

OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS *take on London Marathon*

Golden duo **Katherine Grainger** and **Anna Watkins** are tackling the London Marathon on 13 April, just six months after Anna gave birth to baby, William. And they're back in a boat too, for the Women's Head of the River. R&R finds out more...

BY CAROLINE ROBERTS

R&R: Why run the Marathon?

Anna: It's about supporting the event and our charities, and having some fun along the way. It's also a physical challenge.

Katherine: It's such an amazing event. I'm not sure how enjoyable the experience will be but it's an honour to do it. And it's nice having a joint goal again.

Tell us about the charities you'll be raising money for?

K: I'm on the board of International Inspiration. It uses sport to make a positive impact on the lives of people around the world.

A: Macmillan is particularly important to me for family reasons. I lost my father-in-law and he was very ill around the time of the Beijing Olympics. Macmillan was just amazing. They were like extra members of the family and I saw at first hand the difference they can make. I'm really, really proud to do something for them.

How's the training going?

K: We're trying to run three times a week, with at least one run together. We have a base fitness, but it's increasing the mileage each week that's the challenge. It can be repetitive and what's nice about training together is we get to have a good old chat as we go along.

A: It's so much better training with Katherine. I've tried to do some long runs by myself but as a rower you're used to having people around you. We're social creatures, rowers, so it makes so much sense to have somebody who's mad enough to do the same thing.

We hear that William sometimes comes too?

A: Yes, but it's been tricky finding places that are dry enough to run with the pram. I tell myself it's resistance training and it's going to pay off. William quite likes it as he enjoys looking around.



Anna and Katherine take a break during yet another muddy training run!

What do you think will be the toughest thing about the race?

K: The 26 miles between me and the finish line. I'm not exactly Mo Farah's twin! We'll be running further than we've ever done in our

lives, and you don't know what your body's going to be going through. We've both gone up to about 12 or 13 miles in training, which gives you confidence that it's doable. But we're not underestimating how tough it will be on the day.

A: We're not going to set the tarmac on fire. But we'll get round, even if it's by hopping. Giving birth has certainly moved my pain threshold on a bit.

Are you going to cross the finish line together, or will the competitive instinct kick in?

K: Oh, I'm sure we'll have the elbows out at the end and will be tripping each other up. No, really, we get on so well and enjoy each other's company so hopefully we'll spend the 26 miles together.

And what about the Women's Head?

K: The idea was to get together an eight of people who haven't rowed for a while. They're all ex-internationals so they know how a boat should feel and the competitive spirit is still there. We won't have the power and speed of current internationals, and there's no pressure on us, but on the day we'll see what we can do.

A: It's really nice to get to know rowers from different generations who competed in different Games, and great just to get out on the water. I'm just hoping the river calms down enough to run the event. At the moment it's pretty dire but we'll cope with whatever is thrown at us. The really wild heads are always the most memorable.

If you would like to support Anna and Katherine's London Marathon journey, you can donate and follow news at www.justgiving.com/Katherine-Grainger and www.annawatkins.co.uk/charity



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