

The thirteenth club cross country championship race took place in Hargate Forest on Saturday morning. With weeks of drought conditions having hardened the going underfoot, there were very few areas of mud on the 1.8 mile circuit, so making conditions perfect for a fast race. By the time the twenty two competitors lined up for the start, the early morning rain had cleared but it remained dull and overcast, very different from the glorious spring sunshine of the previous year.

Chris Wolton set a rapid pace for the first of the three laps, leaving all of his closest challengers far behind. He finished in a time of 33:00 for the 5.4 hilly miles, this being the fastest time on the course for some 5 years and only 16 seconds outside Mark Taylor's course record stretching back to 2000. Improvements made to the paths by the Woodland Trust also contributed to fast times, particularly on the previously muddy gully leading down into the valley. In finishing in second place, Simon Whitaker set his best time on the course by over a minute and a half, his 35:34 taking the M40 title. Cross Country Captain Ed Steele finished in third place in a time of 36:27.

In the ladies race, Alice Heather-Hayes raced for the first time since the UK Inter Counties Championships and took both the senior and F35 titles in a time of 37:02. Her time is a new women's course record, beating Tara Taylor's course record of 2006 by a huge 3:13. In setting her record, Alice finished fourth overall in the race.

Jeannette White finished second to Alice and seventh overall in the race, taking the F45 title in time of 38:55, her time also beating the previous course record and setting a new best time on the Hargate Forest course for her age category.

Derek Harrison improved on his time of the previous year by over two minutes to take the M50 title in a time of 42:09, and Peter Richardson took the M60 title on his debut run on the course in a time of 43:56, this being less than a minute outside Mike Jarvis' M60 best on the course. Eric Schofield finished in 47:55 to take the M70 title.

Thanks to all of the runners for turning out in less than inspiring weather, and to Ed Peltor, George Harris and Mike Russell for collecting all of the

course marking equipment. Thanks also to the Woodland Trust for their continuing support to the club in allowing us to use the woodland for our annual event.

- 1 Chris Wolton 33:00 1st MSen
- 2 Simon Whitaker 35:34 1st M40
- 3 Ed Steele 36:27
- 4 Alice Heather-Hayes 37:02 1st FSen, F35
- 5 Patrick Bareham 37:48
- 6 Ed Peltor 38:04
- 7 Jeannette White 38:55 1st F45
- 8 Geoff Turner 39:00
- 9 Alan Collard 39:13
- 10 Mike Tull 39:55
- 11 Steve Woodruffe 40:15
- 12 Pat Lockett (guest) 41:09
- 13 George Harris 41:29
- 14 Steve Bright 41:47
- 15 Paul Lindsey 42:04
- 16 Derek Harrison 42:09 1st M50
- 17 Siân Roberts 42:11
- 18 Peter Richardson 43:56 1st M60
- 19 Steve Austin 44:18
- 20 Eric Schofield 47:55 1st M70
- 21 Martin Reynolds 48:43
- 22 Bryon 'Spud' Taylor 1:10:42