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# JBA Great North Run Team 2011

We did it!!!



Four of us at JBA Consulting, Steve, Crispian, Richard and Zdenka took part in the **Great North Run on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011** in Newcastle upon Tyne. With the help of everyone at JBA, we managed to raise **£1500 for RedR UK**. Thanks to the kind donations, RedR will be able to, amongst others, continue running the new training and support centre in Nairobi, Kenya, or keep helping during the food crisis in Somalia.

Here are our tales of woe:

## Zdenka

What an amazing weekend up North!! I had the opportunity to spend the whole weekend in Newcastle and watch the City Games that were organised near the famous footbridge and Baltic. Amazing to see the real athletes run sprints, hurdles, do long jumps, simply soak in the atmosphere. I did a little too much walking though before the big run – so easy to do when there is so much going on! A bit of culture was also part of my pre-race preparation – I just hope that no bits of the madness of King George III in Theatre Royal rubbed onto me...?!



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This was the first time I did the Great North Run and I was hugely impressed by how well the event was organised. We all lined up in corridors on the motorway; there was enough breathing space (although we were a kind of body on body) although we were 54000 people! Everyone was really relaxed and friendly. The number of spectators aligned along the way right to the finish cheering us up, music, people in fancy dresses and kids offering slices of melons or oranges to us was truly amazing. Fancy dresses were everywhere – I tried to keep up with the guy in the funny minimalistic speedos, but somehow I was not able to catch him! ?!



I did not really have the chance (or mind) to train for this run properly and so I was a bit worried that I might let myself and RedR down, but I finished in 1hr 49min (55sec) and so I hope that's good enough.

And what memory will always stay with me? Sight of the biggest pile of banana peels I have ever seen, my lining up with the guys on the motorway embankment for the last pre-race wee, the shiny red of Red Arrows, the sign "this is sea" at the end, and tears (I got really emotional in the finish!!!!).

PS: Thanks ever so much to Elie Charles who was a superb entertainer and support during the whole weekend ☺

### Crispian

This was my 2nd GNR in a row and after last year I was excited about the prospect of High Five'ing Ant and Dec at the start line!! However once over the start line I realised with tremendous disappointment that they weren't there. A moment of disillusionment turned into a moment from the surreal, when I felt I had entered Monty Python's 'Marathon for the Incontinent' sketch as there seemed to be a large number of men 'spending a penny' by the roadside right after the start line. The next 13.1 miles turned into a blur of humming along to my iPod, reading the random things people had written on their running shirts, trying to stay away from guys who were wearing not quite enough to be considered decent, and trying to figure out if what the roadside bystanders had just handed me to give me energy was in fact edible. I gradually got slower and slower as I got nearer the end, but then a look around my shoulder near the finish revealed that I was being chased by a maniacal giant frog (see photo), so ended up sprinting for my life. Finished with a pint of Guinness and a 14-hour sleep (once I'd got home). Hurray!



### Richard

I had a great run at Newcastle. I thought I might have been on for a respectable time but some injury problems in the two weeks before (having to drop out of a training run and then needing treatment for a pulled hamstring) had put some doubt in my mind. I'd worked out a schedule of split times and was hoping to use my GPS to monitor my speed and predict my finishing time.



Unsurprisingly this all went bosoms-up fairly early on in the race. I'd forgotten that the first mile or two is run beneath a flyover and my GPS soon lost its signal. The one I have isn't very good at locating itself when it's moving, so didn't come back to life until just before the 3 mile point, at which time it thought I'd run half a mile (perhaps someone from GIS can explain to me how this technology can get it so wrong).

So, it was time to revert to 'manual' and luckily I'd written some split times on my hand. I was almost bang on at 3 miles and after that, despite my best efforts to run at a 'steady' pace I found myself running about 15s per mile faster than I'd planned to. Anyway, I stuck at it and took as much as I could from energy drinks, water, shower tunnels, etc. etc. just to keep myself refreshed and energised. Things were getting a bit tough at around 10 miles, when I saw a Jelly Babies station approaching. Just what I needed, but when I got there the guy in front of me snatched at every outstretched hand, taking all he could and leaving none for me! I eventually ended up with 2, while he stuffed a load into his mouth and threw the rest away. Thanks, mate!

Anyway, not to be defeated I pushed hard up the two uphill miles leading to the sea front. Then it was down the plummet to the coast road, squeal round the sharp left hander and head for the finish. I felt relatively un-devastated at this point, so gave it some beans. But the finish takes a long time to get to – first there's a timing mat at 20km (1km to go), then a distant sign saying 800m, then an even more distant sign saying 400m. I'm certain this last mile is three times longer than the first one (and I'm sure my GPS would agree).

I ended up with a time of 1hr 36m 09s, which I was extremely happy with. For some reason, my official 'chip' time is under 1:36, but given my dim view of technology, I'll stick with my stopwatch time, which I know is right.

After the race the heavens opened, and the area beyond the finish turned into a sea of silver foil blankets. But the sun soon came out again, just in time for the Red Arrows display over the sea, which most of us watched from the comfort of the Marsden Rattler pub.

Overall it was a tremendous day, with a fabulous run. The memories which will stay with me are standing in the bushes having a pee next to the Pink Panther, and legging it along the sea front at a pace not often managed by the Annable legs these days.

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### Steve

I had a brilliant day up at Newcastle on Sunday, running my first half marathon and it being the highlight of my first year of running. Thanks to the thousands of people lining the route encouraging us all the way it will be a lasting memory and I am sure I will return to take part again.

It seemed a long way to the finishing line, as you can probably tell from the look on my face, but I did eventually pass the girl in the white T shirt!

