

Five Congleton Harriers made the two-hour journey to Harewood House near Leeds on Saturday as over 1,000 senior runners from more than sixty clubs turned up to compete in the Northern Athletics Cross Country Championships. Heavy rain throughout the week made the going in the car park somewhat of a challenge but the course itself laid out across Lancelot Brown's landscaped acres was in good order, mostly grassed with a few areas succumbing to mud. Much praise for the course, both the men and women's races held over two laps, 8k for the women and 12k for the men in a beautiful setting and on rolling hills, the venue could well be chosen for the National cross-country event in future years and the organisers did themselves proud.

During the races, the rain held off, but there were still strong cross winds to battle with as red kites darted and soared across the leaden skies in search of carrion but the bodies below were very much still moving as the starting pistol sounded at 14:15 and 435 women got underway, the trio of Congleton Harriers performed admirably all finishing within a four minute window, led by Jo Moss who finished 156<sup>th</sup> in 40:16, Lucy Rusbridge 238<sup>th</sup> in 43:14 and Michelle Stevens 260<sup>th</sup> in 44:08.



*Jo Moss at Northern Cross-Country Championships*

*photo Paul Birdsall*



*Lucy Rusbridge at Northern Cross-Country Championships*

*photo Paul Birdsall*



*Michelle Stevens at Northern Cross-Country Championships*

*photo Paul Birdsall*

In the Men's race over 760 runners were called to the starting pens at 15:00, five minutes later the gun sounded and something reminiscent of a multi coloured infantry charge began. With the Lascelles family looking on from their 18<sup>th</sup> century grade 1 listed home they saw Bryan Lomas conquer the course in 52:51 for 367<sup>th</sup> place with Nick Budd coming in 669<sup>th</sup> in 64:28.

Overall a very successful event and enjoyable day's racing was had by all.



*Bryan Lomas and Nick Budd at Northern Cross-Country Championships*

*photo Paul Birdsall*

Congleton Harriers run three times a week from the leisure centre for more details visit [congleton-harriers.co.uk](http://congleton-harriers.co.uk)