

John Turner, once of Stratford AC's most senior seniors, has achieved a slice of national glory by winning an age-group bronze medal at the British Masters 10K Championships down in South Wales. The event was incorporated into Chepstow Harriers' annual 'Magor Marsh 10K', and with the combination of a high-quality field on show and a dodgy back John knew from the start that he was going to have his work cut out to make an impact. A few painkillers beforehand worked wonders though, and to come 3rd in the over-65 category behind the class acts of Martin Ford (Cheltenham) and Gordon Orme (Birchfield) was no mean feat. With fellow Stratford O65 entrant Roger Wilson unfortunately ill and injured, John just had son Andy for company amongst the sold-out limit of 350, and on a rain lashed journey down they must have been wondering what they were letting themselves in for.

The course itself is fast and flat, run on quiet country lanes from Undy and incorporating the familiar 'Rose Inn' circuit, and even though the rain held off at the somewhat congested start they all set off into strong headwind. At the halfway point turnaround they started to have the benefit of the wind behind them until soon afterwards the torrential rain caught up with them again. Despite the weather conditions not being conducive to fast times John still recorded a time of 42:42 (116th), a little outside what he would usually expect but pretty impressive given the fact that the silver fox has had to curtail his activities recently because of his back. Unsubstantiated rumours circulated afterwards that John was actually pleased! Andy again showed that he is still noticeably improving as he finished 201st in a very pleasing time of 51:45.

The race was won by Andy Ward (O35, Clowne Road Runners) in 31:44, first lady was Sarah Gee (O45, Reading Road Runners) in 36:03, and amongst the folks who flocked from all over the UK was Leamington C&AC's Monica Williamson who was 2nd female O45 (38:45).

The Turners should perhaps be taking out second claim membership with Chepstow Harriers since 6 days previously they had paid another £5.80 fee to cross the Severn Bridge for the third of the four races in the Rose Inn midweek series. These 4-mile, 2-lap Tuesday night blasts take place in a beautifully peaceful setting, but the drive down to Redwick was again in heavy rain, which did not bode well for enjoying this rural location to its maximum. The Welsh weather though perked up once more as our intrepid duo crossed the border and, despite a strong headwind on the second half of each lap, the slightly smaller than usual field of 124 were blessed with dry feet for the evening.

Age came before beauty as John was first back in 26:36 minutes (45th), a minute slower than his May run but still good enough for 1st O65, and with 2 wins out of 2 in this age category and John being able to complete a third counting race in August, things are looking good for the series trophy. Andy was not far behind with 30:46 (76th), Richard Gardiner (Cardiff AC) won in 19:19, Debbie Marsden (Westbury Harriers) was first lady in 23:38 and the biggest news of the night was probably the Stratford pair coming straight home instead of claiming their free post-race pint!

A dozen Stratford AC runners made a pleasant Saturday evening trip down into the deepest Cotswolds for Bourton-on-the-Water's 'Humph's Hilly Half', and they can be delighted with their prize-winning results. The Hilly Half was introduced in 2003 to replace the Bourton Classic 15-mile race, which had been running for over 20 years, and once again the race followed a single loop, starting and finishing in the village and following a notably picturesque route through the villages of Clapton, Sherborne, Windrush, Great Barrington and Great Rissington. Basically, if you feel alright after the first mile and a half, most of which is a steep uphill, then

you should be on for a decent showing! The sticky heat made a tough event even tougher, while the other notable feature of this race in recent years has been the organisers' adherence to the UKA ban of MP3 players during races – and once again there were a number of disqualifications this time round.

Of the 12 Stratford runners, a spectacular performance from Steve Marshall (1:22:16,6th) put him first back, which wasn't bad considering he isn't doing any goal-oriented training at the moment and only decided to do it at the last moment because he was at a loose end! Another strong performance from Johann Breytenbach (1:27:11,14th) pushed him all the way, with Phil Howell (1:32:36,32nd) third back in a very respectable time despite concentrating more on swim and bike lately.

The first two Stratford ladies were both highly impressive prize-winners, with a quality showing from Kate Wright (1:33:23,35th,3rd lady) winning the O45's and Alison Bagnall (1:37:39,57th,6th lady) repeating the feat in the O40 category. Keith Beardsmore (1:40:03,71st) put his stamina resources to good use, as did the rejuvenated Martin Todman who finished well up in his O55s age group. Phil Brennan's (1:47:25,114th) excellent performance highlighted the strength of veteran running these days, as he could finish 'only' 4th O65 behind that man Martin Ford again, who finished 19th overall in 1:29!

Phil Marshall (1:51:00,135th) will have been delighted to finish in the top half of a 280-strong field, and Phil was just ahead of Sarah Odell (1:54:28,161st), who is another who has been putting in a lot of triathlon cross-training work over the summer. Marathon man Tony Hunt (1:58:08,184th) was well under the 2-hour watershed, but Michael Oliver (2:01:26,205th) was slightly over as he seems to struggle a little in warm conditions these days. Both the men's and ladies' races were won by last year's champions - over-50 Gary Payne and 18-year old Stephanie Lane providing a nice contrast - in times of 1:16:03 and 1:29:13, with big mentions to Stratford second-claim member Mick Williams (1:32:25) who was 1st O50, despite an injury-hit summer, and to that local running machine Kim Johnston (2:07:20) for another strong showing!