

Congleton Harriers Race Reports.

Saturday 3rd November saw 18 Harriers make the short trip towards Macclesfield Forest for the Langley 7-road race. A small group of Harriers always run this race, but this year saw a record turnout, in a total field of 234 runners. The morning rain cleared to present a clear afternoon for what is renowned as a tough course, climbing steadily for the first half of the race and then dropping down swiftly to Trentabank Reservoir and Langley Village. First Harrier was James Pearce, 20th in 43:29, followed by the ever-improving James Wood, 27th in 44:28 and Alex McCormick continuing his good form, 46th in 47:29. Debbie Hill led the chasing group from start to finish and was 92nd, 51:53, keeping out Gill Armstrong, 103rd in 53:27. New member Rob Parkin hustled his way through the pack with an excellent finish (105th, 53:38) to edge out Rich Benson (107th, 53:44). Malcolm Jackson worked hard on the downhill to finish strong (110th, 53:56) followed by another plod from Pete Doyle (116th, 54:33). Dave Forster is slowly getting back to fitness after a long layoff and impressed in 136th, 55:53. Next home were Dave Taylor 145th 56:36 and Tony Smith 152nd 57:19. Derek Dale has persuaded many members over the years to run this race and didn't disappoint this time either. As a thorn between two lady roses, next in were Jude Newham 159th, Ann Lipton 160th and Derek Dale 161st, all timed at 58:02. Jude Ceuppens continues to work back to fitness, 172nd 59:29. Margaret Fox returned to the race she first ran some 20 years ago and scooped the Ladies Veteran 70 prize, 222nd in 1:07:12 – a remarkable result. Finally, Caroline Partner stormed in 5 minutes ahead of last year's PB in 227th place, 1:09:16. All then retired to the church hall for tea, coffee and delicious cakes.

The week before saw the running of the Passing Cloud Race. This is an old race that stopped some years ago and was resurrected by the Harriers very ably led by John Amies. Although entries were small participants welcomed the return of this race and it is expected that this will again become a regular event and numbers will increase. The Harriers had a strong representation with Simon Harding being first Harrier home in 8th place in a time of 77.20 closely followed by James Pearce 77.57 (10th), James Wood 78.50 (12th) and Pete Newham 80.07 (16th). Thanks to all the Harriers who helped on the day, which turned out to be wet and bitterly cold.

In the meantime, Rich Benson was off to Amsterdam to run in the marathon over one of the fastest courses in Europe and he was delighted with his time of 3hrs 58min.

The 3rd race in the cross-country season took place on Stafford Common and 16 Harriers took part. The men are currently holding on to 3rd place followed closely by Newcastle. We need our strongest team out for the final race at Leek to help consolidate our highest ever placing in the league. Six ladies represented the club and the team now stands in 5th position with the lady vets in 3rd place. Again we will need our strongest team out for the final race and hopefully the team will move further up the league.

The Cheshire Cross-Country Championships take place at Forest Park Birchwood, Warrington on Sat 5th January. This is a one-off event and named entries must be submitted to the organisers before Dec 31. Please advise Derek Lucas or Paula Kennerley if you wish to run and the club will submit your entry and pay the entry fee.

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