

The UK and the world are having to come to terms with the impact of Covid-19 and sees a rapidly evolving situation, changing by the day, which is trying to delay and minimise the impact of the pandemic. The racing community is not immune or isolated from this and the past week has seen announcement after announcement of major events being cancelled. **London marathon** postponed; **Manchester marathon** postponed; **Wilmslow half marathon** cancelled; **Fleet Half marathon** postponed, and the list goes on. On the fell running front many of the larger events have also already been cancelled or rescheduled for the Autumn.

This has caused race organisers much heartache over the last two weeks having to make difficult decisions with advice from the government and governing bodies changing on an almost daily basis. With further restrictions on gatherings now announced it looks like this may be the last race report for a while as all organised events are suspended.

The response from all the runners impacted so far has been uniformly stoic and understanding: a race can always be run next year and the impact on the health of others must take precedence.

Despite all the above there were some races that did manage to survive over the weekend that included Harrier participation.

Caroline Partner (who has moved away from Congleton but is still a member of the Harriers) had gained a qualifying place with the GB age group Duathlon team and last weekend she competed in the European Standard Distance Duathlon Championships in Punta Umbría, Spain. It was her first time competing at the 10km Run/ 40km Bike/ 5km Run discipline and was competing against 6 British athletes and 3 Spanish in her age category. The conditions on the day were perfect, clear blue skies, sunshine with a very light breeze. A better than expected first run was followed by a fast ride on pothole free roads and then it was a case of holding on in the final run to finish in 2:30:48 which was a personal best up 6:21 minutes from the qualifying time from set in Bedford last October. Spurred on by the experience Partner will hopefully be heading off to the qualifying later this year for both the Sprint and Standard Duathlons to gain qualifying for next year's Europeans.



Caroline Partner:

Photo: C Partner



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Andy Roberts travelled up to Crowden to take part in a low key fell race: the Alan Kirk memorial Lad's Leap, a 6-mile "out and back" run with 1,699ft of ascent. Out of the 118 runners, Roberts finished 25<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> MV50 in 1.02:20.

Two Harriers made the trip down to Stafford to take part in the half marathon. An interesting fact, which highlights the level of organisation required and hence the hard decision making over cancellations for the race organisers: the Stafford half involves 52 road closures, which maybe why this one still went ahead. Given cancellations elsewhere, the race took the unusual step to open up the competition for on the day entrants which bolstered participation. Steve Canning finished 924<sup>th</sup> in 1:57:00 and Matt Plummer was 1164<sup>th</sup> in 2:04:15.

Away from the dwindling stock of competitive races, there were still opportunities for running. the Park Runs were still taking place and there were a healthy number of Harriers there on Saturday. For now the regular club runs are still being held and the Sunday social run saw a small contingent out retracing the Alderley Edge route from the previous week (it was felt to be such a good run that it just had to be repeated). There are even moves to set up some on-line virtual routes/races for those who need their competitive fix. This is of course likely to change at short notice, so please check the club's website and Facebook site for latest news.

You can find full details on our Congleton Harriers website: [Congleton-harriers.co.uk](http://Congleton-harriers.co.uk).