

MOLLY HOPKINS
IT HAPPENED
in ...

Paris



IT HAPPENED
in Paris



IT HAPPENED
in Venice Coming
Soon

Bootcamp it with Brealy Bootcamps.

September 20th, 2011

A Step Towards The Body You've Always Wanted.

I've just returned from a six day stay at Brealy Bootcamp. I'm a new woman. Like totally different. I've been transformed from a wine guzzling, nachos munching sofa blob, to a show-offy pony tail swinging fitness fanatic, (well almost, my pony tail is too short to swing).

I arrived at Camp Brealy on Sunday rather the worse for wear, after a fabulous party in Eastbourne to celebrate the publication of *Unlike A Virgin* by Lucy Anne Holmes, (which is an absolutely amazing read). Celebrating is something of a specialty of mine and Lucy is equally practiced. Subsequently, I trudged up the gravel path of Paramoor House set in the beautiful Chiltern Hills with a bongo drum banging in my head.

A very cheerful Jules, the Lifestyle Coach, caught me wandering aimlessly around Paramoors splendid Victorian oak panelled hallway. Jules linked her arm through mine and lead me to meet Julie Brealy, founder of Brealy Bootcamps. Typically, Jules and Julie are fit and trim, but obviously I forgave them for that, because they were going to make me fit and trim.

I was the first of my group to arrive, and so helped myself to a cup of herbal tea and a slice of carrot cake, and had a wander around the grounds. Paramoor House is an excellent example of a fine Victorian country seat, with a fabulous garden that provides delicious organic vegetables for Paramoor's kitchens. I was surprised. I had expected an assault course, a running track and bland dormitory style accommodation. After all this was a Bootcamp, not the set of Downtown Abbey.

Once our complement of participants arrived, we were directed to the Blue Room, where we sat in squishy tasseled sofas and listened to Jules and Julie as they gave us a run down on what to expect from our week at Brealy Bootcamp. I was gripped. I wished I'd done this year's ago. I felt like clapping. This was going to be a week of absolute self-indulgence. Menus would be selected and cooked for me, calories and fat content would be assessed and portion sizes controlled. I would have a personal trainer, (this is no exaggeration because Julie Brealy has eyes in the back of her head, and she can magically see around corners, she knows if you slack before point of death, she misses nothing). At my finger tips would be the expertise of a nutritionist, hypnotherapist, masseuse and a running coach. This week would be all about me. I would have more staff looking after me, nurturing me and catering to my every need than Jennifer Aniston. And it was up to me to make the most of it, and I fully intended to do just that, definitely! The only tiny niggle in the back of my mind was that I wasn't fit. Not even a little bit. My idea of a jog is hot tailing it down stairs if the Henry Hoover is on the tumble. Would I be able to keep up? But that was an inconsequential point, because I was here to get fit. Apparently all I had to do was exercise from sunrise to sunset. I mean, how hard could that be?

Jules suggested that each member of the group introduce themselves and tell us why

they had come to Brealys Bootcamp and what they hoped to achieve. I'm nosey, so I switched to uber attentive. And again, I was pinned. Strangers we may have been, but it was as if everyone had taken a truth pill. "I've gained four stone in two years, because. . ." was the opening statement. I felt an immediate connection and a rush of companionship towards these people I'd only just met. I was in the mood for a kit-kat, a cappuccino and a gossip, when suddenly the introductions were over and it was time to check into our room, put on our trainers and show what we were made of. And frankly, I wasn't made of much. I moaned for two days. If I wasn't grumbling about how much I hated running, I was harping on about missing white wine. I took my watch off because in circuit training I was checking the time every 30 seconds. I feared I might vomit my tonsils with exertion. And then on the third day something truly amazing happened. We went on a four mile power walk through the beautiful Berkshire countryside. Our group paced themselves according to ability. The two show offs Sharon and Cranmore, (you know who you are), were as usual way up front. I followed the Lorna, Ali and Hannah trio. We fell into a trudging chatty rhythm, comparing our partner's sexual prowess and ripping the people to shreds that audition for the X-Factor even though they can't sing, (why do they do it?). We must've had a lot to say, because before I knew it we were back at camp. And I, Molly Hopkins had power walked four miles, just like that, with no effort whatsoever. Apart from the uphill bit when Lorna pushed me, and Hannah pulled me, and Ali chanted, "come on, come on, you can do it." And I kept saying, "you go on, leave me, leave me, I'll be fine." Like a Vive la Revolution heroine. In my defense the hill was practically perpendicular. The point is, I had walked four miles. I was inspired. I felt absolutely fabulous. I had reached a level of fitness to boast about. Well I thought so anyway.

And so the following day when Beverly the running coach arrived with her Labrador Leyla to take us on a ten mile stroll, (I swear Julie called it a stroll), I was jogging on the spot and doing star jumps. I was raring to go, I couldn't wait. And OK, it didn't quite pan out as planned because Hannah and I collapsed after five miles, (I blame the raring to go, I'd worn myself out). We sat in a field and phoned Julie to come and pick us up. Which she did, tearing through the hedgerow in her posh 4x4 like the Charge of the Light Brigade, (it's all part of the service). But still, five miles, blimey! Amazing! Don't forget I walked four miles the previous day, so we're totting up a fair old distance now. Me, who only ever walks up and down Oxford Street.

At Brealys Bootcamp there are no military camouflage jackets, no jackboots and no whistles. Julie and her team encourage by means of persuasive cajoling. Their goal is to tease you towards your personal potential by means of a skillfully designed fitness regime, enabling you to keep to pace regardless of your fitness level. When you decide you cannot walk another step, it doesn't matter; because suddenly it's time to lie on your back and torture your abs, the formula works . . . it works brilliantly. This expertly crafted fitness programme is further complimented by a delicious and well balanced eating plan; I was on a diet but didn't need willpower.

In the evening after a relaxed meal in the dining room where we ate in a chummy circle, we would move into the sitting room. Ali practiced her Sports Therapy Massaging skills, (you have magic fingers Ali), and the rest of us would argue over the remote control. It was just like being at home. There was a sense of unity amongst our small group. We became friends. OK, a bit of a skirmish broke out at netball, and again at rounders, but that's understandable. After all who wants to be on the losing team? Not me.

The end of the week came too quickly and as an unwelcome surprise. And as for the results, well I don't want to boast, but I lost 7lbs. I was amazed; I lost 7lbs in six days. Our 'Biggest Loser' was Reg, who lost an astonishing 14lbs, and Julie and Dolly took 2nd and 3rd place with 11lbs and 10lbs respectively. But it doesn't end there. Brealys Bootcamp menus and recipes were distributed, email addresses exchanged and details of our follow up maintenance programme discussed. Brealys Bootcamp keeps in touch with you, offering support and advice on how you can maintain your weight loss and work towards achieving the body and fitness you've always wanted. How is that for service? It's unbelievable really.

At home on Saturday morning, my alarm went off at six o'clock, (big groan that was the time it had been set for all week at the camp). I switched the alarm off. And then, the weirdest thing happened. I got out of bed, got dressed and put my trainers on. I

know! I know! Even the dog was surprised, I swear he lifted an eyebrow when he saw me. I went running, only for 20 minutes. Still it was 20 minutes longer than I would have bothered to do before. Will I keep it up? I hope so. Will I go back to Brealy Bootcamp? Definitely. Without sounding cheesy because I hate a cheesy-talker, but if I can lose 7lbs in six days, anyone can. So check out



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