

The Marathon Diary

Well here it was the 22nd April 2007, a date that had been etched on my mind for the last 5 months! The day when all the last few months of training would finally & hopefully come into their own! And what a few months it had been.....

I had always wanted to run the London Marathon and after nanny died I had hoped that one day I would get a place where I could run for my own charity & as I had been involved with the IWBS since I was a child through my nanny it was a forgone conclusion in my mind that it would be for this cause I would run! I knew that the training was hard but the reality over the last few months had been a nightmare of running & exercise, come rain or shine, piling on the miles trying to build up the stamina. With a history of bad knees, a consultant who was enraged that I would consider putting this level of pressure on my knees, regular acupuncture & of course my faithful chiropractic, I endured weekly sessions where they collectively put me back together! And I'm not proud to admit that on a number of occasions I found myself in floods of tears as the training increased & it began to take over my life, whilst trying to fit it around an extremely busy business. There were many occasions where I questioned my ability to be able to even get to the start line let alone cross the finish line!

Standing at the start line in Blackheath was very overwhelming. It would have to be the hottest one on record with road temps reaching 27.5 degrees, but the atmosphere was buzzing a mixture of excitement & fear. As we set off I knew that here it was the moment I had been waiting for & that this was it, no turning back.

The first few miles went quite well, & I got swept along with everyone. The miles ticked along quite well at the start, but the heat was incredible. As I got near mile 8 I really began to need the loo! There are about 6 toilets every 2 miles & I had already passed some by trying to avoid the large queue I would have to join, but alas, the heat was making me drink more & the more I drank the more I needed the loo & there was no way in the world I was going to do the now historic 'Radcliffe' manoeuvre!! So finally I had to give in and join a queue. This happened twice along the way, with queuing time making up ½ hour of my official time! It was a little frustrating!!

So with all of that in hand I continued on my way.....

It wasn't until I crossed Tower Bridge that I really felt like I was in the marathon, as it was a sight they showed a lot on the TV. I could see the camera above me & joined everyone around me waving as we passed by. From then on it was just a case of plodding on looking out for the archways you went under that signalled another mile completed!

I met up with my 'pit crew' at mile 11 & 21. It was lovely to see some familiar faces, and to have the chance to refuel my sports drink & lather my knees in ice gel. I later found out that they had been having an adventure of their own trying to get around an extremely congested Underground!!

As I continued along, I told myself on a number of occasions to savour each moment. The crowds were truly amazing & the support was incredible. There

were thousands of people lining the streets, cheering you on, handing out jelly babies, slices of oranges, & even holding their garden sprinklers out for you to run under, to cool down. Pubs having street parties & live music every mile, the atmosphere was unbelievable & you really got a feeling of a city coming together in the name of charity.

Everything for me was going well, but unfortunately for many others, they were struggling with the heat & fatigue. Whilst I have cursed every moment of that training, I do now have to say that it did its job & that I am glad that whilst on many occasions I have to force myself out to train I am so glad I did! I never did hit the legendary 'wall'. I read so much stuff on how to avoid it & so I guess it worked!

The last 2 miles were the hardest as I was beginning to tire. Coming around in front of Buckingham Palace was memorable for one thing & that was that there were only 200 meters left to go! It is amazing that whilst you feel so tired, when you see that finish line you can seem to muster up this final burst of energy, not just so you look good when you cross the line but because you know that the quicker you cross the line the sooner it is over!!

And so for me crossing that line was a great feeling, an amazing rush of adrenaline, a euphoric feeling of achievement & yet an emotional overload that rushed through me with tears of relief & joy flooding down my face. I had actually done it, I'd run the London Marathon!! I immediately called me 'pit crew' to tell them I had finished & was told that they knew, as my brother has just rung to say that he had just watched me cross the finish line on TV from his sofa in Cowes! So I was on the TV too!

And so that was the end of the adventure. I never thought I would be able to do anything like this, & so that is why I set myself this challenge & boy was it a challenge both mentally & physically. Running a marathon is not just about the day. The hardest part is all those months of preparation. I am so glad I did it & to have been able to offer my personal challenge as a means of raising money for a cause dear to my heart, but I can honestly tell you that I will not be running another marathon! The day was amazing, but the training.....nah!!

Nikki Collinson

May 2nd 2007