

THE Edinburgh to Glasgow road race, first held in 1930, has a magnificent reputation for generating more than its fair share of drama and excitement.

Everyone who has ever competed in any of the previous 52 editions of the event has a story to tell and there are as many tales of calamity and disaster as there are of success or glory.

This year's race lived up to that reputation. The success and glory eventually belonged to Racing Club Edinburgh, who lived up to their tag as pre-race favourites by winning on their debut appearance, but they also came close to calamity and disaster.

When Alan Robson took over from Tom Hanlon at the beginning of the eighth and final stage, the Edinburgh men held a commanding lead of 2min 33sec over Teviotdale Harriers, with Cambuslang Harriers a further 11sec adrift.

But in the deepening dusk of a cold, foggy afternoon, Robson lost his bearings while negotiating the busy Glasgow streets. He by-passed the finish and by the time he was put back on course his lead had been narrowed to one minute.

Robson kept his cool, however, and the club he was instrumental in founding less than a year ago scored its most significant team success so far.

Racing Club can now add the Edinburgh to Glasgow title to the National Six-Stage Road and the National Four-Stage Cross-country Relay titles won earlier this year.

The Edinburgh club saved their big guns for the latter stages of the race but they were in command early in the proceedings. Fourth at the end of the first stage, the Edinburgh men moved up to within one second of the lead by the end of stage two, courtesy of a fine run from Brian Kirkwood.

David Gardiner put them ahead on leg three and Martin Coyne and David Ross kept them there before John Robson and Tom Hanlon went into action with the fastest sixth and seventh stage times.

After that, it should all have been plain sailing, but Alan Robson's unfortunate late detour provided them with a few heart-stopping moments before victory was assured.

Cambuslang, with Andy Beattie running the fastest final stage, took the silver medals, but they too had to deal with a major mishap along the way.

Charlie Thomson ran a brilliant fourth stage, bringing his team up from sixth to second place, only to find that the usually dependable Eddie Stewart wasn't ready to receive the baton. Despite losing time, Stewart recovered sufficiently to run the fourth fastest stage time of the day to keep his side in contention.

Teviotdale Harriers were third and picked up their first medals (other than the most meritorious medals) during a long association with the event.

Defending champions, Falkirk Victoria Harriers finished fourth but badly missed the in-form John

Racing Club march on

Racing Club Edinburgh strengthened their grip on relay titles north of the border with victory, but not before a few shocks on the way, as FRASER CLYNE reports



LEAD BUILDER: Tom Hanlon

Sherban, who apparently is suffering from a calf injury. The Vics did, however, field Ian Brown, seventh in the junior race at the 1978 World Cross-country Championships, who at 32 is on the comeback trail after years out of the sport.

Dundee Hawkhill Harriers were missing four of their 1989 winning team and under the circumstances did well to finish fifth.

Victoria Park, winners of the race seven times during the Fifties including a record-breaking five wins in a row (1950-54), showed that the glory days may be rekindled in the not too distant future. They finished a creditable sixth with a team which included five juniors.

The medals for the most meritorious performances went to seventh-placed IBM Spango Valley, who returned to the race this year after previously failing to qualify.

Spango's outstanding performer was Chris Robson, who lifted them from 14th to fourth on the classy second stage with the fastest time of the day.

Bobby Quinn did a similar job for Kilbarchan, taking them from 12th to third on stage two with a time only four seconds slower than Robson.

Although steeped in tradition, the future of the Edinburgh to Glasgow

race is frequently called into question. Traffic levels continue to grow and this year, as in the past, there were a few close shaves with runners and cars almost coming to blows. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the course to be safely marshalled.

Let's hope a solution can be found and the event does not pass into the history books in the same way as its sisters, the Manchester to Blackpool and the London to Brighton Relays, did in the Sixties.

RESULTS

1. Racing Club Edinburgh 3:42:17 (S Cohen 27:51, B Kirkwood 29:40, D Gardiner 24:43, M Coyne 27:35, D Ross 27:15, J Robson 32:14, T Hanlon 24:15, A Robson 28:44)
2. Cambuslang Harriers 3:43:17 (K Gormley 27:08, D Runciman 31:06, D Thom 25:23, C Thomson 26:26, E Stewart 27:32, G Croll 33:13, J Orr 25:29, A Beattie 27:00)
3. Teviotdale Harriers 3:43:31 (B Emmerson 28:00, A Walker 30:15, K Logan 24:46, D Barr 27:14, A Fair 27:06, D Cavers 33:14, I Elliot 25:31, R Hall 27:25)
4. Falkirk Victoria Harriers 3:46:03 (I White 27:55, D Bain 31:12, P Faulds 24:07, I Brown 26:56, M McQuaid 27:52, D Grindlay 33:11, K Rankin 25:14, R Jones 29:36)
5. Dundee Hawkhill Harriers 3:47:48 (D Beattie 27:49, C Hall 30:07, R Bell 25:29, R Barrie 27:44, M Strachan 27:35, P Fox 35:01, B Cook 25:59, C Haskett 28:04)
6. Victoria Park 3:48:08 (G Graham 27:56, A Douglas 29:34, S Barnett 25:26, F McGowan 27:33, A Adams 27:45, C Little 35:08, C Greenhalgh 26:26, J Kennedy 28:20)
7. IBM Spango Valley 3:49:41 (S Hodge 28:50, C Robson 29:01, C Cromar 26:41,

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