

What a Great Weekend!

What a great weekend for the club, as a bit of an anorak, we coaches get like that; I've found the results and spectating fascinating. Firstly let's talk about the national x/c champs held in a snowy, slushy Sunderland. We had a coach load of support and athletes head up the A1 to compete, applaud and get very cold. The photograph of the team bus setting off from Ilkley was fabulous and the main reason I wanted to write something. We had 27 athletes compete at Sunderland 18 females and 9 males ranging from the under 13's to the senior men and ladies events. The under 13 girls, imagine running in a national champs at that age, were first on the start line; Allesandro Ricci, Molly Jeffels, Emily Elmes, Ella Shouler-Harris, Eva Jeffels, Jess Burgess and Megan Hayes all ran well above themselves to get Ilkley off to a great start with a 20th team place in a national championship!

The under 13 boys were next to toe the line and Evan Burgess, Francis Westhead, Robbie Mathews, Oscar Stapleton and Ben Clarke conjured up between them a fantastic 16th team, remember we are talking national champs here, fantastic!

The under 15 boys were off before the previous race had finished and our three representatives Thomas Kerr, Ruaridh Mon-Williams and James Pickering set about their task as if their lives depended on it and all were well placed for their efforts, it's a shame they didn't have another team member as it would have given them a good team placing.

The under 15 girls were there in abundance and set about their task like they do regularly on their training nights, Sarah Pickering, Lucy Williams, Josie Clarke, Ellie Coones, Joanne Williamson, and Elizabeth Westhead made their efforts well worthwhile finishing 15th team, remember there are a lot of teams in England eligible to compete in these champs.

Unfortunately, we did not have a team in the under 17 men's race but it gave family and spectators a chance to take a breather from the tremendous competition they had been involved in.

We then came to the under 17 women's race, hugely anticipated by all, we had one runner Georgia Malir who looked effortless, although she will probably not agree, as she took on the field finishing in a fabulous yes fabulous 13th place.

We had no representative in the junior women's race although Dianne Kitchen and Julie Elms did put themselves forward but had to be escorted from the start line. However, their time was to come.

In the senior men's race we had just the one runner; illness did not allow me to join him. David as ever ran very well and to finish in the position he did in such a top quality field shows his application when competing which make me believe there are further successes to come from him.

The senior ladies comprised of Sally Morley, Dianne Kitchen and Julie Elmes and all ran above themselves. Sally got in the first 100, Dianne was ever reliable and was overtaking people at the finish, now Julie Elmes an ever present throughout this cross country season has to be an inspiration to us all how she approaches these muddy, slushy, cold events should be a lead to us all.

Last but not least a big thank you has to be given to the junior section coaches, mum's, dad's grandparents and others for getting the junior athletes to compete in such an altruistic way, well done as I've said before Ilkley's future looks great.

The Ilkley Fell Race traditionally used to set the fell running season off. A real classic of a race it has never registered as one that could be used in a championship counter but over its history there have

been some very famous runners who have stood on the winner's podium. Today being no exception with the female winner Emma Clayton breaking her own course record and who incidentally finished in the top 5 of yesterday's national x/c champs proving the point. Ilkey's hard work at putting the race on were given a well-earned prize with Tom Adam's taking first place in a very convincing style leading the men's team also to victory. We had 29 runners in the race 22 males and 7 females. The junior fell races also attracted a huge number of runners and support, I don't have the numbers at this point but the organisation was as ever very professional.

Over in East Yorkshire the very fast Snake Lane 10 took place and we had 4 athletes competing although no official results have been released there is a feeling from the athletes that they did very well with a possible pb and age related win.

Then finally over in West Lancs we had one runner in their half marathon running a very credible race getting under the 90 min mark.

So as I see it we had 60 athletes out right through the age spectrum, it can't get much better than this weekend, if only Bradford could have won.

Peter