



50 up and first marathon win

HE'S only just turned 50, but already Barry Hards is discovering that winning habit.

Barry won his first ever marathon when he romped to victory at the Isle of Wight event last month on a blistering hot day with temperatures touching the 80s.

He led home a field of 103 runners to win in a time of 3hrs 5mins 32secs, a winning margin of more than seven minutes from second-placed Nicholas Holmes from the Fleet & Crookham Club in North Hampshire.

"I have been second and third a number of times, but never first, so it was a fantastic birthday present"

With a touch of irony, in April on the same day as the Totton 10km, Barry



Barry battles through the heat at the Isle of Wight Marathon

battled his way through overnight snow to compete in the Taunton Marathon in Somerset where he finished ninth in bitterly cold conditions in a time of 2:55.47 to finish second Vet 45.

Now just days after celebrating the big Five-Oh and in sweltering conditions, Barry made light work of an event organised by Ryde Harriers and which has been described by Runners' World as "relentless ups and downs make the UK's longest-running marathon a formidable opponent."

For the 52nd staging of this race, runners started in Ryde and headed out on a single lap course covering Binstead, Wootton, Newport, Rookley, Aretton, Sandown, Brading and back to Ryde.

Barry said: "The IOW was a new course this year, so I guess it is the course record, but I am sure it will be broken next year."

"My personal best for the Isle of Wight is 2hrs 41mins which was set about 15 years ago.

"The new course misses Newport, but adds at least two extra hills. It does the climb out from Brading to Ryde twice, and an extra

hill at Newport."

Barry explained that he took the lead at about half way to end up well ahead of the next runner by the finish.

The Isle of Wight Marathon is notorious for some traffic problems, especially with impatient drivers along some of the narrow roads dotted about the island.

"The traffic was slightly better, but it was very hot, especially in the towns," said Barry.

"The marathon was my first race as a Vet 50. I was going to do Alton, but thankfully chose the IOW. I only hoped to get the first V50, so to win overall was fantastic, albeit with a slow time.

"Last year's winner was there but was only in contention for the first eight miles or so.

"It was my first marathon win - I have been second and third a number of times, but never first, so it was a fantastic birthday present. Bev, Ali (Bev's sister) and the kids were there too, so was it a great day out."