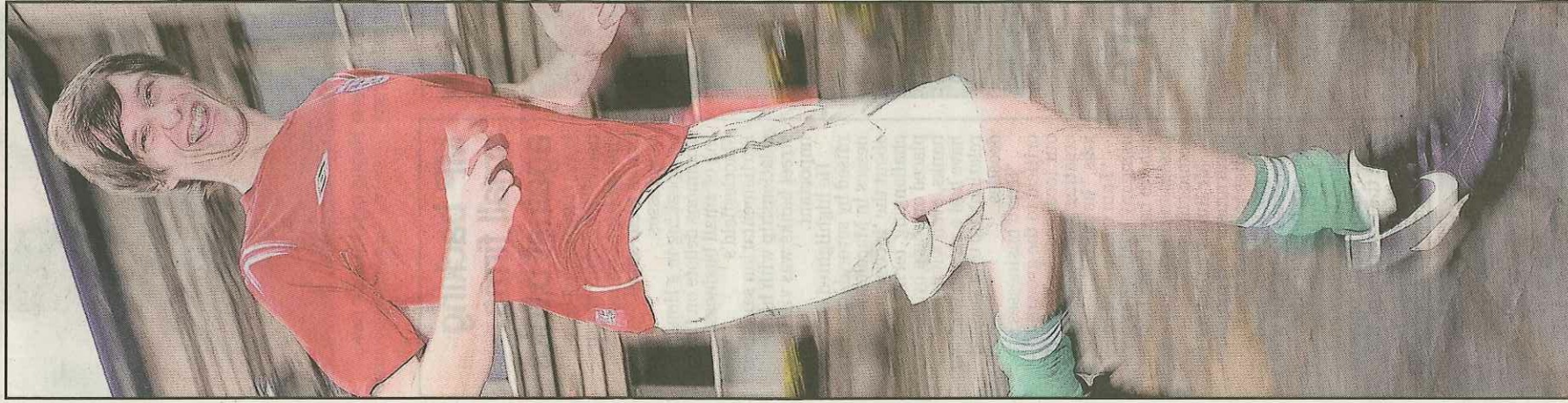


Hilly, 13 miles and hundreds of runners – I must be mad!



HALF-MARATHON MAN: Reporter Chris Morris in training
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Express reporter
Chris Morris trains
for the Macclesfield
Half-Marathon

NOTORIOUSLY hilly, 13.1 miles of road, and with hundreds of runners – you would have to be a little bit mad to run the Macclesfield Half Marathon wouldn't you? Well, it seems I am.

Yes, an odd thing happened to me when I decided to renounce (partially) my youth and its insalubrious activities. Call it an epiphany, if you will.

Long story short, I needed a goal and wanted to get fit, so what better way than to tackle the Maco Half Marathon? After all it's for two fantastic causes.

That was at the start of August. How hard can it be I thought, I ran a lot when I was a kid: cross country, 5,000 metres...easy. Or so I believed.

After my years at college, university and those afterwards, it seems I had a penchant for several fitness-inhibiting habits including a few light ales, the odd chip shop and, more importantly, cigarettes.

Step one: First thing's first, the cigarettes had to go. It's hard, but as long as you get straight in from work and pop on those running trainers, it gets easier.

Step two: Diet. Eat lots of bananas. The tennis players do it, so it's good enough for me.

Step three: The training. All expert advice points to regimes of at least four months before a big race, not least for a race that goes up and down more times than the Blackpool Big Dipper.

But I had left myself just two months. Two months? Two months, you say? I was mocked by my friends who had last seen me run in, well, let's just say we were gearing up for the Millennium.

The first few runs were short, two or three miles, and resulted in me panting like a bulldog on a beach.

Two weeks in, and each run required a long hot bath and was painful to finish. Just what had I let myself in for?

But then a miraculous thing started to happen. The distances got longer and it got easier. So I treated myself to a fancy pair of trainers and a gait analysis, which is recommended for any would-be runner to check what shoes you need. It was time to get Mo Farah on this lark.

I got myself a funky app for my smartphone, which logs exactly where you've run, the time and the distance between each mile using its GPS.

Now I was building up the miles, four, five, six, nine...and before I knew it, I'm sitting here writing this article with only two weeks to go. Bek.

There have been a few setbacks, such as a mild chest injury and the odd visit back to the Nag's Head (well, I'm not a monk) but I feel ready and, more importantly, I feel great.

I have a time in mind I'd like to achieve...but I'm not going to tell you. Place your bets.

There's still time to sign up

THERE are still places left if you want to sign up for the eighth Macclesfield Half Marathon.

The event, run by Macclesfield Harriers, raises money for the East Cheshire Hospice and the Macclesfield Track Appeal, which funds young sportsmen and women in the town.

The organisers have permission for 1,200 runners – 800 are already signed up – and they hope to fill them all to get close to last year's fundraising total of £10,000.

And there is also a one-mile fun run.

Colin Ardron, from Macclesfield Harriers, said:

"We would love to get more people to sign up.

"It's a fantastic day out, even if you're not running."

The Macclesfield Half Marathon is set to take place on Sunday, September 26, with entrance to the race costing £19.

To enter online, log on to macc-half.co.uk, or pick up an entry form at Macclesfield Leisure Centre, Congleton and Wilmslow Leisure Centres, CampFour on Pickford Street, Macclesfield, and the Running Bear in Alderley Edge.

You can also sign up on the day.



HIT THE ROAD: Action from last year's race

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Raising charity cash is a runaway success

17/11/10

TWO charities are set to benefit from a cash windfall thanks to the fundraising efforts of the annual Macclesfield Half Marathon.

More than £9,000 was raised from the 13.1-mile run in September and will be split equally between East Cheshire Hospice (ECH) and the Macclesfield Track Appeal.

Since the Macclesfield Harriers event started in 2002 £72,000 – mostly from runners' entry fees – has been handed to charities as well as thousands raised by the racers themselves.

Barry Blyth, one of the organisers, said: "People enjoyed the run and the feedback so far has been good. It's a challenge and encourages people to get out there and do more than they usually would."

"A lot of effort is put into it by a team of individuals to make it happen, as well as all of the volunteers on the day who help with things like marshalling and handing out the T-shirts."



RUNAWAY SUCCESS... Colin Ardron, from Macclesfield Harriers, Lucy Golding, from race sponsors Camp Four, Phil Robertshaw, from East Cheshire Hospice, Bob Lynch, Mandy Calvert and Barry Blyth from Macclesfield Harriers

He added: "Hopefully the outcome for our efforts is a challenging, enjoyable experience for the runners with a financial benefit for the charities."

The event raised £4,500 for ECH and £4,500 for the Macclesfield Track Appeal which aims to help local children get into athletics.

A committee prepare the event during the year while more than 50 people help with the half marathon on the day.

Phil Robertshaw, communications and fundraising manager for ECH, dubbed the run 'a flagship' event for the hospice.

"The Macclesfield Harriers have been great friends to

the hospice for many years," he added.

"The half marathon is a flagship event in our fundraising year and without the support of friends like the Macclesfield Harriers and the people who slog it round Macclesfield on the day, the hospice could not survive."

Half-marathon declared runaway success

A STUNNING £8,500 was raised for charity from Sunday's Macclesfield Half Marathon.

More than 700 runners finished the race in glorious conditions with organisers declaring the day a runaway success.

The Macclesfield Harriers-organised event, famed for its friendly atmosphere, attracted nearly a thousand runners and hundreds of spectators.

Colin Ardron, from Macclesfield Harriers, said: "The feedback we have got so far has been very good and the runners seemed to have enjoyed it."

"Anything that brings the community together like the Macclesfield Half Marathon is a good thing. I think it helps to put Macclesfield on the map particularly because it's so well organised."

He added: "It's an inspiration for the runners and for the spectators and a big achievement for a lot of people to finish a half marathon."

Money raised from the event will go to the East Cheshire Hospice and the Macclesfield Track Appeal which helps youngsters in sport.

Reporter Chris Morris' race

I NEVER want to see another slight incline as long as I live, let alone rolling hills. Yes, I have done it, the Macclesfield Half Marathon and it feels great, if a tad painful.

It had been thoroughly enjoyable made more so by my fellow runners, organisers, volunteers and Maxonians who came out to cheer us on.

At one point I was flagging but was overtaken by a man who was considerably older than me – and fitter it seems – who egged me on. I will be eternally grateful. I ran as fast as I could and crossed the line. And what of my time?

Well, I beat my target and ran the 13.1-mile course in one hour, 38 minutes and four seconds and raised a couple of hundred pounds for the East Cheshire Hospice.

But would I do it again? Ask me in a few weeks.



ON YOUR MARKS: Half-marathon gets underway MXN38MarathonD10001904016401



Get in shape for half marathon



RUNNERS at last year's Macclesfield Half Marathon

ON YOUR marks, get set, go for the Macclesfield Half Marathon.

The annual race is back again and open for runners of all experience to sign up. And all money raised from the event, which is in its eighth year, goes to helping East Cheshire Hospice and the Macclesfield Track Appeal.

Colin Ardron, from the Macclesfield Harriers Athletics Club, said: "We always get great feedback from the half marathon. It gets consistently good

reviews from runners and is renowned for being a friendly race.

"All standards of runners are welcome, right from the best club runners who are close to the national standard down to absolute beginners."

"It gives a great sense of achievement and helps some great causes as well."

The 13.1-mile course is set to start at Macclesfield Leisure Centre before winding its way through Prestbury, Mottram St Andrew, Over Alderley and

Whirley before returning back to the leisure centre with many twists and turns along the way.

The organisers have a mission for 1,200 runners - 450 are already signed up - and they hope to fill them all to get close to last year's fundraising total of £10,000.

But even if you are not running in the town's big race, it is still a fun day out.

Colin added: "There are plenty of places to watch the race from but the best is at the start - many people watched from there last

year." The Macclesfield Half Marathon is set to take place on Sunday, September 26, with entrance to the race costing £19. All money from the entry fee goes to the race's two charities.

■ To enter online log on to www.macc-half.co.uk or pick up an entry form at Macclesfield Leisure Centre, Congleton and Wilmslow Leisure Centres, CampFour on Pickford Street, Macclesfield, and the Running Bear in Alderley Edge.



ALL this year Canalside Community Radio has been inviting the region's talented young people to share their poetry, prose, rhymes and raps with our listeners in our fabulous poetry competition.

Pupils from the Marlborough Primary School, Pott Shrigley Primary, Prestbury Primary, St Gregory's and Dean Valley, have all had their work played over the Canalside airwaves in a bid to be crowned North East Cheshire's 'Poetry Champ' on National Poetry Day, October 7.

The lucky group of winning wordsmiths will win a computer for their school, and a year's IT support courtesy of local business Cara Technology.

A great time was had by all and much money was raised, along with more than a few blisters, at the weekend at the Macclesfield half marathon.

The team from Canalside Radio thoroughly enjoyed compering the event and watching the winners come across the line - who knows, next year we might be tempted to ditch the microphones and swap them for a pair of running shoes instead.

If you want to join Cheshire Peaks and Plains; Macclesfield Lions; East Cheshire Hospice and have Canalside Community Radio provide lively, fun, informative support for your community event, just give us a buzz on 01625 576689 and we will be more than happy to help you out!

If you haven't heard them yet, tune into the two Nicks - Nick Hawkins and Nick Wright - bookending your working day on Canalside 102.8fm with wit, great music, local news, traffic and travel, and competitions.

Midnight Walk 2010



On Saturday 11th September, hospice supporters will once again snake through the streets of Macclesfield to raise vital funds for their local hospice.

With a brand new route and 1,500 places available, the 2010 East Cheshire Hospice Midnight Walk is set to be the biggest yet. Organiser Lara Rigby says, "In 2008 we had 500 walkers. In 2009 that doubled to 1,000 walkers and this year we are aiming for 1,500. The Walk is already a firm favourite amongst hospice supporters and so we're calling on everyone

throughout the region to come along and take part."

A total of over £180,000 was raised from the 2008 and 2009 Walks but this moonlit event will be the biggest fundraiser in the hospice calendar. "With more walkers than ever before," says Lara, "this fun event promises to light up the streets with flashing bunny ears, luminous glo-sticks and its wonderful, unique atmosphere."



To secure your place in what is set to be one of the liveliest nights in our 2010 calendar, simply complete your online application form today at www.eastcheshirehospice.org.uk or alternatively contact the fundraising department on 01625 433477. An early bird rate is available until 30th June.

Keep on running!

We are really pleased that the hospice has been selected as charity partner in this year's Macclesfield Half Marathon which will take place on Sunday 26th September.

The "Macc Half" is a fun and well-established event in the region's running calendar and we do urge all supporters who like a challenge to sign up this year, dust off their running shoes and help raise funds for the hospice.

Visit www.macc-half.k313.com to register and find out more.



Why not run for East Cheshire Hospice this September?



It's not hard work ALL the way round!

Photos supplied courtesy of Bryan Dale

If you can spare a little time, join our friendly team of volunteers.
To find out more, ring Lynette on 01625 610364