BANBURY FIFTEEN

A joint decision by Stephen Male of Oxford City and Nigel Marley Coventry Godiva produced the most unlikely finish to The Banbury Fifteen on Sunday. The duo after sparring for twelve miles and well clear of the third runner made the decision to finish together.

This was quite the opposite approach from the first lady home in the race, this being the petite but determined Sophie Carter of Woodstock Harriers. Having changed clubs from Kidlington Runner’s in the autumn after completing a three timer of wins in the race she used the race as a build up for the London Marathon she kicked on from the gun leaving the other females in her wake. The thirty-one year-old young mother thrives on races of 10k and upwards and the latter to the foremost. At the halfway point running at even pace she had established a lead of over a minute from second place Kate Wright of Stratford AC. This was to extend as she made her way along the narrow road around Appletree. She kicked harder through the Bourton’s and onto final two miles down Hardwick Hill and the Spiceball Park finish. Carter looking as impressive as Long Run did winning The Gold Cup, she strode for the line claiming a fourth consecutive victory and 25th overall. To her delight her winning time of 1 hour 36minutes and 13 seconds eclipsed the course record by over a minute. Wright followed her home two minutes later winning the Headington duo of Dianne Moore and Jude Craft contesting third place, the former getting the nod. The first local lady home was Banbury Harriers Michelle Bartlett in 8th place and 76th overall in 1hr 47m 13s.

The male race up front found four clear as the field stretched up Hardwick Hill, the two who would finish joint first plus James Bolton of Woodstock Harriers and Tim Wright of the host club. Within three miles Wright was dropped and the trio strode onto Great Bourton. Soon Bolton slipped off the pace and the two pulled away to make the most unlikely finish. Bolton finished next with Banbury Harrier Wright having to settle for seventh place. Next local runners home came another Harrier vest worn by Pete Newell in 26th place followed by Cherwells Ian Thomas in 29th place. Richard Thomas also in a Banbury Harrier came home in 38th place to claim the veteran sixty first prize. Altogether 350 runners finished the course, with the host club claiming the second men’s team prize.