

## Recent Press Reports (by Richard Butterwick)

**Tod News 8/01/09 Giant's Tooth, Nine Standards, Hebden 22**

Todmorden Harriers made a spectacular start to 2009 with three stellar individual performances and a team victory, before most runners had time to recover from their festive indulgences.

First off the mark was Andrew Wrench in the Giant's Tooth fell race at Ogden Water on a cold clear New Year's Day.



Attracting a field of 91 runners, including six Harriers, the three mile woodland and moorland circuit of Ogden Water, with 400 feet of ascent, was being organised for the first time by Chris & Kathryn Smale.

After quickly opening up a lead from the start, it was a lonely run as Wrench finished nearly a minute ahead of his nearest rival in 17 minutes and 21 seconds.

Todmorden ladies took the team prize led in by Claire Duffield who was 4<sup>th</sup> lady overall, behind Holmfirth's Lisa Lacon who knocked 30 seconds off her own record. Bev Wright and Louise Abdy, who was making a welcome return to racing, made up the rest of the winning team.

At the same time in Kirby Stephen, sole Todmorden entrant Lauren Jeska was 1<sup>st</sup> lady\* in the Nine Standards fell race which attracted a field of 68 runners to the eight and a half mile course featuring 1800 feet of ascent that covers an out-and-back course over road, track and fell to the Nine Standards landmark starts from the Market Square.

On Saturday, Jon Wright continued the club's perfect start to the year by winning the Hebden 22 in 3 hours 33 minutes. Amongst several other Harriers tackling this navigational test were Derek Donohue who finished in 22<sup>nd</sup> and Colin Duffield in 35<sup>th</sup>.

This event, organised by the Long Distance Walkers Association, attracted over 300 runners and walkers to a choice of the full 22 mile distance or a shorter route of 14 miles around the hills above Hebden Bridge and Mytholmroyd.

*\*It later came to light that Lauren was actually 2<sup>nd</sup> lady – but the facts should never get in the way of a good story!*

### **Tod News 15/01/09 – Mini Moorland Marathon**

Todmorden Harriers had a different focus last weekend at their annual 3 hour score orienteering event. Open to Harriers and invited guests the Mini Moorland Marathon induced a strong competitive element amongst team mates. Navigation and intelligent route planning were as important as speed, with the outcome in the balance to the end. Only when hard working organisers Richard & Jane Leonard had totted up the scores were the winners known.

Runners competed either solo or in pairs and set off at 1 minute intervals. Only receiving their marked map as they started, the first task was to quickly determine which, and the order, of the 20 checkpoints they would attempt to reach within the 3 hour time limit. Depending on location, checkpoints were worth 10, 20 or 30 points.

This year race HQ was the New Delight Inn at Colden and the scoring area covered much of the Upper Valley's hills and valleys. Marker posts were not always in obvious sight so valuable time and points were lost when runners found the correct area but couldn't spot the marker posts.

Good judgement of pace was also required to avoid losing their hard won points, with severe penalties for those returning over the allowed time limit.

Several prizes were on offer and Simon Bourne of Calder Valley Fell Runners took the overall prize with an excellent score of 270 points returning with just 3 minutes to spare, 30 points ahead of first Todmorden Harrier Alistair Rhodes-Dawson and Todmorden based Horwich RMI Harrier James Logue.

Despite a time penalty, Dave Collins had covered enough ground to take the Vet50 prize ahead of Phil Hodgson. Ben Page won the under 18 category and Trevor Smith the Vet60.

First lady was Sarah Warburton with a fantastic total of 168 points, 10 points ahead of 2nd place Mandy Goth. Calder Valley's Jackie Scarf finished 3rd lady a further 8 points back.

The pairs' competition was equally as closely fought and despite a 20 point time penalty, Charlie Boyce and Peter Bowles managed to outscore Rachel Skinner and Jeff Walker by 10 points.

The much coveted 'Golden Pigeon' award found a new home with Myra Wells and Richard Butterwick, after a significant time penalty for returning late left them with a negative score.

#### **Tod News 29/01/09- Stanbury Splash**

Todmorden Harriers' Fell Championship for 2009 got off to a muddy start on the moors above Haworth on Sunday. Twenty-five Harriers joined over 300 runners for the 7 mile Stanbury Splash. Featuring around 1200 feet of ascent, the course started with a mad muddy dash out of the quarry at Penistone Hill Country Park before a short road and track section led competitors to a steep grassy descent to the first of several icy stream crossings. After a sharp rise through soggy fields, further height was gained on another track before a turn off for an undulating loop of the moors around Ponden Kirk. Runners then retraced their steps back to the quarry on increasingly heavy ground.

It was no surprise when Bingley's Ian Holmes quickly opened up an unassailable lead to win the race, by a clear 2 minutes, for an incredible 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

After warming up with a winning performance in the junior under 16 race, Sean Carey barely had time to catch his breath before entering the senior race and finishing in an excellent 16<sup>th</sup> place. Dave Collins was 2<sup>nd</sup> Todmorden runner in, followed by Martin Roberts who took home an armful of prizes for being 2<sup>nd</sup> local runner.

The ladies race was a much closer affair with Sabine Hauswirth of Ilkley narrowly edging out Lisa Lacon of Holmfirth by 14 seconds. Despite finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> lady vet40, and 7<sup>th</sup> lady, current Todmorden ladies fell champion Kath Brierley received an early warning that she faces a tough battle to hold onto her crown this year from Lauren Jeska, who finished a couple of minutes ahead as 6<sup>th</sup> lady overall.

With several junior races also taking place, attracting a record 141 entrants, six other Todmorden youngsters were also in action including Jack Crummet who finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the under 12s.

#### **Tod News 5/02/09 – Pennine Bridleway Relay**

Todmorden Harriers narrowly missed out on a top three place in the Pennine Bridleway Relay on Sunday by just 3 seconds, after over 5 hours of racing in strong icy winds with occasional snow flurries.

The final major fell relay race of the winter covers a full circuit of the 47 mile Mary Townley Loop and attracted a record 84 teams of 10 runners to tackle the near 7000 feet of climbing along the way. The distance is split into 5 legs which are each run by a pair of different runners.

Starting at Waterfoot, the first leg follows the trail to Holme Chapel before a 'sting in the tail' climb to the finish near Coal Clough, that was made all the harder by the tough weather conditions. Chris Smale and Sean Willis made the perfect start and headed the field at the first changeover, with a 14 second advantage over 2<sup>nd</sup> placed Rossendale. Jon Wright and Andrew Wrench took over for the 12.5 mile second leg, much of it straight into the cold easterly headwind, after which the team had lost the lead to Rossendale at the changeover at Callis Bridge.

The third leg saw Calder Valley take up the lead as Todmorden slipped back to third place, with team captain Andrew Horsfall and Alistair Rhodes-Dawson maintaining the challenge. After the shortest leg from Calderbrook, Dave Collins and Ben Crowther kept the team in third, as the overall lead switched back to Rossendale. The final leg back to Waterfoot saw Horwich RMI, with Todmorden resident James Logue and teammate, make dramatic progress through the field from 6<sup>th</sup> position and in a desperate dash for the finish Andy McFie and Nick Barber were split by the Horwich pair to cruelly lose out by the narrowest of margins.

Despite the disappointment on the line, this was the best team performance for some years and reflects the growing strength of the club.

The Ladies team also put in a strong challenge for honours and battled throughout with local rivals Calder Valley and Rossendale. With Rossendale leading after leg 1, Todmorden leapfrogged Calder Valley with a strong 2<sup>nd</sup> leg by Sarah May and Lauren Jeska to take the lead, before Calder Valley took pole position on the following leg which they then held to the finish. After Rossendale had closed the gap on leg 4, ladies team captain Mel Blackhurst and Lucy Hobbs ran a strong final leg to comfortably ensure 2<sup>nd</sup> place but were unable to close the gap on the leaders.



Matching that performance were the Men's B team, who also finished as 2<sup>nd</sup> placed open B team, with new club 'B' records set by Simon Galloway and Mark Anderton on leg 3, and David Baldaro and Peter Bowles on leg 4. That helped the team to an excellent 23<sup>rd</sup> place overall.

Todmorden also had two further teams competing, and after the mixed team had held the advantage in the first two legs, the Z team then took up the initiative for the next two legs before the mixed team edged out the Z team on the final leg by 4 minutes and 2 places, finishing in 57<sup>th</sup> overall.

#### **Tod News 12/02/09- Wadsworth Trog & Half Trog, Rombald's Stride, Winter Hill**

Whilst the wintery weather caused the postponement of Todmorden Harriers' AGM last week, there was no interruption to the running, with the club revelling in alpine landscapes over the weekend. Under normal conditions Calder Valley's Wadsworth Trog and Half-Trog fell races, starting from Old Town Cricket Club, are both tough undertakings, but with deep drifts of snow over the moors they required considerable extra effort this year.

The Half Trog follows a figure of eight route through High Brown Knoll to Cock Hill and returns via Wadsworth Moor. Lee Athersmith of Bingley matched his result of the previous year, albeit 20 minutes slower due to the tough conditions, edging out Shaun Godsman of the host club. First Todmorden runner was Peter Bowles in 15<sup>th</sup> place, closely followed by Paul Cotton in 18<sup>th</sup> and Lee McCluskey in 25<sup>th</sup>.

Whilst the snow and sunshine made for picturesque views, it also increased the navigational difficulty and after last year's ladies winner Lisa Lacon had gone astray on the return leg, Todmorden's Lucy Hobbs headed the ladies field in her first attempt at the race from Holmfirth's



Peter Bowles

Jacqui Dews, before she suffered her own route difficulties that put her out of contention, allowing a Holmfirth one-two as Lisa Lacon recovered to 2<sup>nd</sup> place. With Todmorden taking 3<sup>rd</sup> place with Chris Preston, 4<sup>th</sup> Helen Hodgkinson and Elise Milnes in 7<sup>th</sup> they narrowly lost out on the ladies team prize.

The 20 mile full Trog with a total of 4000ft of ascent, equivalent to climbing Ben Nevis, follows a similar course at the start and finish but with an additional middle section of 11 miles taking in Top Withens. Bingley's Rob Jebb blazed a trail from start and held a comfortable 8 minute advantage over Calder Valley's Adam Breaks at the finish.

First Todmorden finisher in 59<sup>th</sup> was Kath Brierley who had made steady progress through the field to cross the line as 6<sup>th</sup> lady. Jeff Walker and Rhys Watkins were the Harriers' other finishers.

Jon Wright continued his bright start to the year finishing joint first in the 25 mile Rombald's Stride on Sunday. The challenge walk over Baildon & Ilkley Moors and Otley Chevin, organised by Airedale scouts, is open to runners and walkers. This year's inviting conditions attracted over 350 entrants, with Bev Wright and Colin Duffield also competing.

At the aptly named Winter Hill fell race also on Sunday, Todmorden's Andy McFie and new club member Dan Taylor tackled the 11 mile looping course that climbs to the summit three times to total 2,700 feet of ascent. The icy conditions proved a blessing in some ways as the normally boggy route was firmer than usual allowing for fast progress to be made, with Simon Bailey of West Mercia taking a narrow win over Darren Kay of Horwich.

#### **Tod News 19/02/09 – Radcliffe Trail**

Todmorden Harriers continued their strong start to the year with two top ten placings and individual and ladies team winners at the weekend.

The opening race in the Harriers' 2009 Road Championship was the Radcliffe Trail Race with barely a stretch of tarmac in sight. The race makes its way through an area of rejuvenated Lancastrian industrial heartland to the south of Bolton, following nature trails, former railway lines and canal paths.

As with previous occasions when the race has been included in the championship, it tempted some of the club's runners who are more usually associated with success on the fells, as well as newer members making their debut in a championship race. With the recent thaw, conditions underfoot were very muddy and made for sapping progress around the 12 mile course for the 220 finishers.

Jon Wright was first Todmorden finisher in 4<sup>th</sup> place less than a minute behind the winner, Wilmslow's Damien Nicholls. Andrew Wrench was 2<sup>nd</sup> Harrier across the line in 8<sup>th</sup> place followed by Sarah May who had a tremendous run to finish 27<sup>th</sup> overall, and first lady overall. Along with Lucy Hobbs and Bev Wright, this meant that the club comfortably took the honours for first ladies team.

#### **Tod News 26/02/09- Ilkley Moor**

Todmorden Harriers had further success this week with Chris Smale 1<sup>st</sup> V45, Sean Carey 1<sup>st</sup> U18 and Sarah May 3<sup>rd</sup> lady as 27 Harriers joined a record 400 strong field for the Ilkley Moor Fell Race on Sunday. The 5 mile race with 1300 feet of ascent and descent, which has a reputation for being demanding and not for beginners, took place in mild and breezy conditions.

The route started from Wells Road on the outskirts of the town and after a bottle neck past The Tarn, the runners soon spread out on the climb past the Cow and Calf Rocks. A further climb to the Pancake Stone was followed by a fast and tricky descent down Backstone Beck; before a bridge crossing and a long climb all the way back up the other side of the beck. After a level section interrupted with a short steep scramble, a further level section took the field to a longer steep ascent up to the Badger Stone at the highest point of the race. A fast descent followed before a sting in the tail final climb led onto a second fast plunge down the aptly named Weary Hill to the finish.

Ian Holmes of Bingley Harriers soon took up the lead and held it to take a comfortable win. Chris Smale was first Todmorden runner in 10<sup>th</sup>, closely followed by Andrew Wrench. Sean Carey finished in 16<sup>th</sup> winning the U18 prize, following on from his earlier win in the U16 junior races which themselves had attracted over 250 youngsters. Craig Stansfield made a promising debut for the Harriers with a solid run to finish 76<sup>th</sup>.

Sarah May was first Todmorden lady home, continuing her profitable start with the club. With Jo Waites of neighbouring club Calder Valley taking the ladies prize, Sarah had to settle for 3<sup>rd</sup> on this occasion. Lauren Jeska and Claire Duffield were the next Todmorden ladies as the team made a strong showing.

#### **Tod News 5/03/09 - Noonstone**

The Noon Stone Fell Race attracted a large field of 251 hardy runners to Todmorden on Saturday. Whilst the morning mist had lifted considerably by the start at 12 noon, grey and cloudy skies remained throughout in perhaps the kindest weather experienced for several years. However, with the 9 mile race incorporating a total of 2,300 feet of ascent and a sizeable unmarked navigational section, it was still a serious undertaking.



Craig Stansfield



Helen Hodgkinson

Starting from Mankinholes, the race quickly rose up the first steep climb of the day to Coldwell Hill, before plunging back down to London Road losing much of the 600 feet height just gained. The route then immediately climbed back up past Stoodley Pike and then down again to Withens Clough. The third and longest gradient of the day took the strung out field across pathless open moorland and bog to the highest point of the race at the Little Holder Stones. After very briefly following the Pennine Way from Warland Reservoir runners were soon back onto rough ground as they descended over Langfield Edge. The final short climb of the day then took them back up to Coldwell Hill and a steep testing decent returned them to the finish at Mankinholes.

The early pace was set by Calder Valley's Shaun Godsman and Alex Whittem, as they opened up a small lead on the first climb with Sheffield University's Callum Gilhooley and Todmorden Harriers' Sean Willis leading the chasers.

Whittem initially took up the lead on the muddy descent to London Road as Willis was dropped from the leading group. As the race progressed

further a two way battle ensued between Godsman and Gilhooley, with the Sheffield student looking favourite as he opened up a small gap in the latter stages. However the local man's experience win by 7 seconds, with Whittem ultimately finishing a further minute behind in 3<sup>rd</sup> place.



Emma Osenton

First Harrier home was Willis in 6<sup>th</sup> closely followed by Chris Smale in 7<sup>th</sup>, taking 1st and 2nd in the Vet40 category respectively. The men's team prize went to Calder Valley Fell Runners edging out Todmorden.

Zanthe Wray of Sheffield University quickly established herself as first lady and a strong run all the way round ensured that she comfortably remained so to the finish, with a 4 minute advantage over her nearest rival Heather Dawe of Ilkley. First Todmorden lady was Kath Brierley in 6<sup>th</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vet40. Along with Emma Osenton and Helen Hodgkinson, Todmorden comfortably won the ladies team prize.



Kath Brierley

After the extensive prize giving, a Todmorden Harriers spokesman thanked the land owners for their help putting the race on, the landlord and staff of the Top Brink Inn for their excellent

hospitality throughout the day, and the many volunteer marshals and other helpers.

## Who's up for a "thlon" then???

### The TODDIE Tri / Dua / Aqua / Bi / Pent / Hept ..... Section

For anyone out there who hasn't sussed that there's quite a lot of us doing, or aiming to do, triathlons, duathlons, aquathlons and cyclo sportives, you're welcome to join in!

Quite a few of us are now to be found down at Tod pool, particularly on Mon, Tues and Thurs evenings (there's often more of us than the regular punters!).

We're also organising plenty of long rides out on road bikes at the weekend and, starting Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March there could be occasional road bike time trials and even visits to the Velodrome. We might even manage to resurrect the Toddie chain gang when the evenings get a bit lighter... and just wait till the reservoirs get a bit warmer, we'll be wild swimming at every opportunity. ..Bring it on! - we could do with at least eight days in a week.

The cross training helps build overall fitness and is great for your running fitness or, is something to do if your running bits are injured.

Anyone interested should consult the Toddies Forum - see info on what's happening in the Cycling/Triathlon/Duathlon/Aquathlon section.

(We've not got into Biathlons, pentathlons etc yet but watch this space. We could probably invent our own "thlons" - suggestions, in person please, to the next Boy's or Girls Beerathlon)

**BollockonBobathlon**