

**London Marathon
Sunday 22 April 2012
Report by Kay Farrow of Beverley AC**



Nineteen members of Beverley Athletic Club travelled south last weekend to take part in the London Marathon, one of the biggest marathons in the world.

After months of training they joined a record number of 37,227 runners at the start in south London to run 26 miles and 385 yards round the capital to the finish in the Mall.



After a dull and wet week in London, on race day there was bright sunshine, cloudless skies and higher temperatures than forecast. Conditions were great for spectators but a little warm for some of the runners.

There were some excellent performances from members of Beverley AC with several personal bests, a couple of championship times, a number of good for age times, several comebacks from adversity and lots of shouts of encouragement from club mates who had travelled down to London to watch the race. All Beverley runners commented on the support from their club mates which gave them a real boost. Sam Allen said: "It makes a difference when the shout of encouragement is from a voice you recognise and a familiar face. I am really grateful for their support."

James Pearson and Rob Snaith were the first Beverley athletes to finish, crossing the line within seconds of each other in 2:43:11 and 2:43:18 respectively. Both finished in the top 300 and achieved championship times to qualify for next year's race. Pearson has run faster in a marathon but it was Snaith's turn to record a new personal best and he was delighted with his time. This was his fourth marathon and he beat his previous best by more than a minute. He reported feeling comfortable at the half-way point, got through the lonely part



of the course between 14 and 22 miles and then realised that if he could maintain his pace he would do his training justice and achieve a PB. He has suffered from cramp in marathons in the past and when it threatened again he lengthened his stride, raised his head and kept it at bay. He caught sight of Pearson as he turned into the Mall for the last few hundred metres and although he was unable to overtake him he was delighted with his performance. He had enough energy to perform a victory dance for his two young sons when he was reunited with his family.

Photo left: James Pearson **Above left:** Andy Grainger
Above right: Jim McGivern, Steve Peacock and Sam Allen



Beverley AC was allocated four club places in the race and they were awarded to Sam Allen, Victoria Evins, Andy Grainger and Pete Watkinson. All four did remarkably well.

Running in his third marathon and in London for the first time, Andy Grainger beat his personal best by an amazing 32 minutes and 34 seconds to finish in an impressive 4:01:25. He would have been even faster if he had not had to dodge and weave through the crowds of runners. "I did more side steps than Roger Millward in his heyday," he quipped afterwards. Realising with 385 yards to go that he would just miss breaking four hours he decided to enjoy the finishing strait and jogged down the Mall waving to the crowds.

Sam Allen was delighted to receive one of Beverley AC's club places in recognition of her work for the club especially as she had been rejected in the public ballot every year since the last time she ran in London in 2009. Her target this year was to achieve a good for age time of less than 3 hours 50 minutes so that she would gain automatic entry to the race next year. She was frustrated that she could not run at her own pace at the start and wasted time and energy weaving in and out of other runners. After only eight miles she felt a big blister forming on her left foot then another on her right foot. Despite the pain she decided to try to continue at a consistent pace and finished in an excellent time of 3:38:45, twelve minutes faster than her previous time in London and well within the good for age qualifying time. However her feet were in a terrible state and she could hardly walk after she finished. She hobbled to the St John's Ambulance tent where medics bandaged her wounds.



Victoria Evins was the only Beverley athlete who was taking part in a marathon for the first time. Although her training had gone well and she had completed two 20-mile runs she had no idea what to expect in the last six miles. Everything went to plan until 21 miles when her legs started to stiffen and her pace dropped. However after running 422 miles in training she was determined to finish. She was helped by a man at 23 miles who gave her Jaffa cakes and she received a big boost at 24 miles when she saw her husband and children. She loved the whole experience and said "Nothing really prepared me for the atmosphere but the noise when you are running is incredible. This was my first marathon, but I very much doubt it will be my last!"



Photos: Andy Grainger (top), Sam Allen's feet (middle), Victoria Evins blowing a kiss to her children (left)



It was Pete Watkinson's eighteenth London Marathon and he also praised the spectators: "The crowds were fantastic. There seems to be more every year and at times the noise was deafening!" He was delighted to finish in 3:27:42 and qualify for next year's race with a good for age time.

After some excellent performances in the past it was Jim McGivern's first marathon for nine years. A ruptured Achilles tendon caused him to limit his running to shorter distances eight years ago. This year he decided to make a comeback to distance running and entered the London Marathon to give himself a focus. He had a great run and finished twenty seconds inside his target time in 2:59:40 and was even more pleased to beat his old rival Steve Peacock by almost a minute.

Peacock had been on the verge of pulling out of the marathon when an Achilles injury struck during training. He decided to compete but at a slower pace. He finished in a commendable 3:00:35 and qualifies automatically for next year's race with a good for age time. He hopes to be back to his best form by then and will be aiming for sub 2:50.

It was a disappointing day for Tony Hunter and Andrew Foster. It was Hunter's fifth successive London Marathon and he was aiming for three hours. He was fine in the first half but lost the pace when he had trouble breathing and had to stop three times. Nevertheless he finished in a very respectable time of 3:18:35.

Andrew Foster was aiming to set a new PB in his fourth London Marathon but it was not to be. He found the conditions too warm and would have preferred some clouds and rain.

Four of Beverley's runners had competed in the Hull Marathon only two weeks before and all recorded slower but still very respectable times in London. Despite their tired legs Julie Donald and Zoe Dale recorded good for age times. Although Debs Brant was a few minutes slower than in Hull she beat her previous best which was set in London last year.



After racing the Hull Marathon Julie Donald and Lucas Meagor decided to run London for fun in fancy dress. They were also aiming for a place in the Guinness book of records. Julie ran as Wenda from the Where's Wally? series of books and is now the proud holder of the world record for the fastest female to run a marathon dressed as a book character. Slowed down by jeans and a long-sleeved shirt Meagor missed out on the fastest cowboy record but thoroughly enjoyed his eighth London marathon.

Photos: Jim McGivern and Pete Watkinson show off their medals (top), Julie Donald as Wenda and cowboy Lucas Meagor



A family record was maintained by Ian Boardley who chose to run the marathon despite having done little training. He has been suffering from a painful tendon problem since November and had only run twelve miles this year. He said: "I ran in fancy dress as Spiderman to keep a run of 15 years of a Boardley finishing the London marathon going and to raise money for children with cancer."

Dan Hammond ran for Breast Cancer UK, one of the two official charities for this year's London Marathon. He has returned to running recently after a busy few years following the birth of his twins in 2009. He found it too hot for comfort and decided to take it steady, soak up the atmosphere and enjoy himself. He beat his target of sub four hours comfortably and during the race ran alongside actor Tony Audenshaw of Emmerdale and pop idol Will Young.

Popular local athlete and former Beverley AC member Darran Bilton recorded another excellent time in London. He finished first in the 45-49 age group in 2:34:55.



Kenya's Wilson Kipsang won the elite men's race in 2:04:44, the second fastest time ever recorded in the London Marathon. Mary Keitany, also from Kenya, won the ladies' race for the second year in succession in 2:18:37 to become the third fastest woman in history in a marathon. It was a fast ladies race with the first three all recording new personal bests.

Beverley AC finishing times:

James Pearson 2:43:11; Rob Snaith 2:43:18; Jim McGivern 2:59:40; Steve Peacock 3:00:35; Steve Jackson 3:16:32; Tony Hunter 3:18:35; Ian Husband 3:25:20; Pete Watkinson 3:27:42; Zoe Dale 3:36:10; Sam Allen 3:38:45; Julie Donald 3:39:49; Dan Hammond 3:51:06; Ian Boardley 3:51:19; Andrew Foster 3:58:54; Andy Grainger 4:01:25; Debs Brant 4:05:18; Jayne Dale 4:09:32; Lucas Meagor 4:16:10; Victoria Evins 5:27:58.



Photos Andy Grainger (top), Sam Allen and medal, Julie Donald and Lucas Meagor

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