

2:09 Events Ltd has a wide ranging role in the running world, organising a diverse range of activities from training schedules to training camps through to charity runs in the UK and adventure races in exotic foreign locations.



2:09 Events Ltd was founded by the 1983 London Marathon winner Mike Gratton. Mike's winning time in that race was 2hrs 9mins and, even in comparison to the standards of the modern era, the time came to symbolise a level of high achievement making it the ideal trade mark for a company striving to be the best in its field.

About Mike Gratton

Mike has been running since the age of 12 and found he had a natural talent for it. At 13 he was second in the British Forces Schools Germany 800m final before returning to the UK where his family settled in Folkestone.

He was introduced to the local running club, Folkestone AC, and went on to run for his county that year, achieving relative success at his first national championships with 7th place in the English Schools Intermediate age group 1,500m final.

HOW DID 2:09 EVENTS COME ABOUT?



He later went on to win an English Schools title, at 5,000m as a senior school boy, before progressing to College to take a Physical Education degree.

In 1979, during his early years as a teacher, Mike was encouraged to go to Paris with his club, Invicta East Kent AC, as they were taking part in a marathon there. Without any special marathon preparation he finished 11th in 2hrs 21mins and was inspired to enter another one, the historic Polytechnic Marathon which started in Windsor Castle, which he won in 2hrs 19mins.

Progression was steady from 1979 through to 1982 when he finished 3rd in the London Marathon with 2hrs 12mins 30sec. This led to selection for the Commonwealth Games Marathon in Brisbane, Australia, in the same year where he took the Bronze Medal in 2hrs 12mins 6sec.

Six months later he went on to win the London Marathon in 2hrs 9mins 43sec

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Development of the Training Camps

A world class performance in the London Marathon and a background as a PE teacher inevitably led to a career in organising training camps. The first of these was in the Algarve each March for the new runners inspired by the early London Marathons.

From a small beginning the training camps are now under the umbrella of the Runner's World Magazine Travel Collection and have grown so that in 2008 they celebrated their 25th year with a record 170 participants.

Travel to World Events

2:09 Events is now an ATOL bonded Tour Operator with special arrangements with some of the Worlds leading marathons that enable them to offer guaranteed entry to high profile sell-out events.



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These include: ING New York City Marathon, NYC Half Marathon presented by Nike, Bank of America Chicago Marathon, adidas Boston Marathon, Zappos.com Las Vegas Marathon, Real Berlin Marathon, Medoc Marathon, Venice Marathon, Barbados Marathon & Bermuda Marathon.

Runner's World Travel Collection

All of the overseas events and training weeks in the 2:09 Events overseas programme are part of the Runner's World Travel Collection. The events are marketed to the huge Runner's World readership and online community guaranteeing wide exposure and bringing the expertise of the magazine into various aspects of planning and delivery of the tours.

Creation of Overseas Events

After the success of the British Team at the Athens Olympics 2:09 Events were invited to the team holding base in Cyprus with the view of putting on an event that utilised some of the facilities that were put in place for Team GB.



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After some planning the Cyprus International 4-Day Challenge was born, a race in four stages including a time trial, hill race, trail half marathon and city 10km run, with the winner being the person with the best cumulative time.

Only 40, mostly British, runners took part in the first run, 4 years later an International field of 500 are entered in the challenge, including Germans, Dutch, Italians, Scandinavians, Swiss, Austrians and of course, British.

The Cyprus Challenge has become a blue print for the development of other overseas challenges by 2:09 Events, who, working closely with local people to form a unique experience, have developed an event series that includes; the Cuban Trail Marathon in the Sierra Meastra Mountains, the Himalayan Kingdom Marathon in Bhutan and the Gorilla Marathon in Uganda.

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UK Events

The 2:09 Events staff draw on a background of organising events through the various running clubs that they have belonged to for many years. Armed with this experience they have developed a number of events at unique venues; including Longleat Safari Park, Brooklands Mercedes World and the BBC Top Gear Test Circuit at Dunsfold Park in Surrey.

Charity Events

2:09 Events reputation for organising high quality races has led the charity sector to increasingly contract the company to fulfil their own event requirements. In some cases 2:09 events have created events for a charity, such as the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital Family Running Festival in Battersea Park, or they have been asked by charities to organise and plan specific events for them – charities working closely with 2:09 Events include; Great Ormond Street Hospital, Crisis, London Peace Campaign, Disability Snowsport and Dreams Come True amongst others.



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Many charities buy into the 2:09 Events overseas race programme, particularly to gain access to entries and travel to the Paris Marathon, New York City Marathon, Berlin Marathon, Boston Marathon and Chicago Marathon, as these events form the basis for many of their incentive programmes.

Charities working on overseas events in addition to those listed for the UK events above include; Cancer Research UK, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Breast Cancer Care, Breast Cancer Campaign, British Heart Foundation, Sense, Shelter and Mencap.

SaabSalomon Trail Series

Saab, the car manufacturer, and Salomon the leading adventure training shoe and sports apparel company have commissioned 2:09 Events to put together a programme of Trail Running events.

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Trail running is growing in popularity as it takes the runner off the punishing road and out into the open countryside.

The brief was to have a range of events that at some points were suitable to all ability levels. These start with a series of easy to do summer evening Forest Runs over 3 or 10km in Forestry Commission land around the country, these lead to the more demanding Turbo X Trail Events that are on tough routes through sand hills, mud and waist deep water. The top level is the South Downs Marathon, a point-to-point trail event over the 26.2 mile distance along the top of the South Downs National Trail.

Marketing Opportunities

2:09 Events, through its unique range of running training programmes, training camps, UK and overseas events offer access to a large and committed running community.

Opportunities exist for event sponsorship, technical support and product sampling.

For more details contact 2:09 Events Ltd on 01252 373797, email info@209events.com or visit the 2:09 events website www.209events.com.