

Thames Trot 50 **5th February 2011**

For the second time in as many races the records tumbled as Craig Stewart set a new course record of 5:40:22 and Mary Grace Spalton, running her first ultra set a new ladies record of 7:40:21. Couple this with the biggest turnout for a Thames Trot which saw 206 start the race and a record number of 181 finishers and you will understand why this is fast becoming one of the premier races in the ultra running calendar. Once again the Prince of Wales in Iffley provided the perfect hosts as bacon sandwiches, toast, coffee and porridge were all available before the off.



Over 200 athletes assembled for the start of the Thames Trot

The race starts with a gentle downhill to Iffley lock and the first crossing of the Thames, the early pace was set by Craig Stewart and Terry Conway who arrived at the first Checkpoint after 10 miles together and just ahead of a small group of 7 runners. The order of the first few miles remained intact as the Thames meandered through Abingdon, Dorchester, and Shillingford on it's way to the third stop of the day at Streatley. For those less concerned with the seconds this is a beautiful stretch of the Thames alive with wildlife and river users in abundance, and several people took full benefit of the lunch available at Streatley before continuing several minutes later.

The ladies race followed a similar early pattern with Mary Grace and Ute Baird arriving within a minute of each other. And at the first stop no less than 9 ladies arrived, fighting it out for the third position a few minutes later.

Ignoring the temptation of lunch Craig built a sizeable lead over the second half running 25 minutes quicker than the first 25 miles to finish ahead of Terry Conway by exactly this margin. With Matthew Lynas managing to break free from fourth place Sam Pullen in the last few miles to complete the podium.

Eventual ladies winner Mary Grace Spalton and Ute Baird continued to battle until the late stages with only a few minutes separating them throughout, they were joined at 44 miles by Jayne Angillely who having started at a more modest pace rapidly ate into the 16 minute deficit she had on the leader at half way. Ultimately she had left too much to do finishing 4 minutes down in 2nd place.



Left to right Terry Conway, Craig Stewart, Matthew Lynas.



Left: Matt Mahoney clearly enjoying the prospect of lunch approaching CP3



Right: Winner Craig Stewart as few will have seen him.

Thanks to Science in Sport who provided the electrolyte drinks which kept many people going towards the end, and provided spot prizes which were welcomed by the 4 lucky recipients, 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.

Finally congratulations to all runners who completed 50 miles on Saturday including our 'lantern rouge' John Chelsom who knocked an impressive 40 minutes off his 2009 time. Many runners were using the Thames Trot to raise money for charity. Alex Flynn continued his personal quest to raise £ 1M for the official race charity Parkinson's Trust by running 1,000,000 miles and Tom Constable, Owen Roberts and Michael Smith raised the bar by finishing the race complete with flag to raise money for Help for heroes.

We hope to see you all at next year's race on 4th February.



Tom, Owen and Michael
by this stage wishing they'd never brought the flag.