

## **Elvet Striders X/C Captains' Report for Season 2015-16**

Apologies to all for our being unable to attend tonight's AGM.

The 2015-16 season was our 7<sup>th</sup> as x/c captains and by far the most successful for the men's team culminating in their first place finish in Division 2 of the Harrier League and the resulting promotion to Division 1.

The Women's team too had a successful Harrier League season, in the highly competitive Division 1, finishing in a commendable 6<sup>TH</sup> place.

Over 120 Striders completed at least one x/c race last season (a 10% increase on the previous year) and we had an average turnout of 51 Striders at each Harrier League fixture.

Last year also saw a significant increase in the strength in depth possessed by Strider teams. At the start of this season we had no less than 21 members in either the fast or medium packs. This is unprecedented.

But our greatest asset is the massive turnouts that we can generate, such as the 65 runners we put out at Aykley Heads. And in our view everyone who runs is a 'counter' for the club whether or not they finish in the first 4 or 6. Just being part of that 'Sea of Purple' sends out a message to other clubs that we 'mean business' and they are going to have to work damned hard to beat us!

Once again Striders played a major part in organising the Aykley Heads Harrier League fixture, both in preparation before the event, and by providing an army of marshals and traffic managers on the day. Please be in no doubt that this fixture would not go ahead without the involvement of Elvet Striders.

Such has been the success of the event that Aykley Heads has been chosen to host this season's North East x/c championships & that is largely due to the efforts of this club – so many thanks to all who have helped out.

X/C is about more than the Harrier League and Striders competed in a number of prestigious fixtures across the country last season including the National Champs at Donnington Park, the Northern Champs at Blackburn and the North Eastern Champs at Sedgefield. These events are always fantastic days out and much enjoyed by those Striders who take part. They are longer, and can be tougher, than Harrier League but the rewards are even greater with post race food and drink tasting even sweeter. So, we were a little disappointed with the Strider turnout at the Nationals and Northern Champs last year and we hope more of you will want to join us for these races in 2017.

Some of you will remember that the Alan Purvis Cross Country Quaich was awarded for the first time last year at the Aykley Heads' race with the first recipient being Penny Browell. It is Alan's wish that this trophy is awarded for 'endeavour' and we

saw plenty of that last season. There were so many fantastic individual performances that deciding on this year's recipient will be difficult. We saw some high quality performances from both new club members and those already highly experienced. We saw consistency, with certain members turning up and running their hearts out time and time again, come rain or shine, and we saw lots of happy, encouraging faces around the Striders tent contributing to a wonderful friendly atmosphere and generating a team spirit that we believe is second to none.

So where do we go from here? Well, Harrier League continues to be our main focus with increased participation in the National & Regional Champs being another aim. We will be competing in the Northern Relay champs for the first time this coming Saturday (22<sup>nd</sup>) and we will be looking to further develop our series of x/c specific training sessions.

So many thanks to those of you who ran, cheered, baked cakes, marshalled, directed traffic & helped with the tent last season – your involvement, and the involvement or cooperation of your families & friends, makes this club a joy to be part of. Many thanks.

Geoff & Susan Davis

October 2016