

PHIL WALKS THE MARATHON

Last year hundreds of people supported Phil Packer on his epic 14 day London Marathon – this year Phil hopes that thousands of us will do so again. Phil has faced formidable challenges and has inspired and motivated millions of people around the world with his selfless support of young people with disabilities, children at risk and injured service men and women and was the recipient of the Helen Rollason Award at BBC Sports Personality of the Year and the Pride of Britain Fundraiser of the Year.

Whilst serving in the British Army in February 2008, Phil suffered catastrophic injuries following an incident following a rocket attack in Iraq, which left him a paraplegic. From his hospital bed, he came up with a bold plan to raise £1million for Help for Heroes, a charity for wounded service members. Phil's idea was to accept a variety of challenges, including rowing the English Channel (February 2009), completing the London Marathon (April 2009) and climbing El Capitan in Yosemite (June 2009). Phil was able to walk the London marathon at two miles a day, over a two week time period. Still classified as a paraplegic, Phil then climbed El Capitan by pulling himself up the mountain, a feat of over 4250 pull ups and sleeping on the side of the vertical rock-face for 3 days.

Phil is now founding the British Inspiration Trust (BRIT) to support young people with disabilities. This residential centre will provide week long and weekend courses to inspire and motivate young people with disabilities and deprived young people to reach their goals. Phil also supports numerous charities in addition to forming his own.

In March 2010 Phil took part in the Three Peaks Challenge, climbing the three highest mountains in Britain in 72 hours for the UK charity Sport Relief. Phil faced horrific conditions, but never wavered and the climb team completed their goal. He has raised £1.3 million for Help for Heroes to support wounded service men and women. Through his challenges, Phil made a difference to the lives of thousands of individuals in the UK and overseas and continues to enthuse millions every time he takes on another challenge.

Phil is now preparing to again walk the Virgin London Marathon, but this time he will walk the 26 miles in 26 hours for 26 charities that support young people with disabilities, youth at risk and wounded service personnel. A young support walker

from each charity will walk a mile with Phil. During 1st April- 26th April, the charities will be raising money. Phil is giving his time, energy and enthusiasm to help these charities use the marathon as their chief fundraiser of the year. He will start at 1000 hrs on Sunday 25th April and finish on The Mall at 1200 hrs on the 26th. Our support to him would be great, so if you see him on the way, do give him your support.

Phil juggles founding the British Inspiration Trust to support young people with disabilities and the numerous charities for children at risk and wounded service members he supports. He inspires people with his grit, can do attitude, humility and by honouring his word. Phil's potential impact is phenomenal, given that BRIT, will become a global humanitarian organization, inspiring and fostering the goals and dreams of hundreds of thousands of young people.

For further information on how to support Phil and the 26 charities please go to www.philpacker.com



ROGER RABBIT RUNS AGAIN!

Cab driver Derek McCarrick MBE will be taking part in his 23rd London Marathon on 25 April 2010, dressed as always as Roger Rabbit. One of the questions that Del is asked regularly is: "Why do you continue to run the marathons now that you have achieved your award of MBE?" His answer is: "I continue to run because people are still ill and there is still money to be raised. I am not ready to give up just yet."

Del will be collecting at London Stations and roundabout up until the marathon, so if you see him say hello, donate some money and wish him luck.



2010 VIRGIN LONDON MARATHON

Taking place on 28th April 2010, this year's London Marathon will see many runners, including some from the taxi trade, taking their place on the start line. For some it will be their first Marathon, whilst others have run the gruelling course before. So how did the Marathon itself begin? How did it grow to be so popular, with thousands entering each year? In the pub, according to John Disley and the late Chris Brasher, co-founders of the London Marathon! The Dysart Arms next to Richmond Park is home to the Raneleigh Harriers running club. On Wednesday nights runners drift in and talk over pints of bitter. One night, the talk was of the New York Marathon. Several club members had competed in the 1978 New York City Marathon and never tired of talking about it. After listening to these stories, Brasher and Disley decided to see the New York Marathon for themselves. The pair ran, finished, and witnessed how wonderful a 'city mass marathon' could be. On returning home, Brasher wrote an article for The Observer called 'The World's Most Human Race'. This is how it started: "To believe this story you must believe that the human race can be one joyous family, working together, laughing together, achieving the impossible. Last Sunday, 11,532 men and women from 40 countries in the world, assisted by over a million people, laughed, cheered and suffered during the greatest folk festival the world has seen." Brasher ended the article by

wondering "whether London could stage such a festival? We have the course, a magnificent course... but do we have the heart and hospitality to welcome the world?"

Donald Trelford, then editor of The Observer, hosted a lunch in early 1980 so Brasher and Disley could meet the relevant authorities who'd be involved in organising a marathon – the Greater London Council (GLC), the police, the City of London, the Amateur Athletics Association and the London Tourist Board.

The idea was agreed, but the difficulty came in persuading the police that 26 miles of road could be closed off for a marathon without causing London to shut down completely. Disley later presented a course design that used the Thames as a 'handrail', while only closing two bridges. One of those, Tower Bridge, was often shut on Sundays anyway. The police approved the event and the tourist board were happy the course passed so many of London's sights – Cutty Sark, Tower Bridge, the Docks, The Embankment, Big Ben and Buckingham Palace.

However, there was one condition from Sir Horace Cutler, the chairman of the GLC, who told Brasher and Disley: "You should never ask the ratepayers to bail you out. Not a penny from the GLC."

A budget was prepared for the first London Marathon with an expenditure of £75,000 over and above any revenue expected from entry fees. Gillette had just

given up their sponsorship of cricket's Gillette Cup and were looking for something else to sponsor. The company were told about the two young Olympic medallists putting on a marathon who needed help. A deal was done and Gillette became the Marathon's first title sponsor. The deal was worth £75,000 a year for three years. Charitable status was established for the event.

Five months later, on 29 March 1981, the first race was held. Some 20,000 people wanted to run. 7,747 were accepted. There were 6,255 finishers, led home by the American Dick Beardsley and Norwegian Inge Simonsen, who staged a spectacular dead heat at the rain-swept finish on Constitution Hill. Joyce Smith, 43 years old and mother of two, broke the British record to win the women's race.

The event was a massive hit with the runners, the thousands of spectators who lined the course, and viewers who followed the race on the BBC. As a result, the 1982 race received more than 90,000 applications from hopeful runners around the world. The entry was limited to 18,059. The race has grown in size, stature and popularity ever since. Now established among the major events in the sporting calendar, the London Marathon is shown on television in more than 150 countries around the world. A total of 746,635 runners have completed the London Marathon (1981 to 2009), while a record 35,694 people finished in 2007.