

## AULD LANG SYNE RACE REPORT

Holmes is no stick – in – the – mud

Despite very heavy muddy conditions underfoot, which was testimony to everybody's legs at the finish and brought about a new use for the cricket hut water collecting butts. The recognised 'King of Haworth Moor' Ian Holmes won yet again for the 6<sup>th</sup>

time, including the Ghost race, when 3ft of snow brought about a morning cancellation; but still 70 runners turned up. His tally of victories over the Bronte Moorland is 21, and is fast becoming a legend around the area. His only defaults are at the 1990 Stoop beaten by Allan Whalley and 1995 Withins Skyline when Graham Patten out sprinted him.

Given the fact he knows the terrain like the back of his hand, he mischievously led the record 277 runners along the right hand side of the wall from Oxenhope Stoop to Top of Stairs, which negotiates the far boggier terrain. Shaun Winstanley, visiting his parents in Haworth used his better road speed to overcome Mark Horrocks for second, while over 40 Steve Oldfield certainly shows no sign of age.

Holmes' New Years resolution is to win the British title for a record 4<sup>th</sup> time. Colin Donnelly and Kenny Stuart share with Holmes the distinction of having won the championship 3 times, and despite what will undoubtedly be a fiercely competitive season, a unique achievement is more than a possibility.

Carol Greenwood won the race for the 4<sup>th</sup> time, with the only other name on the mini Bulmers cider Barrel being that of Sarah Rowell twice. 36 year old Sarah this year added the W35 course record to her overall mark of 40-05, as she sliced 41 seconds off Sylvia Watson's 1996 time. The only other record was by over 50 Christine Porritt, who improved the new time to 1-08-45, not bad for someone that only 2 years ago was fighting leukaemia. Barnsley Harriers may not be a team that springs to mind when thinking of team winners in fell running, but Wendy Barnes, Sonia Hewitt and Joanne Hadfield showed the other ladies team spirit and camaraderie.

Being run on New Years Eve, hence the title of the race, appropriately all prizes are of the alcoholic beverage variety, with the winner, first lady and first vet all receiving a case of beer of their choice, a party celebration cake, a bottle of nuts, a chocolate game of twister and what else but a large box of wine gums to make the nights festivities swing. The tables in the Old Sun creaked under the weight of the prize list, with at least the first 40 men, all 22 ladies plus numerous veterans, juniors and team runners collecting booze to party with. To the officials among you, regarding juniors, they were allowed to pick off the table, but were accompanied by a responsible adult or parent. All 277 runners received their free bottle of beer as they crossed the line, where bottle openers were duly available, and well used.

1999 is a special year, in that the Auld Lang Syne will be the last fell race of the Century and to commemorate this Otley based Briscoe Brewery are producing a pint bottle of very strong ale to all finishers.

A competition is now on until the end of July, to find an appropriate name and possible logo or design for this Millennium beers label. The lucky winner will not only have their label produced with their own name on they will also be able to sample 12 bottles of the yet unnamed beer. Briscoe Brewery have already produced such delights as Puddled & Barmy, Shanes Shamrock and Woodies Willy Warmer which was awarded to 24 lucky 1998 Auld Lang Syne runners.

Entries for the competition should be sent to; Dave & Eileen Woodhead, 166 Hainworth Wood Road, Keighley, BD21 5DF, West Yorkshire, there is no limit to the number of entries you send.

Once third in the 1995 3 Peaks race, fell runner now brewer Paul Briscoe is the one and only judge, and his decision is final, good luck in the competition, and see you in the 1999 Auld Lang Syne.

Arfur Guinness