

ATHLETICS TODAY/12 STAGE ROAD RELAY

THIRD ON THE TROT FOR TIPTON

Despite missing half last year's winning team, Tipton showed their strength in depth by capturing their sixth trophy in eight years.

DUNCAN MACKAY reports. Photos:

Mark Shearman

TIPTON HARRIERS comfortably won the Athletics Today AAA 12 stage Road Relay for the third successive year at Sutton Park last Saturday. But behind them silver and bronze medallists, Shaftesbury Barnet and Swansea Harriers, broke the Midlands stronghold on the event.

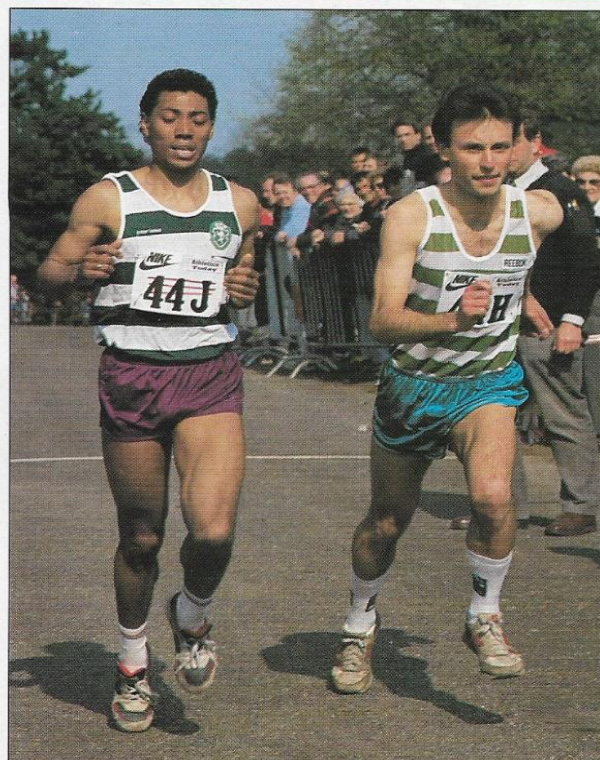
It was the first time since 1982 (when Aldershot, Farnham & District won) that a non-Midland club other than Gateshead had finished in the top three. This 25th AAA 12 Stage really did have a silver lining for Shaftesbury, who had never finished in the top three before. Four weeks ago they were controversially deprived of at least a medal, if not victory, in the Southern Championships at Wimbledon Park

when they were directed off course on stage nine. And at last year's 12 Stage they missed bronze by just 43 seconds.

Swansea, meanwhile, go from strength to strength. Fourth at Sutton Park two years ago, the Welsh club have been bolstered by the signing of Ian Hamer.

But it was really due to a brilliant run by Nigel Adams on stage 11 that they got back in among the medals after at one time appearing to be out of the running.

Swansea could be a real handful to deal with in this autumn's Six Stage at Rushmoor Arena, especially with 28:11.25 Australian 10,000m runner Peter Brett available after serving his qualifying period.



(Above) ASHWORTH LAUKAM hands over to ARRON KEENE for Tipton.

(Below) NIGEL ADAMS hands to GEOFF HILL for Swansea, who finished third



It is becoming an increasingly tired cliché about Tipton's strength in depth winning the 12 Stage, but rather like Liverpool they seem to be able to withstand the loss of leading runners better than any other club in the country. Neither AAA Six Stage champions Bingley (missing English cross country champion Richard Nerurkar) nor Northern champions Copeland (without both Kevin McCluskey and Paul Taylor) were able to withstand the loss of one or two of their top athletes.

But Tipton were without nearly half of last year's winning team! Mark Burnhope, Andy Wilton, Ron Bentley jnr, Lee Woolridge and John Wheway were all sidelined this year for various reasons. But, Liverpool-like, replacements were drafted in with no adverse effect on their performance.

This was Tipton's tenth title in all and their sixth in eight years. As is the norm with the West Midlands club, their success was based upon good solid teamwork and not on one or two individuals. Remarkably, all of their long leg runners clocked times between 25:41 and 26:21 while all the short leg runners recorded marks between 14:12 and 14:53.

Despite the sunny warm conditions, a gusting wind kept times at the sharp end disappointingly down. No-one managed to break 25 minutes on the long stage (5 miles 706 yards) for the first time since 1988 while for the second successive year only one man managed to duck inside 14 minutes on the short leg (3 miles 8 yards).

It was a day for the clubman on the

short stage as the fastest time was recorded by little known 24 year-old Richard Hollingsworth (13:55) of Notts, the second fastest by Stockport's Bashir Hussain (14:00) and the third by Highgate's Mike Quinn (14:07).

Better known names stole the honours on the long leg as Basildon's Eamonn Martin looked full of running on his way to the fastest time of 25:03. Although the quality at the top end may have been slightly down this year, there was more depth with Morpeth's Mark Hudspeth (25:11), Shaftesbury's John Sherban (25:14) and Adams (25:16) also breaking 25:20. And overall, 25 runners broke 26 minutes compared to just 19 last year.

STAGE 1

COMMONWEALTH 5000m bronze medallist Ian Hamer gave his new club Swansea Harriers the perfect start, breaking clear early from the pack and bringing the Welsh club home in 25:37, 18 seconds in front of the rest.

Behind Hamer, British steeplechase international Ken Penney (25:55) led the chasing pack for Southern bronze medallists Boxhill Racers. They were neck and neck with last year's Midland champions Wolverhampton & Bilston, represented by Kevin Lamb.

A cluster of clubs were grouped behind them, including defending champions Tipton in fourth. Tony Milovosov displayed remarkable powers of recovery after finishing 44th in the ADT London Marathon just six days earlier to take part in his 16th successive AAA 12 Stage. But he was not happy with the time of 26:00 he was given by the timekeepers. "I ran 25:56, 25:58 at least," complained Milovosov.

Junior international steeplechaser Lee Dunn (26:05) brought Sale home in fifth place, despite having to perform acrobatics to keep his feet after slipping on some mud around Keeper's Pool. A number of runners behind him were not so fortunate.

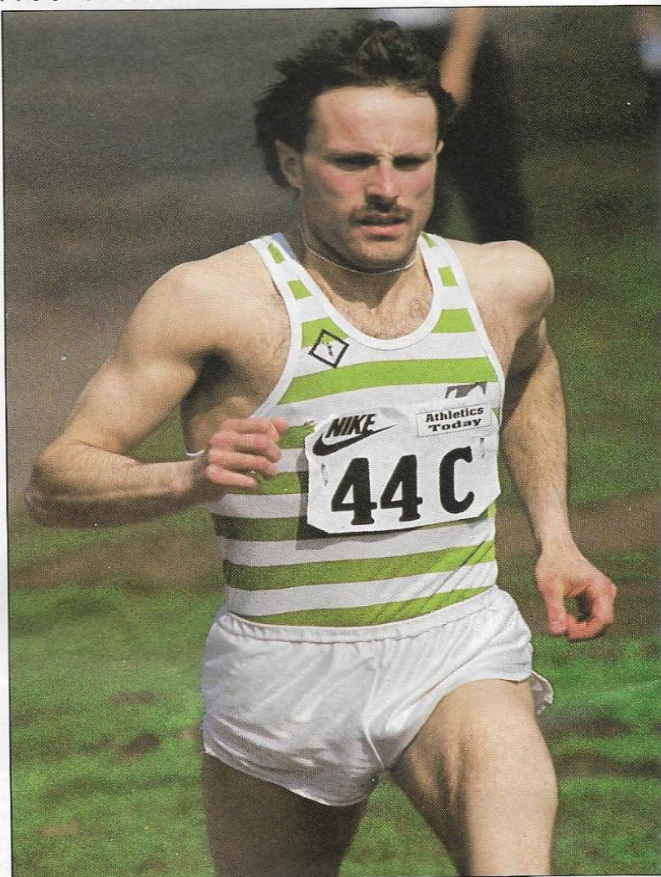
The expected Northern challenge was slow to get going with Bingley and Copeland languishing in 17th and 23rd respectively.

1, Swansea 25:37 I Hamer; 2, Boxhill 25:55 K Penney; 3, Wolverhampton & Bilston 25:55 Kevin Lamb; 4, Tipton 26:00 T Milovosov; 5, Sale 26:05 L Dunn; 6, Notts 26:06 R Ironmonger; 7, Blackheath 26:07 A Guller; 8, Telford 26:09 B Bedell; 9, Bristol 26:12 M Hula; 10, Coventry Godiva 26:15 B Bramma; 11, Salford 26:17 M Deegan; 12, Omega 26:23 M King; 13, Shaftesbury Barnet 26:26 M Moughton; 14, Sunderland 26:27 G Forster; 15, Sheffield 26:27 D MacFarlane; 16, London Irish 26:33 N O'Brien; 17, Bingley 26:36 S Johnson; 18, Haringey 26:41 D Grover; 19, Brighton & Hove 26:45 K Newton; 20, Warrington 26:49 P Wynn; 21, Aldershot Farnham & D 26:52 A Bailey; 22, Chelmsford 26:56 J Freeman; 23, Copeland 26:58 A Sawyer; 24, Leicester Coritania 27:01 J Parker; 25, Westbury 27:04 M Harris; 26, Leeds City 27:06 W Aylesbury; 27, Herne Hill 27:07 G Jerwood; 28, Rowheath 27:07 S Hewett; 29, Oadby & Wigston 27:09 G Deacon; 30, Morpeth 27:11 I Hudspeth; 31, Chester Le Street 27:12 J Ranson; 32, Preston H 27:13 A Walpole; 33, Bournemouth 27:18 D Bird; 34, Gateshead 27:24 D Miles; 35, Derby 27:37 J Ward; 36, Stourport 27:37 S Pailton; 37, Les Croupliers 27:46 H Roberts; 38, Highgate 27:56 S Blaney; 39, Stretford 27:59 S Alexander; 40, Cardiff 27:59 G Eames; 41, Birchfield 28:06 P Black; 42, Massey Ferguson 28:32 G Crowe; 43, Belgrave 28:34 G Teahan; 44, Basildon 28:43 J Hunt; 45, Stockport 29:00 D Turnbull

STAGE 2

BOXHILL RACERS, who had led for the opening three stages in 1990, stormed into a 15 second lead after the second fastest time of the stage by Justin Fairbrother (14:22). Swansea's John Theophilus (14:55) held on to second while Paul O'Callaghan (14:38) kept a heavily depleted Wolves in the picture.

British junior international Steffan White, 55th in the World Cross Country Championships,



PAUL FOWLER pushes hard to maintain Tipton's lead on Stage 10

brought last year's bronze medallists Coventry up six places to fourth with an impressive leg of 14:27, 13 seconds quicker than he ran in the Midland Championships.

Among those 18 year-old White passed was Tipton's super-vet Andy Holden. The 42 year-old dentist was running this event for the 17th time in 18 years. He ensured that Tipton maintained their position in striking range of the leaders. But his time of 14:53 was well short of Alun Roper's 14:27 vets course record. Fastest time of this stage was Mike Quinn's 14:07 for Highgate as the AAA 10k champions gained 15 places to move into 23rd.

1, Boxhill 40:17 J Fairbrother 14:22; 2, Swansea 40:32 J Theophilus 14:55; 3, Wolverhampton & Bilston 40:33 P O'Callaghan 14:38; 4, Coventry Godiva 40:42 S White 14:27; 5, Telford 40:50 M Walsh 14:41; 6, Tipton 40:53 A Holden 14:53; 7, Omega 41:01 R Chapman 14:38; 8, Notts 41:05 I Muxlow 14:59; 9, Sale 41:11 S Craig 15:06; 10, Salford 41:12 I McAllister 14:55; 11, London Irish 41:15 B Nugent 14:42; 12, Warrington 41:25 G Green 14:36; 13, Bingley 41:30 G Grindley 14:54; 14, Westbury 41:33 D Adams 14:29; 15, Blackheath 41:36 L Bulson 15:29; 16, Shaftesbury Barnet 41:38 S McHugh 15:12; 17, Haringey 41:38 P Scott 14:57; 18,

ANDY KELLEHER of Shaftesbury on Stage 10



Leicester Coritania 41:41 P Davies 14:40; 19, Bristol 41:44 P King 15:32; 20, Aldershot Farnham & D 41:51 G Burnett 14:59; 21, Copeland 41:56 D Bowness 14:58; 22, Leeds City 41:58 R Ashton 14:52; 23, Highgate 42:03 M Quinn 14:07; 24, Sheffield 42:03 C Maddocks 15:36; 25, Morpeth 42:05 A James 14:54; 26, Sunderland 42:12 G Armstrong 15:45; 27, Brighton & Hove 42:22 J Hook 15:37; 28, Chester Le Street 42:26 G Harris 15:14; 29, Rowheath 42:26 D Ehrenfried 15:19; 30, Oadby & Wigston 42:33 S Boulter 15:24; 31, Bournemouth 42:36 L Austin 15:18; 32, Chelmsford 42:42 M Knowles 15:46; 33, Derby 42:42 I Evans 15:05; 34, Herne Hill 42:45 C Loizou 15:38; 35, Cardiff 42:55 S Moseley 14:56; 36, Preston H 43:04 W Truran 15:51; 37, Birchfield 43:06 T Werrett 15:00; 38, Stourport 43:13 N Williams 15:36; 39, Gateshead 43:21 T Lynch 15:57; 40, Belgrave 43:24 S Paton 14:50; 41, Stockport 43:27 P Fitzpatrick 14:27; 42, Les Croupliers 43:29 C Davies 15:43; 43, Stretford 43:31 M Roberts 15:32; 44, Basildon 44:24 R Porter 15:41; 45, Massey Ferguson 45:25 D Lee 16:53

STAGE 3

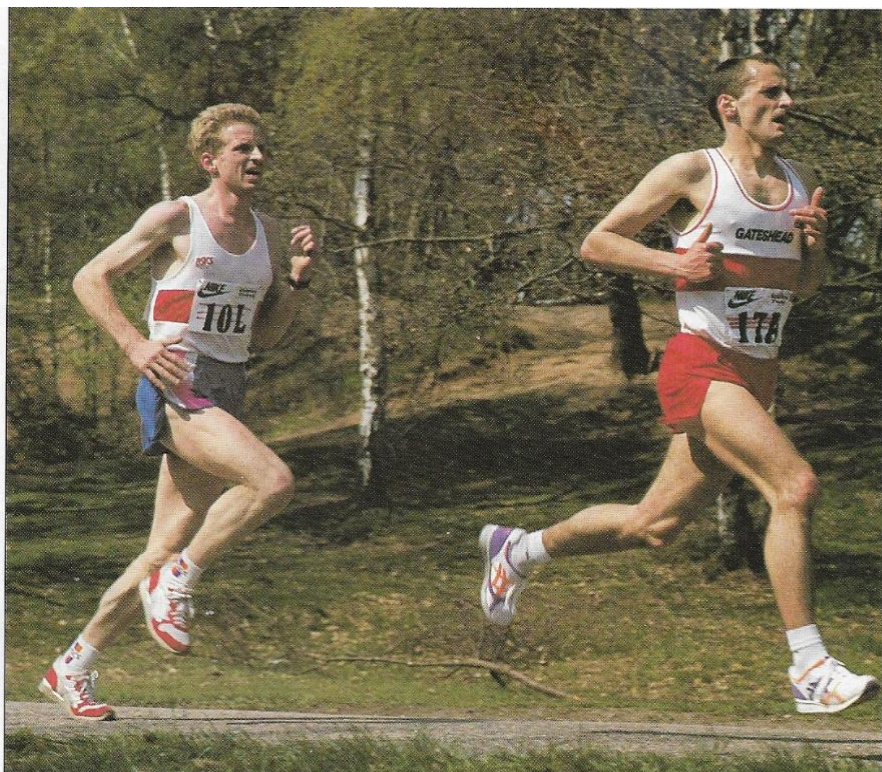
DAVE COWAN (26:24) increased Boxhill's lead to 30 seconds over Salford, who came from nowhere to pop up in the top three thanks to Mark Peters whose time of 25:59 was the fastest of this stage. He passed eight people, but the biggest improvement came from Morpeth. They moved from 25th to 13th due to Steve Platts (26:03).

But Wolves moved in the opposite direction. They dropped five places to

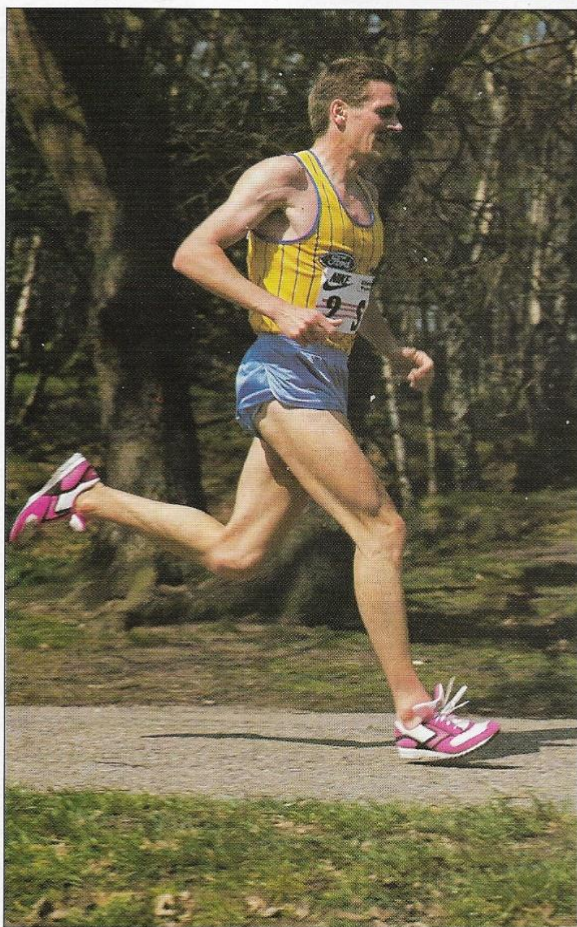
eighth as David Pearson clocked a modest 27:14. Tipton's David Payne (26:21) regained two places, leaving them in fourth. Payne is one of the athletes who epitomises Tipton's club spirit. He ran, despite having to rush away immediately after his leg to attend a wedding.

Keith Cullen, the first European junior in this year's World Cross Country Championships, showed encouraging form. He clocked 26:13 to help his club, Chelmsford, break into the top 20. Another steeplechaser, 1986 Commonwealth silver medallist Roger Hackney, made a rare appearance for Aldershot and posted a time of 26:19 as they continued their steady climb up to 15th.

1, Boxhill 1:06:41 D Cowan 26:24; 2, Salford 1:07:11 M Peters 25:59; 3, Swansea 1:07:12 S Tobin 26:40; 4, Tipton 1:07:14 D Payne 26:21; 5, Coventry Godiva 1:07:16 J McKeown 26:34; 6, Sale 1:07:24 N Rimmer 2:13; 7, London Irish 1:07:29 T Maher 26:14; 8, Wolverhampton & Bilston 1:07:47 D Pearson 27:14; 9, Telford 1:07:53 P Clemens 27:03; 10, Omega 1:08:00 G Neely 26:59; 11, Notts 1:08:08 N Cope 27:03; 12, Morpeth 1:08:08 S Platts 26:03; 13, Sheffield 1:08:09 M Ridgeway 26:06; 14, Westbury 1:08:10 M Vile 26:37; 15, Aldershot Farnham & D 1:08:10 R Hackney 26:19; 16, Shaftesbury Barnet 1:08:12 K Dumbleton 26:34; 17, Warrington 1:08:23 M Girvan 26:58; 18, Highgate 1:08:40 P Naisbitt 26:37; 19, Sunderland 1:08:46 C Naisbitt 26:34; 20, Brighton & Hove 1:08:50 N Gates 26:28; 21, Haringey 1:08:54 E Mannion 27:16; 22, Chelmsford 1:08:55 K Cullen 26:13; 23, Bingley 1:08:56 M Peace 27:26;



COLIN WALKER of Gateshead leads DEON McNEILLY of Bristol on Stage 7



AMMONN MARTIN: ran the fastest long leg of the day for Basildon

24, Copeland 1:09:05 M Amor 27:09; 25, Oadby & Wigston 1:09:07 N McCaffery 26:34; 26, Blackheath 1:09:14 D Taylor 27:38; 27, Stourport 1:09:18 T Rudd 26:05; 28, Leicester Coritanian 1:09:19 S Needs 27:38; 29, Bournemouth 1:09:28 J Boyes 26:52; 30, Chester le Street 1:10:03 A Whitfield 27:37; 31, Bristol 1:10:05 A Henderson 28:21; 32, Preston H 1:10:10 S Gildert 27:06; 33, Leeds City 1:10:12 A Gill 28:14; 34, Rowheath 1:10:27 E Twohlg 28:01; 35, Herne Hill 1:10:37 M Boyle 27:42; 36, Belgrave 1:10:48 G Adams 27:24; 37, Les Croupliers 1:10:59 P Wheeler 27:23; 38, Stretford 1:11:10 M Hutchinson 27:39; 39, Birchfield 1:11:19 A Iszatt 28:13; 40, Derby 1:11:21 S Wright 28:30; 41, Gateshead 1:11:25 M Thompson 28:04; 42, Basildon 1:11:28 A Taylor 27:04; 43, Stockport 1:11:41 H Morris 28:14; 44, Cardiff 1:12:31 D Ide 29:30; 45, Massey Ferguson 1:14:48 I Redford 29:23

STAGE 4

SIMON FAIRBROTHER ran exactly the same time (14:22) as brother Justin to increase Boxhill's lead to 43 seconds over Tipton - for whom Steve Portman (14:32) ran a solid leg - and Swansea, who were kept in third by Paul Richards (14:50). Salford's Duncan Mason (15:31) was unable to keep them among the leaders as they dropped five places.

The challenge of Bingley and Copeland finally showed signs of stirring, albeit briefly. Both clubs finally moved out of the 20s and into 17th and 18th positions respectively as they each gained six places with Steve Green recording 14:44 for Bingley and Dave Rowbotham 14:41 for Copeland.

Stockport's Bashir Hussain ran the fastest time on this stage - and the second quickest short leg of the day - of 14:00, although it largely went unnoticed, happening as it did towards the tail end of the 45 strong field.

1, Boxhill 1:21:03 S Fairbrother 14:22; 2, Tipton 1:21:46 S Portman 14:32; 3, Swansea 1:22:02 P Richards 14:50; 4, Coventry Godiva 1:22:13 C Brown 14:57; 5, Wolverhampton & Bilston 1:22:21 M Edwards 14:34; 6, Sale 1:22:38 M Gilmartin 15:14; 7, Salford 1:22:42 D Mason 15:31; 8,

London Irish 1:22:52 P Murphy 15:23; 9, Notts 1:23:00 I Mant 14:52; 10, Aldershot Farnham & D 1:23:04 I Legg 14:54; 11, Telford 1:23:16 P Gardner 15:23; 12, Shaftesbury Barnet 1:23:17 M Williams 15:05; 13, Omega 1:23:19 P Buckley 15:19; 14, Morpeth 1:23:20 G Woods 15:12; 15, Sheffield 1:23:38 C Ireland 15:29; 16, Westbury 1:23:39 K Miles 15:29; 17, Bingley 1:23:40 S Green 14:44; 18, Copeland 1:23:46 D Rowbotham 14:41; 19, Brighton & Hove 1:23:51 J McDonald 15:01; 20, Warrington 1:24:01 P Frodsham 15:38; 21, Highgate 1:24:05 T Temmink 15:25; 22, Haringey 1:24:07 J Kilsby 15:13; 23, Sunderland 1:24:14 P Solomon 15:28; 24, Leicester Coritanian 1:24:19 N Stirk 15:00; 25, Chelmsford 1:24:20 D Tullett 15:25; 26, Bournemouth 1:24:52 M Cowan 15:24; 27, Blackheath 1:24:58 G Clifford 15:44; 28, Oadby & Wigston 1:25:06 A Moore 15:59; 29, Bristol 1:25:15 S Pilling 15:10; 30, Leeds City 1:25:17 C Devlin 1:25:17; 31, Stourport 1:25:19 M Brantfoot 16:01; 32, Chester le Street 1:25:25 M Openshaw 15:22; 33, Stretford 1:25:32 S Green 14:22; 34, Stockport 1:25:41 B Hussain 14:00; 35, Preston H 1:25:43 V McKoy 15:33; 36, Rowheath 1:25:58 R Gray 15:31; 37, Gateshead 1:25:59 R West 14:34; 38, Birchfield 1:26:02 A Symonds 14:43; 39, Belgrave 1:26:04 G Pitts 15:16; 40, Les Croupliers 1:26:12 R Bullen 15:14; 41, Basildon 1:26:16 E Brown 14:48; 42, Herne Hill 1:26:34 J Stanger 16:02; 43, Derby 1:26:50 S Hilton 15:29; 44, Cardiff 1:28:09 D Fowles 15:38; 45, Massey Ferguson 1:31:08 D Semple 16:20

STAGE 5

A NAME from the past and one for the future dominated this stage. Former 5000m world record holder David Moorcroft (25:48) was given one of the biggest ovations of the afternoon as he put Coventry into the lead. But the fastest time was set by Morpeth's 22 year-old Mark Hudspith, whose 25:11 lifted Morpeth from 14th to fourth.

Boxhill's lead evaporated quickly on this stage as Moorcroft and Tipton's Eddie Wedderburn ran shoulder for shoulder until the last 300m when the

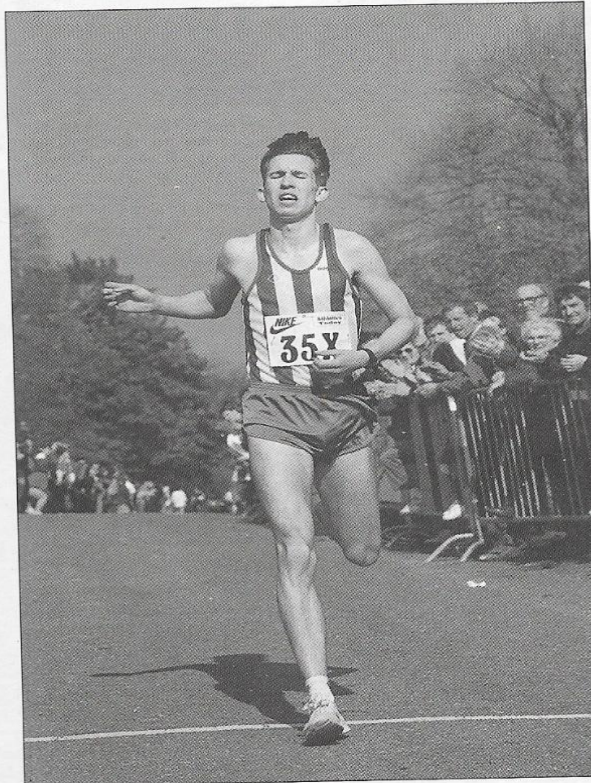
Coventry athlete broke away from his former training partner.

Though Steve Brooks (25:49) and Dave Swanson (25:44) came through to bring Bingley and Copeland into the top ten for the first time, it was Sale who kept the North's flag flying. The Northern silver medallists manoeuvred themselves into a medal winning position as Ged Davey ran 25:44 to pass three runners.

There was plenty of quality on this stage as eight runners broke 26:00. These included the incredible Sam Carey (25:34) who had finished 30th in the London Marathon, but kept his shoes on here to run the second fastest time of the stage and move Warrington up nine places.

1, Coventry Godiva 1:48:01 D Moorcroft 25:48; 2, Tipton 1:48:07 E Wedderburn 26:21; 3, Sale 1:48:22 G Davey 25:44; 4, Morpeth 1:48:31 M Hudspeth 25:11; 5, Swansea 1:48:43 A Doel 26:41; 6, Omega 1:48:55 C Robinson 25:36; 7, Boxhill 1:49:17 I Lampough 28:14; 8, Wolverhampton & Bilston 1:49:25 M Fromant 27:04; 9, Bingley 1:49:29 S Brooks 25:49; 10, Copeland 1:49:30 D Swanson 25:44; 11, Warrington 1:49:35 S Carey 25:34; 12, Salford 1:49:52 T Leonard 27:10; 13, Aldershot Farnham & D 1:49:58 P Ledger 26:54; 14, Shaftesbury Barnet 1:50:00 D Bannister 26:43; 15, London Irish 1:50:13 K Thompson 27:21; 16, Westbury 1:50:30 C Buckley 26:51; 17, Leicester Coritania 1:50:52 R Watt 26:50; 18, Highgate 1:50:55 R Watt 26:50; 19, Stourport 1:50:59 M Dalloway 25:40; 20, Notts 1:51:14 M Hill 28:14; 21, Brighton

NICK SMITH brings Shaftesbury Barnet home in second place



& Hove 1:51:20 S Price 27:29; 22, Sheffield 1:51:24 J Girvan 27:46; 23, Chelmsford 1:51:40 M Gormley 27:20; 24, Sunderland 27:45 J Hunt 27:45; 25, Bristol 1:52:09 T Byrne 26:54; 26, Stretford 1:52:13 K Harrison 26:41; 27, Haringey 1:52:16 J Leversedge 28:09; 28, Leeds City 1:52:18 M Roscoe 27:01; 29, Telford 1:52:22 J O'Rourke 29:06; 30, Bournemouth 1:52:22 S Tuck 27:44; 31, Basildon 1:52:49 P Barr 26:33; 32, Blackheath 1:53:17 P Brice 28:14; 33, Gateshead 1:53:16 R Smedley 27:17; 34, Chester le Street 1:53:26 S Bennett-Cowell 28:01; 35, Rowheath 1:53:31 B McEvoy 27:33; 36, Oadby & Wigston 1:53:54 M Strange 28:48; 37, Derby 1:54:07 J Winwright 27:12; 38, Les Croupliers 1:54:14 M Haley 28:02; 39, Preston H 1:54:20 B Gorman 28:37; 40, Birchfield 1:54:21 S Edmonds 28:19; 41, Stockport 1:54:40 G Goodwin 28:59; 42, Cardiff 1:54:45 J Hobbs 28:36; 43, Herne Hill 1:55:05 L Ball 28:31; 44, Belgrave 1:55:46 O Lewes 29:42; 45, Massey Ferguson 2:00:38 R Wallis 29:30

STAGE 6

THE THREE leading positions remained unchanged for the first time in the afternoon as Paul Hayes (14:38) put Coventry even further in front of Tipton.

The main talking point on this stage, though, was the performance of Richard Hollingsworth of Notts. He achieved something that even double Olympic 1500m champion Sebastian Coe never managed – to break 14 minutes at Sutton Park.

Hollingsworth gave the individual performance of the day as he moved to equal ninth on the all-time list with Simon Mugglestone behind Barry Smith (13:36), Brendan Foster (13:37), Rob Denmark (13:42), Paul O'Callaghan (13:44), Ian Stewart

(13:50), Alan Salter (13:51), Ray Smedley (13:54) and Mike Hawkins (13:54) with his time of 13:55.

1, Coventry Godiva 2:02:39 P Hayes 14:38; 2, Tipton 2:02:55 D Millington 14:48; 3, Sale 2:03:13 N Wilkinson 14:51; 4, Swansea 2:03:27 A Smith 14:44; 5, Boxhill 2:03:46 T Crossman 14:29; 6, Morpeth 2:03:54 T West 15:23; 7, Wolverhampton & Bilston 2:04:11 M Turner 14:46; 8, Omega 2:04:12 S Kelly 15:17; 9, Bingley 2:04:38 P Ogilvie 15:09; 10, Shaftesbury Barnet 2:04:41 J Godden 14:41; 11, Copeland 2:05:02 A Quayle 15:32; 12, Aldershot Farnham & D 2:05:05 M McCarthy 15:08; 13, Notts 2:05:09 R Hollingsworth 13:55; 14, London Irish 2:05:38 J Emery 14:43; 15, Highgate 2:05:39 N Smart 15:09; 17, Warrington 2:05:41 C Hulse 16:06; 18, Salford 2:05:46 P Haigh 15:54; 19, Sheffield 2:06:21 D Ansell 14:57; 20, Leicester Coritania 2:06:28 M Barker 15:36; 21, Sunderland 2:06:32 K Newton 14:33; 22, Brighton & Hove 2:06:39 P Witcomb 15:19; 23, Stourport 2:06:50 K Lane 15:51; 24, Chelmsford 2:07:20 S Jakeman 15:02; 25, Leeds 2:07:28 M Hill 15:05; 27, Bristol 2:07:50 C Sowley 15:41; 28, Bournemouth 2:07:53 A West 15:17; 29, Stretford 2:08:01 L Duffy 15:48; 30, Gateshead 2:08:01 J Reid 14:45; 31, Haringey 2:08:30 C Fenn 16:14; 32, Blackheath 2:08:46 B Saddler 15:34; 33, Rowheath 2:08:47 A Harding 15:16; 34, Derby 2:08:51 I Calladine 14:49; 35, Chester le Street 2:09:21 C Hilton 15:52; 36, Basildon 2:09:25 S Denmark 16:36; 37, Oadby & Wigston 2:09:35 J Matthews 15:41; 38, Cardiff 2:09:48 D Lane 15:03; 39, Birchfield 2:09:54 G Timmins 15:33; 40, Les Croupliers 2:10:02 C Miles 15:48; 41, Stockport 2:10:22 D Gibbons 15:42; 42, Belgrave 2:10:56 M Bizio 15:10; 43, Herne Hill 2:10:58 R Jacobs 15:53; 44, Preston H 2:11:07 S Hallas 16:42; 45, Massey Ferguson 2:16:24 T Meehan 15:46

STAGE 7

THE STAGE where most clubs played their aces was also the one on which Tipton swept into the lead for the first time – a lead which they were never to surrender. Chris Sweeney (25:41), who only two months ago was considering quitting the sport, comfortably made up the gap between himself and Coventry's Dave Ramsden (26:11) and opened up a cushion of 14 seconds.

Sweeney was one of 11 runners to break 26 minutes on this stage, making it by far the classiest of the day. Individual honours went to Basildon's Eamonn Martin, whose 25:03 was the fastest long stage.

Although it was 16 seconds slower than Martin ran two years ago, his coach Mel Batty is sure that he is on for his best season yet after an inspiring cross country season. His first track outing of the summer is likely to be on June 19 when he will probably run the 5000m in the Great Britain v Germany match at Crystal Palace.

The unheralded Richard Partridge, whose sense of direction helped Aldershot win the Southern title, was the second fastest of this stage, 21 seconds slower than Martin. Shaftesbury Barnet, whose steady climb through the field had gone largely unnoticed until this point, suddenly moved into overdrive as Ian Cornford's 25:28 brought them into fifth place.

The other runners to break 26:00 were Larry Matthews (25:25), Craig Mochrie (25:37), Steve Tunstall (25:37), Brian Rushworth (25:46), Colin Walker (25:51), Andy Bristow (25:54) and Colin Reitz (25:59). Two other notable names to run on this stage were Bristol's Deon McNeilly (26:03) and Bingley's Steve Binns (26:18).

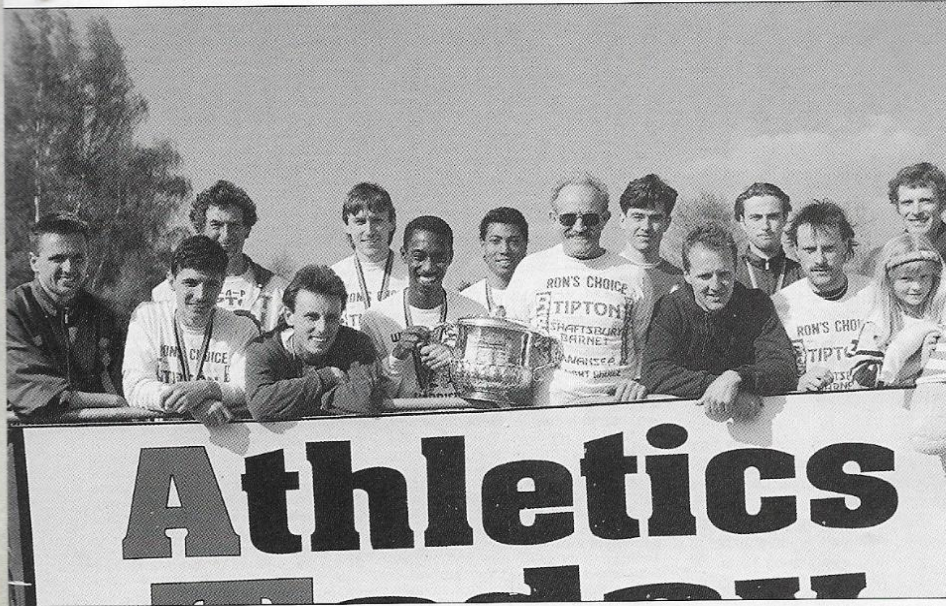
1, Tipton 2:28:36 C Sweeney 25:41; 2, Coventry Godiva 2:28:50 D Ramsden 26:11; 3, Swansea 2:29:39 J Hall 26:12; 4, Sale 2:30:05 J Keworth 26:52; 5, Shaftesbury Barnet 2:30:09 I Cornford 25:28; 6, Omega 2:30:11 C Reitz 25:59; 7, Wolverhampton & Bilston 2:30:28 M Cadman 26:17; 8, Aldershot Farnham & D 2:30:30 R Partridge 25:24; 9, Bingley 2:30:56 S Binns 26:18; 10, Salford 2:31:11 L Matthews 25:25; 11, Boxhill 2:31:35 B Attwell 27:49; 12, Morpeth 2:31:41 D Coull 27:47; 13, Leicester Coritania 2:32:05 C Mochrie 25:37; 14, Sunderland 2:32:18 B Rushworth 25:46; 15, Brighton & Hove 2:32:33 A Bristow 25:54; 16, Copeland 2:32:35 B Thompson 27:33; 17, Stourport 2:32:51 A Jackson 26:01; 18, London Irish 2:33:16 P McGrath 28:00; 19, Warrington 2:33:30 T Piegrome 27:49; 20, Westbury 2:33:37 D McGrath 27:58; 21, Highgate 2:33:49 A Mason 28:11; 22, Gateshead 2:33:52 C Walker 25:51; 23, Bristol 2:33:55 P Shaw 27:34; 24, Sheffield 2:33:55 P Shaw 27:34; 25, Notts 2:34:12 J Forster 29:03; 26, Basildon 2:34:28 E Martin 25:03; 27, Bournemouth 2:35:09 N Mannion 27:16; 28, Haringey 2:35:51 A Robinson 27:21; 29, Chelmsford 2:36:00 G Orr 28:40; 30, Rowheath 2:36:18 A Kennington 27:31; 31, Telford 2:36:73 S Lloyd 28:55; 32, Leeds City 2:36:27 N Lovell 29:07; 33, Preston H 2:36:44 S Tunstall 25:37; 34, Derby 2:36:48 J Harries 27:57; 35, Cardiff 2:36:57 J Hooper 27:04; 36, Stretford 2:37:09 N Evans 29:08; 37, Blackheath 2:37:28 N Watling 28:42; 38, Le Croupliers 2:37:33 M Surridge 27:31; 39, Chester le Street 2:37:48 P Casey 28:75; 40, Heme Hill 2:38:08 R Cole 27:10; 41, Belgrave 2:38:19 J Gladwin 27:23; 42, Birchfield 2:38:47 R Harrison 28:48; 43, Oadby & Wigston 2:38:48 H Wilkinson 29:13; 44, Stockport 2:39:01 M Noble 29:01; 45, Massey Ferguson 2:45:01 T Hoy 28:59

STAGE 8

PETER MARTIN, a night-time lorry driver who always does a late stage because it allows him time to get more sleep before he runs, turned in a solid leg of 14:38 to keep Tipton out in front, although Coventry's Andy Hart (14:30) cut their lead to only six seconds.

While Swansea's challenge for a medal looked like it might be fading, Sale and Shaftesbury continued to dispute the bronze medal. Sale regained their third spot as Kevin McKay (14:12) ran the fastest time on this stage, but moving ever more menacingly up to Sale's shoulders were Shaftesbury, who improved one more place as Graham Getty clocked 14:32.

1, Tipton 2:43:14 P Martin 14:38; 2, Coventry Godiva 2:43:20 A Hart 14:30; 3, Sale 2:44:17 K McKay 14:12; 4, Shaftesbury 2:44:41 G Getty 14:32; 5, Swansea 2:44:45 C McFadzean 15:06; 6, Omega 2:45:17 T Fee 15:06; 7, Aldershot Farnham & D 2:45:30 H Hudson 15:07; 8, Wolverhampton & Bilston 2:45:35 D Foy 15:07; 9, Bingley 2:46:07 S McDonald 15:11; 10, Salford 2:46:33 K McGee 15:20; 11, Boxhill 2:46:38 N Green 15:03; 12, Leicester Coritania 2:46:58 R Sheen 14:53; 13, Morpeth 2:47:20 L Lemon 15:39; 14, Brighton & Hove 2:47:40 A Rowe 15:07; 15, Copeland 2:47:44 I Flynn 15:09; 16, Stourport 2:47:58 T St Ledger 15:05; 17, Sunderland 2:48:07 R Tough 15:49; 18, Highgate 2:48:26 M Chapman 14:37; 19, London Irish 2:48:34 J Orr 15:18; 20, Westbury 2:49:11 N Miller 15:34; 21, Bristol 2:49:21 B Murphy 15:28; 22, Sheffield 2:49:25 C Cope 15:30; 23, Gateshead 2:49:30 C Stewart 15:38; 24, Notts 2:49:46 K Pye 15:34; 25, Warrington 2:50:00 P Abbott 16:30; 26, Bournemouth 2:50:31 H Smith 15:22; 27, Haringey 2:51:20 A Crossan 15:29; 28, Basildon 2:51:25 C McConachie 16:57; 29, Stretford 2:51:29 P Toetell 14:19; 30, Leeds City 2:51:35 J Wilkinson 15:08; 31, Cardiff 2:51:44 A Pritchard 14:52; 32, Chelmsford 2:51:55 C Purse 15:55; 33, Rowheath 2:52:01 S Caley 15:43; 34, Telford 2:52:02 T Bedell 15:39; 35, Derby 2:52:48 P Hilton 16:00; 36, Blackheath 2:53:01 D Hassall 16:33; 37, Belgrave 2:53:03 O Foote 14:44; 38, Preston H 2:53:06 P Quibell 16:77; 39, Chester le Street 2:53:57 J Russell 16:09; 40, Les Crouplier 2:54:22 K Sullivan 16:49; 41, Birchfield 2:54:27 N Lawrence 15:45; 42, Heme Hill 2:54:42 S Baxter 16:34; 43, Stockport 2:54:50 S Haylock 15:27; 44,



Going one up on last year, Tipton show off their latest self-congratulatory T-shirts

Oadby & Wigston 2:55:00 T Wilkinson 16:12; 45, Massey Ferguson 3:01:29 D Clarke 16:06

STAGE 9

AS SALE'S bid for glory floundered, Shaftesbury's blossomed. Scots-based John Sherban put Shaftesbury into silver medal position with a storming leg of 25:14.

Only he and Highgate's AAA 10k champion Ian Manners (25:59) broke 26 minutes on this stage. Any ambitions Coventry harboured of beating Tipton disappeared as Pete Knight clocked only 27:08 and international steeplechaser John Hartigan extended Tipton's lead to 34 seconds with a time of 26:07. But Steve Smith gave Swansea hope of scraping into the medals. His time of 26:41 allowed them to move past Sale's Nick Peach (27:44) and back into fourth place, although still nearly a minute behind Coventry.

Traditionally this is a leg where some of Britain's leading distance runners turn out but it was a low key affair this year. However, Colin Moore, who represented Britain in last year's European Championships, kept Bingley in the top ten with 26:34.

1, Tipton 3:09:21 J Hartigan 26:07; 2, Shaftesbury 3:09:55 J Sherban 25:14; 3, Coventry Godiva 3:10:28 P Knight 27:08; 4, Swansea 3:11:26 S Smith 26:41; 5, Aldershot Farnham & D 3:12:00 J Kendal 26:30; 6, Sale 3:12:01 N Peach 27:44; 7, Omega 3:12:27 C Poulter 27:10; 8, Bingley 3:12:41 C Moore 26:34; 9, Salford 3:13:59 M Meary 27:28; 10, Wolverhampton & Bilston 3:14:20 D Rowley 28:45; 11, Copeland 3:14:23 I Postlethwaite 26:39; 12, Highgate 3:14:25 I Manners 25:59; 13, Morpeth 3:14:52 M Tait 27:32; 14, Boxhill 3:15:00 C Parrack 28:22; 15, Sunderland 3:15:01 P Campbell 26:54; 16, London Irish 3:15:04 J Downes 26:30; 17, Leicester Coritanian 3:15:27 J Masterson 28:29; 18, Brighton & Hove 3:15:56 M Lynch 28:16; 19, Gateshead 3:16:08 M Smith 26:38; 20, Stourport 3:16:12 C Penny 28:16; 21, Sheffield 3:16:56 J Bosdon 27:31; 22, Westbury 3:17:00 G Eagle 27:49; 23, Bournemouth 3:17:56 B Nixon 27:25; 24, Warrington 3:17:59 J Crehan 27:59; 25, Notts 3:18:23

S Forster 28:37; 26, Cardiff 3:18:34 S Knight 28:50; 27, Bristol 3:19:04 P Parry 29:43; 28, Basildon 3:19:10 P Haynes 27:45; 29, Leeds City 3:19:35 C Saint 28:00; 30, Rowheath 3:20:06 N Price 28:05; 31, Chelmsford 3:20:15 T Robinson 28:20; 32, Derby 3:20:26 T Gardner 28:38; 33, Haringey 3:20:31 S Livingston 29:11; 34, Blackheath 3:20:51 T Baldock 27:50; 35, Telford 3:21:02 J Cooper 29:00; 36, Stretford 3:21:10 J Humm 29:42; 37, Preston H 3:21:34 P Ward 28:28; 38, Belgrave 3:21:36 M Anderson 28:33; 39, Los Crouper 3:22:03 P Smith 27:41; 40, Birchfield 3:22:50 P Tranter 28:23; 41, Stockport 3:23:02 R Taylor 28:12; 42, Chester Le Street 3:23:10 S Bell 29:13; 43, Horne Hill 3:23:16 B Brown 28:34; 44, Oadby & Wigston 3:24:33 I Noble 29:33; 45, Massey Ferguson 3:32:19 P Atkins 30:50

STAGE 10

FOR THE first time in three years, Tipton's Paul Fowler (son of 1963 World Cross Country champion Roy) decided to turn out in the 12 Stage rather than race his pigeons. It turned out to be the right decision because he not only picked up a AAA winners medal, but also ran the fastest time (14:12) on stage 10 to further increase Tipton's lead.

Behind him, a real scrap for the medals was developing. Shaftesbury's Andy Kelleher (14:49) and Coventry's Pete Banks (14:57) kept their respective teams in the silver and bronze medal positions, but Sale's Darryl Taylor (14:33) brought his club back into the frame just three seconds behind fourth placed Swansea.

1, Tipton 3:23:33 P Fowler 14:17; 2, Shaftesbury 3:23:44 A Kelleher 14:40; 3, Coventry Godiva 3:25:25 P Banks 14:57; 4, Swansea 3:26:31 N Kinnane 15:05; 5, Sale 3:26:34 D Taylor 14:33; 6, Aldershot Farnham & D 3:27:17 K Gavin 15:17; 7, Bingley 3:27:53 S Hawkins 15:12; 8, Omega 3:27:59 T Bishop 15:32; 9, Highgate 3:29:02 S Snow 14:37; 10, Wolverhampton & Bilston 3:29:40 P Cadman 15:20; 11, Salford 3:29:54 R Merrill 15:55; 12, Copeland 3:30:05 A Smith 15:42; 13, London Irish 3:30:11 J Quirke 15:07; 14, Sunderland 3:30:31 J Taylor 15:30; 15, Morpeth 3:30:34 A Jenkins 15:42; 16, Leicester Coritanian 3:30:36 A Russell 15:09; 17, Boxhill 3:31:00 P Rowe 16:00; 18, Brighton & Hove 3:31:40 J Bristow 15:44; 19, Gateshead 3:31:55 I Harper 15:47; 20, Stourport 3:32:15 P Wright 16:03; 21, Sheffield 3:32:51 P Blakeney 15:55; 22, Bournemouth 3:32:53 D Higgins 14:57; 23, Westbury 3:33:19 P Chichy 16:19; 24, Warrington 3:33:43 L Williams 15:44; 25, Notts

3:34:15 J McQueen 15:52; 26, Basildon 3:34:30 N Weatheridge 15:20; 27, Cardiff 3:34:33 A Hayes 15:59; 28, Leeds City 3:34:36 M Benson 15:01; 29, Bristol 3:35:31 D Noad 16:27; 30, Derby 3:35:40 P Evans 15:14; 31, Rowheath 3:35:41 M Rees 15:35; 32, Haringey 3:36:07 C Lewis 15:36; 33, Blackheath 3:36:23 R Coles 15:32; 34, Chelmsford 3:36:30 G Harmer 16:15; 35, Belgrave 3:36:35 J Hobbs 14:59; 36, Telford 3:37:17 J Fry 16:10; 37, Stretford 3:37:18 W Shone 16:08; 38, Preston H 3:37:54 R Kenny 16:20; 39, Birchfield 3:38:41 J Arley 15:40; 40, Los Crouper 3:38:41 J Arley 15:40; 41, Horne Hill 3:38:53 M Llinas 15:37; 42, Chester Le Street 3:38:56 M Cunningham 15:46; 43, Stockport 3:39:16 S Hobson 16:14; 44, Oadby & Wigston 3:40:26 L Shields 15:53; 45, Massey Ferguson 3:49:05 P Arber 16:46

STAGE 11

COVENTRY, not out of the top three since the fifth stage, saw a medal disappear from grasp as Swansea's Nigel Adams defied a stomach bug to put the Welsh club into third with the fourth fastest long stage of the day: 25:16. The former Welsh cross country champion also closed to within 23 seconds of Shaftesbury's warhorse Julian Goater (26:40).

Sale's fires were finally doused after Gary Horne managed only 27:27 while Aldershot's strong second-half charge for a top five placing continued to gather momentum as Mark Jones (26:44) closed to within touching distance of Sale.

But there was no touching Tipton at the front. Ashworth Laukam's time of 26:04 put them 1:47 ahead and ensured that the last stage would be a victory lap for Arron Keene. Further down the field Midland rivals Wolves and Birchfield continued to struggle among the also-rans. Even Neil Appleby's 26:12 (fourth fastest on this stage) only managed to lift 1983 champions Birchfield from 39th to 31st.

1, Tipton 3:49:37 A Laukam 26:04; 2, Shaftesbury 3:51:24 J Goater 26:40; 3, Swansea 3:51:47 N Adams 25:16; 4, Coventry & Godiva 3:52:06 T Redman 26:41; 5, Sale 3:54:01 G Horne 27:27; 6, Aldershot Farnham & D 3:54:01 M Jones 26:44; 7, Bingley 3:54:40 M Hawkins 26:47; 8, Highgate 3:55:02 E Southam 26:00; 9, Omega 3:55:32 N Bishop 27:33; 10, Wolverhampton & Bilston 3:56:10 T Power 26:30; 11, Leices-

ter Coritanian 3:57:24 A Hart 26:48; 12, Sunderland 3:57:34 D Jenkin 27:03; 13, Salford 3:57:52 S Curran 27:58; 14, London Irish 3:58:24 S Kerr 28:13; 15, Copeland 3:58:46 G Byres 28:41; 16, Brighton & Hove 3:59:06 R Carter 27:26; 17, Morpeth 3:59:21 A Teasdale 28:47; 18, Bournemouth 3:59:51 B Jones 26:58; 19, Westbury 4:00:26 B McIntyre 27:07; 20, Boxhill 4:00:32 M Airey 29:32; 21, Stourport 4:00:38 P Dalloway 28:23; 22, Gateshead 4:00:52 M Coleby 28:57; 23, Sheffield 4:01:20 K Metcalf 28:29; 24, Cardiff 4:01:36 S Rhind 27:03; 25, Basildon 4:01:37 T Barden 27:07; 26, Warrington 4:02:10 G Ratcliffe 28:27; 27, Bristol 4:03:05 W Buxton 27:34; 28, Leeds City 4:03:25 T Wilks 28:49; 29, Rowheath 4:03:43 N Davey 28:02; 30, Notts 4:03:53 T Parr 29:38; 31, Birchfield 4:04:42 N Appleby 26:12; 32, Derby 4:04:54 R Woods 29:14; 33, Blackheath 4:04:58 P Calman 28:35; 34, Chelmsford 4:05:17 M Gibbs 28:47; 35, Belgrave 4:05:32 M Lake 28:57; 36, Stretford 4:06:26 R Byers 29:08; 37, Preston H 4:06:43 S Harris 28:49; 38, Haringey 4:06:43 D Milner 30:36; 39, Telford 4:06:56 P Cross 29:44; 40, Horne Hill 4:06:58 S Horton 28:05; 41, Les Crouper 4:07:00 M McGeoch 28:19; 42, Chester Le Street 4:07:35 B Forbes 28:39; 43, Stockport 4:08:45 D Lovam 29:29; 44, Oadby & Wigston 4:09:16 W Soden 28:50; 45, Massey Ferguson 4:17:09 V Clisham 28:04

STAGE 12

A BRAVE last stage from Colin Ridding could not salvage a medal for Coventry. He put everything into a 14:33 effort, but it was all in vain. Geoff Hill ran three seconds quicker to anchor Swansea to a medal for the first time behind Tipton and Shaftesbury.

Tipton's winning time of 4:04:11 was the slowest since their victory in 1985. On the Tipton all-time list ranked a lowly eighth, but only five clubs (Gateshead, Bristol, Aldershot, Birchfield and Coventry) have ever gone quicker on the present course of 50 miles 706 yards.

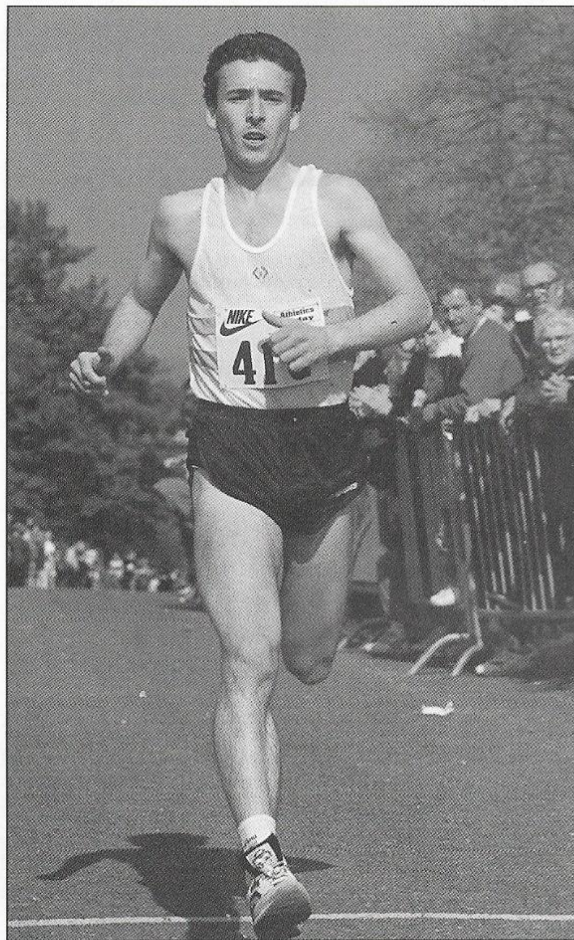
Ian Logan (15:00) completed the south's best day for many years as he pulled away from Sale's Glenn Savage (15:18) to bring Aldershot home in fifth spot. Indeed, three Southern clubs finished in the top seven as Highgate Jamie Lewis (14:51) managed to squeeze out an extra place for them in the closing stages at the expense of disappointing Bingley. Fastest on the stage was Bournemouth's Andy We

HOW THE RACE DEVELOPED

Stage	Leader	Time
1	Swansea	25:37
2	Boxhill	40:17
3	Boxhill	66:41
4	Boxhill	81:03
5	Coventry	1:48:01
6	Coventry	2:02:39
7	Tipton	2:28:36
8	Tipton	2:43:14
9	Tipton	3:09:21
10	Tipton	3:23:33
11	Tipton	3:49:37
12	Tipton	4:04:13

STAGE BY STAGE - THE FASTEST

1	I Hamer Swan	25:37
2	M Quinn High	14:07
3	M Peters Sal	25:59
4	B Hussain Stock	14:00
5	M Hudspeth Morp	25:11
6	R Hollingsworth Notts	13:55
7	E Martin Bas	25:03
8	K McKay Sale	14:12
9	J Sherban SB	25:14
10	P Fowler Tip	14:12
11	N Adams Swan	25:16
12	A Wedlake B'mth	14:13



lake. His time of 14:13 helped his club improve four places to 14th on the final leg.

GEOFF HILL ensures Swansea take third and win their first 12-stage medal

1, Tipton 4:04:13 A Keene 14:36; 2, Shaftesbury 4:05:57 M Smith 14:33; 3, Swansea 4:06:17 G Hill 14:30; 4, Coventry Godiva 4:06:39 C Ridding 14:33; 5, Aldershot Farnham & D 4:09:01 I Logan 15:00; 6, Sale 4:09:19 G Savage 15:18; 7, Highgate 4:09:53 J Lewis 14:51; 8, Bingley 4:09:59 A Venn 15:19; 9, Wolverhampton & Bilston 4:11:09 M Walton 14:59; 10, Omega 4:11:30 D Jordan 15:58; 11, Leicester Corntanian 4:12:19 T Walker 14:55; 12, Sunderland 4:13:09 M Hill 15:35; 13, Salford 4:13:43 P Roberts 15:51; 14, Boumemouth 4:14:04 A Wedlake 14:13; 15, Copeland 4:14:07 T Taylor 15:21; 16, Brighton & Hove 4:14:15 D Rathbone 15:09; 17, London Irish 4:14:28 J Sheridan 16:04; 18, Morpeth 4:14:31 S Priest 15:10; 19, Westbury 4:15:42 T Artus 15:16; 20, Boxhill 4:16:04 S Bishop 15:32; 21, Gateshead 4:16:18 J Larkin 15:26; 22, Stourport 4:16:24 H Lambert 15:46; 23, Cardiff 4:16:47 K Blake 15:11; 24, Sheffield 4:16:58 N Duggan 15:38; 25, Basildon 4:17:26 J Metherell 15:49; 26, Warrington 4:18:19 S Burthorn 16:09; 27, Bristol 4:18:54 K Fahey 15:49; 28, Rowheath 4:19:08 C Cartland 15:25; 29, Leeds City 4:19:17 M Flannagan 15:52; 30, Notts 4:19:38 S Rouse 15:46; 31, Blackheath 4:20:01 M Colpus 15:03; 32, Derby 4:20:30 P Jackson 15:36; 33, Birchfield 4:20:36 E Barbour 15:54; 34, Belgrave 4:20:58 A Patton 16:26; 35, Chelmsford 4:21:07 B Thorpe 15:50; 36, Stretford 4:22:09 Leigh 15:41; 37, Telford 4:22:44 P Clarke 15:48; 38, Preston H 4:22:46 M Crook 16:03; 39, Haringey 4:22:47 R Smith 16:04; 40, Herne Hill 4:22:57 A Norman 15:59; 41, Les Crouper 4:23:27 D Walsh 16:27; 42, Chester Le Street 4:23:34 M Tomlinson 15:59; 43, Stockport 4:25:06 A Bagley 16:21; 44, Oadby & Wigston 4:25:59 P Stammer; 45, Massey Ferguson 4:33:37 J Crabbe 16:28

FASTEST LONG LEGS

E Martin Bas 25:03; M Hudspith Morp 25:11; J Sherban SB 25:14; N Adams Swan 25:16; R Partridge AFD 25:24; L Matthews Sal 25:25; I Cornford SB 25:28; S Carey Warr 25:35; C Robison Omega 25:36; I Hamer Swan 25:37; C Mochrie Leic 25:37; S Tunstall Pres 25:37; M Dalloway Stour 25:40; C Sweeney Tip 25:51; G Davey Sale 25:44; D Swanston Cope 25:44; B Rushworth Sun 25:46; D Moorcroft Cov 25:48; S Brooks Bing 25:49; C Walker Gate 25:51

FASTEST SHORT LEGS

R Hollingsworth Notts 13:55; B Hus-sain Stock 14:00; M Quinn High 14:07; K McKay Sale 14:12; P Fowler Tip 14:12; A Wedlake B'mth 14:13; P Tootell Stret 14:19; J Fair-brother Box 14:22; S Fairbrother Box 14:22; S Green Stret 14:22; S White Cov 14:27; P Fitzpatrick Stock 14:27; D Adams West 14:29; T Crossman Box 14:29; A Hart Cov 14:30; G Hill Swan 14:30; S Port-man Tip 14:32; D Taylor Sale 14:33; N Smith SB 14:33; C Ridding Cov 14:33

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