

RING OUT THE OLD, RING IN THE NEW

Auld Lang Syne report from Dave Woodhead

After a decade of dominance is 'old age' finally catching up with thirty-nine year old Ian Holmes? Remember he lost the Stoop title to Rob Hope after a decade of wins - mind you he still is on course for a Soreen Stanbury Splash '10'.

But it did take the calibre of a world mountain running 4th placer from Alaska (just fourteen seconds outside a medal).

a 29m-34s - 10k, 49m-07s - 10 miler, as well as a GB and England cross-country, road and mountain runner to take Ian's beer pump trophy and crown - Andi Jones is that athlete.

Just as at the Stoop race, a route change had to be implemented on the outward circuit, which meant climbing Oxenhope Stoop via Harbour Lodge, after Louis Holmes (now five), the official starter, dressed as Dash from the Incredibles had shouted, "GO, GO!!" at the massive 434 field. Due to the change, it meant the normal route had to be run in the reverse direction, before returning to Penistone Hill on the old route. It wasn't until the Top o' Stairs bridleway, that Andi and John Brown remembered where they were and then really increased the race tempo. "We really tanked it along the flat water channel, although I fell at the turn in a bog, I knew I had John on the descent, again I fell several times in the deep muddy bogs. At the beck, I looked back, and noticed Ian had got past John but I felt strong on the climb back, I also deliberately ran in all the deep water, trying to clean myself up. At the finish, I just jumped into one of the large water butts to wash off," said the twenty-six year old winner, who over Xmas was 2nd at the Ribble Valley 10k in thirty minutes.

Back in the 2001 Auld Lang Syne, Andi surprisingly only finished 5th, three minutes behind Ian, when challenging with Andy Peace, then his "novice" regard for fell runners, and the icy terrain let him down.

A Design & Technology teacher at Didsbury, Manchester he rarely runs on the fells, but did win the Rivington Pike Classic, Up the Nab and Latrigg races, and a 9th in the Leeds 2004 National X-Country also shows his class.

After the 2005 London marathon, maybe a Commonwealth Games place could be on the cards but he will need to improve on

his 2h-52m time; this was set when, as an eighteen-year old, he was inspired to compete after watching it on TV. London is his aim, so beer and chocolate is a no, no, so his prize haul is a real treat for the 'Northern Boys Love Gravy' lads he trains with.

'Champion' Ian Holmes was pleased with his run, especially since his family had the "cold bug" over Xmas. "On the day I didn't feel like it, I even struggled early on and to hear Andi and John just chit-chatting along didn't help. But I should still have taken closer order, although if Andi had known the route he would have won by minutes."

Third came John Brown, another Salford lad, who like Andi ran in the 2004 European mountain championships, helping the GB team to silver medals, and he has a world best position of 8th, before an inspired run by George Ehrhardt.

P&B's Gary Devine wasn't impressed to have English under-sixteen champion, Adam Peers, thirty-seven seconds ahead in 5th - but then Adam was only a baby of one year old when Gary won the senior English Championship in 1989.

YOUNG 'UN' COMES THROUGH

It's always encouraging when a junior athlete makes it through the ranks, and Katie Ingram has certainly done that. Since the age of fourteen she has represented England ten times, four of these have been at world championship level, although a massive disappointment for her was being injured and then diagnosed with a stress fracture after the 2004 event in Italy. Now, with all that behind her, she is concentrating on cross-country but did win the Leyland 8k - it was meant to be 10k, except ice caused the organisers to shorten the route.

A student at Loughborough University, studying English and Sports Science in her 2nd year, her finest moment has been winning gold in the Black Forest Teenager Games Berglauf race in 2000. However the British title and gold medal, which is incorporated with the Home Countries International has always eluded her but Katie has won the English junior championship three times at U14, U16 and U18 level.

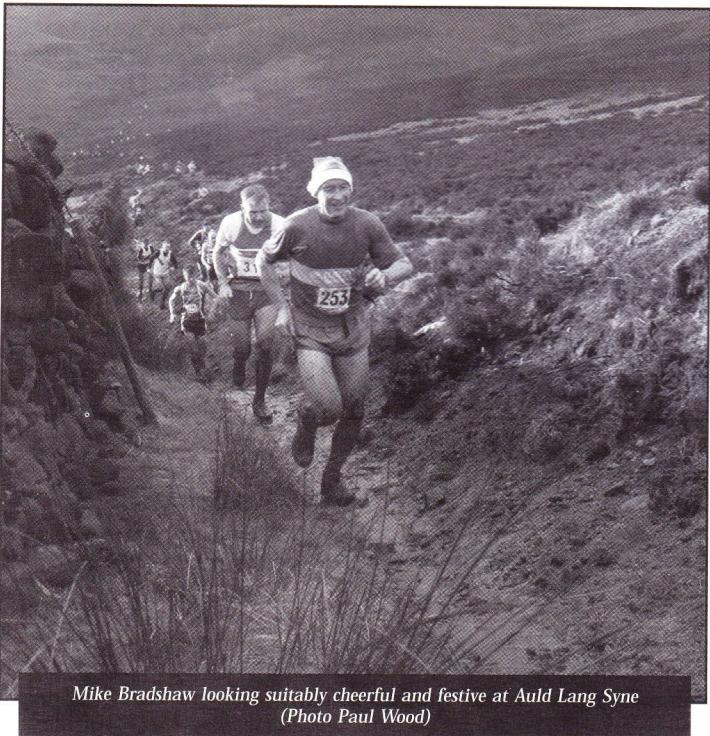
Katie was just too fast for the defending lady the 'Queen of Haworth Moor', Sharon Taylor, who won Wansfell by forty seconds from Nicola Davies just days earlier. "On the Harbour Lodge path, she just ran away, I could see her all the way round and expected to gain on her, but it never happened."

From 'sunny scunny' came, 4th U18 Sam O'Neill and 7th U18 Jarratt Perkins but it was FU18 record holder, Emma Clayton, who repeated last year's double wins of Stoop and Auld Lang Syne, who had the best prizes.

The traditional Briscoe's Auld Lang Syne beer, given to all finishers, was handed out at race entry, thereby the bottle was kept nice and clean. Do you realise people pay hundreds to visit health farms and bathe in mud baths, or have it smeared on them - well at this race, for just £3, you get some beer, a healthy workout, free coffee and biscuits plus all the life giving properties of Haworth Moor mud that you can fall into; but DEFINITELY no colonic irrigation!

BITTER AFTER TASTE

A sad note at the prize giving was the diabolically unsportsmanlike conduct of one individual, who saw fit at the winner's moment of glory to shout obscenities. Why is beyond us and this certainly won't be tolerated in any form at any of our races. We work hard, you the runners work hard, the marshals work hard, the pub works hard at making it a successful day but one idiot can undo all this - and, on this occasion, has done!! The matter is in hand, and our sincere apologies to everyone, especially to those who spoke and wrote to us.



Mike Bradshaw looking suitably cheerful and festive at Auld Lang Syne
(Photo Paul Wood)



And out they come from the quarry the Auld Lang Syne start (Photo David Brett)