

# Marathon Lady Runs for the OSPCA

Running marathons keeps you young! That surely is the conclusion to be drawn from looking at the photograph in these columns of a lady displaying what might be termed a winning hand of Euro notes.



The picture was taken when Daphne Hathaway from Norfolk, in England, visited the OSPCA office, Church St., Tullamore, last week to hand over a €300 contribution towards the costs of the Society's animal welfare work in County Offaly. This was made up in part from the sponsorship she had raised from supporters on both sides of the Irish Sea and included also a share of the €100 prize she won in the Dublin Marathon as the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest runner in her age group.

It was her fourth time to enter for – and complete – the run through the 'Fair City'. She did not achieve a new personal best time but that was neither a surprise nor a disappointment because her training schedule had been disrupted during the weeks preceding the race.

In recent years, Daphne has competed also in the London and Paris marathons, earning a special distinction in 2008 when she was believed to be the first person ever to celebrate her Golden Wedding by completing the London course.

She has hugely enjoyed participating in the Dublin run, which over the years has come to be regarded as one of the major events in the city calendar – rivalling the St Patrick's Day Parade itself. It is far more than being just a race. It is a celebration of the human spirit. A great

outpouring of goodwill. A source of funding for all sorts of charitable endeavours. Participants come from many parts of the world. It is a place and a time where friendships are forged and renewed. Runners find it remarkable that they can make new friends while actually out there on the course. The contact might last only a few minutes, while complete strangers find themselves striding along side by side. Then it is a case of ‘goodbye now – see you next year’. And all the time, of course, the crowds of supporters and spectators are there to provide refreshments and the vocal encouragement which enable the competitors almost literally to vault over the infamous ‘wall’ that confronts long distance athletes when they feel they have reached the end of their tether.

How has it come about that a community based organisation in the Irish Midlands is a beneficiary of the energy and initiative of this remarkable English lady? Well, there is, of course, a local connection. Daphne is mother of Ross Hathaway, partner of Deirdre Pender, Offaly SPCA’s extremely efficient Dog Manager, and Ross himself also does more than his bit in support of ‘the cause’.

So how old is Daphne anyway? Well, believe it or not, when the photograph was taken, she was just a few days short of her 74<sup>th</sup> birthday. Will she be back for next year’s marathon? She certainly hopes so. And what she would really like to find next time is that she will be just one of a little team, men and women of all ages, running / jogging / walking to support the work of the OSPCA. She herself did not take up running until after she had retired so she is speaking from experience – as well as real missionary fervour – when she contends that one does not need to be young in years to derive immense satisfaction and enjoyment from this form of exercise.

### **Caption for Photo**

***Dublin Marathon runner Daphne Hathaway (left) pictured with Offaly SPCA Chairman Dorothy Oakley when she called to the Society’s office in Church St., Tullamore, last week to make a very much appreciated donation of €300.***