

Mansfield Harriers were at Birmingham's Sutton Park for the final time this year as the venue played host this time to the National Road Relays.

Harriers' men had high hopes of a strong performance here. However with a spate of last minute injuries and illnesses a depleted team could only manage 60th position in 6 leg race won by Newham and Essex Beagles.

Danny Barkes, who has been showing strong form lately, led off on the notoriously hard first leg for Mansfield clocking 20:05 before handing on to James Mee. The Birmingham University student ran a cracking leg, just missing out on his first sub 18 minute run with a time of 18:01.

Mee handed on to Stuart King, recovering from a bout of illness, for the third leg with King coming home in 20:23. It was another Birmingham University student, Luke Marshall out on 4th and the fresher showed that his new training regime is paying off with a sub 20 minute time of 19:49.

Russ Betts continued his return to racing with a promising 5th leg of 20:13 before handing on to the sole veteran of the team, Doug Ross who clocked 20:33 to anchor the team home.

With Kahli Johnson and Amie Grainger both missing from the quartet that ran 69:21 at the Midlands event four weeks ago, Mansfield's women were led out again by Natalie Yates. Despite being 9 seconds down on her Midlands time a month ago, Yates still ran sub 16 minutes, clocking 15:54 to bring the team back in 40th.

The ever consistent Jackie Massey took over from Yates, running an identical time to the one she posted at the Midlands event – 17:38 before handing on to Miriam Tedder, who recorded 18:08 and brought the team back in 47th. Emma Wilkinson ran the anchor leg in a time of 19:49 to give Harriers a final position of 54th and a collective time of 71:29.

With a last minute withdrawal from the women's B team a trio of Helen Scott (19:35), Clare Coombes (18:50) and Wanda Curley (19:24) still turned out as an incomplete team.

Sunday was the turn of the youngsters in an event which has seen many of the senior middle distance athletes cut their teeth. Mansfield produced 3 top 10 performances which is a fantastic achievement against the country's biggest clubs.

The best finish for Harriers came in the Under 13 Boys race where the trio of Sam Johnson, Alex Rieley and Lewis Ashmore missed out on the bronze medal by only 32 seconds.

Johnson led off the team, recording 14:04 and bringing them back in 10th spot. Rieley then took over, picking off 7 athletes to return in 3rd place in a time of 14:06. Ashmore had a tough job on third leg but held on to clock 14:44 bringing them back in 5th position.

Johnson's twin sister Molly led off for the Under 13 girls, clocking 15:21, putting the same 2 second gap as her brother between the first two Harriers – Caelidh Ross recording 15:23 on second leg. Ella Shirley ran the anchor leg in 15:58, bringing the team back in a highly respectable 7th position.

The Under 13 Boys B team of James O'Mara, Bailey Wardle and George King finished in 28th place whilst the Girls B team of Claire Norris, Abigail D'Aguair and Rachel Norris managed 24th.

The third top 10 spot came from the Under 17 women where Hannah Wragg, Rachel Brandham and Claire Talbot came home in 6th spot. Wragg led out the trio, clocking 14:53 and handing over in 20th position.

Brandham ran a time of 14:53 and made up 7 places on the second leg handing on to Talbot with the team in 13th. Talbot did likewise on the anchor leg, taking another seven athletes for a personal time of 14:42 and a 6th place finish.

The Under 17 boys finished in 46th spot through the efforts of Richie Talbot (13:03), Tom O'Mara (14:06) and Daniel Patrick (13:34) whilst the Under 15 Boys were 48th through Jake Lancaster (13:48), Jordan Boam (15:39) and Sam Raynor (15:15). David Wilkinson also went out on the first leg running 14:36.

Three Mansfield teams contested the Under 15 Girls race with Chevelle Baxter (14:58), Demi-Jade Jakymelen (15:38) and Hayley Silver (15:52) first back in 26th position overall.

Hannah Hardy led out the B team clocking 16:04, and along with Alice Mortiboy (16:13) and Tamsin Smith (17:15) finishing in 46th place. Jess Smith (15:43), Hazel Blount (17:01) and Holly Smith (25:20) finished in 58th.

James Mee made a strong start to his winter season with an excellent 11th place finish at the Birmingham Cross- Country Challenge. Up against some quality athletes this performance really sets out Mee's intentions over the country in the next few months.

In the first Booth Decorators Cross Country League fixture of the 2009/10 season Stuart King finished in sixth spot. Steve Davies, selected for the Welsh V50 team to compete in the British Masters Home Country international, continued his strong winter form with a 14th place finish.

Tim Raynor was next Harrier back in 28th position and Dougie Flett returned to racing after months away through injury with an excellent 34th place.

Other Mansfield finishers: 43: Matt Brennan, 51: Phil Shaw, 63: Pete Collinge, 64: Jason Foster, 91: Carl Lancaster, 104: Maddy Collinge, 105: Tina Green, 114: Louise Harrison

Terry Ashmore was the first blue and green vest back at the Worksop Half Marathon, finishing 79th in 87:39. On a picturesque course, much of which is run through the grounds of Clumber Park, Brian Harris was next back, 86th in 88:02 with Graeme Wilkinson also making the top 100, finishing in 88:23 in 91st position.

Other Mansfield finishers: Junior Glave – 94:17, Miriam Tedder – 96:14, Trevor Hiscox – 97:42, Julian Wood – 98:36, Eva Williams - 99:15, Colin Fell – 1:40:07, Joshua Takoaka – 1:43:07, Clare Coombes – 1:44:34, Wanda Curley – 1:46:05, Matt Fisher – 1:47:43, Dave Rose – 1:49:15, Sally Smith – 1:52:06, Christine Fell – 1:58:08, Faye Gardener: 2:04:47.