

Nuneaton Harriers Athletic Club

Newsletter 22 – January 2017

Wishing a very happy new year to all our readers

2017 promises to be another exciting year for athletics fans with the world championships coming to London in August. But before we start thinking about the summer season let's see what the climax of the winter season can deliver.

December saw the first league win in the West Midlands cross-country series for Kieren Coleman-Smith. The Boxing Day relays were once again a great friendly occasion. In January our best athletes were in action for the County championships.

Warwickshire County champions

The senior women's team of Eleanor Fowler, Polly Keen and Helen Talbot were crowned Warwickshire county cross-country champions at Leamington Spa on 7th Jan. With a stunning team performance, taking, 2nd, 4th and 9th places respectively the women regained the Stuart Harris shield that they last won in 2014.

There were individual honours as well in the younger age groups, Emily Negus finished 2nd in the U17 women's race and Tom Dixon took 4th in the U13 boys race thereby almost certainly gaining selection to represent Warwickshire in the inter-counties championship to be held in March.

In the Leicestershire champs held at Burbage Common the best result came to Kieren Coleman-Smith taking 2nd place in the U15 boys' race with the team including Michael Wynne and Joel Howes placed 2nd.

A full report is included in the cross-country news section



Editorial - Has sports science really helped us go faster?

A recent article in Athletics Weekly resonated with me – the author was questioning why despite all the advances in sports science and the greater availability of facilities over the last 30 years there are so few British middle and long distance runners achieving times faster than clocked in the 1980s. Mo Farah and Laura Muir are the exceptions but few others even come near the marks set by Coe, Ovett, Cram, Elliot, Moorcroft, etc. The article goes on to discuss whether it is the science or athletes that are at fault.

The article set me thinking about how we use the science at club level. I declare family interest here, my brother is a sports scientist and a highly respected academic in his field (Google him - Prof Neil Fowler). I think it's not the sports science that's at fault but our interpretation and (incorrect) application of it. Many of the advances allow new measurement of different parameters of fitness – that's interesting stuff to know but in and of itself won't make us go any faster.

In my opinion the access to pockets of the science leads to it being applied in a very patchy way and actually getting in the way of doing the basic things effectively. At a very simplistic level the best training for running well is Running well. With so many gadgets and web-based analysis tools the risk is that we lose sight of this and get distracted by spurious science chasing unnecessary goals. There's too much Garmin/Strava/Map-my-whatever, obsessing about training heart-rate 'zones' and not enough focus on the things that will bring us (club level athletes) the greatest performance boost.

At the elite level, when the athlete already highly accomplished and trained for their event it is necessary to pursue the last few small percentage point changes in order to gain a margin over the competition. Try to mimic this approach without first tackling the basics and at best you'll be frustrated with the lack of real progress and at worst may drive yourself to overuse injury.

At our level, I believe the biggest gains come from simple, progressive hard graft built into a programme that allows sufficient rest and time for the recovery benefits to take place. Aim to have a purpose for each training session. Work on speed and technique in interval sessions – push these hard; Barry is exaggerating only slightly when he says these should be worked so hard that you nearly spew! Distance runs should push your endurance – tough enough to be testing but not so far to leave you utterly exhausted. Tempo work should bring a familiarity with operating at close to your target race pace and recovery runs should be just that, easy and relaxed. You can do all of this by 'feel' with hardly any recourse to sports science or gadgets.

Maybe the new year resolution could be to (sometimes) leave the trackers and gizmos at home and just get out there and run.

<http://www.athleticsweekly.com/featured/training-keep-it-simple-54775>

Road racing news

Centurion Grand Prix series – Sunday 4th December – Chelmsley Wood

No apologies for making another advert for these races – they're great if you're looking for a low key race where you can try out for fitness or new tactics. Fairly flat on parkland paths it has people from 5 minute milers through to those running half that speed. The races are held once each month and there's good facilities and atmosphere at the prize giving afterwards. Each month there are awards for outright race winners and in addition there are awards for selected veterans' age groups.

Four Harriers were out for this second race of the 2016/17 series. Eleanor was in good shape, pushing a bit harder this time to easily win the women's race (again!). Ian Carwardine was testing his fitness – hoping to run at 7 minute mile pace so was well pleased to blast that with a 34:06 result. Pete B is still coming back to form and Pete Greenfield was 2nd in the M65 category, bested by Dave Pettifer (again!).

11 th	Eleanor Fowler	30:12 (1 st woman)
30 th	Ian Carwardine	34:06
35 th	Pete Barzetovic	34:50
49 th	Pete Greenfield	36:45

Telford 10k – Sunday 12th Dec

This is a race with a justified reputation as a proper 'quick one' right at the end of the season. This is good honest racing; the prizes are very modest, but nevertheless it draws club runners looking to clock a 10k pb knowing that they will be alongside some of the best domestic competition outside a national championship. At the 'pointy end' of the elite race was Joshua Grace who had to sprint for his 29:21 win. If you can't break 30 minutes then you'll struggle to get a place in the top 20; Even 100th place was run in 33:14! The fastest woman was Elinor Kirk of Swansea in 32:35.

A little further back in 199th, Eleanor used the last mile to push on for 36:32 and leave Eric to puff and blow for 206th place with 36:43 (although that was 4th in the M50 category). *Bryan Smith photo*



Midland Counties Road Running (virtual) league – El gets 3rd place ranking

The Telford 10k was the final race in the Midland Counties road race series. This was a new innovation for 2016 with results picked from specified road races across the season used to determine the honours. The best three finishes for each athlete are counted for those athletes that have entered the series via the Midland Counties website (there is no additional fee to do this – just the race entry).

At the end of the series the victor was Juliette Potter of Charnwood with a maximum score of 1500pts. In equal 3rd place on 1492 pts was Eleanor Fowler.

The traditional Boxing Day relays – Monday 26th December

This year there was 12 teams on the start line to enjoy the bright and bracing conditions of Riversley Park. The record holder for the course, Namir Batavia (Cov Godiva), was once again the quickest around the park and although Namir has a bit of a cold and so is slightly off race form he still managed 11:42 for the 2.1mile lap.

With the advantage of Namir on the lead stage, and the second fastest individual time of the day clocked by Michael Wynne on the second stage it was up to Anne Grant to bring the team home for the win. Youngster Sam Yates matched plenty of the seniors over the full course distance clocking 14:45 to anchor his team to 2nd overall. Even younger Sam Hateley also ran the full course to set his team up for 3rd place. Helen Talbot was this year the fastest female (and 3rd fastest overall) with 13:45 and anchor for the 4th finishing team. After that the finishers came closely together with the final team just 10 minutes after the winners.

There were family honours at stake too, three of the Wynne family, the Neeson family, the Bailey family and all four of the Alkhamesi clan were out to race. Check the individual lap times below to settle the scores – but I'll pick out that Hisham was just 2 seconds quicker than brother Faris – and boys take note, your mum is still the fastest in the family!

Team results and 'splits'

1	Namir Batavia 11:46	Michael Wynne 13:43	Anne Grant 17:25	= 42:50
2	Ian Greenfield 14:09	Carolyn Dyall 16:09	Sam Yates 14:45	= 45:03
3	Sam Hateley 16:42	Pete Barzetovic 14:30	Jon King 14:15	= 45:37
4	Mary Hall 16:04	Rob Wynne 17:05	Helen Talbot 13:45	= 46:54
5	Derek Hateley 16:47	Alex Bailey 14:21	Gary Rose 16:44	= 47:52
6	Brian Strugnell 15:02	Martyn Shuttler 18:47	Steve Arnold 16:09	= 49:58
7	Olivia Bailey 16:01	Gareth Parker 18:13	Faris Alkhamesi 17:30	= 51:44
8	Sim Wilson 16:54	Zubair Alkhamesi 18:58	Nick Wilson 16:14	= 52:06
9	Angie Fisher 19:56	Natalie Wynne 16:46	Martin Swan 15:55	= 52:37
10	Alex Bruce 16:46	Stephen White 14:28	Lucia Neeson 21:42	= 52:56
11	Mark Bailey 14:40	Brian Neeson 21:31	Hisham Alkhamesi 17:28	= 53:39
12	Gabriel Neeson 20:55	Alan Glaister 14:53	Michelle Kenny 17:55	= 53:43

Centurion Grand Prix series – Sunday 8th January – Chelmsley Wood

Race 3 fell in the same weekend as the County championships so any runners who had raced on the Saturday were nursing tired legs - four Harriers were out in good weather conditions, cool and still, perfect for a swift 5!

Eric abandoned a plan for a steady run and got involved in a small pack that was pushing for a 30 minute finish. Eleanor was more sensible and despite taking it 'easy' was still clearly the winner of the women's race (again!) with a margin of 2 minutes over 2nd. Pete B ran well in the second half of the race and Pete Greenfield collected a prize for 3rd in the M60 category running over a minute quicker than last month.

7 th	Eric Fowler	30:13 (1 st M50)
11 th	Eleanor Fowler	31:04 (1 st woman)
28 th	Pete Barzetovic	34:38
38 th	Pete Greenfield	35:31 (3 rd M60)

Indoor athletics

Away from the cold and damp, athletics continues indoors. **Charlotte Ellis** competed in the Southern area indoor combined events championships as a guest on 18th December at Lee Valley stadium in north London. Charlotte collected 2 new personal best performances in the U17 women's pentathlon with 9.76s for 60m hurdles and 9.00m for the 3kg shot putt. The total score for 5 events was 2993pts.

60h – 9.76s HJ – 1.51m SP – 9.00m LJ – 4.87m 800m – 2:36.42

Midland indoor open meeting – 14th / 15th Jan, Birmingham

Good early season testing for several of the Harriers with some quality competition. Chloe Vinestock and Jess Day stand out with impressive long jump performances taking wins in their events along with decent sprinting on the track. Derek Hateley was below his best in the pole vault although still posting a useful marker.

Results

Derek Hateley	Sen men Pole Vault	3.20m
Charlotte Ellis	U17 High jump	1.45m
	U17 Long jump	4.60m
Chloe Vinestock	U17 Long jump	5.09m (1 st)
	U17 60m sprint	8.42s
Katie Daniel	U17 60m sprint	7.95s (round 1) / 7.96s (round 2)
Samuel Jephcote	U15 60m sprint	8.54s (round 1) / 8.50s (round 2)
Jessica Day	U13 Long jump	4.37m (1 st)
	U13 60m hurdles	9.89s (round 1) / 9.91s (round 2)
	U13 60m sprint	8.80s (round 1) / 9.11s (round 2)

Cross-country news

Midland Counties 5 mile cross-country – Sat 19th Nov – Nottingham

Polly Keen was the solo Harriers representative at Bulwell Hall park near Nottingham for the Midland races. The Potter sisters Jane and Juliette (Charnwood AC) once again battled for the top positions with Jane taking the title this time. Polly was close to the action finishing 6th in a time of 32:17.

Midland young athletes league – 11th Dec – Perry Park, Birchfield

The third cross-country fixture of the winter season saw three special performances by some of the older athletes. In the U15 boys race Kieren Coleman-Smith took his first win in this league with a great back-up run coming from Michael Wynne to place 18th. In the U17 women's race Emily Negus showed further good progress taking 7th place. Abigail Wynne again led the U11 girls' team and Freya Slattery led the U13 girls. There were no U11 boys. In the U13 boys Robert Currie and Sam Yates found the competition a bit stronger than at the previous match. Amicia Collett was the solo Harrier in the U15 girls' race.

Results

U11G

56 th	Abigale Wynne	7:36
74 th	Lily Sharkey	7:48

U13B

20 th	Robert Currie	10:00
35 th	Sam Yates	10:23

116th Freya Sweet 9:13

U13G

32nd Freya Slattery 10:55
79th Natalie Wynne 11:52
121st Mia Sharkey 14:08

U15G

90th Amicia Collett 17:34

U17G

7th Emily Negus 16:44

U15B

1st Kieren Coleman-Smith 11:13
18th Michael Wynne 12:03
73rd Hisham Alkhamesi 15:07

U17B

16th Sam Howard 17:54

Huncote Hash – Sunday 31st December

The places for this year's event 'sold out' very quickly so many of the regulars couldn't get in for this final race of 2016. The recent kind weather meant that the course wasn't the usual mud-bath fest or as slippery on the top of Croft Hill. Geoff Hudson had bought new trail shoes specially too! Helen Talbot was the quickest of the Harriers and finished as the first female in the race.

28 th Helen Talbot	49:03	154 th Martin Swan	61:43
62 nd Phil Harris	52:48	197 th Sarah Clark	66:03
79 th Stephen White	54:00	198 th Robert Wynne	66:07
94 th Peter Greenfield	55:16	265 th Kathryn O'Brien	74:37
108 th Pete Barzetovic	56:30	322 nd Geoff Hudson	84:31

Warwickshire county championships – 7th Jan, Leamington Spa

Newbold Comyn had been suitably softened by rain for the championship races and the ditch claimed a few 'victims' as always. Each event was in effect two simultaneous races with Worcestershire and Warwickshire athletes running together. This made for greater numbers and better quality races throughout the afternoon. The top three finishers in each race gain automatic selection to represent Warwickshire for the inter-counties championship which will be held in early March. Other athletes finishing well in this championship will be considered by the selectors when the final team is picked.

In the early races the top performance came from Tom Dixon with a 4th place finish in the U13 boys' race. The boys were the only complete team of Harriers in the young athletes' classes and the squad of Tom, Robert Currie and Sam Yates closed out with 4th place.

Freya Slattery may be on the county team selectors reserve list with her 11th place finish in the U13 girls' race.

Emily Negus, at the age of 17 is already a very experienced racer and former county champion (2013 winner of the U15 girls' race). Despite restricted training and not feeling very well before the start Emily was still strong enough physically



and mentally to drive on to finish 2nd in the U17 age group and yet again gain county selection.



The senior women provided the highlight of the afternoon in the 6.4km race. With just three harriers running and three needed to score for a team there was no plan 'B' – the women just run hard and finish. Right from the gun the women showed they meant business, packing well in the leading group with Polly starting fastest. As the race developed into the second lap Eleanor took up the running, picking off places while Polly and Helen worked hard to secure the team score. By the finish Eleanor had climbed to 2nd place, Polly was close behind

and took 4th while Helen held on for 9th. The combined score of 15 points earned the women the county champions title – an honour last won in 2014. Eleanor and Polly are almost certain to get the selectors' nod for the inter-counties team.

In the final race of the day Eric Fowler and Pete Greenfield ploughed round the 10k masters race, Eric finishing 28th and Pete 107th.

U13B

4 th	Tom Dixon	12:52
10 th	Robert Currie	13:20
31 st	Sam Yates	14:30
34 th	Toby Collett	14:44

Senior women

2 nd	Eleanor Fowler	24:44
4 th	Polly Keen	24:56
9 th	Helen Talbot	26:01

Masters men

28 th	Eric Fowler	42:18
107 th	Pete Greenfield	51:18

U13G

11 th	Freya Slattery	14:24
29 th	Emily Powell	17:38

U15G

27 th	Amicia Collett	22:41
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U17W

2 nd	Emily Negus	21:53
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Leicestershire county championships – 7th Jan, Burbage Common

Only 6 Harriers contested the Leicestershire and Rutland champs that were virtually on the doorstep at Burbage and overall the entries were very small with very few complete teams in any of the races. The best individual performance came from Kieren Coleman-Smith with 2nd in the U15 boys' race. Michael Wynne also ran well into 6th and may gain county selection. Joel Howes closed out the team that was placed 2nd and Hisham Alkhamesi was 16th. Natalie Wynne claimed 18th in the U13 girls' race and Andy Harris was 62nd in the masters men's race.

U15B

2 nd	Kieren Coleman-Smith	15:12
6 th	Michael Wynne	16:14
11 th	Joel Howes	17:56
16 th	Hisham Alkhamesi	20:01

U13G

18 th	Natalie Wynne	16:05
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Masters men

62 nd	Andy Harris	51:01
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Midland women's league – 14th January, Wolverhampton

The women had this fixture as a 'stand alone' without a men's league race and were at Aldersley stadium in Wolverhampton. It was good to see a strong turnout for the third cross-country league race, despite some of the team missing through injury. Conditions were ideal for a fast race and thankfully the cold weather that had been forecast failed to materialise.

First of the Harriers was Polly Keen, who looked strong throughout, finishing in 8th place. It's good to see Polly finally getting back to fitness after a couple of frustrating years of injury. Next Harrier back was Helen Talbot, looking comfortable to finish in 18th place, and 3rd masters position, not far behind leaders in the age group. Third spot went to Carolyn Dyall. Carolyn had a great race, showing her usual determination to keep pushing all the way to the end. She finished in 94th place and 31st masters position. It was good to see Sarah Clark back for this fixture and her position of 98th helped to boost the senior team to 10th position overall. Sarah was also 35th in the masters race, putting the masters team in 8th position.

A battle was going on throughout the race to see which Harrier would be the next one back. With Kathy O'Brien going from strength to strength with each race, she managed to pull ahead of Michelle Kenny to finish in 122nd place. It was good to see Michelle back after injury to complete the trio of sisters (along with Helen and Sarah), and in true 'Kenny' fashion - she was smiling throughout to finish in 126th.

Along with the Kenny sisters, the ladies' team also boasts another family connection, the mother and daughter double act of Ann Wheeler and Laura Matkin. Both were suffering with niggles earlier in the week, but Ann managed to edge it, showing that her marathon training is paying off. Ann finished in 132nd place, with Laura in 134th.

Results

8 th	Polly Keen	23:09	
18 th	Helen Talbot	24:22	(3rd Master)
94 th	Carolyn Dyall	30:22	(31st Master)
98 th	Sarah Clark	30:55	(35th Master)
122 nd	Kathy O'Brien	34:16	(47th Master)
126 th	Michelle Kenny	34:35	(50th Master)
132 nd	Ann Wheeler	37:35	(55th Master)
134 th	Laura Matkin	38:34	(56th Master)



There were 367 runners in the race with Division 1 and 2 combined.

Next fixture - Saturday 11th February, Warwick University, hosted by Kennilworth Runners. It will be vital to make sure that we get as many runners out as possible for this final fixture so that we ensure we remain in Division 1.

Birmingham & district league – 14th January, Droitwich



Droitwich isn't the nicest cross-country course but it does have variety and its own special features – like the scary 'canal turn' – get this one wrong and you could be in the water. The wet weather of the last few days made for some slippery sections although generally the course was in pretty good condition. With several 'sick notes' received the team was again just 9-strong and unable to score a 'B' team. Nick Wilson was back in the squad and clocking up his 142nd appearance in the Birmingham

league. The team posed for a photo before the start and 'Hard Man Harris' in just a club vest showed up the 'softies' in their tee-shirts.

Following the usual safety announcements the start of the race was signified only by the league president Bob Hughes shouting the word 'GO', catching most of the competitors by surprise. James Mason set out with firm intent on the first couple of laps around the football pitches but soon found that his brand new race shoes with short spikes weren't giving much grip. Eric took up the running and gradually worked through for a finish in 24th. James finished 77th, comparing well with the race at Burbage Common. Andy Harris and Pete B just 10 seconds apart and Matt Ruff and Chris H-H were 'promoted' to the 'A' team – well done guys.



The team, 15th on the day hangs on to 10th in the division with several clubs very close behind – we will need a good squad at the final match next month to avoid an ignominious drop down the table.

Results

'A' Team

24 th	Eric Fowler	39:47
77 th	James Mason	43:13
127 th	Andy Harris	47:32
131 st	Pete Barzetovic	47:52
134 th	Matt Ruff	47:49
142 nd	Chris Hamer-Hodges	48:43

'B' team (incomplete)

176 th	Martin Swan	40:25
182 nd	Nick Wilson	40:59
195 th	Alex Bruce	43:14

Thanks to Claire Mason for taking the photos.

Midland young athletes league – 15th Jan – Abington Park, Northampton

The youngsters were racing at Northampton in very wet conditions with Bill Sharkey as the team manager. There were complete teams in the U15 boys and U13 girls races but in other age groups (U11B, U15G) there were no Harriers at all. Overall the

Harriers finished as 14th team on the day. Bravery award goes to Natalie Wynne ran the whole U13 girls' race in one shoe after a start-line 'racing incident' – no names will be mentioned!



Results

U11G

51 st	Abigale Wynne	9:54
71 st	Elizabeth Pap	10:17
72 nd	Lily Sharkey	10:19

U13G

44 th	Olivia Bailey	13:02
55 th	Natalie Wynne	13:23
75 th	Freya Slattery	13:58
104 th	Mia Sharkey	17:23

U17G

6 th	Emily Negus	18:22
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U13B

35 th	Robert Currie	12:07
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U15B (8th team)

7 th	Kieren Coleman-Smith	13:35
24 th	Michael Wynne	14:29
62 nd	Hisham Alkhamesi	17:52
63 rd	Joel Howes	17:58

U17B

13 th	Sam Howard	19:40
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Upcoming competitions

For latest details please look at the new autumn/winter fixture list posted on the club website – www.nuneatonharriers.org.uk

Championship events

All of the championships are 'local' this year. Too late to enter now but great if you want to spectate - There are races for all age groups U13 and upwards. The National is still the very best cross-country event IN THE WORLD! The **Midland** championship will be at Prestwold Hall near Loughborough on Saturday 28th January. The '**National**' will be held at Woollaton Park, Nottingham on Saturday 25th February.

If your results are not in this edition – and you'd like to see them reported, or if you have other items that you think may interest your club-mates then please send your words/pictures to me at - eric.fowler@hotmail.co.uk