



ANDY'S MARATHON 2020



I ran so they can walk

I had been preparing to run the 2020 London Marathon for a 6 month period. After a long winter, training 5 times per week through countless storms, banking 60 miles per week and at peak fitness, the effects of the Coronavirus lockdown began to bite and you can imagine my disappointment when, inevitably, the London Marathon was postponed.

However, despite the postponement of sporting events all over the world, it was clear that the tremendous need for the marginalised in this world does not go on hold.

With your support, I was well on track to raise £15,000, so that 40 Kenyan children who suffer from the club foot condition could access life changing surgery and follow-up care, to include their first pair of shoes. During some of my toughest training runs at 05:00hrs before starting the working day, my trainers getting soaked within seconds and battling yet another head

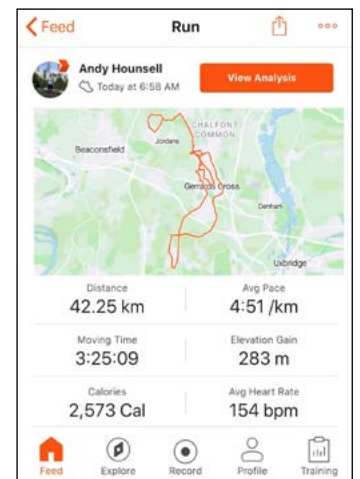
wind, it was the thought of each Kenyan child receiving transformative care and the difference that it would make to them, that inspired me to keep running. I was very much aware of the remarkable support and generosity that had been shown to me by so many people. One way or another, I was set on completing the marathon challenge, even if it meant running a local route in isolation and forgoing the sight of thousands of spectators cheering me on as I cross the line along the Mall!



Above: A photo of me completing the last few metres of the Marathon.

On the 14th April, following the long Easter weekend, I went out to complete a 19 mile run, to practice hydration and fuelling. During the run, I worked hard at being disciplined and holding back my pace. Remarkably, the miles ticked by and I didn't see any reason to stop running at 19 miles! I used my mobile at 24 miles (whilst running) to ring my wife Liz to pre-warn her that the full Marathon distance was unexpectedly on and to prepare to get the kids ready to cheer me home. I ran the full marathon distance in 3hrs 25mins which was a full 5 minutes less than the target time I had set myself!

It feels rather surreal to have a achieved a lifelong ambition in isolation! Any disappointment about not running in the London Marathon is hugely outweighed by knowing that, due to the generosity of supporters, we have raised over £16,000, with further funds coming in. With Gift Aid added to this figure, at the time of writing this now means at least 47 operations can be funded.



Above: Statistics from my fitness App. Strava which measured the distance.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has provided such generous support. You have been instrumental in making a life-transforming difference to at least 47 Kenyan children.

"I ran so they can walk"
Andy Hounsell

It's still possible to give...

If you would like to donate, there is still time. This would provide funding for additional operations and more children's live being transformed. Please click in the link below:

www.give.net/CountyFinancialChallenge2

If you are unable to use the link, please send a cheque made payable to Rope Charitable Trust to the County Financial offices.



Left: Here we are as a family with the Rope banner... celebrating the moment we reached the £15,000 fundraising target on 26 April 2020 - the original date of the London Marathon!