

Race Rundown: Leas Marathon, 24th February 2019



2019 Leas Marathon, around South Shields and Souter lighthouse. The course is mainly on gravel coastal paths with some gentle inclines. It can be tough if it's windy, but we had perfect running conditions today. I travelled and ran with Ray and we saw Ben Swales on the course too. I haven't seen any results yet so I'm not sure how Sedgfield Harriers fared on the day.

I really enjoy North East Marathon club events. No massive nightmare getting to the start line and the relaxed atmosphere is always welcome. Ray picked me up and we headed up the coast. As usual the conversation turned to food. It was the AGM that day too so there would be a buffet! Back-up would be a Big Mac Grande and a Twix Mc Flurry. The buffet was great so no trip to the golden arches was needed.



The weather was fine in Wingate, but the fog was so thick in South Shields you couldn't see more than 50 meters in front of you! We found the tent, picked up our numbers and got ourselves ready to run. It was a staggered start, so Ray and I started on our own. No race briefing or anything like that, just turn up and run. Ray and I decided to run together. It's great to have company and miles seem to pass much quicker when chatting. Basically, I talk about food for a few hours with a bit of cross county, football and other running chat too, but it's mainly food.

The thick fog made it hard to stay on track during the first lap and we took a few wrong turns. Maybe I shouldn't blame the fog... I have run this marathon a few times and always get the route wrong. Nothing major and the distance still adds up to marathon distance. We even followed fellow marathon clubber Paul Blakey thinking he knew the course, but he went wrong too. No harm done and we quickly got back on track. The fog made everything wet too! You could see dew on runners' hats, my feet got wet and I could even feel water on my eye lashes. The route was basically two out and backs with a little loop at each end. You did these 4 times, so you kept bumping into other runners throughout the whole event. I love this type of event when it's a small field of runners.

I wasn't sure if I drank too much water or my compression gear was too tight, but I kept needing the toilet. Luckily you ran past public toilets so I didn't have to wait too long before I could go again.

The run was going well, we ran well together and pretty much chatted for the whole run. The sun made an appearance too and we were treated to a beautiful sunny afternoon in South Shields. We could see a warship just out





to sea which was pretty cool. I started looking at my watch and could see a sub 4 marathon was achievable if we kept moving at a reasonable pace, but I kept needing to pee and Ray needed to stretch to keep cramp at bay so it would be close. We did manage to just sneak under 4 hours so that was great.

After the run we made our way to the AGM. This is a great time to chat and catch up with everyone plus take care of club business. Peter King came to the AGM so four Harriers in total at the event. The food was great! A simple but lovely fish and chip buffet with pasta for vegetarians and vegans. I love fish and chips, but never eat it so this was a proper treat for me.

Everyone received a Marathon Club travel mug as a surprise gift! This was a really nice touch, and everyone seemed pretty chuffed with it. After that we said our goodbyes and headed home. It was a long, but very enjoyable day out at the seaside.

All in all, a great day out catching up with running friends and another step closer to completing my 100th marathon. Thanks to Razza for the lift and the company and everyone at NEMC who helped put on another great event.

By Gary Thwaites

Results: <http://www.northeastmarathonclub.co.uk/the-leas.php>

