

RR Harriers – Club Captains Report 2023

This report details the events, challenges, and competitions that Rolls Royce Harriers, as a club, participated in during 2023. The report also contains a final paragraph with thoughts for 2024. This is a joint report, written by the respective Men's (James Ward) and Ladies (Karolina Kucharek) club captains.

Firstly, we wish to state it's been an honour to act as the respective Men's and Ladies captains of the club during 2023. We have tried to provide motivation, tried to increase participation, and add a general fun factor for the club.

The report has been written by summarising the running disciplines we engage in;

Cross Country

The final race of the 2022/23 North Midlands cross country league was held at Mansfield in January. A small number of athletes represented the club.

The Derby runner cross country league concluded in spring with races at Boothorpe, Shipley Park and Foremark reservoir. We were slightly better represented by RR athletes in these races. There are prizes for all Vets 5 year age categories, and congratulations to Karolina and Mark Skelton for winning their age categories. James Ward finished third in his category.

The North Midlands cross country league for 2023/24 started up again in October with races at Markeaton Park, Kettering and Shipley Park. We did have a number of athletes at Markeaton and Shipley, but lesser numbers made the Kettering trip. From the ladies, only Gillian made the start line for any of these races.

In the 2023/24 Derby Runner cross country league we had good turn outs in the 3 fixtures before end 2023; Anslow (x2), Allestree park. The second race at Anslow being particularly challenging in the snow, fog and mud. We haven't seen the individual standings after the first 3 races, but David Parkin and Mike Lawson should be well placed in their age categories.

We do maintain that cross-country races should be part of the staple diet of most runners' fixtures and training. Not just from the strength and character building, but also the team perspective. Great to see new members David Parkin, David Pettit and Tim Scanlon donning the Harriers vest and competing.

Relay Races

The club competed in several open relay races in 2023. As per cross country races, relays are good from a team perspective and great fun at the same time. The events we competed in;

Hairy Helmet (Darley Park) – We entered 2 teams (James, Rob Goulds, Andy Ward, Nigel Granville and Gillian, Gemma Stacey + 2 runners from the Derby runner community)

Starlight relays – 2 teams at Calke Abbey (James, Dean Smith, Debbie Phelps, Nigel Granville and Sam Skelton, Mark Skelton, Pete Adams, Mark Rogerson). There was no interest to compete in the 2023/24 series.

Belper River relays - We entered one team (Chris Booth, Alison Booth, James and Nigel Granville). The course this year used a new hilly route – the nice flat one should be back in 2024.

Nomad Relay – organised by Andy Ward – 1st time the club has ever done this. Follows the 50mile course used for the ultra event. We had one team consisting of Debbie Phelps, Ian Page, Neil Shipley, Andy Ward, Richard Kerry, Alan Eccleston. The team finished in 2nd place!

Masters XC relay event at Long Eaton was cancelled due to the weather conditions.

FRA relay, held in Lake District - alas there was no representation from RRH due to insufficient availability of runners to form a team. The event in 2024 will be in the Yorkshire Dales village of Appletreewick.

Track

Chance for runners to enjoy the challenge of racing on a track. Intense competition and well supported. Great to see new members having a go (David Pettit, Chris Gillot, Steve Randle, Ken Idigo, David Millar). 27 runners had a go at least one track event. There were some good battles between Paul Spencer and David Pettit at the front, and Russ Parkin showed us his track prowess over 1500m. It can be reported that no injuries were gained during the sprint events!

Worth recording in this section is that Russ Parkin was part of the GB Mv60 team that broke the world record for the indoor 4x800m relay. Way to go Russ!

These races are only possible thank to Bill's great efficiency in timekeeping and working out the results. Huge thank to Bill and volunteers on the day for supporting the track races. And any other races in fact.

Broome Cup and Pearson Trophy

The Broome Cup saw an increase in entries on 2022. We had 80 runners of which there was 21 teams. There was a great race at the front, with 3 Derby AC athletes battling it out and Jack Dakin managed to claim 1st in the final sprint. Gordon Kalwak was first Harrier home with Robin Carter finishing first MV. Clare McKittrick was first Lady Harrier, first lady and first LV! Hazel Le Cornu finished second lady and second LV. RRH Ladies, comprising of Claire, Gillian and Karolina, finished first ladies' team.

The event was a success, and we did make a small profit. However, it did highlight a shortage of qualified race adjudicators in the club and we had to set the race date dependent on Ian Page availability.

The Piggs Trophy

Steve Wakefield has reported early last year that Mark Haslam of Derbyshire County Council had confirmed that a new Government agricultural and environmental scheme would prevent us from using the Great Northern Greenway for future Piggs Trophy Races held on the normal Mickleover course. After Steve's thorough reconnaissance of different options, the decision was made to use Darley Abbey Park, with the event HQ being Derby Rugby club

It coincided that 2023 was the year where the Colin Potter 10k team decided to discontinue organising the event that used to take place in July.

The Piggs Trophy event was well attended. A total of 100 runners took part with David Pettit finishing first male and Karolina first lady RR Harriers.

We have received positive comments regarding the race organisation and the new route from individual runners. It is a great route for spectators as the two laps allow to see the runners more often and is accessible in various spots to cheer on.

Well done to Steve Wakefield in his first year as race organiser. Now we have a confirmed course, we can advertise the event earlier and maybe attract more runners.

Club Runs

The core group of runners took part in a few Wednesday club runs organised so far with James, Debbie Phelps, Mark Rogerson, Dean Smith, Rob Goulds being on the rota. The interest shown in club runs is very little and we wonder what would increase the attendance. The festive edition of the club run, with a pub stop at The Furnace was run by 3 runners. Any suggestions from the committee and membership would be appreciated!

Lunch time challenge

New challenge set up by James has been popular amongst Harriers and also non-members showing a great competitive spirit of all runners and possibly this is something we would like to continue and promote. The challenge is to beat others and your own previous time on a 2.8mile route that starts near the Wilmore Road/LDC road crossing. The times recorded so far;

1	Gordon Kalwak	16:11
2	Kenny Malton	16:27
3	David Pettit	17:12
4	Paul Spencer	18:25
5	Chris Gillott	18:30
6	Rob Goulds	19:10
7	James Ward	19:33
8	John Irving	19:55
9	Richard Kerry	20:39
10	Dean Rowland	21:06
11	Tim Scanlon	21:26
12	Mark Rogerson	21:35
13	Simon Cook	22:00
14	Julian Smith	22:12
15	Andy Ward	22:47
16	Kevin Sutcliffe	25:47

Park Runs

Park runs are popular amongst the RRH membership. Last year we had two park run get togethers;

Long Eaton (July) - celebrating Gillian's 1000 day of consecutive running! A cake was involved afterwards!

Markeaton (December) - Christmas run attracted a good group of RR Harriers. We shared mulled wine and mince pies after.

It is our aim to encourage the club members to get involved in more social park runs and the refreshments at the local café in 2024.

Fell and Ultra Running

Smaller branch of our running portfolio, attracting a smaller group of more seasoned and experienced in these challenging disciplines athletes.

Several our members did compete in fell races in 2023 gaining valuable championship points.

For the 2023/24 season, selected fell races granting additional 5 points attracted David Petit, David Parkin, Chris Booth and James Ward so far. This is to encourage runners to have a go, and encourage runners to turn out at the same event. All 'bonus' fell races are in the club calendar which is available from the RRH website.

In the Ultra category, a few hardy members completed noteworthy championship point scoring events: Robin Carter completed the Lakeland 100 (14th), Silva Northern Traverse (300Km – 2nd) and the Nomad Ultra (50miles – 3rd); Pete Adams the Wye Valley Ultra (34Km); Ben Hall the Nomad Ultra (the 32mile course); Matt Tomlinson WON the Beacons Way 100 and the Black Beacon 100 Trail race (September), both in South Wales.

Also, a big shout out to Jon Kinder who devised his own 37mile ultra taking in 11 trig points around Matlock, to raise £4k for Ashgate House (a charity who look after cancer patients).

Open Road races

Lots of open road races entered and completed by RR Harriers. However, I just wanted to include this section in order to say well done to Chris Booth (Bath) and Paul Spencer (Keyworth) for running Half marathon personal bests. Excellent running chaps!

Club Championship

The club championship for 2022/23 concluded in September and Karolina claimed victory by a clear margin. A worthy winner, Karolina showed a lot of commitment supporting club events and submitting times for championship scoring events. The full list of winners were;

Club champion Karolina Kucharek

Men's champion Dean Smith

Ladies' champion Gillian Whiteside

Men's V40 David Johnson

Men's 50 James Ward

Men's 60 Andy Ward

Ladies' 35 Deborah Phelps

Ladies' 45 Clare McKittrick

Improver – Paul Spencer

Whinger – Rob Goulds

The 2023/24 season started with the handicap race at Markeaton Park. 19 runners took part, and it was Debbie Phelps turn to fool the handicapper. There were a couple of navigation errors which we need to work on for 2024.

The 2023/24 championship year should be an interesting one. Dean Smith who has won the championship a number of times over the past few seasons is still recovering from a bad injury, and Karolina* has switched her first claim allegiance to Sinfin RC. This leaves the door open for a new name on the trophy. (*Many thanks to Karolina for her support to the club as a first claim member over the past years).

As per the comment in the Track races section, a big thankyou to Bill Southgate for keeping track of all the results and keeping us up to date with the championship table.

Summary and thoughts for 2024

Reading through the report, it shows that we've had a good year. Thanks to all the runners taking part in numerous events and disciplines, putting Rolls-Royce Harriers into the history of the results.

The club has gained a few new members and I believe the usage of the Harriers track as a part of the membership has attracted a number of those.

We are, as we've said before, competing against a lot of local clubs to attract new members. However, we put on a number of events and together with cheap membership fees and free track usage, we are quite competitive.

The challenge is to build on this year's success of events participation and intake of new members. We need to think of ways to increase group participation which may make us more appealing as a club. So, there is still some thinking we need to do as a club. The club does have an ageing membership, so we need to keep on recruiting to stop us dwindling in size.

It has been great fun to act as club captains and we look forward to a successful 2024.

James Ward and Karolina Kucharek

RR Harriers in action; 2023



*Derby Runner XC at
Shipley Park (Feb)*



*The winning ladies
team at the Broome
Cup*



The start of the Broome Cup 2023



*The Ladies team at the
Hairy Helmet relays (Jun)*

*The Mens team at the Hairy
Helmet relays (Jun)*



RR Harriers in action; 2023



*The Nomad
relay team
(Jun)*



*Chris Gillat, albeit in
a Matlock AC vest,
after winning a 5km
in Indianapolis*



*Gillian's 1000th
consecutive day of
running celebration at
Long Eaton Park Run (Jul)*



*Robin Carter after finishing 2nd in
the Northern Traverse 300km*



Belper River Relays (Jul)

RR Harriers in action; 2023



Debbie on her way to winning the handicap race

The first Cross Country of the 2023/24 season – Markeaton Park



A self indulgent pic of myself at Shipley Park (Dec)



Still going strong in the Mv70 category – Mike Lawson at Markeaton Park



Braving the snow, fog, mud, rain – Derby Runner XC at Anslow (Dec)

RR Harriers in action; 2023

*Festive Park Run at
Markeaton Park (Dec)*



*Karolina receiving the
Club Championship
trophy for the 2023/23
season*

*David Pettit receiving the
Jack Piggs 10k trophy*



*Rob Goulds receiving the prestigious Whingers
Trophy for 2023!*