

The end of November saw a good turn out of Harriers going to Leek for the last in the series of four North Staffs Cross Country League. The course had changed slightly from previous years but still included the steep bank which saps the energy of so many of the runners. Eight females from the club ran,. Charmaine Wood was the first Harrier to cross the finish line in 33rd place, closely followed by Jo Moss, showing that she is regaining her fitness following injury (40th place). Debbie Hill was only 4 places behind with Polly Kennerley in 47th place. The other members of the team were: Heather Jackson, 51st; Sara Stead, 68th; Ali McNinch, 105th and Lucy Rusbridge, a new comer to the club, one place behind. 136 ran altogether. The excellent performances by the team and individuals meant that the Congleton Harriers ladies were in third place of fifteen in division 2 with the LV40 team being fifth out of ten. Charmaine Wood, Polly Kennerley and Heather Jackson, who took part in all four races, were ranked 14th, 20th and 23rd respectively in the individual prizes.

The men had an even better turn out with thirteen braving the mud and hills. Bryan Carr was the first Harrier to finish, being in 42nd place out of 223. Tom Brown maintains fine form and was 61st. Chris Moss was only 4 places behind. Andy Roberts and James Pearce were in 84th and 85th place and only a second apart and a similar battle took place between Pete Newham (106th) and Chris Hewitson (108th) with 5 seconds between them. The rest of the team were: Pete Carvell, 116th; Andy Eaton, 168th; Paul Bevan, 176th, and Rob Parkin, 186th. Dave 'not the sweeper this week' Taylor was in 202nd place and Steve Pullen had the sweeper's crown in 206th. Seven male Harriers managed to run all four races with Tom Brown ranked 22nd overall. Chris Moss was in 24th place and third MV40, James Pearce, 29th; Pete Newham, 32nd; Andy Roberts, 39th; Chris Hewitson, 50th and Andy Eaton 62nd. The team managed to stay in division one finishing seventh out of ten with the MV40 team ending up third of eight. Well done to all who have taken part.

December seems to be the start of the Christmas themed races and events. Derek Lucas and his daughter travelled to Liverpool to take part in the charity Santa Dash which took place on 1st December. The 5km event starts in front of the Liver Buildings and is a spectacle with over 8000 runners of all calibre dressed as Santa. The race is not timed but is for fun and to raise money for good causes.

December 8th was the Tatton Yule Yomp. This was a chip timed 10km race on trail, mud and grass around the mere in Tatton Park. The deer were a bit bemused by the sight of over 1100 runners careering across what is usually a fairly peaceful piece of land. The finish was at the Egerton Sports Centre where a brass band was playing to welcome the runners. Matt Belford was the first Harrier in 46 minutes and Jo Moss was only one minute behind in a time which was good enough to gain her 5th lady and 1st LV 40. Two other Harriers took part but the results are yet to be confirmed.

Charmaine Wood had hoped to gain a place on the Tatton race but had to make do with 5 mile Christmas Pudding Dash on the same day at Wythenshawe Park. She was the only Harrier running but did the club proud by finishing in 37.08. She was second lady and 13th overall. Charmaine did say that she could have run faster if she had not had such a good evening at the club Christmas do at the Plough

at Eaton on the Friday night which had been ably arranged by fellow Harrier, Chris Thomas. Indeed a good night was had by all and Chris should be congratulated for his efforts.

Boxing Day is a special day for the club. It is a day to blow off the cobwebs with those wanting to run meeting at Congleton Leisure Centre at 10am for a gentle and sociable run up the Cloud. Family and friends who do not normally run with the club are welcome to join in and silly hats may be worn if wished! The runners all gather at the trig point. Others who are feeling less energetic can meet up at the top of the Cloud for photos and a chat, before those running head back down to town.

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