

## Pier to Pier - 22nd May 2011

The Pier to Pier race is one of the more popular runs in the region with 777 finishers this year, their second largest entry. The race starts on the beach at South Shields pier and follows the beach and coastal footpaths to finish about 7 miles later near the pier on Roker Beach in Sunderland. It always takes place on a Sunday in the middle of May depending on the tides.

The day started with bright sunshine and blue skies with a gentle breeze but the wind soon picked up and the clouds arrived. We all huddled together like penguins at the start to try and keep out of the biting wind and were pleased when the whistle blew at 10am to set us on our way.

Fortunately the tide was out and the over half mile of beach start was reasonably firm underfoot. The strong headwind coupled with running on sand was a tough start for some competitors. We soon started climbing up from Water's Edge and onto firm ground along the coastal path passing Marsden Grotto and then on to the Souther lighthouse water station. The scenic coastal path continued past Whitburn and then back on to the beach at Seaburn for the final stretch to the professional looking finish line at Roker pier.

We then made our way for our reward of crisps, a chocky bar and a rather nice thermos flask and cups set. Pity they weren't full of hot toddy as it started bleaching down with hailstones at the end!

The strong winds meant that times were all a few minutes down on previous years apart from the first woman, Rosie Smith from Durham, who was only 28 seconds outside the women's course record. Other results:

### **Pos No. Name Club Cat Time**

1 666 Brendan McMillan Claremont M28 41:37

2 544 Conrad Franks Gateshead M28 41:46

3 764 Robert Bee Blackhill Bounders M37 41:52

8 726 Rosie Smith Durham City F25 42:41

**614 381 Maria Hindmarsh Stocksfield Striders F41 69:23**

**615 380 Philip Hindmarsh Stocksfield Striders M43 69:23**

**752 439 Lesley Anne Reed Stocksfield Striders F44 80:26**

Next year, the race is likely to be held on its more usual weekend on Sunday 13th May so hopefully see more Striders then.

On a more personal note, the race was a mini disaster for me and Maria. Instead of using the bus we decided to leave Maria's car at the end and take mine to the start. Half a mile from the end we passed Maria's car in Seaburn. Have you got your car keys I asked? No I gave them to you said Maria. No I don't think you did said I. I've left them in your car said Maria. Oh bother or words to that effect said both of us.

It was a quiet half mile to the finish.

Pier to Pier became Pier to Tear when I had to fork out £15 for a taxi back to Shields.

Philip Hindmarsh