

West Nab 2014 Results

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Category: Fell
Published Date
Hits: 5480

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Photos courtesy of Norman Berry here .

More photos including Erica celebrating (right) by Eileen and Dave Woodheads here.



West Nab Fell Race (31st May 2014)

At the end of the summer last year, the FRA were looking for new venues for their English Junior Championship races & approached Holmfirth to see if we would host a race for them. In a moment of weakness, we said yes and so the planning started. Fast forward 9 months to Saturday 31st May & the waiting was over. All that was needed was some decent weather & a few athletes to turn up! Thankfully, our prayers were answered & after some torrential rain earlier in the week, the sun came out & so did the best of the English juniors. Overall, we had nearly 250 runners in the junior races & over 70 in the senior race, testament to the increasing appeal of the sport.

First away were the U8's, some of whom were trying out fell-running for the first time. It was great to watch 30 eager juniors chasing through the mud & up the hill before flying back along the track to the finish field, where they were cheered in by those watching, before collecting their goody bags, kindly sponsored by Arrow Self Drive.

The U10's had to run to the far end of Royd Edge, conquer a short but steep climb, before negotiating the bilberry bushes & making their way back along the track. Although not part of the Championship, this is a very competitive age-group & the current stars are the Bowen twins from Ambleside. James took the honours this time, finishing 1st over the 1.9k course in 9.55, just 4 seconds ahead of brother Harry. We had 53 finishers in this race, with great representation from Calder Valley, Keighley & Craven and Horwich RMI, who provided the girls' winner in Ella Pendlebury, finishing 9th overall in 11.53, just ahead of Sophie Rylance from Ambleside, who finished 11th overall in 12.01. Top Harrier's finisher was Isabel Richardson, 13th overall & 4th girl in 12.08.

Next up were the U12's, who had the dubious distinction of being the first race that had to climb all the way to the top of Royd Edge! At 2.8k & with around 100m of climb, the race was a stern test for the 55 starters, but once again, there was some great talent on show for those watching. Eden Runners, based in the northern Lakes, brought a small but talented team down and their first success was with current Championship leader Samuel Almond, who won the U12's race in 15.44, some 25 seconds ahead of Finn Moffatt from Rushcliffe AC (2nd in 16.09) & over a minute ahead of Ben Edmondson from Broughton Runners (3rd in 16.46). For the girls, first back & finishing an excellent 7th overall in a time

of 17.16, was Briony Holt from Clayton –le-Moors, just ahead of Chloe Rylance from Ambleside, who finished 8th overall in 17.24 and Lilli Carr (Keighley & Craven), 13th overall in 18.29. Callum Durrans was the highest placed Holmfirth athlete, an excellent 4th overall in 17.08.

A dip in the waters of Royd Edge Clough awaited the U14's on their way back to the finish, which hopefully added to the attraction of the 3.8k, 150m race! Joshua Boyle is currently running away with the Championship & is also placing well in senior races, so it was no surprise that he was 1st back in 18.47 after a good battle with Nathan Smith (City of York), who claimed 2nd in 19.20, with Euan Brennan of Ilkley Harriers 3rd in 19.37. Eden Runners provided another winner, this time for the girls, with Esme Davies first back, 15th overall in 21.55, ahead of Imogen Burrow from Helm Hill (20th overall in 23.03) and Holmfirth's Sunnivah Waterman (22nd overall in 23.21). Top Harrier was Harry Shelbourne, 7th overall in 20.27 from a field of 48 runners.

Two climbs of Royd Edge was the treat in store for the U16's as part of their 5.6k, 250m race and this certainly had the effect of spreading out the field of 43 entrants. Holmfirth's Chris Law was relishing the opportunity of racing on home turf & was handily placed in 2nd before a heavy landing after a slip in the river forced him to retire. This left the way clear for Jack Denton of Calder Valley to cross the line 1st in 29.05, ahead of Elliott Matier from Carlisle Aspatria (2nd in 29.55) & Matthew Senior from Helm Hill (3rd in 30.14). Thankfully, Erica Byram stayed on her feet & was Holmfirth's proud winner of the girls race, 9th overall in 32.36, pipping Elizabeth Greenwood of Blackburn Harriers (10th overall in 33.03) & Scarlet Dale from Lancaster & Morecambe (11th overall in 33.44). Erica was also the highest placed Harriers finisher, a notable achievement in a fiercely competitive category.

Finally, it was the turn of the Seniors & U18's, who would not only climb Royd Edge twice, but head out to the summit of West Nab before turning to enjoy a near 3k descent to the finish as part of the 8.8k, 450m race. Having watched his son Oliver contest the U8's race, Mercia's current English Champion Simon Bailey returned to West Nab to show everyone how it should be done and duly won in 40.01. Jack Willis from Middlesborough & Cleveland was the closest to him, finishing 2nd overall & 1st U18 in a great time of 40.55, which itself was some 4 minutes ahead of the 3rd placed finisher, Chris Foley of Dundee (44.55) & Daniel Chan from Pennine, 4th in 45.03. The next 2 U18's had a good tussle around the course, with Jack Hindle of Blackburn Harriers back in 45.06 (5th overall), ahead of Jacob Boyle from Clayton, who finished in 45.27 (6th overall). For the ladies, Holmfirth's Helen Berry was 1st, finishing 19th overall in 51.21, just ahead of Sally Newman from Calder Valley, 23rd overall in 51.32 and another Holmfirth athlete, Lucy Needham, who was 37th overall in 54.52. The U18 girls perhaps found the course slightly longer than usual & were a little further back, but still worked hard, with Rosie Dale of Lancaster & Morecambe 1st GU18 (41st overall) in 55.16, followed by Lucy Williamson of Ilkley Harriers, 46th overall in 57.17 and Jennifer Willison, 47th overall in 57.41.

88 of the 90 starters completed the race & most seemed to enjoy themselves, commenting that it was not as complicated as, but harder than it looked on the map! Holmfirth had some good representation throughout the categories, with first Harrier home being Jonny McLean, 7th overall in 47.10, ahead of Chris Beadle, 3rd V40 (11th overall) in 49.55, Andy Shaw, 2nd V50 (14th overall) in 50.10 and John Ewart, 3rd V50 (29th overall) in 52.38. The team prizes both went to Holmfirth, with Jonny McLean, Chris Beadle & Andy Shaw taking the Mens, whilst Helen Berry, Lucy Needham & Fran Whitworth (2nd FV40) took the Ladies.

Staging 6 races in one afternoon is certainly a challenge, but we had a great team of volunteers who all played their part in making the afternoon a success, so many thanks again to all who helped before, during & afterwards. Thanks also to Meltham CE Primary School & their Parent/Staff Association, who made us all very welcome throughout the day & kept us supplied with food & drink. Thanks also to the farmers & landowners for allowing us to race over their land, particularly Neil Muffitt at Sun Royd Farm for the use of his quarry, Sheila Woodhead at Lathe Farm for the use of her field for the Start/Finish area and Meltham Shooting Club for allowing us to cross onto West Nab. The bacon in your butties was donated by British Bacon Supplies, the goody bags were sponsored by Arrow Self Drive & the senior race numbers were sponsored by Up & Running, so many thanks to all those businesses as well.

Now the dust has settled, will we do it again? Well, there's not much hair left to turn grey, so I guess so. Here's to 2015!

Phil Hobbs