

## Waterway 30 2017 Race report

On a damp, cold morning in January, two MRC ladies, Gail Barber and Barbara Lowndes, ran the Waterway 30 trail race. This fairly new event is organised by Robbie Staton of HOBOPace. HOBOPace aims to promote trail running around the Nottinghamshire area and organises several local trail races



throughout the year. The Waterway 30 sees runners tackle a circular route of 32 miles from South Wheatley, near Retford, via the Chesterfield Canal and the River Trent. 162 runners set off and there was a great atmosphere from the start. Ultra running tends to bring out the best in runners, who (usually) exchange a few cheerful words with others



along the way. This camaraderie extended to the marshals and the volunteers at the aid stations, who dispensed jelly beans, nut butter sandwiches and enthusiastic encouragement. The kit list was extensive, but not strictly enforced, although everyone was clearly well prepared with waterproofs, survival blankets, head torches and emergency flapjacks. It ought to have been simple, as the navigation involved



running mostly canal and riverside paths and there were few climbs. However, due to 12 hours of continuous rain beforehand it was slippery mud all the way. The muddy trail seemed to sap energy from our legs and every stile was more difficult than the last. Despite the

conditions underfoot it was mostly runnable apart from one very boggy section at about the 29-mile mark – the last thing you need when you're approaching exhaustion! There was a lovely surprise waiting for runners at the finish – a personalised finisher's medal and a running vest – mine was a perfect fit. The race entry fee was reasonable for this sort of event, which makes a nice change. Would I recommend it? Yes – it is short enough to be a first ultra, relatively



flat, easy navigation, friendly, well organised, good value and local – this last point being important if you like to recce courses beforehand. It is probably all the more challenging due to the time of year so if you can complete this you are without doubt a fully paid-up ultra-distance runner.

