

# The year 2009 – our favourite races

Yes, it's time for the annual Tod Harriers review of our best races of the past year. Here's what you've written.

**Anniversary waltz. One of my lakeland favourites. especially this year as conditions were near perfect. Easy[ish] navigation. Good climbs, great descents, wonderful tattie pot +free beer afterwards.**

- Martin Roberts



I haven't done many races this year but surprisingly for me London Marathon has to be my race of the year. I initially entered to (i) try and achieve a pb, and with a view to qualifying for place on the ladies elite start time (ii) to help Johnnie complete his first marathon by training together over the winter. Unfortunately both reasons flew out the window due to my injury and lack of fitness. It was only a month before the marathon that I actually decided to give it a go & hopefully pace Johnny round the first 'bit' & then see what happened.

What a great day it turned out to be. A fabulous atmosphere, sizzling weather & real connection with the supporting crowd. I grinned from ear to ear for the whole of the 26.2 miles and seemed to float round on adrenalin. I managed to keep up with Johnny for all of it too. He

loved it and gained so much from the experience after the inevitable sickness from such effort.

- Chris Preston

**My favourite race of the year was Coniston - my first, and so far only, race in the Lakes. The race itself was great, good atmosphere, plenty of big ups and downs, and long ridges with great views. And the event was made more enjoyable by the after race ceilidh and by camping in the field with so many other Toddiess and their families. Hopefully I'll be able to make it a regular thing and eventually find a better way to get down from Coniston Old Man!**

- Phil Cook



*I'll stick with... Alice's Run 10k. A true multi terrain race: wet grassy field start, crush to get onto the canal path, road, cobbles, track, road, mud, puddles, pavement, woods, through a front garden! and a school field finish... its local, for a good cause and has a surprising amount of up and down for a run from Mytholmroyd to Hebden and back - what more could you ask for?*

- Richard B

Has to be Holme Moss. I think it's a great race anyway: pity that other commitments mean I

can't do it in 2010 when it's an English Championship race. In 2009 it was so amazingly wet, almost unbelievable: we were running along, not just streams, not just rivers, but actually raging torrents, and all this water had come down during the race. And I did it to see whether my compartment syndrome had been overcome by magic physiotherapy. And it seemed it had: I took 4 1/2 hrs over the race (not all that bad in the circles) and the compartment syndrome did not kick in. I've not run for as long as that at any time since 2006 when the dreaded affliction first struck.

Unfortunately this was a chimera: the compartment syndrome reared its ugly head again fairly soon after: not sure why I got away with it at Holme Moss, but perhaps all that water kept the limb cool and reduced the swelling. Be that as it may, I've lined myself up for surgery, and now expect this to happen this side of Christmas.

- Peter Ehrhardt





*Powdery snow, blue skies, warm sunshine. In England?! Yes, it's true. The Half Trog back in February. Two joyous hours spent running about on the moors that stirred childhood memories of the thrill of waking up to fresh snow and all the fun to be had. I had such a good time I wish I'd done the Full!*  
- Helen Hodgkinson

**I have two: No1: Whernside fell race, because just like last year the hot sun shone all day, the view from the top of Whernside was gorgeous, the descent off Great Coum is ace, the village of Dent was idyllic in the sunshine, and I got to lie in the stream at the end to cool down. The only downside was there were no other Toddies there... No 2: it hasn't happened yet but it will be the Calderdale Way Relay, because you can't beat running on home terrain, knowing so many people who are out running or cheering others on, and Calderdale getting overtaken by more than a 1000 fell runners for a day is pretty amazing.**

- Sarah Warburton



I got to the top of the first climb, feeling strong, Ian Holmes and Rob Jebb are a little bit behind - Harriers v Cyclists must be my favourite race of the year. I suppose I should mention that they were carrying bikes up the hill and when the ground levelled out they came past never to be seen again.

Really good informal event with lots of banter, varied course, finishing with a pint or two in the pub. Always plenty to laugh at - a spectacular head first into the mud dismount from a cyclist a few years ago was memorable. This year it was good to see Jane cycling through a very muddy ploughed field as if she was on tarmac and who could forget Clive in his spiderman outfit and for some reason missing his saddle!

Also really enjoyed some of the English Champs events especially Dent and Tebay.  
- Dave Collins

*I'd like to ride rough-shod over the rules and choose a series rather than a single race. So I'm having all my counters in the Runfurther Ultra series;*

1. **The Haworth Hobble**, for the feeling of it being like visiting an old, grumpy friend. A Very Yorkshire race somehow.
2. **The Calderdale** for the banter, teamwork, and bananas.
3. **The Fellsman** for the sense of adventure and vague menace.
4. **The Long Tour of Bradwell** for the slightly hysterical hilarity on route and the chance to visit A+E après route.

*For more insight or clarity for any of the above please watch; 1) Last of the Summer Wine 2) Five Go Adventuring Again 3) An American Werewolf in London 4) Holby City.*

- Colin Duffield



**My favourite race this year was 2 really. It was the Brecons Fans Race Weekend and consisted of Pen Y Fan (AS 3.5m super steep decent) on Saturday and then on the Sunday Fan Y Big (BM 10m picturesque and dramatic horseshoe route).**

**It was great going to Wales for the weekend and meeting lots of new people from clubs I'd never heard of. Brecon also has a gazillion pubs so a decent pub crawl in between races was a must!**

- Rachel Skinner

The Good Shepherd...

It's on the doorstep. It was warm and sunny. I dropped off a water bottle on route to the start, which was VERY welcome half-way round. It tested me without killing me. I was surrounded by Toddies of a similar ability making it more interesting. I knew where I was going for a change. Andy McFie gave me a bottle of beer from his team prize.

- Paul Brannigan





*I'm opting for the Eyam half marathon held in May. Having had a terrible race at Eyam in a heatwave in 2004 it was good to have another go, and satisfying to knock nine minutes off my time. This time the race ended in a downpour, Shame about the dishcloth t-shirts – why do they bother?*

*- Andrew Bibby*



Race to recover from knee operation in order to do some races. But on reflection, not exactly a favourite...

*- Dave O'N*



**1. Langdale – swinger for club trophy (best performance, so said Phil). (Also thanks to Brendan Bolland for directions)**

**2. OMM – really brought out my + partner's best assets – endurance, orienteering route choice, preparation, training & correct kit choice (we came second – Nick carried it all)**

**- Ben Crowther**

The Ultra Tour de Mont Blanc. Why ? The atmosphere, the spectacular scenery, the people. Pitting yourself against the climbs, the distance, pushing the limits of endurance. And finally... finishing!!

*- Richard Leonard*



Ben Nevis was my favourite. A fantastic atmosphere being among all the other competitors as we were piped around the start field. The weather was wild, wet and windy and the route soon resembled a mud slide in Pakistan! All the way along supporters were out cheering us on. A long steady plod up to the summit then a fantastic descent : slipping and sliding at break neck speed before hitting the road and into the finish field. The night out was fantastic : beers, more beers! meeting old friends and making new ones. A brill weekend! Why not get lots more Toddies up there next year, there`s not a race like it!! Dropping your kegs is not compulsory!!!

*- Sue Roberts*

*Coniston. Why? Finished in front of Peter Ehrhardt? No, it's one of my most enjoyable Lakeland races*

*- Barry*



**Norland Moor. My first top 10 finish, was in 12<sup>th</sup> most of the way round the moor, worked really hard to overtake 2 runners in front just before the big descent. Passed Dave walking his dog who spurred me on. Made sure I didn't get overtaken on the flat finish. 7 m, 48 mins.**

**- Dan Taylor**

*Difficult, did well at the Longs this year but overall got to go for LANGDALE. To get points in a Champ race and beat the time I did in 2007 by nearly 40 mins was very pleasing (2.29).*

*(However, beating our club champion at WASDALE comes a close second).*

*- Alastair Rhodes Dawson*





The CCC – Coumayer-Champex – Chamonix. 60 miles and lots of climbing, an amazing experience – 23 ¾ hours including five 750m climbs, three of these in the dark where you could see head torches way above you. The finish coming down in Chamonix where the streets were lined with people giving you a hero's welcome. Awesome.

- Mandy

**My favourite race for 2009 is the Good Shepherd because I run Elise, she pulls me along which is great, and know I can get lost.**

**- Moyra Parfitt**



Snowdonia Marathon, Oct 24<sup>th</sup>

As I stood in the queue being lashed and beaten by the wind and rain, the last thing I wanted to do was run a marathon. Amazingly, once the race started, the weather Gods were kind. Road running through the mountains is fabulous – you can look at the scenery instead of the ground. It's euphoric stuff! And a year of hilly running in Calderdale made that last killer hill seem EASY! I raced past people that last five miles, and loved every second

-Joolz

*Haweswater ½ Marathon – March. Despite being the only*

*Toddie on a Stainland Lions bus, this was a varied half marathon, very scenic, undulation, steep hills and great cakes afterwards.*

*- Mel Blackhurst*



**Well, for me this year it has to be the Lytham St Annes 5K Monster dash! I managed to win - beating 47 other zombies, ghosts and other assorted scary creatures in a time of 19:21! Not that impressive really - but "a win's a win", "you can only beat who turns up on the day" etc. etc. After over 20 years running it was nice to actually be first for once**

**- Simon Galloway**

My year was dominated by IronMan Lanzarote. But, for running events, the Harriers v Cyclists is a great laugh. Fast and furious and not too serious.

- Simon Anderton



***My fav race for 2009 is the 'Good Shepherd'. I always run with Moyra, the last three years. We always have a blast, not really treating it as a race, more like a day out in the hills...***

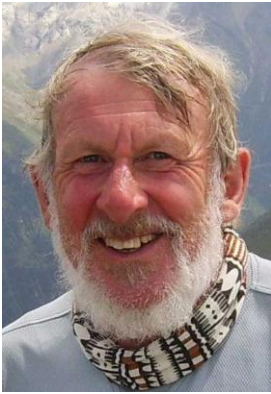
***BRILL!***

***- Elise***

*Fiensdale: When not hidden in the mist like this year, Parlick looks the way a hill ought to look, with steep grassy slopes rising from the plains beneath. Once up top, the amazing peat landscape makes you wonder if you've been transported to Mars.*

*Lauren*





Coniston. The only real race I've done this year! A complete fell race. logical circuit, variety of terrain and lots of route variations and chances to go wrong.

- Trevor S

Apart from the Bunny Score Event! ...has to be the Lakeland 50. Although somewhat biased, having helped plan the route, it is a particularly delightful mix of trails and paths around the more Eastern fells. By crossing the ridges, rather than going along them, it provides a different aspect to the Lake District and takes you to places you wouldn't visit on most fell runs. Tough, and runnable, but with generous cut

offs, it is a great race for anyone working their way up through ultra distances.



## GP Blog Spot

The mists of my mind swirl round the patch of dim-low-vis-grey of my memory at my recent attempt at GP hero-making. Failure. It stares you in the face and slaps you like a fat dead haddock, the burning shame of failure and utter impotence at the inability to do anything about a race that is now over. Just knowing I sat watching the last gate at the top of Great Gable Close as others more able than I filed passed (ok, some were puking as well). Shame, Like the bang of an old Iron prison door, locked there in the head box for ever. So after that lovely little exhausting wasdale event (and don't worry, ladies, as I found a new source of my favourite electro-exite tablets from Indo-china, I now have a years supply of 'Big fat's' fizzy blue 'viagra-nuun'). So I'll be up and running again on all cylinders in as short space of time, almost as short as my First Kimm blue Running shorts. That should help to swell the ranks, if you know what I mean.

After the delights of Wasdale, I was treated to a most gentlemanly lift back with Al (Well done on your first long.... there is a hint that just training for 16 miles max before a 21 mile race works...) and Mr James (I'm not sure which Club I belong to so I'll get my wife to join Tod to ease my conscience) Logue who kindly bought us a refreshing break to pick up a beer to drink on the way back... proper recovery drink!

So Dentdale – Tricky, short fast Dave Collins beater of a race... after 2 weeks hard drinking, err, training in France, OR a 3 night stag do on a Scottish island at a stag do with sea kayaks, running, caber and shot, shooting, whisky and MTB-ing on the menu... Humm time to consider options of the overall results any plan the last few races perhaps... decision decisions...

Bum, Due to incompetence I am not going to even qualify for a GP place this year! I'll have to do it all again next year! Not a bad thing, I think I'll do GP, Classic Lakes 6 (ok I only finished three this year but did qualify!) and the Old County Tops in May?, plus a few MM's. Not much to have to negotiate with the wife, and more importantly yelling children! I would have come a decent place as well after achieving a once in a lifetime (so far) goal of beating Dave Collins by 8 minutes at Langdale Phew, and he had a gud un! So onward with the training courses and keep up those sessions to improve myself, oh and er other runner too, heh heh! I'll attempt to keep meself in the A team, but if not try to be a good club runner for our merry band of Toddites. Weeee!!! saying I won't qualify, Unless I can find a way to get up and down to Dunnerdale in about 4 hours? Maybe the steam train out of Hebden goes past the start? I'll have to check this out? Or find a mate with a fast motorbike to take me up and down? But up and coming is one of the best night of the year when I get to dance my pants off again – I swear this is great training to dace for about three hours, vertically or horizontally, My wife is soooooo Lucky! Good Luck to all for next years efforts, well done for this years and lets hopefully get loads of new blood in the system form all coaching activities and encouragements that we can muster.

Grand Prix Bloggin' off!...

Well, failing to get in the GP was the worst bit of my attempting to do all of them by early on missing a short fell race then ending up doing none of them dues to family and other commitments! Rubbish! Training and getting another health prize is all good with a health snap shot of me looking snappy in the Todmorden News, Ah the glory to bathe in... I'll be getting in early next year and getting as many of the fell races and possibly the Trail races in to cover a couple of bases and be a part of the overall GP not just my beloved Fell GP! Well done to everyone in the club for supporting such a good club and well done to those who have made it to the dizzy heights of being a GP finisher!