

## JUNIORS RACE TO HELLIFIELD GALA THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 12<sup>th</sup> running of the Junior Yorkshire Championships kindly sponsored by Norman Berry of the **Burton Safe Company** are to take place on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of August at the village of Hellifield near Skipton in North Yorkshire. This promises to be a grand day out with the village hosting its 38<sup>th</sup> annual Gala with a street procession, fancy dress, amusements, various stalls, children's novelty races, refreshment tents (for young and old) and not forgetting the prestigious fell races.

Runners that have visited before don't be caught out by the race running order or the Gala procession, previously the seniors went first and the juniors followed, this year the juniors take precedence because of the Yorkshire championships with the racing beginning at 2-15pm and the finale being the Yorkshire Under 18 and Under 20 boys and girls racing it out with the open seniors with £40 on offer to the first male and female back to the Gala field finish. An extra bonus of £10 is available to anyone breaking Steve Oldfield's 2002, record time of 24-28, and Lisa Lacon's 2006, time of 29-14.

Who says Yorkshire folk are tight? A new introduction this year, is that all competing runners will receive a tube of Smarties, why? Because only Smarties have the answer!!

Yorkshire gold, silver and bronze championship medals are awarded to boys and girls in U12, U14, U16, U18 and U20 with the ages being as per FRA rules on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

Surprisingly it's been 21 years since this race was last used as a championship event, and that was by BOFRA, and we think it's been a long time coming, let's see what you all think!

### **THE EARLY YEARS**

The first ever Gala was in **1969** on the old football field and it was called the Youths Gala, there was no cross country or fell racing, although there was children's sports with flat races for pre school to 14-15 years, sack races, wheel barrow racing, an obstacle course and of course egg and spoon racing, which attracted over 60 entrants!

The first cross country race was organised in the early seventies with Peter Metcalfe being one of the main instigators, with competitors mainly being local from Hellifield, Otterburn and Long Preston villages. The course took in such things as the Water Board Pumphouse on Haw Lane, then onto the back of Haw Hill, over Haw Hill, with a steep descent under the railway bridge before negotiating the Gas Works yard and a fast finish on the football field. Locals to the fore were Jimmy Coates, Philip Howarth, Robert & Andrew Haggas, Brian Hardacre, Garry Murfin, B. Underwood, Rebecca Robinson, Dawn Arthurs, Julie Moorhouse, Peter Metcalfe, D. Lund and the Seggars of Long Preston, who all raised to the challenge admirably.

First reference to the name being changed from a cross country to a fell race was in **1976** and Peter Metcalfe kept things afloat until the early 80's when the Northern Sports Promoters Association was founded, this was pre The British Open Fell Runners Association, which is known as BOFRA, Peter also encouraged his brother Trevor onto the scene, Trevors fell racing initiation ceremony was at the Burnsall Open Race on a wet damp wet drizzly day in 1982, he actually came last, but thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and like most of us was then hooked.

It was around 83/84 that Peter and Trevor joined the Gala committee, Mick Hawkins from Grassington won from one of the greats of open running, Steve Carr of Kendal, with Skipton's Keith Summersgill third, in **1984**.

Carr won in **1985** from Jeff Emmott.

BOFRA asked if Hellifield would stage their **1986** championship race, thus it came about that true fell racing was born in Hellifield. Steve Carr won again with Cowling's Jeff Emmott second and Kevin Wright of Silsden third, Peter Metcalfe finished seventh and first local. In the under 17's Robert Hudson won from Keith Mullen and Steve Wright, while in the under 12's Mark Webb triumphed. This was the only time it was used as a championship race, as the biggest hazard then of this 3.5 mile 800ft route was the trains on the Skipton to Carlisle railway, which is part of the famous Settle to Carlisle line, the runners couldn't go until it was safe to cross, hence the route was altered.

**1987** saw builder Jeff Emmott win in 26-40 from first local Peter Metcalfe and Fran Batchelor, that day also saw Trevor finish third local and Mike Wooding take the first veteran prize; tragically Mike died in 2007.

After winning Cowling Gala the previous week, Roger Gibson, a sheep farmer, won from Jeff Emmott and Mark McGkincy third in **1988**.

**1989** Steve Carr returned to win again with Steven Wright second and Jeff Emmott third, while in the under 12's Jon Whitelock took the honours from Stefan Briggs and Richard Fell.

### **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

The 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Gala was in **1990** and to celebrate the occasion Trevor and Peter Metcalfe organised a 10 mile fell race to Rye Loaf Hill and back, this hill is on the skyline between Settle and Malham. Two days previously at Ambleside Sports it was a scorching hot day but fresher cooler conditions met the 34 runners. As expected Steve Carr won in 71-13, with Kevin Wright second 1-25 behind, Wright was then making a name for himself as within eight days he had won a short fell race, 600m track race, 3200 track race and taken second at an 800m, Keighley's own Craig Bottomley was third. An epic battle for the first locals prize ensued between Keith Blades and Trevor Metcalfe, with Trevor grabbing the glory by just one second in 84-13, finishing fifteenth overall.

**1991** saw 3 times BOFRA champion in 1985, 1986 and 1987, Steve Carr won for the fifth time, once again from Jeff

Emmott

Roger Gibson who finished twice runner up in the BOFRA championships in 1991 and 1992, and has been recognised as the best athlete never to win the title, mainly due to lambing time taking precedence in the early season, won for the second time in **1992** with that man again Jeff Emmott in the runner up spot for the fifth time, as you can see it was one of Jeff's favourite courses.

While in **1993** Robert Hudson triumphed in 24-58 from Andy Holden, 26-05 and Kevin Wright, 26-16, with no ladies competing that year from the 32 runners. 26 under 12's competed with David Huff first boy and Samantha Waddington first girl. But in the U14's race, Richard Fell won in 12-51 from Lee Proctor, 5<sup>th</sup> overall was local lass Sarah Dugdale who will figure highly later! In 9<sup>th</sup> and second girl was a certain Long Preston runner, Mary Wilkinson, who has through the years become a well known and respected international runner, with wins at such classics as Mount Snowdon, Rivington Pike, The Three Peaks, finished 4<sup>th</sup> at the World Trophy, and also has become 3 times the senior Yorkshire Lady Champion. Although here she finished nearly two and a half minutes behind Sarah, so all you youngsters out there take heed 'dreams can come true, just believe'.

A changed 6 mile route in **1994** saw Steve Oldfield finishing in 47-20 ahead of Dave Woodhead, 48-36 and Ken Taylor, 49-58, while Ilkley's Sally Malir won the ladies in 63-08 from Steve's wife Pauline in 68-20. In the juniors James Mason and Nicole Slater won the Under 12's with James Pratt and Samantha Waddington the Under 14 race.

### **INTERNATIONALS DRAWN TO HELLIFIELD**

An international flavour came to the race in **1995**, when England international Matthew Moorehouse of Salford won in 23-01 from Andy Smith, 23-40 and Steve Oldfield, 23-51 with Steve's wife Pauline taking the ladies winning rosette in 31-42 from Kirsten Bailey, 40-25 and Yvonne Proctor, 40-40. Moving up into the under 17's Sarah Dugdale won in 23-13, with Stefan Briggs winning in 17-47, while in the under 14's Geoff Slater beat James Mason, another name of the future. Slater did go on to win two Yorkshire titles at U14 and U16, whilst James Mason took three titles at U14, U16 and U18.

Another international Mick Hill of Tipton Harriers took the honours in **1996** from Rob Grillo and Graham Hawkins.

**1997** Leeds City's Greg Hull ran a fast 23-34 from Alfie Atkinson, 24-17 and Rob Grillo, 24-50 with 44 runners racing, Jo Prowse took the ladies in 30-22, from J. Tomkins, 31-17 and Sarah Dugdale, 33-12, now moving up to the senior race.

Bradford Airedales Steve Oldfield won in **1998** in 25 dead with Crawley Harrier Andy Carruthers second in 25-48 with Steve's training partner and team mate Richard Crossland third, 26-36. International Jo Prowse took the ladies in 31-26, just behind now organiser Stephen Moore a mere second separated these two, while only 15 seconds separated Kendra White, Yorkshire U18 champion Sarah Dugdale and Emma Hodgson (now Barclay).

**1999** saw Steve beaten by the thickness of a vest by Mark Horrocks in the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary 10 mile race to Rye Loaf Hill and back which they completed in 72-34, with Darren Brame third, three minutes behind, the only lady was 1999 English Intermediate champion and Yorkshire U20 champion Sarah Dugdale in 67-17.

Veterans dominated the millennium year, **2000**, with who else but Oldfield winning easily in 26-27 from Cowling's Jeff Emmott, 28-09 with Brian Goodison third in 28-32, Sarah Dugdale who had retained her Yorkshire U20 title took the ladies in 8<sup>th</sup> overall, 34-06 and second was Lynn Whittaker, 44-28.

The dreaded foot and mouth saw no race in **2001** although the charismatic Roger Ingham did organise a mile handicap race round the football field.

### **ALL CHANGE TO NOW**

**2002** saw a change to the route for all age groups to what it is now, this came about due to the building of the new housing estate at the back of the old auction mart, although Haw Hill is still the main feature of the race, which overlooks the Gala, and is a great vantage point for spectators if you can haul yourself up there. Who else, but Steve Oldfield won in 24-28 the dominant name here won with Will Smith second in 25-53 and Steve's nephew Gary Oldfield third in 26-03, Helen Glover the Yorkshire U16 champion of 2000 progressing nicely won in 35-42 from Sally Horn, 42-12 and Lyn Whitaker, 44-16. Introduction of the U9 race came in **2003** and the winner was Jarrod Nolan in 7-54, unfortunately he was the only one, but 10 did in the under 12's with William Heseltine winning in 9-25. In the seniors where 34 ran Ian Rowbowtham won in 28-34 from Guy Heyes of Salford, 28-51 and Settle Harrier Alex Pilkington third in 29 minutes dead. England international Lisa Heyes, Guy's better half won the ladies in a new record time of 30-37 from Karen Slater, 31-19 and Helen Johnson, 31-22, probably the most competitive ladies field assembled.

Steve Oldfield carried on his winning ways in **2004** in 24-35 from Paul Brittleton, 26-19 and Will Smith, 26-31. Keighley & Craven also supplied second lady in Helen Glover, 34-35 and Fiona Raby, 36-13, behind Veteran lady Karen Slater who won in 31-12. Skipton's Matthew Hurst won the under 17's from Harry Coates, while Nial Nicholas of East Cheshire won the under 14's, Thomas Sessford the under 12's and Marcus Preedy the under 9's. In the girls races Alice Lilly took the GU17's whilst sister Claire the GU14's in the GU12 it was Wharfedales Florence Haines and the GU9's Holly Roberts.

England team manager and international, Mark Croasdale of the Royal Marines took the **2005** winners rostrum in 25-50 from Will Smith, 26-21 and Steve Oldfield, 26-48 with a record 54 competing. Local lady Sarah Dugdale won for her hat trick in 32-58 from 2004 Under 18 English champion Sarah Tunstall, 34-01 and Dewsbury Road Runner Flora Skidmore, 34-19.

Youth triumphed in **2006** with U20 Yorkshire champion Harry Coates of Skipton AC unexpectedly upsetting the apple cart

by beating Steve Oldfield by 9 seconds in 24-33, with recent Snowdon England international and 2002 U20 Yorkshire champion Lee Athersmith third in 25-36. Twice under 18 and Intermediate English champion Lisa Lacon, broke Lisa Heyes record by a massive 83 seconds to record 29-14, with Sarah Tunstall second again, 33-57, and Aire Valley's Shona Brash third in 34-53.

So what of the 35<sup>th</sup> running of the **2007** Hellifield Gala fell races? The seniors may attract a bigger field, but the 12<sup>th</sup> Junior Yorkshire championships are bound to become the main chapter in the chronicles of Hellifield Gala and the history of it's fell running.

*Many thanks to Sheila Swinbank now retired from the gala Committee, Peter and Trevor Metcalfe and numerous others who have compiled this archive of Hellifield Gala and it's fell racing. Apologies for any inconsistencies in the results, but as with all races some results go astray; of course if you can fill the gaps in please contact; Dave Woodhead 01535 669100*