

The 2018 Virgin Money London Marathon will celebrate the unique spirit of the world's greatest marathon, showcasing the extraordinary stories of its runners, champions, volunteers, supporters and spectators through the new Spirit of London campaign.

Hugh Brasher, Event Director, explains: "On Race day last year, millions of people around the world were moved by the sight of Swansea Harrier Matt Rees helping David Wyeth down The Mall to the Finish Line. For us, that moment encapsulated the unique spirit of the London Marathon and inspired our theme for 2018.

"Running the Virgin Money London Marathon is described by so many as a life-changing experience with extraordinary camaraderie among the runners, volunteers, spectators and everyone involved in the world's greatest marathon. Our #SpiritOfLondon campaign will unite everyone running on Sunday 22 April and the greater London Marathon family of more than one million finishers – and it also has a wider connection with the response of Londoners to troubled times.

"Sport has an extraordinary power to unify people. One of the London Marathon's founding pillars, created by my father Chris and John Disley, is 'to have fun and provide some happiness and a sense of achievement in a troubled world'. We have seen how the London Marathon does this every year since 1981.

"In the last 12 months London's values have come under attack from people trying to destroy our way of life, our freedom. Never have the words of our founders rung truer. In 2018 we particularly welcome PC Charlie Guenigault, the teams of Grenfell firefighters and the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust runners who are taking part in this year's event.

"The unity and camaraderie that running a marathon can bring was embodied by our inaugural winners, Dick Beardsley and Inge Simonsen, who crossed the line hand in hand after duelling it out for 26.2 miles. Matt and David carried on that spirit and we know that on 22 April hundreds of thousands of Londoners will be out on the streets of the capital to celebrate the Spirit of London."



**Spirit of London Runners in 2018 include:**

• **Matt Rees and David Wyeth** (pictured below)

The Spirit of London theme was inspired by the moment in the 2017 race when Matt stopped on The Mall to help David finish. The footage went viral and that moment was recognised at the National Television Awards. Following his experience last year, David worked with medical experts to find out what went so wrong after his meticulous preparations and he has made that research available to all runners.

• **Charlie Guenigault**

The off-duty police officer who was seriously injured in the London Bridge terrorist attack when he went to help victims. (Full story on page 18.)

• **Kathrine Switzer**

A trailblazer for women's sport who became the first woman to enter and officially finish the Boston Marathon in 1967. (See page 18.)

• **Grenfell Tower Firefighters**

Two teams of nine firefighters, one from Paddington and one from North Kensington fire stations, who were among the first responders to the Grenfell Tower fire. (See page 19.)

• **#StephensTeam**

Sunday 22 April is the 25th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a keen runner who took part in the Mini Marathon in 1988. His mother, Baroness Lawrence, is the non-running captain of a team of 10 raising funds for the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust. (See page 20.)

**The Spirit of London Award**

As part of the campaign, a new Spirit of London award has been introduced to recognise runners who personify what makes the London Marathon unique. Up to 26 runners will be presented with a special commemorative coin at an awards ceremony in May.

The first winners will be David Wyeth and Matt Rees. The coin shows Dick Beardsley and Inge Simonsen, the joint winners of the first London Marathon who crossed the finish line hand-in-hand. The coin is engraved with the words: 'To have fun and provide some happiness and a sense of achievement in a troubled world.'

Brasher said: "Every year since 1981 we have marvelled at the incredible stories of our runners and the way they have triumphed over adversity, raised extraordinary sums for charity and personified what makes the London Marathon unique. Behind every runner is a story and a support network, while thousands of people work so hard to deliver the event. We have volunteers who have been with us since 1981 doing everything from sorting registration packs to staffing drinks stations. These people live the Spirit of London and the new award provides the opportunity to celebrate that."

## Some #SpiritofLondon Stories

### Charlie Guenigault

Met Police officer Charlie Guenigault was off duty and enjoying a night out with friends when terrorists struck on London Bridge on 3 June last year.

Guenigault, 26, was walking back towards London Bridge railway station late in the evening unaware that terrorists had driven a van deliberately into passing pedestrians before running into Borough Market, stabbing people who were enjoying their night out.

Guenigault spotted two police officers being attacked and rushed to help. "I didn't know it was a terrorist attack," said Guenigault who is a PC in the Southwark borough of London which includes London Bridge. "I just saw the officers being attacked and went to help."

He ended up being stabbed five times himself, in the head, back, stomach and leg, and was rushed to nearby King's College Hospital in a critical condition where he underwent an emergency three-hour operation to remove his spleen.

The Chelsea fan and keen sportsman then spent three months in hospital slowly but surely working his way back to full fitness under the guidance of the hospital's medics and physio team.

Guenigault had run the London Marathon in 2017, finishing in four hours 23 minutes and 56 seconds, and when he was eventually discharged, one of his first thoughts was to get back into running. Soon those thoughts turned to running the marathon again and raising money for The King's College Hospital Charity as a thank you for saving his life.

"As soon as I came out, I wanted to get back into running again, then I was given the opportunity to run the marathon again," Guenigault said. "It's important for me this year because I'm running for The King's College Hospital Charity and obviously I want to show what they did for me in saving my life and getting me back on my feet again."

Last year, he was awarded a Pride of Britain Outstanding Bravery Award for his actions. Craig Mackey, deputy commissioner of the Met Police Force said: "For PC Charlie Guenigault there was no such thing as 'off duty'. That summer night in Borough Market, Charlie ran towards the terrorists, putting himself in danger to protect the public. Without a thought for himself, his bravery undoubtedly helped others."

"Helping, supporting, running to the aid of the public or an injured colleague, putting others before ourselves, showing courage and compassion –these we humbly call our values, values that the men and women of the Met show every day."

Guenigault wants to use his experience to show others who have come through adversity that life can go on. "I just want to show people that you don't have to be afraid," he said. "You don't have to stop your life for

something that has happened to you or something that you have seen or something that you have dealt with."

Eight people were killed in the London Bridge terrorist attack and 48 were injured.

### Kathrine Switzer

Kathrine Switzer was the first woman to challenge the all-male tradition of marathon running when she became the first woman to enter and officially race the Boston Marathon in 1967.

Women were barred from running the 26.2-mile distance at the time and Switzer, who entered using just her initials, became known worldwide when a race official tried, but failed, to forcibly remove her from the competition. Switzer finished the race and in doing so proved to the world that women could run the 26.2-mile distance and paved the way for every woman who has run a marathon since.

Now 71, she will run the London Marathon for the first time this year when the UK is celebrating the 100th anniversary of some women first winning the right to vote.

Switzer, who won the 1974 New York City Marathon, has been a tireless advocate for women's distance running and, after organising a global series of 400 women's races in 27 countries, was instrumental in getting the women's marathon added to the programme of the Olympic Games for the first time in Los Angeles in 1984.

She has also advocated for women's sports participation throughout the world and has created '261 Fearless', a global non-profit movement that empowers women through running (see [261fearless.org](http://261fearless.org)). 261 was the number Switzer wore during her famous first Boston Marathon in 1967 and has become synonymous with women's equality in sport. Switzer will wear that iconic number again in the 2018 London Marathon.

"The streets of London have been an important part of women's running history as well as women's rights," said Switzer. "In 1980, a year before the first London Marathon, we staged the Avon International Women's Marathon here and successfully showed the Olympic Committee that we had the talent and international representation to be included in the Olympic Games. Ever since then I've wanted to run it, but have been too busy. Now, I am so honoured and excited to be out there."

Switzer is well-known in the USA as a commentator and author. She was also inducted into the USA National Women's Hall of Fame, not just for her running but for changing millions of women's lives through running.



## Grenfell Tower Firefighters

A group of 18 firefighters who attended the Grenfell Tower blaze will run the London Marathon to raise funds for groups supporting local people affected by the fire. The firefighters were among the first to arrive at the scene soon after the blaze started on 14 June last year and experienced sights and sounds that they will never forget.

In total, 71 people died in the worst residential fire the London Fire Brigade has ever dealt with. Nine firefighters from North Kensington Fire Station's Red Watch and nine from Red Watch at Paddington Fire Station will be taking on the marathon, the Paddington crew in full firefighting gear, including breathing apparatus which weighs an extra 30kg.

The North Kensington firefighters are raising money for Kids on the Green, a project designed to provide a calm space for families, teens and children affected by the blaze. It provides arts and crafts, sports, entertainment and psychological support for the children.

The firefighters from Paddington are fundraising for three charities helping those affected: the Harrow Club W10, which works with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds; the Rugby Portobello Trust, which provides space for activities for local children and young people; and the Fire Fighters Charity, which provides health and wellbeing support to firefighters who have suffered with injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the Grenfell fire.

Firefighter Martin Gillam from Paddington station said: "This was a hugely traumatic event for everyone involved, both physically and emotionally. We are fundraising for the Fire Fighters Charity which has provided ongoing support to firefighters who attended the Grenfell fire and supports thousands of firefighters across the UK each year."

Tom Abell, from North Kensington station, said: "We arrived on the scene of the fire at Grenfell Tower within minutes and were faced with a blaze of unimaginable scale and intensity. We battled to save lives as one of the worst British tragedies of modern times unfolded within our own community.

"In the weeks and months since the fire we have grieved with, and stood in solidarity with the survivors and community of Grenfell. Now, in 2018, we would like to help heal and re-build.

"We're fundraising for Kids on the Green which was set up in the aftermath to provide free counselling to the children who survived, or were affected by the fire. It also provides free entertainment such as discos, art therapy and parties. This fantastic organisation allows children who have seen and experienced the unthinkable to regain a sense of normality and do what kids do best, have fun.

"We would love the children of our community to grow up with their lives defined by happy times and achievements, not by tragedy."

London Fire Commissioner, Dany Cotton, said: "I stood alongside firefighters as the fire took hold at Grenfell Tower, so I know all too well the absolute horror they dealt with last June. It takes some courage to do what they are doing, to yet again face this tragedy and to try make some good come out of it.

"I am very proud of these firefighters who represent the true essence of what it is to be a London firefighter – grit, determination and a sheer drive to help other people in the face of adversity."

## #StephensTeam

The 2018 London Marathon takes place 25 years to the day since Stephen Lawrence was murdered in a racist attack in Eltham, south east London.

To mark the anniversary, 10 runners from the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust – the charity set up 20 years ago by his family – will be taking part in the marathon with Stephen's mum, Baroness Lawrence, acting as a non-running team captain.

Stephen was a keen runner himself, who took part in the 1988 Mini Marathon. His ambition was to become an architect before his life was tragically cut short.

The Trust set up in his name seeks to inspire and enable young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by offering them life-changing opportunities, such as mentoring, training and work placements. The Trust also provides bursaries to students who would otherwise struggle to stay in education.

Among the 10 runners in #StephensTeam are some of the thousands who have benefited from these opportunities over the last two decades as well as some who have mentored the young people.

Baroness Lawrence said: "I'm really proud to know that we have a wonderful team of 10 runners doing the marathon in Stephen's name. Stephen loved running, although he was a sprinter rather than a long-distance runner, so only placed 100-something in the Mini Marathon. We were just proud he actually finished!"

Baroness Lawrence believes raising money for the Trust at the London Marathon is a fitting way to mark the 25th anniversary of Stephen's death.

She said: "Over the last 20 years we've worked with thousands of young people, ranging from 13 year olds getting their first taste of what different careers might entail, to people in their 20s building the skills they need to get a job.

"But we want to help thousands more to access careers, not just in architecture but across all the professions, which is why we're hoping to raise much-needed funds in this important anniversary year through events such as the London Marathon.

"The fact that this is happening in London – the city where I live and where Stephen was born and brought up – and that it is the London Marathon, an amazing event where thousands of people run for dozens of different charities, makes it special. I think this year will be very memorable.

"We hope everyone gets behind #StephensTeam and helps us raise the funds we need to continue the good work we're doing in Stephen's name."

The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust fundraising page can be found at: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/25thanniversaryappeal>.

More #SpiritofLondon stories and quotes can be found on the @LondonMarathon Twitter channel.



Baroness Lawrence (centre, in white) with members of #StephensTeam