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RACE REPORTS

Mayfair Park and Tower Race 5K

HYDE PARK, LONDON, JUNE 17



FIRST MAN	PETER SLIJKHUIS 19:30
FIRST WOMAN	JO MERSH-FENN 23:07
LAST FINISHER	48:28
NO. OF FINISHERS	88
PB POTENTIAL*	60%
OVERALL RATING*	80%

This new tower race aims to take advantage of the rise in interest in extreme running (see RW July 2009) by raising money for the Galvin's Chance charity, which helps disadvantaged young people into work.

Celebrity support took the form of British former Olympic sprinter John Regis, who started the race, ex-international footballer Graeme Le Saux and ex-400m runner Iwan Thomas (both of whom competed), as well as some of the cast of TV show *Gladiators*.

The route was a 4.5K dash round the Serpentine lake in Hyde Park, and then on into the Park Lane Hilton where, dodging bemused tourists in the lobby, runners



LIVING IT UP
Runners baffle tourists in the Park Lane Hilton lobby

dragged themselves up 28 flights of stairs to the Galvin at Windows restaurant.

The key to success (or survival) was two-fold: a steady pace throughout (some runners who hared off at the start were later seen 'composing' themselves halfway up), and a suitable strategy for ascent – with

participants adopting varying methods (one step at a time versus two, walking quickly versus running slowly, holding banisters or not) according to what suited them best.

Former London Mayor Ken Livingstone was on hand to greet every finisher with a medal, and post-race rehydration took the form of water and a glass of champagne.

The small field partly reflected the new status of the race but also given the space restrictions on the stairs, it's unlikely to grow by much more than 50 per cent.

Champagne reception aside, this is a no-frills race, but the efficiency of the organisation, the air of camaraderie and the unusual format make it well worth looking into for next year.



STEP TO IT
There are 28 flights of stairs – no easy task

Like the sound of this? Try...

Vertical Rush, Tower 42, London, March 2010 (Date TBC)

Organised by homeless charity Shelter, this is currently the largest tower race in the UK; 700 masochistic runners met the challenge of making their way up 42 flights of stairs for the inaugural race earlier this year.



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Run and rated... Real racers' views on the Mayfair Park and Tower Race 5K

**NEIL KIRBY, 57,
EASTBOURNE,
27:35**

"I didn't do any particular training for the race since I run marathons regularly - but I have to say the stairs were knackerin! The atmosphere was fantastic with everyone encouraging each other all the way round."



**FELICITY
COUSINS, 31,
TUNBRIDGE
WELLS, 32:46**

"I found the key to the stairs was changing your approach the more tired you got. I started running up one at a time and finished walking up two at a time. If I'd kept running I'd have got a slower time overall!"



**CHRIS GALVIN, 50,
FELSTEAD, ESSEX,
36:36**

"It was more a mental battle than anything once you got to the stairs. I only started running about six months ago for my health and the best tip I can give is: run your own race and ignore everyone else's speed."

