

## **Kent Fitness League - Minnis Bay Race Report**

Following an enforced break during December owing when the weather intervened, the Kent Fitness League got back on track on Sunday with a race held under glorious blue skies at Minnis Bay.

Apart from the sun, sea and sand, the race was memorable for the five waterlogged ditches which had to be negotiated in the closing stages of the 6 mile route. Estimates of depth varied from “knee high” to “waist high” and opinions varied on whether it was right and proper to include all five of them. Certainly no one went home without getting just a bit wet.

Clayton Barrett was able to perform his victory dive to great effect on crossing the finish line to record his first outright race victory for nearly 4 years in this competition. Having suffered from a spate of crippling back injuries over the past 2 years, last season's champion showed that he is now back on form, finishing about 60 metres clear of guest runner Phil Price.

Mark Ford finished close behind in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, the first of three Canterbury Harriers amongst the top 10. Steve Roberts was the leading over 40 runner in 7<sup>th</sup> place, followed closely by the leading over 50 - Ray Pearce, in 11<sup>th</sup> and the leading over 60 - Paul Ross-Davies in 13<sup>th</sup>. The number of competitors (263) taking part at Minnis Bay was no doubt affected by the Kent Championships on the previous day, but several runners competed on both days – notably Ashley Howes who finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place.

In the ladies' race, Jill Cliff made only her second appearance in the league but was easily strong enough to outrun her opponents, thereby interrupting the winning streak of Maria Heslop who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> on this occasion. Claire Gaskill had a good run to finish 3<sup>rd</sup>, following 12<sup>th</sup> place in the Kent Championship race. Hazel Vuvi (4<sup>th</sup>) led in three top 10 finishers from Dartford Roadrunners.

In the team race, Larkfield's hitherto domination of the league this season was broken by the combined forces of Canterbury Harriers who had a great day out by the seaside. Larkfield finished second and still remain 4 points clear at the top of the table with Canterbury and Darford Roadrunners now in equal second place.

Thanks to Phil Kinnill and all the marshalls/officials from Thanet Roadrunners who put the race on another successful race, having been forced to abandon last year because of the weather. The action now moves to Nurstead Court for the next race of the series, another venue famed for its standing water !

Rob Bright