



## **PLESHEY HALF MARATHON**

Essex Championships

Sunday 2 October

It was a good day for a small Ilford AC squad of 7 at the Essex Half Marathon Championship as they returned home with 5 medals from the Essex half marathon championships held at the picturesque village of Pleshey last Sunday.

The race held around the village country lanes was of high quality which was reflected in the first three home all breaking the old course record. The leading three of James Connor (Kent AC), Paul Molyneux (Springfield Striders) and Ilford's Blair McWhirter had a close battle which was only decided in the testing last 3 miles with Connor taking the honours in 67 mins 44 secs, with McWhirter 2nd in a new personal best time of 68 mins 09 secs and Molyneux third. As Connor is not qualified for the Essex Championships McWhirter retained the title he won

last year.



Backing him up was Amin Kolkai in 6th spot with 74 mins 10 secs which won him the M40 category gold medal. There was bronze in this group for Paul Holloway who came home third in 1 hr 18 mins 53 secs for 15th overall. These three Ilford athletes combined to finish second team and each added a silver team medal to add to their individual ones.

Steve Philcox was disappointed with his run finishing 29th in 1hr 25 mins 07secs but still won the bronze medal in the M50 age group.

Next home was Rohan Alexander in 65th who also recorded a new best time for the distance of 1hr 31 mins 48 secs.

Further down the field of 397 finishers finding the going tough on the day was Steve Parker in



1h 45m 03s in 175th and Peter Spelman with 2h 04m 55s for 318th.

### **Essex Cross Country Relays**

Hockley - 24th September

Ilford entered 2 senior teams in this event, but with late withdrawals had to revamp the teams. Opening the account on the 1st leg Tom Gardner put in a solid run for 4th place in 15-00. On Leg 2 Usamah Patel drafted in at the last minute ran 16-11 for 7th place. Club stalwart Malcolm Muir slowly returning to fitness took over on leg 3 with 15-27 leaving the stage set for Ahmed Abdulle with some ground to make up to storm around the course on the final leg bringing the team home in 3rd place overall and 2nd fastest time of the day in 14-15 with the fastest time going to Southend AC's international Adam Hickey. The Ilford B team had track specialist Simeon Balson on Leg 1 clocking 17-52 and ex club president Ernie Forsyth on Leg 2 running 21-12.

### **Other Races**

Last Friday saw Ilford's John Batchelor placing 146th out of 286 runners of all ages and sexes in the monthly Serpentine 5K race. The Ilford superveteran clocked 21m 54s, knocking 27 seconds off his previous M75 course record. This places him 3rd on the Run Britain all-time rankings for this sparsely-populated age group.

Sunday saw Andy Catton competing in the Mind charity 5k at Harrow Lodge Park, Hornchurch where he finished 6th and 1st vet. This was an 80% grass circuit where Catton clocked 21.08

Further afield Declan Cullen made his annual trip to Wales for the Cardiff Half Marathon. He was rewarded by a good run in this televised event to record a new personal best of 1hr 37mins 59 secs for 148th in the large field and 15th in the M60 age group.