

## HARRY NEWTON: MARATHON MAN

Harry's 1<sup>st</sup> Marathon was London 1995 aged 58!

This was almost a chance occurrence. Harry, a grocer and sub –postmaster, happened to attend a conference where he met a man from the Mars chocolate company. This man had been involved with the Mars sponsorship of the London Marathon in the early days of the race and had also taken part himself on two occasions. He asked if any the attendees were interested in having a go at the next race in April 1995 and raise money for their grocer's charity. Harry was. He entered with just six months to train from scratch. Having no running background whatsoever he found it difficult from the start suffering with "minor" problems such as shin splints but he persevered with a mix of running/walking. By January after a couple of months training he was up to 9 mile runs and going quite well. Then the trouble started! Severe pains in one of his knees brought training to a halt and his time was taken up visiting physiotherapists and doctors. April came round and although nowhere near ready to run a marathon with the help of a cortisone injection he decided to give it his best shot. In Harry's words "The day of the Marathon arrived and I started to run. All went well for the first nine miles, then into the unknown and the pain set in. I carried on running and walking with the pain getting worse with every mile. I managed to finish the race in 5 hours and 18 minutes. Then the pain really started as my legs quickly started to stiffen up. I could hardly walk back to my hotel, where I had a shower and got on the bus back to Macclesfield. After about six weeks I got my legs back to something like normal. That first marathon was a massive learning curve"

Undaunted he ran the New York Marathon the following year with some grocery colleagues. He managed to get some good training in during the summer and was in pretty good shape for the race which he completed in 4 hours and 12 minutes. "A much more enjoyable experience than my first London race". He ran the London Marathon again in 1997 with a similar time to his New York race.

After a "Marathon" break Harry became more like an occasional runner without any serious training.

Harry being a retail Grocer had a connection with the Cadbury confectionary company who were sponsors of the baton carrying for the Manchester Commonwealth games in 2002. Harry was sponsored by Cadbury to carry the baton in Macclesfield during which he met up with Mark Wheelton who was carrying the baton sponsored by Macclesfield Harriers. Mark persuaded Harry without too much difficulty to join Macclesfield Harriers where he did some serious training with Dave Jackson and the C group. This paid off and in the London Marathon 2003 aged 65 he managed a time of 4 hours and 5 minutes (just 5 minutes over the good for age time). The following year he missed out on a place at London, so instead he had a go at the Lake Vyrnwy marathon in Wales achieving a personal best time of 3 hours 59 minutes and 30 seconds (now in the "Good for age" category). In 2008 he improved on his best time completing London Marathon again, this time in 3 hours 52 minutes and 30 seconds.

Shortly after this he was diagnosed with Lymphoma and had six months of chemotherapy at the Christie Hospital. He missed out on 2009 London Marathon, but there was good news as he learnt his Lymphoma had gone into remission. He resumed training with a new enthusiasm and has since completed 5 London marathons and 1 Greater Manchester Marathon raising money for cancer related charities. The only hiccup to date has been the 2012 race which caused an injury under his left foot. He visited a podiatrist and had special insoles made. He has since taken much more care of his feet with creams and insoles for his shoes.

He managed to get some training in for the 2013 marathon at the age of 75. Wary of a recurrence of the foot injury he decided to take it easy particularly in the early stages. This paid off and with a boost from terrific crowd encouragement he managed to find a little extra energy for the last few miles finishing in 4 hours 59 minutes and 14 seconds, still "Good for age".

Harry continues to run and at age 77 in the 2015 London marathon improved his time finishing in 4hr 43min 21secs. This was his 15th Marathon and still counting!

During the last 2 years Harry very much enjoyed running with Harriers D group. He has also enjoyed some shorter distance races with other Harriers. Harry very much appreciates the help of the fantastic Harriers team who organise the training runs and hopes he may have helped others to "Get Inspired"

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