

Auld Lang Syne athletes brave the snow

PEDANTS maintain that the millennium ended last weekend and not at the end of 1999 but notwithstanding exactitude when Dave Woodhead publicised his 1999 Auld Lang Syne Race as the last fell race of the millennium, even he was astounded when 520 runners turned up to race, leaving the mathematicians to their arcane debate.

Last Sunday's Briscoe's Brewery Auld Lang Syne Race was merely the last fell-race of the year 2000 and so only (only?) 280 runners turned up at Penistone Hill for their New Year's Eve outing.

A fortnight is a long time for English weather forecasters and whereas two weeks ago for The Stoop race the route was a trog through mud, for Sunday's event runners had to overcome ankle deep snow, sheet ice and bogs covered with ice shards which readily tore open bare ankles.



Ilkley Harrier Nick Pearce on the Auld Lang Syne race.

Traditional events demand traditional outcomes and Ian Holmes did his duty by winning the event (in a time of 35 mins 30 sec) as he has for the last seven years to reinforce the view of many in the sport that he is the greatest all-round fellrunner of his generation. Fellrunning is not conducive to television coverage and so Ian remains largely unknown outside his sport in contrast with athletes in other minority sports who can capture the public imagination. But such is the power of television.

Skyrac provided seven runners with David Young, who excels in fast events, the first home in 34th place in 41.33. Then came 99th Graham Breeze (45.32), 110th John Forsyth (46.20), 147th Nigel Kirkbright (48.28), 156th Ralph Warman (49.00), 179th Max Wood (51.12) and Malcolm Coles was 192nd in 52.17.

No Skyrac prizewinners but since all competitors took home a bottle of beer-brewed for the event by Otley's Paul Briscoe there were no complaints.

Dave Woodhead mounted his first New Year's Eve event in 1994 whereas Allan Greenwood's New Year's Day Giant's Tooth Race from Ogden Reservoir is only in its second year. Mounting a fell race on the morning after New Year's Eve implies a degree of optimism and in the FRA Calendar Allan had utilised the aphorism "If you can get there the race is on" which was reassuring given the weekend of snow.

Forty-one competitors turned up with Steven Macina (Pudsey & Bramley) winning in 19 min 6 sec which was a slower time than in 2000 reflecting the difficult ground conditions.

For Skyrac Malcolm Coles celebrated his third race in three days by winning the Veterans' Over 60 prize finishing 25th in 24.09 whilst Graham Breeze finished 14th in 22.18 which was only good enough to take the second Over-50 prize.

Of course Skyrac is an all-round athletics club and its road runners and juniors were present at the weekend's Jolly Holly Jog 10K event near Ripon.

Steve O'Neill came home in 7th position

and Peter Rawnsley, after demonstrating that in a contest between himself and a stile he will come second, limped home in 42 min 58 sec.

For 2001 Skyrac AC is looking forward to the start of construction of the new £50,000 club house and it was reassuring for the future of the club that its junior boys took the first four places in the Jolly Holly Jog Fun Run and Skyrac girls placed four runners in the first six of their event.

Skyrac is the premier North Leeds athletics club and you will receive a warm welcome if you ring (0113) 229 0924.

Ilkley Harriers

OVER the New Year's weekend, Ilkley Harriers were following the club motto of "Running on the road, up and down the fells and across the country."

Across the country, Ripon Runners' Jolly Holly Jog is a popular end-of-year run. The 10km race takes in the scenic parkland of Studley Royal.

Andy Wade raced to second place in 35.29, a very respectable time on the mixed terrain, and helping Ilkley Harriers to take the men's team prize. Carl Smith was 22nd in 40.21; Geoff Howarth's 23rd place and 40.29 made him 48th in 42.42.

Next was another super-vet, Norman Bush second Vet over-60 in 51st place and 43.04; and Di Kitchen third lady (and first lady Vet) in 54th place and 43.13. Richard Gray was 99th in 46.42; Steve Fletcher 164th in 52.05.

Emma Barclay and Andy Kitchen were also running.

On the fells, the Auld Lang Syne race at Howarth presented a strong draw to the club's fell-runners. Ian Holmes won for the eighth year. Nick Pearce was 40th in 42 mins and Mike Baldwin 60th in 45.30.

It was great to have Tracey Ambler once again running in Ilkley colours for an impressive third ladies' place, and with Sally Malir (47 mins), Joyce Marshall, Richard Malir, Keith Wood, Michael Gooch and Ronnie Shackleton all enjoyed a great race and the free beer at the finish.

And on the road, Eddie Irvine finished an impressive 8th place in a blistering 32.28 in the Clitheroe 10km, with David Matthews 37th in 35.43; Mark Iley 57th in 37.02 (a personal best by two seconds); and Peter Shields 90th in 39.10. Made a New Year's Resolution to get



Skyrac's Graham Breeze leads this trio in the Auld Lang Syne Race



Chevin Chase.....some facts

Dear Editor,

Your recent report on the Chevin Chase Boxing Day run was not entirely accurate about the historical antecedents of the event. This was initiated by my former wife and myself, helped by a local Airedale athlete Bill McGrogan, fellow Scout, Venture Scout