

Priory Relays

On Saturday 6th November, Reigate Priory AC hosted the 65th edition of the historic Priory Relays within the grounds of Priory Park.

The race is a cross country team event for athletic and running clubs, many who enter multiple teams with the men's race consisting of 4 legs per team and the ladies' race 3 legs per team. Each leg was approximately 2.5 miles long over some very challenging terrain. The conditions this year were firm under foot and the rain held off although a biting wind ensured that the competitors weren't completely at ease with the elements.

Walton AC had a modest turnout for this event and managed to field 3 teams consisting of a Men's 'A' and 'B' team and a Ladies Team. At 1.30pm a mass start commenced, and the WAC demonstrated once again that although, small in number, could punch well above their weight.

Lizzie Amos (W40) started well for the Ladies Team finishing Leg 1 strongly before handing over to **Eloise Williams (U20)** who ran a gutsy leg over the challenging course. On the day, the Ladies were one runner short, so Walton's campaign ended at the end of Leg 2.

On Leg 1, **Duncan Woolmer (M40)** led off for the A team, coming home in 4th position although he took a tumble at the top of a descent before handing over the **Alex Kilby (U20)**. Despite this mishap his time of 14:22 was the 10th fastest of the day. **Alex** sped off chasing down the leaders and brought the team back into contention in 3rd place running the fastest Leg 2 split and 4th fastest time of the day in 13:42. This was exceptional as no other WAC athlete has ever broken 14mins for this course, according to the results archive that have been published since 2012. Although the top 4 team positions changed during Leg 3, **Jamie McLoughlin (M45)** kept Walton in contention maintaining 3rd position before handing over the **Matt Reed (SM)** on the 4th Leg. **Matt** ran very well and brought Walton AC home in 3rd position in a time of 60:13, the fastest Walton time since 2012!

Chris Ness (M50) ran Leg 1 for the B team, bringing the home in 15th position before handing over to **Chris Coppellotti (M50)**. Chris ran a fine leg holding his own, in the knowledge that both **Duncan** and **Alex** were in the process of changing their numbers and swapping spikes for trail shoes to bring home the B team on Legs 3 & 4. The 'B' Team finished in 7th place overall beating many other Clubs 'A' Teams in the process.

It was a great Team effort from all the WAC athletes in attendance and it was very much appreciated the commitment shown by **Alex** who travelled back from Durham University for the weekend specifically to race for the Club in this event and played a significant part in enabling both Men's teams to do so well.

PHOTOS BELOW



The Bronze medal 'A' Team: Duncan, Alex, Jamie & Matt



Team Walton AC



The 'Mass' Start and Finishing at Speed