

# **Algarve Running Challenge 2006**

**1 – 5 November 2006**

**Report by Steve Smythe**

The **Algarve Running Challenge 2006** was a great success, seeing keen competition over 4 events and some top class performances and, whilst the weather was unusually disappointing, the rain held off for all of the 4 races over the 5 days, and most runners added to their tans as well as their trophy cabinets.

Taking the accolades as the first ever Challenge winners, were Woodford Green with Essex Ladies' **Ewen Malloch** and Dulwich Runner's **Teresa Gaillard de Laubenque** who dominated the men's and women's event. The strength of the older age groups in the Challenge was illustrated by the team award being won by Veterans AC from Dulwich and Great Western Runners.

The event was staged around the **classic X Milhas do Guadiana**, a 10 mile race that alternates each year between Ayamonte in Spain and Vila Real San Antonio in Portugal across the giant Guadiana Bridge that separates the two countries. The Challenge organiser, Track and Field Tours, put on three new races leading up to the Sunday race, a 8km cross country, a one mile track race and a 6.5km beach race, which together with the 10 miler added up to a total distance of 20 miles.

Adding to the week's entertainment, there was a seminar by the **1962 European 5000m champion Bruce Tulloh**, who gave details of his running in Kenya and his run across America and also offered individual training advice. Challenge competitor **Will Cockerell** gave a detailed account of how he came to choose his **"50 Top Marathon Races of all Time,"** his fascinating book published earlier this year.

Tulloh unfortunately injured his leg in the first 100m of the initial race and was unable to take further part in the Challenge but assisted with the organisation for the rest of the week. Indeed, the famous runner and coach called out the times for the Mile race. Tulloh himself ran 3:59.3 on a grass track in 1962 Wanganui, a race won by Peter Snell in the then world record time of 3:54.4.

The mile race was won by 1:48.3 800m performer **Andy Brown** but the other Challenge races were dominated by Malloch. He led all the way to win the cross-country race held over four laps of a twisting undulating 2km circuit in 26:30. **Phil Leybourne**, who has won a team medal in the National cross-country for Salford Harriers, pushed him hard to finish second with Brown third. Brown won the mile from Malloch and Leybourne, blasting through the first quarter in 61 seconds to win in 4:26.1. The Beach race saw Malloch, a sub 9 minute steeplechaser, kick away from Leybourne in the final kilometre to win by 9 seconds in 21:41 as Belgrave Harrier club captain William Cockerell had his best race of the week to place third. Cockerell ran barefoot on the advice of Tulloh, who won national titles on the track minus his shoes.

In the 10 Miles, this year run from Spain to Portugal, Malloch found the opposition, which apart from Spanish and Portuguese, also included Kenyans, a Tanzanian and Russian much tougher than earlier in the week and he ended up 13th, but headed the other Challenge competitors within the 10 miles event by 4 minutes. **The X Milhas do Guadiana race was won by the Olympic 8th placer in the Marathon, Alberto Chaica.** The time was a mere 48:51 but unusual headwinds of 30 mph / 50 kph for the second half of the race slowed times considerably and he was the only runner inside 50 minutes. Leybourne, who won an award in the M35 category, took second in the Challenge. **Dave Mansbridge**, a four-time winner of the Malta Challenge, finished third in the Algarve Challenge, and dominated the Vets section and was second Vet overall in the 10-miler

The X Milhas do Guadiana race entry is inexpensive and all finishers receive a T-shirt and a fine medal. There were generous prizes and awards, and the 10 miles event was accurately marked in kilometres, with adequate drinks stations over an interesting and scenic course. The results, thanks to chip timing, were quickly posted.

Other Challenge age group winners who also picked up awards in the X Milhas event included **Dave Wintle** who dominated the M50 section and **Ray Hall** who was first M60. Hall, a latecomer to the sport, impressively left the younger overseas opposition behind to win X Milhas M55+ section which was the oldest category in the 10 miles.

The women's Challenge winner was **Teresa Gaillard de Laubenque**, who has only been running seriously for just over a year and in 2006 she took 40 minutes off her marathon pb to qualify for the elite women's start for the 2007 Flora London Marathon. She was beaten by teenager Kristie Leybourne's in the mile and beach race but finished with her best race in the 10 mile, where she was 4th woman in the **X Milhas do Guadiana race won by 2:28:49 marathoner Ana Dias**, she won the Challenge by over 20 minutes.

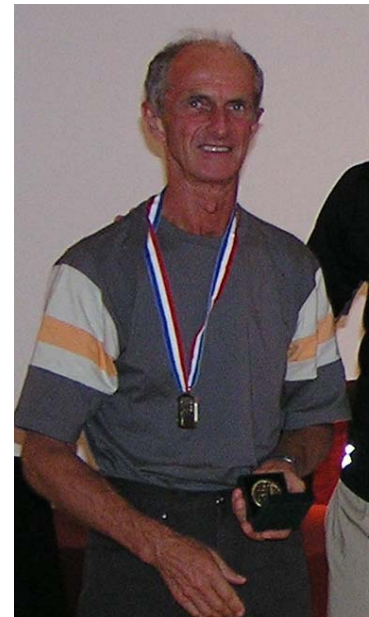
Teresa enthused, **"The Challenge presented an excellent opportunity to race over varying distances and terrains culminating in the cross border race. The social element was fun, allowing a combination of sight seeing, drinking and racing, supported by a wealth of knowledge from Bruce and Will who gave fascinating presentations. Support and coaching facilities were excellent too. I will most certainly be back next year to defend my title."**



**KRISTIE LEYBOURNE leads PAUL SMITH in the BEACH RACE**



**DAVE WINTLE M50 Challenge winner towards end of 10 MILES**



**RAY HALL M60 Challenge winner receives his award**



**TERESA GAILLARD de LAUBENQUE Womens Challenge winner entering the stadium in the 10 MILES**



**WILLIAM COCKERELL (12) and ANDY BROWN (11) run topless – Will ran barefoot too! – headed by Challenge runner up PHIL LEYBOURNE with M40 Challenge winner DAVE MANSBRIDGE (23) sitting in behind on the first lap of the BEACH RACE.**

The men's winner, Malloch, part of a strong British Milers Club trio, was also impressed. *"I really enjoyed my week. The facilities are excellent here and I really enjoyed the principle of 4 races working to one overall target. Phil pushed me in some of the races but I expect the opposition will be even harder next year."*

Other good performances in the week were put in by Paul Smith and teenager Adam Hulme in the open category, M40s Ian Cardy and Paul Hodge (the latter winning a special award for his enthusiastic pacing), M45s Steve Edwards and Kev Wood, M50s Cliff Hide and Ian Richardson, M55s Martin Miller and John Tussler, M60s Dennis Williams (who beat Hall in the Beach race), Ray Jaekals and Alistair Jackson and M65s Dave Brooks (winner of an award for the best pacing throughout the week), Malcolm Offer and Steve Parsons. Paula Cardy was runner up in the women's race with Stephanie Burchill, the first W50 and Susan Hall the first W55.

**All Challenge competitors and partners received a top quality specially designed t-shirt and bag, and all competitors received a medal, and in addition there were generous awards for the leading competitors overall and in the age groups.**

**The facilities in the area are superb and Vila Real San Antonio and Monte Gordo are proving popular venues for athletes for warm weather training:** the British team used it as a holding camp for the 1999 World Championships in Seville and during the Challenge a strong squad of German athletes were using the facilities. The track facilities are excellent, with a new indoor facility too. There is a cross-country course close by - used for the European Masters Championships the year before - and it sits beside the Portuguese National Forest which has some excellent trails that are clearly marked and sit both sides of Monte Gordo. The beach is also excellent for running most of the time, stretching close on 10 miles and running along to the Guadiana river. Flat and not cambered and besides the dunes and forest trails, very quiet.

## **LEADING RUNNING CHALLENGE RESULTS**

### **8km Cross-country, November 1**

#### **Men**

1 EWEN MALLOCH 26:30; 2 PHIL LEYBOURNE 26:45; 3 ANDY BROWN 27:38; 4 DAVE MANSBRIDGE (M40) 27:47; 5 WILL COCKERELL 28:51; 6 PAUL SMITH 30:17; 7 DAVE WINTLE (M50) 30:38; 8 ADAM HULME 31:33  
M55: MARTIN MILLER 34:05. M60: 1 RAY HALL 32:14; 2 DENNIS WILLIAMS 34:12. M65: STEPHEN PARSONS 38:31

#### **Women**

1 TERESA GAILLARD DE LAUBENQUE 35:26; 2 PAULA CARDY (W35) 40:15  
W50: STEPHANIE BURCHILL 44:08

### **1Mile Track Race , November 2**

#### **Men**

1 BROWN 4:26.3; 2 MALLOCH 4:30.2; 3 LEYBOURNE 4:39.2  
M40: MANSBRIDGE 5:01.1. M50: WINTLE 5:10.0. M55: MILLER 5:43.2. M60: HALL 5:48.7

#### **Women**

1 KIRSTIE LEYBOURNE (U15) 5:23.0; 2 GAILLARD DE LAUBENQUE 6:07.2; 3 CARDY 6:46.8

### **6.5km BEACH RACE, November 3**

#### **Men**

1 MALLOCH 21:41; 2 LEYBOURNE 21:50; 3 COCKERELL 22:50; 4 BROWN 22:59; 5 MANSBRIDGE 23:06; 6 SMITH 25:17; 7 WINTLE 25:24  
M60: 1 WILLIAMS 27:22; 2 HALL 28:03

#### **Women**

1 LEYBOURNE 26:43; GAILLARD DE LAUBENQUE 29:14; 3 CARDY 33:24  
W50: BURCHILL 35:18

### **X MILHAS DO GUARDIANA, Ayamonte ESP - Villa Real San Antonio POR, November 5**

#### **Men**

1 A Chaica 48:51, 2 P Sulle (TAN) 50:06 ... 13 MALLOCH 53:33 ... 20 LEYBOURNE 56:56  
M40: 2 MANSBRIDGE 57:25. M50: 3 WINTLE 64:08; 5 IAN RICHARDSON 68:10. M55: 1 HALL (M60) 66:03; 5 MILLER 69:47

#### **Women**

1 A Dias 61:32 ...4 GAILLARD de LAUBENQUE 70:14  
W35: 5 CARDY 83:57. W50+: 2 BURCHILL 88:57

### **CHALLENGE OVERALL RESULTS**

#### **Men**

1 MALLOCH 1:46:17; 2 LEYBOURNE 1:50:05; 3 MANSBRIDGE (M40) 1:53:20; 4 SMITH 2:02:18; 5 COCKERELL 2:20:25

M40: 2 CARDY 2:11:23; 3 HODGE 2:38:20. M45: 1 KEV WOOD 2:30:07. M50: 1 WINTLE 2:05:20; 2 RICHARDSON 2:14:23; 3 CLIFFORD HIDE 2:27:55. M55: 1 MILLER 2:18:03; 2 JOHN TUSSLER 2:40:23. M60: 1 HALL 2:12:09; 2 WILLIAMS 2:22:15. M65: 1 PARSONS 2:39:11; 2 DAVID BROOKS 2:42:17; 3 MALCOLM OFFER 2:50:35

#### **Women**

1 GAILLARD de LAUBENQUE 2:21:02; 2 CARDY 2:44:23  
W50: BURCHILL 2:55:47. W55: SUSAN HALL 3:24:02

**COMBINED TEAM:** 1 Veterans AC 7:08:13; 2 Dulwich Runners 7:29:49; 3 Great Western Runners 7:35:06