

Recent Press Reports

If you have done great deeds, or little ones, and you'd like to see those deeds layed bare before the Todmorden masses, you need to talk to Colin Duffield 01422 846593 (email claire.colin@virgin.net). And remember...

'Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper, good thing too'-George Orwell ,
Collected Essays (almost)

Midgely Moor/Donard Commedagh/Liver Hill (Press date 05/04/07)

Godsman Races to Glory on Midgely Moor Fells

Todmorden Harrier Shaun Godsman registered a win in a local fell race last Saturday as he joined 14 his fellow Harriers competing in the Midgely Moor Fell Race. The race, organised by members of Calder Valley Fell Runners, sees the competitors setting off from Booth Cricket Club for a five-mile dash around the moor, visiting six checkpoints in prescribed order. The route between checkpoints is often a matter of each runner's preference, this leaves plenty of room for route choices as runners try to gain vital seconds on their rivals. If the hill mist is down this can be very much a navigator's race, and although this year the mist stayed away the importance of picking a good line through the heather clad moor was still paramount for any serious contender.

Godsman dominated the race from the off, using his flat racing speed to take time off his pursuers on the trodden paths rather than the more direct routes over the rough moor. In doing so his winning in a time of 38.33 was not only a minute and a half clear of second placed man Owen Beilby of Wharfedale but the fastest winning time for the race since the record was set in 2002 by Steve Oldfield of Bradford and Airedale.

In the ladies' race, Janet McIver of Dark Peak Fell Runners continued her outstanding early season form by breaking the course record, and leaving the opposition trailing. Strong showings from Todmorden's ladies included a downhill gallop to the line with Kath Brierley and Sharon Godsman bidding to register as first Tod lady, only 10 seconds separating the two at the finish. Club mate Jane Smith finished 3 minutes later to ensure Todmorden took the ladies team prize.

Also last Saturday, some of the Harriers number turned their attention to the British Fell Running Championships at the prestigious Donard Commedagh Hill Race in Northern Ireland. The 6.4 mile race climbs Northern Ireland's highest peak Slieve Donard on route and attracted over 200 mountain runners, among which were three Todmorden Harriers and a number of runners from neighbouring club Calder Valley Fell Runners who had also made the trip over the water. International runner, Rob Hope of Pudsey and Bramley, won the race. First Calderdale man home was CVFR's Karl Grey who finished in eleventh place in the race, which was won by Rob Hope of Pudsey and Bramley. First Todmorden finisher was an in form Jon Wright who came home in 23rd place, followed by club mates Andrew Wrench in 32nd and James Riley in 147th.

In the week prior to the Midgely Moor and Donard Commedagh, there was opportunity to warm up for the weekend at the Liver Hill Fell Race in Rawtenstall. This fast and furious 5 miler is traditionally held to celebrate the arrival of the lighter nights and the opportunity to run away from the roads in the evenings. Pick of the Todmorden contingent was Mark Goldie who crossed the line in 35.53, some two and a half minutes and five places behind the winner, Darren Kay of Horwich. First Todmorden lady was Kath Brierley who finished in 88th place overall and eighth in the women's rankings, five minutes behind ladies winner and potential future star, 16 year old Rachel Searson of Blackburn. Elsewhere in the field, Todmorden's Simon Galloway ran strongly to finish in 42nd place, followed three minutes later by club mate Keith Parkinson in 70th spot. A little further down the field, Tod's evergreen septuagenarian Derek Clutterbuck left many younger runner struggling in his wake to come home in 167th place.

Caldervale 10 (Press date 12/04/07)

Bibby Scores Early Points in Championship

Competition in the Todmorden Harriers Road Championship stepped up a gear over the Easter holidays after the Caldervale 10 race in North Lancashire.

Eight Harriers travelled to the sunny Bowland countryside for the race and competition was intense, with less than two minutes separating the first four Tod athletes. Andrew Bibby lead the Harriers home in 80th place in a time of 1.13.44, followed by first lady Harrier, Kerry Edwards, just eight places and one minute adrift.

These two were followed in quick succession by Jeff Anderson, and reigning ladies' Road Champion, Mel Blackhurst.

The race was won by Ken Chapman, formerly of Salford Harriers, now running without a club. His time of 55.45 seeing him home comfortably ahead of second placed Garry Dixon of Barrow.

Pendle Fell Race/Calderdale Hike (Press date 17/04/07)

No Broomstick Required for Jon on Witches Hill

Todmorden Harriers were well represented in the hugely popular Pendle Fell Race recently. The event is one of several annual races that climb the famous witches Hill from the picturesque village of Barley and this year attracted a quality field of 215 runners.

The race was won by Danny Hope of Pudsey and Bramley AC who flew around the 5 mile course, without the aid of a broomstick, in a time of 31.47. However, he was pushed all the way by the chasing pack that included in-form Todmorden man Jon Wright who eventually finished in fourth place in a time of 34.32.

Other Todmorden interest at the sharp end of the race was provided by Alex Whitem who also ran strongly to finish three places behind his club mate in seventh place.

Elsewhere in the field, there were also creditable runs from Harriers, Dave Collins who finished in 50th place, Keith Parkinson in 107th, and Simon Galloway in 112th.

In contrast to the test of speed and nerve at Pendle, another group of Harriers tested their stamina in the Calderdale Hike last Saturday.

The race, which starts from Sowerby before setting off on a 38 mile tour of bridleways and tracks around Calderdale and Airedale, has separate categories for runners and walkers and was a counter in this year's Montrail UK Ultra Running Championships.

Again foremost amongst the 'long distance' Harriers was veteran 50, Phil Hodgson who is currently riding high in the national rankings for these super length challenges. He finished first in his age category and twelfth overall, finishing in 6 hours and forty minutes.

Next Harrier to complete the arduous route in the sweltering temperatures was Chris Preston, followed some time later by club mate Colin Duffield.

The next event concentrating the Harriers' energies will be the Paddy's Pole Fell Race in North Lancashire. This tough four and a half miler has been chosen as a national counter in the English Fell Running Championships, and it is important that the club wheel out their 'big guns', in both the men's and ladies' races.

Paddy's Pole (Press date 26/04/07)

The latest round of this year's English Championships took the fell running community to North Lancashire for the Paddy's Pole Race.

Despite its' curious name, the race itself is a no nonsense dash over 4.5 miles, starting with a steep climb, before a fast middle section before the final giddy descent to the finish. The nature of the route made it necessary to split the ladies and men's race in order to avoid any possible congestion on the narrow paths that made up the course.

In the ladies race it was series front-runner, Natalie White of Bingley Harriers who glided home first in a time of 34.09, fifteen seconds ahead of second placed Sarah Tunstall of York.

A healthy turnout of Todmorden ladies saw them rise to seventh in the team placings following good runs from Alison Richards in 22nd and Sharon Godsman in 48th. Alice Heath made up the team, finishing in 56th place.

In the men's race Kendall's Joe Symonds surprised some by taking the honours in a time of 27.27, pipping former national champion Simon Bailey in second.

First Todmorden man was an in form Shaun Godsman in 24th position, just three minutes adrift of the winner. The Harriers' men's team matched their female counterparts, also finishing in seventh place in the team stakes, with Jon Wright (30th), Andy Wrench (43rd), Alex Whitem (62nd), and Mark Goldie (90th) making up the team.

In contrast to the understated ambiance found at fell races, five Todmorden runners ventured south last Saturday to the glitz and glamour of the London Marathon. First home was Nick Wigmore who dipped below the three hour barrier in a time of 2.58. Next home was experienced ultra marathon runner Rhys Watkins, who was possibly one of the few people in the huge field to find the distance a bit short. First Todmorden lady was Mel Blackhurst in a time of 3.46, followed by Mel Siddall in a time of 4.11. Jeff Anderson made up the travelling Tod contingent in a time of 5.01.

Jon on Peak form (press date 03/05/07)

According to the old Yorkshire adage, Ingleborough, Wharfedale, and Penyghent are the 'highest hills twixt t'Tweed and t'Trent'.

Last Sunday these famous fells saw the running of the 53rd Three Peaks Fell Race, which reverses the order of the hills, but has every inch as much height gain.

The race has a long history and is probably the most famous fell race in the country. Furthermore, the presence of such luxuries as ice cream vans and children's rides in the control field gives the race something of a carnival feeling. Also, the 600 entrants momentarily double the population of starting village Horton in Ribblesdale before they leave the village for the long climb up Penyghent.

This year the sun shone, which made life pleasant for the spectators but caused competitors to swelter as they made their way around the 24 mile course, the breeze that blew on the tops of the hills doing nothing to alleviate the sunburn that afflicted many of the runners.

After clashes with other races in recent years, causing fewer Todmorden runners to participate in the race, this year it was business as usual for Harriers who sent a strong team of ten runners up to North Yorkshire, including four 'Three Peaks First Timers'.

First Todmorden runner back was Jon Wright who had an outstanding run to finish in eleventh place, just twenty seconds away from a top ten finish in a field packed with the best long distance fell runners in the country, including race winner Rob Jebb of Bingley Harriers. Next Tod athlete back was Andrew Wrench in a creditable 67th place. Newcomer Andy McFie made up the Todmorden top three in 151st place, finishing just a shade over the four hour mark.

In the ladies finishers, Bingley Harrier and Skipton local Mary Wilkinson proved too strong for the rest of the field finishing in a time of 3.30.22. First lady Harrier was Chris Preston who was sixth female finisher and first veteran lady, whilst club mate Ali Richards continued her rich vein of form to finish a pleasing twelfth lady.

Todmorden Results for the Three Peaks Race:

9,Jon Wright (3.12.25); 67,Andrew Wrench (3.44.07); 151, Andy McFie (4.02.44); 154,Chris Preston (4.03.00); 242,Alison Richards (4.17.41); 255,Rhys Watkins (4.21.31); 261,Derek Donohue (4.22.32); 349, Colin Duffield (4.44.00); 384, Alice Heath (4.51.52); 447,John Lee (5.21.00).

Also last weekend, there was a much lower key race held locally. The Wardle Skyline is a seven mile tour around the hills north of Watergrove Reservoir, taking in 1000 feet of climbing long its' length as it visits, Brown Wardle Hill, Rough Hill, and Hades Hill before a tough finish and a final climb back to the village centre.

First Harrier home was Alex Whitem, who continued his recuperation from persistent injury with a hard fought fourth place in a race dominated by Calder Valley duo, Karl Grey and Ben Mounsey, who finished first and second respectively.

Next Harrier home was Mark Goldie who crossed the line in thirteenth place after losing some ground and places on the final half mile in the teeth of stiff opposition.

The ladies' race was won by Katie Ingram of Horwich, who just held off the chasing Calder Valley pairing of Jo Waites and Sally Newman, who followed her home in second and third places.

Todmorden Ladies were represented by Sharon Godsman who ran well to finish fifth lady, and Claire Duffield who arrived home in tenth place in the female rankings.