

Sun, Sea and Sandblasting- Fleetwood Half- Sunday 29th August 2010

As four Deestriders pulled into the car park at the Marine Hall, Fleetwood, early on Sunday morning they were wondering whether it wouldn't be a better idea to simply drive on and look for a chip shop. The weather was grey, lashing it down with rain and high winds howled along the promenade. Fortunately the rain stopped before the race and the sun came out soon after the start, but the strong wind did not let up and this was a major factor against very fast times- the race was eventually won in 1 hour 13.

The start on the prom also gave rise to an even greater concern- there were several pockets of deep, swirling sand. But our fab four had to forget about that for a while as the race set off south into the outskirts of Fleetwood on an ultra-flat route round a peninsula. The second lap, at seven miles, led down onto three miles of prom, blown with blinding sand for much of the first section. The wind alternated between helping and hindering and thankfully blew everyone into the Marine Hall Gardens for the final mile. The race was measured by many as being under 13 miles, but we can live in hope that it was an accurate distance!

Jay Jennions, who has made significant progress with her training for the distance, had wanted a 1.25 but aspirations of this were blown away early on. She however powered round with little trouble beyond the inevitable sand in an excellent 1.27, which she hopes will qualify her for an elite start in the London Marathon next year.

Nick Chadwick suffered injury soon after London 2010 which has thrown off his training for the Loch Ness Marathon somewhat, but despite the conditions he did extremely well today with a near-best 1.35.

Martin Witty is a sub 1.30 runner but due to a recent lack of training this wasn't on the cards for today. He therefore decided to put the event to the best possible use by pacing Phil Taylor for his long-sought-after sub 1.45. The pair stormed home in 1.42 and even if the course was short, this would still have equated to a 1.44. Phil has worked really hard for this and it gives him massive confidence going into Loch Ness, an event he almost had to pull out of with injury but is now seeking to break 4 hours at.

We have to spare a thought for the massively improved Emma Cadwallader, who looked set to break 2 hours but was sadly unable to compete due to appendicitis. Get well soon Emma- you deserve to reach your goal at a similar event.

One thing most of us love as part of the running experience is the club spirit and camaraderie and the runners celebrated after the event with a trip to a fish and chip café before heading home. It was just a good thing that they didn't bury their heads in the sand over the race first!