

## **BRITISH MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS, incorporated into THE BUNTINGFORD 10, Hertfordshire, December 30**

Organisers of the British Masters' Championships were pleased with the entry but it is a sad fact of modern championship competition that such events predominantly attract local runners.

It had originally been planned to hold the ten-mile championship in the North East in August but that was difficult for local organisers there and Buntingford was selected instead and just about squeezed into the calendar year.

BMAF road supremo Walter Hill praised the local club Royston Runners for their slick organisation, results service and easily accessible headquarters.

Whilst Alex Milne took the overall race, it was second placed Jack Nixon who won the British Masters championships, Milne had a comfortable enough margin of half-a-minute when winning in 52:32 in the race based out of Freeman College, that had an elevation of some 144-metres, For Nixon, his 53:03, rounded off a successful year which had seen M35 titles in both British and European Masters championships.

Duncan Woolmer, in fifth spot overall, was the top M40 home, in 54:52, to annex the BMAF title, whilst David Lipscomb's 56:09 took the M45 gold.

Kevin Sambridge was the first M50 to finish, in 58:18, but as was not entered for the Masters championship, that top medal went to second placed Ty Farrer in 58:52.

One of the runners who travelled the furthest to take part in his first British Masters event was 1987 European Junior 5000m champion, Simon Mugglestone, who ran 13:43.82 when taking the British title that year. The former Westbury international still holds the British under-20 road 5km best at 13:54. Here, Mugglestone's 59:40 was his first recorded outing over the 10-mile distance since a 47:41 outing over the distance at Twickenham in 1991 and a 49:03, when winning at Maidenhead in 1993.

Further up the age groups, top M65 Jonathan Haynes headed all of the over-60 runners with his 65:16 which took him to fourth on the rankings for 2023.

Victoria Knight won the overall women's race, in 58:27 but, as the 47-year-old was not entered in the Masters' championship, the title went to second placed Clare Thurgood, whose 61:11, on this difficult course was personal best, took the W35 gold.

For Knight, it was her first outing over the 10-mile distance since 2016 when the Cambridge & Coleridge runner set her best time of 56:48 to top the W40 rankings for the year.

Jenny Armson placed fourth in the open race to take the British Masters W40 gold, in 64:09, as Hannah Turner was next home for the W45 title in a personal best 65:24.

The women's over-50 category had good depth but Penny Habbick was a comfortable winner after posting a personal best 65:58 to be first home but, as she too was not entered for the masters' title, the BMAF award went to second placed Clare Hayes, in 69:15.

There was little competitive action in the W55 class, as Susan Dixon had things very much her own way when winning in 71:25, but Cath Henery was much quicker when taking the W60 title with 74:20.

2023 top ranked Lynda Hembury was quicker than both of them in winning W65 gold with 73:13, albeit more than three minutes down on her best for the year.

Perhaps the most well-known women's winner was W70 Yuko Gordon, who ran for Hong Kong in the 1984 Olympic Marathon. Here the British 10-mile record holder, with 74:07, found 78:06 enough for another top medal.

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