

### **Isle Of Man Easter Festival**

Steve Smythe writes, despite three mediocre performances, I can thoroughly recommend this for an Easter event. There is a great friendly atmosphere on an island that combines Lake District type mountains and also seaside towns and beaches. The 10k is a tough course taking a couple of bays and ports, I had a sluggish run but picked up from 3:40 per km between 2 and 9k, with a relatively fast 3:14 final kilometre though it did have some downhill on it.

The hill race was probably the most scenic of my 2000 odd races, with a vicious ascent taking you up from Peel harbour into the hills and on a beautiful sunny day as you climbed beside the sea, the view was breathtaking. Even though the descent was soft by true fell running standards, I was woeful on the down sections on the course and eventually lost to runners I had been 3 minutes up on the 10K. Despite a truly awful overall run, I did win a £10 cheque for third vet (they didn't recognise M50s). Runners were bussed the 11 miles to the race but many ran back via every single pub on the route. Work commitments meant I didn't join them and went back in the bus and arrived some nine hours of so before most of the runners did, many of them the worse for wear. Despite a mediocre run in the 5K relay - I was found a team to run in - I had my highest position and some of those who had participated in the run/pub crawl suffered for their exertions.

Most of those competing are students or ex students and the organisers don't discourage the drinking and even organise a beer drinking relay in the evening at the presentation. There was a generous £5000 prize fund but that was generally geared to the students who despite their distractions did put up some very good performances over the weekend, though they did tail off.

I would recommend though if you do go, going as a group to get the best out of the weekend.