



News release

Date: One Sunday 2006
Location: The Mean, Wet Streets of Bognor Regis

Marathon Training - One Sunday's experience

By: Mike Monk

Another Sunday and another "up early, quick breakfast and ready to hit the streets following my coaches training programme designed to get me round the London Marathon. Why do we do such daft things?! Is that rain I hear on the conservatory roof?

So off I go heading east to put on a few miles before joining Michelle at the end of Barrack Lane. We agree to meet between 8.30am and 8.45am. Slight drizzle but not too bad and Abba on the MP3. Feeling okay as I now head west with a tail wind past West Park. Over the strains of Peter Gabriel's "Steamhammer", I hear my phone in my back pack. That must be Michelle checking to see if I have overslept or if I am nearly at Barrack Lane.

I quickly try to untangle myself from the 50 feet of head phone cable to answer the phone before I lose her.

With 50 feet of cable (I exaggerate here, dear Reader!) wrapped around my neck, running jacket and back pack I feel like a wet, trussed chicken. Anyway, having fought off the cable I swing my pack off my shoulder - big mistake! In my rush to get on the road, in my bleary state, I had forgotten to secure the storage pocket. The next thing I know the phone flies through the air into the road and comes to a slithering halt, in pieces over a drain! Saying the odd choice word or two I quickly put the phone together and try to ring Michelle as I walk towards Barrack Lane. Not a sausage! Taking the back off, I realise the battery is missing. Running back to the scene of the crime I spend 5 minutes in the road searching under cars, moving wet leaves and rubbish from the gutter and peering (yes, I do mean peering!) into the drain.

"Huston - we have a problem"!! - I don't know Michelle's address in Barrack Lane so I now have to hope she sees me passing her house or we meet on the road. Jogging down the Lane I peer into houses, bungalows and mansions with garages bigger than my house. Michelle might have one of those? Nothing seen, I decide to run back to the scene of the crime for another look for that battery. Feeling colder and wetter by the minute I once again fail to find it.

Okay let's go back into the Lane and hope Michelle has decided to look for me! Again I jog down the Lane as far as the shops. Eureka! I find a 10p piece and nearby a telephone box. Problem solved - I can ring her. So entering the warmth of the booth I peel off my gloves, dig out the scrap of paper with the number and pick up the phone. Reading the instructions my world collapses - I need 30p. Can you believe the cost of these things!!!

Right that's it - back up the Lane - I must find that battery. After 50 metres I realise my hands are cold. Oh no - I have left my gloves in the telephone box!! So back down the Lane once again. Meanwhile the Police are no doubt getting frantic calls from Neighbourhood watch!



Okay, don't panic Mr Mannering - just find that battery and all will be well. So for the last time I visit the crime scene and fail again. A retired couple, no doubt amused at my antics, ask me what I was doing dressed like that, soaking wet and messing about in the gutter!! Quickly explaining my plight, they soon realised that whilst I must appear mad to them they would solve my problem in a flash. Yes folks, they had a mobile phone!!

Problem solved then. Well not quite. I only get the ansaphone!! Michelle must be "indisposed" so leaving a message to say I would be at the top of Barrack Lane for the next 10 minutes, I set off. After 10 minutes, no Michelle and with the onset of hypothermia, I reluctantly decide to carry on with my plan of running 16 miles. Heading east, and feeling guilty for letting Michelle down, I was passed by other runners. They told me Michelle had set off earlier in an attempt to find me. Thinking she would be somewhere along the Prom, I set off in "hot pursuit" - well "cold pursuit" would be a better description!

Running into a headwind and wishing I had put on glasses to recognise Michelle, I looked intently at every young lady runner as I ran along the Prom - my case comes up next month!! By the time I reached the Lobster Pot, thoughts of completing 16 miles were vanishing fast - just like Michelle. Okay - let's do 10 miles then - that's only another 3. Right then - wrap myself up in the 50 feet of cable, switch on the MP3, and go, go, go!

Well, dear Reader, it will come as no surprise to read that there was no uplifting sound from the MP3! Yes, you guessed it, the battery had died! So that's two batteries in one day. Is someone trying to tell me something? On top of that my scrap of paper blew away in the wind so I couldn't even ring Michelle later! Now I really am "fed up"!!

It will come as little surprise to know that as my little nice warm house isn't too far from the Lobster Pot I suddenly I realised it I was approaching the front door. How did that happen? Must be the hypothermia. Best go in, have a warm drink and a shower in case I catch a cold. Don't want to ruin my training do I? Oh well, perhaps Michelle decided to return as well. It's no fun running on your own. That thought/hope made me feel better!!

So you see, dear Reader, Marathon training isn't all glamour and that Sunday was just the pits. But we will all be out there next Sunday encouraging each other to achieve the training targets. The prize of finishing the London is worth all the grief. Just remember to check all your kit before setting off and do up any ZIPS!!!

El Presidente

Footnote : My wife, pointed out that I had written Michelle's number on the calendar so I did manage to make contact and found out that she had done 12 miles!! Well done Michelle - I feel such a wimp!!!