



## RACE REPORT – CITY OF LINCOLN 10KM

Beverley AC sent a very select roster comprising Julie Donald, Ian Husband, Lucas Meagor, Olly Johnston and Tina Wardropper to the badlands south of the River Humber to contest the City of Lincoln 10km on Sunday, 21 March 2010. The selection was in reality not based on ability but on being able to navigate the City of Lincoln Council's website so as to be able to find the application form and actually enter the race in the first place.

When found, the entry form was truly a bizarre creature. This being a race organised by a public authority, it was perhaps not surprising that entrants were invited to complete a diversity monitoring form. Ability and elitism, performance and training, must be rooted out from all levels of sport it seems and equal proportions of all strata of society must have medals, presumably whether they feel like running the race or not. Seeing this, I was concerned whether I would be allowed to take part, or whether the usually popular senior male biped category would already be full and the only places available would remain in the V90-95 Dengue Fever Sufferers category. Thankfully, I passed the diversity qualification criteria. Lucas commendably refuses to complete such forms as a matter of principle, whereas I meekly submitted, but may have skewed City of Lincoln Council's diversity reporting in the process with some mysterious answers about myself... The gender section unfortunately did not allow me to enter as a hermaphrodite, but there remained sufficient scope for amusement with the rest of the form. In particular, quite why age needed to be monitored three times over the course of the entire application, including on the confidential diversity monitoring form after having been examined Stasi-like on the open-record entry form proper, I have no idea. Maybe by asking three times they can catch out age group bandits. Or pension credit cheats.

Perhaps even more bizarrely, there was real gender discrimination on the application form in the guise of the question asking "If you are male, do you expect to run the race in under 40 minutes?". Presumably women are not considered capable of running a tidy sub-40 10km or must start at the back and wait until all the men have run off and had their fun. Or maybe the women were to go ahead of the men waving red flags and when the men's race was over, they could just jog round the course at their leisure. Anyway, back to the question. Like most men, having done something commendable once (well, twice actually), namely run a sub-40 10km, entitles me to say that I do this out of habit, nay, expect to do it. Naturally, I expected an elite starting pen of perhaps me, Kenenisa Bekele, and James Pearson, unless this race had not found its way on to his radar (James's radar that is; I was sure that Bekele would be present by invitation to contribute to the diversity of the event and, not being afraid of his speed, I would happily show him who is boss).

The entry comprised further hurdles for hardy Beverley AC competitors such as the somewhat steep £14 entry fee, which at £1.40 per km makes getting the bus, or a taxi, for the route seem a more sensible



option, and which fee did not include a return trip over the Humber Bridge. One would have thought that that could have been included in the entry fee... To be fair, though, the race entry comprised full chip timing and could almost be described as a mass participation event, there being a field of some 5,000 runners, a large number for a relatively short race in a compact city centre. Add to this excellent organisation at the start, baggage collection with drop-off at the finish area and a pleasant, varied race village in the city centre, there was little lacking to justify the big race entry fee.

So, after all this it was that we lined up to await the starter's gun. Fortunately the race starts about 10km away from the city centre to avoid the high participation causing a roadblock in the narrow streets. And, joy of joys, there was a starting pen marked not "Sub 40" but "Elite". I had found my level and, like all big-time races, a yellow background to my number denoted the quality "Elite". I was the Übermensch, I had reached my true level. However, it took some time to wear this status with confidence, and so I nervously hung around in the starting pens for Untermenschen until a race marshal spotted my distinctive number marking and beckoned me to enter the rarefied air of the high altitude zone with a clear view down to the dreamy towers of Lincoln's cathedral. "Me?", I wondered. "Yes, you", the marshal beckoned anew. It was time to wear the number and step up to the plate. For too many minutes I was together with only about four other "Elite" runners in this area and so nervously acted the part until I was happily joined by an extremely lithe, lissom and elite-looking Ian Husband and Julie Donald. How did a female make it into this, according to the entry form, testosterone-only pen? The race archives and diversity forms may in fact record that a sole transgender entrant by the name of Julian Donald, or perhaps Donald Julie, participated in the race. As for Ian, appearing to be in such toned, lean shape meant that just looking at and speaking to him before the race made me feel athletic. In fact, the only person to surpass Ian's athletic appearance in this pen was the taller, lithier, even more lissom-looking gentleman wearing only shades, a t-shirt and a tiger skin design male posing pouch, and so by revealing considerably more flesh made sure that everybody could form much the same view regarding his likely prowess (as to race speed I mean). Lucas was, with any luck, properly hidden away in a crowded pen to spare any spectators the indecent view of his Union Jack shorts, recently displayed for four hours round the calles of Barcelona. Actually, he may have been wearing his Norwich City football shorts, but then those are equally offensive to most people, just for different reasons.



Among all this, a race did eventually take place. This comprised, roughly-speaking, two circuits of Lincoln's northern districts and which meant that it was a great event for spectators, who could catch glimpses of their heroes several times throughout the race as they passed and re-passed a series of roundabouts and sundry junctions. Beverley AC's team was supported throughout these laps by Kristian Davis, to whom thanks are due for some of the photos featured in this report. The weather could hardly have been better, being a mild spring morning with only a breath of a breeze, which together with a relatively flat course promised fast times if competitors could only remember which lap they were on and figure out which turn to take at the next roundabout.



The race finished with an impressive stretch through the historic old town of Lincoln. Approaching the castle grounds I began aimlessly to daydream of Knights Templar, jousting, medieval pageantry and fair maids (sorry, I mean Raquel) waving handkerchiefs from the ramparts. At this point a blue and yellow vest worn by an extremely lithe and lissom-looking male runner burst past me and pulled out about 20 metres as the race entered the castle grounds themselves. I snapped out of my reverie and remembered that there was a race going on and sprinted back at Ian's heels to bring two Beverley AC runners home together. Very soon after followed Julian (or Donald), Lucas and Tina.

Happily for me and Lucas, there was a medal by way of commemorative award and not a t-shirt. We seem to be in a crowd of about two who prefer the longevity of hard metal to the transient qualities of something in which to do the gardening or throw away at the next race (the quality performance shirts presented at Beverley AC and any other good sporting events are, of course, excepted here). Further, this was not just any medal, but a substantial piece of bling with, according to the race organisers, the first colour-printed ribbon used in a race in the United Kingdom. We were proud, all of us, I think.



For the record, a total of 4,270 participants completed the race and all Beverley AC runners finished in the top 20 per cent., an outstanding performance. The race was won by Bruce Raeside of Notts AC in a time of 30m 04s and the first woman home was Julie Briscoe of Lincoln Wellington Athletic Club in 35m 13s. The hard work now over, we repaired to the fine establishments of Lincoln to enjoy the remainder of a lovely day in a lovely setting.



## RACE ANALYSIS

**Julie Donald** – 42m 23s (320<sup>th</sup>) – “I think that I may get into the Beverley 10km as good for beauty, but not for age.”

**Ian Husband** – 38m 37s (104<sup>th</sup>) – “That’s going to chafe, I hope he has some lube.”

**Lucas Meagor** – 43m 45s (456<sup>th</sup>) – “Despite the large numbers, a well-organised event, well-supported and an enjoyable day – complemented by cakes courtesy of Olly.”

**Olly Johnston** – 38m 36s (103<sup>rd</sup>) – “Where’s the nearest cake shop?”

**Tina Wardropper** – 46m 42s (824<sup>th</sup>) – “It’s the tempo runs and speedwork that improve performance.”