

Brathay Windermere Marathon



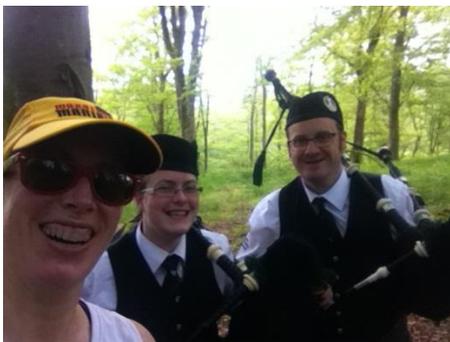
When my alarm went on at 5:30 am on May the 18th, I was not mentally ready to run a marathon. I still feel like I have not fully recovered from South Africa and the 3 weeks of high activity that went along with it. My body had a laundry list of physical and mental complaints, but I knew that if I missed this race I would regret it deeply.



The grounds for Brathay house are extensive and they were put to good use for race day. The Brathay Trust is a charity for helping and inspiring at risk youth and this is their big fund raiser for the year. In addition to the nearly 1,000 runner that ran the Marathon on Sunday, there was a small group that had been running the marathon course daily for 10 straight days! To celebrate their big finish, the Trust held a family fun day with food and activities that even included a hot air balloon.

Lake Windermere is in the heart of the English Lake District and its namesake marathon goes all the way around it, including the nearby Esthwaite Water. The numerous old manor houses with mature English gardens are wonderfully charming, set on the backdrop of the lake which was a riot of sailboats zipping past one another in the stiff breeze.

The marathon itself was a tough course. We were always either going uphill or downhill so, of course, it seemed like it was 80% up and 20% down. Towards the end the volunteers would solemnly tell me the hills were behind me and it was flat for the rest of the way. Clearly we have different definitions of flat. A fun moment on the course came when I was running with a chatty group and after overhearing me a guy yelled, "Hey, I remember you! You were at Malta!" LOL. The British running world is small indeed.



Since I have Edinburgh next week, I didn't want to make myself particularly sore or wear myself out too badly so I tried to keep my heart rate under 80% of max by walking up the hills. It slowed me down a bit, but also made it easier to enjoy my beautiful surroundings and keep from overheating. The temps were in the 70's, which would normally be just fine, but after a long, cold, English winter, the runners were not acclimated to the warmth and there were an awful lot of ambulances on the

course.

Next up, Edinburgh!