

A DECADE ago The Stoop Fell Race over Haworth Moor attracted around 200 runners but last Sunday it drew a record field of 321 with a further 112 in the junior race.

It is a sign of the times as the 2007 Ben Nevis Race, which accepts 500 entries but which will not actually take place until September 2007, is already full with a waiting list of dozens of frustrated runners.

The Ben, like many pre-entry races, adheres to the crude 'first come, first served' principle.

However, when around one quarter of these entries will not make the start line and Ian Holmes (Bingley), a five times winner and the greatest fellrunner of the past decade, does not get a place because he has not yet applied for a race ten months in advance, the phrase 'Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark' springs to mind.

Ian won The Stoop race for ten consecutive years but last Sunday he was only third in 31.08.

He is now 41 and so generously allowed youngsters Rob Hope (P&B) finishing in 30.12 and Andi Jones (Salford) 30.31 to bask in some of his reflected glory. Horsforth's Alistair Brownlee was missing from the line-up through injury having also missed the European Championships.

First Lady was Natalie White (Bingley) 28th overall in 37.06.

For Skyrac Robert Pritchard and Graham Breeze finished five seconds apart in the 2005 race and on Sunday the gap had stretched to 16 seconds with them finishing in 91st (41.36) and 95th (41.52) respectively with Graham retaining his First V60 status. Malcolm Coles was 191st in 48.12.

Running is fun and the people at Skyrac are really nice. The club is introducing low key 'turn up, run and then have a drink in the clubhouse bar' evenings for beginners every month. Why not come down to the Clubhouse on Nunroyd Park on Tuesday or Thursday evenings at 7.30pm, ring 01943 874046 or look at www.skyrac.org.uk?

Skyrac's under-17s heptathlete Laura Griggs competed at the recent indoor meeting held at the English Institute of Sport Centre in Sheffield.

Running indoors for the first time on the 200 metre track Laura came 8th in her 600 metre race in a time of 1.52.10 and placed 16th in the senior ladies' triple jump with 9.26.

Skyrac's Charlotte James is back in training after a serious foot injury and will be running in the sprints at the North of England Indoor Championship in January contesting the 60 metre and 200 metre girls' under-15s. Charlotte, who attends Prince Henry's GS, Otley, is rated in the next generation of 400 metre runners within the next four years to break 50 seconds for the one lap.

Skyrac will also be sending a small team of track and field athletes to the Reebok Manchester Indoor Meetings, organised by Sale Harriers, during January 2007.

A club official said: "Skyrac Athletic Club would like to wish a Merry Christmas to all our friends within the sport, all our volunteers and the people who work to make Skyrac one of Yorkshire's most successful athletic clubs.

"A special thank you to the coaches who have developed a scientific training schedule for the athletes and finally a Merry Christmas to all our senior athletes and to our juniors who have competed with distinction and shown true sportsmanship and kept the Skyrac flag flying high.

Otley Athletic Club

AFTER a soggy old start to December, the perfect winter running conditions finally arrived on Sunday with a cold, crisp sunny day rewarding the 24 Otley runners who turned out for the final race in the club's Ken Dixon Handicap Series.



Ilkley Harrier Malcolm Pickering who finished 76th and Skyrac's Graham Breeze (yellow vest), who was first over 60, are at the forefront of this group in The Stoop Fell Race. PICTURE: Tony Fickes

While the handicap races are supposedly 'social' events every point is hotly contested and post-race favourite to win the series, Mark Clifford, was giving nothing away.

A testing five mile figure of eight course took in Timble village and Fewston Reservoir. Race winner was Michael Pickard with a net time of 35.02 which earned him the Eric Smith Trophy as the Christmas Handicap winner. Second over the line was Ian Fisher with the fastest net time, and course record, of 26.13, followed by Jamil Parapia (27.36).

Helen Walsh was first lady (37.40), just managing to overtake Liz Fawcett (40.49) who had a great run to hold her pole position almost all the way to the line.

As expected Mark Clifford held on to his lead to become this year's overall winner of the Ken Dixon Series with a total of 129 points followed by Mark Blagg (120) and Zack Whitehead (117).

Otley AC welcome runners of all abilities and meet for training runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7.15 p.m. at Otley RUFC, Cross Green, Otley. For more details visit www.otleyac.co.uk.

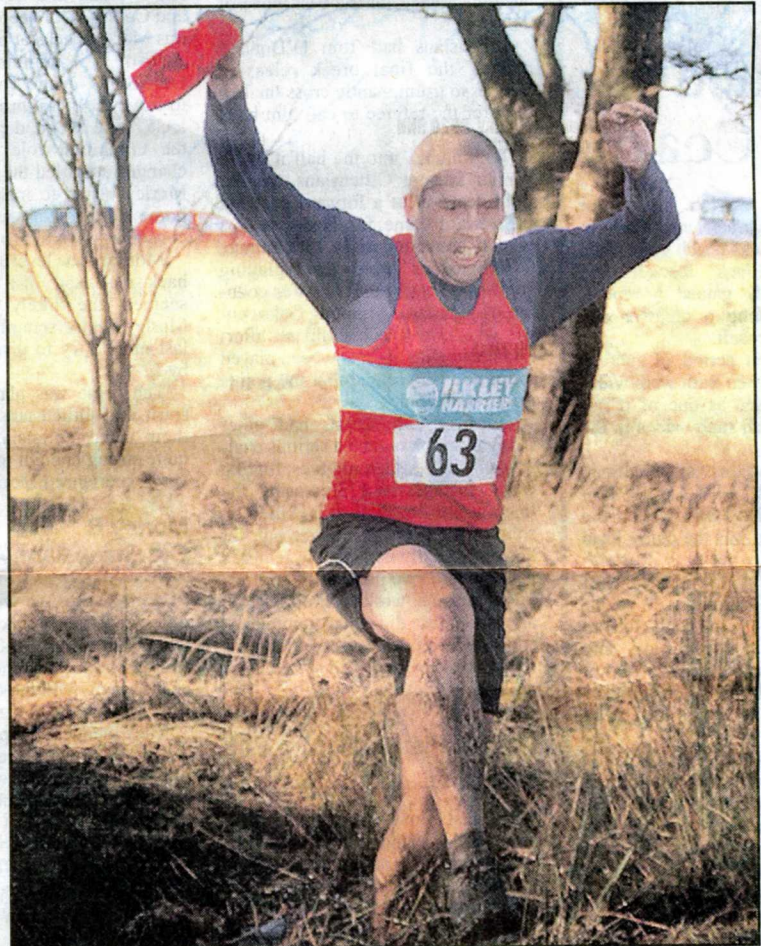
Ilkley Harriers

THE Stoop Fell Race at Penistone Hill was run on Sunday under beautiful blue skies but with deep black mud underfoot in places. Joyce Marshall had an excellent run to take the FV40 prize.

Full Ilkley results were: 25, 36:13 Jamie Hutchinson; 27, 36:48 Stef Macina (P&B); 82, 40:58 Dan Goodey; Malcolm Pickering; 102, 42:18 Morgan Williams; 106, 42:26 Mike Baldwin; 115, 42:57 Joyce Marshall; 123, 43:37 Norman Bush; 134, 44:30 Ian Marshall; 189, 48:09 Paul Wood; 205, 49:03 Sue Booth; 206, 49:06 Clare Cheesewright; 238, 50:59 Rob King; 276, 54:40 Rachel Hagan.

There were some very good results in the junior races too with Jenny Dybeck finishing second in the Under-16s race.

The same day, the first Sport Direct Cross-Country League race was hosted by Woodkirk over 4.5 miles but again an absolute mudbath meant it probably felt further. There were good results from the Ilkley Harriers men's team led home by the ever improving Paul Davidson in 7th place. The outstanding result of the day was Alison Bennett's victory in the ladies' race.



BOGGED DOWN: Ilkley Harrier Paul Wood struggles through a bog in The Stoop Fell Race. PICTURE: Tony Fickes

Other ladies results were: 8, Di Haggard; 21, Catherine Gibbons; 38, Ann Stead; 47, Emma Payne; 57, Amanda Parnaby. Men: 7, Paul Davidson; 8, Bob Addey; 9, Lawrence Basham; 13, Steve Turland; 15, Dave Wilby; 16, John Atkinson; 17, Ian Rowbotham; 35, Geoff Howard; 56, Pete Shields; 58, Anthony Camp; 80, Keith Wood; 113, Vince Gibbons; 134, Bob Payne; 140, Andrew Bennett.

For some, it was off to the Lake District for the Great Langdale Christmas

Pudding10k (at the end of the race runners were rewarded with a standard Christmas pudding). Results: 113, Vic Verecondi 43.55; 121, Simon Harry 44.12 (racing in his first 10k, pb); 133, Andy Wiggins 44.32; 144, Holly Williamson 44.44; 233, Andrew Kitchen 47.56; 405, Rachel Websdale 54.10.

Ilkley Harriers is a friendly club, training from Ilkley Lawn Tennis & Squash Club every Tuesday at 7pm - more on www.ilkeleyharriers.org.uk