

Tod News 9/10/08

Drama struck the Bronte Way Fell Race on Sunday after a bad fall at Bronte Bridge left one runner requiring an air ambulance rescue. Fortunately, after hospital checks the injured man was found to have no broken bones but still nursing a severely sprained ankle.

For the rest of the 175 runners the 8 mile point to point course, that started at Wycoller and finished on the doorstep of the Fleece Inn on Haworth Main Street, was a more enjoyable experience under glorious blue skies and sunshine. After the previous day's heavy rain the ground was heavy going but winner Lee Athersmith of Bingley Harriers excelled in the conditions and had a clear margin of more than 3 minutes at the finish. Paul Brannigan was first Todmorden runner to complete the course in 35th place, followed by Simon Galloway in 49th. Mel Blackhurst was first Todmorden lady, with Kath Brierley not far behind her. Both took home prizes with Mel 1st lady V40 and Kath 2nd LV45.

Todmorden Harriers recorded a number of excellent results at last week's Rab Mountain Marathon. The event, held over two days in the remote northern extremities of the Lake District, tested the competitors' ability both in mountain navigation and fell running. It was the second running of the event and the entrance was up to around 250 teams, from all over Britain.

Harrier Ben Crowther and partner Sophie Brown had a superb event to finish 6th mixed couple, whilst Colin Duffield and Jon Sutcliffe battled in out in the hyper competitive veteran men's pair category to finish 9th pair and a pleasing 21st overall. Their fellow Harrier, and seasoned mountain athlete, David Wilson went it alone to finish 13th senior solo man and 24th overall.

Tod News 16/10/08

The hills above Langdale were the destination for nine Todmorden Harriers on Saturday. The 14 mile fell race, which includes over 4000ft of ascent, takes in several sizeable peaks over tricky terrain.

The warm Autumnal weather provided perfect conditions on the day even if it was still wet underfoot. Rob Jebb of Bingley Harriers held a comfortable lead at the finish to complete the course in 2:05:07 but the places behind were much closer in a highly competitive field of nearly 400 runners. Jon Wright of Todmorden Harriers finished in an excellent 10th position, with Andrew Wrench in 20th. Alistair Rhodes-Dawson was 3rd Todmorden runner home in 49th.

Lauren Jeska was first Todmorden lady home just past the 3 hour mark, followed by Chris Preston and Sue Roberts.

It was a family affair at the Beefy's Nab Fell Race at Oxenhope on Sunday. The scenic 3 mile route is a fast dash from Leeming Reservoir up and around Nab Hill. Harrier Martin Roberts finished in 4th place overall, and 1st V50, whilst wife Sue finished 6th lady, and 1st LV45 despite her exertions the day before. Daughter Annie, running for organising club Keighley and Craven, finished 2nd lady.

... Thanks to Colin for covering whilst I was away yeti hunting in the Himalayas...

Tod News 4/12/08

Two Todmorden Harriers joined 150 that braved icy temperatures at the David Staff Memorial Fell Race in Darwen. The course is a short steep affair with 1200 feet of ascent crammed into its 5 miles. The frozen route took runners up two climbs on their way to Darwen Tower and back down again via Aggie's Staircase, which was treacherous in conditions that were more suited to Ski Sunday than running. A climb back up the hill followed before another descent to the finish.

The race was won in a new course record by Blackburn's Ben Fish in 31:29, with Todmorden postman, and Calder Valley runner, Alex Whittem in 2nd place.

Harrier Jeremy Godden finished in 77th with Keith Parkinson, making a return to fell racing following injury, in 91st place.

At the Leeds Abbey Dash 10k, which attracted a 5000 strong field, Harrier Richard Butterwick set a new personal best time of 40:27 to finish in 368th place – a minute ahead of celebrity runner Nell McAndrew - with Todmorden's Carl Heald in 2,547th and Myra Wells in 3,029th.

Tod News 11/12/08

Todmorden Harriers Annual Presentation Evening and Christmas Party, held at Todmorden Cricket Club, was a particularly special occasion this year as it marked the 30th anniversary of the club's inception.

More than 100 members turned out to reflect on a year, assisted by an excellent presentation by Phil Hodgson, that had seen many tremendous highlights that included an individual English Championship bronze medal, a Lakeland Classics trophy, entrants in international marathons as well as on a less competitive note many members taking part in a special 30k anniversary run in the summer and even commemorative ale being produced by Bare Arts Brewery for the club. On a sadder note, honorary club president and founding member Eric Stuttard had passed away at the start of the year.

It was in his honour that a new award for the best performance in the English Fell Championships was named, and the first recipient was Chris Smale. Chris had had an outstanding year and was rewarded for his hard work with a coveted bronze medal for finishing 3rd in the Vet 40s.

Also on the national scene, Jon Wright had become the Series winner in the Lakeland Classics, which comprised of six of the toughest long fell races in the Lakes.

In the English Fell Championships the ladies team once again continued their recent years' progress to finish in their best ever 6th placing. Jane Leonard and Moyra Parfitt narrowly missed out on individual medals both finishing 4th in their categories, with Kath Brierley and Chris Preston finishing 7th and 11th respectively in their age groups. Ali Richards finished the season in an admirable 23rd place in the overall standings.

The men's veteran 50 team matched the ladies with their own 6th place, with the overall men's team finishing 13th and the Vet 40 team in 9th. In terms of individual performances as well as Chris's medal, Dave Collins had finished 17th in the V50.

Current President Jim Smith highlighted the good work of many members in running the club and assisting at the club's many races. After a vote on the night club secretary Derek Donohue was named 'Clubman of the Year' for his contribution.

The club's own Championships attracted a high number of entrants with a record 20 achieving qualification for the Club's Grand Prix and 84 taking part in at least one race.

Kath Brierley triumphed to be named GP Champion and was also successful in the club's Fell Championship, with Chris Smale winning the corresponding men's Fell award. Other awards went to Andrew Wrench as runner-up and Alistair Rhodes-Dawson in 3rd, Ali Richards as ladies runner-up, Claire Duffield (1st LV35), Jane Leonard (1st LV50) and Peter Ehrhardt (1st V60).

In the Road Championship trophies went to Mel Blackhurst, who retained the ladies title for the 3rd consecutive year, and to Richard Butterwick, in his first year at the club. Other awards went to Duncan Ritchie as runner up, Claire Duffield (1st LV35), Mel Siddall (1st LV45), Myra Wells (1st LV50), Richard O'Sullivan (1st V45), Steve Burnip (1st V50), Peter Ehrhardt (1st V60) and Ian Stansfield (1st V65).

Paul Brannigan was awarded the 'Club Champion' trophy, which requires excellent all round ability across road and fell, as well as a variety of distances.

Claire Duffield was named 'Most Improved Runner of the Year', assisted in part by the club's weekly training sessions conducted by seniors coach Graeme Wrench.

After the presentations were concluded, whilst Club Chairman Mandy Goth was referring to members participation in ultra races, triathlons, long distance cycle races, and many other interests when commenting that the club could now accurately be described as "More than just a Running Club", many members demonstrated an alternative interpretation of the motto when displaying their athletic prowess on the dance floor to Harrier Simon Anderton's band 'Big Noise' before 'DJ Branny' played the evening out with an eclectic mix of tunes from the past 30 years.

Tod News 18/12/08

Todmorden Harriers entered four teams into the prestigious Calderdale Way Relay on Sunday, joining over 1000 of the country's top fell runners on the historic trail.

The race follows the 50 mile route of the Calderdale Way, with an additional side loop to take in Stoodley Pike, and totals 12,000feet of climbing. The distance is split into 6 legs which are each run by a pair of runners within teams of 12.

With the recent thaw, conditions were wet and muddy underfoot and runners on the first couple of legs also had to contend with mist on the tops, that made finding Stoodley Pike on leg 2 a much trickier challenge than normal.

After several changes in the lead throughout the race, Salford Harriers were victorious overall ahead of Dark Peak. Todmorden's 'A' Team finished in a very respectable 13th place to improve upon last year's placing, with the performance of Sean Carey and Sean Willis of particular note as they set the fastest time of the day for leg 3.

The ladies team also put in a sterling effort to finish in an excellent 5th place, behind winners Ilkley Harriers. Provisional results also indicated good runs for the Vets team in 45th overall, and 5th Vets team, and for the mixed team in 82nd overall.

Tod News 31/12/08

A bumper turnout of 300 runners, cheered along by many supporters all around the course, enjoyed dry and milder than usual conditions for Todmorden Harriers' annual winter road race the 'Hot Toddy' on Sunday. Todmorden youngster Sean Carey set the early pace as the race emerged from Dale Street and travelled along Rochdale Road.

After turning off at Walsden Post Office, Ian Grime of Newham & Essex Beagles took control up the long climb to the Shepherd's Rest Inn, closely shadowed by Jonathon Ferguson of Rossendale Harriers. The pair opened up a substantial lead on the next group of runners who were left to battle for 3rd place.

Following a steep descent the race then returned to the town centre along Halifax Road, with Grimes opening up an unassailable lead of nearly a minute eventually crossing the finish line in 29 minutes and 41 seconds.

First Todmorden Harrier was Sean Willis in 7th place.

First female was Karen Pickles, who after taking the lead up early on Rochdale Road quickly established a strong lead that she held to the finish, almost a minute ahead of her nearest rival Amy Green of Keighley and Craven. Previous winner on several occasions, Sue Beconsall came in just behind as 3rd lady. First Todmorden lady to finish was Laura Sutcliffe.