

The History of the Weets Race

The race began in 1971 and for six years started at the Fosters Arms. It was a men only race and the record was set by R.Harrison in 1973 with a time of 26.50. In 1977, the start of the race was moved to the Rolls Royce Social Club and for the first time, women were allowed to enter. The roads in the town centre were closed for the race and there was a great atmosphere as the runners passed the pubs and the road side spectators before heading off up to the summit of Weets, before returning through the throng back to the Rolls Royce Club, a total of six miles.

The first race from the Rolls Royce Club was won by D Slater in a time of 30:34 and this time stood as a record for 18 years until it was beaten by 4 seconds by K Anderson in the 25th anniversary of the first race. Only three men have won the race three times, D Slater and Barlick legend Roger Brewster.

Ladies were first permitted to run in 1977 and the first winner was L King in a time of 48:52. The ladies record was set by C Greenwood of Bingley in 1997 with a time of 35:54. The only year that the race was not run was in 2001 when it was prevented from taking place by the foot and mouth epidemic.

Eventually, the cost of closing the town centre roads became prohibitive and in 2003, the start of the race moved to Letcliffe. The first winners of the men's race over the new course was three time British Champion, Rob Hope, in a time of 39:27. The first winner of the ladies' race was Vanessa Peacock of Clayton in a time of 48:34.

The race from Rolls Royce was six miles and as much of it was on the road, it was very fast. Although the present course is shorter, it is probably more challenging as it involves much less road and much more climbing. The records for the old courses will stand forever, but the records for the new course are there to be broken. The men's records was set by J Tigue in 2008 with a time of 39:16 and the ladies' record time of 40:31 was set in 2010 by Victoria Wilkinson of Bingley Harriers.

Many fine runners have taken on the Weets challenge over the years, including Ron Hill, Roger Brewster, Rob Hope and John Wild and is probably one of the few races in the area that Ian Holmes has never won..

The race has been run for over 40 years and now that it is under the auspices of the local running club, its future looks assured.