Palma Marathon – 19 October 2014 by Ian Richardson

I like to think of myself as reasonably well travelled, but had never been to Majorca before. The invitation to join the Heaton Harriers trip was a very easy one to accept and we made our way there on the Friday before the race.

Registration on Friday afternoon was in front of the cathedral next to the sea and was a simple affair as we were very early. On picking up the pre ordered T shirts, we discovered these to be undersized and no exchange was possible. An annoyance, but not a big deal.

After two nights in our splendid all inclusive hotel, we got into taxis for the 9am start on the Saturday morning. This was on the road in front of the cathedral and a great location. It was already very warm and was due to get up into the high 20s.

After the marathon, the 10k started at 9.10 and the half at 9.20.

The start headed west along the sea front, before doubling back on itself and heading into town. There we were treated to a good degree of shade and an interesting, if twisty, route.

During this section the faster half marathon runners started to come past us. The roads were often a bit narrow for this and perhaps a greater split in starting times between the full and half would have been better, with the full starting earlier to miss a bit of the heat.

Passing in front of the cathedral at about 18k, we then made for the sea where the half marathon runners turned right to finish their race, and the full runners turned left for a very long out and and back to Arenal.

This was hard work. We were running directly into the sun and mostly on roads one back from the sea front, so it was quite a lonely section.

Water, in 350ml bottles, was provided very frequently, as was sports drinks and bananas. A couple of drinks stations had water being fired out of hoses in a fine spray, which proved very popular.

Two of the drink stations also had pole dancers, which was also a welcome distraction.

Turning at Arenal at around 29k, we then had the run back along the sea front with the sun behind us. We were also passing bars and restaurants, and so there was quite a lot of support.

The sting in the tail was about 1k from the end. Although I knew about it, it really didn’t help.

From about 40-41k there was a lot of support and encouragement from supporters and those who had already finished. This was great. However, we passed the finish line which was on the other side of the road and had a 1k out and back before it was our turn to finish. This last section had no support on it and was very hard psychologically, even though it was near the finish.

On finishing, I saw some of our group who had run the shorter distances and carried on to receive a decent medal on my way to pick up kit.

Before the baggage drop was a stand for Erdinger alcohol free lager. I’ve had this before and not liked it, but the prospect of a cold drink was attractive, so I had one. It was just as bad as I remembered and I put it on the side of the road where many others appeared to have the same view of it.

After that it was pick up kit, shower and change and away.

The heat made for a very hard run, but overall I really enjoyed it and would come back.

Results for NEMC members who were running in the marathon.

Ian 4:14

Michele 4:18

Adele 4:33

Davina 4:33

Ian Richardson 25 October 2014.