

## **South Cheshire 20, Organiser's Report, 2010**

Thank you to the 167 of you who raced last Sunday, and thank you especially for the wonderful comments we have received via email and via the Runner's World forum and ratings. It is enormously gratifying to know that we have, as far as I can tell, got things right. (I will address the things we might improve in a moment.)

Perhaps the most enjoyable comment of all was the following: *"I must comment on the value for money. In these days entry fees are excessive, NOT SO FOR THIS RACE. Well done South Cheshire, greed did not appear to be your motivation but good old fashioned passion for running and runners."*

It has always been the ethos of the club that when we put on races, we do so in order to put something into running, not for profit. We want to make sure the nuts and bolts are in place – road safety, clear route marking, refreshment en route – and hopefully provide a decent memento of the day at the end. When the accounts for the race are finalised, I anticipate we will have about £250 profit to put towards our designated charity this year. This seems to me a good balance.

The other main theme of your comments was the work of the marshals. I counted nearly 70 club members, former members, family and friends out there marshalling, staffing drinks stations, taking entries, or driving the lead bike or sweep vehicle. One of our marshals made flapjacks for the finish, another ran round with the back marker, and Pete Mallison barely drew breath from finishing second before he asked if there was anyone he could take over from as marshal. It is the sort of effort that makes you proud to be a member of the club.

I'd also like to thank Bryan Dale for his promotion of the race and his photos on the day (take a look at Bryan's free site if you haven't already: [www.racephotos.org.uk](http://www.racephotos.org.uk)) and Ken Marshall and team for manning two of the water stations. Ken is not part of the Harriers but supports various races each year, entirely at his own expense. We also had superb police support this year, in excess of what we had booked and paid for, and thanks too to the St John Ambulance team who, happily for you, us and them, had a day entirely without incident.

As to next year, I will leave in place the O65 men's prize which was hastily added when the one competitor in that category pointed out my oversight, and will probably, as per one request, add a bottle or two of squash to a couple of the later drinks stations as an option, though I do prefer to keep things as straightforward as possible for the people doing the drinks.

The slightly more vexed topic of iPods/MP3 players is one I will have to revisit before next year's race. It has been pointed out by one runner who was asked to remove his, that there had been no advance warning of this. In fact, it was on entry forms and on our website, but it is true it was not on the online entry sites that most of you used. A lot of race organisers, me included, have tended in the past to advise people against using them, but not strictly enforce it. UK Athletics is, however, getting stricter about enforcement and points out that all such devices are already banned in its rules. Next year, we will make sure any ruling is spelt out unambiguously wherever and however you enter.

Two words on prizes. First, of the ones I wasn't able to announce at the prizegiving, Cynthia Lewis of Telford won the O60 ladies prize, and Stafford Harriers won the ladies team prize. Second, those of

you who had to get away (with a field as spread out as it gets on a 20, it's inevitable that the prizegiving is a bit of a wait for some) and still awaiting cheques in the post, the club treasurer has your addresses, and has signed the cheques, but needs another committee member signature. They may be in the post today and if not should in any case be with you early next week.

Finally, I do realise that for many of you a race like ours is a means to an end – a final tune-up for the Edinburgh or Chester marathons, for example – and that without that incentive it is just a long, gruelling, rather masochistic exercise (or, as it is also known, running). We would love to see as many as possible of you next year, but if it doesn't fit your schedule in 2011, please tell your friends and clubmates about us. We appreciate your support.

Thanks again, and congratulations to all who competed.

Charlie Rowlands

Race organiser.