

Congleton Harriers hosted the 34<sup>th</sup> running of the Sting-in-the-tail - half marathon on Sunday morning, 270 men and women from sixty-one different running clubs and a further 148 unattached athletes completed the 13.1 mile course including the notorious climb at mile 11 from where the race gets its soubriquet.

Years of experience and six months of planning resulted in another successful, incident free race for the club. With registration opening at 7.30 Sunday morning from Congleton High school runners began to arrive to collect their race number, timing chip and goody bag including souvenir t-shirt. A record number of 39 people entered on the day, with ex-Cheshire resident James Dowd surely traveling the furthest from his home in Michigan, USA.

Outgoing race director Paul Steel and incoming race director Louise Poole got the race underway in Black Firs Lane at 09:30 in perfect running conditions with barely a breath of wind and none of the rain that featured in forecasts earlier in the week.



*Paul Steel and Louise Poole get the 34<sup>th</sup> Congleton Half Marathon underway photo Paul Birdsall*

This year runners benefitted from partial road closures with participant safety paramount, soon the athletes began to string out along the quiet rural roads as they headed out towards the villages of Somerford Booths, Marton and Swettenham on an undulating course designed by long time Congleton Harrier Alex McCormick who sadly died earlier this year.

By 10:30 numbers began to swell around the finish area in anticipation of the first runners to return, there had been a number of lead changes throughout the race in what was a closely contested affair with less than 30 seconds separating the top three but in the end it was Trentham Running Club member Simon Myatt who was to take this year's honours crossing the line in 1:14:48 with Paul Jones from Shrewsbury athletic club 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1:15:02 and local runner Carl Moulton from Boalloy 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1:15:15 which was a very impressive result given that he'd come sixth in the previous day's cross country event at Winsford.



*Race winner Simon Myatt from Trentham RC*

*photo Paul Birdsall*

In the women's results, it was Wilmslow runner Diane McVey who was a clear winner with her time of 1:22:42, two and half minutes clear of second placed Kristina Defries of Trentham RC in 1:25:23 with Joanne Bentley of Stone Master Marathoners completing the top three in a time of 1:32:44.



*First female finisher Diane McVey from Wilmslow RC*

*photo Paul Birdsall*

As well as water stations positioned around the course there was more water and a banana awaiting all finishers before runners reassembled in the school hall for the prize giving ceremony assisted by Congleton Town Mayor, Cllr. Charles Booth.



*Awaiting the finishers – l-r Luke Doorbar, Cllr. Booth, Jordy Hayter, Isobel Doorbar photo Derek Lucas*

Every year the race profits are distributed to charities and in recent years Congleton Harriers have been able to support the families affected by the Bosley explosion and donate to Becca's Wish to Walk fund. This year the charities were chosen earlier in the year by Mr McCormick and proceeds will be going to Parkinson's UK, Visyon and Storehouse Foodbank.

Social media comments and on the day feedback was once again wholly positive with much praise for the organisation and slickness of the operation and for the 55 supportive and enthusiastic marshals positioned throughout the course and by return the club would like to thank its own members for making the race happen, all their sponsors and Congleton High School for their facilities pre-and post-race and the club now look forward to 2018 and the 35<sup>th</sup> Sting-in-the-tail half marathon.