

29th May 2023

Hills

"He may be slow, but he's still in motion."

Tom Paxton, *He May Be Slow* (song lyrics)

Yesterday, I ran part of the Edinburgh Marathon, 4.5 miles of the last section of a four-member relay over the Marathon course – me, two family members and a family friend. It's the "Hairy Haggis Relay". (Sorry! I have *no* idea why the organisers chose the name ...) We were the "Go Gordons", and we have T-shirts and medals to prove what we've achieved.

The final section, "the glory leg", runs along the bank of the Firth of Forth, from Port Seton where I live to Musselburgh where the Marathon ends. It looked like a flat run. It's along the coast, and it doesn't get much flatter than that. At least it *seems* that way if you're walking or driving. But running is a different matter. Even the *slightest* incline feels like a big hill. Don't let anyone tell you that it's just the *big* hills on a marathon course that pose a problem, when *every* undulation is a veritable challenge.

I referenced a song by Tom Paxton recently. The quote above comes from another of his songs, *He May Be Slow*, taken from his 1980 album. *The Paxton Report*. The song is sung from the perspective of a man whose younger brother has learning difficulties and goes regularly to a Day Centre. It pleads for an understanding of the needs and circumstances of this young man. The full context of the quote is as follows:

*He may be slow, but he's still in motion.
He's got his own road, his own hill to climb.
All he needs is a little devotion.
He may be slow, Lord, but he's right on time.*

It doesn't matter how hard or gentle the hills are. They've all to be overcome if we are to progress. We've got *our* own road, *our* own hill to climb, and each incline isn't better or worse, easier or more difficult, than anyone else's. So what do we need? A little understanding, "a little devotion", a little recognition of the race we're running and what we're seeking to achieve. And if we're slow, we're not slower than anyone else. There should be no comparisons and no judgements. The "Go Gordons" were "right on time", the time it took to get up and over those hills on the Edinburgh Marathon course and succeed together in 2023.

A prayer for today

*Lord, on my own road, with my own hills, at my own pace,
I need all the devotion I can get. Amen*