

9th March Newton's Fraction Half Marathon

Sunday 9th March saw the first race of the club Grand Prix, and the chosen event to start the season was the Newton's Fraction half marathon in Grantham. The race began and finished in the South Kestevan Sports Stadium, a fine council provided sports venue which houses a football pitch for the town team, as well as an eight lane athletics track, facilities for field events and also a bar and cafe, something which Retford as a town would be very much the better for.

On a perfect morning for running there was an overall field of 225 starters for the race, though disappointingly only seven Retford members turned up for the event, and those that did arrive were in varying degrees of fitness, but, following a well organised, scenic run they all returned home with credit from their performances.

Despite two tortuous hills along the route, especially one at 10 miles, there were personal bests for this distance for the two female entrants Becky Duggan and Maria Needham. Of the male runners, Andy Sly was first home for the club despite carrying a knee injury, followed by Mark Wilkinson who himself is coming back from a long injury lay off. Chris Ryan was next man home; unusually for Chris he was quite content with his performance on the day and looks ahead to the rest of the season with some confidence. Dave Pickering was also quite pleased with his efforts on the day, looking comfortable and relaxed as he finished, although being another athlete on the comeback from injury. Ken Neal was the final Retford runner to finish in a highly creditable time, which saw him well placed in his age group. Thanks from all the runners must also go to Colin McMurray who took on the role of car key holder, beverage buyer, time keeper and everybody's number one supporter as he cheered everyone into the stadium, hopefully he'll be back running sooner rather than later. The next Grand Prix event will be the Ranby 10 mile road race on 6th April at 2.00 pm.

Official Positions and Times

12th Andy Sly 86:12 (5th age group)
28th Mark Wilkinson 93:03 (8th age group)
83rd Chris Ryan 104:21 (4th age group)
108th Becky Duggan 106:58 (3rd age group)
117th Dave Pickering 107:55 (26th age group)
128th Maria Needham 109:48 (4th age group)
204th Ken Neal 127:12 (2nd age group)