

Mansfield Harriers were in action over the country, on the track and on the road in what was a busy Valentine's weekend.

Berry Hill Park provided a home venue for the penultimate fixture of the Booth Decorator's Cross Country league and Mansfield responded with a good turn out of blue and green vests.

County Champion and Midlands Bronze medallist Billy Farquharson donned his second claim Mansfield vest and ran to a comfortable victory. Farquharson, hoping for a high placing at the National Championships in two weeks time, put in a seven mile training run prior to the start of the race and started a minute after the rest of the field but by halfway into the final lap had still eased his way into pole position.

Luke Marshall showed no real signs of tiredness, having competed for his Birmingham University team in the Birmingham league the day before, finishing strongly in third position in 24:37. Danny Barkes, who had accompanied Farquharson on his pre race run, also ran strongly to take fourth spot in 25:11.

Ryan Saxton continued his return to full fitness, and to racing, with a seventh place finish in 26:03 over the three lap 7km course. Steve Grainger had to put in a fast finish to hold off a late challenge from team mate Doug Ross and taking two other athletes in the process to seize a top ten finish. Grainger was ninth in 26:48, finishing as first veteran home, and Ross twelfth in 27:03.

With seven to count Mansfield were comfortable winners in the Men's race, the above six being joined by seventh counter Tim Raynor who clocked 27:22 to take 14th spot.

For the women it was three to count and the trio of Eva Williams (80th in 33:01), Kirsty Huntington (88th in 33:25) and Hannah Hardy (95th in 33:35) took second team spot.

Laura Massey took to the mud to raise money for the Haiti earthquake appeal, raising over £200.

OTHER MANSFIELD FINISHERS: 23: Alan Crewe (28:15), 26: Thomas Ross (28:28), 27: Rob Smith (28:28), 28: Dougie Flett (28:29), 29: Mark Johnson (28:30), 49: Phil Shaw (30:18), 54: Grant Saxton (30:48), 58: Sam Dobb (31:01), 59: Simon Raynor (31:04), 62: Trevor Hiscox (31:16), 66: Pete Collinge (31:34), 68: Jason Foster (31:41), 81: Carl Lancaster (33:02), 91: Julian wood (33:29), 97: Alice Mortiboy (33:35), 98: Jonny Brown (33:41), 99: Adie Bellingham (33:43), 109: John Hardy (34:39), 113: Clare Coombes (35:05), 117: Clive Russell (35:14), 122: Claire Talbot (36:16), 123: Demi-Jade Jakymelen (36:19), 124: Maddy Collinge (36:21), 125: Mandy Carmican (36:29), 133: Hazel Blount (37:30). 137: Alice Keogh (37:42), 141: Claire O'Mara (38:23), 144: Laura Massey (40:20),

145: Richard Massey (40:21), 146: Denise Winfield (40:33), 147: Gina Radford (40:36), 153: Lilly Rooney (43:49), 156: Linda Wilkinson (45:37)
After some good recent form indoors Martin Cook received a call up to compete in the Aviva World Indoors Trials held at Sheffield. Cook finished fourth in his heat in a time of 49.87, below his best but the experience of competing at this level undoubtedly doing him good.

Cook went on to compete over 400m again at the Midland Indoor Championships in Birmingham the following day where there was a Mansfield one two, Cook taking silver in 49.67 behind Gold medallist Sam Cordin who ran 49.56.

Cordin had earlier taken silver in the 200m, clocking 22.42 to win his heat then improving this in the semi-final where he finished second in 22.29 and again in the final where he took second spot in a time of 22.27.

There was also silver at senior level for Stef Wilcockson, producing a new PB of 8.9 in the 60m Hurdles. Wilcockson went on to record 52.16 in his heat of the 400m whilst Martin White clocked 7.63 in his 60m heat.

Chloe Elphick was third in the U17W Triple Jump with a best jump of 10.29m and also produced a new PB of 4.82m in the Long Jump. Rachel Brandham finished qualified for the final of the 800m after finishing second in her heat of the U17W 800m in a time of 2:27. With the two races taking place less than an hour of each other Brandham faded in the final.

Luke Cragg, competing indoors on the other side of the Atlantic in the Husky Classic in Seattle, USA set a new club record with his time of 14:03.73 over 5000m. This time places him in fourth spot in the UK rankings so far this year.

On the roads Sally Smith and Dave Rose both made the trip to Stamford for the traditional Valentine's Day 30K race. This is a well timed preparation race for those doing the London Marathon and both Mansfield athletes showed they are on form for sub 3:45 pace over the 26.2 mile distance.

Smith finished in 352nd position with a time of 2:34.10 with Rose just seven places behind clocking 2:35.08.

Mansfield Harriers are organising their annual trip to the London Marathon from Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th April. It is open to non club members that might be running or to anyone that just fancies a weekend in London watching one of the greatest sporting events. Price is £130

per person including coach travel, hotel accommodation and breakfast – based on sharing a twin room. For more details ring Steve Davies on 01623 636775.