

## A SPECTATOR'S DAY AT THE WEAVERS' WAY ULTRAMARATHON

We all know what a long day it can be supporting someone running an ultramarathon, but your support is definitely appreciated even if all you get is grunts or a sweaty emotional wreck who is feeling the effects of running for 8, 9, 10 hours or more.

These races are long, they start early and finish late and you will have lots of time to kill but you have a vital role in injecting enthusiasm and fun that makes the day feel so special for the courageous runners taking part so please come along and bring your best cheering voice with you.

How will the day pan out for you?

The start of the race is at 0730, but the runners need to get to the start between 0600 and 0700 to pick up their race numbers and trackers and get their kit inspected.

**The start is at Acle recreation centre, Bridewell lane, Acle NR13 3RA.** There is ample parking here. The runners will go into the hall to register, it is tempting to go in with them but it will get cramped and we still have to be mindful of Covid precautions etc so it is best to wait for them in your car or even better help one of our local businesses, Nourish, who will have a coffee van for you to buy something to kick start your day.

The race starts on the field behind the hall and you are more than welcome to mingle with the runners there and give them a rousing send off as they leave on their epic journey to Cromer. Please don't run alongside them here though as it is quite tight and I wouldn't want you to get trampled!

Along the route there are several decent places to park and support your runners so I will list them below with their approximate distances into the race so you can roughly work out when they will be there and you can get ready to give them the boost they need. Just be mindful that even though you are supporting a race, for the rest of the world the day is just a normal day and so please do not cause traffic jams and please drive with care.

Supporter spots:

### **POTTER HEIGHAM 14km into the race**

There is a feedstation on the river bank by the bridge here, if you park in the big central car park opposite Lathams then walk up towards the bridge, do not cross the bridge but wait for your athletes by the green on the left hand side of the bridge. There are 2 cafes here and I can strongly recommend Bridge cafe if you like cake. Supporters need energy too you know.

### **HICKLING 24km into the race**

You have a few choices here, either the car park at the Pleasure Boat Inn that is sadly closed down but gives you a lovely view of Hickling Broad or The Greyhound pub which is also lovely but may be too early for a pint possibly. Hickling is just after the river section of the course and the athletes will be running on quiet country lanes from here to Stalham.

### **STALHAM 33km into the race**

The runners will run through Stalham and then turn up St Johns Road which is a right turn just after a charity shop. This takes them up to the checkpoint at the Poppy centre off Recreation road. Parking is limited at the Poppy centre so we would recommend on road parking in the High street or there is a small car park near the end of the High street opposite the fish and chip shop. The runners will run directly past you here.

### **EAST RUSTON WEAVERS' WAY CAR PARK 36km into the race**

This is a good option if parking is a bit tight in Stalham, just nip up the road and the car park is at the bend on Chapel road. After you've seen the runners you can pop into the Butcher's arms for a quick one if you aren't the designated driver!

### **HONING STATION AT BRIGGATE WEAVERS' WAY CAR PARK 40km into the race**

The same applies here, you can park at a disused railway station car park and sit/ stand on the platform as the runners come by. Great photo opportunity here.

### **BENGATE WEAVERS' WAY CAR PARK 41 km into the race**

Just another km down the line is yet another Weavers' way car park. This is just off the A149 which runs to N Walsham and is a busy road. The runners won't cross this road but you may have to if you park here so just take care.

### **NORTH WALSHAM LIBRARY CAR PARK 46km into the race**

This is a centrally located car park, it is also the location of one of the checkpoints at the community centre. This is the 3rd checkpoint for the long race and the first checkpoint for the shorter race. The car park is accessed off New road just past the firestation. If you aim for the library the parking is in front of it. This car park is also the bus station so just beware it may be busy. The checkpoint is around the back of the community centre in the far left corner of the car park. There are plenty of places for refreshment and cafes in the town. If you head back towards the firestation on foot and cross at the zebra crossing there are cafes and also if you walk through the church yard there are a few more.

### **BLICKLING HALL at about 59km into the race**

This is the hard part for the athletes. They have a half marathon to go which on a normal day might take 2 hours or so depending on ability. But this is no normal day. They may well be flagging or emotional here. So give them a big cheer. This part of the course is beautiful in day light but some of the runners may be reaching here at dusk. There is a lovely pub here called The Bucks Inn which they will run past. Grab a pint and cheer them on. You may have to pay for parking here as it is a National Trust property. If you have bought a ticket you might as well make the most and walk/run with your runners for a bit if you want to as the course goes into the estate anyway. If it's dark you will need a torch of course and don't get lost, we won't be tracking spectators only runners so be sensible!

## **CRICKETERS ON THE GREEN PUB ALDBOROUGH at about 69km into the race**

This is the last checkpoint in both races. The pub is fantastic and the village green is a perfect setting for a cold beer on a sunny day. This being October however it may well be dark by the time your runners reach here, but it is still a great place to have a hot chocolate and sit by the fire. The landlord is a supporter of the race and so is more than happy for you to pop in. The menu is very good too (booking advised). Give your runners a good cheer, only 8 miles to go.

## **FELBRIGG HALL at about 77km into the race**

The runners will emerge from around the back of the lake in the grounds of Felbrigg hall to run across the front of the hall and out down the driveway before cutting across a field to the village green. So you can choose to pay for parking in Felbrigg hall car park which is a National Trust property and very beautiful as you would expect but if it is dark and late I would recommend making your way down to Cromer to get parked and wait by the finish line overlooking the Pier ready to welcome your runner in.

## **THE FINISH**

Your athlete will have a medal hung around his /her neck and then be directed to the Community centre a short 400m walk back up the course. This is only a short walk but to the athletes this feels like a mile so bear with them.

At the community centre there will be food laid on and they will be reunited with their kit bags.

Some people like to stay in the finish hall for quite a while as it is warm and they are tired. We ideally want our athletes to stay as long as they like until they are recovered. It is not uncommon to feel nauseous, weak and cold also after a race like this. These feelings are normal but with a bit of time, food, change of clothes and nice cup of tea/ coffee they soon recover enough to make the walk back to the car.

If the centre looks busy then please wait outside or in your car or any other suitable location. But if its not too busy then by all means come in and sit with your runner but just be mindful that the food and drink is for the runners as we cannot cater for an unknown number of spectators and we wouldn't want to run out of food and tea etc for the later runners as they are, arguably, the ones that need the refreshments the most.

***If you've had a good day and you aren't in a hurry to go home then please hang around near the finish towards the end of the race to cheer the last few runners in. Those last few runners will be stressed about making the cut offs. They are the real heroes of the day, they will have battled through all sorts of emotions to make it to the finish. Its truly devastating when you are at the back of the field and you arrive to silence and people packing up so please stay and cheer them in. We want the loudest cheer for our back of the field finishers. They are an inspiration to us all.***

And lastly a big thank you to you for supporting your runners in this race. Without you we wouldn't be able to put on a race like this. So a massive thank you to all our supporters. Drive safely and see you at the next race God willing.