

Blaydon Race - 9th June 2010

"Twas on the ninth of June"

Hard to start a report on this race without mentioning the weather. This, the 30th Blaydon race, was my ninth consecutive attempt but the first when it has not been hot and sunny. The forecasters got it spot on and the rain, first a drizzle and then a bit more of a downpour, started while we gathered near Balmbra's and drove most people (except those queuing for the loo) under the cover of assorted shop fronts. Let's hear it for Ladbroke's – honest, we didn't know you were still open when we blocked your doors!

Despite their gazebo blowing away just before the off, the band gave us a good rendering of "The Blaydon Races" and we runners, happy to be doing something other than standing around getting cold, sang along with gusto and some even pretended to know the words. Then a short jog to the start, presided over by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, and we were soon "gannin' along the Scotswood Road".

This long straight stretch is slightly downhill and it didn't seem long before the climb onto the Scotswood Bridge and across the river to start the "contraflow" part of the course. I discovered that this stretch needs some concentration if you are not to lose your pace – it's very tempting to slow down and look out for your fellow Striders as you head along and back. Then it's through the industrial estate and back on to the dual carriageway, past the speed camera into Blaydon town. The finish is a bit of a slalom but a welcome sight, as with every race. A PB, just, for me over the new course, so I was pleased. Not bad for a quadruple-G gadgie.

But back to the weather. We had planned to take a team photo at the start – after all, we had a best-ever turnout consisting of Lesley, Lesley, Claire, Andrew, Jill, Sally, Linda, Antonella, Deane and Yours Truly (and possibly one or two others competing under aliases!). Unfortunately everyone was under a different shop door at the start, and at the finish we were keen to collect our black pudding and pickled onion and head for somewhere warm, so the photo didn't happen. However, a hardy soul from the Running Commentary blog (<http://runnerwanderings.blogspot.com>) managed to snap Claire and me crossing the Scotswood Bridge looking slightly bedraggled, so thanks to him (and to Sally for spotting them).

All in all, a great race, but lousy weather. Thanks to all at Blaydon Harriers for organising it, and well done to all the Stocksfield Striders for a great team effort.

Julian Bates



Results

Andrew 46.12
Claire Collinson 47.08
Deane 48.59
Julian 50.46
Linda 51.09
Claire Aitkenhead 53.39
Sally 54.56
Jill 54.56
Lesley Richardson 57.57 (?)
Antonella 58.35
Lesley Reed 60.05
Aileen Parkins 60.14