

February is proving to be a fairly quiet time of year where races are concerned for members of the Congleton Harriers although there is plenty going on behind the scenes. The first of the 2014 Harriers Race Series events is taking place on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and much preparation is underway. This is the Cloud 9 hill race which is popular amongst seasoned 'fellies' and those new to the off road experience. It is a well marshaled course from near to Congleton Leisure Centre up onto Bosley Cloud and is primarily on trails and tracks. The event is renowned for being friendly with excellent post race food including soup and a roll for all runners. The cake stall is famed for the high standard of goodies which are bought and eaten by runners and supporters alike. The race is on line entry only in advance via the Harriers website.

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> February was the day of the Long Mynd Valleys fell race down in Shropshire. Chris Hewitson, who almost exclusively races off road, was the only Harrier to travel to this picturesque part of the world. Whilst the hills look relatively benign, this is a challenging area to run in. Hewitson had a tumble early on, causing significant damage to his thumb, but rallied to finish in an excellent 96<sup>th</sup> place out of a field of 231 in 2:27:06. The weather was kind to the competitors being sunny but it was rather soggy underfoot.

On the same day, a significantly larger number of Harriers took the shorter journey to Alsager for the Brooks Alsager 5 road race. This forms part of the Club's winter competition and no less than ten Harriers ran for club points. The Alsager 5 has a justified reputation for being a good event on a fast course and attracts runners from top athletics clubs such as Birchfield Harriers, Belgrave and, of course, Congleton. The conditions were better this year with clear skies and pleasant running temperatures of around 6 degrees in contrast to the icy conditions for last year. Bryan Lomas was the first Harrier to cross the line in 110<sup>th</sup> place and in 30:16 ( chip time). Lomas felt that he could have done better but still managed to improve on his time for 2013. Pete Newham was the second Harrier to complete in 31:50(162). Jo Moss had a superb race and was the first female Harrier in 35:39 (293). The rest of the results are as follows: Charmaine Wood, 36:02; Debbie Hill, 38:44; Jude Newham, 39:08; Heather Jackson, 39:13; Martin Wood, 41:38; Ali McNinch, 42:45 and Dave Campbell, 49:36.

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