

## **Hardmoors 30 New Years Day 2013**

Organised by Jon Steele of the Hardmoors Race series this is the 3rd year the race has been going, although the first time for me. It is roughly a circular course 31 miles in length although Jon sometimes underestimates course length!

There were a number of options on the day; a 9am start for walkers and slower runners (it seems most went for this option), 10am start for faster runners and an 11am start for the 15 mile option.

In terms of prizes there are the usual trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd ladies & mens, plus ladies and mens vets & interestingly a prize for 1st Shire which is a euphemism for male 14 stone plus entrants, which nicely suits the slightly non PC character of the race director. He actually started the race with the words "Bugger off!"

### The course

Starting at Ravenscar Village Hall the route follows the Cleveland way south to Hayburn Wyke nature reserve & a self clip checkpoint. It then joins the disused railway line heading North to Whitby with checkpoints and refreshment stops at Ravenscar and Robin Hoods Bay village halls where there was plenty of encouragement, drinks and assorted snacks. At the end of the line in Whitby (20 miles) there was another CP with more drinks and flapjacks. The route then takes you through Whitby town centre and up the 100 odd steps (running up the steps is compulsory) to the ruined abbey. Whitby was quite busy on New Years Day as the weather was relatively fine.

2 or 3 miles south of Whitby on the Cleveland Way the going did become quite muddy, and continued to get muddier and muddier throughout the rest of the route This caused me to become slower and slower. The final leg between Robin Hoods Bay and Ravenscar was especially interesting with lots of descents and climbs along the cliff path interspersed with doughy mud-type conditions and then the final climb to Ravenscar.

The weather throughout the day was mostly dry with a persistent wind but it stayed fine throughout the day. The temperature did start dropping quickly later so the later finishers would have been getting chilly once it was dark.

At the end of the run there was a warm welcome in the hall, hot drinks, baked potatoes and lots of warming through generally. Some runners were staying overnight in the hall as well, so doubtless there was a drink or two later on as well.

### Results were

104 starters, and 97 finishers, of which the NEMC had at least 3 runners, represented by Dave Robson, Dave Cremins and myself, apologies if I have missed anyone.

### HARDMOORS 30 Category winners

1st Robin Carter 4hrs 21mins  
2nd Neil Risdale 4hrs 23mins  
3rd Anthony Gerundini 4hrs 30mins  
1st Lady Sophie Crad 5hrs 32mins  
1st 50 vet David Jelley 4hrs 41mins  
1st 50 vet Lady Alison Brind 6hrs 15mins  
1st 60 vet Dave Thompson 6hrs  
1st Shire Darren Gillman 7hrs 39mins

You can see the full results here on the Hardmoors website (my flapjacks get a kind mention too)  
<http://www.hardmoors110.org.uk/cms/?q=node/379> .

There is another race report here, which has more poetic description of the mud  
<http://nippersmith.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/hard-moors-30-1-january-2013.html?m=1>

Tim Taylor  
January 2013

## MIAMI NICE: Miami Marathon January 27<sup>th</sup> 2013\_

Adele and I decided to do the Miami Marathon last year as a great excuse for a holiday and a week in the sun.

The holiday got off to a flying start when we realised Yohan Blake was sitting behind us on the plane. We then took it upon ourselves to race him to US Customs when we arrived in Miami and were delighted to overtake him in the airport (wearing 4"heels), although to be fair to him he didn't realise there was a race going on!!!

We arrived in Miami on Thursday afternoon and the marathon was early Sunday morning. Friday was spent at the Expo picking up our numbers, buying new trainers and trying every freebie on offer.

Race day started early with our alarms set for 3.30am. We made our way to the start in the dark. When we got there it was quite poorly organised as we couldn't find the baggage drop and there were very few toilets. We just made it to our corral in time for the 6.15am start.

At the same time as the full marathon, there was also the half marathon and the 2 races started together. There is an American running coach who trains people to complete marathons by running/walking. He obviously had a big influence on a lot of the competitors as we were surprised by how many people were walking right at the start. This resulted in quite a lot of congestion at the start and difficulty passing them.

Once past the walkers, we enjoyed running past the cruise liners, and Star Island, looking at the amazing houses (home to the likes of the Bee Gees and Gloria Estefan). We then ran into South Beach and past our hotel and onto downtown Miami, where the half marathon finished.

By this time it was starting to heat up and was very humid (temperatures reaching the 80's). The next 10 miles were a slog, running through Coconut Grove, a mainly residential area.

The heat and humidity started taking its toll on me at mile 23, luckily Adele kept me going.

At mile 26 we were delighted to see a friend of Adele's in the crowd and this spurred us on to finish with a smile.

The finish was much better organised than the start with food, drink, music and stalls. The medals are fantastic and well worth all the hard work.

Overall we enjoyed this marathon despite the heat. And we really enjoyed the heat for the rest of the holiday which was spent relaxing on the beach.

Davina Lonsdale



Mile 26 and still smiling!!

## Apeldoorn Midwinter Marathon – 3 Feb 2013 by Ian Richardson

I like running in Holland. They seem to organise distance events very well and are enthusiastic about supporting them, even in awful weather. This was the 40<sup>th</sup> running of the event, according to my medal and there are several shorter distances too.

The 2011 event was in temperatures of -15C according to the Sandwell lads I met, who had come back for another go as they had enjoyed it so much, cold notwithstanding.

Just over 500 of us set off at midday with a lot more in the 27.5 K event, in chilly but pleasant conditions. It took over 90 seconds to cross the line at the start by the concert hall just outside the centre of a very attractive town.

As I am suffering a hip injury which means that I have to take things easy, the slow start was good for me and gave me a chance to have a chat and to admire the scenery.

The first 5k were around the outskirts of the town and along streets with some very nice houses. It really was a most impressive looking place to live.

Drinks stations serving water, sports drink, tea and chopped up bananas were every 5k, and after the first of these, we were out into the countryside. Flat as you would expect in Holland, and none the less pleasant for all that.

The marshalling was spot on as was the encouragement at the drinks stations.

After 15k, we were onto a recently resurfaced road for about 10k on the way back to town, having turned away for the rather chilly breeze. Running along the country road was certainly more pleasant, but this was fine.

At about 26.5k, those running the shorter distance split off to the finish and we headed out for another lap, taking in some of the earlier lap, but not as much road.

For me, the rain started just after this split, and got progressively heavier and colder. I was particularly pleased with my choice of kit as I had thought that I was a bit overdressed earlier on.

It was a quiet but very pleasant run to the end as my confidence in my hip grew and I was able to pick up the pace and overtake a lot in the last 10k, always a good feeling.

The last kilometre or so was run alongside the end of the mini marathon, separated by barriers and there was a good cheering crowd in the rather unpleasant conditions. I could hardly see a thing through my glasses and kept looking for the finish sign, thinking that it must come soon !

At the finish was a nice medal and bottle of sports drink then you were on your way. I really enjoyed this event, despite my rather modest 4:03 and would be very happy to go back and do it again, although preferably not in -15C.



Look, both feet off the ground!

Ian Richardson 4 Feb 2013

## Clonakilty Back2back marathons 16/17 March 2013 by Ian Richardson

“Sure, and it’ll be a soft day for running”, was what one of the lovely ladies in the hotel told us on the Saturday morning. In English, this seems to mean mild, drizzly and very windy.

Stevie Matthews and I were representing the NEMC and had flown to Cork on the Friday and hired a car to drive about 45 minutes to Clon.

O’Donovan’s hotel was in the centre of town and could not have done more to look after us. They epitomised everything that is good about Irish hospitality.

Registration for this inaugural event, capped at 180 entrants, was a straightforward affair in another local hotel where we got our two technical T shirts, nice ones, two numbers and a chip.

We left into the “soft” morning and drove the 3 or so miles to Inchydoney Island where the race started outside the huge, new and impersonal looking Lodge and Spa .

Being on the sea front, we had the full force of the wind, but after a short distance, moved inland and headed roughly west and were largely sheltered from the elements and could start to appreciate the beautiful rolling countryside.

There were water stations every 3 miles (bottled, 250ml) and also some cycle support riders carrying additional supplied and energy bars. In addition, there were energy stations at 20 and 22 miles, which had energy drinks, bananas and various chocolate and sweet things.

The first hill on what I had heard was a tough course was at about 6 miles and was very short.

There were two long inclines in the second half but not real hills, not like Hamsterley !

There were a couple of steeper downhill later on which were hard on the quads and toe ends.

The marshalling and drinks management was excellent and encouraging and the views of the sea were quite inspiring. The course was not closed to traffic, but there was very little and mostly very supportive in passing by slowly and giving us plenty of width and waving or shouting encouragement.

The last mile along the sea front was into the wind and hard work, but also quite rewarding as the finish banner came into view.

At the end, we got a very nice, heavy duty medal, plenty of drinks, bananas, energy bars, chocolate bars and a foil blanket, which threatened to become a sail.

We both really enjoyed our run and awaited the alarm clocks call to groundhog day on Sunday.

Similar weather, but with much stronger winds which were a nuisance, otherwise a lovely repeat of day one.

They are planning to have a get together on the Sunday night next year, for those staying over, as this was a test event, and Stevie and I are keen to be there.

I would say that it is the friendliest marathon(s) that I have ever done. All of those involved deserve praise for their unflagging and enthusiastic support and encouragement, standing on corners alone for hours to guide us the right way and handing out drinks and cheers. That’s West Cork people for you.

I would thoroughly recommend this event. It is worth going to Clon just to stay in O’Donovan’s hotel, a sixth generation run establishment that is at the top of the list of hotels I have stayed in over the years.

Ian Richardson

18 February 2013

## Osmotherley Trail Marathon 17-02-2013

This was my first foray into a 'proper' trail marathon. It is the first of 5 new events in the new Hardmoors 26.2 trail series. There were around 160 competitors spread across the 10k , half marathon but mostly for the full marathon ,109 to be exact. It was a mainly circular course with a small out and back at the far end. Given the anticipated elevation and terrain I had anticipated a new personal worst - Although I would have been happy to finish inside four hours, I had seriously underestimated how tough this one would be.

The organisers send out an e mail on the Wednesday before the race warning of potentially hypothermic conditions, resulting in a trip to an outdoor centre for extra kit.

When the day came though we were blessed with clear skies and calm weather - and a heavy backpack of kit! I can see why the warnings had been in place as the moors were completely exposed in places and a chilly wind which resulted in hat and gloves being taken in and out of my back pack.

A car park was allocated on the outskirts of the village and a ten minute walk up the hill brought us to the village hall in Osmotherley where race HQ was. Here we were presented with a technical t shirt , a race number and a good supply of pre race food.

Everything seemed efficient and after a short race brief we were sent on our way at 9 prompt. The half and the 10k were to start at later times.

The race started on a down hill road on the way out of Osmotherley, but within the first 2 miles it was a steep climb and the first of several stages of enforced tactical walking for the majority of the field.

The route was soon out onto the exposed moors and up and down steep ascents and descents. The terrain was a mixture of mud, rocks, a little snow and normal trail all of which got quite technical in places, especially coming down the steep mountains. When you got the chance to look up you where treated to some fantastic views across the North Yorkshire Moors, although with my unsuitable road shoes I preferred to keep my eyes on the course as much as possible , or face the risk of falling flat on my face!

I seemed to be able to hold my own on the flat parts of the course but lost a lot of ground on the difficult terrain and on the descents.

I had a final spike of energy in the final few miles, probably helped by the enforced walking, and also bumped into a couple of other members of the NEMC. The organisers had stated this course was 27 miles long - I clocked it at 28.3 making the final descent back into the village a very long one!

My finish time was 5 hrs 13 and in 27th place, and found this to be a great event. There was plenty of well stocked aid stations and a supply of food at the end, along with a good quality finishers medal. I'm sure I'll be back for another event in this series at some point, although I'm quite booked up already this year.

Andy Bristow

### An uphill climb



## GOLDEN FLEECE CIRCUIT 27.5 miles March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013

My original intention was to do the Meadows Marathon in Edinburgh this weekend. Medical problems and the doctor's orders not to run until after surgery put paid to that idea. Walking, however, is still allowed so I looked for an LDWA type event I could do instead and came up with this one. (There's nothing in the rules that say you have to run a marathon for it to count. You just have to cover the distance on foot and under your own steam)

The Golden Fleece Circuit in memory of a local scout leader is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year and offers both runners and walkers a 27.5 or 15 mile route among the East Yorks. Wolds, an area about which I knew very little. Both events start and finish at the small village of South Cave situated just north of the Humber estuary. The 300 limit reached early last year seemed to be exceeded this time around – a friend who entered on the day was given No 358.

So, over 300 of us set off in a mass start at 8.30am on what turned out to be the most beautiful sunny day of endless blue skies and panoramic views. The runners, including Dave Robson and friend Melanie, soon disappeared into the distance. Route finding was by written instructions directing us to the 8 checkpoints we had to find on the longer route. Being unfamiliar with the area my master plan was simply to tuck in behind the faster walkers and follow them around the course.

It quickly became apparent that, just as in running events, there was some kind of recognisable hierarchy among the walking fraternity, a sort of LDWA set of superstars who regularly try to out-walk each other on these events. These people were deadly serious, heads-down, non-communicative and carrying their own provisions so as not to be held up at the checkpoints. They maintained a relentless 14 minute per mile pace throughout, which is some going, (for a walk), considering the undulating nature of the course, (try it, it's not that easy!) It became quite competitive but, with a full winter of marathon training behind me, I had no difficulty in keeping up. The only problem was in restraining my natural inclination to break into a run, particularly as so much of the course involved long, straight stretches between the surrounding Wolds on firm, dry trails – perfect conditions for an off-road marathon. In fact, the only really testing part of the course came during the final 2 miles where the height gained afforded spectacular views of the Humber estuary before dropping down to the finish.

At this point and without the worries of route finding, I decided to push on ahead. A couple in particular of the aforementioned walkers seemed to resent the presence of an unknown interloper dogging their footsteps so, out of sheer bloody-mindedness, I increased the pace and overtook the both of them. Just because I can't run, it doesn't say I can't be competitive!

As usual for these events there were volunteers galore, all-you-can-eat at checkpoints and a welcoming warm meal at the finish. The day was almost perfect for running/walking with clear skies and a gentle breeze allowing us to enjoy the stunning scenery of the Wolds – splendid value for only £9. I'd really like to return as a runner next year.

Jim Manford

March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013

Typical Wolds scenery



## MEADOWS MARATHON 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2013

This was the second running of this marathon which consisted of 14 laps of The Meadows, a park in the south east corner of Edinburgh. In 2012 the race was 15 laps but was also the best part of a mile over the marathon distance so this year the organisers had lengthened each lap but reduced the number. Conditions were perfect for running, cool, dry and very little wind. I had been suffering from a head cold for a few days before the race and really didn't feel up to a marathon and if it hadn't been for the fact that it was a lapped race and therefore easy to drop out I wouldn't have started. I actually made my mind up on lap 3 to drop out at the end of lap 4 but found myself running alongside fellow NEMC member Ian Richardson and as we ran along together chatting about this and that, I started to feel a little better and before I knew it another four laps had gone by. By then I had reached half way so I made my mind up that I was going to finish no matter how much I had to slow down over the second half. Ian had stopped for a toilet break and I therefore ran the last half dozen laps on my own. Because there is also a half marathon there are plenty of other runners around in the first half of the race but the second half is a fairly lonely experience once the half marathoners have finished.

Anyway, I eventually got to the finish in 3.57.29 by my watch but to be honest I couldn't have cared less about the time, I was just delighted to have got round.

I think there were six NEMC members in the race who probably finished in this order:

Steve Prentice, Ian Singer, Ivan Field, Ian Richardson, me, Dave Parry. Sincere apologies if I have missed anyone but it took a week before the results were published and even then I have been unable to open the results folder on the Meadows Marathon website so I don't know the times of the other runners. Steve Prentice may even have won, he certainly seemed to be leading when he lapped me for the second time.

The race, organized by Edinburgh University, is an unashamedly fundraising event for various charities and while as a race it probably isn't worth the £30 + entry fee, I would rather my race entry was used for this purpose than to line some race organisers pockets.

Full marks to the very enthusiastic marshals who cheered right to the end. No marks to the providers of the chip timing system.

Cris Atwell

## GROUNDHOG TRACK MARATHON March 9<sup>th</sup> 2013

Within the space of a week I'd gone from the somewhat sublime to the faintly ridiculous - from the rolling countryside, wide open spaces and endless skies of the Yorkshire Wolds to the cramped confines of a track marathon in the unscenic surroundings of a Telford Athletics stadium. I'm still under doctor's orders not to run and had reluctantly just cancelled a week in Paphos where I was entered for the Cyprus Marathon today. I had, however, enjoyed fast-walking the Wolds event to such an extent I was tempted to see if I could repeat the process again, this time by getting under the strict 6 hour time limit imposed by the organisers. So, ignoring the warnings behind words like "mice" and "treadmill" I managed to obtain a last minute entry. The NEMC's Ian Richardson already had his name down for the event, as too did a number of good friends from the 100 Marathon Club, always keen to go the distance regardless of what it involved.

A small group of approx. 55 of us set off on the first of our century-plus laps at 10am on a cold, damp Midlands morning. I stuck to my plan of walking as fast as I could for the first five laps, completing each of these in sub 12 minutes/mile pace but by lap six I'd already been lapped by the slowest runner in the race and was facing the indignity of being left alone on the course at the finish. Never having finished last in any of my previous marathons, (other than when acting as sweeper for a couple of my own events), I decided to defy doctor's advice and jog around every 4<sup>th</sup> lap. This worked a treat and by the time I finished in just over 5 hours there were still eight weary souls winding their lonely way to the finish line. The fact that my Garmin read 27.72 miles simply gives credence to the argument that it cannot measure distance accurately on circular tracks.

It's a strange sensation going round and round in the same size circles. It's as much a psychological as a physical challenge. After all there's nothing particularly arduous on running on a good surface on a completely flat course. To keep myself amused I passed a lot of the time observing, as well as chatting to, my fellow competitors. These seemed to be divided into three distinct groups: firstly there were those on a mission, going for a personal best time and who simply hared around each lap, hogging the inside lane. You had to keep out of their way! The second and largest group, to which I belonged, seemed to have a much more sociable outlook to the event, using it as an opportunity to catch up with old friends, swap experiences and exchange friendly banter. Mind you, much of the latter came to a stop approaching the 80<sup>th</sup>+ lap when survival took over and energy had to be conserved. Finally, there was a smaller group, largely uncommunicative with wires in their ears, lost in their own musically motivated world. I guess when faced with the daunting prospect of completing 105 laps of a track we've all got to work out our own best way of getting around.

The race was organised under the auspices of the COD Running Club. I'm not sure the reason behind the name and forgot to ask Denzil Martin about it while we were going around. Denzil organises a series of events of which the Holly Challenge and the Sunrise to Sunset races are perhaps best known. Everything about the event went as smoothly as could be expected. The chip timing allowed the laps to be counted electronically and shouted out to competitors as they came past. There was also a huge table full of goodies to which the runners could help themselves as often as they wanted. The medal was distinctive and it was possible to get a hot shower afterwards in the nearby leisure centre. What more could anyone want?

Jim Manford

March 10<sup>th</sup> 2013

Here we go Looby Loo!



## HARDMOORS 55 2013

This was my first attempt at running the Hardmoors 55, which was run from Guisborough to Helmsley for this first time this year. (it normally starts at Helmsley). It has also been my first race of any distance, since the Hardmoors 60 in October last year. My preparation for this race in terms of training has been following an Advanced Marathonning plan by Peter Pfitzinger and Scott Douglas. The HM55 is my longest run in that plan, which is 5 weeks out from my marathon. A link to my slightly modified version of the plan can be found here. As you can see I am falling well short of the weekly mileage targets. That is the point for me, if I can not even find the time to meet the mileage for a marathon plan, then why follow an Ultra plan. I think the mixture of speed and endurance is better for me than the more endurance based ultra plans. Most of my running for this plan has also been on trails rather than tarmac. The slight changes I made are that I do longish runs on Friday and Saturday and the obvious one is that the original plan does not have a 55 mile long run :) Just getting to the start line was an adventure wheel spinning my way up a very snowy Sutton Bank was not for the faint hearted. Once at the top I doubled back to help a stranded runner stuck near the top of the hill. Once there I joined the coach at Helmsley to take us to the start at Guisborough. It was good to catch up with everyone on the bus and discuss the upcoming race, just looking out of the bus at the snowy wintry conditions it was clear that it was going to be an interesting day. Race registration and kit checks went very smoothly and it was good to see full kit checks being enforced given the weather. Thanks to Ray for snapping me before the off. My hopes for this run were to be able to run all runnable section, survive on minimum food by running at a steady pace. Given that this was a training run towards a marathon and also preparation for my first 100 miler in May, I was not wanting to go out to hard like I did in my last Ultra (Hardmoors 60). In short I wanted to see if it was possible to enjoy an Ultra, in terms of time I was hoping that I could break 10 hours for 55 miles. We learned at race registration that the course was being shortened to 52 miles, given the weather I was keeping an open mind about the time target. Once under way it was good to get the legs moving and kept reminding myself to take it easy early on. The first real sign that that the weather was going to be a big part of the day, was the climb up Roseberry Topping. The wind whipping across the hill was vicious, top marks to the two marshals that were running the checkpoint on that hill. I was more than glad to get up and down of that hill. After passing through the first indoor checkpoint at Kildale we started the long climb towards Bloworth Crossing. It was this point that I started my highly complex nutrition plan by consuming a single fig roll. Here are some key facts on my new super food :) I am using Sainsburys fig rolls, but I am sure other brands are very similar :) Nutritional Summary: Cals 71 Fat 1.8g Carbs 12.6g Prot 0.9g There are 71 calories in a 1 roll serving of Sainsbury's Fig Rolls. Calorie Breakdown: 23% fat, 72% carbs, 5% prot.

The first hints of strong wind were to be found on this hill, as the wind was blowing strongly into our faces during this climb. Once we started to approach Bloworth I had my breath taken away by the wind! I had to put on my hat and pull my coat hood over my head to prevent the side of my face freezing! The side wind was that strong it was literally blowing my sideways whilst running. The knee deep snow in places, stopped us from being blown away though! Full marks to my Montane minimus jacket for keeping the wind out. It was during this period that my water supply froze, so the only water I could drink was at check points that had water. Most of the route was runnable, but the drama of that wind and the 2 to 3 feet snow drifts in places, added a real sense of drama to the day that made the run a real adventure :) I had not had chance to recce the parts from Bloworth to Osmotherly miles 18 to 32. There are some great climbs in this section and they come thick and fast. As I approached Osmotherly (second indoor checkpoint) I had consumed almost a full packet of fig rolls, but I was looking forward to some savoury food and a good drink of water!

After leaving the checkpoint at Osmotherly we hit some of the longest and deepest snow drifts with strong cross winds again. This section was pretty tough, and it was slow going wading through the snow. I was looking forward to reaching Sutton Bank, as from Sutton Bank you start the run in to the end at Helmsley. Once at Sutton Bank, time seemed to go into slow motion as I started the run into Helmsley. What kept me going was the desire to finish an Ultra without needing a head torch and on checking the time, it looked as though a sub 10 hour finish was still on the cards, if I could keep going at the same effort.

I managed to reach Helmsley in just under 10 hours and was delighted to have broken the 10 hours barrier in such challenging conditions. I was 14th overall. Really pleased that I seemed to have proven to myself that running in fat burning mode for an ultra has enabled me to have one of my best finishes in a training race :) It was also the first ultra where I felt in control of the pacing throughout the whole route. I would also like to give a special thank you to Shelly, Hardmoors leading lady for helping me with pacing and route knowledge. Also many thanks to Jon, the helpers and marshals. This is my second hardmoors race and I am big fan of their race series. I look forward to running the HM55 and HM60 again. I remain very nervous about joining the two together to run my first 100 miler later this year though :)

Tim Bateson

March 2013

## RESERVOIR MARATHON March 31<sup>st</sup> 2013

This was the second race of a double marathon weekend titled “Easter around the Reservoir” organised in Northampton by Dave and Linda Major of madeyarun.com fame. Dave & Linda have been good friends of the NEMC for a couple of years now, providing online entries and publicity for all of our events.

In addition, they’ve both travelled regularly the long distance from their home in Northampton to run in and assist at our races. I thought it was time, on this occasion, that I should go down to one of their events and make a reciprocal gesture.

The Majors had had the foresight to book a tranche of rooms at the nearby Holiday Inn for those taking part and to use the venue as HQ for the event. With many running the double and staying both nights, this made the whole weekend a very sociable affair and a chance to catch up with friends at pre-race breakfast and the post-race bar. As the hotel was also playing host to a large wedding and disco on the Saturday, the weekend turned out a very lively affair – as evidenced by the unexpected Sunday no-shows from those expected to run that day. I’m not sure whether this was a consequence of unexpected aches and pains from Saturday or merely the result of that night’s over-indulgence.!

As it was 61 runners finished the first leg of the double on Saturday and a further 42 of us lined up on a cold Sunday morning for the first of 6 laps around the Brackmills Reservoir situated at the rear of the hotel. 25 of the latter managed to complete both events. Though totally off-road, the circular nature of the course meant that there were no problems with route finding. We ran the first 2 miles on the western side of the reservoir on a tarmac, multi-use path. Then a short zig-zag behind the dam brought us back on ourselves and up onto the head of the dam.

From there it was another 2 miles along a raised grassy dyke on the reservoir’s eastern side back to the drinks station in front of the Holiday Inn. Apart from one small slippery section of grass, the going was generally good underfoot making for pleasant running conditions throughout.

Dave and Linda’s event had all the ingredients for a successful marathon: enthusiastic organisers, a scenic course, ample refreshments, a friendly bunch of runners and an excellent venue – all at the sensible price of £15, (or £25 for the double) We were also given an Easter Egg (a nice touch) as well as the customary medal for our troubles. The event is being staged again, as a double, in July when hopefully it might prove a little warmer than yesterday.

Jim Manford

April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013

The Reservoir we’re talking about here

