

Endurancelife Marathon 1st March 2014

Alnwick Castle to Bamburgh Castle

As part of my challenge to myself to complete 50 marathons by end of 2015 to coincide with a big birthday, I decided to complete the Endurancelife marathon from Alnwick Castle to Bamburgh Castle. According to the organisers, "Running here will nourish your soul like nowhere else on earth, and I think they might be right.

The race registration was in Bamburgh Castle, now there are not many marathons where you actually register in a castle. The weather was perfect, with the horrendous winds we had had that week suddenly disappearing leaving a lovely calm morning.

Once registered a bus took me to the start in Alnwick, with a great view of the castle, but no toilets!!

The route was great, running to Alnmouth and then around Alnmouth golf course and back onto the beach, at the rocky part. It then took the route of the Coastal run, up to Craster, past Dunstanburgh Castle and heading to Beadnell Beach. It was all off road with tough muddy conditions in parts.

Everything was going great, until I was running on the beach from Beadnell to Seahouses when the tide started to come in, fast!! There is an inlet on the beach and the male runner in front of me went through this. I started to panic when I saw that the water came up to his waist. By now I had run 23 miles and was starting to get tired and was worried if I fell in the water I might not manage to get back up again. So I had to take a detour to the road, through the golf course and then I climbed up onto the cliff top rather than get stranded on the rocks below. I was quite worried that the very few runners behind me might get trapped on the beach, and as there were no marshalls I mentioned this at the next checkpoint, but nobody seemed interested.

I then had to run on the beach from Seahouses to Bamburgh as the tide was coming in most of this was on rocks (I am not very good at running on rocks as I have a fear of falling) so I must admit I did walk most of the last few miles.

The finish was back at Bamburgh castle and I nearly missed the finish. For some reason I expected the castle to be in front of me, but it was on my left hand side, otherwise I could have ended up doing 30 miles. This marathon was actually 27.5 miles, but with my detours I did around 28 miles so think I might class this as an ultra.

I loved every minute of this marathon and did see the funny side of the tide coming in. But it was quite expensive at £50, not very well marshalled, very poor t shirt and lack of goody bag or even available water at the end. It was also my worst time. However, I would do it again tomorrow!!