



537 runners seeing out the old year. Photograph: DI E Woodhead

Millennium Kid

Four-month-old Louie Lloyd Holmes became the star celebrity for a day when he was brought in as 'starter' for the Auld Lang Syne fell race, on the last day of the 20th Century.

Louie is the son of runner, Ian Holmes, who has dominated this event with seven straight wins, including the ghost race of 1996, and only his name graces the hand pump perpetual trophy. "It was great to have Louie as the official starter, as an emblem for youth as we move into the next Century. Hopefully one day he will be able to take over the mantle his dad has set for him. We had our biggest ever turn out with 537 runners a record for any race we have ever organised, which was a fantastic finale for fell running to end the year". Organiser Dave Woodhead remarked.

Earlier on in the year a competition was run in this magazine to design a fitting label for the beer that was being presented to each finisher. This was a closely guarded secret until race day. The first glimpse of the winning design was when in true fell running spirit a chain gang of runners man handled the 43 crates around to the finish area. Boff Whalley for his brilliant design, which captured the whole essence of the race, collected his prize of a crate of 'THE ORIGINAL HAPPY NEW BEER! BRISCOE'S auld lang syne ale' at the prize giving. Paul Briscoe owner of Briscoe's Brewery would like to thank all the competition entrants, and found it a hard task to choose a winner amongst all the witty, weird and wonderful ideas. Thank you all!

One apology has to be made. Sorry to those few runners that missed out on a bottle of this superb beer, and instead received two bottles of a North Eastern brew. This was solely down to the

organisers oversight in not expecting more than 500 runners, any participants that didn't get one on the day, please contact the organisers, and it will be rectified.

To the race, for the first time ever the race was run in the opposite direction for safety reasons, mainly because of severe ice on the 'Top of Stairs'. The general consensus of opinion was that although this made for a tougher race – the peaty skyline section now comes in the latter stages – this is a better route. "It flows more as a race", according to race winner Ian Holmes, and now looks likely to be used in future years, although it has been suggested a coin be tossed on the start line, to determine which way round the route is run.

Top Yorkshire athletes Ian Holmes and Matthew Whitfield both broke away early on, and ran neck and neck until the boggy descent off the Stoop where Ian gained a few yards. Matthew, soon to join the RAF in February, in true die hard fashion pushed Ian all the way back to Penistone Hill, and only failed by seven seconds. Louie accompanied by mum Zina enthusiastically spurred Ian all the way to the finish, along with all the supporters that had congregated on Penistone Hill, to experience this unique once in a lifetime atmosphere.

Top Yorkshire lady athletes Lucy Wright and Sarah Rowell proved their race to be only marginally less competitive, although both commented that neither were at their best on the day. Part time librarian Lucy, a World and European cross country competitor held the 20 second winning margin throughout the race, admitting she expected Sarah to be coming past at any time. If there was any consolation to be had for Sarah it was slicing over 3 minutes off last years over 35 record. Youngster Kate Rogan and not so youngster Sylvia Watson – broke two

other records under 18's and over 50's.

Husband and wife, Steve and Pauline Oldfield dominated the over 40's, and by far had the biggest boozy prize haul to take home, which amounted to 63 bottles of different beers, including cake, giant cracker, tin of biscuits, yard of Crunchie, etc.

In fact Lucy Wright, Sarah Rowell and Ian Holmes' crackers were pulled at the stroke of midnight at various party locations, along with copious amounts of their alcoholic prizes being consumed.

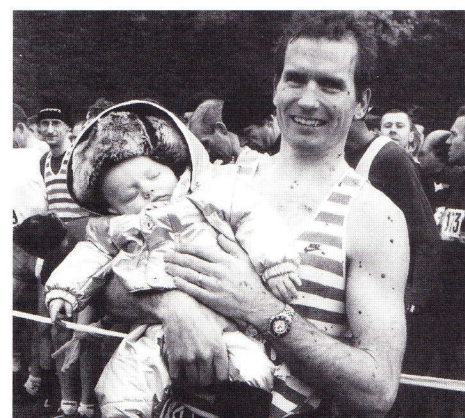
The prize giving was a Mammoth Millennium Mayhem, with stacks of cases of lager, bitter, stout, cider and real ale on offer to virtually everybody within the confines of the Old Sun Inn. The video of the race that day proved a huge success, and looks like it would be appreciated as a permanent feature, and with platters of free sandwiches and Sarah Rowell's own special recipe chocolate cake the party was in full swing.

Obviously several felt the need of a challenge after all this, so the half-yard of ale was exceedingly well supported with 14 so called athletes participating, and several doing it twice! Borrowdale's Scoffer Schofield and Dave McGuire, Clayton, shared the £10 prize with seven seconds dead, whilst in third Bob Whitfield got faster as he progressed. The ladies decided on a relay event, two per team, Bingley versus Clayton, with Bingley's Sharon Taylor and Esther Cotton easily beating Marie Jackson and Catherine Howell by 35 seconds to 73 seconds respectively.

We hope everybody enjoyed this event in the true spirit it was meant to be, testing, fun, entertaining and a chance for Auld and young to show fell running bottle.

A happy new millennium to you all!

M.T. Glass



Ian Holmes and official starter Louis Lloyd Holmes
Photograph: DI E Woodhead