



Annual Report of the Ilkley Harriers Committee to the AGM

2009/2010 has been a busy and successful year for the Ilkley Harriers Committee as the Club and its activities grow year on year. A detailed report of the Club's activities would take many pages, with up to 10 races attended every week; a busy training schedule, and several social events a month. So this report is something of a summary.

The **membership** of the Club has increased by 5% to 347, an all-time high, and with many younger runners evident on Tuesday nights (age 18-39 membership up 8%). There have been a number of new membership initiatives this year, and more planned for next year.

In addition to this number there are over 270 **Junior** Ilkley Harriers, most of them involved in weekly activities. The development of the junior section is, quite simply, something to be proud of. Its activities and achievements are so numerous that they are reported on separately.

On the **competition** front, the Club has been well represented at events near and far, with good numbers of members racing on the roads, fells, trails, and cross-country. And we are represented at all levels from first-timers to national and even international level.

We have had class winners in Marathons, Half Marathons, HDSRL, fell races and the English Fell Championships, the local PECO XC League, the OMM, and triathlon. We have runners who are in the fastest 10 in their age class in the country. And very recently we had a Silver medal at the World Mountain Running Association Masters Championships. One of our runners has this year emerged as a regular race winner on trail and fell. More than a dozen Club records have been broken this year (some of them more than once!). And we have had two Bob Graham Round runners (and may Harriers supporting BGR).

There have been countless Personal Bests, and races where the sheer number of red and green vests has been inspiring (e.g. 75 runners at our PECO race, 21 Harriers finishing the 3 Peaks race).

On the team front we have had improved results in the local HDSRL and PECO XC Leagues. We were delighted to beat Bingley Harriers in the Mob match again this year. Relay participation was up on last year, but this is an area where more participation is possible.

A development this year was sending coaches full of Harriers to the Blackpool Marathon, and to the athletics at Gateshead. Lots of work setting it up, but great family days out as a result.

The cornerstone of the great level of (senior Harrier) race participation is the Club **training** organised by the members themselves. Despite problems with the provision of coach training by the athletics authorities in the last year or so, we have a mix of experienced and able coaches and leaders who work very hard to provide structured training for our members. And there are many others who lead less formal but no less important group runs.

With so many members enjoying the experience of racing, it is important that the Club 'puts something back in' by **organising races**. The number of races we organised more than doubled to 7 this year, with a similar number organised by the Junior section. A fundamental change this year was to grant race organisers a greater degree of autonomy whilst still giving every support possible. This has been successful – our races are popular, enjoyable, and have a reputation for quality organisation.

Peter Shields' YVAA Road Relays at the Lido went swimmingly well, and we have been asked to stage the event again this year. Neil Chapman and Shirley Wood's PECO XC set everyone talking with its 'river crossing'. Paul and Shirley Wood's Ilkley Moor fell race was hit by snow this year but was still one of the biggest and best local fell races. Neil Chapman's race started the HDRL season on a high note. We took over the organisation of the Will Ramsbotham Badger Stone Relays and the number of teams increased from 6 to 51. Lawrence Basham's Ilkley Trail Race attracted some 270 runners and raised over £1100 for the Revival Centre and Orphanage in Matugga, Uganda. After a gap of 20 years, Paul Wood and Graham Maud revived the Addingham Gala fell race. And Geoff Howard's Ilkley Incline continues to attract an enthusiastic crowd of uphill enthusiasts. 2010/2011 looks set to have more exciting developments, including a new 5 mile road race organised by Neil Chapman to raise funds for local lad Ben Smithson.

We've named the race organisers here, but they have been supported by an army of race officials, timekeepers, marshals, caterers, and other helpers – thank you to them all.

The many successful Club activities this year have been *steered* by the Committee, rather than *managed* by it. Again, this is a necessary evolution as the Club grows. As an example, Ewan Welsh coordinated a successful new series of mid-month social events – approved and supported by the Committee. Overall, we were able to offer *support* for more social events this year than for many years and many Harriers enjoyed the benefits. We're pleased to report that despite the costs of fuelling these events with free buffets and the like, the Club has still made a small surplus on its accounts this year. The Treasurer will report separately.

At the start of the year we published a **Development Plan** to set targets for this year and in the main those targets have been achieved. (The areas where we have struggled have been where outside factors have caused problems – UK Athletics has only just put its coach training program in order, the Ilkley Gazette' sports editing has been somewhat erratic.) In the new Committee year the Development Plan will be reviewed and a new Plan created for the next Committee year.

Earlier in the year the Club achieved ClubMark accreditation, a 'quality mark' for sports clubs. A tangible benefit was the review and documentation of the Club procedures and policies which are now in good order.

Another declared aim this year was to inform and involve non-Committee members with Committee activities. Agendas and minutes were published in advance on the web site, and the Meeting itself moved to a more accessible post-Tuesday-run slot. This has not resulted in many non-Committee members 'dropping in', but the opportunity is there. And there have certainly been valuable contributions made by non-Committee members working with the Committee on various projects, e.g Jann Smith's contribution to 'Club Kit'.

In summary, there has been some real *development* in Ilkley Harriers this year, and we have a great base to build on next year, our 25th Anniversary year.

Paul Wood, Chairman Ilkley Harriers, 2009-2010