

Gade Valley Harriers Score and Amazing Double 2nd

Last Saturday local running club Gade Valley Harriers scored an amazing double 2nd in the challenging off road South Downs Marathon Relay.

The marathon relay is conducted over 4 legs. Each team is made up of 4 runners who have responsibility for completing 1 leg of the relay each. The runners have to drive to their nominated handover points and the finish time for each team is recorded when the last runner passes the finish point. Overcoming a couple of near disasters the Harriers had four teams in the race, two mens, one womens and a mixed. Despite the logistics of getting 16 runners from Hemel to the Start in Arundel before 9am the race got off without a hitch (unless you count Claire McDonnell forgetting her trail shoes!) The next stage presented a near disaster when of the cars failed to start. However the Harriers were made of sterner stuff and a quick change of plan the ladies team (and all their kit) scattering between the other cars. The race was on!

The route took in some of the most glorious views of the South Downs Way. However, the Harriers did not have any time to soak it in, the hills they had to tackle ranged from playful to positively mountainous and the weather was British to say the least, glorious sunshine interspersed with torrential rain!

The adverse weather conditions did nothing to dampen the spirits or the performances. From the start Guy Wollett set the pace and put the mens team into a commanding second position, Jon Roberts, Vince Ellerby and Bill Hawes held off all challengers ensuring they finished a fantastic 2nd in an impressive 2 hours 59 minutes. The second team of Russ Haynes, Bill Brimacombe, Martin Storrie and Olly Courtney ran a commendable race clocking personal bests to finish 9th in 3 hours 20 minutes. A strong start from Claire McDonnell on leg one, Sandra Mogan on leg two was enhanced by a flying third leg from Lisa Oldham and secured by Vicky Crawley who overtook six teams on the final leg bringing the women home in 3 hours 35, 18th overall and the 2nd womens team. The fourth team of Simon Bright, Jacky Eskerdale, Andy Newing and Paula Cook though hampered by injury ran a gutsy race and completed the 26.2 miles in 3 hours 50, 33rd out of the 77 teams that competed. All that running is thirsty work and the Harriers made sure the town of Chichester was well and truly painted red!

If the adventures of the Harriers have inspired you to dust off your trainers they meet every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 6.45 at Boxmoor Cricket Club and all abilities are very welcome. For further information you can call the club secretary Simon Bright on 07939226785.