Our Millionth Finisher

The London Marathon's one millionth finisher will cross the line during the 2016 race, a milestone in the history of the event celebrated by a #oneinamillion social media campaign which celebrates every finisher since the race started in 1981.

- All finishers from the previous 35 editions have been sharing 'selfies', photos of themselves holding up their medals or other memorabilia with their left index finger extended. Selfies have been shared via @LondonMarathon using the hashtag #oneinamillion (see @LondonMarathon for examples).

- A #oneinamillion T-shirt is available to all London Marathon finishers, each one displaying their own unique #oneinamillion finisher number.

A database of finishers has been created, which involved manually inputting 20 years of historical results data. All #oneinamillion runners will be able to search the database by the year (or years) they ran to find their #oneinamillion finisher number(s).

The online ordering system for the #oneinamillion T-shirts went live on www.virginmoneylondonmarathon.com on Friday 5 February 2016. Runners in the 2016 Virgin Money London Marathon will be able to order their unique #oneinamillion T-shirt after this year’s race.

Dick Beardsley and Inge Simonsen, joint winners of the first London Marathon in 1981, will have the number #oneinamillion 1 and the men’s winner on 24 April 2016 will be #oneinamillion 964,334.

The one millionth finisher (#oneinamillion 1,000,000) will be announced on Monday 9 May when all the 2016 results have been ratified and approved.

All profits from the sale of T-shirts will go to the London Marathon Charitable Trust to fund sports facilities in London and other areas where London Marathon Events Ltd holds events (see page 19).

“We want to celebrate every member of the London Marathon family,” said event director Hugh Brasher (he’s #oneinamillion 23,967). “This is about every single runner who has ever run the event, from club runners to our champions and world record holders, from first-timers to the charity runners who have raised so many millions for good causes.”

Those set to receive a #oneinamillion T-shirt include:

- 2015 women’s champion, Ethiopia’s Tigist Tufa (she’s #oneinamillion 926,572), who defends her title against a star-studded field that includes two-time London champion Mary Keitany from Kenya (she’s #oneinamillion 784,518) and world champion Mare Dibaba of Ethiopia (a London Marathon debutante).

- Kenya’s defending men’s champion Eliud Kipchoge (#oneinamillion 926,541) takes on countrymen Wilson Kipsang (#oneinamillion 819,371) who won in 2012 and 2014, world record holder Dennis Kimetto (#oneinamillion 926,543) and New York champion Stanley Biwott (#oneinamillion 856,190), with Ethiopia’s triple Olympic track gold medallist Kenenisa Bekele and Eritrea’s world champion Ghirmay Ghebreslassie also in the field.

- British ESA astronaut Tim Peake (he’s #oneinamillion 386,675), who runs the Digital London Marathon in the International Space Station 17 years after he ran as an Earthling in 1999.

- Double Olympic champion Kelly Holmes makes her marathon debut 12 years after she won two gold medals at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

- Hollywood A-lister Natalie Dormer (she’s #oneinamillion 899,834), star of The Hunger Games and Game of Thrones, who heads the team raising money for the NSPCC, the London Marathon’s Charity of the Year.

- DJ Chris Evans (below, he’s #oneinamillion 953,859), who made his marathon debut in 2015 and this year runs as one of BBC Radio 2’s Children in Need team.
Some of our One in a Million Finishers

A lot has happened since Dick Beardsley and Inge Simonsen (#oneinamillion number 1) became the very first London Marathon finishers on 29 March 1981. Hundreds of thousands of people have crossed the London Marathon Finish Line in 35 years of the race. Here are just some of our one in a million finishers:

- Race founders Chris Brasher (#oneinamillion 1076) and John Disley (below) whose inspired idea grew from its first inklings in the corner of a west London pub in 1978 to become one of the greatest mass participation events in the world.

- Joyce Smith (#oneinamillion 140), the first women's champion in 1981 who became the oldest winner of the London Marathon when she triumphed for a second time in 1982, aged 44. The oldest men's winner was Britain's Allister Hutton (#oneinamillion 149,999), who won in 1990 aged 35 and 278 days.

- Kenyan Sammy Wanjiru (#oneinamillion 712,429), the youngest men's champion who conquered the capital in 2009 aged 22. Tragically, he was found dead only two years later after falling from a balcony. The youngest women's champion was Malgorzata Sobanska (#oneinamillion 272,080). The Pole was 25 when she won in 1995.

- Ingrid Kristiansen (#oneinamillion 37,283), the only runner to have tasted London Marathon victory four times. The Norwegian triumphed in 1984, 1985, 1987 and 1988, setting a world record of 2:21:06 with her second victory.

- British Paralympic legends Tanni Grey-Thompson (#oneinamillion 174,974) and David Weir (#oneinamillion 509,132) have both eclipsed that feat with six wins apiece in their respective wheelchair races. Weir is aiming for his seventh win this year.

- British's Gordon Perry (#37,148) and Denise Smith (#37,157), the London Marathon's first wheelchair champions from 1983. Perry won the men's race in 3:20:07 while Smith took the women's in 4:29:03.

- Standards have improved vastly in the intervening decades, with Australia's Kurt Fearnley (#747,795) setting a men's course record of 1:28:56 in 2009 and USA's Tatyana McFadden (#890,515) winning the 2015 women's race in a record 1:41:14, her third course record in three years. Both are in the fields this year.

- Paula Radcliffe (below, #509,191), who won the women's race three times and set a world record of 2:15:25 in 2003, one of six men's or women's senior world records set in the history of the event. The most recent men's record was set by Khalid Khannouchi (#476,234) in 2002, the US athlete clocking 2:05:38 to beat Paul Tergat and Haile Gebrselassie.

- Men's course record holder Wilson Kipsang (#819,371), who has won the race twice in recent years, took his first victory in 2012 before breaking the course record in 2014 when he finished in 2:04:29. He was second last year behind fellow Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge (#926,541) while current world record holder Dennis Kimetto (#926,543) was third. All three race again in 2016.

- Tigist Tufa (below, #926,572), the reigning women's champion, who shocked the field in 2015 by beating four highly-rated Kenyans to become only the second Ethiopian woman to be first across the Finish Line. Tufa will defend her title against two-time winner Mary Keitany (#784,518) who set an African record of 2:18:37 with her second victory in 2012, the fourth quickest marathon by a woman.
Mo Farah (#890,571) won the Mini London Marathon three years in a row between 1998 and 2000 before going on to become a double Olympic and multiple world champion on the track. Farah broke the English marathon record when he finished eighth in 2:08:21 on his debut marathon in 2014.

Hugh Jones (#6,256), the 1982 London Marathon winner, who is now the official course measurer. Jones has assisted with the London Marathon’s ‘blue line’ painting operation since 1985, and has measured the London and Berlin courses annually since 1994, as well as many Olympic and World Championship courses. Jones uses a special bicycle to measure courses – much more reliable than GPS tools, he says.

Fauja Singh (below, #572,158), who is thought to be the oldest person ever to complete the London Marathon. He was 93 when he took an impressive 6 hours 7 minutes in 2004. Singh carried on running until he was 101, while his appearance aged 100 at the 2011 Toronto Marathon made him the oldest ever marathon runner.

Jenny Wood-Allen is believed to be the oldest woman finisher. She was 90 in when she took 11 hours 34 minutes in 2002 despite injuring her head in a fall during training.

Matthew Parris (#53,234), the political journalist, who was a Conservative MP for Derbyshire West in 1985 when he finished in 2:32:57, still the fastest time for an MP. Doug Henderson (#128,626), Labour representative for Newcastle upon Tyne North, is the only other MP to dip under three hours. He finished in 2:52:24 in 1989. Sixty-nine MPs have run the race since it started in 1981.

The first couple to get married during the London Marathon were Mick Gambrill (#410,059) and Barbara Cole (#410,056) in 1999. The Croydon pair got engaged during the Disney Marathon two years previously. They stopped at Charlton House near Greenwich to be married by a registrar.

Chris Newton (#926,859), the quickest ever celebrity runner to finish. The world champion cyclist clocked 2:39:27 in 2015. Model Nell McAndrew (below, #820,145) is the fastest female celebrity, running 2:54:39 in 2012 at the age of 38.

Reverend Steve Chalke MBE (#oneinamillion 802,049), who holds the record for most money raised for charity at the London Marathon – indeed at any marathon worldwide. The Londoner, now 60, raised a jaw-dropping £2,330,159.38 in 2011.

Lloyd Scott (#oneinamillion 467,493), the slowest ever London Marathon finisher who took five days and eight hours in 2002, wearing a 110lb deep-sea diving suit.

Twelve men have completed every single London Marathon to date. Chris Finill (#196) has recorded the fastest PB of the ever-presents – an impressive 2:28:27 in 1985 – and has completed all but one of his 35 London Marathons in less than three hours.

Hugh Brasher (#23,967), the current event director, who has run the marathon a number of times, although his first experience of the event was aged 16 in 1981 when dad Chris, the race co-founder, persuaded him to sell train tickets to runners at 50p a journey from Charing Cross to the start. These days Race Day travel is free for runners.
One in a Million Quotes

Some of the London Marathon’s #oneinamillion finishers have already claimed their unique T-shirts. Here’s what a few of them said about the event’s mass appeal.

**Natalie Dormer, actress**

Star of The Hunger Games and Game of Thrones:

“I last ran in 2014 and I’m hoping to improve on my time this year. It’s all about the crowds, the cheering stations. It’s when the best comes out in humanity, cheering people on to push the boundaries of human performance. I love it!”

**Michel Roux, Michelin-starred TV chef**

“I’ve run 13 London Marathons. It is simply the best marathon in the world. Why? It’s because of the support, so thank you.”

**Sophie Raworth, BBC News TV presenter**

“I’m running my fifth London Marathon this year. The first one was a bit of a disaster; I blacked out but I did finish in 6:22. This year, I’m hoping to beat my PB, so looking for something that begins with 3:30. I love running the London Marathon because it’s my home city. You can’t beat the sensation of running through the streets of London, those crowds are unbelievable.”

**David Weir, Six-times London Marathon wheelchair champion**

“My favourite memory has got to be when I first won the London Marathon in 2002. As a boy I dreamed of winning the London Marathon. Having won the Mini Marathon and seen the race on TV, it was just a boyhood dream to win the biggest race in the world.”

**Gary Poulton, Former contestant on BBC TV’s Apprentice**

“I ran in 2013 and I’m back to run in 2016. I thought the boardroom on the Apprentice was a challenge, but it’s nothing compared to the challenge of the marathon. After mile 18 my legs had totally gone, but I carried myself round that final eight miles and it was worth it when I finally got over that Finish Line. “This year is unfinished business. If I get round in under four and a half hours, I’ll feel like the winner.”

**Chris Finill, Ever Present**

He has run all 35 London Marathons, all but one in under three hours:

“I’ve run 35 London Marathons and my abiding memory is overtaking the Olympic 800m and 400m gold medalist from Montreal, Alberto Juantorena, about half a mile into the race. The London Marathon is now an obsession for me, it’s something I couldn’t imagine missing.”

**Alistair Burt, Member of Parliament**

“This will be my 10th London Marathon. I first ran in 1984 and this will give me 10 London Marathons over four different decades.

“I want to prove at the age of 60 I’m still up to it. It’s one of the best days you can have as a runner. I ran it in the early years when there were fewer spectators than there are now. These days there are huge numbers of people.

“It’s a great course, beautifully designed. The way the public have absorbed it as the people’s run and the fact everyone does it for so many causes is fantastic. I’m thrilled to have my #oneinamillion T-shirt and thrilled that I have a much lower number than any of the other MPs running this year.”


“The London Marathon is special for me because I ran [the first one] in 1981, and also because when you run elsewhere, you don’t get that feeling of the crowd being behind you. “I think, it’s almost like a funfair, something really special and very emotional. I remember running in 2005 and having tears in my eyes.”

Some of these interviews are available on the London Marathon website:

www.virginmoneylondonmarathon.com