

It was the second race in the North Staffs and South Cheshire Cross Country on Saturday, held down on Stafford Common so a bit of a trek down the M6 to junction 14. The Congleton Harriers women were aiming to maintain their fine form from the first race (standing top of the second division and 2nd overall in the over 40's vets) and another strong team was in evidence. The men were hoping to make some improvement on their mid-table position and were glad to see team captain Bryan Lomas returning from injury. There is a bit of a buzz within the club at the moment around the cross country typified by Stuart Rider making a mad dash straight from Manchester Airport to complete and Emma Taylor, Clara Dorman-Carrott, Sarah Higgins, Sandy Hall and Nick Wilkins all turning out for their first cross country experience with the Harriers; quite a healthy position for the club to have twenty runners competing.

Despite the very chilly weather, the women's team didn't disappoint and put in another strong performance meaning they comfortably retained their number one spot in division 2. Emma Weston was the first Harrier home out of the 227 competitors running over the 3.2 mile course finishing in 27th place in 21:18. Newby Emma Taylor was next home, 33rd in 21:32 followed by Jo Moss 38th in 21:43; Mel Worthington 50th in 22:53; Carol Bird (who still turned out to compete despite clearly being under the weather) 57th in 23:16; Polly Kennerley 73rd in 23:57; Vicii Kirkpatrick 78th in 24:04; Clara Dorman-Carrott 111th in 25:37; Sarah Higgins 145th in 27:34; Sandy Hall 168th in 29:34.



Congleton Harriers women's team Stafford Common

Photo: Jo Moss



Emma Taylor in the final straight

Photo: Nick Budd

Then it was the turn of the men's team competing in a field of 308 runners across a 4.8-mile course, cheered on by the women, now comfortably wrapped up warm and scoffing cake as a reward. Stuart Rider was the first harrier back in 112th place finishing in 29:35 followed by; Chris Moss 114th in 29:41; Bryan Lomas 140th in 30:42; James Yates 179th in 32:26; Nick Budd 214th in 33:52; Nick Wilkins 238th in 35:03; Martin Sands 265th in 36:47; Nigel Poole 268th in 36:57; Duncan Young 277th in 37:46; Rob Parkin 286th in 38:53.



Congleton Harriers men's team Stafford Common

Photo: Jo Moss

Sunday saw a couple of Harriers competing in slightly longer endurance races. First up, Nick Wilkins, seemingly unhindered by his cross country exploits the day before, put in a fine performance at a hilly Bradford Half Marathon finishing 45th in 1:48:55.

Helen Jeffrey managed to bag a deserved new personal best time of 4:21:01 at the Snowdonia Marathon run on a demanding but spectacular route, encircling Snowdon,

Wales' and England's highest peak. Featuring a total of 383m of ascent chiefly across three big climbs at the 3-mile, 13-mile and (cruelly) at the 22-mile mark this is not an easy course so a well-deserved result for Helen.

Finally, on a lighter note, it's Halloween, so a bit of a different social run this weekend. A team of four ghouls from Boalloy and Congleton Harriers took part in the Halloween Hellraiser race organised by the South Cheshire Harriers. A ten-mile multi-terrain race through the Cheshire countryside, all in fancy dress.



Hellraiser running ghouls

photo: Sarah-Louise Proudmore

The club welcomes new members. You can find full details on our Congleton Harriers website: Congleton-harriers.co.uk. You can also connect with the club on Facebook where details of club activities are posted regularly.