

## Congleton Harriers Report

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February was the National Cross- country Championships which this year were ably organised by Notts AC and held at Woolaton Park. Woolaton Park is a popular Nottinghamshire visitor attraction consisting of acres of sweeping parkland, a large lake and woodland around a spectacular Elizabethan mansion. The course consisted of 4km laps. The ground was surprisingly dry and grassy underfoot despite all the recent rain. There were some wet muddy areas so that the competitors looked like they had taken part in cross-country by the end, 2 big climbs to sort out the field and a tree across the path for added interest. The Harriers were not sure if the tree had been put there by design or whether it had been a casualty in the recent winds.

Two male Harriers joined the 1700 strong field; Bryan Lomas and Steve Pullen. Both found running the 3 lap/ 12km course an enjoyable experience with good crowd support all the way round but with such a large number of competitors there was no chance to take things easy. Lomas finished in 47:54 (753<sup>rd</sup>) and Pullen in 1:05:06 (1600). Lomas had picked up another injury 2 weeks before the Nationals and his taking part had been in doubt, but having been a key player in the other cross- country events he was determined to represent the Club. Unfortunately the decision has set his recovery back but he felt that it was worth it. With the male team being only 2 strong they did not count in the team rankings.

The ladies had a bigger representation and had a 2 lap 8km race. Jo Moss proved her worth as one of the leading runners in the Club at the moment being the first female Harrier to cross the finish line in 38:09 (354 out of 700) Charmaine Wood was not far behind in 39:00 (398) along with Sara Stead in 40:26 (453). Polly Kennerley was hot on Wood's heels in 40:29(463), closely followed by Debbie Hill in 467<sup>th</sup> place (40:57). Heather Jackson was only 8 seconds behind Hill in 41:05(473). The ladies ranked 58<sup>th</sup> out of 83 in the team rankings. Well done to all who took part.

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