

The Langdale Marathon and Half marathon report



In the words of the organisers, “A beautiful, challenging marathon course set in England's most spectacular mountain scenery. The Langdale Marathon/Half Marathon has a reputation as the toughest road marathon in the UK.” Well, they certainly got that right!

The full event takes in two laps of the course, whilst the half takes in just the one. With gradients of 1:3, and nearly 3,332 ft of ascent (1666 ft for the half), the views in this event are not to be beaten, certainly from any event I have taken part in, whilst road running.

The start was straightforward enough had it not been for the unavoidable puddles, the lead up to the event had seen 24hrs of rain, making for a wet and slippery course in places. Unbelievably it dried up half an hour before the event, with the rain beginning to fall, shortly after the last runners returned, whoever was reaching out to the weather gods, thank you.

After about a mile, the chit chat and bonhomie amongst fellow Ripon Runners was truly tested, Scooby Doo passed me (every year 😞!) and i turned left and headed up the biggest challenge of the run, namely the road to Blea Tarn. Un-repenting this cruel climb twists and turns past Side Pike and Lingmoor Fell. Many of us walked parts of this section, briefly breaking into a trot when some familiar faces popped up to take a few snaps of our pained expressions! (thanks Uncle Roger and David Oldham 😊)

The run to Little Langdale (and some great cheering from Harvey Jones!) is a gentle rollercoaster (locally known as the flat bit) with spectacular views back to the Langdales and beyond. Although the low mist was covering the tops, the sun did peep out occasionally (well, once..)



Another steep climb followed before reaching the main road, where good progress could be made until i arrived in Skelwith Bridge. Here a road crossing saw us take the steep climb up to Loughrigg Tarn and continue to the side of Loughrigg Fell. Here, i turned sharply left towards a YH that will be familiar to many Ripon Runners at High Close. I was a little apprehensive about the next bit, as it is a pleasant 1mile descent to Elterwater, but the road can be very wet and the previous year my Uncle had taken a tumble, cracking a few ribs and damaging his elbow at this point. Thankfully no big dramas this year, and I decided to push on a little more, as I still felt surprisingly strong. Passing the rather smart holiday accommodation and water wheel, the final push was ahead, the gentle climb to Dungeon Ghyll.



Nowhere near as steep as any of the big climbs, invariably, this stretch takes its toll on many as the end never seems to get nearer. Against a headwind I could finally hear the PA system announcing the arrival of runners and managed to push on again, even overtaking a few others with a final flourish into the field.

The joy of completing the half marathon is enhanced in the knowledge, that not only is your run completed, but those doing the full marathon have to do it all over again!

It didn't however daunt a couple of Ripon Runners as Hugh Watkin managed to come home in an amazing 3rd place overall in the Marathon in 3hrs 7 mins with the effervescent Alex Fawcett breaking the 4hr mark in 3hrs 58 mins. Footwear seemingly is the deciding factor for great performances in the lake district, it was also rumoured that Alex ran the event in a pair of £19 trainers, bought only a few days before the event. It was great to see he still supports the (not so) mighty Leeds United, in his choice of shorts (MOT Alex!)

Half Marathon results

Andrew Harker 2.03

Graham Tinsley 2.10

Andy Purll 2.12

Rebecca Graham 2.15

Carol Norfolk 2.21

Anita Oldham 2.24

Sarah Jones 2.33

Emma Sawyer 2.40



Congratulations to all those from RR taking part, especially to Rebecca, Carol and Emma who were tackling the course for the first time, hope you enjoyed this fantastic event and the running pains healed with the great medal and memories. Hope to see a few more RR's there next year, you'll love it...

Thanks also to my friends and Brother, from South Leeds Lakers, Morley Runners and Uncle Roger from the Wingerworth Wobblers. Your faith in the restorative power of Coniston Blue Bird and Wainwrights ales ensured my walking was only slightly less painful on the Sunday. Pictures courtesy of R.Barrett.