

## Mike's Mad Marathon – 29th June 2019



Group photo before the start

After months of planning the day of the inaugural Mike's Mad marathon had arrived, and what a day it was as 39 runners and numerous helpers assembled at Blyth Beach car park for the 12-noon start.

A little bit of history behind the event.....

Late last year Michael Ashby conceived the concept of the event based on the Big Backyard Ultra held annually in Tennessee, USA and to be held in memory of ex club member Tony Holland who tragically died last year. In Michael's own words, *"After Tony's tragic death last year I decided that it would be lovely to do something in his memory just for Blyth Runners. I knew that Tony liked endurance races so in order to attract as many Blyth runners as possible, I came up with an event that would appeal to all. Basically run 4.5 miles every hour on the hour and do as many as possible in 12 hours"*, and so the MMM was born. Michael chose the charity CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) as the beneficiary of the event with all proceeds from the event going to the charity together with any money raised from the corresponding Just Giving page which was set up by Michael and Steve Dobby. As the CALM web site states, *"The Campaign Against Living Miserably is leading a movement against male suicide, the single biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK."*

The marathon in detail.....

Runners had to run a minimum of 3 laps to qualify for a medal. Starting at 12 noon, runners had 1 hour to complete an exact 4.5 mile loop starting and finishing on the cycle path between the Dave Stephens Building at Blyth beach and the bandstand, and taking in the promenade, coastal path to Seaton Sluice and back along the footpath beside the road. You could run as fast or as slow as you like but you had to be on the start line for 1pm to do another loop and so on throughout the day up to a maximum of 12 loops (i.e., 12x4.5 mile to give a maximum distance of 54miles), the winner being the last person/persons standing. If you didn't make the start line at any point for the start of the next loop then you were counted out. As to the tactics, do you run fast and have a long rest before the start of the next hour or take it steady with little rest?

And so back to the morning of the marathon.....

The weather forecast was for one of, if not the hottest day of the year so far and it was certainly heading that way as everyone congregated at the start area, as well as the runners and helpers from Blyth Running Club it was great to see Tony's parents Mary Rose and

Kevin, who had travelled up from Wales the previous day, together with some of their friends who had remarkably travelled across from Spain for the weekend. Mary Rose and Kevin donated two trophies for the event, the first larger one to be shared between everyone doing the last lap and the smaller one to the person running the fastest last lap.

As 11:45 approached Steve Dobby herded everyone onto the grass beside the start where he gave a very motivational and moving speech before the obligatory group photos were taken. As the runners started to make their way to the start line you could hear them all asking each other “how many laps are you going to do?” or “I’m going to try for 3, how about you?” And then, at noon exactly, Mary sounded the klaxon and the 39 runners were on their way for their first of many laps to the shouts of encouragement from the helpers and supporters.

Once the runners had left the support teams sight, all that was left for them to do was to sit in chairs and do a little bit of sunbathing in the ever-increasing heat of the day, whilst waiting for the runners to return.



On The Prom first lap

While the runners are away on their first lap, we have time for some credits:

- ✿ The 39 runners, in alphabetical order were: - Michael Ashby, Heather Barrass, Lynne Bate, Richard Bickerton, Paul Blackett, Sue Browning, Lyndsay Chapman, Michelle Connor, Anne Craddock, Louise Davis, Steve Dobby, Gwen Forster, Ron Forster, Lewis Freeman, Lindsay Freeman, Steve Gillespie, Leanne Herron, Tony Horsley, Jake Jansen, Ewa Johnson, Rachel Joseph, Julie Lemin, John Mallon, Neil Marshall, David McGarry, Michael McKenna, Tom Moffet, Hayley Raithby, Alyson Robson, Lisa Scorer, Billy Shaw, Dayle Stafford, David Stamp, Jill Thompson, Gary Todd, Sandra Watson, Andrea Wilson, Robert Wilson, Caron Wood, some of these were hardened marathon/ultra runners but many were attempting a step into the unknown.
- ✿ Support cyclists: - Steven Cairns, Michelle Castro, Tony Dunn, Lesley Falkous, Ewa Johnson, Clair Southern.
- ✿ Timekeepers/Recorders: - Carol Ashby, Elizabeth Freeman, Kevin Freeman, Dave Kitching, Helen Morris, Steve Walker.
- ✿ Seaton Sluice: - Ian Baxter, Chris Claassen, Margaret Dickinson, Ralph Dickinson, Lesley Falkous, Andrew Grieves, Pete Holmback, Mark Nicholson.
- ✿ Photographers:- main photographer Craig Harmon and everyone else who posted to facebook.
- ✿ Helpers/Supporters at the start finish line: - many people here coming and going throughout the day and far too many to mention, but please be assured your support was extremely welcome and the event couldn't have succeeded without you, a special mention for Mike's wife Carol however – she was at the start for 8:30 am and

didn't leave until the bitter end. All support crew were given 3 hour shifts but many did much more than this.

It didn't seem 2 minutes before the shout of "first runner in sight" was heard and the start/finish crew leapt into action, first back on lap 1 in a time of 38:45 were Tony Horsley and David Stamp, runners then finishing at regular intervals until the 39th runner, Richard Bickerton crossed the line in a time of 50:02. Had Tony and David run too fast? Were the others pacing themselves correctly? Only time would tell.

1pm and the 39 runners set out again, the supporters returned to sunbathing and deciding which of the take-away food outlets was to be visited first, it turned out to be the burger



van for hot pork and beef rolls. This remained the theme throughout the day, runners returning, having a short break and setting out again on the next hour and the supporters visiting the food outlets with

Craig being the winner for his visits to the burger van, ice-cream parlour and the chip shop (twice). From a supporters point of view the weather was very changeable, sometimes really warm in the sun but when the clouds came over and the sea breeze picked up it turned decidedly chilly. Not for the runners however as they reported it very hot, especially when sheltered by the dunes. The day did turn out to be the hottest Blyth day of the year with a temperature of 25.3 °C being recorded according to the Met Office.

All 39 runners completed the first 3 laps, a total of 13.5 miles, with 8 runners then dropping out to leave 31 runners at the start for lap 4 at 3pm. Another 12 dropped out after lap 4 so 19 remained. After lap 5 a further 7 retired leaving 12 to start lap 6. And so it continued, with 8 running lap 7, 5 running lap 8 and 3 running lap 9 – Steve Dobby, Sandra Watson and Michael Ashby. This proved to be the last lap with the three of them sharing the large trophy for a year and Steve being awarded the winner's trophy



The Main Man





The Final Three

for the fastest last lap, which was actually his quickest of the day, the awards presented by Mary Rose and Kevin – Tony's parents, who had come back to watch the finale of the great event. However, it should be noted that today was not about winning and losing but was a fantastic club effort to support a very worthwhile cause in memory of a fantastic person, today

everyone that was involved in any way was a winner. At the time of writing almost £1200 had been raised for CALM.

#### The results in detail.....

	Lap 1	Lap 2	Lap 3	Lap 4	Lap 5	Lap 6	Lap 7	Lap 8	Lap 9
Name	Noon	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM
Steve Dobby	41:07	46:23	44:22	47:43	43:34	42:16	42:38	45:07	38:51
Sandra Watson	42:52	46:42	51:32	47:22	41:17	44:20	51:42	47:19	47:06
Michael Ashby	45:00	44:50	44:38	47:03	47:38	48:07	47:09	49:55	49:38
Heather Barras	45:21	48:02	47:20	46:40	45:36	42:56	43:59	39:18	
Julie Lemin	44:37	48:20	45:29	48:07	46:26	46:55	48:03	50:44	
Lisa Scorer	45:21	46:42	47:20	47:22	46:29	39:26	38:37		
Gwen Forster	45:21	46:23	47:20	46:40	47:07	46:49	50:28		
Richard Bickerton	50:02	50:22	47:36	41:57	46:14	48:42	50:45		
Rachel Joseph	48:14	50:22	48:54	50:47	47:13	45:33			
Leanne Herron	45:35	46:54	46:41	47:15	46:49	47:24			
Billy Shaw	40:47	46:38	46:46	45:54	48:08	50:09			
Paul Blackett	42:15	46:38	49:27	45:46	49:07	50:09			
Jake Jansen	42:15	42:11	42:56	43:32	51:01				
Sue Browning	48:14	46:38	45:29	47:28	52:15				
Michelle Connor	45:40	47:40	45:29	47:29	52:15				
Louise Davis	44:37	49:04	49:31	50:53	52:15				
Anne Craddock	45:41	45:42	51:32	53:01	52:55				
Lynne Bate	45:41	48:20	49:35	52:44	53:41				
Alyson Robson	44:48	46:23	49:35	52:44	54:44				
Tony Horsley	38:45	34:28	36:10	37:16					
Lyndsey Chapman	41:07	41:24	44:22	46:13					
Tom Moffet	41:07	41:24	41:28	46:56					
Robert Wilson	41:28	38:26	38:27	47:28					
Steve Gillespie	42:52	42:11	44:50	47:59					
Neil Marshall	40:47	44:11	43:52	48:04					
David Stamp	38:45	39:44	46:46	52:16					
Dayle Stafford	45:00	45:35	44:50	52:27					
Andrea Wilson	45:40	47:59	49:12	52:39					
David McGarry	44:30	44:47	49:30	52:44					

John Mallon	46:20	45:35	51:52	52:44
Michael McKenna	42:22	47:43	49:45	53:01
Lewis Freeman	45:40	42:58	43:57	
Lindsay Freeman	45:40	42:58	43:57	
Hayley Raithby	45:40	49:43	45:29	
Ron Forster	45:35	47:25	52:25	
Gary Todd	46:20	47:40	53:48	
Caron Wood	45:41	48:20	53:48	
Ewa Johnson	46:20	49:43	54:36	
Jill Thompson	49:13	50:33	54:36	

It should be noted that some runners could have probably run further but had other engagements for later in the day, many runners ran further than they had ever run before, fastest lap by Tony Horsley in 34:28, a grand total of 887.5 miles run.

A few comments from the day.....

Over the moon with a distance pb! I didn't know Tony Holland but seeing how everyone came together in memory of him was so moving.

*Gary Todd*

I'm super proud of each and every one of you who took part and volunteered yesterday! Hope your legs are working ok

*Kathryn Gillie*

Michael Ashby you're a Blyth RC legend now mate!!! What a fantastic event!!! I'm really proud of you!!! I love you like a brother.

I would just like to thank everyone at the club who took part and organised Mike's Mad Marathon. What an awesome event. Steve's speech really moved me! A great tribute to Tony Holland

*Tony Horsley*

What a great event today. Well done to all who ran and a massive thanks to all the Marshals, also a massive well done to Michael what a man for doing such a great job, you should be really proud of what you have achieved. What a fantastic club we have. We really need to do this type of event next year . P. S on a personal note I am over the moon with managing 26.75 miles!!!!

*Paul Blackett*

Thank you everyone for a great day .Totally enjoyed it , well done to all runners and thanks to all organisers and supporters.

*Lyndsay Freeman*

And finally make a note in you diaries, MMM2 - 27th June 2020.

RIP Tony ☐

Steve Walker