

# BATH HALF MARATHON – 11.3.12

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Well it was Saturday morning and we were all packed and raring to go (suitcases packed with enough clothes for a fortnight – passports at the ready) – chitter chatter all the way (poor Steve) two and half hours of race plans, and thoughts on what pace we needed to run each mile to beat our PB times – we talk a good race – like proper athletes!! The weather was great – blue skies – was this to be a good omen? I had packed long sleeves, short sleeves, vest top, arm warmers, gloves, hat, spare vest (you can never 2<sup>nd</sup> guess the British weather) but the weatherman assured me it was to be a lovely weekend – and for once in his career he was correct, the sun came out and didn't disappear until we got back to Cornwall Monday evening.

We arrived in the beautiful city of Royal Bath – did the sites – ate the food and drank a little to aid a restful sleep. We stayed at a lovely B&B called Milton House – 10 minutes walk from the centre.

Next morning – breakfast – full English – the hostess said that 'over the years of having runners to stay no-one had ever opted for a full English!!' - but various conversations with Tracy on the benefits of protein and not carbs – I was sure we had made a good choice!!

Full up and ready to go – a warm up walk to the Runners Village . three Cornish bumpkins in the middle of about 11,000 runners and the nerves were beginning to show. We were looking around to find likewise runners who would be in the slow pen with us – when we discovered that we had a white bib and would be starting the race with the Elite!!! We were beginning to wonder whether we had written on the entry form that we would finish in one hour something instead of two? Something had gone wrong somewhere – but then some ladies from St Austell put our fears to rest as they were in the same pen and were hoping for two hours something – phewee!!

As we were ushered to the start we did some warm ups and pretended that we knew what we were doing and that we had earned our place in the starting pen. Dermot O'Leary strolled past to the shrieks and cries of the crowd – sporting a very lovely pink headband – (another good omen - ?).

Eleven o'clock and we were off – the downside of starting at the front – we were almost trampled in the rush – 5000 runners overtaking you is very demoralising to say the least!!

Emma's daughter was waiting in the crowds with the camera – then as the elite runners passed she was relaxing and enjoying the sunshine - it would be another 15-20 minutes or before we would arrive - then she looks up and screeches 'Oh my god –there's Mum, there's Mum!!! – whats she doing near the front with all those fast runners!!!

The 2 lap run around the city was fantastic – the crowd support was amazing – there wasn't any part of the route that didn't have supporters shouting out your name – encouraging you along, holding up good luck banners and handing out sweets . There were plenty of water stations – first aid tents and loos along the route (what a relief – Em didn't have to do a Paula).

We were running along having a lovely time – when we were ushered to the left hand lane as the lead motorcyclist went past with Kenyan runner Edwin Kiptoo at mile 6 - he was nearly finishing and we still had another 7.1 miles to go!! ( he finished in 1h 2 minutes).

After about mile 8 I was beginning to struggle with the heat – the shaded areas were on the right and we were being ushered to run on the left to allow those lapping us to overtake. It was at this stage I noticed the sirens – ambulances trying to overtake to collect poor runners who had collapsed beside the road – a tad worrying – my only thoughts then - to breathe deeply, keep drinking the water – and ease the pace.

At mile 12 I felt a tap on the back and Kylie came springing past- juggling – looking like she had been running for the last couple minutes, fresh as a daisy – there was me - sopping, panting and looking like I had run two marathons !!

Then at long last I saw the 13 mile sign and it was nearly all over – surprisingly I did find the energy for a very small burst of speed to pass the finish line to collect our lovely medal, t-shirt and goodie bag.

The whole event was well organised – and was a very enjoyable experience –thoroughly recommended .

Well done to all who took part –

Emma 2.09.56, Pauline 2.15.29, Shirley 2.07.28, Karen 2.18.34 and Vicky 2.13.47.

By Shirley.