

The Race Route

The south coast town of New Milton once again hosts the start of both our Full and Half Marathon races.

Situated two miles from the sea, twelve miles east from Bournemouth, the New Forest National Park is less than two miles north of the town.

Traffic management around the course on race day is a perennial problem for us as race organisers. We have been in consultation with local authorities and to comply with the road closures necessary to make the event safe, alterations have been made to the course for 2011.

This will affect both races.

The Half Marathon start is at 09:30 with Full Marathon runners setting off at 10:00am. Both races follow the same route with a common start and finish. Marathon competitors have an additional 13.1 mile loop around the forest to enjoy including 3 miles off-road on gravel track.

Starting in Station road in the middle of New Milton, follow the road north and over the railway bridge past Great Ballard Lake, along tree lined Fernhill lane and straight across Bashley Cross roundabout.

Entering the New Forest National Park there is a very slight incline to Redcliffe Garden Centre and Bashley Football Club then a completely flat and fast run to the Rising Sun Inn at two and a half miles. Cross the first cattle grid and watch out for wild ponies from now on. The race now turns right into Tiptoe Rd.

(Note: this has changed from previous years when the course continued north from the Inn. The changes mean that Sway Village is now five miles from the start instead of five miles from the end. Competitors will clear the village within one hour instead of five hours and this should minimise traffic delays.)

At Tiptoe garage turn left into Middle Rd. Enjoy a fast descent for three quarters a mile, turn left into Mead End Rd. past the scrap yard and begin the undulating climb to Sway Village. After completing this testing section of the course you have run five miles.

Sway village spectators will gather to cheer competitors as they pass the butchers shop – home of the award winning New Forest Sausages. Continue through the village residential area and turn right into Manchester Rd. There is a steep descent beneath the railway bridge before climbing up to turn left onto the B3055 and the open forest.

The Hare and Hounds Inn will be just off the course but a good base for spectators.

Turn left, left again at Marlpit cross roads. Most of the next mile is flat and fast before a strength sapping undulating section past Long slade bottom at eight miles. Everyone should have recovered before the junction at Longslade Heath, turn left past Wilverley Inclosure and eventually descend to the nine mile mark. At this point full marathon competitors continue straight ahead and onto a 13.1 mile loop before returning to the same spot but worse for wear! (See 'The Marathon Loop')



Half Marathon competitors turn left and continue downhill to Wootton Bridge. The last hill is just around the corner but very steep, if you don't have to walk you are doing OK. There will be Jelly Babies, drinks and sponges on offer at the top.



The Marathon Loop After separating from the Half Marathon at nine miles the full marathon continues straight ahead. The next three and a half miles are completely flat and follow the course of a dismantled railway last used in 1964.

The Old Station Tea Rooms at Holmsley reveals the first off-road section just after the ten mile point. The two miles of compacted gravel track are traffic free apart from horse and bicycle riders. Rejoin the tarmac at Burbush Car Park and follow Pound Lane towards Burley. The road climbs gradually at first then steepens towards Castle Hill, site of an Iron Age fort hidden amongst trees. Descend past the scrumpy cider shop and tea rooms into Burley Village – you are half-way around the Marathon course.



The Burley Inn and Queens head are good spectator spots, the center of Burley will be busy with tourists. The shady run along Chapel Lane is undulating and joins a second off-road section at Wood's Corner. The next mile is predominately uphill on a gravel track through pine forest.

At fifteen miles turn left onto a closed tarmac road within the forest. After 300 metres a race marshal will guide you through a 180 degree turn. This out-and-back section solves the course designer's problem of adjusting the route to an exact distance. Continue through the forest to Lucy Hill and back onto the public highway. A few bends in the road precede a long downhill run and a left turn into Mill Lane. The undulating road past Mill Lawn and short climb into Bisterne Close is very scenic and soon passes the 19 mile point.

The White Buck Inn – turn left at this secluded country hotel set amongst the trees. Left again into Station Road and enjoy views across the heath. Descend a long hill returning to Holmsley Tea Rooms, passing under the A35 road bridge at twenty one miles. Retrace the dismantled railway, flat and fast but beware of the hill ahead!



Full and Half Marathon rejoin at twenty two miles. Descend to Wootton Bridge and begin the long tough climb to twenty three miles, this will be the last hill. Jelly babies, drinks and sponges will be waiting at the top. Marathon and half marathon runners continue to follow the same route to the finish.

Full and Half Marathon continue back to the Rising Sun Inn where there are only two and a half miles to run, it is completely flat along Bashley Common Road, past Burley Villa Riding School and Bashley Plant Centre. Turn right into peaceful New Lane at twenty four miles. Navigate a very short section of the B3055 and turn left into Stem Lane just before the Sammy Miller motorcycle museum. Enter a pedestrian pathway that was the old road. Over the railway bridge and turn left into Gore Rd, past The Old Barn Tea Rooms and you will hear the roar from waiting crowds at Arnewood school, the finish banner and a well deserved medal.

