

*All interviews have kindly been conducted and written up by Charlie.*

## **CASSIE**

**Number of trainers: 1**

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 20 miles. **Race:** Marathon.

Cassie has been running for a couple of years but has already run two marathons, London in April and New York in November, however this did cause some problems. "During last summer's festival season I did have a few days where I ran a casual half and then was in a field covered in glitter two hours later. Probably not recommended." But she started running after she supported a friend running the London Marathon.

"I don't have any runners in the family so I think my earliest memory (other than watching it on TV) was watching a friend run it a couple of years back. I'd had a few beers, had a great time cheering for random people and left thinking I really wanted to do it... that was when I started running."

**Seeing it on TV did you want to do it then?**

"I honestly don't remember it being more than background TV. I don't think I really realised "ordinary people" could do it."

**What part of watching your friend and others run made you want to run the Marathon?**

"Mostly the atmosphere. Hard to watch it and not be inspired!"

**How long have you been training for the London Marathon for?**

"Technically 14 weeks, started late off the back of an IT band injury. However, I trained for two last year which I'm hoping will help me."

**What advice would you give for overcoming an injury in your marathon training plans?**

"Advice that I'm really bad at taking myself - but rest and foam roll. Also Epsom salts are absolute magic."

**What's your earliest and latest training run in the day?**

"Latest I've done was running home at 9.30pm when work was mad. You run quite fast when you start to panic you're being chased."

**Why did you think you were being chased?**

"Mostly just because I think, despite being 23, I'm still slightly afraid of the dark."

**How have you maintained a balance during your training; have you given up anything or had to skip runs?**

“Honestly, I probably stretch the definition of balance too far. So I don’t think I’ve missed out on much....I have officially given up on my toenails though.”

**What would you prefer at the London Marathon: a good time or a good photo?**

“100% a good time.”

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“Join City Runners! (Honestly, I was a late joiner but there’s so many people of different levels you’ll definitely find someone to follow).”

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“Enjoy it, and be proud that you’ve got this far, and make sure regardless of time or anything else you celebrate your achievement properly afterwards. As far as getting through it on the day I rely quite heavily on a combination of bagels, gels and a serious playlist.”

# HANNAH

**Number of trainers:** 2

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 30 km. **Race:** Marathon.

When Hannah was younger she would cycle alongside her dad as he ran. "My dad had always been into running and when I was a kid I'd cycle alongside him on his runs, and always wanted to run but I probably wouldn't have been able to keep up!" At thirteen she joined the Cross Country club with school friends. Her school friends dropped out, but she was hooked. In 2016 she ran the London Marathon, but had only run 13 miles up till that day. To make it worse her GPS watch told her she had run 27.8 miles in the race.

"I ran the London Marathon in 2016, although my GPS told me I'd run 27.8 miles, so this time I'm going to try to go a bit narrower on the corners and not weave in and out of other people so much! This year I've got up to 20 miles in training, so I'm hopefully a lot more prepared than in 2016 when the furthest I'd run before the big day was 13 miles. I really learnt my lesson about training that year!"

**So you went from running 13 miles to running a 27.8 miles?**

"Yeah, I didn't train properly the first time so I ended up running 13 miles about a week before the marathon - I found the second half of it really tough and it took me just under 5 hours in the end."

**What hooked you into running at 13?**

"I think I got into running for a few reasons. It was one of the only sports I took to quite naturally. I was okay at other things but did pretty well at running from the start. I loved that I could do it anywhere and with pretty much nothing but a pair of trainers. I had a good coach who worked us hard, but was also really encouraging, so I enjoyed it."

**How long have you been training for the London Marathon for?**

"Training properly kicked in on January 1st so I've followed a 16 week plan."

**What's your earliest and latest training run in the day?**

"I'm quite lucky as a freelancer that I can plan my schedule a little bit around training, so the earliest I tend to head out is 7.30am. When I was younger I used to go for midnight runs at the end of a long day, but I gave them up after two separate friends were attacked nearby late at night. I just didn't feel safe anymore so now I stick to daytime/earlier runs."

**What have you skipped a run for?**

"If I don't go running it's almost always because I've got an early meeting or rehearsal that I can't miss and I don't feel like getting up at 5/6am to fit a run in."

**What have you given up for the London Marathon?**

“I’ve been way more careful about staying out late and drinking too much. I’m a real lightweight and I can’t get away with big nights out and long runs the next day.”

**What would you prefer at the LM a good time or a good photo?**

“This is such a hard one! Probably a good photo for the memories – I can always try for a better time in another race.”

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“Do it because you enjoy it. Don’t struggle on if you get bored, mix things up, try new routes, new podcasts and music, read a magazine or book about running to get inspired, or join a club. Running has so many amazing physical and mental benefits and you’ll get the most out of them if you love the process too.”

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“Train as well as you can, it’ll make the race much more enjoyable. Smile, encourage other runners when they need it and try to soak up the atmosphere. Everyone says it, but it’s a really special day and the cheers from the crowds are like nothing else, so make the most of it.”

# JOHN

**Number of trainers:** 3

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 20 miles **Race:** Marathon.

John started running aged 9 when he joined the same running club as his older brother. From the age of 11 to 16 he did a yearly 36 mile walk organised by his school for charity. "I used to run the first 18 miles then run/walk the second half". His earliest memory of the London Marathon was watching his brother run it in 1983.

"I was 13 when my brother did the London Marathon, he ran it in 3:44:37, but I will probably be an hour slower than that. I can't remember if I imagined doing the London Marathon, but since I had done about three 36 mile jogs by then, I probably would have told my brother he should keep on running 10 miles past the finish to make up the shortfall in his comparatively easy event!"

**What inspired you to run marathons?**

"The first marathon I did because my friend had assured me wine would be available all around the course (The Médoc Marathon). While this was true, I really don't advise trying to drink Bordeaux in 30°C of heat during a marathon. Also I got injured in training, so my longest run was only 15 miles, which meant I had to walk the last 6 miles as my legs hurt too much!

"I got into the LM by mistake, i.e. I entered the ballot with zero expectation of getting a place as it was only my 2nd ballot attempt. The odds this year were 27-1 I believe. I was surprised, excited and slightly alarmed when I got the news. I entered because London is my home city and it's the marathon I would most like to run.

"Maybe if I finish London without any drama or too much pain I may sign up for a 3rd marathon?? Ask me this again in the pub afterwards!"

**How long have you been training for the London Marathon for?**

"I started training at the end of October.

"I guess I would say the longer runs have been interesting as I have seen parts of London that I've never seen before, even though I've lived here for about 25 years, for example running up Parliament Hill, Primrose Hill, the new development behind Kings Cross, the Lea Valley, Walthamstow Marshes, the Olympic Stadium and Park, the Woolwich Foot Tunnel, the Thames Barrier (I think I saw it from a party boat once), the full length of the Regent's Canal. I didn't get around to running east down the Thames to Erith, nor West as far as Richmond, but I guess I can do that after London.

"Also I have conducted bizarre eating experiments while running such as eating sausage rolls, sucrose and water, glucose and water, coconut oil, sausages, and finally pâté. This actually seemed the best. I guess it's similar to baby food as its pre-mashed, but I doubt you'll see Mo Farah eating pâté while running."

**What's your earliest and latest training run in the day?**

“Earliest probably 11am, latest around 9pm.”

**What would you prefer at the LM a good time or a good photo?**

“I'd prefer a decent time (doesn't everyone?).”

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“If you're just starting running start with short distances, e.g. 5k. Once you're comfortable running 5k, rather than trying to run further, instead run more frequently, e.g. 5k twice a week. This should improve your running more rapidly.”

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“Assuming you are already comfortable running 10k+ 2-3 times a week, the most important thing is to start training early, e.g. 6 months in advance. Starting early will allow you to increase your weekly mileage slowly. It also allows time to recover from illnesses, minor injuries etc. I got ITB problems in the first marathon I did because I started the training too late and increased my weekly mileage too quickly. As a result the longest run I did was only 15 miles, and I had to walk the last 6 miles which was really tedious (apart from at the 41k stage where beer and ice cream was available). Also there are lots of marathon training plans that seem to have people running 5-6 days a week. I would not recommend this. Running 3 times a week is sufficient, and gives more time for recovery between runs. If you have extra energy to spare then do some x-training instead, e.g. swimming, cycling etc..”

# LAURA

**Number of trainers:** 4

**Furthest run: Training:** Half marathon. **Race:** Half Marathon.

Until recently running 5km was a struggle for Laura. She started running 4 years ago, but very sporadically. She joined City Runners in April 2017, and started training for the London Marathon in November.

“I have been training since November for the London Marathon. In December I still could not run 5k without stopping to walk at some parts of it, and I really thought I would never be able to do the marathon.” Her first run longer than 5k was in January. “There was something in my head that clicked in January and I realised I had 4 months to go and became really determined. I realise that most people would have been doing 10k long before this but it's just made me work harder to prove to myself that I can do it.”

She's also training to be a Lawyer, so balancing work and training is difficult. “My earliest run was at 7am on the weekend, and my latest run was at 10:30 at night. As a trainee solicitor there are some very late hours, and combined with a long commute, has meant that 10:30pm is the only time I can fit a run in. As I had to be ready by 22<sup>nd</sup> April I didn't have much choice. If I hadn't been running the marathon I would have gone straight home to bed, but having a goal has definitely made me push myself. The only problems it caused was that it was dark, and where I run is not particularly well lit, so it is a difficult run with a few twisted ankles along the way but not really any problems”.

Her father has run the Marathon and her Grandad ran the first London Marathon in 1981, but passed away in 2015. This inspired her to run the marathon this year. “During the last 10 years my Granddad was diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy so I wanted to raise awareness and money for them and I thought that the only way I could do it would be to follow in his and my dad's footsteps and run the marathon”.

**What's your earliest memory of The London Marathon?**

“My earliest memory of the London marathon is from 2010 when my Dad was running the marathon for the first time and the whole family went up to London to watch and support him. It was one of the most inspirational days watching the professional athletes, and then all those who have worked so hard to be able to do it.”

**Have you given anything up for the London Marathon?**

“I have given up drinking which has been tough as with my job there are regular drinks, and I have had to be very disciplined.”

**Have you skipped a run for anything?**

“I have skipped a run for the snow. The snow really affected my training, and I skipped runs for longer than I could afford.”

**What's your biggest fear for the day?**

“My biggest fear. I have lots of fears and worries for the day as it has suddenly dawned on me that I have to run 26.2 miles. That is a long way! But my biggest worry is definitely the feeling that I might be overwhelmed on the day and panic rather than staying calm and focused”.

**What would you prefer at the London Marathon a good time or a good photo?**

“A good time although my aim is just to finish it in one piece”.

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“I would advise anyone to not give up, and even if you have to walk-run-walk-run, just keep going and push yourself a bit further each time. But also listen to your body. If I can do it then I really mean that anyone can.

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“To not worry too much about the time that you get, but just focus on your own run and enjoy the moment. For me this is my first marathon so my advice may change afterwards, but this is what I am going to try and do”.

**What keeps you motivated during the training runs?**

“What keeps me motivated is just sheer determination that I have to do this and I want my family to be proud of me”.

Laura is running for Muscular Dystrophy UK.

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/LauraBaker92>



# LIZZIE

**Number of trainers:** 4

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 22 miles. **Race:** Half Marathon.

Lizzie started running 3 years ago using the Couch to 5k App (C25k) from the NHS. "The C25k feels like a distant memory but I do remember that initially I found it incredibly hard. I recall thinking that I was never going to be able to run for as long as the voice was telling me to. That feeling passed pretty quickly and I ended up playing games of beating the app. Running longer and walking less."

From there she moved up to 10k. "Once I'd completed the app I trained up to a 10k. Doing two 5k runs during the week and then adding on another km to a run each weekend taking it from 6k to 7k etc. Over the next 2 years I did the occasional 10k but never got faster or fitter."

**Do you have any tips for people who have recently completed the C25k?**

"I suppose a tip for a newly graduated C25k runner would be to book regular races, ones that you have to do something to commit to, whether that be paying for it or doing it with a friend. That will ensure you keep up your fitness and continue to enjoy the journey."

**What's your earliest memory of The London Marathon?**

"My first memory of the London Marathon was visiting a friend when I was about 10 years old. I recall being aware of what a huge feat it was because when her friend had to leave early to go off to run the mini marathon I was in total awe."

**Why did you decide to run the Marathon?**

"I'd always wanted to complete the Marathon and tried with the ballot 3 times unsuccessfully. There was only one Charity that I'd wanted to run it for. A very small charity that supports people who suffer with the same disease my late father had. It is a rare and devastating disease and the charity is small and this year was the first year they won a place. Just one and I got it. So the Charity has motivated me knowing what they will be able to do with the funds I raise. I also wanted a goal to aim to, to get fit and healthy. Since winning my place (I definitely see it as the best gift ever) I have lost weight and also given up smoking. I am so pleased at what the marathon has given me!"

**What would you prefer at the LM a good time or a good photo?**

"Difficult. Would be great to have a fab photo to remember it by, but also, a great time would be such an achievement (great for a snail that is)."

**How long have you been training for the LM for?**

"17 weeks officially."

**What's your earliest and latest training run?**

"I'm so habitual with my running. I must eat before running and need a nice chill after, so earliest is 8am and latest 8pm."

**What's the biggest thing you've missed because of London Marathon training?**

"I think I've managed to get to everything. I've taken advantage of travelling to see friends and family by planning long runs in their part of the country."

**What have you skipped a run for?**

"I accidentally got drunk with some old friends I hadn't seen in over a year. I didn't actually skip a run it just got delayed for a couple of days. I did have to take 10 days rest with a posterior ankle impingement but thankfully rest and stretching have cured it completely."

**What have you given up for the London Marathon?**

"Dating."

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

"Take your time, don't rush anything, it's better to slowly achieve more, and enjoy it, than burn out and hate it!"

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

"It's me that needs the advice!!!!!"

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/elizabeth-farrant5>

# LOUISE

**Number of trainers:** 1

**Furthest run: Training:** 21 miles. **Race:** Half Marathon.

Louise started running when she found out she had a place in the London Marathon. That was in October 2017, and she joined City Runners in November 2017. The London Marathon will be her first marathon, but the one that sticks in her memory is when Lloyd Scott walked the marathon:

“The one that definitely sticks in my mind is the admiration for Lloyd Scott. The 40 year old man who completed the LM in a 120lb antique diving suit! Now that takes some doing!”

**Have you had to give anything up for the London Marathon?**

“I have given up a lot of my social life when training for the London Marathon, but I am a firm believer in “all or nothing” and I would rather focus on the marathon for a few months of the year and know that I have given it my all. I feel so incredibly lucky to have got a place and I am sure there will be plenty of socials after the event to make up for it!”

**What’s the biggest thing you’ve missed?**

“I have been lucky in that I haven’t missed out on too much, but I did bail out of a friend’s birthday night drinking celebrations because I had to run 18 miles the following day!”

**Has anything made you skip a run?**

“I skipped a run when the “Beast from the East” arrived for a night with friends and a takeaway!”

**What’s your earliest and latest training run?**

“My earliest run has been at 5:30am (God knows how I managed that in the dark without injury!) and my latest has been 8:30pm.”

**Why did you have to run at 5:30?**

“I had a really full on week and so had to make the time to get my run in before work, and so that meant heading out at ridiculous o’clock in the morning! The only problem I had was the visibility, and running on the pavement without much lighting was not fun!”

**What’s the first thing you’ll do after you cross the finish line?**

“Probably fall to a heap on the floor! Although, hopefully, my legs will carry me to Tiger Tiger where my charity is hosting an after party. So I shall be eating, drinking and getting a massage!”

**What are you looking forward to doing after the Marathon?**

“Eating ALL THE FOOD! I have other friends who are running the London Marathon and on Monday, to celebrate our achievement, we are going for a huge burger and ice cream!”

**What would you prefer at the London Marathon a good time or a good photo?**

“I would much rather prefer a good time. To date I have never had a good race photo!!”

**What’s your biggest worry for the day?**

“Hitting the wall! We have all heard that it exists, and when running my longest run of 21 miles I’m sure I was incredibly close to touching it! I’m also worried about the pain that comes with running that distance as I have never experienced that mileage before!”

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“My advice to anyone starting out running would be to concentrate on yourself, and your own goals and accomplishments, rather than comparing yourself to others. You will be amazed how much you can achieve in a short space of time and it works wonders for your self-esteem. Go at your own pace. I actually find that once you get past the 3 mile mark it becomes easier. So many people quit before this point because they are finding it hard to breath and feel like they can’t carry on but for me everything starts to regulate after this point. Just stick with it.”

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“My advice to anyone doing their first marathon would be to invest in a decent pair of trainers (this is essential!) be consistent with your training and listen to your body! I wanted to give myself enough time so that I was in a position to increase the mileage slowly and get used to running all those miles. More importantly I wanted to be in a position where hopefully I had achieved the desired level of fitness so that I can enjoy every moment and try and take in all that marathon day throws at me!”

Louise is running for Sense. They are a national charity supporting people who are deafblind, have sensory impairments or complex needs to enjoy independent lives.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/louise-kinna>

# MARC

**Number of trainers:** 2

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 20 miles. **Race:** Half Marathon.

Marc started running to get away from his desk when he started work. He wasn't ever a long distance runner but did enjoy getting outside. In 2013 he went to watch the London Marathon and from that point on he wanted to run it, so for the last 4 years he's been running more regularly. However he found out late that he was running.

"I was a little late to the party. Only found out I was running for my Charity mid-January. "

**Did starting training in January cause you any problems in fitting the training in?**

"Was a little struggle. But that was mainly due to it being different to my normal routine. But I just started a training program from London Marathon website at the point I would be at if I had learnt I had a space earlier."

**How do you run during working hours?**

"My boss is quite relaxed and if all the work is done he doesn't mind if I take longer than the normal hour off for lunch. So I just run what I plan to do during that time."

**What's the biggest thing you've lost to London Marathon training?**

"I have been lucky that I have managed to run a lot during working hours, so that meant changing running days to try to make sure I could fit most things in."

**What have you skipped a run for?**

"Grandparents 80<sup>th</sup>."

**What have you given up for the London Marathon?**

"Booze has been a big one. Spending time with friends in the weekends."

**What would you prefer at the London Marathon a good time or a good photo?**

"A good time."

**What's your earliest and latest training run in the day?**

"Earliest 6am. Latest 6pm."

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

"Give it a go, no matter how fast or slow you are everyone can do it!!"

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“Have fun I guess, you aren’t a pro, so as long as you are enjoying it that is half the battle I think.”

**What are you looking forward to doing after the race?**

“Chilling with friends that came to support me on the day! Probably having a couple of pints.”

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=marc-garrity&pageUrl=2>

# MELANIE

**Number of trainers:** “Too many to count!!”

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 30 km. **Race:** Marathon.

Melanie started running when she did Modern Pentathlon (fencing, swimming, show jumping, running and shooting, in case you didn't know). From there she wanted more of a running challenge. “I started with short runs then slowly wanted a bigger challenge” Melanie explained, ‘but I wanted to do the London Marathon because it looks like the best marathon to do.’ She ran the London Marathon last year, so this will be her second run around London on the biggest day of the London running calendar.

**What's your earliest memory of The London Marathon?**

“I watched it on TV when I was young, and remembered I wanted to do it. I applied for a good few years until I got a place last year.”

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“Do it on a nice sunny day!”

**Why do you prefer running on a sunny day?**

“I'm not a fan of the cold! And it's nice to run when the weather is nice!”

**What have you given up for the London Marathon?**

“I love food- so haven't given up on anything. Big night outs have suffered a little bit.”

**How long have you been training for the London Marathon for?**

“Since December.”

**What's your earliest and latest training run?**

“I'm not a morning person so my latest run is 10pm.”

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“Start slow, check your pace, it is so easy to get carried away by the sea of runners! Iron your name on your shirt. You can get an energy boost from spectators. Enjoy it!”

**What would you prefer at the LM a good time or a good photo?**

“Both!”

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/melanie-gurney>

# TIM

**Number of trainers:** 3

**Furthest run:**

**Training for the London Marathon:** 35km. **Race:** Half Marathon.

Rugby was always the priority for Tim. He skipped his only race during the time he played rugby to play in the season finale. "I didn't run the 10k purely due to rugby. It was due to be in April of one year, but I ended up playing an end of season match and wouldn't have been able to run a day after a rugby match". Things changed in 2015 when he had to give up playing rugby.

"I was coaching, but I loved training and had nothing to train for. In October 2015 I ran my first Parkrun and got into them regularly. In 2016 I set myself a challenge: run 2016 km in 2016. It was the biggest challenge I'd ever done and it was just due to my competitive nature that I did it! I achieved it with 3 days to go! In that time I was running long distances from time to time, 15-20km sometimes. I set myself a plan of running 10km races before doing a half marathon. I did that all during the summer of 2016. I also, in my head, set out a plan of if I ever did a marathon, and at this time I was getting tempted by the challenge: I'd do a minimum of 3 half marathons. My first was April 9th last year, my home half marathon in Norwich, and here I am just over a year later preparing for my first marathon having run 3 halves in a year."

**What's your earliest memory of The London Marathon?**

"My earliest memory of the Marathon is actually from the mid-1990's when Liz McColgan was regularly running it and back in the days when it was sponsored by Flora."

**Watching the marathon did you want to run it?**

"Yes and no, it looked great but every time I looked into it, when I was younger, it looked like too much training plus back when I was younger I played rugby a lot so never thought it would work with rugby season and training etc.."

**How long have you been training for the London Marathon for?**

13 weeks. In total I'll have done a 14 week training programme.

**What's your earliest and latest training run in the day?**

"I prefer to train early. My earliest session was one of my long runs, about 6.30am, on my birthday when there was a snow blizzard – bloody freezing. The latest has probably been club runs on Tuesdays, so about 7pm ish!"

**What's the biggest thing you've had to miss for your London Marathon training?.**

"I had to come back to London early over Easter from a weekend with family in Norfolk as I refused to run my 35km run in 'hilly' Norfolk so that's probably the main thing. Wouldn't have bothered for anything else."



**What have you skipped a run for?**

“Luckily nothing as I work afternoons and evenings so I can train in the morning. But if I had to say one thing I’ve had to missed 3 or 4 months of gym training to prepare for the Marathon which won’t be enjoyable to get back to.”

**What would you prefer at the LM a good time or a good photo?**

“Both... I hope I’d get a couple of good photos, but I’m going for a time as it’s been my goal since I started training – have written it down but very few people know what it is!”

**What advice would you give to someone starting running?**

“Set yourself small goals – Parkruns are brilliant and when you get more confident, aim bigger. Join a club as well as it’s easier to run with people than alone – London City Runners is a very friendly, inclusive club and everyone is welcome which is fantastic. Running is a great way to explore anywhere.”

**What advice would you give to someone doing their first marathon?**

“I’ve not done it yet but I’d say enjoy it, enjoy the training, accept the good runs with the bad runs and don’t worry too much. Set a training plan out that suits your goals and your target time! If you live in London do some of the training runs along some of the route so you know what to expect on race day.”

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=TM RugbyCoach&pageUrl=1>