

Despite just missing out on her first AAA title and an automatic place in the Great Britain team for the World Indoor Championships, Karen Harewood received the perfect boost when the selectors picked the top two finishers in the trials.

The Corby AC runner joins Wigan's Jenny Meadows who just beat her for the 800m title at the AAA Indoor Championships and World Trials held at Sheffield over the weekend.

The pair were named in the first wave of athletes chosen to represent Britain in the Worlds which take place in Moscow between March 10-12.

Harewood, the leading Briton this winter with a clocking of 2.00.53, travelled up to Sheffield along with her coach Charley McConnell hopeful of a victory – a target that was strengthened when she won her heat with the fastest qualifying time of 2.03.6.

The 30-year-old returned the following day with a plan to follow the pace through the opening lap before taking up the running. This is exactly what happened as Meadows took the field through the first 200m in 30 seconds before Karen set out on her intended bid for glory when taking up the running after 300m. She opened up a 3m lead going into the final circuit but was hauled back by a determined Meadows going into the final straight. The duo were neck and neck as they crossed the line and it was only after a long study of the photo finish that the Wigan girl was eventually given the verdict in 2.02.41 with Karen an agonising one hundredth of a second behind. In third place Joanna Ross clocked 2.03.27 for a new Scottish record.

After the race Karen said: 'I didn't know on the line, I just had to cross my fingers. I am completely gutted, when you know you can run two minutes you don't want to come and run 2.02.0 and get a silver.'

However, once the dust had settled and she clinched selection she said: 'The race is in the past and I am very happy to be going to my first major games.'

She went on to say how indebted she was to her coach Charley McConnell who has made numerous sacrifices to help her. As well as setting her training programme he also drives her all over the country to compete.

Not so lucky was another Corby athlete William Sharman, who arrived in Sheffield with a recent 60m hurdles best of 7.78, which is only three hundredths of a second away from the World Qualifying Standard.

After returning the second fastest qualifying time of 7.87 behind Sale's Andy Turner (7.64), when winning his heat, he lined up in the final hopeful of a medal. Away to a superb start he was a fraction behind Turner (the winner in 7.70) going into the third hurdle before disaster struck when he caught the underside of the barrier.

The mishap, in a rough race, saw Sharman crash to the ground and with it went any immediate inspirations of going to the World Championships although he has a couple more races in which to impress the selectors before next Tuesday's deadline.

Another county athlete competing at Sheffield was Cogenhoe's Emma Bailey who, in the colours of Rugby & Northampton AC, clocked a fine 7.52 to qualify for the semi-finals of the 60m.

Unfortunately, she failed to go faster and her time of 7.58 - in easily the fastest semi – saw her finish seventh.

If you want to get in touch with Karen you can contact her on 01536 266707.

This has the makings of a great story about someone who has only been in the sport proper for two and a half years and has her sights firmly set on competing at the very top.

Regards

John

