

Bingley's fell master Holmes still stooping to conquer

Granville Beckett

BINGLEY international Ian Holmes chalked up his sixth consecutive victory in the Stoop five-mile fell race, at Haworth, yesterday.

But, he had to dash off to his own club's Christmas celebrations at a venue near Harrogate, without collecting his prizes.

Race organiser Dave Woodhead will try to catch up with him before Christmas to hand over appropriate seasonal awards of a crate of ale, a selection box, a jar of sweets and a tin of biscuits.

Holmes, crowned earlier this year as English and British champion on the fells, was slightly below par because of a

cold and was noticeably well outside the course record of 26min 36sec which he set last year.

Even so, no one in the record field of 192 runners, had the pace to put him under sustained pressure in yesterday's Bronte land event with its 800 feet of climbing involved.

Horwich's Darren Flatley, second last year, tried hard to keep pace but Holmes, wearing a red Santa's hat, went away from him after only a mile.

The Lancastrian slipped outside the first three and it was Pudsey and Bramley's former British champion Gary Devine who finished nearest to Holmes at the end. But he was more than

a minute slower than the Bingley man's final figures of 30.07.

Bingley had Colin Moses at 10th and John Brooks at 11th but Horwich, who had runners in fourth and fifth positions, pipped them by a point when organiser Woodhead finished 12th.

Veteran Dave Gratton won the popular Travellers Six Mile Road Race at Denby Dale yesterday for the third time in his career. Over a hilly course, left treacherous in places by sheet ice, the 41-year-old from Wakefield beat a field of 180 to add to his successes in 1992 and 1993.

An absentee last year through injury, Gratton returned in style to lead the improving Wakefield Harriers to victory.

■ Britain's Keith Cullen came home in fifth in the season-opening IAAF World Cross Challenge in Brussels yesterday. The race, over 10.5km, was won by world champion Paul Tergat of Kenya in 31.35secs, beating Ethiopia's Hapte Jifar by the thickness of a vest.

Results

Stoop fell race (5 miles/800 feet) at Haworth - **Men:** 1, I Holmes (Bingley) 30.07; 2, G Devine (Pudsey and Bramley) 31.16; 3, M Corbett (Rossendale) 31.20; 4, D Flatley (Horwich) 31.25; 5, G Scofield (Horwich) 31.28; 6, P White (Leeds City) 31.31; 7, M Horrocks (Calder Valley) 31.34; 8, M Woods (Clayton-le-Moors) 31.39; 9, A Garside (Saddledworth) 31.50; 10, C Moses (Bingley) 32.22. **Teams:** 1, Horwich 21 points; 2, Bingley 22. **Women:** 1, G Cook (Rochdale) 37.21; 2, S Newman (Glossopdale) 39.05; 3, W Barnes (Barnsley) 39.18; 4, T Ambler (Ilkley) 39.39; 5, H Mayo (Bingley) 39.50.

Travellers 6 mile road race at Denby Dale -

1, D Gratton (Wakefield) 31.11; 2, A Johnson (Wakefield) 31.34; 3, D Hurton (Denby Dale) 31.58; 4, K Davis (Barnsley) 32.23; 5, P McNamara (Wakefield) 33.02; 6, T Wright (Longwood) 33.23; 7, M Holroyd (Denby Dale) 33.49; 8, J Cartwright (Denby Dale) 33.56; 9, P Grimes (Huddersfield) 34.14; 10, A Austwick (Meltham) 34.20. **Teams:** 1, Wakefield 8; 2, Denby Dale 18. **Women:** 1, B Coomber (Denby Dale) 38.21; 2, J Krol (Holmfirth) 38.45; 3, E Twigg (Wakefield) 39.00.

Club Christmas Handicap races

Bingley Harriers 8 miles - 1, P Helliwell (Hcp 28.30) 92.24; 2, J Hill (34.00) 92.57; 3, I Goodyear (27.00) 92.57. Fastest time award: R Jebb 51.53 actual.

Halifax race - 1, S Keighley (8.30) 40.57; 2, M Hoey (7min) 41.18; 3, P Helliwell (1 min) 41.34. Fastest time award: K Strat 29.36 actual.

Holmfirth - 1, G Hall (scr) 44.04; 2, A Shaw (2.30) 44.10; 3, J Rank (2.00) 44.40.

Tinker Cup: T Cock 40.46 handicap time.

Longwood race - 1, M Gyzwacz 45.21; 2, A Norgate 45.29; 3, D Harpin 45.32. Fastest time award: J Stephens 33.48 actual.