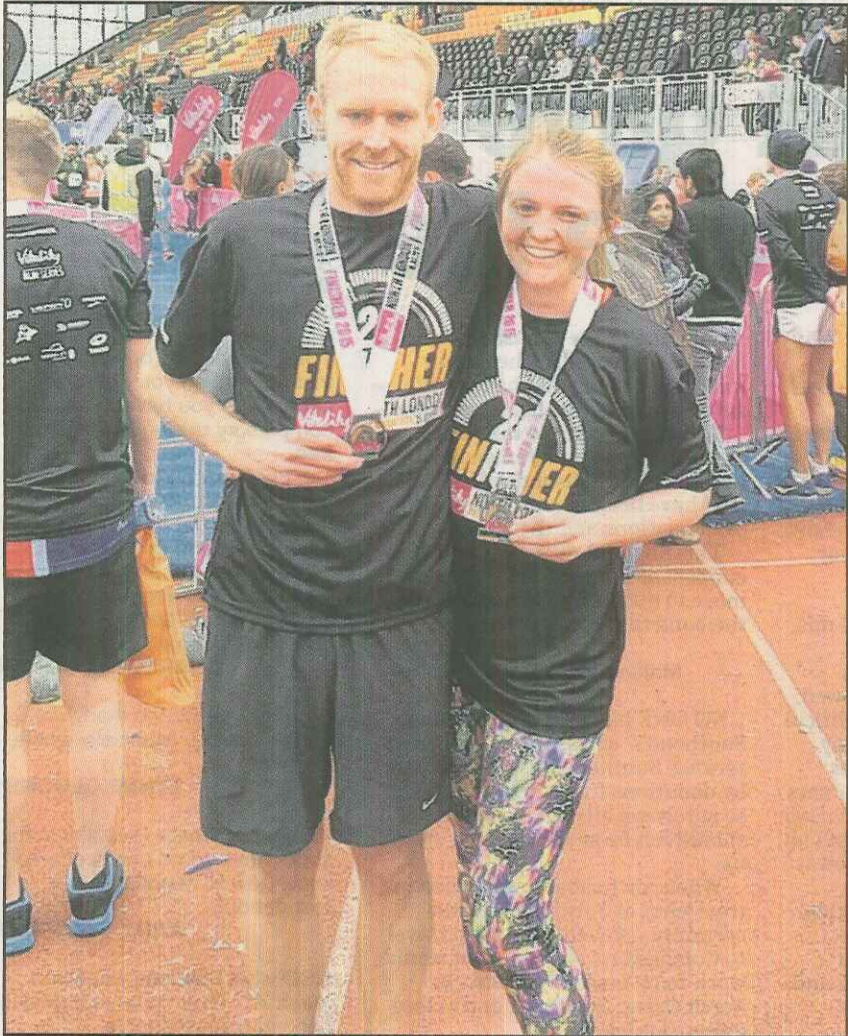


Super-fit Peter aims to run 153 miles in 36 hours to complete the Spartathlon



■ Road race challenge – Peter Goldring, pictured with his girlfriend, Samantha Gray

Runner Peter is training to take on the ultimate road race

By PAUL NIZINSKYJ
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SPARTATHLON NUMBERS

153.4	The length of the race in miles.	4.25	The minimum average speed in mph required to finish in time
390	The number of runners	74,000	The total number of miles the team will run training for the September 25 race
53	The percentage of starters who completed the 2014 race	4c-30c	The temperature range faced over 36 hours on the course
36	The number of hours allowed to complete the course.		

AT 153 miles, the Spartathlon is often regarded as the toughest road race in the world.

Leigh runner Peter Goldring, a media sales manager, is one of 25 Brits entered for September's race in Greece.

It is run on rough tracks and muddy paths between the Acropolis, in Athens and the Spartan capital, Laconia.

Mr Goldring, 33, who lives in Rectory Grove, will be running with a British team which includes Mimi Anderson, the female world record holder for the John O'Groats to Land's End route, and Paddy Robbins, who was placed seventh in this year's 24-hour World Championships.

The route includes a treacherous, twisting path which climbs 3,900ft in the dead of night and is so tough only about half the entrants make it over the finishing line within the 36-hour time allowed for the distance.

The 36-hour rule means competitors have to run almost non-stop, maintaining an average speed of at least 4.25 mph. The first three runners to com-

plete the distance were RAF officers John Foden, John Scholtens and John McCarthy. They set out in 1982 to see if they could replicate the run made in 490BC by the Athenian messenger Pheidippides, who was sent to call for reinforcements, ahead of the Battle of Marathon.

The route has 75 checkpoints, and failure to get to each of them within the allocated time leads to the runners being stripped of their numbers and ordered on to the "death bus" which carries the unsuccessful off the course.

In an age when even the most modest of marathons has been commercialised, Spartathlon remains steadfast to Olympian ideals.

Runners are not allowed to wear sponsors' logos, and there is no prize money for the winner – they do it merely for the distinction of taking part, and to fulfil a dream challenge.

Mr Goldring said: "I took part in the 400 mile Rocky Raccoon race in Texas and, because I finished within 18 hours, it automatically qualified for the Spartathlon."

"Someone mentioned it to me and, stupidly, I accepted. I've got five and a half months to train, though, which is good."

"I'm doing the London Marathon and a 24 hour race in June to get used to it because I've never done more than 21 hours before."

Echo Competition!

WIN A PAIR OF TICKETS TO THE LONDON PET SHOW

The Echo is offering 10 lucky readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to UK's favourite pet show. Tickets are valid any day and are limited to one pair per winner. So what are you waiting for? Send your entry today! With hundreds of different animals, amazing animal action displays and fun and informative talks and demonstrations, the London Pet Show sponsored by Gocompare.com (9 & 10 May 2015, ExCel London) is the ultimate day out for pet lovers, owners and families.

From the cute and cuddly to the weird and wonderful, the London Pet Show is the place to discover everything you need to know about dogs, cats, rabbits, chinchillas, micro pigs, ponies, parrots, miniature horses, hamsters, fish, geckos, and lots lots more!

To help guide you to your favourite animals, the show is divided into dedicated zones covering dogs, cats, small furries, reptiles & aquatics, ponies and animals. Within each section, you can learn about each type of pet, meet a whole host of different breeds and receive essential advice from the experts. The live features are not to be missed. With Rabbit Show Jumping by Burgess, Nerf Dog Activity Ring, Doggy Dancing, Duck Herding, Agility & Obedience displays, expert talks and many more activities, the London Pet Show provides an educational and entertaining weekend for pet lovers.



You will have the opportunity to meet animal experts and celebrities including reptile expert Crocodile Joe and Channel 4's Supervet Noel Fitzpatrick, who will present his wonderful Supervet Live show in the Zoflora Super Theatre, revealing the latest advances in the veterinary profession and recounting heart-warming success stories. After each show, Noel will be available for signings, photo opportunities and to answer any questions. Whether you want to treat yourself or your pet to a well deserved gift, or discover the latest gadgets and pet products, the London Pet Show's Market Place is the ultimate shopping destination, with a fantastic range of treats, toys, food, clothes and souvenirs available throughout the weekend.

If you are not a lucky winner, you can book tickets by visiting www.londonpetshow.co.uk or calling 0844 581 4993

To be in with a chance of winning simply answer the following question

What cannot be found at the London Pet Show?

- A) Dogs
- B) Cats
- C) Flowers

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Top marks for station's service

SOUTHEND Victoria station has been praised for its customer service.

The station has achieved a 100 per cent score for the quality of the information provided for passengers for the second month in a row.

Abellio Greater Anglia's stations have been visited by "mys-

tery shoppers" making sure signs and directions are visible, PA announcements are clear, information screens give timely and accurate information, the right timetables and posters are on display, local bus and taxi information is available and opening times, no smoking signs, maps and

welcome posters are on show.

Customer service director Andrew Goodrum said: "delighted Southend Victoria achieved the top score."

"Our teams are working to provide excellent customer service and good information provision at stations is a must. It sets a great ex-