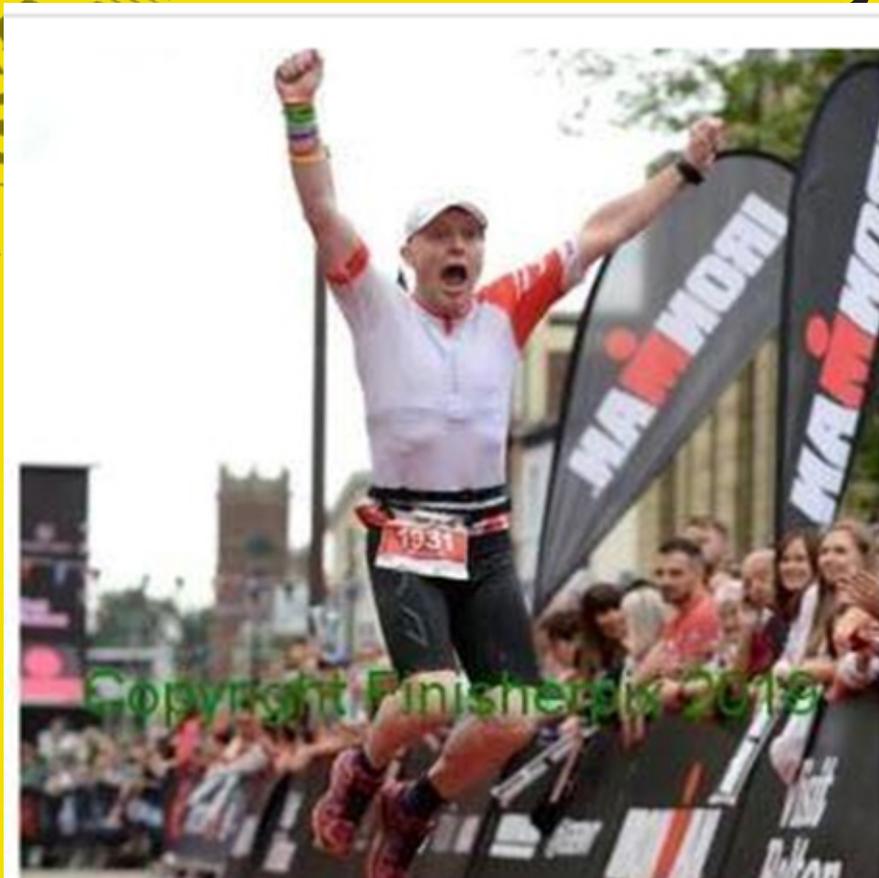


The

Dash

July 2019



Dashers' latest Ironman – Mick Wilding – Well done Mick.

From the editor...

Last weekend Chris and I celebrated our 1st Wedding Anniversary with a social Trot up to the tower with several Dashers and we were met at the tower with Refreshments very kindly provided by Beccy Jepson and assisted by Paul Conlon. Breakfast followed in the Old Function Room.

It was great to met up with other Dashers on Sunday morning to cheer on the Ironman competitors and in particular Michael Wilding who was still smiling on his second lap of the route.

Simon Fox has done a "book review" for this month's edition. What a fab idea. If anyone else would like to do so please feel free to send one in to darwendashers@gmail.com.

I was delighted to be able to present a Cheque on behalf of the Heritage Half Marathon to Jack and Tom Mayoh for the East Lancs Hospice for £1000. These two boys are inspirational with the amount of fundraising they have acheived in memory of their loving Mum Louise Mayoh.



Debbie
Biscuit

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tom-jackmayoh>



Contents

From the Editor
Chairman's Chat 4
From the Captains
Joss Naylor
Challenge

Dashers Book
review
Abrahams Tea(m)
Coast to Coast in a
day



Darwen Dashers Running

Club: Founded 1990

Club Committee

Chairman

Simon Fox

the.dash@hotmail.co.uk

President

Jim Taylor

jimtaylor@uwclub.net

Secretary

Sharon Cocker

shazzyc_work@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer

Allan Harle

Beginners Captain

Alison Abbott

07971 451431

alison.abbott22@yahoo.co.uk

Fell Captain

Gareth Davies

07954 411637

gareth@sportingnrg.co.uk

Road Captain

Gareth Taylor

07889 633672

gjtt15@yahoo.co.uk

When/where to meet us:

Tuesday

The Sunnyhurst, Tockholes Rd,
Darwen BB3 1JX

19.00

All Welcome

Thursday

The Sunnyhurst, Tockholes Rd,
Darwen BB3 1JX

19.00

All Welcome

Check our Facebook page for
details of runs which are taking
place on club nights.

If you have not run with us
before, please get in touch
before you come so we can
arrange for somebody to meet
you.

The Dash

Editor Debbie Bevitt

Contributors Debbie Bevitt,
Chris Cash, Simon Fox, Helen
Jones, Louise Oldfield,
Calum Rigby, Deborah
Robinson, Gareth Taylor.

Designer Sophie Atherton

Darwen Dashers

Running Club



@DarwenDashers



On Facebook:

**Darwen Dashers
Parkrun Information
Page**



All contributions for the The
Dash to be sent by 1st of each
month to:

darwendashers@gmail.com

Chairman's Chat



Hey up,

Finally it's Summer! Isn't it nice to get out in some decent weather? Having said that we have just been on holiday to the Isle of Mull in Scotland and, while the rest of the UK was having a mini heat wave, we got rain. Typical! Still it was a nice break and somewhere that bears returning in future to see more of.

It's been a busy time on the race side. There was an excellent turn out of Dashers for the recent Ian Terry Memorial 5k at Cowm Reservoir. It looked like quite a battle between Gareth T and Rich Marsden at the sharp end with both going sub 20.

Also not a Championship race but a good local race was the Bull Hill fell race. Eight Dashers took part and the amazing Amy Freeman was both first Dasher and first Lady, taking 25th place overall.

Kudos to Calvin Ferguson for his organisation of the Don Ashton Memorial fell race. This seems to go from strength to strength. Well done to everyone who volunteered to marshal.

That is the last club race until the David Staff in November so everyone can now race without feeling guilty (or having an excuse not to race depending on how you look at it!). More on this one nearer the time.

In closing I'd like to say how pleased I was to see my good friend Mick Wilding succeed in becoming an Ironman. It was good to see such a lot of Dashers out on the course to cheer him on. He has put so much hard work into achieving this – he had been training for it for nearly a whole year – and fitting it all in round the rest of life. It was a brilliant achievement. Mick – I'm proud of you, lad. Hard work pays off and you get out what you put in. Enjoy your running.



Mick Wilding on the bike section of the Ironman.



Simon

From the Road Captain

I write this following a fantastic day of sporting entertainment, Wimbledon men's final, British GP and England Winning the Cricket World Cup for the first time! Although I have never really followed cricket but it was fantastic to watch and certainly made a decent change to Love Island! A bit closer to home we had the Towneley Park 10k, I must apologise as the change in date wasn't advertised on Facebook (was on the web-page and in the Dash). Hopefully it should effect the tables too much. We now have four races left this year, the dates are confirmed so hopefully there won't be any further changes.

2019 Road Races Remaining:

4 August - Lancaster 10m

8 September - Stockport Hatters Half Marathon

27 October - Accrington 10k

17 November - Preston 10m



A couple of weeks ago we had the Witton Park trail relays, the weather even though a little breezy (as those who erected the gazebo found out) turned out to be perfect running conditions. We put together 9 teams so well done to all those who came and represented your club, hopefully you all enjoyed yourself and would have another go next year. A massive congratulations to the Men's Vets team Ady, Martin and Andy as you won the Men's Vets category outright. Looking at the times it looks as though most people were well suited in their specific categories. Again well done and hopefully let's see if we can put more teams in for 2020.

Darwen Dashers Men Vet A

Ady Humphrys 00:17:10 Martin Oldfield 00:17:14 Andy Smith 00:18:11 00:52:35

Darwen Dashers Men B

James Mellor 00:17:52 Gareth Davies 00:18:27 Gareth Taylor 00:18:22 00:54:41

Darwen Dashers Men A

Simon Taylor 00:18:21 Karl Aspin 00:17:29 Rick Marsen 00:19:17 00:55:07

Darwen Dashers Men Vet B

Brian Morris 00:20:55 Ian Asher 00:19:58 Mark Taylor 00:21:44 01:02:37

Darwen Dashers Men Vet C

Lee Dooling 00:23:43 Dave Allen 00:23:24 Jez Turner 00:21:05 01:08:12

Darwen Dashers Women

Amy Freeman 00:19:22 Claire Davies 00:27:15 Sharon Cocker 00:28:09 01:14:46

Darwen Dashers Men Vet D

Chris Cooper 00:25:26 Andy Haworth 00:29:56 Jim Taylor 00:30:09 01:25:31

Darwen Dashers Women Vet B

Viki Walsh 00:27:52 Donna Burrell 00:27:31 Rebecca Simms 00:30:14 01:25:37

Darwen Dashers Women Vet A

Jules Dawson 00:27:13 Sarah Marsden 00:28:40 Sharon Dooling 00:31:09 01:27:02

Gareth

from the fell Captain

Fell Captain update

Just the one race since the last dash which was Stoodley Pike. A decent turn out from Dashers on an excellent course. The fell champs takes a rest now until September. Scafell next - that'll be fun.

Editor's note#

One person on Strava described Stoodley pike as awesome and] another described it as emotional.

Gareth

Paul Taylor



Paul is attempting K2 the information below is from the website <https://www.adventurepeaks.com/k2-expedition-june-2019/>

18th July

The team made the decision to set off at 9:30pm local time last night for their summit push. Upon getting out of the tents Pete felt his feet were far too cold to carry on, so made the decision to stay at camp. The rest of the team made their way up to the bottleneck. There was another team ahead and some Sherpas rope fixing at the front. However when the team arrived at the bottleneck, they found the other team and rope fixing sherpas were heading down. Apparently a large crack in the ice has opened up on the traverse above the bottleneck and they are not able to bridge the gap. So with heavy hearts they returned back to camp. They arrived back at around 1am local time where they reported the news. Today they are making their way back down to base camp. Hopefully they will push it out and get down today, but may have to stay one more night on the hill depending on how long it takes them to clear down. Well done to all for a great effort.

Good Luck Paul, Stay safe.

Joss Naylor Challenge

This is the account of my Joss Naylor Challenge that I submitted to the official website.
Simon Fox (M55) 8 June 2019

I'm guessing that you are reading this for one of three reasons.

1. You're bored at work (again!)
2. You've done the JNC yourself and are interested to see how someone else's experience compares to yours

Or 3. You have decided that you want to have a go at some point and so you're obsessively reading all the accounts to glean as much knowledge as you can. I'm aiming this at the latter category (because that was me not long since) but I'll see what I can do to entertain the rest of you.

Training.

For comparison, I'm 56. One of those skinny bald types that always populate races. On a really good day I might get in the top 1/3 of a small local fell race. So, no Ian Holmes but not Eamonn Holmes either. I was motivated to attempt the JNC mostly by the regret of not doing the Bob Graham Round when I was younger. A recent brush with mortality gave me that bit more encouragement. A 6 month plan was put into action. Not very scientific - run more. Mostly up and down hills. Ideally in the Lakes. Even more ideally actually on the route. I'm not one for high mileages but ramped it up a bit from my usual 20 odd miles a week to 30 odd with forays into 50 +. I'd build up and have 1 easy week in 3. This plus cycling to work most days seemed to work for me. I was getting fitter and avoiding injury. At the end of March/early April I did a couple of 60 mile weeks, finally an 80.5 mile week two weeks before my attempt - the most I have ever done. Long runs comprised lengthy trots across the West Pennine Moors (home turf), a recce of JNC L1 and L2, competing in the Anglezarke Amble and the Howarth Hobble in horrendous conditions (very useful training for the JNC), a recce of the Old County Tops route and an aborted Abraham's Tea Round also in 'the grim'. I didn't do any more than 33 miles in one hit.

Logistics

This was harder than the training! I'm lucky knowing a lot of people from Darwen Dashers and beyond who were keen and able to help out so had cover for all legs. The hard part was arranging to get them back to their vehicles following the legs. I created a JNC WhatsApp group to make life a bit easier as they could organise lifts between themselves. I also had volunteers just to collect/deliver people to the appropriate places. I made a Word document listing who was helping on each leg and their role - Nav, timekeeper - and what I'd need for each crossing (food carried/food eaten at crossing/clothing to be ready). I had a dry bag with emergency big cag, mitts, buff and a gel to be carried by a pacer and passed on at each crossing. I weighed and measured this and posted the info on the WhatsApp group. I had seen about 90% of the route and was comfortable navving most of it but made sure that I had at least one competent navigator per leg. The night before the attempt my wife and I went to the Pooley Bridge Inn for food and a few beers then slept in their car park in my van. We had done this in the past as they were ok with it if you'd spent money with them. We booked into Church Stile campsite on Saturday night - close to both the finish at Greendale Bridge and the Screes pub. I booked a table at The Screes for all the helpers who were staying on and pre-ordered food as their kitchen closes at 9.00pm.

The attempt

I used the V55 'standard' 14:40 schedule and hoped (optimistically) that I'd gain time as I went along as I was concerned about having enough time on the final leg. This meant a 5.00am start. The forecast was shit. It was right. There were suggestions about postponing for 24 hours but this wasn't an option due to the availability of helpers. The night before I messaged everyone to say that unless it was epically terrible weather in the morning then I would start as arranged. I would assess at end of Leg 1 if I was to continue and at Leg 2 I would make the 'big call' if we were going to abandon. This was to have enough time to stop people making a fruitless trip up to Styhead with no signal. So, at 5.00am we set off. Russ Owen (Eyriri) and Dave Haygarth (Rossendale Harriers) covered this leg.

It had rained all previous day, all night and was still going. We were in clag before we reached Arthur's Pike. Tip: have a look at the start. Don't run along the shore of Ullswater. Take footpath to left and head for the road. The gate is by a large tree. Turn right on road then enter campsite on left. Straight up the road through the site before reaching a 5 bar gate onto the fell. Climb it and bearing right you will reach the main track to Arthur's Pike. Despite God awful conditions I was quite happy. We ticked off the summits and only had a problem with Red Crag. It is not an obvious summit and in the clag it was difficult to find. In the end we used GPS to hit the grid ref.



Soon we reached the large cairn of Thornthwaite Beacon. Tip: If you don't want to run the main zig zag descent (rocky, loose, steep and slow) you can bear right alongside the wall by the cairn and reach an easier path with some grassy sections. We got Stoney Cove done and then the clag made us pause slightly before spotting the trod to Pike Howe, then headed back to the main path towards St Ravens Edge. Tip: cross the wall by a large boulder and drop down diagonally across the field to the road rather than the slower 'tourist path' above the pub.

At the crossing I had homemade potato and leek soup and, as I'd warmed up on the run in, I decided to save time by not changing kit. I went to get a last mouthful of soup only to discover Dave polishing it off! Ah well, he'd earned it. I was very pleased to meet Ian Charters doing the JNC traditional 'meet and greet' here. Joining Russ and I on Leg 2 were Dashers Gareth Taylor, Karl Aspin and Calvin Fergusson (his Grandad, Don Ashton, was an early completer of the Challenge).



Straight into the climb of Red Screes. I was still buzzing with the euphoria of the occasion but Russ was struggling with his ITB and the others were into a big climb with no warm up so we climbed in silence until I said 'Bloody hell lads, the banter's not so good on this leg! We dropped out of clag at Kirkstone but by the summit of Red Screes we were right back in it. Summit tagged and off toward Scandale Pass. Tip: you can cut the corner rather than hand railing the wall line. There is a trod on the right part way down. It can be wet but it is still runnable and saves time. The next section was a grind, uphill into the wind. It was screaming as we crested Fairfield. Next it was down to the saddle by Grizedale tarn. Last year this was the spot I had managed to briefly run alongside Kilian Jornet on his record breaking BG. Climbing, the wind made me stagger as I neared the top of Seat Sandal. Tip: after the summit bear to the right and keep on the slight trod. You will pass one of those huge sacks they transport stone in and later a stone points to the right indicating the path down. Out of the cloud and the road crossing became visible and soon the van with my crew waiting.

I was still feeling good here. In fact I felt great! It couldn't last of course. The decision was made to continue with the attempt. Finally I started using the walking poles that had been carried round the previous two legs. Head down and get into a rhythm, glancing up towards the top occasionally, immediately regretting it and looking back down. Steel Fell is one long, steep sucker. On this leg I had Dashers Gareth Davies (nav), Alex Buckland, Ady Humphries (time-keeper) plus Kev Smith (Red Rose) and Stanners (CLEM). The latter two hanging back with me. This leg continued to be a clag fest but the rain began to tail off. Gareth did an excellent job of the navigation and we were soon up and over High Raise and heading towards Rossett Pike. Tip: aim to cross Stakes Pass and then contour round Rossett Crag before climbing up to the summit. Bow Fell was next and I began to struggle. A tough climb over the rocks although the route is easy to follow with the cairns on the way. I hadn't taken enough food in and the cold and wet was sapping my energy too. A big mistake that nearly cost me dearly. I struggled to the summit and started to play catch up with my nutrition but by this stage swallowing was getting harder too. Everything had to be accompanied by water. Esk Pike came and went and then the trudge up Great End. I had been shown a line off that I was happy I could find in good conditions however we had agreed that if it was bad vis then we would take the safer but slower option doubling back before heading to Styhead. It wasn't worth the risk on the day so that's what we did.

There was quite a group waiting at Styhead. I had a few mouthfuls of chilli from a flask and some other bits but I was conscious of needing to keep going. Gareth continued on with me to the finish but the rest stopped here. Amy Freeman (Dashers) took over nav duties, also from Dashers we had Paul Taylor plus Jonathan Stubbs (Settle). Great Gable was trugged up and then onto Kirk Fell. I was suffering but still able to run when terrain allowed it. We descended via the Red Gulley. Tip: worth a recce so that you know exactly where to get on to it and that you would be happy going down it. I was starting to get some pain and restricted movement in my left leg now so was glad of Paul Taylor directing my hand and foot holds down here. On Pillar we were joined by the ever cheery Iain Asher (aka Asher the Dasher) and he kept me fed with bits of caramel biscuit. I touched the little cairn on the wall indicating the summit of Scoat Fell and then headed towards Steeple. Only 3 to go after this. Down the wall line and up the slope to Haycock. I'd arranged with Amy that if I had time in hand we'd go down the forgiving grass slope but if it was tight we'd use the faster scree descent. As we approached on the day she said 'Right, we are going to use the scree descent.' And I thought 'Oh shit.' As it turned out we descended on grass right next to the scree and made it down quickly. I ploughed on as fast as I could but I was worried about time.

At one point I turned to Gareth and asked 'Is it on?' 'It's on', he replied. Seatallan is a wall - a heartbreaker. I knew to just keep my head down, use the cut out steps and make good use of the poles. Finally the slope lessened and I could risk looking up. Waving and cheering figures on the summit materialised as Claire Davies and Lea Pea from Dashers, last seen on Styhead. Their enthusiasm and encouragement spurred me on.

My legs, particularly the left one, were in state by now. The steep Seatallan descent was always going to be hard but with a flash of inspiration I slid down the wet grass on my back, hurtling down like a toboggan! Desperate times need desperate measures! I stopped before the rocks and levered myself upright. Back into the shambolic run. Middle Fell seemed to have grown since I'd been up it previously. Stomping up using the poles, taking on mouthfuls of whatever was offered swigged down with isotonic drink. Finally the summit. A brief pause for a photo then the final descent. Amy told me I had 27 minutes to get to the bridge. My brain struggled with the mental arithmetic. I did this descent in 14 minutes on a recce on pretty fresh legs and 'going for it'. A different proposition now. Shambolic run mode re-engaged. Get. It. Done.

Supporters were screaming at me from near the bridge 'Come on! COME ON!!' Iain Asher spotted a direct line through the bracken and I followed. I ran as hard as I could now. Pain blocked out. Along the beck and hard right onto the bridge. DONE! I had a brief head in arms collapse onto the wall of the bridge and then I was back in the room. A big grin on my face with everyone cheering and there he was – Joss Naylor – standing next to me extending his hand. I gripped it firmly and we shook. I looked him in the eyes and took in as much as I could of the moment that I dreamt of and worked so hard towards for months. Tip: it's worth it.



Huge thanks to everyone who supported me in achieving this. You can't do something like this without a good team and I had the best. Thanks also to everyone who contributed to my JustGiving page and helped raise over £1800 for Prostate Cancer UK.

Simon

Dashers book review

High Inspiration by Heather Dawe

Many years ago I was given a copy of *Adventures in Mind*, Heather's first book. It really resonated with me as there were many things that I could relate to, Heather had competed in races that I'd done (Three Peaks cyclocross, the Grand Raid Cristalp mtb race and various fell races) albeit with far greater success than me. She was a Singlespeed mountain biker and at that time it was a big part of my life too. The book meant a lot to me on several levels and I tend to lend it only to friends that I feel will 'get' it too. So, when I saw that Heather had written a new book I immediately pre-ordered it.

The first thing you notice with *High Inspiration* is that it is beautifully produced. The cover and paper are high quality. It is illustrated with Heather's artwork throughout and it is a tactile and aesthetic delight. It is an account of a run round the Tour de Mont Blanc that Heather and her friend did a few years ago.

She describes the route, the views, their feelings and the day to day experiences. The book is much more than a simple travelogue though. Heather links in other aspects of her life – from being a race winning athlete to realising that her race 'career' is now not as important as it was, her relationships with her children and her partner.

It also deals with both her own mental health and the battles her father faced throughout his life. I admired her bravery in putting this into print.

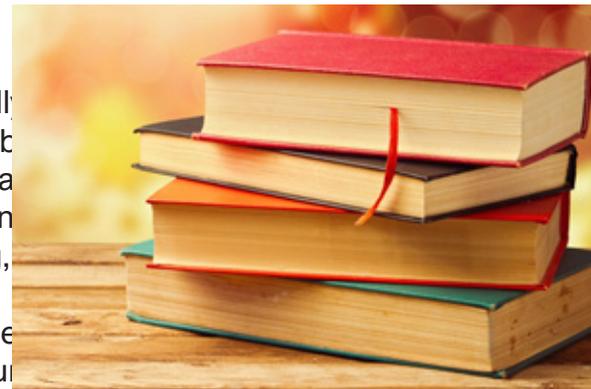
I found the book to be well named as I really did find it Inspiring. There are references from other authors relating to the love of the mountains, some I was familiar with (Nan Shepherd) and others that I would like to learn more about (the Italian climber Walter Bonatti). The description of the run itself and the alpine villages and mountain refuges that they visited made me want to visit the Mont Blanc region myself. I have been lucky enough to meet Heather a few times and, despite being an amazingly talented writer, artist and mathematician (she is a data Scientist), she is very modest and down to earth to talk to.

This is reflected in the book. I felt that it was at least partially written as a form of therapy but this doesn't detract in any way from the pleasure you gain in reading it. If you like running, mountains and would like to read something a bit more cerebral than yet another account of some high end athlete's list of successes then maybe this would be worth a read.

Reviewed by
Simon Fox

#Brilliant idea Simon

HIGH INSPIRATION
mountains, running and creativity



Abrahams Tea(m)

5th July was pencilled in this year as my third attempt at the Bob Graham Round, however, other things have popped up this year that have meant I have not been able to commit to the training to be ready for such a challenge. Another challenge was therefore needed. After attempting the Abrahams Tea Room Round a few weeks earlier and being completely weathered out with hail, snow, poor visibility and high wind we pencilled it back in for the 5th. I was beginning to feel though that my chances of completing any kind of round where being thwarted one way or another. Saturday came and the forecast was amazing and we duly set off from George Fisher at 7.30am for the 30 mile, 14,000 foot challenge. Going up Catbells and I wasn't feeling too great but pushed on hoping it would pass. On summiting Robinson I voiced my continuing discomfort to Tiny and Asher – "not feeling this just yet." Flat and down running was good but going uphill I couldn't get the oxygen in nor my heart rate to rise. On summiting High Stile I was in a pickle so sat down for a sandwich and a can of coke to see whether that could perk me up. We descended into Buttermere and met up with Claire where I still wasn't feeling great. It was getting hotter and I was beginning to feel another round slipping away from my grasp

There is no quick way back to Keswick other than getting the bus over Honister Pass so I made the decision to continue and began ascending Whiteless Pike. . Very quickly things started to get a whole load worse, I felt weak, like I couldn't climb, no energy and I sat on the hillside happy to return for the bus. I had gone through the mantra of what I could fix – Food, Drink, Sleep, Muscle Management and Motivation. I was desperate to finish a round but had felt like crap for 5 hours. With another 6 hours to go my self motivation was now diminished.

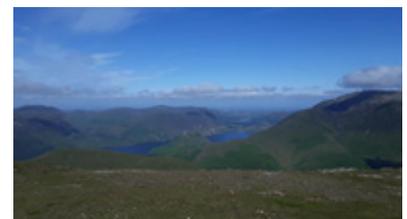
This is where your mates and your wife kick in and take control. Those that know me will know that I am a control freak, particularly when I am on a hill. Nevertheless I was in safe hands. So with a pep talk from Asher, Claire carrying my rancid smelling top and Tiny's encouraging words we continued on. On reaching the top of Whiteless a lovely flat bit of running ensued to the house at Coledale whereby a dip in the stream and a refill of water occurred. I was now in do as your told mode – eat this, drink that, follow me and I started to perk up.



With Hopegill Head and Grisedale Pike down, we ascended Eel Crag and the magnificent ridge of Sail and Causey Pike and the out and back of Rowling End. One more peak and then its downhill to Keswick. Barrow is a relatively small peak but if I never visit it again I will not be disappointed. Amy high fern and deep heather meant 25 minutes of high knees to the top. I was spent at the top but knew now that the "hoodoo" of completing a round was going to be put to bed. The aim at the start of the day was to get round, the bigger aim to finish in time for free tea and cake at George Fisher. That ship had just sailed so on passing Braithwaite village we stopped for a much deserved ice cream before the 2 mile road run to Keswick and the end in a time of just under 11 hours.

I suffered and I'm proud I carried on. I am also immensely grateful to my team mates – my chips were down and they pulled me through. I learnt a lot that day. Sometimes self motivation isn't enough. Sometimes you need those closest to you pick you up off the floor and help you. Sometimes it's ok to not be ok!!!

Gareth Davies





Coast to coast in a day

150 Miles Seascale to Whitby

Gareth Taylor – June 29th 2019

I signed up for the challenge after a mate sent me the link and asking if I fancied a crack just after getting married last November. I thought 'June is ages off, I'll get the three peaks out the way and then be able to concentrate on the bike'. This didn't really happen, I carried on running and before I knew it I was on the bike for the first time in two years just a month before the event. I went out with my mate Graham (who I was doing the C2C with) and Karl Aspin (Fell Running Dasher/Mountain Biker), we went out for a ride towards Clitheroe, up the trough of Bowland, popped out near Lancaster and then the plan was then to get home through Longridge and Ribchester

All was going well, we were all pushing each other along and chatting, then after about 50 miles the wheels fell off. My legs went heavy and I couldn't even keep my head up, I made a schoolboy error of not eating enough and I'd run out of energy, I'd read in a book from Guy Martin that if you start feeling hungry it's already too late! I learnt the hard way – I pulled into Sainsbury's in Longridge feeling like a right idiot, I spent about £10 in chocolate and that gave me the boost I needed to get myself home

I sat at home after the ride thinking sh1t. In less than a month I've got to ride nearly three times this.....

I spent the next few weeks doing a couple of short (30 mile) rides and kept telling myself as long as I fuel I'll be fine – how hard can it be, me and a few guys from work did the Les Cingles du Ventoux challenge a couple of years ago, basically up a mountain three times in a day – going up from each side.

A couple of days before we had the Witton park relays to help me keep my mind off the bike ride, even though I got chatting with Andy Smith and he reminded me how hard it was going to be and the nerves sunk in again!

The night before the event me and my mate Graham drove up to Seascale in Cumbria and registered, we got given a number to tie wrap to my bike and a map (not sure why you'd need this as all 150 miles was fully sign posted and marshalled where required). We checked into the digs and after giving the bikes a once over we headed to the pub for a pint and burger – proper pre-race fuel.

The morning of the event and we got a lift down to the start line for our decided 6am departure, the start line was on the beach at Seascale, Cumbria. There was a guy scanning barcodes and a photographer taking photos as you set off. I set off and everything felt fine, I was still nervous as about 30 minutes in we had the gruelling slogs up Hardknott & Wynnose Pass. The roads headed into the Eskdale valley, we were getting nicely warmed up as the temperature was already about 18/19 Celsius. We got to the bottom of the passes and already agreed that we'd meet up on the other side. The climb was tough, Hardknott for those who have never seen it is about 1.5 miles long with a gradient of 30%, I stuck the bike in the easiest gear, put my head down and just prepared to sweat! Even though the road was closed for vehicles the road was full hundreds of cyclists either peddling or pushing up.



Hardknott eases off half way up, there's a Roman fort where the road flattens out which gives you a false sense of completion. After this it really kicks and introduces a double switch back for good measures! I'd told myself if I could get over Hardknott and Wrynose then the hardest part of the day was over! We started the fast descent off Wrynose and headed for the first check point which was the ferry that crosses Windermere just after Hawkshead. This was our first stop about 30 miles in. We had missed the first ferry so had to wait about ten minutes for the next one, cyclists like runners are a friendly bunch so we had a bit of a laugh with some guys who'd travelled up from London. The ramp opened up and away we went, it felt like a bit of a race for some reason in my head as about a hundred or so cyclists all rode off the ferry and up a big bloody hill that headed towards Kendal. We reached Kendal and followed the route through the one way system in the town centre, this led to a school which at 39 miles was our first feed station. The feed station was basically a school playground set up with bike racking, water bowlers, portaloos and table after table of food. There was pretty much everything you could fancy to fill up, sandwiches, cakes, fruit, sweets etc. We spent about 10 minutes there then decided to make tracks.

The climb out of Kendal was tough, it kept going on and on until we crossed the M6 motorway bridge and then a fast decent down into Sedburgh, Without even peddling I think I was hitting about 45 mph so it felt good to get a bit of speed on after a morning of tough climbs in Cumbria. After passing Sedburgh and crossing into the Yorkshire Dales national park it all went pretty well, lots of gradual ups and downs and plenty of flat roads. Every now and then we'd pass a couple of cyclists or some guys who looked serious would pass us (all the matching gear, tri/cycling club types). We'd slot on the end of their chain gangs for a few miles then they'd slip off. I'd forgotten how much easier riding in a chain gang can be (unless you're the front man). Before we knew it we dropped into the second feed station, this time in a little village called Hardraw. Similar to the last one but this time in a field with a huge marquee. About ten minutes passed and we were back out onto the flat roads of Wensleydale. By this point it was about midday and we were starting to feel the heat, I think it was about 25 Celsius.

As we popped out the other side of the Dales we were hit with another long hard slog up another hill, we reached the top and it was full of signs for 'tanks turning'. We were now on the road that ran parallel with the Catterick Garrison ranges – No tanks or squad-dies though! Nothing exciting at all, just fields and the odd sheep.

We only briefly stopped at the third feed station at Tunstall, we were going well and had covered about 90 miles at this point. Before we knew it we were going through the centre of Northallerton, all I can really tell you about this is that the roads were crap, we'd been down country lanes through Cumbria and Yorkshire but as soon as we hit this town it was pot hole after pot hole! We took it steady through the town as we knew we'd be doing quite a bit of climbing to head out of Northallerton and up into the North Yorkshire Moors national park. This was another tough climb, just kept going on and on for about 5 miles – By the top of the climb I had almost already ran out of water, I checked my watch and had roughly 10 miles before the final feed station, my mouth was already pretty dry. It seemed the longest ten miles of the day.

We arrived at the final feed station – it was a village called I Our feet were both feeling it by this point, we put it down to expanding in the heat. We both drank as much water and coke until we could drink no more, we also give our feet a ten minute break and took our cycling shoes off. We had 28 miles left and for some stupid reason we both thought it was downhill pretty much all the



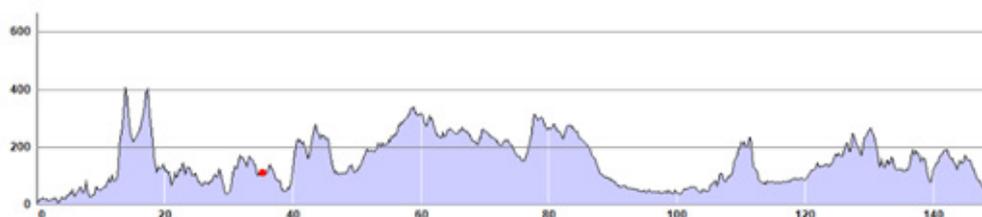
Our feet were both feeling it by this point, we put it down to expanding in the heat. We both drank as much water and coke until we could drink no more, we also give our feet a ten minute break and took our cycling shoes off. We had 28 miles left and for some stupid reason we both thought it was downhill pretty much all the way into Whitby! We had another couple of salt capsules (no idea still how many of these you are allowed take in a day but we took one at every feed station and I didn't feel cramp during or after the event!) and then set off from Ingleby optimistic that it was flat or downhill – we were wrong, we didn't check the climb profile for the last bit but afterwards when we did it showed spike after spike, I can't remember exactly how many but I'd say there were at least five tough 30% gradient hills – basically sweat pouring off, head down and feeling the burn for a couple of minutes each. Horrible!

Talk about a bloody sting in the tail. The worse part of this leg though was that you'd think the sea would be visible from a distance out – due to all the hills we didn't actually see the sea until about 2 miles from Whitby. What a site though! We headed into Whitby and it felt a little like we were Tour de France riders or something, the final stretch was lined with people cheering and clapping.

What a day – a really well organised event by Open Cycling. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and would recommend if anybody fancies it then get yourself signed up and get training. You don't need a fancy bike or need to be the fitness level as Geraint Thomas! There were people on all types of road bike and people of all fitness abilities.



Me and my mate
Graeme in Whitby



Map and Climb Profile

DARWEN DASHERS

RUNNING CLUB



Paul Conlon and Pete Gardner taking their marshalling roles seriously!!