



'I'm looking forward to the challenge'

Reader **Samantha Carter**, 33, from Poole, in Dorset, is looking forward to a totally new challenge and raising awareness of Shelter



'I've been running on and off for the last ten years, but seriously for the last 18 months. I started as it was a relatively cost-free way to keep fit. I used to be overweight, wearing a size 22 at my biggest. I lost my weight mainly through diet and took up running when I was at a healthy weight, to help maintain my weight loss.

'While I've completed a few 5K and 10K races, and I'm training for my first half marathon, I've never done anything like this before! I entered the WR Vertical Rush competition because I wanted to try something totally new, and I feel excited and honoured to be part of the WR team.

'The training day was really useful. Seeing Tower 42 for the first time was daunting, but it was great to meet Anne-Marie! She had lots of useful information on how to train and I learnt a lot. MR editor David had some fantastic tips too, having competed in Vertical Rush last year – it never even crossed my mind we may experience vertigo from always turning left! I'm looking forward to the challenge, and helping to raise awareness for Shelter.'

WR writer **Fiona Bugler** was the third-fastest woman to conquer the Tower in 2009. How will she fare this year?

'I did Vertical Rush in 2009. At the time, I was pretty fit from marathon training and stormed up the 42 flights of stairs in 7:19, coming in third woman. It was, however, a big shock to the system. My legs turned to jelly and as I clambered the last few flights of stairs I joined in with the cacophony of runners coughing, our lungs stretched after triumphing the Tower!

'Six years later, I'm back: less fit, more apprehensive. Now I'm up against the MR Team, with some formidable runners among them. Editor David Castle has a 10K PB of 31 minutes; there's a 17:53 5K runner; and there's the incredible Gordon, who started running at 81 and is currently training by running 17 flights of stairs three times a week!

'Our team consists of ultra runner Anne-Marie, two marathoners and some fit younger women. I'm confident we can take on the boys!

'At the training day, Anne-Marie showed us the right way to limber up for our climb and then we were off. The session consisted of running 15 of the 42 floors we'll tackle on the day. I was quickly reminded of that dizzy, lactic acid laden feeling, which hit after about ten floors.

'Ronnie and I noticed the MR team was talking technique, so we joined them for an impromptu extra session. We ran an extra ten flights and by the end of it, breathing was heavy and the coughing had started.

'Team WR left vowing to use the stairs not the lift, and to run up all escalators. Six weeks of running up and down stairs is bound to make the whole experience more enjoyable, give us the edge on the boys – and we'll have the bonus of a pert bottom!'



The MR Vertical Rush team will be eating our dust!

'It's great to be part of a team'

Reader **Tracy Dumbarton**, 36, from Kent has done triathlons and is a parkrun regular



'After a break from running in 2011, I returned in 2012 and have been running consistently ever since. I started as I wanted to try a triathlon, but didn't run or swim! So with some encouragement, I joined a local running club. In 2012 my local club, Larkfield AC, started a 0-5K group, so I joined. I've been running ever since.

'I've previously done a couple of half marathons, 10Ks and now regularly attend Maidstone parkrun. Last year, I also did some sprint triathlons. I've never done anything like Vertical Rush before. I have run up a lot of stairs... just not 932 at once! I entered as I've always wanted to do one of the tall building challenges as part of a team.

'It was great to meet everyone at the training day. It was useful to hear the experiences of other people who had done the event, and get practical advice. I'm optimistic about my race-day fitness, as I'm starting to get my fitness up for triathlons later in the year. I've also joined a Crossfit class, so I think all the squatting and weights will really help my leg strength.'