

RR Harriers – Club Captains Report 2024

This report details the events, challenges, and competitions that Rolls Royce Harriers, as a club, participated in during 2024. The report also contains a final paragraph with thoughts for 2025. Firstly, I wish to state it's been an honour to act as the Club captain of the club during 2024. I 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 2023/24 North Midlands cross country league was held at Bulwell Hall in January. A small number of athletes represented the club. Some creditable performances: David Parkin competed in all 4 races and finished 6th overall in the Mv50 category and the Men's Vets team finished 11th team overall.

The Derby runner cross country league concluded in spring with races at Boothorpe, Shipley Park and Sinai Park. It has to be said, we were treated to particularly muddy conditions for this year's Derby Runner XC races! There are prizes for all Vets 5 year age categories, and congratulations to David Parkin (Mv50) and Mike Lawson (Mv70) for winning their age categories.

The North Midlands cross country league for 2024/25 started up again in October with races at Markeaton Park, Kettering and Shipley Park. We did have several athletes at each race. The Men's Vets team managing to field a team at each venue and Neil Shipley is well placed in the Mv60 category.

In the 2024/25 Derby Runner cross country league we had good turn outs in the 2 fixtures before end 2024; Shipley Park and Anslow. The first race at Shipley Park being the normal mud bath we've become accustomed to.

We do have a small core of athletes that turn out for the cross country races. Would be great to see a few more of the membership giving one a go. They are fun and character building!

Relay Races

We didn't enter many relay events this year, which is a shame as relay races are good fun and help with team camaraderie.

Hairy Helmet (Darley Park) – We entered 1 team (David Pettit, David Parkin, Robin Carter, David Johnson). The team finished a creditable 27th out of 145 teams, and 6th in their combined age over 160 category.

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

FRA relay, held in Appletree, Yorkshire (Oct 24)– the committee decided not to enter a team. The entry rules are now quite strict, and the club would have struggled to find sufficient runners to form a team.

Track

Chance for runners to enjoy the challenge of racing on a track. Intense competition and well supported. We had 30 runners taking part in at least one track night. Julian Smith ran in all 8 events and Neal Fellows ran in 7. The track races are good fun and enjoyed in a masochistic way by those that take part!

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 a reduction in entries compared to 2023. We had 51 runners of which there was 18 RR Harriers. There was a good race at the front, with Andy McEwen (SMR) prevailing over Kenny Malton. Gordon Kalwak was again first male RR Harrier home and Deborah Phelps first Lady overall and first lady RR Harrier. Andy McEwen led the SMR team to victory in the Pearson team trophy. RRH Ladies, comprising of Deborah Phelps, Gemma Stacey, Paula Parkin and Gillian Whiteside, finished first ladies' team.

The event was a success as regarding organisation. However, we did suffer a monetary loss. This was caused by rising fees for use of Moorways, St Johns etc, and the lack of entries didn't cover the organisational costs. We did advertise the event as much as possible. Maybe the adverse weather in spring 2024 leading up to the event put people off.

The Piggs Trophy

The Piggs 10Km was held at Darley Park for the 2nd year running, utilising Derby Rugby club as the race HQ. The race itself was well organised and received lots of positive feedback. The downside being the disappointing reduction in race entrants from 2023. Late entries on the night took us to 77 finishers, with 12 RR Harriers.

David Pettit finishing first male Harrier (Jack Piggs Trophy) and Gemma Stacey first lady RR Harrier (Ted Page Trophy).

Thanks to Steve Wakefield for again acting as race organiser. Thoughts for next year are to change the race date and try and avoid school holidays.

Club Runs

We struggled to get this organised in 2024. A regular Wednesday night run, or indeed a lunchtime run, may attract new members. We need to look at this in 2025 and something I may need help with.

Lunch time challenge

These were held once every 2 months and we had varied attendance. It is a nice little lunchtime blow out! We used the infinity way course (2.8miles) but in 2025 we are also going to experiment with a 3 lap course at Osmaston Park. The best recorded times for the Infinity Way course are below:

1	Gordon Kalwak	16:11	
2	Kenny Malton	16:27	guest
3	David Pettit	16:53	
4	Paul Newton	17:54	guest
5	David Parkin	18:15	
6	Paul Spencer	18:25	
7	Chris Gillott	18:30	
8	Rob Goulds	19:10	
9	James Ward	19:33	
10	John Irving	19:55	
11	Dean Rowland	20:31	
12	Richard Kerry	20:39	
13	Tim Scanlon	21:26	
14	Mark Rogerson	21:35	
15	Simon Cook	22:00	
16	Julian Smith	22:12	
17	Andy Ward	22:47	
18	Kevin Sutcliffe	25:47	

Park Runs

Park runs are popular amongst the RRH membership and as such 6 park run get togethers on a once every 2 months basis were arranged (Alvaston Park, Wollaton Park, Conkers, Long Eaton, Shipley Park, Markeaton Park).

It is a chance to get together and compare post run whinges with your fellow Harriers. Some of the get togethers were better supported than others.

The festive edition at Markeaton Park did attract a good group of RR Harriers. We shared mulled wine and mince pies after.

I'll try and add new venues for 2025. I'm open to suggestions!

Fell and Ultra Running

Smaller branch of our running portfolio, attracting a smaller group of more seasoned and experienced in these challenging disciplines athletes. Great to see a number of our runners taking part and gaining championship points.

A few highlights:

Jon Kinder won the Wilmott wander (32miles), with Mark Fowell and Cliff Cooper also taking part.

Debbie Phelps and Chris Morrison completed the Charnwood hills race (13.4miles)

Jon Kinder ran the Grindleford Gallop (21miles)

David Parkin was 6th in the Silva Dales traverse (52.7k)

Dean Smith completed the Three Forts challenge (27.7miles)

David Parkin, Dean Smith and Chris Morrison ran the Parks Life race (4.3miles) at Belper for bonus championship points

Mark Fowell completed the Lakeland trials (100k)

David Parkin and Dean Smith ran the Salt Cellar fell race (7.1m)

David Pettit ran Rickys race (4.5miles) at Darley Dale for bonus championship points

Mark Fowell completed the Grand tour of Skiddaw (46miles)

Dean Smith ran the Limestone ultra (50miles)

David Parkin and Dean Smith ran the Totley terminator (17miles), the last bonus point fell race of the 2023/24 season.

The first 2 bonus point fell races of the 2024/25 season were;

Curbar Commotion: David Pettit and David Parkin ran

Leg it Lathkill: Tim Scanlon and Dean Smith ran

Apologies to anyone whose efforts I've missed from those highlights.

Club Championship

The club championship for 2023/24 was one of the most keenly fought championships for a few years. David Parkin eventually prevailing over David Pettit, mainly by gaining points in all disciplines. Claire McKittrick won the 'Improver' award for her national titles in 'Laser Running'. The full list of winners below.

Club champion David Parkin

Men's champion David Pettit

Ladies' champion Deborah Phelps

Men's V40 Robin Carter

Men's 50 Dean Smith

Men's 60 Mike Lawson

Ladies' 35 Gemma Stacey

Ladies' 45 Gillian Whiteside

Improver – Clare McKittrick

Whinger – Rob Goulds

The 2024/25 season started with the handicap race at Markeaton Park. 18 runners took part, and it was Andy Norman that stole the victory. Good to see Andy running again after a season of injury. Alison Booth was 2nd, with Andy Ward 3rd.

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.

Virtual Races

I did organise one virtual event in 2024, a tribute to Roger Bannister virtual mile (70th Anniversary of his sub 4minute mile). It was a bit of a throwback to the covid virtual events years, and 15 runners submitted times. Things haven't changed though, and Russ Parkin submitted the fastest time. I will try and organise a virtual event of some sort for 2025.

Summary and thoughts for 2025

Reading through the report, it shows again that we've had a full year with athletes representing RR Harriers in all disciplines of running. Thanks to all the runners taking part. There is still a healthy spirit and enthusiasm with the club.

The challenges we have as a club remain the same as within previous years.

We are, as we've said before, competing against a lot of local clubs to attract new members. We do need to ensure we offer enough activities and benefits to prospective members to entice them. The club does have an ageing membership, so we need to keep on recruiting to stop us dwindling in size.

I haven't done well on organising club social runs, either at lunch or after work. The lunchtime challenges attract a core group of athletes. As I said earlier, an area I need help with.

The lunchtime track usage benefit did attract new members, but without encroaching on other committee members reports, we need to assess whether that is still viable. If not, maybe look at alternative solutions.

Despite the concerns, it has been great fun to act as club captain and I look forward to a successful 2025.

James Ward

RR Harriers 2024 - XC



Derby Runner XC –
Shiple Park, Feb 2024

Derby Runner XC –
Anslow, Dec 2024



Derby Runner XC –
Shiple Park, Nov
2024

RR Harriers 2024 – Park Runs



Long Eaton, August
2024

Shipley Park, Oct
2024



Markeaton Park,
Dec 2024

RR Harriers 2024 – Evening Track races



5000m Jul 2024

800m, Aug 2024



3000m, Jul 2024

RR Harriers 2024 – Evening Track races



5000m Jul 2024

1500m, Jul 2024



3000m, Jul 2024

Broome Cup 2024



The start line!

A very blurred Gordon
Kalwak – 1st Male
Harrier



Debbie Phelps –
1st Lady Harrier