

THE competitors line up for the start of the Blaydon Race



THE winner, Mike McCleod, crosses the line ahead of the field.

THE first Blaydon Race in its modern form was run on a pleasant, if blustery, summer evening on Tuesday.

The trip to the horse races of 1862 described in Georgie Ridley's famous song, was commemorated by over 200 runners as they retraced the route along Scotswood Road from Balmbras in the cloth market to the Georgie Ridley in Blaydon shopping precinct.

First lad home to take the Newcastle Brown Ale Blaydon Cup was Mike McLeod of Elswick in 26 minutes 27 seconds with Kevin Forster of Saltwell Harriers second and Ray Smedley of Birchfield in third position.

The Blaydon team of Tony Robinson (4th), John Colquhoun (7th), Nick Jobson (9th) and Tony Wright (13th) took the Callers Blaydon Team Trophy, closely followed by Gateshead with Steve Irvine (4th), Brian Baggaley (8th), Ken Brown (10th) and Bruce Robson (12th).

Elswick Harriers were perhaps surprisingly only third overall team with winner McLeod, Dave Robson (6th), Harry Matthews (11th) and Kevin Johnson (21st).

The beautiful Dutton Forshaw Blaydon Chainbridge Ladies Trophy in the form of a rosebowl with an engraving of the old Scotswood Chainbridge on the plinth was won by Helen Boyes of Morpeth in 34 minutes 6 seconds who beat Mary Chambers of Blaydon by just over a minute with Lorraine McCutcheon of Jarrow and Hebburn and Vera Robson of Gateshead not too far adrift.

In the Auld Gadies (veterans) section Jim Alder of Morpeth took the top award of the Blaydon Bell Trophy in 29 minutes 55 seconds.

The trophy is a brass handbell which is a replica of the handbell owned by Jackie Brown, the town crier of Blaydon in 1862.

The McCutcheon Veterans Team Shield was won fairly easily by Heaton Harriers with Blaydon second and Gateshead third.

Other veteran awards all in the form of various sizes of bell-shaped whisky decanters were: Over 40's: 2, Reg Checkley, Heaton; 3, Eddie Hudspeth, Morpeth.

Over 45's: 1, Dick Balding, Heaton; 2, Keith Boyle, Sunderland; 3, Frank Docherty,

Over 50's: 1. Bob Peart, Elswick; 2. Gordon Freeman, Sunderland; 3. Dave Hush, Gosforth.

Over 55's: 1. Ted Joynson, Gateshead; 2. Ron Walker, Saltwell.

The race is now likely to become an annual event.

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