

## **From Nothing to Lots to Very Little** by Pat Wood

The year, 1982. I am the mother of a HUGE 8 year old who thinks he can rule the roost. The solution, according to Dad, was to take said obnoxious child to a local boxing club. Teach him discipline, get rid of aggression, tire him out. Little did I know it would do the same to me!!

So, as an active mum – only 28 years old – I took great delight in training with all the horrible Henry's aged 8 to 14. The training involved some warm-up drills in the gym then a run round the hills of Dewsbury. Strangely, that was the part I really enjoyed. So much so that I would go out for runs around Denby Dale where we lived. There was not one route from my house that did not start with a flipping hill. I was not a member of a club, who knew then that they existed? I used to run with my dog. [I also did my son's morning paper round (don't ask!) and ran that too].

Fast forward nearly 20 years. My enjoyment in a gentle trot had diminished over those years, but every now and then I thought I could still do some running. In 2001, there was a new event starting and I challenged myself to enter and run it. It was Race for Life. Mine took part in Greenhead Park, Huddersfield.

My son, now grown up, and a Champion Boxer, (see, dedication and hard work paid off for him), decided that he would train me, Rocky style. There is a bandstand in that park with steps leading up to it. Mark had me running up and down those steps singing the theme tune. Laugh? The youths in the park did! The day of the Race for Life came. I lined up with a couple of hundred other bewildered females and off we went. I ran my little legs off that day but seeing my son and family cheering me on made the sick making sprint finish worth it.

Mark asked me "So what's next Mum? A marathon?" .... And without further thought, I managed to secure a place in London 2002. Where eldest son met me at mile 13, then 18, then 21 – with a pint of lager – and then at the end. 5 hours 20 minutes of sheer hell. But, like many thousands of others, I went on to run more marathons, hundreds of halves, loads of 10k's and an immense number of 5K's.

Now, after 3 heart attacks in 2014, sepsis and knee replacement in 2017, I am content to be ED at Nostell parkrun, a coach, be there to support, encourage (oh OK, shout at you all xx), and involve myself with the junior running club – today's children, tomorrow's Usain Bolts. #loveARR xx.

Pat Wood, May 2020