

The Walton Wobble 10k race report



A chilly and overcast (but most importantly, dry) day awaited on Sunday 25th January as ten Chase Harriers headed up to the charming little village of Walton-on-the-Hill, just outside Stafford. Having set a personal goal for one event per month in 2026, I knew '10K Paul' Bate would have some good suggestions for a January run, and this was one. Thanks, Paul!

The Walton Wobble is rather infamous for its large hill, otherwise known as 'B Hill' (a runner I met on the course quipped that it stood for a certain expletive). Options are a full 10K, or the 'hill dodging' 5K - either way, it promises a great mix of road and trail. It might not be a PB course, but I knew I wouldn't be bored.

As the run starts from Walton High School, there's plenty of parking and a roomy sports hall for runners to congregate in and collect their race packs. The packs were brilliant: colourful race number with your name clearly displayed, free pins, plus a free Wobble-branded buff! The Race Director delivered her briefing quickly and professionally, and with that we were all shepherded outside to the start line just up the road from St Thomas's Church.

The first two kilometres were pleasantly undulating with beautiful views of surrounding countryside. As the crowd pulled away quickly from the back of the pack (where I tend to hang out), it was nice to ease slowly into the run particularly as I knew of what came up ahead. Our Jimpops was also spectating and cheering us all on to do our best!

The 5K runners then peeled off to the right as the 10K runners turned left to tackle the hill. The good news is that the Wobble is an out-and-back, so what goes up will come down... eventually! I drove my arms and kept my eyes trained straight ahead just in time to see the encouraging race tagline printed onto a marshal's sign: "it's just a hill, get over it". Halfway up, runners in both directions then had to pause for a pack of deer who made ascending that hill look far too easy! Seeing the other Harriers on their way down (with breathless, sweaty encouragement shouted from both sides) really helped push me up to the top, where there was a very welcome water-station.

From then, it was simply a matter of going back the way I came. While there were marshals on the course, the Wobble makes use of signposts which were particularly useful on the return journey as I didn't always have another runner in sight to follow. It made for quite a peaceful descent back into the village, and then tackling the undulations back towards the High School (which seemed a lot more uphill on the way back). Runners with freshly-won medals and half-eaten bananas cheered us on as we rounded the corner and clapped eyes on the inflatable finish-line, where unofficial Harrier photographer Tim managed to snap the triumphant finishes.



First Harrier home was James Washington with an eye-popping 41:04 (and 2nd in his age category). Brian Evans was not only the 100th finisher, but also 1st in his age category with an

excellent time of 53:33. Our other fantastic Harriers taking part in the 10k were Paul Bate (51:37), Melissa Wright (53:30), Jessica Luke (1:04:08), Yvonne Cooper (1:04:12), and Louise Parker (1:12:02) - and in the 5k we had Tim Elsmore (31:41) and Colin Pheasant (50:38). Great work, everyone, we all put in a proper shift. Personally, my main aim for a tough 10k course is always to 'get round', but I managed it in 1:25:56 so I'll have that!

All in all, the Walton Wobble is an invigorating Sunday morning with plenty to keep you interested, plus it's well organised with cheerful and enthusiastic support from marshals and other runners alike. Dust off your trail shoes after Christmas and register for 2027!