

## **Kent Fitness League Cross Country 2011/2012 – Oxleas Wood**



**On a glorious sunny morning on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November we participated in the third event of the Kent Fitness League Cross Country Series at Oxleas Wood, New Eltham.**

Labelled as a roller-coaster race, 415 runners turned out to tackle the technically challenging two and a bit lap course of about 5 miles. Renowned for being wet and feared by some because of the challenges, it actually turned out to be a brilliant run with the majority of runners coming home saying how much they enjoyed it. Most competitors had the respite of walking and clambering up the steep slope through the woods but then had to struggle with the climb up toward the café at the top of the park in full view of the spectators.

We had 26 Harriers turn up on the day and were the 5<sup>th</sup> largest team on the course. All the team completed the course with just Diane George spraining her wrist when she fell over prior to the home straight. Our Sonja Whatling, running behind her who is a paramedic shouted to her in the true spirit of competitiveness to stay down to allow her to run pass – really girls!! Dave Keeling was observed bent double attempting to throw up outside the organiser's tent on the first lap – he says he needs to do that to get going – nice one Dave!!

The usual 18 teams took part and we finished 12<sup>th</sup> in the combined (ladies & men) event, the ladies were 5<sup>th</sup> in their event and the men 14<sup>th</sup>. Individually for the ladies, Penny Holden led us home in 9<sup>th</sup> position with Julie Stoppani 22<sup>nd</sup> and Kay Banfield 24<sup>th</sup>. For the men Mike Murdoch once again led us home in 52<sup>nd</sup> position with Richard Ellison 55<sup>th</sup>, Adam Palfreyman 94<sup>th</sup>, Oliver Stride 104<sup>th</sup>, Martyn Earl 109<sup>th</sup>, Darren French 123<sup>rd</sup> and Ron Carr 155<sup>th</sup> (our o'50 cat).

In the league we are now 10<sup>th</sup> in the combined division, 6<sup>th</sup> in the ladies division and 12<sup>th</sup> in the men's division.

It is worth mentioning that trophies are awarded each year by the KFL at the end of the season for the most improved runners in the leagues. In the statistics at the moment Adam Palfreyman is leading with Richard Ellison third. For the ladies, Kay Banfield is in third position. Well done to all three, it is a measure of how much effort they have put into their running this year.

Once again our presence was evident with Nigel Warren bringing along the gazebo and Dave Keeling our 'windsailing' banners. Well done guys, it is very much appreciated and is a good advert for the club.

The 'travelling circus' now moves onto Avery Hill Park, again at New Eltham (only about a mile from Oxleas) for the 5<sup>th</sup> event on Bank Holliday Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012. This is a very easy course and is ideal for trot round after the Christmas festivities and excesses. It is sometimes labelled as being 'a bit woosie' but as I have said on many occasions the courses are as hard as you what you make them. It's all grass, short, sharp climbs with long downhill stretches in the very pleasant surroundings of the University Park. We meet at the clubhouse where there will be refreshments and the bar open afterwards to make it a very enjoyable morning.

***David Hattersley***