

The weather is hotting up and so are the number of races available to the members of the Congleton Harriers Running Club. As ever there is variety in the types of events and Bill Boynton topped the bill; taking part in the Stockport Duathlon on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April. Boynton has not been a regular face on club nights due to a chronic calf injury but he resumed training in February and Stockport was his first duathlon for over a year. This event was the final UK qualifier for the World Age Group Duathlon Championships which are being held in Pontevedra, Spain, in June this year. Boynton completed the Standard (Olympic) distance event of a 10km run, a 40km bike ride and finishing off with a 5km run. Boynton, at over 70, was the second oldest of the 248 competitors and finished overall in 141<sup>st</sup> place, beating many of the younger competitors and taking the V60 prize. He earned his place in Spain and hopes to remain injury free. The breakdown of his results is as follows: 10km run, 48:19 (157<sup>th</sup>); 40km bike, 1:13:42 (123<sup>rd</sup>); 5km run, 24:06 (135<sup>th</sup>).

May 5<sup>th</sup> was the James's Thorn fell race which saw the Carvell and McCormick duo running. This is a hilly 5 mile race from the outskirts of Glossop to the top of James's Thorn hill and back. Running in bright sunshine, Pete Carvell finished in 22<sup>nd</sup> place of 58 in 41:35 and Alex McCormick in 52:09.

Midweek, 7<sup>th</sup> May was the Rainow 5. This proved to be a popular event for the Harriers, being the first of the Club Summer Competition events. Eleven Harriers took part in the race which includes a stiff climb, up White Nancy, in stunning scenery. The cool spring evening meant that conditions for racing were good. The course starts with a mix of road and bridlepath, before crossing fields to summit White Nancy, the iconic white folly on the top of the hill. The route then continues along the ridge before descending and returns back across the fields. The results are as follows: Bryan Lomas, 16<sup>th</sup> 38:31; Dave Clark, 49<sup>th</sup> 42:38; Charmaine Wood, 81<sup>st</sup> 45:23; Jo Moss, 95<sup>th</sup> 47:02; Dave Geary, 47:47; Rob Parkin, 48:41; Chris Thomas, 48:47; Dave Taylor, 48:47, Debbie Hill, 50:43. Alex McCormick finished after Hill but does not have a time due to a results' error. Laura Stubbs made a rare appearance and finished in 55:41 just pipping her father, Harry Stubbs, to the post by one second.

Another midweek race is the annual Mow Cop Killer Mile organised by the Mow Cop Residents' Association. The event was first held in 1982 when 95 runners completed the short but grueling linear course. The one mile race is a challenge for any runner not least of all because it is all uphill with the gradient becoming steeper the greater the ascent reached. Michelle Matthews, a new member of the Club, was lulled into thinking that a single mile would not be that difficult but found her legs burning from the exertion. However she would recommend it and found the crowd support fantastic. Results are not available yet.

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May was the second race of the Club Summer Competition; the Market Drayton 10km road race. This has historically been a popular event with the Club, not least of all because of the quality of the goody bags and is has been voted the UK's top 10k for the last 2 years. Four Harriers made up the record field of 2300 runners. There was excellent crowd support along the route which runs through the town centre. Whilst the first half of the race is flat, the second half is more undulating with a steep climb up to the church in the last mile.

Jo Moss was the first Harrier to finish in a PB of 43:19 with Charmaine Wood not far behind in 43:40, also a PB. Rob Parkin out-sprinted Chris Thomas and crossed the line in 42:40, just 2 seconds ahead of his team mate.

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, Bryan Lomas went over to the Peak District where he was the sole Harrier taking part in the Cressbrook Crawl Fell Race; a 6.5 mile event with 1150 feet of ascent around the Wye Valley. The weather was kinder to the runners than had been forecast. The course had some short ascents and descents but there was some respite from the hills along the Monsal Trail. Lomas finished in 12<sup>th</sup> place out of a field of 118 and was pleased with his time of 49:54 as he is still returning from injury.

Alex McCormick was also the sole Harrier to travel to a fell race; Mount Famine on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May. This is another short but sharp fell race of 5 miles but with 1850 feet of ascent; not for the faint hearted. McCormick made up a field of 110 and crossed the finish line 78<sup>th</sup> out of 110 runners in 1:09:32.

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