

MALDWYN HARRIERS JANUARY 2014 UPDATE

Before we get stuck into a round-up of competitive action, news that **Vicky Morris** has secured a place in this year's London Marathon in which she will be running for charity. Vicky's good cause is RJAH Orthopaedic Hospital and she will be raising funds for their new Bone Cancer centre they are planning to build.

Vicky intends setting up a "just giving" website which we will be pleased to share details of as soon as they are available. In the meantime Vicky would like us to mention that the main focus for fund raising is a charity Ball in Llanfair Caereinion on Saturday 3rd May in the Leisure Centre (Bank Holiday weekend). Anyone interested in tickets or booking a table for this event can phone her on 07967582985.

Vicky informs us that the training is going well and that she is up to 16 miles on the Sunday runs in which she is being helped by Maldwyn Leaders Rachel and June. As part of her preparations she is targeting the Rhyl 10 at the end of February and a March half marathon before lining up at London on 13th April where she will be joined by Richard Wild, Sharon Lloyd and Martin Copus who were the lucky recipients of our three club places this year.

Good luck to all in their preparations for the Big Day.

FELL

The Morning After, Church Stretton 1st January 2014

Tim Davies took the spoils in this traditional curtain raiser to the New Year in a time of 31:58 with dad **Ed**, also turning out for Mercia, finishing in 10th place (36:14). **Haydn Jones**, listed as Maldwyn but representing Shrewsbury these days was 27th in 38:27.

Mercia Hill Trial (long course), Church Stretton, 19th January 2014

This year's Trial saw the welcome return to competitive action for **Glyn Fletcher** who has been struggling with a foot injury since last October. In encouraging sign that he is returning to form as well as fitness, Glyn partnered **Paul Beeson** to fifth spot in a combined time of 2:03:42 and which also saw them take second place in the "Men's Pair" category.

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

Welsh Athletics Indoor Championships, Cardiff, 25th and 26th January 2014

Well done to **Lauren Williams** on her second place in the U17w 60 metres hurdles event in which she recorded a time of 9:23. Lauren was also a finalist in the 300m event in which she finished 4th in 42:81

CROSS-COUNTRY

British Athletics Cross-Country Challenge, Antrim, 4th January 2014

Andrew Davies, fresh from his victory at the Welsh Championships in December (see last month's update), finished in a commendable 15th position in a time of 31:04. Although the senior race did not count as part of the four-nation Celtic Challenge, Andy's performance was good enough to place him as second Welsh runner home behind Dewi Griffiths, who just weeks earlier had represented the UK at the European Cross-Country Championships.

In the junior men's race ex-Harrier and still close associate **Gwynant Jones** came home in 9th position (17:50) and, like Andy, was the second Welsh runner to score, helping Wales to second place in the team event.

North Wales Cross-Country League, Lilleshall, 18th January 2014

In a rare venture over the Country **Ed Davies** was 51st placed (second M55) in a time of 41:28.

British Athletics Cross-Country Challenge, Cardiff, 19th January 2014

Gwynant Jones registered 18th place (25:45) in the U20s while **Joseph Crutchley** continues to get to grips with the U15 category with a solid 12th placed 16:30.

North Wales Cross-Country Championships, Northop, 25th January 2014

Harriers shone in vile conditions as **our under-15 girls** took second place in their team competition while young **Dillon Gill** continues to show his considerable promise with a “bronze” in the under-13 boys’ event. **Ifan Jones**, in what we think is his first outing over cross-country, was 53rd (59:30) in the senior men’s race..

With more news of our medal winning youngsters and other battling performances from our juniors here is the irrepressible (though this time without his camera) Chris “The Travelling Harrier” Copus.

25th January and it's off to Northop for the North Wales Cross Country Championships. There's been a lot of weather lately, none of it good. As a consequence the course was very wet in places, particularly the top field. Just the 10 intrepid Harriers made the trip. In fact numbers were down all round although those who were there represented the majority of the top runners in North Wales. All our runners certainly faced a stern test of their credentials.

*First up was U11 boy **Amren Stephenson**, a Maldwyn stalwart. In the last few weeks Amren has improved enormously - a good run at Bridgnorth followed by his best run to date. 26th in the day's biggest field represented huge progress. Our other male representative was **Dillon Gill** in the U13 boys. Dillon has certainly impressed the coaches with his ability and attitude since he joined us at the end of the summer. It was no surprise therefore, to see him up with the leaders right from the off. Never out of the top 4 Dillon eventually came through for a well merited 3rd place a mere 22 seconds behind the winner.*

*U13 girls and 2 young athletes currently in fine form. **Shannon Walker** decided to 'go for it' and was never far off the lead until the latter stages, ultimately fading slightly for a hard fought 6th - a great effort. Not far behind was **Kate Jerman** in 8th. A good steady run in the middle of the field - well done.*

*Up to this point the weather hadn't been too bad - a bit cold, a shower or two - nothing to get excited about. Well I'm afraid our U15 really 'copped it'. **Meg Randell** gamely battled away, briefly threatening the leaders before settling for 4th. Pretty good considering her injury hit preparation. Another good run from **Olivia Sofianos** as well. As conditions*

deteriorated near the end she really had to dig deep to hang on in 7th. A little further back **Lauren Teasdale** and **Alex Austin** exchanged positions a couple of times before Lauren pulled away for 9th to Alex's 10th. A terrific team effort that earned a splendid silver medal. At the conclusion of the race the rain and biting wind suddenly gave way to a monumental hailstorm, complete with thunder. Great! At this point Olivia's disappointment on learning that I had abrogated my responsibility elsewhere regarding guardianship of her hoodie was palpable. Although too nice to say anything her expression spoke volumes! Sorry Olivia.

Also 'enjoying' the Northop weather were U17 ladies **Chloe Evans** and **Margo Martin** preparing for their run. Both started well but gradually lost touch with the leading trio. Despite clearly suffering in the cold and wet both stuck stoically to the task coming home 4th and 5th respectively. A particularly good effort from Margo - that's the closest she's been to Chloe for some while.

All in all some marvellous performances in testing conditions. Well done everybody.

And there we have it for the quiet(ish) month of January. February sees plenty of action over the fells as well as the Nick Beer 10km, half marathon action at Wrexham and Welsh Schools Cross-Country, all of which will be featured in our next update.

In the meantime if you have any athletics-related news and photos that you think will be of interest to club members and website readers then please contact Ian at fraserman1@hotmail.co.uk