

Marathon in the country which does not exist.

Two hours after departing from Liverpool we saw appearing from the Irish Sea, the mountainous and small Isle of Man. Two hours later we docked in Douglas, the capital of the island. And that how I started my adventure in Isle of Man.

With a population of just over 80,000 it is a very strange country. Political maps indicate that IOM is a part of GB but it is not possible to find it in any independent countries index. On the other hand IOM is a territory independent from UK and recognizing the queen. So that is not exactly a British territory and IOM is not a part of EU. You can see everywhere three legged flags – can not be any better for the country organising a marathon.

In the country of kangaroos (wallabies)...

IOM has its own currency, post and parliament. Locals are proud of their heritage and saying that Tynwald is continuation of the Viking tradition. One and a half centuries ago the locals still were using the Manx Gaelic language.

IOM has a lot to offer for holiday makers. Like picturesque castles in Peel and Castletown from the Middle Ages, scenic hills, high cliffs and historic trains.

Interesting is that they have living in the wild, kangaroos(wallabies) which escaped from the Wildlife Park and found their place in the island's natural environment.

Unfortunately Polish tourists can be put off by high hotel prices – double room from £40.00 per night.

Up and down a hill.

The marathon took place (in 2009) on the 9th of August and was accompanied by a half marathon. The competition was organised with perfection. All contestants could use bus transport from Douglas to Ramsey where were located start and finish. Half marathon contestants had to run one lap and marathon runners had to do two laps and that was why they started an hour earlier. Seeing the landscape you knew straight away that would not be an easy run. We expected a lot of running up hill. Over 130 contestants started from the promenade. The route was very well secured with lots of drinking points. Clear distance signs, but only in miles.

My plan was to run a mile in 7 minutes and 5 seconds but runs up and runs down made it impossible to keep the same pace.

During the run I could find out what is a real loneliness of the long distance runner. After a few kilometres I run just on my own. Sometimes I could not see any one from the front as well as from the back, not contestant, not supporter not even a building or car.

Thankfully I could improve my performance on the second lap when closing down other runners helped me keeping a pace.

First sightseeing, then run

On the track I paid the price for my enjoyment of sightseeing. On Friday before the race I went cycling and climbed to the top of the local mountain Snaefell. That all had to affect my performance and the last kilometres I ran on 'soft' legs. I was 65 second off my lifetime personal best. In a last 200 metres I overtook a runner who I had been closing down for the last 5 kilometres. That how I beat the first placed woman - Rebecca Johnson and with the time 3:09:35 I took 8th place in the general classification. In my age group I was second without any chance for better because the winner of the whole run, Ben Scott, took first place in my age group.

For the first time I participated in a run where they use chips on the wrists and on the finish line everyone received a printout with his run time and place.

The world goes forward...