

Alderley Edge is a magic place; just ask local author Alan Garner, one of Congleton's famous sons, who centred his book *Weirdstone of Brisingamen* around the dramatic red sandstone escarpment which offers impressive views over the Cheshire plain towards Manchester and to the hills of Cheshire's Peak District. It's also not a bad place to hold a multi-terrain trail race aptly named the Wizard 5 which wends its way across National Trust property along wooded tracks and quiet roads around the escarpment.

Out of the 193 runners who turned up on Tuesday for the 4.6 mile trail race Congleton Harrier's Chris Moss finished 21st in 31:57 (and 2nd in the M45 category) followed by: Paul Steel 43rd in 34:45, Kelly Hurlstone 93rd in 39:30, Sarah Proudmore 98th in 39:50, Suzie Roscoe 112th in 41:27 and David Whittaker 125th in 42:55. Helen Jeffery, who injured her foot did not finish, however, we will come back to hear more about Helen later in this report.

On Thursday it was the seventh race in the eight race SMAC series, this time at Biddulph Grange. Maybe it was the close proximity to home, but there was over twenty Congleton Harriers in amongst the 225 runners taking on the four mile, 699' ascent course. There were also some fine performances with fifteen top ten age group finishes with four of the club finishing in top three age category positions.

Anthony Allan just missed out on a top three position finishing 4th in 26:21 (2nd in the Open age category) followed by: Chris Moss 19th in 28:45 (3rd in M45 age category), Bryan Lomas 21st in 29:01, Emma Taylor 32nd in 29:40 (2nd in the F23 category), Andy Roberts 33rd in 29:42, Adam Powell 52nd in 31:15, Paul Steel 55th in 31:30, Jack Sargeant 58th in 31:42, Mel Worthington 76th in 33:03 (2nd in the F45 category), Polly Kennerley 100th in 35:09, Jo Moss 102nd in 35:15, Sarah Proudmore 103rd in 35:23, Paul Crean 120th in 36:27, Nigel Poole 124th in 36:46, Peter Jones 138th in 37:58, Josie Galbraith 144th in 38:49, Rob Soames 153rd in 39:25, Gemma Brinkhurst 158th in 39:55, Dave Taylor 181st in 42:44, Polly Wilding 188th in 43:11 and Ali McNinch 193rd in 43:29.



Harriers at Biddulph

Photo: S Proudmore

Saturday saw six Harriers taking on the Buxton Carnival 4. This is a road race hosted by Buxton Athletic Club through the streets of Buxton which starts off just ahead of the Carnival procession and finishes up in the market plac. Out of the 193 competitors Bryan Lomas was 14th in 25:06, Jack Sargeant was 28th in 27:06, Lucy Rusbridge was 72nd in 31:08, Suzie Roscoe was 84th in 32:19, Rob Parkin was 102nd in 33:31 and Gemma Brinkhurst was 114th in 34:14. Rusbridge's time was fast enough to earn her 1st place in the F45 category with Lomas taking second in the M45 category and Roscoe 3rd in the F35 category.



Harriers at Buxton

Photo: S Roscoe

There was also another 4 mile road race on Sunday: the Cheadle 4 with 328' of ascent adding in just enough undulation to keep the 276 runners on their toes. Chris Moss in his 3rd outing of the week was 23rd in 25:14, Adam Powell was 38th in 26:52, Carol Bird was 76th in 28:45, Sarah Proudmore was 118th in 30:53, Kelly Hurlstone was 123rd in 31:23, Josie Galbraith was 172nd in 34:05 and Dave Taylor was 218th in 38:54. Bird and Proudmore took 1st place in the F55 and F45 categories respectively with Bird finishing as 7th lady overall. Moss and Hurlstone also had fine runs finishing 3rd in the M45 and F categories respectively.

Over in Snowdonia there was a lot more undulation to be dealt with for the four Harriers who journeyed into Wales for some marathon action.

In the Snowdonia Trail Marathon, a 26.9 mile 5530' ascent event, there were fine performances amongst the 643 participants from Brian Evans who finished 90th overall and just outside a top 3 age category finish in 5:07:02 followed by Ali McNinch and Polly Kennerley who crossed the line together in 530th/531st place in times of 7:49:29 and 7:49:30.

Now we finally return to Helen Jeffery who entered the even harder ultra marathon; a gruelling 36.7 mile 7000' ascent race. This is the furthest race distance Jeffery has ever attempted and she has had to overcome injuries (including a foot injury at the Wizard 5) and a bout of pneumonia during the months and months of hard training. On the day she gritted her way through some excruciating calf cramps on the climb up Snowdon to finish 118th out of 146 competitors in 10:05:25.



Helen Jeffery

Photo: H Jeffery

The club is always keen to welcome new members whether you are a speedy racer or more of a social runner. So, if you are thinking of thinking of joining then just come along to one of the regular club runs for a few weeks and try us out for size; you will be made to feel more than welcome with no obligation to join. 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.