

Kielder Marathon 9th October 2011

1100 runners turned up on a cold, wet, misty, muddy, windy Sunday to start the 2011 Kielder marathon. I'd heard the entry had doubled this year to 2,000 so perhaps the other 900 saw sense and stayed in bed. This was the second year of the race with Claire being the first to brave it last year.

The course is described as a spectacular and inspiring challenge, Britain's most beautiful marathon (when it's not misty). Rarely leaving the shores of Kielder Water, it follows the Lakeside Way meandering through the forest and heath land that surrounds the lake. Steve Cram says "There are a few inclines to negotiate but most are of the short sharp nature and are rewarded afterwards with nice long stretches of easy running. Most inclines come in the first 15 miles or so and the final few miles are amongst the easiest running on the course." But remember Steve is an ex Olympic champion, most unlike myself!

4The course seemed to be hill after hill which became almost unbearable after 20 miles. My Garmin recorded 1900ft of climbing which is higher than Cat Bells in the lakes. There's not much support on the wild side of the lake so you have to keep running or perish which is always a good incentive.

The race was well organised although the buses take a while to get you to the start. The goody bag, T-shirt, towel and finisher's medal were nice. The race atmosphere would have been better had the awful weather not dampened spirits. Mr Cram and Real Radio kept the carnival atmosphere going.

A race route can be downloaded from the link below. Apart from the cold, rain, mist, hill after hill, pain, I thoroughly enjoyed it and would recommend it to anyone. Who's going to represent the club next year?

Race position below which seems to improve by the day. My time would have been better had the bus not broken down.

Time: 4 hrs 29 mins
Position: 609/1108

Philip Hindmarsh