

# **Gold for Alex & Lauren at National Race Walking Championships 2011**

**A young team of Manx Harriers walkers were competing in the National Championships at Redbridge Cycle Circuit, Hainault, Essex last Sunday in very windy but warm, which made racing tough for everyone.**

**On her debut race off island was Rebecca Greatbatch competing in the U15 girls 3km. Rebecca is a relatively new to race walking and after a steady start worked very hard to finish in 4<sup>th</sup> position in a time of 20.31, 19 seconds down on her best time, the event was won by Hazel Butler in 15.59. I am sure she will take a lot of valuable experience from this event.**

**Next up was the U17 girls and boys 5km, where we had 6 competitors. Alex Eaton followed up on his success in the U15 boys 3km event of last year by producing a fantastic performance to take gold again in his 1<sup>st</sup> year as an U17. He settled into the first 1km before taking the lead and once there was never challenged as he got stronger throughout the event to be rewarded with a personal best time of 26.03. Alex's team mate Juan Bellando who fell foul to the judge's last year has worked hard since and this time had a fantastic walk to receive bronze position in a personal time of 28.03, next to finish just outside the medals was James Green in 28.54, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the boys race was Ben Parsons of Tombridge AC. Also walking at this distance were our three girls, Alexandra Ross, Danielle Oates and Hannah Kelly. All girls walked very well For Ally to be rewarded with silver in a time of 29.20, Danielle 4<sup>th</sup> in 32.09, her time does not show her potential as due to knee injury she has not been able to train of recent weeks. The race was won by Tasha Webster in 26.49 of Birchfield AC. Unfortunately it was the girls turn this year to fall foul to the judges where team mate Hannah Kelly finished her race and was on her way back to the rest of the team about to celebrate a pb to be told by chief judge that a 3<sup>rd</sup> card came in after she had finished and was therefore DQ. All 6 above are in there first year as U17's so should all be extremely pleased with their performances. Also in this group Manx Harriers took Girls and Boys team gold.**

**Next to the start line were Sport Aid recipient (Leeds based) Lauren Whelan and Adam Cowin walking over a distance of 10km in the under 20 age group, this is Adam's first year at this age group/distance. Lauren has had illness at the beginning of the week and wasn't on full cylinders but still produced a fine performance to finish in gold position in a slower than normal time of 54.40. The team enjoyed meeting up with Lauren. Adam who has had to work very hard on his technique over the past two years having also fell foul to UK judges in the past walked a very mature race. He always looked very relaxed and in control and as his coach I am very proud of him as he came home in 4<sup>th</sup> place with a time of 57.22, it may not be a pb but it was a clean sheet with nothing from the judges which I think meant more to him than his time. The winner of this race was Jamie Higgins of Leeds City AC.**

**From this event I have just been notified that Alex, Ally and Juan have been selected to represent England in Dublin in June, well done all.**

**We would all like to thank Alan Callow and Karen Cowin for doing all the driving and to Manx Harriers for their financial support.**