

# The

# Dash

November 2019



A fine collection of Dashers at the Blackburn 10K

# From the editor...

Here we are again heading down towards the end of the year and the Christmas Do and looking forward to seeing who has won the awards for Dasher of the Year, Most Improved Dasher and Most Inspirational New Dasher.... all very well deserved by whoever wins them.

Congratulations to the winners and runners up of the Road Championship and you can find next year races listed within.

You have all been busy out there with Cross Country ,Preston 10 miler, the New Blackburn 10K. Please feel free to drop me a couple of lines about anything that you do running related as there is always room for additional material in the Dash.

On that note if anyone would prefer to received the Dash by email each month please contact me on darwendashers@gmail.com and I shall add you to the list.

Well done to Claire for another superb David Staff fell race with 123 runners taking part.

There won't be a December Dash as I have visitors over from Australia to entertain but I am sure we will find time to host "Jingle Bell Rock" again. Details to follow on facebook.

Michelle Connelly and Allison Pickup have stepped down from leading the Improvers group after many years of turning up week in week out and being a constant support to all. Thank you ladies for all your time and effort and good luck with your own running and racing.

I would also like to wish Andy McAllister well for his forthcoming operation and a speedy recovery and hope to see you back running at the dashers very soon.

Hope to see many of you at the Cricket Club on Saturday 30th November and until the next dash .....keep festive dashing.



## Debbie Biscuit



# Chairman's Chat

*Hello you lovely Dashers!*

In this political era of lies, fragile ego's and misuse of social media, isn't it nice to just get away from it all and go for a run? Times change and people come and go but for nearly 30 years Dashers has been here to provide that 'escape route' of a good run and a natter with like-minded folk. I think that is something that we should all be proud of being a part of. There will be more about our 30th Anniversary in the New Year so keep your eyes peeled.

As I write the Committee are all very busy making sure that everything is in place for the Christmas Do. It has been an eye opener for me these last two years to see how much work is involved. It should be another great night and I am particularly glad that we have again secured the services of Cherrybomb - back by popular request!

As you will know it was the David Staff Fell Race recently. I was unable to attend this year but this race holds a special place in my heart. Back when everything was black & white it was the first running race of any sort that I'd ever done, joining the Dashers shortly afterwards.

Over the years I have taken part, marshalled, supported and even put films of it on YouTube. The route and date have changed a few times but still it remains a very popular race. This year was no exception with a great turn out. Very well done to organiser Claire, her team of helpers and marshals, all who turned out to support and, of course, all who raced – especially young Matty Connell, a future star. Kudos to all.

Merry Dashing to you all!



## Simon



# From the Road Captain

As we bring the 2019 road championship to a conclusion, I'd just like to say a big well done to all those taking part, we had a total of 60 Dashers attending races this year. It doesn't matter what your ability is – just having a good go is the main thing and wearing your club colours with pride! On that note watch this space for the 2020 vests soon to launch to commemorate 30 years of the club.

We had five runners taking part in the final race at Preston 10 miler – well done to Phil Seddon for taking the full 150 points for the men's and Catherine Ferro for the women.

The final tables have now been put together and Iain Asher has kindly added them to the new website – if you haven't been on recently then well worth a look at the brilliant work he's done. This year's championships included 14 races ranging from 5K to a half marathon, this was intended to slowly build everyone up to allow them to progress from 5k to 13.1 miles. Congratulations to Catherine Ferro and Rick Marsden for winning their categories.

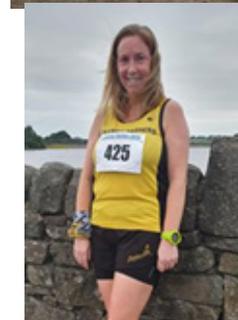
## The women's top three for 2019:

Women's Road 2019	Total
Catherine Ferro	930
Viki Walsh	920
Sharon Cocker	860

## The men's top three for 2019:

Men's Road 2019	Total
Richard Marsden	935
Mark Taylor	900
Philip Seddon	875

The list for the 2020 championships has now been put together please note that some of the dates are provisional as they haven't been confirmed yet so please ensure you give them a google closer to the time! Following on from a little consultation on social media and emails next year will be a bumper year featuring 24 races – I have even added the cross-country dates to prevent any clashes. The races are all local apart from Chester (added by popular demand and also the only race where points will be allocated equally for both the full and metric marathon). There are races to suit all abilities and feature all distances, again it's the taking part and getting the club colours out there that matters! Let's make our 30th anniversary a good one and try to field a full team at all events, save the dates in your calendars!



**Gareth**

# Road Championship races 2020



Race	Distance	Terrain	Dates
East Lancs Hospice 10K	10K	Road	19/01/2020
Winter Warmer	10K	Road	02/02/2020
Lostock 6 Road Race	6 M	Road	23/02/2020
Red-Hot Toddy 10K	10 K	Road	08/03/2020
Trimpell 20	20 M	Road	15/03/2020
Wigan Half	13.1 M	Road	22/03/2020
Caldervale	10 M	Road	10/04/2020
Bolton 10K	10K	Road	26/04/2020
Wray Scarecrow 10K	10K	Road	02/05/2020
Ian Casey Memorial Cowm Race	5K	Road	07/05/2020
Jubilee Road Series - Race 1 (Evening)	5 M	Road	13/05/2020
Bolton Marathon	26.2 M	Road	17/05/2020
Jubilee Road Series - Race 2 (Evening)	5 M	Road	17/06/2020
Trawden 7	7 M	Trail	28/06/2020
Ian Terry Memorial Cowm Reservoir	5K	Road	01/07/2020
Jubilee Road Series - Race 3 (Evening)	5 M	Road	15/07/2020
Elswick Express	10 M	Road	18/07/2020
Riverside 10 Lancaster	10M	Road	02/08/2020
Garstang Half Marathon	13.1 M	Road	06/09/2020
Padiham 10K	10K	Trail	20/09/2020
Chester Marathon (Metric or Full - points for both)	26.2 M		04/10/2020
Red Rose Cross Country - Keep Date Clear			XC 10/10/2020
Green Drive Five	5 M	Road	18/10/2020
Red Rose Cross Country - Keep Date Clear			XC 24/10/2020
Dressers Through The Villages	8.4 M	Road	01/11/2020
Red Rose Cross Country - Keep Date Clear			XC 07/11/2020
Blackburn 10K	10K	Road	15/11/2020
Red Rose Cross Country - Keep Date Clear			XC 28/11/2020



# Me, mates, and Chester Marathon

## Background

I was the kid in school who hated running, I was always picked last, and I developed an ability to bring on a headache to excuse me from anything sport related.

However, on New Year's Eve 2014, I was talking to my long-time friend from College; an avid gig-goer who had recently taken up running with the Dashers. I asked her what gigs she had planned. Her reply was "None – I've got 2 10Ks booked though..." 5 days later I'm stood in Darwen Leisure Centre waiting to see what this running lark was all about...

## Sign up for a marathon, they said...

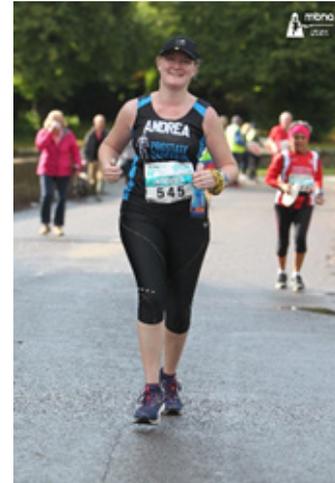
Four years later, whilst celebrating Viki's epic achievement at the Three Towers Ultra, the same friend who convinced me to take up running told us that she hadn't run for 2 years, but had secured a ballot place for the London Marathon. Naturally, Viki offered to help her train and I volunteered to train with them, having only ever run 7 miles at one go, even though I'd never be able to run a marathon...next news I'm being told that I'm running Chester Marathon with Viki in October 2019. I dutifully signed up the next morning (before the alcohol had fully left my system and I still felt brave!).

Just as I was contemplating whether to run for a charity, my dad phoned to tell me that he'd been diagnosed with Prostate Cancer...now I had a charity, and a really strong reason to run this marathon.

## The training

I got myself a training plan from t'internet and followed it obsessively...if there was a half marathon race at weekend, but I needed 14 miles...I was doing 14 miles! I started to plot routes from home for my long runs...I've to run WHERE to get the mileage in?! Thankfully, I'm part of a magnificent running club, and it was suggested that I used the Sunday Social runs to give me some company for part of the route at least. I worked out that I lived 5 miles away from the meeting point, and suddenly the miles seemed easier to get in...both in terms of the distance and the enjoyment! There was always someone willing to do an extra few miles to keep me company, and it broke down the distance into smaller, more manageable chunks. Without the Sunday Social, the training experience would've been completely different.

I also attended the training runs that Chester Marathon organise which had pace runners, water, Lucozade and gels – everything to replicate race day. They were so well organised and definitely worth the drive over to Chester.



## Raceday

The race itself was an amazing experience, fantastically well-run (even though the start/finish had to be changed 5 days before due to flooding), the marshals and pacers were all very encouraging and the general public on the course came out to support too, including residents who had been trapped in their houses due to road closures. Messages of encouragement came through from family & friends, and with 40 minutes to the start I had to ignore them as I was so emotional. As promised, Viki ran with me, having completed Hull marathon 2 weeks before. I suspected that she'd smash this easily, however with a niggle in her foot, she needed to slow up at around mile 17...I was on my own for the toughest part of the race.

Miles 20 and 21 passed before I really started to feel it...I'd been running for HOURS... PLEASE MAKE IT STOP! I was always going to finish the race, I just willed the finish line to be a lot closer!!

As the miles passed, I found it hurt less to keep running rather than walking, which wasn't easy when everyone around me was walking. Approaching the hill at mile 23, I was determined to run all the way up it: surely Chester's 'hills' have got nothing on Earnsdale Road... thankfully, I was right, in Darwen it would be a slope, and even on tired legs, I ran from bottom to top (of a fashion!). Now there was just a Parkrun to go.

My thoughts firmly fixed on the finish where hopefully that my mum & dad would see me cross the line along with my partner Simon & Westie, Rebus. As I came towards the finish, the atmosphere was phenomenal and the crowds lifted my spirit for the final few yards. Cheerleading Dashers shouted my name and as I was scanning the crowds, I couldn't see my parents and I worried that they hadn't made it to the finish line. I decided to stop looking for them & just focus on the finish.



Crossing the line in 5 hours, 6 minutes at 17 seconds, the Race Organiser shook my hand, I was handed a bottle of water, and I looked to my left to see my mum & dad at the barrier – I was absolutely elated that they'd seen me finish! They'd even made a banner for me to pose with for a photograph.

The worst bit of the day was having to go down steps to the racecourse after the marathon to get my bag...my poor knees!!

So much more than running I can hand on heart say that a conversation in December 2014 has led to a life-changing activity that is so much more than a hobby.

Over the last 12 months I've been overwhelmed by the kindness and support of other club members...especially the Sunday Social crew! Dad's cancer is thankfully under control, and running has been a big factor in my ability to cope with the mental and emotional fall-out from the diagnosis and treatment. Then there's the more obvious benefit that running is generally considered good for physical health and fitness...

What next...?

Now to enter some half-marathon races – I haven't done one of those yet!

**Andrea**



# Allithwaite 8 Trail Race November 2nd 2019

I did this race last year as a 'comeback' after my op and really enjoyed it. I saw our ex-Chairman Julian Donnelly (now running for Black Combe) on the line and had a chat with him before the start. I explained that the race would be a tester for me (I had scheduled my next stage in recovery to be a Parkrun but spotted that this was on and it was just down the road from where we have our caravan in the Lake District so after a lot of agonising I decided to do it instead)..

I had no idea how it would go and was very wary of pushing myself too hard and setting myself back. Anyway, to cut a long story short I surprised myself and had a reasonable run. I was 25th out of 102 finishers. I got a spot prize of a bottle of beer and some chocolate. Oh, and I beat Julian by 4 minutes- so all in all a good day out.

Fast forward to this year and we were up at the caravan again for the weekend when the race was on. Yet again I was aiming for a 'comeback' after 4 months suffering with tendinitis after the Joss Naylor Challenge. I'd done a few Parkruns so I was optimistic that I'd be ok to do an 8 mile Trail race so I stumped up my £10 to enter on the day (as a fell runner this sort of extravagance was pretty painful as you can imagine) and lined up

The race is organised by Allithwaite Running Club and takes in a good mixture of terrain..

The initial section away from the Sports Club is on quiet country lanes before heading out towards Cartmel across undulating farmer's fields. On reaching Cartmel it skirts around the racecourse before a stretch through woodland. More fields and a couple of road crossings before the 'tough stuff' began. We crossed the muddy fields and then had two stream crossings in close succession. As the first one approached I noticed that the guy ahead was struggling as it was pretty deep. I veered off to the side to take the option of a footbridge (still ended up with wet feet though! The first Lady was right next to me at this point and she gave me some grief for taking the soft option. "Where's your sense of adventure?!" Cheeky bugger! The next stream crossing appeared with no option to avoid it. It was knee deep and bloody cold but not too bad.

Just after this was the only proper climb of the course as we went onto Hampsfell. This hurt. It's never massively steep but everything up to now had been runnable so I'd probably gone a bit too quickly. I resorted to run for a few yards, walk a few, until I could run steadily again.

First Lady at this point dropped back complaining of numb legs (the downside of a sense of adventure!). The route now visits Hampsfell Hospice which is a tower with a viewing platform (well worth a visit on a clear day) in amongst some slippy limestone outcrops.

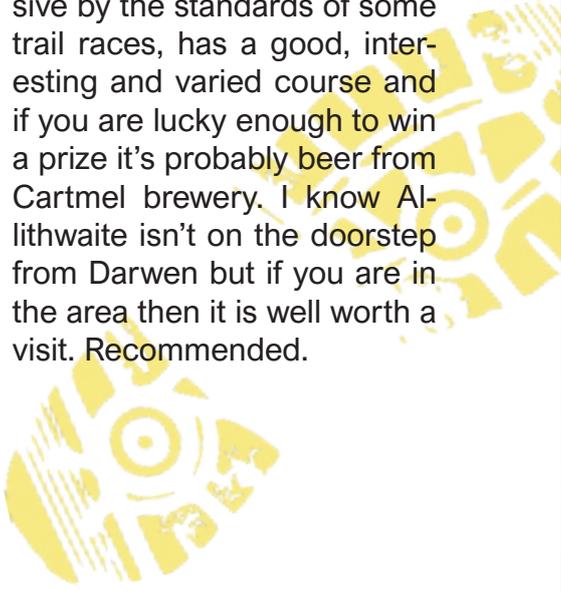
Downhill now and heading home. The marshal said "You can have a rest now!" I gave a hollow laugh. Across the fields we raced before more road near Cartmel Golf Course where I spotted Cath and George T cheering me on. I got into a battle here with another couple of blokes around my age. We passed and repassed each other several times. On the very last field crossing before we came out onto the road near the finish I put in a big effort to reach the stile first and show them that I has plenty left. This was a complete act as I was dying now.

Onto the road and I was forcing myself to keep the effort going and keep everything tidy. Arms steady, no staggering. Finally I rounded the corner back to the Sports Centre and the finish line. Knackered. Properly knackered. Credit to the two blokes I'd held off, they both shook my hand and said well done. One saying that his head had gone when he saw how strong I looked on the last bit. A lesson there for all of us – a bit of psychology works wonders!

I finished 15th out of 80 in 1.06.38. A bit slower than last year but I'll take that. The main thing was that I'd done the race and had no breakdown with my foot injury. Very happy.



In summary – this race is very well organised, not too expensive by the standards of some trail races, has a good, interesting and varied course and if you are lucky enough to win a prize it's probably beer from Cartmel brewery. I know Allithwaite isn't on the doorstep from Darwen but if you are in the area then it is well worth a visit. Recommended.



# Simon



# A Day In The Sun – The Great North Run 2019

I remember many years ago, having a lazy Sunday morning and switching on the telly and catching the end of the Great North Run on the BBC. I had been out the night before so I was in that state of mind thinking, 'What the hell did I drink last night?' and 'I shouldn't drink again!' (I failed miserably at that one). Catching the event on telly, I was mesmerised by the number of participants and the sense of occasion that was being broadcast into my home. I did think that it would be nice to attend The Great North Run either as a runner or a spectator. Most probably as a spectator.

On that occasion, Mo Farah had won his first Great North Run. When I got around to finally participating, he was going for his sixth straight win. It was a journey (some of it I have already mentioned in the dash) but I managed to get myself on the start line, ready to leave at 10:40am on Sunday 8th September 2019.

The day started with a chill in the air but the sky was clear and sun shone brightly. I was wearing my old work jumper to keep myself warm but that nip in the air soon changed to warm sunshine rays. My jumper was eventually deposited with the rest of the old clothes that are left at the start line and then taken to various charity stores.

As you probably know, waiting to start of any race is the worst part of the experience with all sorts going through your mind. With the Great North Run it's epic due to the size of the start field. I was in the middle and I couldn't see where the first runners were, or the runners who were at the back. It is a sea of people hemmed into paddocks on the dual carriageway with speakers and television screens in the central reservation to show you what's happening at the front.

The gun went at 10:40am but there is no point starting your gps watch if you're in the middle like I was. We waited to move, but when we did move it was about 6 feet then nothing for what felt like an eternity. When we did move as a crowd, it was a good 20 minutes since Mo Farah had left the start line and he was a third of the way. The herd where moving up and eventually I could see the start line in the distance and the party that was happening there. There was a camera crane whizzing past us so everyone was waving to hopefully get a chance of seeing themselves when they watch the recording when they get home.

The chip timing boards was coming towards us so it was time to go and set a time on the biggest half marathon probably in the world.

Once you get past the start line and you are running on a dual carriageway, the occasion disappears for about 300 metres and you don't see anyone but that's because you are on a fly-over and the half marathon snakes on the main carriage-way and the two slip roads on that particular junction. I was on the left hand side of the sea of runners so we end up going down through the tunnels under the road. This is where you first hear people shouting 'oggy, oggy, oggy' and the wave of runners shouting back 'og,og,og!' It's a wonderful experience and certainly puts the fact that you are about to do just over 4 parkruns out of your mind.

The route then snakes into the centre of Newcastle via the dual carriageway which is a nice downhill section. This area is full of spectators on both sides like two wailing walls giving us runners plenty of encouragement and cheering us towards the Tyne Bridge. When the Tyne Bridge comes into view, then the sense of occasion does become apparent and you get that tingle down your back. I am bloody running in the Great North Run, how mad is that!! The army of spectators are still lined on the bridge.

Mums and Dads letting you know you are doing great then to the young kids stretching out the arms wanting you to give them a hand slap. The first 4km of the race are fantastic and the sense of occasion and awe does wash over you. After the Tyne Bridge, you enter Gateshead and this part of the route I found the toughest of the race. We now start climbing up from the Tyne River. As I was in the moment, I did take this section a bit too quicker than I should have as it's not a steep climb as you see in Darwen, but at speed it's a zipper. Because the race is so congested this is where you first encounter the ripple effect.

This happens when someone in front of you suddenly stops or slows down and you are trying to get past them but you have nowhere else to go so you have to slow down until you have a space to pass them. This is common not only on hills but anywhere as the person in front might want to stop and get their phone or camera out. This ripple effect is also at the drinks stations but here you have the extra danger of running on a bottle or even worse a bottle top and skidding which luckily I never did but I saw one poor soul nearly do the splits on a bottle top.

Even though you are coming out of Newcastle on the ring road into Gateshead, the amount of people watching on the barriers and traffic islands is magnificent.

There were buses with volunteers from numerous charities all giving their runners support. Families are handing out sweets and ice lollies to the already wilting runners. Music from brass bands, steel drum bands, pub rock bands and even Elvis appears when you get to South Shields. I also saw some blokes who had a beer station and were handing out cups of the local brew.

This was at about mile 8 so I decided to wait until I had finished for that. The crowds were magnificent and the Geordie charm runs throughout the course all the way to the end.

But I am not at the end, just yet. I am still in Gateshead going up and eventually getting to the top and passing the iconic Gateshead Stadium. After this section I started to get into my stride and the crowds of runners was still massive but I was now starting to get a bit of room and able to swerve around the odd runner who were starting to tire or pulling up due to injury. You do see a lot of stretching going on at the side of road or in the middle of the route too. The next stretch of the route was the easiest with just over four kilometres of downhill as the A184 turns into the A194.

This section is where your mind seems to tune in to everything that is happening on route. The fancy dress runners. The people who are wearing far too many clothes and are now regretting it.

The social media runners who are recording the day and not really looking where they are going. The variety is endless. I must confess that during a half marathon, I usually find someone to chat with or have a laugh and a joke. Unfortunately, on the Great North Run, the only words I would say were 'excuse me,' 'sorry,' 'well done!,' 'good luck!,' 'are you okay?', and 'what a tit!!'. I remember passing a lady with a vest saying 'Ask me about Crohn's Disease', I didn't unfortunately because she was wearing earphones and I didn't want to interrupt.

The fans who line the last few miles towards South Shields are the most generous you can find. Might be the Geordie charm? I don't know? I was offered all sorts to keep me going. Gels, sweets, water, pop, ice lollies, and even alcohol again. I was pretty well stocked as it was with my gels, jelly babies and the free water and energy bars which are distributed on the route. I even took a shower on a few of the shower tunnels that line the route.

All ready for the last stretch into South Shields and towards the beachfront. I had done my homework and knew there was a final climb before we reach the beach. It's funny because it's probably not that bad but on the day, the road looks like it is pointing towards the blue sky like a tarmacked ski jump.

The amount of people I saw toiling at this point was unbelievable but I suspect when you have a field of over 50,000 then even a small percentage of runners is massive. I was fine and had enough left in the tank when I went over the 'ski ramp' and could see the North Sea which looked very inviting to someone who had run over 10 miles at this point in the September sun.

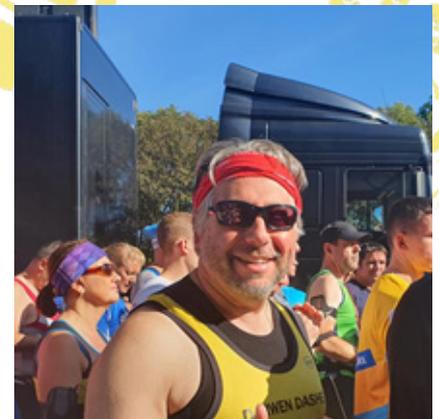
The last mile or so was a strange experience. The crowds now were massive. A football crowd watching us slowly reach our goal of the finish line. The last KM is marked like you see at the Tour De France with signs telling you, you have 800m, 600m 500m to go. On a sprint stage on the Tour De France, these banners fly by but not at the Great North Run. It feels like they are spaced out every mile and not the 200 metres that they are. Eventually you see the 200m, 100m, then 50m to go. I can't see the finish line, where is it?

All the Mo's and VIP's get a chance to finish on the road beside the prom. The rest of us have to take the grass embankment near the beach and finish there. I made the mistake of being on the left hand side of the road near all the spectators and then realising I needed to turn right so take the longest route. I made the wrong choice at the start so it was natural to continue and make another at the end.

After I passed the finish line, I looked at the clock and it was counting near to 3 hours but I knew my chip time would be bit over 2 hours. I was emotional crossing the line, thinking of all that's happened between me watching the race on television, hung over and now reaching out and collecting my medal. I had done it, in a dashers vest too. Now it was time to join the queues to collect their goody bags, t-shirts, buy a pint in the beer tent and the longest queue of all, to get the tram out of South Shields.

My memory of the event is that it felt like Glastonbury on the streets of Tyneside. I am hoping to go back and do it again one day soon if I get lucky in the ballot again. Like with the London Marathon, it's certainly something that every runner should give a go and experience even if it is a complete faff when you are there. As with Glastonbury, you end up getting home late and absolutely spent, but with a smile on your face.

# Chris



# Blackburn 10K

I saw this race advertised through Facebook when I was still recovering from a major operation. Oooh look Bruce a local race, closed roads nice medal, shall we do it? It took a LOT of badgering the husband as it wasn't the cheapest run, and no T-shirt either! But book on it we did, Bruce said he would run with me (think it was to check I wouldn't have a melt down like I did at the Morecambe 10k).

Sunday morning arrived we ran down to Ewood park as our warm up, as we reached branch road lots of runners were milling around, I was quite excited, usually I'm nervous before a race, but I was quite calm surprisingly. We dropped off our bags and walked round to the 'event village' it was starting to rain, and they were fair big drops, oh no this could be grim! Saw a few other dashers Andy, Linda and Brian to name but a few.

We all got into the huge line up of runners, it wasn't too clear where the start was, but as it was chipped time, it didn't matter. We walked round into the stadium and finally crossed over the start mats, and we're off!!!! Lots of cheers and a LOT of runners (over 1,000). It was really busy for the first 3K, as we'd set off towards the back it was hard not to weave through some of the slower runners, but slowly a gap emerged and I settled into a steady pace. And thankfully the rain had stopped!

We headed up towards town over wainwright bridge a U turn at the lights and back over the bridge, twisting and turning through a few side streets, past the cathedral into town, past the college then back up king street towards witton and back to the stadium, and a sprint finish.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable run, lots of charity runners dressed in large furry costumes, music playing around the route, and at the finish and a good turnout of Dashers both running and supporting. It definitely sparked my running 'mojo' back to life, I was really pleased with my chip time of 55.53; my fastest this year.

Blackburn 10K I will be back next year hopefully bagging a PB.



# DARWEN DASHERS

## RUNNING CLUB



**The 3 J's  
Jean, Jules and Jim  
at the David Staff**