

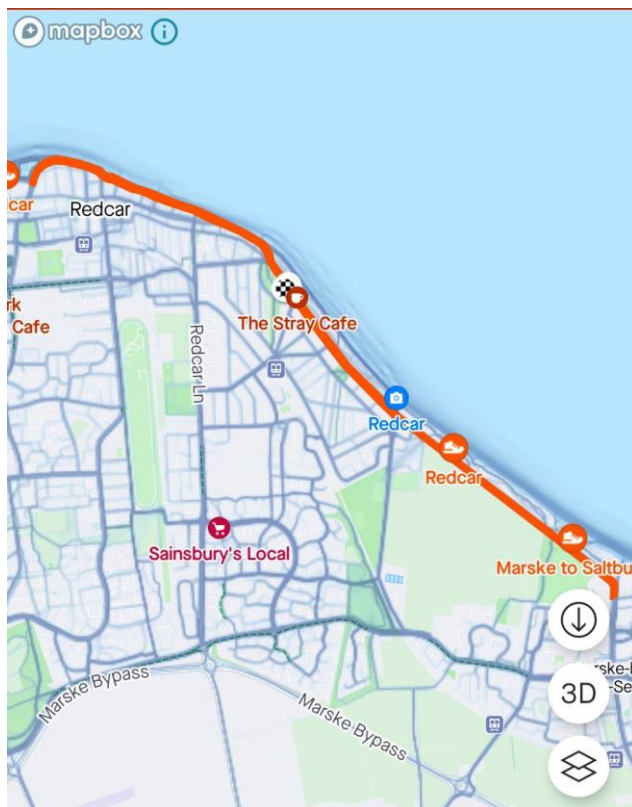
Redcar Half Marathon – 24 September 2023

I needed a half marathon for September. I searched high and low for one but couldn't find one (1) local and (2) that I could make. I obviously hadn't searched high or low enough, because when I mentioned my requirements to Sarah Woffinden, she found this one within about 5 minutes.

So I entered.

It is one of 4 races (2km fun run, Beacon 5km, Zetland 10km and Redcar Half) in the Redcar Running Festival, organised by New Marske Harriers.

Pre-race instructions were clear and there was lots of free parking at Redcar Racecourse, about half a mile from the start. I would have liked some toilets at the parking, but ... there were so many toilets at the start line there were never any queues at any time. Why can't more races do that? And even better, at the start of the race they were still clean with plenty of paper, water, hand towels ... running luxury!



Registration was easy and bag storage seemed secure. The timing chips were different to anything I had seen before though ... we had to safety pin two chips to our shorts – one on the left and one on the right ... never experienced that before.

It was a well organised start, and the route was nice and wide. It was all on roads along the sea front. So you would expect it to be flat, but apparently there was 220 feet of elevation gain.

It was basically two laps of a sea front route. The weather was fine, it was warm when the sun came out and – as you might expect – there were strong winds in places. I could have done without those.

Lots of support at the start / finish, supporters with sweets along the route, water stations and nice views (although I didn't see any canoers setting off for Panama or other South American countries).

There was a shirt, medal and goody bag for all finishers (which seemed reasonable for a £25 entry fee) – additional items in the goody bag were chocolate, a New Marske Harriers pen and a small torch (who decides what should go into goody bags?). 401 half marathon entries and it looks like 327 started.

And there was one other Ripon Runner who took part – Kate Bacon.

For me, it was notable as it was the first time I had run a competitive half marathon in under 2 hours. Very notable actually. I had done it a couple of times in training, but never in a race. And I wasn't sure I ever would ... until I got Nike Vaporflys.



This isn't an advert , but until earlier this year I just thought shoes were shoes. I have to say, I am astonished at the difference these shoes make to my running. It is difficult to explain ... but I will try (although I realise it will be different for different people).

I find it difficult to go slow in them at the start – in other words, I run faster that I would ideally want to. They just push me along. And when I am tired, and I think I am running 10 minute miles (the feel when I am in normal shoes), in the Vaporflys I am actually running around 9.15 minutes a mile.

I would also add that I do not and would not pay full price for Vaporflys – but I was happy to pay \$45 for a pair, which is what they cost me. And other makes of shoes are available.

So, in summary, a very, very well organised and friendly event and one worthy of consideration – particularly if there is a group of you or a family and you want to run different distances.

Paul Ackerley