

TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 111 Aug 22

The Marathon (in my dreams) Run.



I did a fair amount of running, as training for my rowing. I even joined Shettleston Harriers, one of Glasgow's famous local clubs. I had always thought that someday I would do a marathon running race, as I had competed in several rowing marathons, and during some of my training I was both sculling and running more than 20 miles a day. I finally plucked up the courage and entered the Glasgow Marathon.



The eve of the marathon arrived, but things were not to be as I had hoped, Glasgow Police contacted me regarding a missing person who could have entered the river, so I was out most of the night before the Marathon searching the river for any sign of this poor soul, and I knew that I would be expected to be out again the day of the race. Its so difficult when you just have a person missing. Where do you start to look, you could even say which of our waterways do you look in, Three main rivers, burns, lochs, canals. The Clyde being the main one is where I start, but then, the person may not have actually entered the water.



Purely by coincidence, as I was waiting for a Police car to convey me to the harbour area to recommence my search, I met a chap who had been in my class at Primary School. I had not seen Roy for years, but knew he was a very good runner. I assumed Roy was in the park to run the marathon, but he explained that he was out of work and did not have the money to enter and was just going to spectate. I explained my position to Roy and suggested that he took my place. Roy was delighted and immediately agreed. So it was that history recorded that I “George Parsonage” ran the Glasgow marathon in a fairly fast time

Of course, the truth is, that I didn't.

But the story of what I did do, is funny.

I received word from Police that the man I was searching for had, thankfully, turned up safe and well. There was no way I was going back on letting Roy run the Marathon in my place, but there was to be a rowing race held that afternoon over a sprint distance alongside the park, to entertain the crowds that had turned up for the marathon, and I was asked to stroke the club crew.



So, there I was, mid-afternoon, doing squat jumps and other warm up exercises getting ready for the race. At that point a runner (a police officer who knew me) was being helped down the brae by two of his pals. He was totally exhausted having just finished the Marathon. He stopped in amazement when he saw me doing my exercise. “What on earth are you doing” he asked. I replied that I was just getting warmed up for a rowing race. The words stuttered from the man's mouth “But, I have just heard your name announced finishing the marathon ahead of me.” I realised immediately that they had announced Roy finishing in my name, I said “yes, that was quite a good time” (never let the truth ruin a good story). “I knew you were very fit George” the policeman said “but this is exceptional”, and, shaking his head, he continued his assisted walk across the suspension bridge to where, no doubt, they had a car waiting. I wonder if he ever found out?

Let's hope he reads this now, and has a good laugh.