

## Recent Press Reports

By Colin Duffield

‘A little inaccuracy sometimes saves a ton of explanation.’ **Hector Hugh Munro**

### **Calderdale Way Relay** (Press date 13/12/07)

*Tod's Mudlarks Up to Relay Challenge*

Last Sunday runners from far and wide shook off any mid winter sluggishness and headed for the hills for the 24<sup>th</sup> running of the Calderdale Way Relay Race.

The race is run in pairs over six legs, the length of the individual legs varying between 5 and 11 miles, the race totalling 50 miles overall and taking in tracks and footpaths around Halifax, Brighouse, Todmorden and Hebden Bridge. This year the heavy recent rain had turned much of the route into a quagmire, making times slower than usual for the 112 teams.

Calderdale clubs were well represented with Todmorden Harriers and Calder Valley Fell Runners fielding four teams each, organisers Halifax Harriers three teams, and Stainland Lions a whopping six teams.

Despite losing key men to illness and some recent departures from the club, Todmorden Harriers were determined to field their strongest available team in the elite category. Team Captain Dave Collins managing to blend newer runners with his seasoned ‘warhorses’ to achieve the best possible potential result, although he was well aware that Calder Valley’s elite men would be odds on for the prize for first local team.

Favourites Bingley, Horwich, and Pudsey all fielded class teams which would make it hard for the local teams to break into the upper echelons.

First away for Tod in the early morning drizzle were a couple of their big names, Andrew Wrench and Chris Smale, who ran a solid leg one to hand over in 4th place. Taking over at the changeover in Cragg Vale were Captain Collins, along with partner Paul Burnett, who was returning to fitness after a season blighted by niggling injury. This pair held their own on the nine mile leg to Centre Vale Park where Lee McCluskey and Simon Galloway took the baton for the short sharp climb up the Blackshawhead. The Blackshawhead to Shelf leg is one of the key legs, as time and position can be easily lost over the muddy 11 miles. Fortunately for Tod, Andy McFie and Sean Willis took the responsibility and ran well to hand over in 13<sup>th</sup> position. Mark Goldie and James Riley ran Leg Four before handing over to Nick Wigmore and Nick Barber at Shelf. The ‘two Nicks’ had to contend with the cream of the opposition as the route wound around the streets of Brighouse and down the Canal towpath before arriving at the finish in Copley with Tod finishing in 17<sup>th</sup> place, a commendable result in the light of the team’s depleted state. The result saw them 25 minutes and nine places behind a strong Calder Valley team with Jason Stevens and Steve Smithies bringing the Mytholmroyd club home as first locals.

In the ladies rankings Todmorden also looked strong despite their star runner Ali Richards still being sidelined through injury. Like the men, a number of newer members joined the experienced runners in a team that looked useful on paper, although classy ladies teams from Bingley, Dark Peak, and Calderdale’s own CVFR were expected to dominate proceedings if things went to the form book.

For much of the day the battle between the ladies was close, with Todmorden holding their own in the early stages after some strong runs, particularly from Leg Three runners Sarah Warburton and Lisa Parsons who clocked the third fastest ladies time on the day. However as the day progressed the top teams began to assert themselves and gaps started to appear.

At the finish it was Bingley Ladies who took the honours, with first Calderdale team going to CVFR in 7<sup>th</sup> place, Helen Allcock and Karen Mather running the anchor leg. Todmorden’s ladies arrived home shortly after their local rivals, just one place behind, with Mel Blackhurst and Sarah Glyde finishing strongly to bring the team home.

Elsewhere in the field Todmorden’s B team finished in 52<sup>nd</sup> place, which their Captain, Andrew Bibby saw as a minor triumph after several unplanned changes to his team. Todmorden also fielded a mixed team which came home in 99<sup>th</sup> place, and 11th mixed team.

Calder Valley’s other teams also showed well, the B team finishing in 74th place and the veterans in 42nd place.

### **Christmas Party and Presentation** (Press date 20/12/07)

*Harriers Toast Champions*

Todmorden Harriers celebrated the ending of another athletics year in traditional style last Friday when the club gathered at Todmorden Cricket Club for the Christmas party and Prize Giving.

With almost 100 members present the event was one of the best attended in recent years and at the end of the night the consensus was that a good time was had by all.

Phil Hodgson was the night's Master of Ceremonies, joining Club Chairman Mandy Goth to present the club's 2007 prizes. He commented that the year had been another good one for the Harriers, in which the club had continued to grow and build on recent years' success. He went on to highlight the commendable performances in the fell running world, including the men's team's stunning 7<sup>th</sup> place in the British Hill Running Relay Championships and the continuing rise of the ladies fell team into a force in the ladies national rankings.

In addition to this Mandy commented that although in recent years the National Fell Running Championships had captured the club's attention, other members had achieved success in a gamut of running disciplines and these should be recognised. These luminaries included success in the ultra running world, including the two UK champions and various completed long distance 'rounds', and international appearances for club members in triathlon.

After the presentation was concluded, there was the opportunity for members to bop the night away to live music, provided by the excellent combo, 'The Hitmen'. The Harriers lived up to their reputation as a club who like a opportunity to let their hair down, although the sight of the clubs great and good 'throwing shapes' on the dance floor was enough to send some of the younger members straight to the bar!

It was left to evening's M.C, Phil Hodgson, to sum up the evening when he said, 'awesome night, awesome band, awesome club.'

### **The Stoop** (Press date 20/12/07)

#### *Jane takes Record Breaking Bow*

Upwards of 230 runners gathered on Haworth Moor last Sunday for one of the traditional pre Christmas events of the fell running world, the Stoop Race.

The 5 mile race, which takes in 800 feet of climbing, sets off from Penistone Hill before winding its' muddy way around the moor, climbing to the lofty standing stone that gives the name its' name before descending to a finish at the doorway of the club house at the local cricket club.

This race was won by Salford's international Andi Jones in a time of 29:07, whilst Olivia Walwyn of Altrincham was first lady in a time of 35.13, shattering the previous ladies course record.

Local athletes were out in force with Todmorden's ladies having some success with Chris Preston coming home 1st lady V40 in 102<sup>nd</sup> position overall, and Jane Smith breaking the ladies' Veteran 50s record in her debut race in this category.

Tod's Dave Collins also showed well to finish in 53<sup>rd</sup> place in a time of 37.40, just a minute in front of fellow Harrier Peter Bowles in 67<sup>th</sup>.

Other local athletes included Calder Valley Fell Runners Rob Sharratt in 38<sup>th</sup> place with a time of 36:30 and his teammate Chris Godridge in 54<sup>th</sup> who stopped the clock at 37:45

### **Hot Toddy/Whimbery Naze** (Press date 27/012/07)

#### *Top Class Field For Toddy*

Last Sunday Todmorden Harriers staged their annual 'Hot Toddy' road race.

The highly rated race is ran over 5.8 miles, starting in the centre of town before going down the main road to Walsden and then back via a loop around Lumbutts Road and Millwood. The event has become a Christmas favourite in the athletics community, habitually attracting a bumper turn out. This year over 300 runners pounded around the route, a field that included the top names in local road running and a number of raiders from further a field.

As with any race at this time of year conditions are always important in the Hot Toddy. This year, cold but dull weather hung over the throng of runners as they made their way out of town, with none of the snow and ice that has occasionally been a feature of the race in the past.

As the race unfolded there was a significant attack in the early stages of the race, with Damian Nicholls of Wilmslow quickly establishing a potentially race winning lead over the rest of the field. Foremost amongst the chasing runners being Halifax Harriers' budding star, Jonathan Hare.

In the ladies' race Todmorden resident Sue Beconsall, who runs in the colours of Bingley Harriers, had also built up an early lead and by the time she arrived back on Halifax Road for the final run in, the race was effectively won barring any slip-ups.

At the line Nicholls took the mens' race in a time of 29:39, with Hare closing the gap in the latter stages to finish just over 30 seconds adrift. Beconsall meanwhile swept home in 34:35, some three minutes clear of second lady, Margaret Jordan of Stainland Lions.

Other notable local performances came from Todmorden Michael Fryer running for Halifax Harriers and finishing in a time of 33:28, and Jason Stevens, a Calder Valley Fell Runner, running as unattached on the tarmac, and finishing in 19<sup>th</sup> place in a time of 32:27.

First finisher from the organising club was Nick Wigmore, who stopped the clock in 36:13, giving him 57<sup>th</sup> place.

At the finish competitors were rewarded for their efforts with a glass of 'Hot Toddy', a fortifying tonic made to a special Tod Harriers recipe that is kept secret to all but a privileged few.

In the separately ran 'Fun Run' there was a chance to burn of some Christmas excess on the one mile off road route. Amongst the 60 runners who tackled this course there were a large proportion of children, many of whom showed the adults a clean pair of heels. First to finish in the fun run were two names to look out for in the future, 12 year old Jack Walsh and 13 year old Simon Bolland.

After the races were concluded, Race Director Peter Ehrhardt thanked the landlord and staff at the White Hart for their excellent hospitality throughout the day, and the Mayor of Todmorden for kindly officiating the start of the race.

The Hot Toddy wasn't the only event in Christmas week that kept local athletes active in the festive season. On Boxing Day many on the local fell scene took part in the Whimberry Naze Fell Race. This is a short four mile dash, starting and finishing in Rawtenstall. The race was won in fine style by Andy Hilton of York Acorn, although Todmorden's own Chris Smale had a fine run to finish third overall and first veteran. This was despite him entering into the light hearted Christmas spirit and completing the course wearing a dinner jacket and bow tie!

Chris was joined in the race by Hot Toddy organiser Peter Ehrhardt who took a break from preparations or his own race by registering 137<sup>th</sup> place, and 5<sup>th</sup> veteran 60 at Whimberry.

Calder Valley were also represented with their top placing being Clive Greatorex in 63<sup>rd</sup> position, whilst new signing Sharon Godsman finished in 73<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> lady.

#### **Auld Lang Syne/Giants Tooth** (Press date 10/12/08)

##### *Collins Sees in the New Year*

As New Year's celebrations got underway on December 31<sup>st</sup>, many of the fell running community took an opportunity to squeeze in one final race of 2007 at the Auld Lang Syne Race in Haworth.

The six and a half miler is ran from Penistone Hill, and always attracts a huge turnout which this year included a 'baker's dozen' of Todmorden Harriers. These 13 Harriers were witness to a stunning display of fell racing by 18 year old Alistair Brownlee of Bingley Harriers who broke the long standing course record and finished first in a field containing some of the biggest names in the country, including former record holder Ian Holmes, and Salford's international mountain and marathon runner, Andi Jones.

First Todmorden runner home was Dave Collins in 64<sup>th</sup> position in the 470 strong field. He was followed in quick succession by club mates Martin Roberts in 89<sup>th</sup> place, Peter Bowles in 112<sup>th</sup> and Simon Galloway in 117<sup>th</sup>.

In the ladies race, Altrincham's Olivia Walwyn was first over the line in a time of 47:05, another course record. Todmorden's ladies were well represented in the upper placings with Kath Brierley twelfth woman in 57:02, closely followed by Christine Preston two places and less than a minute behind.

All runners who completed the race were rewarded with a bottle of Daleside beer, a brew which they barely had time to drink before another popular race, the Giant's Tooth, held on New Year's Day. The three-mile race is run from Ogden Reservoir, on the outskirts of Halifax and the fast and furious nature of the race is guaranteed to bring in the New Year with a bang.

A total of 98 hardy souls completed the race, which was won by Shaun Dimelow of Peniston in a time of 17:33, just five seconds in front of Todmorden's Chris Smale who also took the prize for first veteran.

Steve Smithies of Calder Valley ran well to finish 7<sup>th</sup> with his fellow Calder runners Adrian Muir and Paul Biddulph also registering top twenty finishes in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> positions respectively.

Todmorden's Peter Ehrhardt also found himself in the prizes, registering as first veteran 60 in a time of 26:24.

First lady was Bingley's Ruth Whitehead in 22:01, whilst Halifax's Carole Fryer finished 3<sup>rd</sup> and first veteran woman.