

Rotarians' marathon effort in Ljubljana

Members and friends of the International Marathon Fellowship of Rotarians have met in Ljubljana, Slovenia, to run that city's marathon on 29 October. As a result, the group has been able to make a donation of EUR3000 (about USD3600) to the Polio Plus program of The Rotary Foundation.

After some 230 Rotarians ran the Paris Marathon in 2005 in recognition of Rotary's centenary, IMFR was founded in France and has been meeting in a different city each year to run the marathon and renew the great friendships made. So far, IMFR has met in nine countries of Europe, as well as the USA and Australia.

This year, some 70 members, family and friends of IMFR gathered in the beautiful and historic city of Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia, for two days of activities over the weekend of 28-29 October. Participants enjoyed a city walking tour on the Saturday morning, where



guide Ina gave an excellent summary of Ljubljana's history, with special mention of the profound impact local architect Jože Plečnik has had on the city.

IMFR walking tour participants mingle with the public on Plečnik's Cobblers' Bridge

The traditional pasta party on Saturday evening, organised by members of the Rotary Club of Ljubljana Julija, was a delicious event, with much animated conversation and anticipation of the next day's race.



Chat and drinks before pasta!

Race day dawned cool and fine, perfect running weather, and 40 runners fronted the start lines for the marathon (42.2km), half-marathon (21.1km) and the 10km race.



Marathon and half-marathon participants ready to go!



They're off! Christophe Cruzel and François Di Costanzo, both of France, greet the photographer in the first kilometre of the gruelling marathon run.

Winner of the Rotary marathon championship was Stefan Hauser, of Germany, in a very creditable time of 3hr30min55sec. Overall winners of the event were Marius Kimutai of Kenya in the men's event, and Shuko Genemo Wote of Ethiopia in the women's.



Ralf Ludewig of Germany still looks fresh at the 41km mark. Maybe it is the thought of a large beer at the finish! Note tower of the Ljubljana Castle on hilltop in the background.

With a 10.30am start for the marathon and half-marathon, and most of the full-distance runners finishing in 4-4½ hours, there wasn't a lot of time for recovery before the post-race farewell dinner at the restaurant in Ljubljana Castle, an atmospheric and delightful venue, reached by a short ride on the funicular railway.

Dinner MC local Rotarian Edvard Škodič introduced IMFR President, Kester Baines of Australia, who invited all runners to share their times and experiences of the races. After thanking all concerned – members of the local Rotary Club of Ljubljana Julija, and the IMFR board members - who worked so hard to make the weekend such a success, he then shifted focus to next year's event, a 2½-week tour of New Zealand culminating in running of the Queenstown Marathon on 17 Nov 2018.

For more information, please visit the IMFR website www.rotarianrun.org or Facebook page www.facebook.com/IMFRRotarianRun or e-mail Kester Baines at kesnsuz@ncable.net.au.