

NEWCOMERS BEAT THE HEAT IN COUNTRY PARK

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is a great place for a stroll – but a hot June evening transformed it into a brutal test of stamina for the 66 entrants in Hastings Runners' annual Alan Corke Memorial championship race.

Over 6.4 miles (10.3k) the mixed-terrain course offered little respite as it clocked over 225m (740 feet) of climbs – meaning participants ascended two-thirds of the Hastings Half Marathon total in less than half that distance.

Both the male and female winners were recent HR recruits, tackling the course for the first time. Matt Draper collected the men's trophy in a time of 41'04 (one minute and 15 seconds ahead of Ashley Vora, finishing second for a third consecutive year). Fleur Record-Smith finished strongly to overtake second-placed Claire Thomas a quarter of a mile from the finish and cross the line in 51'21. There were trophies, too, for the first Male Veteran Darren Barzee and Female Vet Sally Grainger; fourth in 46'43 and 30th with a time of 58'56, respectively.

Beginning in Coastguard Lane behind the northern car-park, runners headed down into the woods above Firehills, before turning to begin the long climb towards Fairlight Coastguard Station, then dipping down past the old quarry and up through fields to Fairlight Road and back to Coastguard Lane. Having completed two of these taxing laps in the heat, the reward was a shorter final circuit ending with a final (though still uphill!) leg from the Coastguard to the finish line, 200m past Bale House.

The club also presented belated trophies to Lewis Betts for finishing as the club's leading male junior at the Hastings Runners 5 Mile (for the second consecutive year); to Tracy Ratnarajah Weatherley Harris for her year-on-year most improved time at the same event; and Christopher White who had earned the Improvers Award at the club's Spring 5k.

Many thanks to the 40 volunteer marshalls and to Piers Brunning for the photo.

