

## Sheffield Ten 10 Ten 2. What sort of name is that for a race?

(It took me the whole 10k run to work it out!)

This was a 10k run organised by Kandoo events. It started at 10am on Sunday 30th October 2011 and was run in support of Weston Park NHS Cancer Hospital, Sheffield. The £18 advance entry fee seemed a bit high, but as half of this went straight to the hospital, I guess it made up a bit for the fact that I hadn't been able to do any fundraising.

The Sheffield Ten 10 Ten 2 race route was through two City Parks, Endcliffe Park and Whitely Woods. These form part of the 10-mile, Sheffield Round Walk circuit, which gives access to 1,100 acres of 'picturesque open space' - all within the boundary of the city's southern / south western districts. At its outer margins the parkland reaches out to the edge of the Peak District moors. Fortunately for me, I didn't have to run that far, as I am definitely not a cross country mud and bog specialist! (Though, running on the Rugby Club field is currently providing some relevant experience on that front.)

In fact, I didn't know about the race until the previous afternoon, when I had been happily doing a memory lane trip with my husband, recalling the 40th Anniversary of our first date - the Sheffield United Vs Liverpool fixture at Bramall Lane on Saturday 29th October 1971 - and saw a poster attached to a railing. Both parks were close by to where we had lived between 1974 and 1979, and we had walked them many times. Of course, this was an era when only proper athletes ran anywhere, and I can't ever remember seeing a runner or jogger using the park in those days. Now, it's a different story, with a seemingly unending stream of walkers, runners and cyclists out at all times.

Anyway, the thought of taking part appealed to me, so I googled for the details, and it turned out to require two laps of a 5k circuit. I registered on line - with 50 places out of 1000 left! I noted with some amusement the helpful advice on the website to arrive '60 minutes to an hour before the start at 10am', with an obligatory pre-start 'pen time' of 9-40am. I also had to submit a predicted finish time, so I'd played it safe and said 85 minutes; well, I hadn't run above 5 miles for nearly 6 months!

Sunday dawned dry, but grey and damp, after heavy overnight rain. For lack of any parking nearby, I was dropped off near a park gate and trudged across a muddy field towards the registration tent. Not having any kit with me, en route, I blagged a bottle of water from the drinks station that was in process of being set up just past the 5k marker. I was quite pleased it was a chip timed event but during the run learned that applying these too tightly to your ankle is not a good idea. It was odd not knowing anyone at the event, but the queue for the loo was, as usual, very long and provided lots of opportunity to talk to other female entrants. I found it a bit worrying to still be in that queue at 9-57am - but made it to the start on time.... Just!

The first section was a wide arcing loop across the playing field, and then we were out of the gate onto a local road, closed for the event. As I trundled along in a file of back of the field runners, it came to mind how many times I had walked along that road in an 'interesting condition' after a night out with student friends. Eventually, after this fairly long uphill stretch we reached another gate into Whitely Woods, where we were immediately sent up a 20 or 30 metre bank of grass the slope of which was not much short of 45 degrees. Since nearly 1000 people had run up this before me it was pretty churned up. I did try to run - even though I was unlikely to win the special 'Queen of the Hill' prize for the fastest ascent. In fact, it was so sticky I left one shoe behind, and, after sorting that out, I decided to just concentrate on getting up it walking. There followed a long interesting uphill section on woodland paths, rather like Lanhydrock, but also including a number of rather odd diversions downhill through tunnels specially chopped out of the undergrowth. These took us to the furthest reach of both the second park and of the 5km circuit, where we headed out onto a road and immediately turned back in through another park gate to run back on an essentially parallel course, this time on metalled park paths.

A highlight was passing a band of drummers for a second time, where I could see the head of the field struggling up the hill for the second time. They still managed to run, but I saw one guy go full length and come up muddy from nose to toe. The run back through Endcliffe park was mostly on metalled track, with a few diversions through the undergrowth, and the odd muddy 'incline' thrown in to slow you down a bit. I was just getting towards the end of one of these muddy bits when a BMX bike rider shot past me shouting 'Leader coming through'. A while later the leader appeared and was gone in a flash, but not before shouting 'get right, get out of my way' to two guys in front of me who clearly had no idea of racing etiquette. They received a sharp thrust aside from the front runner and looked slightly puzzledly at each other as he darted on ahead. (Finishing in under 35 minutes.)

Not many others passed by as I finished the long loop out to the main road and back to the start. The steward at the divide to the finish wasn't even tempted to beckon me into the barriered way as he did to a couple of guys who thundered by me from behind. The second lap went OK, and faster than the first, as I knew what was ahead and thought I could finish OK. It was tough getting up the hill a second time - largely because it was so churned up it had turned into one of those obstacle courses that people include on TV programmes to amuse the audience. One step up and a long slide down!

In the final run back through Endcliffe Park I gained some guilty pleasure in overtaking several of the people I had spoken with at the start, who had then happily told me they would finish in under an hour. Two of them had had no experience off pavements, or of running hills, and I had wondered if they had been being a bit optimistic.

My husband was waiting near the finish with a camera to take a photo of me dashing to the finish, and I put in a final sprint to try to get back in under 1 hour 15 minutes. Oddly, all the photos look like I am just jogging slowly towards the line. It felt fast to me?!!!! I finished 882nd out of 915 with a chip time of 1 hour 13 minutes and 58 seconds.

Ah, the race name! As I wandered the course, I wondered if I had it right that this 10k race might originally have been staged on the 10th October 2010 and that this was the second time it had been run. When I returned my chip and picked up my 'goody bag' (containing a heavy black event logo-ed cotton T-shirt, an energy gel and a bottle of water - somewhat ify I felt), I asked one of the stewards. She laughed and said it had caused a lot of argument when it had been used in all the publicity material last year. Everyone had pointed out that Kandoo's 'catchy title' wouldn't transfer if it were run again, but they had had to do their best 'for continuity's sake'.

### **Sheffield Ten 10 Ten 2011 Results**

**(6 Entry categories, Male,  
Female Under 18, 19 to 39,  
Veterans 40 year plus)**

<b>Male</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Time</b>
1. Julian Lings	34.37	1. Stephanie Sutcliffe	40.21
2. James Gray	36.08	2. Sally Fawcett	42.16
3. Ian Withers	36.16	3. Emilie Verroken	46.38
<b>1st Vet</b> : Einar Bergsholm	37.58 37.42	<b>1st Vet</b> : Jenny Wakeman	47.58 48.37
<b>1st U18</b> : Ed Mallett		<b>1st U18</b> : Ellie Dooley	