



The Harrier



The newsletter of the Canterbury Harriers

Spring 2010 PART TWO

And yes, there is yet more of the Harrier this time and a real bonus at no extra charge dear reader.....

Many thanks to Steve for bringing closure to another enjoyable, eventful and successful cross country season.....

THE CURTAIN COMES DOWN ON THE 2009/10 CROSS COUNTRY SEASON - Steve Clark

It was the most severely disrupted season for many years as the coldest winter this century played havoc with the fixtures list! The number of club members attending was down about a third compared to last year but I suspect the disruption to the season can be partly blamed



for this with several weekends ending up with back to back fixtures between different competitions. Despite this we did come away with some silverware, so it was a satisfactory season.

As usual the heart of the season was based around the Kent Fitness Sunday League but members made some appearances for the club in other competitions along the way.

KCAA Saturday League.

Representation in the Kent Saturday League this season was up overall on last season (17) with a total of 19 appearances by 11(2F, 9M) members. Having said that the female turnout was poor with only Pip Dyer (who only joined us this year!) attending the first two fixtures accompanied by Barbara Hutton at the second, and that was it! The men did better with teams out for the first three fixtures (4 to score) but unfortunately the last clashed back to

back with the KFL Knole Park fixture in February and only Alastair Telford was brave (or foolish!) enough to do both!

This is the main Kent (KCAA) league on just 4 Saturday matches through the winter. There are individual junior, senior women and senior men races at each meeting so the fields are smaller and the standards higher than the KFL but many veteran runners still participate and you will get to see some of the fastest men and women athletes in the County. So come on you Harriers lets see if we can get a male and female team out for each fixture next season and get our club's name on the Team League map! There are only 4 matches and don't forget the club will pay your entry, so watch this Newsletter come next September for the dates and make a note of them in your diary and rearrange or cancel all weddings, funerals, christenings, operations, holidays, etc. Your club needs you!

Kent Veterans Championships-Rose Hill School, Tunbridge Wells-12/12/09

Held at an interesting new venue this year. The multi laps, very uneven, twisting and turning course kept everyone on their toes! Disappointing show from the girls again with zero turnouts! However the boys were made of sterner stuff with a dozen of us turning out for this annual competition. Weather conditions were kind to us and we managed to get teams out in all three categories MV40, MV50, MV60. We did not manage to get any individual or team medals but it was good the club was well represented (on the male side!).

Main Kent Championships - Showground, Detling - 13/02/10

This was one of the events disrupted by the snow. Originally scheduled for 9th January it was re-scheduled for 13th February and held at Detling again for the 4th year running. Due to the disruption, turnout for this competition this year was low and certainly was from our club with yet again no female representatives and only Alastair Telford and Tim Perks in the senior men!

SEAA Championships

The South of England main championship was missed by our club this year, as I never received the entry forms until after the closing date!

Kent Fitness Sunday League

The 7 fixtures in this league are the backbone of our cross-country season and are well supported by our club members and indeed for several years our club has hosted one of the fixtures with the venue at Blean Woods, Rough Common. And what a strange season it has been!

It started late, with the first fixture at Swanley, unable to be fitted in until 8th November and it saw the leagues biggest turnout to date with 455 runners! We had a respectable 21 runners and started the season off with 6th position in the Combined League and 4th in the Female League.

The next meeting was two weeks later on 22nd November at Nurstead Court, Meopham with another turnout of over 400 on a windy day. We had 24 members turnout but slipped to 7th position on the day in the Combined League. The girls improved though with Amy Hicks and Sarah Maguire coming in second and third respectively in the Female League to help put the ladies team in 2nd place on the day and move up to 3rd position in the league.

Seven days later and it was our fixture at Blean Woods on 29th November. Nearly 370 runners turned out in terribly wet and waterlogged conditions after heavy overnight rain. Despite our commitments as race hosts we managed to field 21 runners and this week roles

were reversed coming in 5th on the day in the Combined, which moved us up to 5th position in the league. The ladies slipped back a bit, coming in 5th on the day and slipping back to 4th in the Female League.

After a hectic three match November, there was only one fixture scheduled for December on the 20th. But heavy snow put paid to that and the next meeting at Oxleas Wood finally took place on 3rd January 2010. On a bright, cold day 350 runners turned out on a tough course alternating between frozen patches of firm ground and extremely muddy patches in



the woods! We had a good turnout of 24 runners putting us 5th in the Combined and 4th in the Ladies on the day. Which kept us in 5th and 4th positions in the Leagues respectively. This was due to be followed the very next weekend by the Kent Championships on Saturday and the 5th KFL fixture at Minnis Bay on Sunday! But yet again heavy snow cancelled both fixtures. This was a heavy blow to us with regards to the Minnis Bay fixture as we traditionally get a good turnout and do well at this venue. Due to other commitments Thanet were unable to put this fixture on at a later date and it was to be replaced by another (final) fixture back at Swanley Park.

So three weeks passed before the next fixture on 24th January at a new venue, Fowlmead Country Park that has been created on the spoil heaps from the nearby now defunct collieries. Hosted by Deal Tri who joined the League this season, it was another eventful race but for the wrong reason! 24 Harriers turned out for this event and just under 300 runners set off on this 2-lap course. A little before the end of the first lap, as the leading twenty runners or so continued on the right course, a small gap had opened up and the lead following runner mistaking some bright orange plastic netting on a bend as a course marker, turned off and everyone followed! On a winding but slightly shorter route that came out on a hillock above the start to rejoin the correct route just as the leading twenty runners passed through, causing much confusion! As the scoring is done on position and not time it was felt the mix up would have had very little affect as the lead runners were more or less still out in front and so the powers that be decided to let the result stand. Needless to say the mistake was avoided for the second lap! It was a good result for us achieving our best position of the season, 4th on the day and maintaining our 5th position in the Combined League. The Ladies did even better winning the fixture by a point from Paddock Wood despite their strong team lead by their elite runner Tina Oldershaw. It also moved them up

to 2nd place in the Female League, equal on points with New Eltham Joggers but ahead on the Tie Break score. Despite the mix up the new course met with general approval, although trying to clean the coal stained mud off your skin later was quite an effort!

There was now a 4-week break until the penultimate fixture at Knole Park, Sevenoaks on 21st February. I don't know if the long break lost peoples interest but we only managed to field 15 runners, our lowest of the season and indeed our lowest turnout since a Swanley Park fixture back in November 2004. We just had the minimum 3 females required for the team and that was thanks to Jenni Van Deelen making her first appearance of the season! But together with Jenny Benson who lead them home and Barb Wenman the girls did well



and were 2nd on the day and retained 2nd position in the Female League but New Eltham Joggers slipped up a little as we were now two points clear. So it was all set up for an exciting final fixture to see if we could take the Female League Runners up medals! In the Combined we were 6th on the day and stayed 5th in the league.

As Minnis Bay had been abandoned it was decided to drop the End of Season Relays at Swanley and make another final league fixture there to maintain our normal season of seven fixtures and would be followed by the Buffet and Awards Presentation afterwards in the town centre.

So the final fixture took place on 14th March. We managed to get out 20 runners in a field slightly down at 255. The course was modified slightly and reversed from the one used at the start of the season and the race was run in very pleasant conditions, spring had sprung! The race over, those who could stay on, head to the Alexandria Suite in Swanley centre for the buffet and await the results. The girls had done well but had they done enough to hold off the challenge for the runners up spot from NEJ and Dartford RR. We had a very pleasant buffet while Alastair Telford and Rob Bright worked hard compiling and checking the results. In the Combined League we were 6th on the day and that was enough to hold onto and finish the season in 5th spot, down one on last season but still very respectable. Well done and thanks to all those who turned out for the club this season and helped us achieve this position. In the Female League, Paddock Wood were



again winners on the day and comfortably took the title. NEJ were second, Dartford RR were third and we were fourth. As we were two points ahead of both these teams before the race, we stayed a point ahead of Dartford and although NEJ drew back level on points we had a superior Tie Break score and so held on to the Runners up position and thankfully Jenny Benson had stayed on so we had a female team member there to receive the medals! Congratulations to Jenny along with Barbara Wenman, Joanne Gambrill, Sarah Maguire, Emma Greatrix, Amy Hicks and Jenni Van Deelen, having either scored and/or competed in five or more of the fixtures for the team were awarded Female League Runners Up Medals.

And congratulations to the following, who picked up awards in the Individual Competition. Barbara Wenman won FV50 category for the second year running. Tony McParland won the tough MV40 category and Steve Clark managed to get his grubby little hands on the MV55 trophy!

We had a smaller but still strong squad this season, with many scoring for the team but a special mention must go to firstly Alastair Telford who made a magnificent 13 appearances for the club, four more than anyone else, and together with Wim Van



