelling Bob Graham Round.

Speaking of her achievement, Mandy said,

'My Bob Graham is just a small part of a fantastic year for the Harriers.

On top of all the competitive success, we now have a very active junior section thanks to Eileen Miles, and superb senior coaching from Graeme Wrench. We've got new, really talented people joining all the time and it really feels like the club is going from strength to strength. Roll on 2007.' Hot Toddy 2006

## **Hot Toddy**

Runners from far and wide gathered in Todmorden town centre last Saturday for the ever popular 'Hot Toddy' 5.8 mile road race, organised by Todmorden Harriers.

The fierce storms of the previous day had abated by the time the Mayor and Mayoress of Todmorden sounded the starting horn to send the 260 starting athletes on their way around the hilly course which travels down Rochdale Road to Walsden and Hollins, before climbing over Lumbutts Road and returning to the town centre via a painful run-in up Halifax Road.

Amongst this year's entrants was a large contingent from Halifax Harriers who had travelled up the Calder Valley. The trip proved worthwhile as they scooped the ladies' team prize, and only narrowly missed out on the men's team prize after a close tussle with Skipton AC.

The Halifax club also placed well in the individual rankings, with Jo Buckley winning the ladies' race in a time of 34.10, some 50 seconds ahead of Sue Becconsall of Bingley Harriers. In the men's race Halifax nearly made it a double success, but their star man, Adam Breaks was narrowly pipped in a sprint finish with Salford's Kenyan ace, Tarus Elly. The winner crossed the line in 30.10, with Breaks just four seconds adrift. Highest placed runner from the host club was recently crowned Club Champion Mark Goldie who clocked 34.42 for his 30<sup>th</sup> position. First Tod lady was Alice Heath who was making her debut in the Hot Toddy after a successful first full season in Todmorden colours, her time of 40.56 reflecting her promise for next year.

Prior to the main race there was the now traditional one mile 'Fun Run'. This gentler option follows bridleways and canal towpath and has enjoyed a steady growth in popularity both amongst junior runners and senior athletes. This year 44 competitors lined up at the start, all anxious to get around the muddy course in good style. First home was 12 year old Leon Gregory in a very creditable time of 6.00. Hot on his heels and only 13 seconds behind was Michael Smith, another 12 year old. Several notable performances followed, with the first six runners breaking the magical seven minute barrier.

After both events were concluded, Race Director, Peter Ehrhardt thanked the White Hart Hotel for their excellent hospitality throughout the day, and also the Mayor and Mayoress for officiating at the start of the races.

*Local Results for the Hot Toddy (Todmorden Harriers unless stated):*

30, Mark Goldie (34.42); 50, Paul Brannigan (36.11); 67, Andrew Carnochan CVFR (37.27); 80, Angus Barclay (38.37); 90, Jeff Anderson (39.09); 91, Clive Greatorex CVFR (39.16); 92, Colin Duffield (39.23); 95, Andrew Bibby (39.32); 104, Ben Crowther (40.13); 119, Alice Heath (40.56); Philip White CVFR (41.43); 167, Stuart Bolton (44.23); 170, Liz White CVFR (44.41); 171, Racheal Lockley (44.41); 191, Elise Milnes (47.05); 197, Heather Simpson (47.43); 219, Dave O'Neill (50.08); 228, Derek Clutterbuck (51.51); 256, Ian Stansfield (62.49).

### **Auld Lang Syne/MMM**

The fell running year ended on New Years Eve with the traditional 'Auld Lang Syne' race, held on Haworth Moor. In the words of organiser Dave Woodhead, this race 'isn't all about racing, but more about socialising and having fun'. These sentiments were echoed by the fifteen Todmorden Harriers who made the trip to the windswept outskirts of Oxenhope to commence their muddy slog around the 6.5 mile route. The race was won by former English and British Fell Running Champion, Simon Bailey of Mercia Fell Runners, who held off a strong late challenge by eleven times previous winner Ian Holmes of Bingley to cross the line in a time of 40.55. In the ladies race Olivia Walwyn of Altrincham set a new course record to finish comfortably clear of the other female runners with a time of 49.15.

Away from the leading runners, the remaining 450 competitors enjoyed the good-humoured banter of the occasion and on finishing were rewarded with a bottle of specially brewed 'Auld Lang Syne Ale'.

The Todmorden runners who made the journey will also have gained prior knowledge about the first race in the club 2007 championship, the Stanbury Splash Fell Race as the two races share much of the same route.

*Todmorden finishers for the 'Auld Lang Syne'*

83, Martin Roberts (51.54); 91, Dave Collins (52.25); 133, Simon Galloway (55.15); 153, James Riley (56.11); 159, Peter Bowles (56.22); 185, Keith Parkinson (57.41); 196 Phil Hodgson (58.07); 217, Chris Preston (59.22); 295, Richard O'Sullivan (63.50); 324, John Lee (65.24); 335, Claire Duffield (66.09); 344 Peter Ehrhardt (66.44); 372, Sue Roberts (69.06); 407, Moira Parfitt (74.05); 449, Jim Smith (104.43).

Another event to attract a good deal of relaxed, seasonal competition was the Todmorden Harriers 'Moorland Mountain Marathon'. This annual post Christmas three-hour orienteering event on the moors around the upper Calder Valley challenges club members and guests to find a number of controls cunningly hidden in various locations. The 2007 competition was won by Jonathan Emberton of Calder Valley Fell Runners, who beat Todmorden's Phil Hodgson by a solitary point. Afterwards, this year's organiser, Dave Wilson, thanked the landlord and staff of the New Delight Inn, for their hospitality and help in staging the event.