

Holmes makes it ten out of ten in Stoop

IAN Holmes made it ten out of ten on Sunday when he won The Stoop fell-race from Penistone Hill Country Park, near Haworth for the tenth consecutive year.

Local hero Ian is universally recognised as the outstanding fell runner of his generation and his trophies include four victories in the British Championship, three English Championships and victories in most of the classic races including four wins at Ben Nevis.

The five mile Stoop Race, which is traditionally the last race in the FRA Calendar before Christmas, is always a cause for celebration but even those who are familiar with Dave and Eileen Woodhead's prize handouts were surprised that the goody bag given to all finishers contained a packet of Polo mints with a special wrapper recognising Ian's achievement.

There is actually a cricket pitch on the top of Penistone Hill and with an elevation of just over 1000 feet, when events on the cricket field are less than engrossing the views on a warm sunny day can be splendid.

Fellrunners however associate Penistone Hill with the full rigours of winter because The Woodentops (as the Woodheads whimsically describe themselves) promote their five fell races from this venue between October and January.

Normally in winter, as the wind turbines on nearby Ovenden Moor testify, the hill is swept by biting winds but on Sunday there was calm in the air, the ground had a sprinkling of snow but ice covered the bogs which punctuate the race route slowing Ian on his way to victory in 28 mins 47secs.

Ian's victory was all the sweeter because this race was his first return to the same moors on which two months ago he tore his knee open when competing in the Withins Skyline event and every one of the 228 competitors was delighted to see his return to competition.

For Skyrac husband and wife team Graham and Cheryl Grinstead were 93rd in 38.58 and 201st in 48.34 respectively whilst Graham Breeze and

Malcolm Coles, who never let a weekend pass without competing in a fell-race somewhere, were 75th in 37.51 and 122nd in 41.10.

Skyrac train every Tuesday and Thursday from their Nunroyd Park Clubhouse, Guiseley. Telephone (0113) 229 0924 for a warm welcome.

Thursday, December 21, 2000

65