

Recent Pres Reports
By Colin 'Scoop Dog' Duffield

So, the theory goes that if you had an infinite number of monkeys, randomly bashing at an infinite number of typewriters, for an infinite period of time, you would reproduce the entire works of Shakespeare.

However, we just have the one monkey...

White Holme Circular (press date 31/01/08)

Wrench takes Veterans Title

Todmorden athletes didn't have far to travel last Sunday to the second running of the White Holme Circular Fell Race. The race is a wild tour of the moors in between Littleborough and Todmorden, starting in Summit before climbing up to the exposed moors for a 12 mile circuit of the reservoir tracks above Blackstone Edge and Langfield. Despite being a relatively new event, the race attracted a healthy field of 85 runners, including many of the big names on the local scene.

The race was won by Ricky Graham of the Fell Ponies in a time of 1:17:42, shaving 18 seconds off the previous course record. Calder Valley's Jo Waites took the ladies race by storm, breaking the ladies record by over two minutes with a winning time of 1:28:57

Tod Harriers had plenty of interest at the sharp end with Andrew Wrench finishing first veteran and second overall, just in front of club mate Jon Wright in third.

A little further down the field several Harriers were engaged in their own race within a race and crossed the line within minutes of each other with Kevin Booth 35th, Colin Duffield 39th, Keith Parkinson 44th, and a bloodied James Riley in 46th.

Harriers prizes went to Derek Clutterbuck who took the veteran 70 prize, whilst the efforts of Wrench, Wright, and Booth ensured the team prize went to Todmorden's men.

Mary Towneley Loop Relay (press date 07/02/08)



Sean Willis & Andrew Horsfall PBW

Harrier Ladies are a Fine Third

Last Sunday saw the running of the ever popular Pennine Bridleway Relay Race. Run around a 47 miles loop, the event is run mainly on paths and tracks as it traverses 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.

Organised by Rossendale Harriers, the event is now in its fourth year, has become a steadily more popular event on each running. The 2008 event could boast 76 teams competing from the length and breadth of the North of England and representing the cream of fell running. Hot pre race favourites were last year's runaway winners, Horwich RMI, although the big guns from Cumbria were in town in the shape of Borrowdale Fell Runners, so a battle was inevitable. Amongst the local clubs, Todmorden, Calder Valley, and Halifax Harriers all fielded elite teams

In the ladies section, Calder Valley and Dark Peak looked the teams most likely to take the honours if all went to the form book, although Todmorden and Clayton Le Moors both sent a strong female squads and were regarded by many as 'dark horses'.

Apart from the Senior Men's and Ladies Teams, Todmorden also fielded Men's B and C Teams,

making them one of the best represented clubs in the competition.



Keith Parkinson & Paul Cotton

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 A team pairing of Dave Collins and Martin Roberts who ran the 5th fastest time of the day and gained valuable places for their team before handing over the baton at Calderbrook with Todmorden laying in 7th place.

At the leg four change over, Todmorden's pairings all took the batons with a degree of pressure. The A and Ladies Teams were competing against the best to fell running scene had to offer, whilst the B and C Teams were engaged in their own battles with rival clubs. As the teams snaked across Whitworth Moor on the fastest section of the route, all the Tod runners dug in and performed well to hand over for the final leg in good position.

At the beginning of the final leg, which starts at Lobden Golf Club and travels back to the start in Waterfoot, it still seemed that Horwich were likely to take the title, although Borrowdale were chasing hard. Calder Valley were the first local team to the changeover, with Halifax and Todmorden close behind. Calder Valley's ladies were also first locals in the women's race, in second position to Todmorden's fifth. As the leg progressed, Todmorden's Kath Brierley and Ali Richards showed their class by overtaking two teams to cross the line 3rd ladies, just five minutes behind Calder Valley in 2nd after a whole day of racing.

In the men's race it was Borrowdale who crossed the line first in a time of four hours and forty eight minutes, with Horwich 2nd. Local honours went to Halifax Harriers in 6th, with Calder Valley 7th and Todmorden 10th.

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 cold northerly wind did nothing to subdue spirits and the competition was stiff from the off, but by the first handover Horwich were starting to dominate, a minute clear as the baton was passed at Kebs, with Borrowdale the closest of the perusing teams. Todmorden's first pairing of Andrew Horsfall and Sean Willis ran well to hand over in 9th place, and 1st local team. Meanwhile the ladies race was developing into a dogfight between any number of teams with Todmorden's Kay Leigh and Sarah Glyde 2nd after their leg, behind only Clayton Le Moors.

Leg Two, at 12.5 miles, is the longest leg of race and where many teams chose to play their strongest hands. The Todmorden teams were no exception in this and an interesting battle was developing between the B, and Ladies Teams, the ladies having slightly the better of things at this stage with Chris Preston and Mel Blackhurst running a storming leg. However, there was no room for complacency as the race came steeply down the wooded valley from Blackshawhead to Callis Bridge, and the second changeover.

Leg Three saw the runners going up through Callis Woods and eventually going over to Warland via



Dave Collins & Martin Roberts

Todmorden B followed their A Team home in 28th place, whilst the C Team ran well to finish in 54th spot.

Wadsworth Trog (press date 14/02/08)



Andrew Wrench & Chris Smale

of Top Withins. .

Todmorden's women were exceptionally well represented in the race with six starters, this kind of race suiting the clubs experienced and 'fell tough' ladies. Showing well in the early stages was Chris Preston who was holding third place, with Ali Richards and Mel Blackhurst also holding high positions.

As the runners returned back across the road the Todmorden athletes were still running well but had to squeeze every last drop of energy out of their legs for the tussocky last few miles back to Old Town.

On the finishing line it was Karl Gray who took the honours finishing first in a record time of 2:38:15, almost ten minutes clear of Ian Holmes. Fastest Todmorden runners being Andrew Wrench in 5th place, with Andrew Horsfall making a welcome return to racing and finishing 15th.

First Lady home was Cath Farrow of Valley Striders in a time of 3:38:47, but Todmorden's Christine Preston chased her all the way to finish 2nd lady and first veteran. Next Todmorden lady was Jane Smith, who was 6th lady overall and first veteran 50. These two were backed up by Mel Blackhurst in 7th position, Todmorden easily taking the team prize.

Beast of a Start as Harriers Launch 2008 Fell Championships

Todmorden Harriers 2008 Fell championship got off to a tough start last Saturday with the 20 mile Wadsworth Trog race, organised by Calder Valley Fell Runners.

The race route is probably the toughest local race for Todmorden runners and its' length, tricky terrain and traditionally inclement weather has caused it be known by the alternative, but charming, name of 'The Beast' amongst the fell running community.

Fourteen Harriers were amongst those who set off from Old Town on the long trek over the moors in-between Hebden Bridge and Haworth. From the onset it was clear that the Fell running gods were smiling on the race as the sun came out and the wind dropped, making the race conditions as near perfect as anyone could remember.

Early in the race, Bingley's Ian Holmes and Calder Valley's Karl Gray broke away from the field and by the time the runners crossed Keighley Road for the middle third of the race they had built up a commanding lead, with Todmorden's Andrew Wrench leading the chasing pack as they headed towards the Bronte moors



Jane Smith