



**Release:** Immediate  
**Date:** November 13, 2016

### **Weston runners get in the mud**

Sunday morning saw 38 of Weston Athletic Club's members travel to Chipping Sodbury to take on the infamous Sodbury Slog. The ten mile off-road race features a number of opportunities for runners to lose their trainers in mud of varying depth and degrees of stickiness. This year's race did not disappoint, with plenty of cloying thick mud up to the knees, doing its best to drag runners to the ground.

The 1,100 runners wore poppies and observed a two minute silence at 11am before the race started. Then off they went, hurtling for a mile along the town streets before arriving at the first field. After a couple of miles the first ditch appeared, and any attempts to preserve clean trainers or shorts quickly vanished. Every mile or so, another ditch tempted runners to stagger through its stinking grey mire. The final one - the infamous pig trough - was the stickiest of them all, and soon large queues formed as the runners in front struggled one by one to extricate themselves from its clutches. The wait proved too long for some, and they decided to miss that challenge altogether, gaining valuable time advantages on those who were still searching for their trainers in the trough.

The last mile or so of the race followed a new improved route this year along the footpaths of Chipping Sodbury - a welcome return to tarmac, but not enough to shake the mud boots off before the sprint to the finish line.

Chris McMillan was the first of the club's runners to finish in 1.01.45. He came fourth overall and also won his age category. There was little to separate Josh Harris and Matt Wheeler who finished in 1.11.27 and 1.11.55 respectively.

Cheryl Valentine was the first Weston female to cross the line in 1.28.40. She was followed less than a minute later by Karen Stanley in 1.29.23 and Genevieve Drinkwater in 1.41.06. The other notable performance of the day came from Paul Snelling who finished second in his age category in 1.28.32.

All runners survived unscathed, and returned to normal after a good hose down.

The club's next home event is the third race in the 2016-17 Weston prom run series, taking place on Thursday November 24. The main five mile race starts on the seafront near the Tropicana at 7.30pm and is preceded by the one mile junior race at 6.45pm. Runners can enter on the night or online at [www.westonac.co.uk/promrun](http://www.westonac.co.uk/promrun).

ENDS

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