



March 22nd will be just another day for most, but for local business woman and regular Bugle columnist AMANDA CRUXTON-CHANCE, the date has been at the forefront of her mind for nearly a year. It's the day of the Warwick Half-Marathon and the culmination of 11 months of training three to four times a week in all weathers, covering a total distance of approximately 700 miles. Here's the story of Amanda's year on the run...

Amanda's 12-month run for your money

I'm not a natural athlete and haven't run since my school days over 35 years ago, but attending The Brain Tumour Charity Ball a year ago and seeing so many heart breaking stories, resonated with me.

A couple of glasses of bubbly later and before I knew it my hand shot up and I'd volunteered to raise £1,000 in front of a room full of people. Gulp - there was no going back.

With my booking form complete I suddenly panicked. How was I ever going to complete over 13 miles or nearly 2.5 hours of solid running?

I remember my first very tentative 'run' which was more of a scuttle between lampposts down Wootton Green Lane in Balsall Common wearing my dog walking coat and thick jersey joggers - I was soon boiling hot with a bright pink face.

Day one, week one of what was to be a very long journey for this out of condition, overweight middle-aged woman. But, with the help of a brilliant podcast I found on the NHS website - 'Couch to 5k' - I very slowly increased my distance.

Nine weeks later, with the app's coaching and encouragement, I was able to run a full three miles, at the end of which the podcast narrator shouted 'congratulations' and called me a 'runner' - I burst out crying in my driveway.

The sense of achievement was awesome butthen it dawned on me. How was I to up my distance from three to 13 miles?

There was still a mountain to climb but with the help of a further podcast '5k to 10k' - another nine-week carefully structured programme that gradually increases your distance - I hit my next milestone, 60 minutes or 10k of running.

By luck I was then introduced to Balsall Common Run Club. A group of very welcoming people of mixed abilities each with their own targets - the New York Marathon, Coventry Half-Marathon or the local fun run.

I invested in a new pair of trainers, downloaded an iPod full of upbeat music and off I went again.

It's now just a couple of weeks until my half marathon. I'm incredibly nervous and excited, but have religiously stuck to my training programme.

Don't get me wrong, I'm no saint, and still enjoy my wine, cheese and pasta, but now I'm two stone lighter and fitter - and confident that

I will cross the finish line upright rather than on my knees!

I'd urge anyone to have a go. The first few weeks of lamppost to lamppost interval 'walk runs' are tough. But getting out into the fresh air cleanses, de-stresses and refocuses the mind. It's been a great boost for me.

So, if you see a middle-aged woman pounding the pavements of Balsall Common before March 22nd in a hi-vis pink jacket and matching pink face, do please give me a 'toot toot' of encouragement!

*If you are able please

donate (any amount) at Just Giving - www.justgiving.com/ACruxton-Chance or text your amount from £1 to 'CRUX47' to 7007

*Amanda's regular column appears on p49.



RUNNING SCARED: Amanda's all ready to raise funds for The Brain Tumour Charity