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Chris conquers climbs while James conquers Cornwall

Fresh from his victory at the Tough Ten the previous weekend, Chris McMillan and four of his fellow Weston Athletic Club members travelled to Gloucestershire on Sunday morning to take on the Dursley Dozen. The 12 mile, largely off-road course takes runners on a hilly route along mainly woodland paths and features approaching 2,000 feet of ascent. This year's course was tougher than usual with energy-sapping deep mud to cope with as well as the climbs.

But snow showers along the way, and a final sharp climb so steep a rope was provided, were no match for Chris, and he cruised home a minute ahead of his nearest rival to win the race in 1.19.33. Tony Hogg followed in 1.46.49 and Niki Fulstow was first club female in 1.57.40 and third in her age category overall. Vanessa Andrews and Julia Withers took second and third club positions in 2.29.14 and 2.37.36.

Meanwhile, at Taunton, other club members were racing in the Humdinger half marathon and its smaller sister race the Hurtle. Although all on road, the Humdinger is not a race for the faint-hearted thanks to its overall climb of almost 1,400 feet. A course for personal bests this is not. That said, Josh Harris pulled out all the stops to finish in 1.31.34 and win his age category. Steve Kibblewhite followed in 1.34.03 and Phil Tomlinson in 1.37.51. Nia Davies remains on top form and ran a great race to finish in 1.48.09. She was followed by Helen Diamond and Jo Coveney, both finishing inside the two hour mark in 1.58.11 and 1.59.13 respectively.

Three of the club's newest recruits decided to take on the Hurtle which covers a 4.5 mile route covering some of the same ground as the Humdinger. All ran extremely well with Karen Osment finishing in 44.15, Jenny Cockayne in 45.49 and Amy Reason in 47.56.

By far the greatest achievement of the weekend through came from James Wotton who took on the Arc of Attrition - a 100 mile ultra-marathon along the Cornish coastpath. Competitors started at noon on Friday and had 36 hours to complete the distance along rugged and exposed paths with plenty of climbs and descents to sap the energy from increasingly tired and weakened limbs. In 2016, 72% of those who started the race did not finish. No stranger to ultra-running, James stayed strong and survived wind, rain, snow and freezing temperatures to finish the race well-inside the cut-off time in 31.37.04. He even summoned enough energy to drop and do 20 press-ups when he crossed the line to raise a few more pounds for the 'Challenge Lydia' fund for the Wallace and Gromit Grand Appeal.

The next races in the 2016-17 Weston prom run series take place on Thursday February 16. 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.

ENDS

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