

## Our neck of the woods

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the second instalment of the Surrey cross-country league took place at Oxshott woods. A favourite of mine, perhaps because it brings back memories of training sessions up “that” hill. The leg-burner in question featured twice in the women’s race and 3 times in the men’s.

In the women’s race, Walton had just a single runner this time out. **Mandy R** ran another strong race to finish 68<sup>th</sup> from 256 runners. This is only 5 places lower than race 1, but race 2 had 45 extra runners so Mandy really showing her strength, also managing to finish 21<sup>st</sup> W40 compared to 23<sup>rd</sup> a month ago. Well done Mandy.

The men showed a similar pattern of moving up the rankings despite a busier race. Of the 6 runners who have completed both races, 5 finished higher than they did in the first match, which really helps when every point counts.

First Walton athlete across the line this time was **Alex K**, running his first cross-country of the season after lengthy spells recovering from injury. Alex produced a very strong run to finish 5<sup>th</sup> overall. Just one place behind him was **Duncan W**, who produced a gutsy run to finish 6<sup>th</sup> despite hamstring troubles for the majority of the race. Duncan also finished 1<sup>st</sup> V40 for the second match in a row. Great effort from Alex and Duncan.

**Robert S** was once again 3<sup>rd</sup> Walton athlete, finishing slightly higher up the field than match 1 (59<sup>th</sup> scorer). Not far behind was **Jonathan H** (66<sup>th</sup> scorer) and **Chris N** (69<sup>th</sup> scorer). Chris also managed to finish 4<sup>th</sup> V50. A strong run from both Jonathan and Chris, well done guys.

Next to finish were **Ollie S** (85<sup>th</sup> scorer) and **Chris C** (87<sup>th</sup> scorer). Ollie improved on his scoring position from the last race and Chris, running his first race of the season, came home strong with a valuable contribution. Thank you both!

**Guy C** (88<sup>th</sup> scorer) was next, running his first race for Walton since his Comrades marathon exploits, this distance must have seemed much more manageable! The ever-dependable **Martin W** was 9<sup>th</sup> Walton and 89<sup>th</sup> scorer.

Thank you to all those that raced, it really means a lot to have you. Unfortunately, despite the effort of those running, Walton Men finished 9<sup>th</sup> on the day by a single point. Once again only fielding 9 runners, so, once again, we were heavily penalised. A few more runners really will make a huge difference to the team. Just two more runners in the top 50 would have seen us finish 7<sup>th</sup>.

If you are reading this and you haven’t yet raced this season, the team needs you. It is always an excellent occasion, and our team spirit is always high. Please look out for the next league match in January, details will be sent out as soon as the match location is confirmed.

Thank you

Robert Smith