

Reykjavik Autumn Half Marathon

So, there I was last week, sitting in the audience at the York Barbican waiting for the Pretenders to entertain me, and this guy attracts my attention and says, “You’re the guy who runs half marathons in different countries ... done any recently?”. “Reykjavik, 4 days I ago”, I replied. I’m afraid I don’t know who he was (and so apologies if you are reading this), but it was a helpful reminder that I hadn’t written the race report ...

Half marathon (21.1 KM) (Registered: 5)			
Name	Nationality	YOB	Team
Cam	FR	1996	
Chris Brown	GB	1946	Fountains Abbey Parkrun Peeps
Paul Ackerley	GB	1960	Fountains Abbey Parkrun Peeps
Peter Crowder	GB	1965	Fountains Abbey Parkrun Peeps
Sarah Woffinden	GB	1981	Fountains Abbey Parkrun Peeps

This was the annual trip for a group of us who sit together for a natter after Parkrun. We had decided on the Reykjavik Autumn Half Marathon¹ at the start of the year, and decided to get our places booked in case it sold out ...

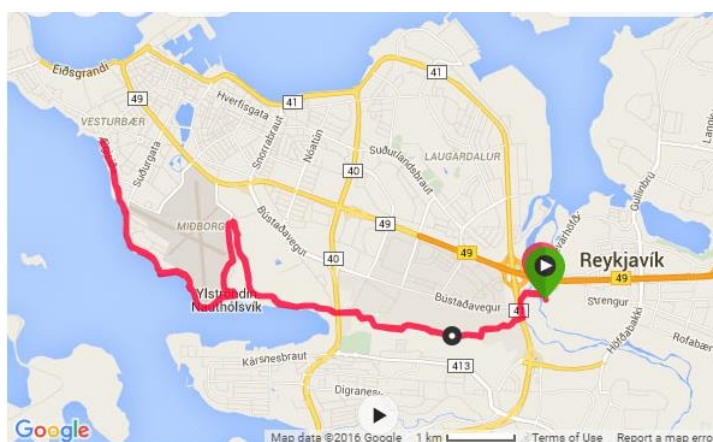
That was the first point of learning ... they are pretty chilled about booking their places on races, it appears – for the next two months, there were only 5 entrants. 2 months before it there were 40 entries, one month before there were 70, and then by race day there were 208.

About a week before the race, there was huge excitement ... not the course, or a shirt design, or the medal ... but the discovery that at the end of the race there were fresh waffles, cream and jam, in addition to hot chocolate. Apparently, it was going to be the best HM ever.

Travelling to Iceland was easy enough, but the weather forecasts for race day were constantly changing. By the morning of the race, we were being offered scattered showers, 2 degrees C, with the wind at 19mph and gusts up to 40mph making it feel like -1C.

Getting to the start line was easy, parking was less than 100 yards from the start (and free – which is good value for Iceland).

Based on the forecast, deciding what to wear was challenging. It was also interesting to see how the locals dressed – no waterproofs in sight – and it didn’t rain. Reviewing this after the race, they obviously had a very good idea of how it would play out ... local knowledge.



As one of our group said after the race, “It would have been a lovely course without the wind”, and there certainly was wind. Windiest race ever according to the Race Director (but perhaps he

says that every year!). The course is possibly designed for the wind to have maximum impact as it runs next to the coast for a goodly part.

It also runs next to the airport, and so there was the unusual experience of being able to look straight down the barrel of a windsock (and it was as rigid as a gun barrel). The wind wasn't in play the whole race, mainly for the last two miles before the turnaround. I gave up running at this point as it seemed pointless ... I decided to conserve my energy to use it after the turnaround – and after the turn around, it was lovely having the wind ... what a difference (and a first ever negative split for me)!

But we all got home, by which time the waffle making was in full swing ...



Faces stuffed, chats with the locals and not so locals complete (although I never did ask the woman from Rhode Island why she chose Reykjavik as her first ever half marathon), we headed off back to our coastal accommodation.



What do you do after running a very windy half marathon? Two of us went to sleep, one of us had two hours in a hot tub enjoying pizza, and one of us went for a drive to North America (geographically speaking) ... probably meant the last of these people hadn't run hard enough.

Overall, a well organised and friendly half-marathon, with some very good sight-seeing either side of the race together with a couple of nights of the Northern Lights (a bucket list item ticked off for Mr Brown) [below Northern Lights photo credit – Peter Crowder]



Planning for next year's trip has already started ... hopefully a little warmer and less windy for the Venice half.