

This weekend saw another massive turnout of Harriers for a race; this time the majority were out in force marshalling at Congleton's most local fell race: Cloud 9. It was another bumper turnout of runners from across the region with over 280 runners participating on the day. With the leisure centre not quite being ready after its rebuild race HQ and registration was again located at Berisfords who had again kindly made their premises available to the club.

An early recce of the course indicated no issues to worry about and that it was likely to be a cold but bright run, albeit there was a hint of snow flurries in the air. The lack of rain in recent months made for very firm conditions which was a bit of a disappointment for all those runners who enjoy a bit of mud.

The Harriers have a long history of hosting this event going back to 1987, but we had a first this year in that we entertained our first V80 runner with Trevor Faulkner from Wilmslow RC lining up on the start line on Biddulph Valley Way just before 11.00am.



Trevor Faulkner on top of the CLoud

Photo: Bryan Dale

Right on time the first frantic dash up to the viaduct commenced before the racers started their climb across the fields to Acorn Lane and the start of the proper slog up to the top of the Cloud. The runners barely had time to catch their breath at the top before descending back down to tackle another climb back up across fields to the track heading over to Bridestones and back onto Gosberryhole Lane before the final leg starting at Timbersbrook, across more fields and a short road section till re-joining the BVW. The runners were heartened along the route by the sustained encouragement of the marshals and from the many walkers up on the Cloud making the most of the fine morning.

The front runners made short work of the course, all returning to the finish line in under an hour. Jack Scott, representing Inov-8, was the first home in 55.52 repeating



his first place from last year's race. Behind him were Simon Harding (Macc Harriers) in 58.18 and Luke Beresford (Matlock AC) in 59.47.



Jack Scott

Photo: Bryan Dale

Chloe Leather (Liverpool Pembroke), making the most of her late entry to the race off the reserve list, was the first woman home in 16<sup>th</sup> place in 65:16. Not too far behind were Caroline Brock (from Sheffield's Steel City Striders) who finished 22<sup>nd</sup> in 66:20 and Nicol Reece (Wilmslow RC) who was 23<sup>rd</sup> in 66:32.



Chloe Leather

Photo: Bryan Dale

In amongst all the runners, there were two Harriers competing. Nige Poole, took the opportunity to take part in the race he has previously been responsible for organising and finished 179<sup>th</sup> in 89:34, also picking up 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the MV65 category. Louise Roberts, Nige's daughter, was 216<sup>th</sup> in 96:36.

Trevor Faulkner kept up a steady consistent pace both up and down the Cloud, eating up the 9 miles to finish his 5<sup>th</sup> outing on the Cloud 9 race in 134:05.

Putting on this race takes a lot of effort and hard work, so thanks to Graham Cooper, this year's race director, and his race committee who once again ensured the race was a massive success enjoyed by all the runners. Thanks also to all those who turned out to marshal on a cold day and never waivered in the support and encouragement they gave to all the runners. All the feedback post-race from the runners tells us it is very much appreciated.

Away from the Cloud the Thacker's were out on a quest to improve records and they were not disappointed at the Trafford 10k where they both posted new personal bests. Iain Thacker finished 698<sup>th</sup> out of 1301 runners in 43:51 beating his previous best by 2:49. Petra Thacker was not to be upstaged and took 1:13 off her previous best finishing 1225<sup>th</sup> in 68:51.

If interested in joining us, there are club runs on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday with most runs setting off from the Congleton Tennis Club. The club is always keen to see new members whether you are a speedy racer or more of a social runner. So, if you are 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](http://Congleton-harriers.co.uk). You can also connect with the club on Facebook where details of club activities are posted regularly.