

CAYTHORPE CANTER Off-road Marathon April 6th 2013

This is definitely one of my favourite small events. I say small in relation only to the size of the field. In all other respects this is up there with the best of them. Although this was its 16th year the numbers participating never seem to significantly increase. I really don't understand why as it's a terrific race, run in beautiful scenery with excellent back-up from the organisers. Each time I do it I come away wondering why similar off-road marathons, like Belvoir, Bath Beat and Charnwood manage to sell out well in advance while Caythorpe never appears to have more than 40 to 50 participants taking part in the 26 mile race – this figure includes both runners and walkers. (There's also a Half Marathon on the programme, but as this sets off after the marathon I'm not entirely sure how many participate in that) It can't be Caythorpe's location that puts people off. While Bath is obviously accessible, Caythorpe is no more difficult a place to get to than either Belvoir or Charnwood, or indeed, most other off-road events that by their very nature, are rarely near centres of high population.

I guess it's simply a case that some events are, for want of a better word, "adopted" by runners while others, for whatever reason, are not. I can't help drawing parallels with two of the NEMC's own events: Druridge Bay and the Northumberland Coast marathons. While, for the latter, I have to virtually beat people off with a stick, entries for Druridge are much slower and more lukewarm. We get our 60 – 70 entrants but the response is sluggish and entries come in dribs and drabs, as opposed to the entry surge once the Coastal is advertised. Personally, I don't think there's a great deal between the two events but I'm sure a queue will form to tell me otherwise!

Anyway, getting back to Caythorpe, (north of Grantham, south of Lincoln.) Yesterday was a glorious Spring day and the circular course was comprehensively signposted throughout, allowing us to make our way around without even having to look once at the map or route directions. The Lincolnshire countryside could be admired, instead, as we passed through the villages of Stubton, Marston and Ancaster en route. It was good to meet up with club member Yvonne Jones, now recovered from a long injury and taking part in her first marathon for 2 years.

It actually got quite warm as the day progressed and while refreshments were provided at 6, 14 and 21 miles another drinks station between the first two would have been more acceptable. The organisers made up for this omission with a veritable feast at the finish in the local village club house, (with bar and hot showers) – all excellent value for £15. I was even offered a lift, if needed, back to Grantham station to catch my train connection. You don't get that sort of concern from any of the all-singing, alldancing, give us your money and run, so-called "big" events, do you?

Jim Manford
April 6th 2013

Blackpool Marathon 2013 – Ian Richardson

I wasn't a fan of this when I did it three years ago, but came away with a much more positive view this time.

The event is under new management and it shows.

The start and finish was at Blackpool's football stadium and next to vast car parks with eye watering expensive fees. £7.50 and the machines didn't even take £2 coins. Registration was simple and changing next to in a concrete concourse under the stadium. Toilet facilities were woefully inadequate and may have contributed to a near 10 minute delay in the start.

Ron Hill set us on our way and we were soon onto the seafront where we strayed until half a mile from the end, going south to the giant roller coaster turning and heading back north, taking in the promenade by way of variety from the roads.

Drinks stations were every three miles with bottled water, but nothing else.

The nature of the course meant that there were opportunities for spotting people you knew either in front or behind and there were a number of friends of the NEMC taking part.

The half marathoners split off at about 12.5 miles and we then did another lap in cool conditions with hazy sunshine, pretty much ideal really.

As usual, it seems, I got into my stride after about 16 miles and really enjoyed the last 10 miles of the event, as it started to warm up.

We finished in the ground, behind the goal.

Here we had our chips removed and were given a rather nice medal. The goody bag had a water bottle commemorating the event and there were some chocolate items too. Then it was back to the bags, changed and away home, feeling pleased that it had gone much better than my previous visit. Better organised and more people out supporting the runners.

I may even go back again.

Ian Richardson

8 April 2013

DRURIDGE BAY 14TH APRIL 2013 by Cris Wordsworth Atwell

There once was a man called Jim
Who had an evil streak in him
He put on a race
With the wind in your face
Making everyone feel quite grim

We started as the clock struck nine
And the sun even tried to shine
But Jim had a smile
Because he knew in a while
Everything wouldn't be fine

We proceeded around the lake
The smiles on our faces quite fake
Then we hit the beach
And with a deafening screech
To a man shouted "oh! For Gods sake"

The wind made us stumble and sprawl
With no forward momentum at all
The sand made us blind
Some fell far behind
And some even had to crawl

I will kill him when I get back
Was the cry that went up from the pack
I'm at the end of my tether
With Jim who sorted the weather
There'll be a couple of things he'll lack

On and on we fought
Our efforts seemingly coming to naught
Lap after lap
Strength continued to sap
And tempers got increasingly fraught

But at last we reached the end
And Jim was again our friend
Handing out drinks
With a smile and a wink
But our muscles will take longer to mend

Jim's Reply

There was a young runner called Cris
Who knew there was something amiss
When the wind it did blow
His pace became slow
Next year he'll give Druridge a miss

Jim Shakespeare Marathon Manford

ps alternative last line: "This Manford guy's taking the p####"

Marathon of the North – 28 April 2013 – Ian Richardson

Second running of this event and my first at it.

The start and finish was just outside the Stadium of Light, shades of déjà vu with my recent trip to the Blackpool marathon, with bag storage and toilets being inside the stadium. The difference here was that the toilets were genuinely plentiful and they continued to be around the course, with Portaloos at pretty much every drinks stop, and there were a lot of drinks stations.

Water was provided in sachets, like big gels and proved to be a very good idea. There were also cartons of isotonic drinks.

The wind from Druridge 2 weeks earlier was still present and didn't help things.

The first half of the course was south of the Wear and mostly rather dull, going through various urban and suburban streets, some of which were not being seen to their best advantage. There was a nice park at 10 miles though.

After the half marathon split off, the rest of us headed north for a much better second half.

We had a loop along the river past parts of the University and then headed for the seaside, making our way north up Roker Terrace and then back on ourselves, south into the teeth of the wind. We also had a lap of Roker Park before making our way back to the stadium for the finish, which included a very nice medal and T shirt. I haven't yet looked in the goody bag.

Overall, it seemed a very artificial course with many out and backs and no natural flow. The upside of this was that it was easy for them to site the drinks stations to cover two parts of the course with one station. It also enabled me to look out for anyone I knew and I am pleased to report a decent smattering of NEMC vests. I really must learn to put names to their owners!

Given its location, I am sure that I will do it again, and the organisation was excellent, but the course really was not inspiring, especially given the unhelpful weather conditions.

Ian Richardson
28 April 2103

PRAGUE MARATHON May 12th 2013

Over the past 19 years Prague has built up its event to be one of the top international marathons, earning itself the coveted IAAF Gold Standard label in the process. For comparison purposes London and Berlin are also gold standard, Madrid and Turin are silver and Edinburgh and Brighton are bronze. I've just been learning about the criteria behind the grading system and am surprised at Prague's status given the number of cobblestones, tram lines and kerbs to be negotiated on the course. (Then again, Qatar was awarded the FIFA World Cup so who knows what really influences the officials of these worldwide sporting federations)

This year the marathon hosted 9700 runners from 78 different countries. I don't usually enjoy these mass participation events with thousands of runners battling one another for somewhere to put their feet, preferring instead the solitary spaciousness of a marathon with a smaller field. The race's start in the medieval Old Town Square was very much an uncomfortable jostle with people tripping over both one another and the cobbles. Things did start to become sensible after a few miles though and from then on I began to enjoy the run, even surprising myself in the process by managing to maintain an even 10 minute pace all the way despite not having been able to do any training since February 19th.

Fortunately, the heavy rain of the previous two days had given way to beautiful sunshine for the 9am start. Unfortunately, the heat's drying effect created an unwelcome humidity not conducive to fast times. The actual route formed an H shape with four approx. 10km out-and-back stretches north and south on both sides of the Vltava River. Bridges over the river, particularly the iconic Charles Bridge, (the one you see in all the advertising for the event), acted as the bar of the H and were crossed and re-crossed several times during the race. As many of Prague's famous buildings are situated on or near the river itself, the whole course proved an interesting, historic sight-seeing experience.

Being next to the river at all times made the course not only quite scenic but also almost perfectly flat with the only inclines being the bridges' on-off ramps on either side. It also meant that you were constantly in view of other runners, both faster and slower, running in the opposite direction. Drink stations were frequent and well-stocked with the usual array of bananas, oranges, water, sponges and isotonic drinks. There was also some pretty good live music being played every couple of kilometres – all of which, when combined with the large crowds of spectators, made for a very atmospheric event.

The finish was again in the crowded Old Town Square where, after being handed a unique medal, we were led past a series of "freebie" food and drink stalls back to the large Technical Area in the magnificent Wenceslas Square. It would have been so much more convenient for everyone if they'd also held the pre-race registration there, too instead of subjecting us all to the long journey out to some distant Exhibition Centre. You have to think that the organiser's main concern here was not for the runners, but more for the corporations trying to sell their merchandise to the captive audience of runners present.

The event certainly wasn't cheap at 75 euros with extra to pay for both the pasta party and an optional tee-shirt. Nevertheless, I'm pleased I went. Prague is a beautiful city with numerous attractions to entertain the visitor: historic monuments, excellent value-for-money restaurants and atmospheric pubs, (beware though the mindless hordes of stag-night drunks!) It also gave me a new country to add to my list of overseas marathons. Given its accessibility from Newcastle with jet2.com it's a race I'd definitely recommend to anyone looking to run a marathon abroad.

Jim Manford
May 13th 2013

Dukeries Ultra (40) - May 11th 2013

Travelled down to Sheffield the night before with Adrian Conlin (also of NEMC) and had an early start to be in Nottingham for registration at 7am.

Pre-Event was excellent with instructions in the form of map and written guidance for the course as well as a speedy response from the organiser regarding OS Maps. (I like a look at where I'm going to get lost in advance.) Facebook updates also gave little bits of information about the course in advance.

Registration was swift in the Walesby Sports and Social Club, excellent staging point for the event.

A quick common sense briefing gave us a taste of the organizational style and we were off at 8am, starting on time. Straight into pleasant trails. The course was scenic throughout with enough changes in surroundings to keep the journey interesting throughout. We applied our plodders strategy of starting slow and getting slower to ease ourselves into the back of the pack.

(Once we were an hour in the 30 mile event started back at the Club.)

In places the course split off for extra loops and routes to give the 40 milers their extra 10, but we were fortunate enough to see the front runners of the 30 milers on the route.

There were four aid stations around the course with supremely helpful volunteers and a plentiful supply of jaffa cakes, flapjacks, water, electrolyte tablets, bananas and the largest bag of jelly babies I've ever seen. It was more like meeting up with old friends with the atmosphere at these. The last one also had cola and hula hoops which was a great treat and well met.

The course was well marked where needed and had long stretches along the main Robin Hoods Way which is also clearly marked. Some minor issues at two points where signage had been removed but apparently this was a much better result than last year when tape was used and had been taken down in large portions. No real problems with this due to excellent maps and instructions though.

The course passed through some notable areas of beauty such as Cresswell Crag, my real regret was that we somehow ran past The Major Oak oblivious to it as we were checking for trail markers.

I'll not lie, there were some tough times in the later miles but we came inside the time limit as planned so the day was a resounding success for our first 40 mile outing.

Back at the club the goody bag was either a personalized cup (nice by a local artist) or a T-Shirt, some foot soak, a banana, chocolate and some local information. All high quality goods and great to see a useful one.

The post race food was a pie and pea supper and the bar was open for supporters and runners if required. The whole race had the feel of something special and it felt good to be part of it. I strongly recommend it to anyone looking for a 30 or 40 mile race.

Especially with the amazing team behind the scenes.

Barry Dunn

White Peak Marathon – 18 May 2013 – Ian Richardson

This was to be the first of a weekend double for me and Stevie Matthews, with Windermere on the following day.

I have run this one twice before and it really is one of my favourites.

Organised by Matlock AC, it is run primarily on the White Peak and Tissington trails, old railway lines covered over, which give an excellent running surface, like the Waggonways around Tyneside.

The width of the trails means that there is a limit of 200 for both the marathon and half marathon.

After a simple registration at Cromford rugby club we were bussed to the start. It was a grey cool day, with heavy cloud, but we were far enough south to avoid the heavy rains affecting more northerly parts.

At 11a.m. we set off.

The first 11 miles are very gently uphill in a mostly northerly direction. There was a turnaround so that you could see people around you over distance of perhaps a mile before heading south east to about mile 20, then east to the end.

Water stops were well managed and about every three miles.

After 21 miles, there was the first of three downhills. These were flagged by signs suggesting that cyclists should dismount. The actual gradients were shown too. The first was 1:14, the second and third were 1:8, which is hard work on tired legs.

Following the third downhill at 25 miles, we turned onto the canal for a final mile, back to the rugby club, where we received our finisher's mug, in a fetching aubergine colour this year.

The club was open, selling food and drink, and showers were available, except that the hot water had either run out or not been switched on. That was a bit painful !

Once again, an excellent event, to which I shall return.

Ian Richardson
20 May 2013

Windermere Marathon - 19 May 2013 – Ian Richardson

This was the second part of our weekend double, following successful runs at White Peak the previous day for Stevie Matthews and me.

I had not run this before and was a little apprehensive about running it on very tired legs, as I kept reading and hearing about how hard and hilly it was.

The start and finish for the 1200 entrants was Brathay Hall near Ambleside.

This is the home of the Brathay Trust, which works to help the young and vulnerable and in whose aid the race is staged.

The whole operation was very well managed, with plenty of enthusiastic marshals to make sure you got parked OK and all sorts of stalls selling craft goods and food and drink.

Once again a simple registration, chip timed today, with the chip being part of the race number.

Before the start there was a presentation to a German chap called Horst who has the world record for number of marathons run, over 1800.

Our own Brian Mills was also running his 902nd marathon.

We set off at 10.30 a.m. on our anti-clockwise lap of Windermere, entirely on roads (and pavements).

The first 9 miles were on closed roads, after which the roads were partially opened one way at a time.

There were times when vehicles were coming in both directions, but it never felt dangerous.

Drinks stations were about every three miles with water in cups and bottles, Some stations also had mint cake and jelly babies.

It was cool start, gradually warming up as we made our way through Hawkhead with a good supporting crowd.

Pretty soon we started to get wonderful views when you could lift your head up and look left.

On the course were the hardy 14 souls who were doing the last day of their 10 in 10 challenge, again a fund raiser for the Brathay Trust. I think that they must have started before us, and the three that I passed looked remarkably fresh.

The hill at 6.5 miles was described in Runner's World as the most serious climb. All I can say is, they should come and try Hamsterley !

The course did undulate quite a lot, which can be quite helpful as a pancake flat course can be both tedious and hard on the same set of muscles and tendons.

We passed through Bowness at 20 miles and then proceeded to the Ice Cream Mountain, so named as there is an ice cream van parked at the top. As previously, it was a decent hill, but nothing to be scared of.

In the last mile I spotted the NEMC colours worn by Keith Robson, and managed to ease past him with maybe half a mile to go.

The last few hundred yards were uphill to the Hall and then it was across the finish line to receive our slate medals.

After a bite to eat, it was off home, assisted by excellent traffic management to get us out of the huge parking area and onto the roads.

Another excellent event and one I look forward to revisiting.

Ian Richardson
20 May 2013

Strathearn Marathon - 9 June 2013 – Ian Richardson

I missed the first running of this one last year, owing to a knee injury, so was keen to do it this year.

The location is a couple of miles to the west of Crieff, home of the famous Hydro. It was in an area of Nissen huts, originally erected as a POW camp during WWII and subsequently used during the era of National Service. The whole camp, Cultybraggan, was immaculately kept and in that sense a bit spooky as it is not in an obvious current use.

Free camping was available by the start/finish and a number of people seemed to have taken that option as we arrived at registration, to see a number of variously shaped and sized tents and a couple of motorhomes.

Registration for the 150 or so of us was very efficient and we lined up on a cool, misty morning for the 9.30 start. I had met up with David Parry, for whom this was almost a local marathon and as we set off he was kind enough to inform me that the first four miles were all uphill. In fact, that wasn't true, it was well into mile 5 before it flattened out.

A lovely rural run with very little traffic was complemented by very good marshalling and plentiful drinks stations with bottled water.

My memories of this run are all pretty positive, as I had a good run. Every now and again, I saw the same car go past, and when I caught up where it had stopped, the driver had got out and was playing the bagpipes as we went past, a very nice touch.

In the second half of the one lap event, we went into Crieff and passed the Visitor Centre. That was a bit busy, particularly with the road works, but was well marshalled and there was no feelings of concern, except when I turned to wave to some cheering people on the opposite side of the road and found that I was straying out into the traffic. I didn't do that again!

Having had the long uphill part at the start, the finish was a two miles downhill/flat back to the camp, where the piper had been joined by another to pipe us into the finish.

3:42 ! I haven't done that for a while. The good bits didn't end there either. After getting cleaned up, it was off to a hut to be fed. It was what I always think of as a "cricket tea", a vast array of sandwiches, quiches, pies and cakes, with much tea and coffee.

This was also where the prize giving was held, so I was able to watch that whilst having a good feed.

As well as an event T-shirt, we also got a finisher's photograph, annotated with time and position, which is a nice touch.

At £25, I felt that this was a good value event and one I have no hesitation in recommending.

Ian Richardson
3 July 2013

The Strathearn Marathon - 9th June 2013
Category: Male V50



Name: Ian Richardson
Category Position: 10
Overall Position: 45
Race Time: 3:42:17

Lancaster marathon – 30 June 2013 – Ian Richardson

The Stevie and Ian roadshow continues as we made our way across the country for the second edition of this event.

I had been warned that it was a fairly fearsome event, but was reasonably unconcerned after the recent good runs at the likes of Strathearn and Windermere.

The start/finish location was Lancaster Brewery, in a leisure park to the east of the city centre, which seemed a good sign.

Masses of parking and a straightforward registration, where a chip was also provided.

Met up with David Parry and Tim Taylor before the start and saw the dynamic duo from Liverpool during the race itself.

We walked a few hundred yards to the start and a little over 100 of us set off in a very low key start through a selection of lanes and small roads in an anti-clockwise route, taking us over the M6 and through some lovely countryside.

The route started to undulate quite quickly and I fell into conversation with Steve Price and Colin Longworth, as we were followed by a man dressed as Zorro.

By half way I was on my own and the continual rolling nature of the course was taking its toll. Coupled with very strong winds, this was becoming about the toughest road marathon I had done.

We had been told that water would be in bottles, but it was actually in plastic cups, so not as easy to get enough into you. A couple of stations had Lucozade sport in bottles which was handy and the marshals and drinks station volunteers were all cheerful and supportive.

The really hard part began after the 18 mile marker in the Forest of Bowland. I turned a corner and my heart sank as I saw a steep hill stretching away into the distance.

Zorro, who was by now ahead of me, started to walk and I was glad to copy him. This was to be the first of a number of walks as the hills continued.

When I remembered to lift my gaze from the tarmac, there were some splendid views to be had, but we certainly worked for them.

The part that I didn't like came after the 21 mile drinks station in a village. Having left this station and turned a corner, I could see no one in front of me, no signage and no marshals.

I was unsure whether to carry on along a road which although not overly busy, did have fast moving traffic. The lack of any arrows or signs warning the traffic made me think that I might have missed a turn, but no, this was the correct route.

I finally managed a second wind after about 24 miles and was able to reel in a good few runners before finishing outside the brewery in 3:56, for 37th out of 115.

At the end we received a goody bag with a good T shirt and medal and some food items and were relieved of our chips.

This event, booked on line, cost £42.79. A quite astonishing amount really. At half that price it would have been very good, but it did seem very overpriced for what it was. Having said all that, and also having almost recovered, I would do it again as the countryside was lovely and it beats a flat boring course hands down.

Oh yes, the results were on line very quickly, as were hundreds of photographs

Ian Richardson 3 July 2013

Hardmoors 110 - My first 100 miler

This is my recourse of my Hardmoors 110 race this year. I started Ultra running last year and as part of my journey of learning to be a runner of trails, I had heard some people say that you are not really an Ultra runner until you have run a 100 mile race. So I decided to pick the Hardmoors

110 as my first 100, as it seemed like a real challenge. I was not sure how many 100s I would ever run. My attempt at running a 100 is as a one off, a challenge and achievement, so I thought I would pick a 100 that was challenging and rewarding. I do not find this complement easy to pass on as a Lancastrian, but the North Yorkshire Moors and coast are very beautiful part of Britain and decided that in for a penny in for a pound and I might as well go for the fully monty of 100 milers, the Hardmoors 110 which follows the Cleveland Way in North Yorkshire and actually weighs in at 113 miles with 19,685 feet of ascent.

I ran the HM55 and HM60 races to get a feel for the route, and that was also a big plus for the Hardmoors series. Running the route as part of other races, is an ideal way to recce the full HM110 course. My combined times for HM55 and HM60 are just under 22 hours and after doing

some number crunching for the past two years for people that had run the HM55 and HM60, who then subsequently ran the HM110, I deducted that if you had added 3 to 4 hours onto the combined times of the HM55 and the HM60 results you would get an approximate finish time for the HM110. BUT, I decided that my HM60 result was slow as I set off too fast and had to slow down. So I decided that I would aim for around 24 hours and if things went really well then I might even make sub 24 hours. I knew that this was a long shot though, as it was my first 100.

The more realistic goals for me were to complete the race in under 30 hours, to get a top 10 finish and lastly if all else failed was to make sure I finished!

So after leaving work on Friday the 24th of May, Phill and I headed down to Filey to pick up Alistair. I should perhaps explain that Phill Turton and Alistair Stewart were to be my race crew. Unless you have run a qualifying race, then all competitors must have a support crew. I initially thought this was a little unnecessary, but having Phill and Archi there to help me made a big difference to me. I seriously doubt I would have finished at all without their tireless help and energy over the course of the weekend. So let me pass a BIG thank you to you both. After picking up Alistair at Filey we headed for Helmsley and the start of the race.

Once at Filey, Phill and Alistair got to work as fellow podcasters and started interviewing people involved in organising the race and the those running the race. Phill is shown below interviewing Jon Steele (Race Director) just before the race briefing. I was milling around and chatting to other runners. The weather was better than forecast. It has been raining most of the day, but the clouds had lifted and the sun had come out to greet us for the start of the race. By this time I was just wanting to get running and get the event under way.

As we get ready for the off the sun is out in full force and the strong winds of they day before have been reduced to a gentle breeze. Once we were running I seemed to settle into fifth place there was a light wind on our back and weather was great. I was not wearing a watch or any timing devices and just ran by feel. I passed through the first check point at the White Horse and was about 20 minutes up on my time according to me crew. By the checkpoint at Osmotherley I

could tell that Alistair and Phill were getting concerned by the pace I was running at. I was no over an hour up on my predicted pacing guides. However, my pacing guides showed a consistent pace for the whole run, I did know that the pace would need slow down for the next section as we picked through the Cleveland Hills. I decided to take a mini break at Osmotherley and take on extra food and fluids ready for the night section. On leaving Osmotherley the terrain soon became more undulating and I settled into an easier pace. As it get dark some of the navigation was a little tricky as a heavy mist had at settled on the hills. On approaching junctions in the trail, I was beginning to get unsure of my direction and I could tell that someone was approaching me so as they caught up to me, I found it was Steve Jackson who I did not know personally, but I knew of him as a regular to the HM race series. So I decided to buddy with Steve so we could keep each other company through the night. I would like to pass on a huge thanks to Steve for the night section. We picked our way across Lord Stones, Wainstones in difficult misty conditions and navigation was a bit tricky at times. We did have one minor confusion after coming of Roseberry Topping that we sorted out as the mist cleared and we noticed a shining head torch descending Roseberry Topping, meaning we had started to run back towards Roseberry Topping! Tempting though it was to go up and down again, we decided to do an about turn and head in the right direction again :) After the blustery freezing conditions last time I ran across Bloworth Crossing it was much gentler to us this time, with a light cross wind and heavy mist. The only issue was with stumbling on rocks. Both Steve and I took at least one tumble. As we entered Guisborough Woods, the sun was starting to make its presence felt. The sounds of birds singing in the woods was very uplifting. I have never heard so many birds singing in once place before. This is Steve and I at the Fox and Hounds pub just after leaving Guisborough Woods. Archi was making us both a well needed cup of tea, before we set off for Saltburn. I was looking forward to getting to Saltburn and running along the coastal cliffs top. It was also a relief to make it through the night without any serious mishaps, As we approached Saltburn Steve started to slow down and I found myself running on my own, and forgot about needing to turn into Saltburn park and carried on running up the hill! I had to double back and found some other runners that new which turning to take! At Saltburn Steve looked as though he was in pain, he would not continue running.

On leaving Saltburn and getting onto the cliffs the sun was out in its full glory and that lifted my spirits. Here are some scenic shots taken by my crew of this wonderful section. This is my favourite section of HM series. Glorious sunshine and great views added to the day:)

By the check point at Runswick Bay I had adopted a a jog/walk strategy. Was the fast start now

catching up with me, or was I always going to slow down at around this point? I know Phill thinks that if I had started steadier I would have been still moving a little easier at that this stage. I took a mini break at this section and drank two cups of soup provided by David Heatherington one of the race volunteers/marshal for the day. The soup and can of coke greatly helped topping up my energy levels. By this stage of the run my body was getting very good at reminding me that I needed to be eating at least once an hour or my energy levels would start to nosedive. My mainfood/energy during the run was fig rolls,

energy gels and sports drinks. The longer the run went I was better able to listen to my body and take on food to keep my energy levels up. I also asked Alistair at this checkpoint if he would start running with me from Robin Hoods Bay. I now knew that I was starting to slow and that I would not be making 24 hours. What was a great feeling at this checkpoint was thinking that I would hopefully be able to finish in under 30 hours. The weather was so fabulous at this point that having to walk and run felt like a bonus as it let me enjoy the weather even more.

The next major checkpoint was Ravenscar and there was some undulating ravines to help remove excess energy from the legs. Ravenscar also marked that I was getting close to the 100 mile point which was a great feeling as well. I also knew that the last 13 miles were going to take a little longer than expected. I was still in the top 10 though and my sub 30 hour time was still looking good. It was great to have Archi to talk to through these latter sections and the weather was still great. By this stage of the run though I was also definitely fully understanding terms like its about putting one foot in front of each and keeping moving. My feet were starting to hurt from blisters, my legs were getting very tired and I had to sort of build up to my slow trotting speed gradually. I think I did tend to zone out at times even with Archi there and just make sure I was moving forward.

Approaching the finish at Filey, taking a little walk break before getting ready to trot in to the finish.

HM110 completed in 28:01:22 and finished in 8th place overall. A result.

I was delighted to have finished my first every 100 (113) mile run and was pleased to have held on to a top 10 finish as well.

It is now 5 days since I finished the HM110 and have spent some time reflecting. I entered the 100 mile event as one off and that is still how I feel now. I have no sudden urge to enter another

100 :) I think for me the challenge of completion was the goal. When I started running about 4 years ago now I always knew I enjoyed running on trails and my love of trails led me towards

Ultra Running. Really, really pleased and proud to have run 50 mile, 100km and 100 mile events.

I would now class myself as an Ultra Runner, but and yes there is a BUT. I am not sure if in the short term that Ultra running will be my main focus. I have trained really hard for 2.5 years with virtually no breaks and think I have earned some time off. I know that after running the 100km it left a question in my mind about what type of running do I enjoy. After completing a 100 miler as well now, I have an answer to my question. I like running quickly for up to 3 to 4 hours more than I do for 10 hours plus. So I am thinking that next year I will look to take part in more fell races and trail marathons. I will possibly run one Ultra a year and that will be no longer than 100km. I do not really have the time to dedicate to running and racing multiple Ultras in a year. The amount of time given my crew Alistair and Phill for the HM110 is debt I need to repay to them at some point as well. So I want to hold some time in reserve to help them. I also owe my family some me time as well!

What a weekend and the HM110 is truly epic event and one that I am very proud to have completed and taken part in. The organisation of the race was fantastic, the volunteers deserve a medal as much as the runners. The course itself is brilliant a great mixture of hills, coastal paths and small towns. I will at some point return to the HM series to run both HM55 and HM60 again. It is more likely that I will be trying of the HM trail marathons next year though :)

For those interested in podcasts the British Trail Running Podcast will be releasing a HM110 live special in the next week, we covered the Hardmoors Race series in episode 1 of the podcast <http://www.britishtrailrunning.co.uk/> and extra photographs of the event can be found at our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TheBritishTrailRunningPodcast>

Tim Bateson
May 2013