

Country to Capital 15th January 2011

It was a day of tumbling records in leafy Buckinghamshire as Caroline Hall bettered the ladies record by over an hour finishing the race in 12th place overall, and for the second year in a row Craig Stewart ran a blistering second half to smash the course record in the men's race by more than half an hour, retaining his title in the process. His winning time of 4:56:10 will take some beating and could stand for several years. But then again we thought that last year ! Second placed Terry Conway also finished inside the old course record in a highly respectable time of 5:23:50.



Starting in Wendover the race spends just 500 m on tarmac before heading onto the Ridgeway and Chiltern Link routes. For some a great milestone awaits.



The day started with unseasonably warm weather for January a change to the frosty conditions of the previous two years and the recent deluge of rain pointed towards a muddy first half across the Chiltern countryside to Chesham and on to Denham. At the 8 mile point a select group of 5 athletes had built a slender 3 minute lead. The leading group was never seen again, Bruce Moore suffered in the later stages, being carried away by the early pace and slipped back, the remaining members of the leading pack went from strength to strength and held the top 4 places at the end.

Craig and Terry stayed together until near the canal towpath at which point Craig's superior speed slowly built an increasing margin of victory. Terry continued in his own company maintaining his 24 minute lead over the battle for third place. Behind him Richie Cunningham (not 'the' Richie Cunningham of 80's sitcom fame) and Sam O'Shea were battling it out for the remaining podium place, Richie eventually winning this private battle by 3 minutes to claim a deserved 3rd place.



Left to Right : Race Winner Craig Stewart with Terry Conway and Richie Cunningham



In the ladies race the leading pack of 4 marked each other closely until the first checkpoint but after the initial courtesy it was every woman for herself. Caroline started to stretch away building a 30 minute lead over second placed Karin Voller by the time they hit the canal. Her lead remained intact as Caroline stormed home in 6:24:14. Behind her a battle royal was developing as Karin first built a 14 minute lead over Hadley Lund then lost this as Hadley found her pace on the early part of the towpath, moving through from 5th to challenge for 2nd place, Karin stretched out again once she realized the threat to improve upon her 3rd place from last year and retain 2nd by a comfortable margin at the finish. Hadley completing the podium with an evenly judged race.

Ladies Winner Caroline Hall enjoying her win after 45 miles

Special mention goes out to our oldest and youngest competitors, Ed Brent completed the race for the second year comfortably retaining his title in his private battle for the under 21 Championships and improving on last years time despite his advancing years. He was however comfortably beaten by two of the three sexagenarians racing Don Newman completed his 300th Marathon / Ultra but Harry Hunter edged this particular race with a finishing time of 8:05:10 finishing ahead of many runners half his age !

Thanks go out to Science in Sport who provided the race nutrition which kept many people going towards the end, Occur photography for their efforts to capture the race for all to see, and to all the athletes who repeatedly make organizing ultra races such a rewarding experience.

Congratulations to all runners who achieved their goals on Saturday. We hope to see you all at next year's race on 14th January, to see whether Craig Stewart can make it a hatrick of wins ? Or will there be a new challenger to his title ?