

## Great Winter Run - 8th January 2011

Julie, Claire, Elissa & I decided that a good way to kick start our running for 2011 would be to enter the Great Winter Run, which took place in Edinburgh on 8<sup>th</sup> January. It is a 5k run around Holyrood Park using the high road around Arthur's Seat.

Obviously taking part in the run necessitated a 2 night stay in Edinburgh along with 1<sup>st</sup> class rail travel, much to the bemusement of our husbands. Elissa unfortunately had a leg injury, but decided to still come along and support us. We left snow in Stocksfield on the Friday and arrived to a cold but dry Edinburgh. By 7 o'clock that night the snow had started in Edinburgh and by the morning of the run there was 3 – 4 inches of lying snow. The organisers of the run took the decision to use the contingency route which meant not running on the high route around Arthur's Seat, but running there and back on a tarmac snow covered road.

We walked down the royal mile to the start of the race and it was freezing. By the time we got the start our hands were so cold we could hardly attach our timing chips to our shoes. This was the first run I had done with a timing chip & I felt like a proper runner! Due to Claire & Julie misreading the application form they had both been given numbers in the slowest start group & me being a true friend dropped back so we could all run together! The start was quite congested, which I am told is generally the case with busier runs. We ran up the hill away from the park along the grassy verge to avoid the crowd but were moved back onto the road by the marshals.

After about 1k we were overtaken by a lad who was visually impaired and running with a white stick which he used to poke people with to warn them of his approach. He obviously couldn't see how snowy it was underfoot & wasn't as concerned about slipping as I was! Once we got to the top and turned back to come to Holyrood Park it was a nice run back down hill.

Julie & Claire finished in a smidge over 30 minutes and I did it in 33.46 minutes. I think Elissa was pleased to see us finish as she was freezing watching us. I certainly enjoyed the run, as Julie and Claire did and we are all keen to do it again in 2012.

Katharine Russell