

LOOKS EAST

The Newsletter of The Rotary Club of Ipswich East

ORWELL CHALLENGE SPECIAL

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The Orwell Challenge from the President's View

Saturday afternoon 28th June saw Rotarians from Ipswich East set up the gazebos in preparation for registering the runners and walkers. As expected, the following morning runners began to arrive soon after 6AM and set off at 7AM. The weather was kind, providing a gentle breeze and a good blanket of cloud overhead. The favourable conditions saw some good course times. Out of a field of 98, Oliver Watson of Ipswich Jaffa was the first half-marathon runner to cross the finish line with a time of 1hour 34. Nico Drinkwater of the Norfolk Gazelles set himself a steady pace with a half marathon time of 1hour 40 and completed the marathon in a creditable 3 hours 22 minutes. 58 runners completed the marathon course.

By contrast most of the walkers enjoyed the day at their own pace. There was the opportunity to recharge their reserves of energy at Levington Creek, the half-way mark for those doing the 25 miles. Tea, coffee, sandwiches and cakes were available. Some had brought their own lunch and chose to rest up where the view was to their taste.

The Ipswich Mayor Counsellor Elizabeth Hughes arrived soon after the last of the walkers had set out from the start and was welcomed at the Gainsborough HQ by John Button and the President. Elizabeth warmly thanked the volunteers and Ipswich East for the work they had done to put on the Orwell Challenge and met several of the participants who had recently crossed the finishing line. At Levington Creek she had the opportunity to converse with the volunteers and met groups walking on behalf of The Bridge School and Inspire Suffolk, who were delighted to have their picture taken with the Mayor. The Mayor was then taken to the checkpoint at Decoy, where she met Ewan Dodds, who having recently taken over as checkpoint leader, was a superb host. The Mayor expressed her intention to do the Orwell Challenge next year with others from the Council in aid of The Creative Computing Charitable Foundation, her chosen charity.



My grateful thanks to John Button and his team for making the day so special for the runners and walkers, who without exception were delighted with the care, encouragement, and kindness that they received from the volunteers. We were fortunate to have First Aid cover from EDMS medical whose expertise in medical emergencies was fortunately not called upon.



David Chittick



A strange visitor at Fox's lots of photos and a few quotes...



Well done a superb event and John deserves all the praise we can give him
Surely Service above Self is what he does and of course all those members who worked so hard too - I am proud to belong to this super club!
Dick Jeffery

Really enjoyed the Half-Marathon; thanks to everyone involved. Can I just say The signage this year was top notch over the whole course.

Many thanks to all of your organisers and friendly marshals.

I'm writing to offer thanks and congratulations from the Kesgrave Cruisers who took part in the Orwell Challenge runs today. I think we had 27 out in the runs (with a few others doing the walks too) and everyone had a terrific time and loved the route ... you make an immense amount of work look easy and the lovely attitude of all the volunteers on the aid stations is fantastic and just what you need on such tough runs. So many thanks from me personally, but also from all the Kesgrave guys and girls out today - I'm positive you'll have another strong turnout from us next year.
Kevin



Thanks and look forward to next year.

Tim, Ipswich Jaffa

A few thoughts from Mr OC himself, John Button...

We had approximately 850 people participate on the day - 170 runners and 680 walkers. This is equally as high as 2 years ago. The feedback without exception was really positive, with some saying this is the best event in the calendar. Its unique in that the terrain and views are so varied. One person had even travelled from Scotland to take part!

There was a fantastic spirit back at HQ at the finish and we have had a number of congratulatory emails from participants. As far as I am concerned all the participants followed the Covid rules on the day and observed social distancing protocols. I really didn't need to "police" this as I had anticipated. People queued patiently at registration which naturally took a little longer than usual, but all were in good humour.

On the financial front I am waiting for the final account from Time My Race - but am told there will be more money to come. Expenses were a little higher than usual due to EDMS involvement and Covid - but with a full list of sponsors we should be making a reasonable total for the Benevolent Fund. I even had one lady at the finish come up and make a donation because she had had her "best day for over a year".

This is a great day for the Club, and I know people had reservations - but when we are able to safely put on such an event for our Community I am sure we all can see that it is so worth all the effort, sleepless nights in my case, and hard work on the day. Next year the three line whip will be back in force and lets all pull together as a Club and make the event even better.

We must hold a de-brief while the event is fresh in the minds and I will collate comments received from all. We are all getting older and we do need to look at how the work can be shared more evenly both on the day and before. I can only say that I do know which bases have the most work to do and I do try to allocate appropriate people to those bases - and I would ask members to remember that a handful of us at HQ started at 5.30am and finished at 7 pm !"





The plaudits keep coming...

It was so good to get back to the Orwell Challenge after a year's gap.

Familiar faces at the Sports Centre and at the refreshment stops.

A big thank you to everyone involved.

The preparation over the preceding week, turning out early to set up tents and loos, let alone cleaning the loos, and then the personalised welcome at the stops. When you are tired and a bit "over-focused" - on your feet or fitness, it is so nice to talk about who you are walking for and just general chat.

It's like a mental massage and helps recharge the batteries.

Then your team have to take everything down, clear the route, retrieve the signage. They must be tired at the end of the day.

And this year you organised it for much less seaweed on the foreshore. You must have been out early with your industrial seaweed sweeper.

And let's not forget the "backroom powerhouses" driving the event forward over the year.

Best wishes, Julie Stuchbery

