

English National Cross Country Championships, at Parliament Hill

As mentioned in the email introduction, the conditions were extremely challenging, with thick mud covering large sections of the courses.

I believe that we had 122 starters in the end and 100% of them finished, which is testament to the determination of so many. You will see in the report that a number really put themselves through the mill to get to the finish.

Reading some of the comments posted on strava, by various runners is quite amusing in retrospect, but at the time it must have taken a big effort.

For those interested, we have had more finishers in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022

We had complete scoring teams in all 10 races, which we hadn't managed the last two years. We were the only club who managed to do that this year !

I would also like to thank Tony Bennett, Mark Pitcairn-Knowles, Lucy Pitcairn-Knowles, Rachel Fagg, Ollie White and Theresa White, who all helped get the TAC shelters and kit to the top of Parliament Hill, via the new TAC minibus.

Senior Men - 5th of 112 teams (6 to score) and 3rd in 9 to score competition

Maybe it wasn't the medal winning team performance that we hoped for, but the team were just two points away from 4th.

It is now 8 years in a row of top 5 positions

James Kingston completed his set of medals, from the last 3 years, where he has been 1st, 3rd and 2nd

We had all 6 scorers in the top 61 from 1781 finishers

Alex Howard deserves a special mention, as his foot required 4 stitches at A and E after being badly spiked early on and he still finished 49th.

Our Club Chairman, James Taylor ran his 15th National in a row, a TAC record.

Senior Women - 5th of 82 teams (4 to score)

This was one of the surprises of the day and one of our best ever senior women's results at the National.

We have had teams finish 4th on two occasions, but nothing else better than 5th.

Charlotte Alexander finished a superb 15th to lead the team home, whilst Katie Goodge (54th) and Alice Wood (86th) and two of their best ever races. The 4th scorer Lucy Thompson finished things off, despite suffering a family bereavement in the week, so deserves great credit for helping the team.

Under 20 Men - 1st

Alongside the Senior Women, this was probably the biggest surprise.

Jake Brislane had most definitely his best ever race in 11th, as did Harrison Fraser in 19th.

Jamie Macdonald lost a shoe relatively early on, but somehow finished 30th just ahead of Tom Claridge. Without Jamie's points and heroics the team wouldn't have won.

It is the 5th time this century that a TAC under 20 men's team have won and 6 years in a row of being amongst the medals.

Of course this is one of the age groups where members are at university and it shows the spirit that so many came home to race.

Under 20 Women - 9th

This is such a tough age group to get through that the number of scorers was reduced to three, from four, relatively recently.

A quick scan of the results shows that 5 of the clubs ahead had 3 finishers, whereas we had six ie we would have been 4th with 4 to score.

Again thanks to those returning from university.

Annabelle Hales led the team home in 49th, with Jess Poland and a strong finishing Amelia Beeston completing the scorers. Lily Slack had a nice break from indoor 800m racing to run !

Under 17 Men - 6th

I think it is fair to say that although 6th was good, the potential was a lot higher for the team. Some recent illnesses had an impact and a few of the squad have had a tough season, but hung in there.

We had 14 finishers, which is not close to the record of 19, but has only been beaten once since 2018

Toby Bawtree was first scorer in 25th, in conditions which were not ideal for him. Oscar Graffin (68th) and Sam Smialowski (71st) had particularly good races.

This is quite a 'young' squad, which includes all four members of the u15 team which won last season's National.

Under 17 Women - 9th

One of the big individual surprises of the day came from Florrie McIver-Hall making not only her National debut but having her first race for a club and finishing 32nd ! Her recent parkrun results had been solid and suggested some ability, but this was a great start to her TAC career.

Neve Raymond in 67th was our next scorer and perhaps found her best form of the season, although also maybe looking forward to track racing. The others have also all had their battles in recent months, but we have decent depth in the age group, so if they can come through this spell could have very good senior careers.

Under 15 Boys - 10th

There were 343 finishers in this race and it was a tough day for the squad, with Tom Weston-Simmons being first home in 82nd.

Again, we have decent depth and hopefully a few will step up, train consistently and get stronger as under 17s and beyond.

We have had a lot of success in this age group previously, with six wins this century, but you don't have to be near the front as an under 15 to be at the top in the older age groups.

Dougie Arnold, who finished 336th, received the Team Manager's Award, as during the race a fellow competitor slipped and fell. Dougie immediately stopped and helped him get up and carry on to finish.

Under 15 Girls - 12th

Some recent illness had an impact on the team, but this group seem to me to really enjoy the sport and again will hopefully develop in the years ahead.

Isabel Gowing was first home, whilst Jemima Wellesley gave it a real go, being our leading runner for a while. I will also mention Hana Maeda who rocks up so regularly to race and always gives it her best.

Under 13 Boys - 4th

This squad has transformed and developed as the season has developed, both in numbers and quality of performances.

Guy Bowers (8th) realised that he should have joined TAC in the first place and recently transferred from Paddock Wood ! Kit Larkin had his first TAC race at the National, which is quite an unusual experience, as not all races are quite like this one. Sam Shearer and Bailey Webster had particularly good races, whilst Zac Pluckrose made his debut.

We had 14 starters and the last time we had more was in 2018, when a record of 16 was set.

Under 13 Girls - 13th

Aimee Watts has had a great season, consistently racing hard and finishing high up and on this occasion was 8th. It was her first ever National aswell.

The whole squad seems a tightly knit and mutually supportive one, so hopefully will develop as the years go on.