

Dear Footer,

Hello and welcome to the April/ May newsletter.

Footers have been out in force in recent weeks.

A group of us competed in the Flora London Marathon. Race reports from Steve Dear, Dougie and Alan follow.

If you are doing any races, especially ones that not many Footers have done, it would be great to hear from you.

It doesn't have to be an epic, a few lines will do.

Also, if you want your race times to appear on the Footers' web site and in the Herald, e-mail them to Alan. A few lines about the race and weather would be good to use for the Herald. The darts gets more coverage than the Footers!

The Flora London Marathon

Steve's report

This was always going to be a special race for me being my first marathon, even more so as it is THE marathon. Although I didn't really know what to expect from this event I was well primed in the weeks leading up to it by my fellow runners and it more than lived up to what I imagined.

The whole weekend went like clockwork which helped to take away any pre-race stress! Having such luxurious accommodation allowed us all to relax for what was to come. As with any typical club night/occasion the camaraderie between the two *elite footers* kept the humour to a level that kept my mind off the anguish of Sunday morning.

After my Saturday night/Sunday morning 'snooze' it was time to get up and consume the pre-ordered race day breakfast although with hindsight instead of a cup of tea with my scrambled eggs on toast I should have gone for a triple espresso.

As we made our way to Blackheath I was determined that my lack of sleep would not prevent me from doing my best and enjoying

the event that I had been so looking forward to, however mile 16/17 got the better of that determination.

Passing Buckingham Palace I recalled Ian's comments to me one club night about what this would be like and I have to agree the goose bumps confirmed that feeling. It was also made more special at that point when I heard a familiar voice in the crowd shouting my name - yes the 'Arbroath Lichtie' himself!

Rounding the corner the finish was in sight and from there on it was what I can only describe as being in slow motion (I was probably slower than that!). I have to admit crossing that famous line and collecting that prized medal was very emotional for me.

I suppose it was a combination of all those months of training with periods when through injury I didn't know if I would even get to the start line and the thought that three years ago when I went out for my first ever run (2-3 miles) I never imagined I would have completed the London Marathon!

Dougie's report

I wasn't sure what to expect from this marathon as I've stayed clear of mass events in the past.

In my mind it would be too crowded, I would not be able to get into my gazelle-like stride quickly enough and my chance of a PB would be blown. Lochaber has been my usual April marathon (when not injured) with only 400 runners.

After running London I must say I am converted to the big events. 43,000 runners is unbelievable and it was a joy to be one of them.

From the start I never had much in the way of congestion and we were soon up to speed quickly and clicking the miles down taking in water every mile and Lucozade every 5 miles (brilliant, no bum bag required!).

It wasn't until mile 12 (I think) at Tower Bridge that I thought 'hmm getting hot now' (dont let any treasurer tell you he canna run in the heat, PB!)

The next set of showers offered a welcome cooling down.

One of my highlights was running past Gordon Ramsay at 15 miles, low point was Batman running past me at mile 22.

But hey ho, he is a superhero.

From 22 on I was struggling big time and my leg was getting sore (did I tell you about my hamstring?!))

We were all suffering at some point so dig in and get finished.

When I got to Buckingham Palace I knew I was nearly there and then it was up The Mall and IT'S OVER- 3-47-52. It was my slowest marathon but most enjoyable.

The organisers and the people of London should congratulate themselves on hosting a terrific event, with crowds cheering for 26.2 miles and bands playing music.

I want to go back so have entered the ballot again for 2010, fingers crossed.

I would also like to thank Alan McDonald for the organisation in getting us there, which he didn't have to do but did.

Alan's report

In 2006 when I DNF London pulling out at 17 miles, I made the decision last year to apply for the 2009 London Marathon. I entered online through the ballot system along with another 100,000 people.

Then two weeks later I ran the Lochaber Marathon, my first marathon since not finishing London. I ran 3.09 and was elated that I managed to finish without the injury re-appearing. I was unaware that this was a guaranteed entry to London, being sub 3.15.

After a discussion on the Runners' World forum I contacted the London Marathon and they confirmed that my time was good for age, so I was in!!!. No turning back now.

We booked our flights to London and the hotel, and the training runs before the big day were good. Steve had also entered London and Chris was training for Edinburgh, so they accompanied me on most of the long runs, along with Craig -who has the potential to run another marathon!!! So thanks to them all for putting up with my snottering!!! LOL

It was the weekend of the race. We hired a mini-bus to take us to Edinburgh Airport, leaving Arbroath at 7.30am.

On our way the mood was good with spirits high. On arrival we were told the flight was delayed by over an hour. We were in no hurry so we had breakfast.

On arrival at London City, Ian, Janette and Marion decided to go straight to the Expo at the Excel Centre, while the rest of us went to the hotel to check in and dump our bags.

At check-in the girl was faffing about for over half an hour trying to allocate us our rooms. In the end she said she had complimentary upgraded us all to Queen Deluxe Rooms, which was a bonus. Very nice.

Doug, Steve, Joanne and I then headed to the Expo to collect our numbers and do a bit of retail therapy!

We met Janette and Ian, both had had enough of the Expo and were going back to the hotel. The rest of us registered for the race, went to the pasta party and then we shopped (got some bargains).

By the time we got back to the hotel it was after 9pm, it was a busy day but most enjoyable.

On Saturday we had a lie in then went down for breakfast. Wow, what a brekkie we had. We then walked along to Oxford Street, passing some time by shopping again!

Janette went to meet Mo and the kids at Hamley's toy shop. We arranged to meet her later on at the Odeon at Marble Arch. We were like school kids sitting in the cinema, having a laugh and a joke. The film was good, too (State Of Play), but it should be at £10.70 each!

In the evening Pamela, Graeme and Rachel met us at the hotel to go for tea. We booked an Italian for the pre-race meal. A very nice and enjoyable meal. Graeme teased Dougie by having a few bottles of beer with his meal. It was tempting but we did resist.

Race day was here. We booked breakfast in our room for 6am. Ian and I ordered a tray full of goodies..I felt sorry for the girl who had to carry it into the room. It was heavy!!! - LOL

We checked out at 7am, leaving our bags in the secure room so we could return for a shower. Nerves were getting to us all by now. Steve had only managed two hours sleep the night before, not the best marathon prep. However, we were all optimistic.

We all dispersed to our starts. Ian and I were at the red start, the sun was shining and it was hot. Finally the gun went and we were on our way.

We had our race plan - 6.51 minute mileing. This would get us sub 3! Ambitious, I know, but if you don't try you will never know if you can do it.

A few severe words were thrown at each other along the route, but all taken in good humour. We approached the 17 mile mark where I had pulled out three years before. I said to Ian I was glad to see the back of this. However, we still had nine miles to cover.

At mile 20 Ian said to me that he could not continue running with me, so I ran on myself. It was tough being on my own as Ian had given me encouragement and vice versa.

I was tiring near mile 25, but I knew the end was in sight and kept going. I was in The Mall and saw the finish ahead and made a sprint (well it probably wasn't but it did feel like I was).

I had finished in 3.02.05 and was well chuffed with my time as it guarantees me automatic entry for the next two years.

Ian was next in 3.06.12 PB, followed by Marion in 3.11.02 (4th in her category), Janette ran 3.37.17 PB, Steve came in at 3.40.54 PB, a very respectable time for his first marathon, followed by Doug 3.47.52, Pamela 4.16.24 and Joanne in 5.31.52.

The day was good and we all thoroughly enjoyed the marathon.

We then went back to the hotel for a shower - ahhh!!

Dougie and I had a pint in the hotel bar to celebrate finishing the last Flora London Marathon, then we headed to Heathrow for our journey back home.

All in all I had a great weekend, the company was good, and I am sure everybody else did too.

So come on the 1st Virgin London Marathon 2010 - here come the Footers!!!

The Dunblane 7.5 Mile Road Race

Myself and Janette ran this race on Sunday.

It starts outside the Hydro Hotel and you follow mainly quiet country roads out to the village of Kinbuck, returning to Dunblane following a different road.

The route is undulating with a few tough climbs in the second half. You need to save a little bit for the end which is at the top of the drive at the Hydro.

The weather was cloudy and cool, with a strong head wind on the way back.

Over 300 runners took part. It was a charity event so the prize list was short and the goody bags light, but we both really enjoyed it.

Janette's time was 55.28 and mine was 60.00.

Female club kit

We have had some disappointing printing quality from our most recent suppliers.

Janette is now trying to source a new supplier and will keep you posted.

Other news

Norma and Chris are running in the Edinburgh Marathon on Sunday. Good luck to them.

Norma has some race reports in the pipeline for the next newsletter. She is running six races in six weeks, including two marathons!

Well that's all folks.

Thanks to Dougie, Alan and Steve for their reports.

Yours in running

Pamela