

**Mauritius Half-marathon
Sunday 19 June 2011
Report by Kay Farrow of Beverley AC**



Kay with medals at the finish

The Mauritius marathon and half-marathon took place last Sunday and Beverley Athletic Club's Kay Farrow ran the half.

Like all running events in Mauritius the race started at 7 a.m. to avoid the higher temperatures later on in the morning. This meant that Kay had to get up at 4 o'clock to allow enough time for breakfast and to travel to the race. With the course being point to point rather than a loop, two cars were needed and Kay teamed up with Aberdonian athlete John Cabrelli.

Both had reservations about running the half-marathon: John runs several times per week for about an hour but had not competed in a half-marathon for more than twenty years; Kay had not run at all for six weeks after falling in a trail race and bruising her ribs. They set their targets at 2 hours and 2 hours 30 respectively taking into account their fitness and the temperature which was 22 Celsius at the start.

The undulating course followed the only road along the south coast from Baie du Cap to St Felix with breathtaking views of the Indian Ocean and the mountains inland. The fine sunny weather of the previous few days was replaced by an overcast sky and heavy rain which kept the temperatures down and made the Brits feel more at home. The rough seas and huge waves crashing onto the beaches created a great atmosphere and provided a welcome distraction from the effort of running.

There were few spectators on the course and residents in the villages on the route showed little interest in the athletes running by. The road was still open to traffic and runners had to dodge buses belching diesel fumes. They passed almost as many dogs as people and had to take evasive action with the more aggressive canines.

The marathon started near Kay's home in Tamarin and linked up with the half-marathon course. Kay was delighted to be overtaken by the winner of the marathon in the last kilometre. "He looked so strong despite the distance and the rising temperature," said Kay "it really spurred me on."

For the last 150 metres of the course runners left the main road and dropped down onto a track which allowed them a straight run to the finishing line without the dangers of dogs or traffic. Kay managed her customary sprint for the last 50 metres and finished in 2:18:35 – well within her target time. John Cabrelli did even better and finished in eighth place in 1:49:00.

Both were really pleased with their performance so it was a bonus when they were awarded additional medals. John won the M50 category and Kay was third in the F50 age group.



Kay Farrow and John Cabrelli celebrate after the race

The half-marathon was won by Henri Hoareau in 1:28:34. The first lady was Daniela Nicosia in 1:51:56. The relay was won by La Trobe in 2:02:12.

Jacek Cieluszecki won the marathon in 03:02:24. The first lady was Caroline Mertz in 4:18:05. The relay was won by a team from Médine in 2:45:42.



Kay Farrow and Ute Diesenbach of Germany on the podium