

Harriers report number 7

The Harriers are taking full advantage of the wide variety of races and events on offer for the spring. The London Marathon is the jewel in the crown for many runners and is the end of a hard few months of training, often lonely training, through the dark winter months. Three Harriers undertook the 26.2 mile challenge and whilst training had been completed over a very wet winter, the day of the race, Sunday 13th April, was unseasonably warm making for difficult conditions. Steve Webb ran for his first club claim, Belle Vue, and finished in 3 hours 38 minutes. Jack Sargeant had been hoping to better his time from last year's Manchester marathon but found the heat took its toll, but he did manage a respectable sub four and a half hours (4:26:46). However despite the disappointment with his time he thoroughly enjoyed the experience and raised money for charity. Ali McNinch was only 2 minutes behind Sargeant, in 4:28:49.

The following week, Wednesday 16th, Bryan Lomas was the sole Harrier travelling to Upton to race in the Essar Chester Spring 5. Lomas is still recovering from a twisted ankle and some recent off road training runs have been uncomfortable experiences. The 5 mile road race on closed roads was seen as a safer bet. The course is regarded as a relatively fast one, with the first half being up hill and the second half downhill. The conditions were good on what was a warm evening and over 330 competitors turned out. Lomas was 54th in a highly creditable time of 30:30.

A group of 8 Harriers went to Mobberley on the 24th April to run the Round the Runway race. The race is a 5.3 mile race on roads and trails and as the name suggests it goes around the 2nd runway of Manchester airport as well as following the beautiful lanes and trails near Mobberley. A number of newcomers to the club took part but the first Harrier home was Jo Moss in 37:15 (125th place of 430). New recruit, Craig Hewitt was less than 30 seconds and 6 places behind in 37:37. Rob Parkin put on a last minute sprint to cross the line in 39:38, one second ahead of team mate Chris Thomas. Two new Harriers were not far behind; Jayne Winstanley in 40:41 and Michelle Matthews in 41:50. Robert Soames came in in 323rd place (46:52) and another new Harrier, Jackie Moss in 47:36. The ladies were extremely pleased to rank 5th out of 11 teams and the men were 13th out of 15. The runners topped off what was felt to be a pleasant evening with a drink in a pub.

Rob Parkin decided to do something a bit different and on Saturday 26th April he travelled to Grantham to take part in the HellRunner Hell in the Middle; an extreme cross country race at Belvoir Castle. Just under 400 people put themselves through the 11 miles of grueling mud with such delights as the Hill of Hell and Bog of Doom. The event is billed as multi-terrain and varying underfoot conditions with everything from running tracks and trails to water-filled areas and plenty of steep hills. Competitors are told to expect to get cold and wet! Parkin survived the ordeal and completed in the excellent time of 1:45:04, 84th.

Sunday 27th was a popular day for the club with seven Harriers taking part in the Kinder Downfall fell race. The race starts from the pretty village of Hayfield where the weather was warm, but immediately climbs upwards onto a rocky and uneven track before dropping to Kinder Reservoir. A further climb through William Clough and onto Kinder Edge exposed the runners to a cool easterly wind, and the drop

down from Kinder Low and Edale Cross back to Hayfield was welcome as the temperature improved. Andy Roberts and Pete Newham had a tussle with Roberts having the advantage at Williams Clough only to lose it to a speeding Newham. However Roberts managed to regain ground and was the first Harrier to cross the finish line in 1:26:18 (51st out of 277), 2 minutes and 2 seconds ahead of Newham (56th). Charmaine Wood proved her excellent running credentials and had a strong performance from start to finish, being the first female Harrier to make it home in 1:41:25 (154). Debbie Hill led Jo Moss on to Kinder Edge with Alex McCormick and Jude Newham not far behind. There was a hard fought battle with Hill, Moss and McCormick being consecutive runners along the Edge vying for the lead. At one point McCormick was ahead but Jo Moss proved her position as one of the best all round runners in the club, as her abilities on both rocky and flatter ground paid off and she finished in 1:46:10. Hill also caught McCormick and crossed the line in 1:49:24, not far ahead of McCormick (1:50:44). Jude Newham ran well and also nearly caught McCormick finishing in 1:54:08.

On the same day Matt Plummer travelled to Stratford to take part in the Shakespeare Marathon. This is a relatively flat course consisting of two uneven laps with a loop round the historic town of Stratford first before heading out into the countryside. The race finishes with a straight 6 mile stretch along a disused railway track. Plummer finished well under the four and a half hours mark in 4:18:33.

The club winter competition is now over with Bryan Lomas and Charmaine Wood both scoring the maximum 320 points. Well done to the pair of them. However Wood takes the overall title having run more races. The summer competition has already started.

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