

Following his 3rd place finish in the Mansfield Half Marathon earlier this month James Mee's growing potential was recognised last week with an invitation to compete in the National Under 20 3000m Championships at Crystal Palace. Held as part of the Aviva Grand Prix meeting this was Mee's biggest race ever on the track and was run in front of a crowd of over 10 000 gathered for the televised meeting.

Going into the race as the 17th fastest athlete Mee's aim was to secure a new personal best and to break the club record he had set a week earlier at Stretford. He achieved this in style – finishing in an excellent 11th place and smashing his personal best by just under 5 seconds to record 8:33.23.

Not content with this one race for the weekend Mee's parents then drove him the 200 miles from Crystal Palace to Swansea on Saturday evening to meet up with the Mansfield Harriers National Junior League team who had travelled down earlier in the day in preparation for their final match of the season in the Midland Premier Division on Sunday.

In his last National Junior League match James didn't disappoint and gained valuable points in his 3 track events. Unsurprisingly showing a little tiredness in his legs from the race the day before, he finished strongly in the 800m taking 3rd place in 1:59.95. Having shaken off the tiredness in the 2 lap race next up was the 1500m where victory was secured with a strong last 300 metres to record 4:10.90.

Mee's final race in this league was the 2000m steeplechase where he secured a comfortable victory in 6:30.07. Danny Heathcote made a welcome return to wear a blue and green vest – Mansfield now being his second claim club since joining Aldershot, Farnham and District due to his army posting – and ran with Mee in the 2k Steeplechase taking the B string in a time of 6:31.50 to secure maximum points for Harriers having earlier finished second in the B string 1500m in 4:15.24.

Elsewhere in the men's middle distance events Mike Mumford was only a tenth of a second outside of his season's best finishing second in the B string 800m in 2:04.64 and took third place spot in the B string 3000m. New recruit Craig Woods ran well in the blistering heat to finish 4th in the 300m in 10:02.09.

In the women's middle distance events Amie Grainger secured 2 new personal bests finishing 4th in a highly competitive 800m in 2:19.48 and then taking second place spot in the 1500m steeplechase, just losing out to Amber Valley's Tamara Armoush by half a second in a nail biting finish to record 5:26.18.

Laura Bennett also recorded 2 new personal bests. After an excellent run over the 100m Hurdles where she took a staggering 0.3 of a second off her previous best – recording 15.70 to take 2nd place – Laura went on to take a second off her best time in the 200m with a new PB of 26.86m. This promising multi-eventer had earlier finished 3rd in the A string Shot, 4th in A string Discus and 6th in A string Long Jump.

Holly Blount took second place in the B string 3000m and 1500m Steeplechase with Jodie Bestwick completing a mammoth afternoon with 3rd in the A string 3000m.

With only 8 girls able to make the long journey team managers were reliant on all the athletes making maximum commitment. Jodie Bestwick provided a great example of this. Starting her day with 3rd in the B string 400m Hurdles Jodie

went on to record a new PB in finishing 4th in the A string 400m before gaining a few useful points in the Javelin and then going on to take 3rd in the a string 3000m before rounding things off with a 4th place finish in the B string 1500m!

Joining Jodie in the 400m Hurdles, 400m and 1500m was Emily Reeve who took good points in all of these before going on to lead off the 4x400m relay team.

Holly Blount took second place in the B string 3000m and 1500m Steeplechase with Claire Beaumont competing in the 100m, Discus, Triple Jump and the 4x400m relay, Natalie Butterworth in the Long Jump, High Jump, 100m Hurdles and 4x400m Relay and Amy Porter making a welcome return to compete in the 200m, 800m and Shot.

Sam Cordin marked his last outing in the National Junior League with 2 close finishes in the 200m and 400m. Cordin chased local rival Michael Warner of Notts AC all the way to the line in the 400m just failing to catch him but in the process took the scalp of Cardiff's Tom Miller – ranked just 2 above him nationally.

In the 200m Cordin was up against Robert Davis of Birchfield who has recently returned from the World Junior Championships where he won a silver medal in the 4x400m Relay. Up for the challenge Sam again worked hard to the end finishing second to Davis by only 0.27 of a second and gaining revenge for Warner's earlier defeat of him in the 400m by pushing him into 3rd place spot.

With a 4th place finish in the 100m and a strong last leg of the 4x400m relay to take Mansfield into 3rd place the older Cordin brother bowed out in style. Meanwhile younger brother Jonathan continued to demonstrate his growing ability with 4th place spots in the B string 100m and 200m along with 3rd in the 110m Hurdles and 5th in the B string Javelin.

Richard Woolley will be a huge loss to the Junior league team as he moves up to the senior age group next season having scored massive points for the team over the past few seasons.

Woolley won the Javelin by over 5 metres with a best throw of 58.29 metres, was 3rd in the Shot with 12.61m and 5th in the Hammer with 40.94m. Keen to be recognised for his potential on the track as well as the field he recorded a new PB of 52.68 to finish 4th in the B string 400m.

Adam Sansom and Tom "Bean" Bell doubled up in the Long Jump and Triple Jump – Sansom recording a new PB of 6.00m to take 5th in the A string Long Jump and Bell jumping 5.74 to finish second in the B string. This was reversed in the Triple Jump where Bell leaped 13.20m for second place in the A and Sansom 11.50m for 3rd in the B. Sansom had earlier finished 4th in the 400m Hurdles.

Alex Lloyd in the 100m Hurdles & High Jump and Matt "fast-food" Cordon in the Shot, Pole Vault, Discus and hammer completed the Mansfield line up with Daniel Ward also guesting in the 1500m where he recorded a new PB of 5-26.

With only 15.5 points separating Cardiff (3rd) and Mansfield (5th) on the day the team lost out by the closest of margins on qualification, for the first time ever, for the National Finals of this league where they would have had the chance to compete against the best clubs from the South and North.

Despite the team's valiant efforts they finished in 3rd place spot in the league on the same league points as West Wales who took the second qualifying spot by virtue of them having more match points. Final league positions: BIRCHFIELD:

31, WEST WALES: 22, MANSFIELD: 22, CANNOCK & STAFFORD: 19, NOTTS AC: 16, CARDIFF: 15, CDAV: 14, TAMWORTH: 5

Away from the junior action and into masters athletics Steve Davies took two medals at the recent Welsh Masters Track and Field Championships. In the M50 category Davies took silver in the 5000m in 18:07 and then went one better to take Gold in the 1500m in 5:10.

Mansfield Harriers have also had a busy period on the road with outings at the Notfast 10K, Sherwood Pines 5K and 10K and the Booth Decorators League.

Pete Stafford, one week before his 50th birthday, marked his last race as a VM40 with victory in the VM40 category at the Notfast 10k. Stafford finished 11th overall in a time of 36-01. Brain Harris was 30th overall and first in the VM60 category in 40:02 and Denise Winfield was 151st in 53:56.

3 Harriers finished in the top 50 of the Sherwood Pines 10k with Trevor Hiscox leading the way finishing 29th in a time of 40:42. Pete Collinge and John O'Reilly battled it out to be second Harrier home – Collinge just edging it to finish 42-44 with O'Reilly 5 seconds behind in 48th place with a time of 42-49.

Other finishers: 60th Ivan Colton: 43.36, 81st Julian Wood: 45.12, 95th Colin Fell: 45.54, 118th Eva Williams: 47.00, 146th Keith Carrington: 48.25, 227th Maz Lee-Cerrino: 51.40, 153rd Maddy Collinge: 48.34, 313th: Chris Fell: 54.04, 377th: Jo Glover 62.28, 379th Elaine Wells: 62.54.
Bronwyn Ward took part in the 5K at the same event finishing 59th in 30.35.

36 athletes turned out for Mansfield in the 4th fixture of the Booth Decorators League at Nutbrook Cricket Club and kept the club in medal contention in all 3 categories.

Craig Kelly was first back in 7th place in 24:42 with Luke Marshall next in 22nd in a time of 26:31 to take the second place junior spot. Just 9 seconds and one place behind Marshall was Rob Smith closely followed by Richie Talbot in 26th in 27:01.

Dave Peet had a good run to finish 40th in 28:02 with Brian Harris, just 5 seconds behind him, finishing as the first VM60. Hannah Wragg was 45th, her time of 28:15 securing the first junior lady slot and Tim Raynor was one second behind in 46th. Rick Huntington completed the placings for Mansfield as 3rd VM55 in 28:35 finishing in 52nd overall.

On the night Mansfield's ladies secured joint first position and with the men in 4th finished 3rd overall. With just one race remaining the ladies are in second overall, the men in fourth and the club lay 3rd overall.

Other Mansfield finishers: 53; Ryan Saxton, 56: Marcus McCarthy, 61: Kirsty Huntington, 66: Trevor Hiscox, 68: Henry Partridge, 70; Claire Talbot, 71; Bob Scott, 82: Grant Saxton, 91: John O'Reilly, 93; Daniel Ward, 96; Pete Collinge, 97; Miriam Tedder, 120: Eric Palmer, 122: Pat Carlan, 132: Adey Bellingham, 134; Steve Wragg, 135: Tina Green, 136: Emily Collinge, 145: Maddy Collinge, 147: Lewis Caulton, 148: Sue Bellingham, 158: John O'Reilly, 159: Kate Raynor, 175: Elaine Greaves, 187: Michelle Peet, 206: Jo Glover, 207: Elaine Wells