

People and places

Marathon man

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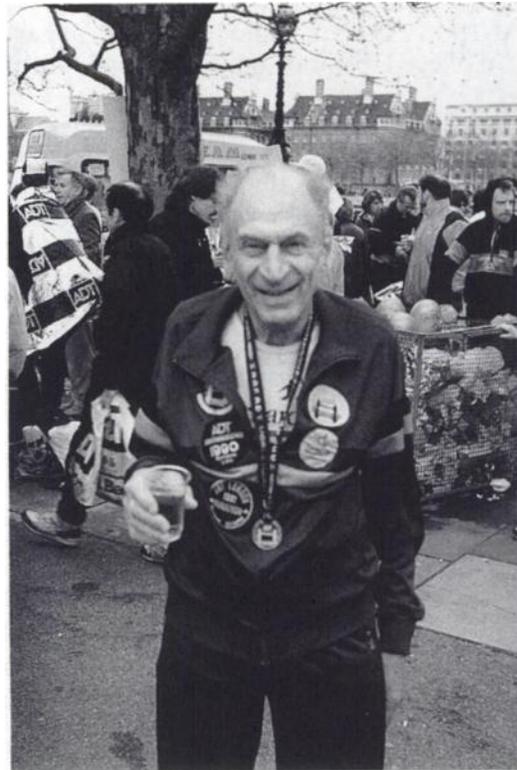
On a cold, wet Sunday in April 1986 Dr Sidney Crown ran his first London Marathon. He assured everyone that this was a "once in a lifetime event", but the sense of achievement and the uplifting and heartening atmosphere of the event appear to have been addictive, because on another cold, wet Sunday in April this year he completed the London Marathon for the sixth time.

Sidney always runs the London Marathon for a charity with which he feels in sympathy and perhaps this provides the vital ingredient at those moments when he "hits the wall" and the going gets really tough. On each occasion he has raised between £500 and £1,000 for his chosen charity and this year he raised £750 for Barnardo's. In the past he has run for the Mental Health Foundation, the London Hospital Children's Unit, the St Michael's Church, Brighton Appeal and the London Foot Hospital, when he was one of only ten runners to be sponsored by *The Times*.

The London Foot Hospital used the money raised to buy a computer for the library. This has allowed them to introduce an information retrieval system which is proving very helpful to students and staff and has enabled the library to be recognised as a specialist collection within London University. St Michael's Church has now raised enough money to begin restoration work and this will include re-leading its Burne-Jones stained glass windows.

Sidney has always been a sports enthusiast and played a great deal of organised sport when he was younger. He runs every day, and three or four times a week his wife June runs with him. On weekdays he sets off from his home near Regent's Park at 6.30 in the morning and runs for three miles round the Park, where he is on nodding acquaintance with the ducks, the herons and the vagrants. At the weekends, when most of us are winding down, Sidney ups his rate to five miles a day and throws in a game of squash for good measure. These runs take place in the invigorating air of the South Coast, where he and his wife spend the weekends.

Each January 1st when Sidney is advised that he has been given a place to run in the London Marathon,



he gradually increases the distance of one of his weekend runs, until he reaches 15 miles. Two of his pre-race runs measure 27 miles. In order that the musculo-skeletal system has time to settle down, the second of these is run four weeks before the race.

Sidney is already planning the strategy which will take him to the moment in the Spring of 1992 when he runs into Parliament Square and over Westminster Bridge, and another 26 miles of that peculiar blend of camaraderie and humour and courage which characterise the London Marathon will be over.