

Golden Yorkshire Day out

17 gold, 10 silver and 4 bronze medals made the 16th UKA Fell Inter Counties on home ground at Settle Hills a grand golden day out for team Yorkshire. This medal haul included three individual champions in BU18 Max Wharton, GU18 Annabel Mason and in the senior ladies Emma Clayton, these athletes also led these teams to gold medals.

24 year old Emma Clayton now becomes the seventh Yorkshire lady to hold the title following in the footsteps of Mary 'Scary' Wilkinson, Wrekin in 2005, Jo Waites, Settle Hills in 2006, Janet McIvor, Crowden Horseshoe in 2007, Lizzie Adams, Shining Tor in 2012 and Victoria Wilkinson at Belmont and Lletty in North Wales, 2008 and 2009. Emma earlier in May set new pbs for 10k at Bristol with a stunning 33-49 which ranks her 7th on the UK list for this year and only five days previous had improved her track 3k to 9-17-46, on the back of a great XC season of 4th at the Northern and National championships. Emma smashed the Settle Course record by over three and a half minutes along with the first four ladies. The White Rose Tyke vests swept up the individual medals with Pendle, Coniston and Fairfield winner Victoria Wilkinson collecting the silver and Katie Walshaw the bronze medal to record a ninth team victory. Black Combe, Ovenden, Cribyn and Silent Valley British championships winner Helen Fines finished fifth showing the strength and talent that Yorkshire can call on.

Ilkley Moor winner Tom Adams has improved each year at these championships from 9th at Broughton Hills and 7th at Shining Tor to a superb bronze medal at Settle Hills behind Wegene Tafase running for Scotland West and Nick Swinburn running in the colours of North East Counties. The Yorkshire men with backup from Adam Osborne, 8th, Karl Gray, 14th and Mark Addison, 15th won the team golds for the sixth time by just one point from North Wales.

Karl Gray was donning the Tyke vest for the fifth time and had a score to 'settle' with this race, back in 2006 in his first ever Inter Counties, Karl ended up in hospital after he collapsed within 300 yards of the finish line due to heat exhaustion.

Blackstone Edge winner Joe Crossfield finished 6th in the MU23 whilst Caroline Lambert having been ill all week finished 8th FU23.

The Tyke juniors dominated the U18 race group with the girls taking all the individual medals with last years FU16 champion Annabel Mason gold, Georgia Malir silver and Zara Knappy bronze, a great improvement from 6th last year. All this meant the girls easily won team gold ahead of Lancashire. In the BU18 Max Wharton, only 6th last year had a fierce sprint on his hands at the finish with BU16 bronze medallist last year Iolo Hughes. Yorkshire grit, determination and talent gave Max the edge to win by 2 seconds with last years BU16 champion James Hall taking the bronze. Sam Haggart ran well to finish 7th, ahead of all the Lancashire athletes, Yorkshire won the team gold again ahead of North Wales and Lancashire.

BU16 Lewis Byram once again had to settle for the silver medal, this time being outsprinted by Jack Willis of the North East Counties with Jack Hindle of Lancashire taking the bronze. Jack Denton finished in 5th, but with Callum Davidson in 4th for Lancashire, this meant the great red rose rivals took team gold on countback. Edan Whitelaw suffered in the race due to illness and finished a very disappointed 14th, don't worry Edan your time will come!

Three new Yorkshire fledglings, Ellie Lambert, Lucy Williamson and Rebecca Coope wore the famous vest in the FU16 category. Ellie the senior winner of the Mearley Clough race showed her great potential by finishing with a 'very surprised' silver medal behind Lizzie Greenwood of Lancashire, while Bronwen Jenkinson collected the bronze for North Wales. Lucy and Rebecca finished 7th and 8th and thrived on the experience, but with Rhiannon Wickham in 6th Lancashire collected the team golds on offer with Yorkshire the silver and Cumbria the bronze.

To end the golden day off Yorkshire teams again celebrated with Karl Gray and Emma Clayton spraying the fizz, grand prix style.

New Inter County Champion, Emma Clayton gives her race view

' Despite not being born and bred (ssshhhh Yorkshire at heart), pulling on the Yorkshire vest is always a great honour. Competing in the Inter Counties was a late decision and luckily there was still one spot on the team available. In almost ideal conditions, I felt strong on the climbs and managed to build quite a big lead by the top of the first climb. I relaxed on the descents so that I wouldn't kill the legs and worked the next couple of climbs. I'm not as strong on the descents as I once was and didn't want to get into a race on the descent. The realisation that I'm more of a European Mountain Runner than a fell runner is quite sad. Vic Wilkinson descended like a demon and clawed back the advantage and shortly before we reached the bottom track she stormed ahead, I thought for a minute I'd lost it, but steadied myself and luckily I had enough left in the legs to chase her down and win my first Inter Counties title.

To put the cherry on the cake I led a Yorkshire 1,2,3 and team gold which was fantastic although I think my Champagne spraying could certainly do with some work. Hopefully we'll be able to defend the title next year and I'll give the Champagne another go having spent the next 12 months practicing with lemonade.

It wasn't until we were leaving that we decided to check the course record and always prepared Dave W was on hand with the FRA race calendar. Not only had I broken the course record by just short of 4 minutes, but all of the top four women had gone under the previous record too.'

Check out all results here <http://www.race-results.co.uk/results/2013/settle.htm>