

Blaydon Race 9th June 2011

Having been caught out by the rain last year, hanging around for the start of the race for an hour or so getting wetter and colder, I came prepared with my black bin liner. Fortunately, the weather was kinder this year- a little breezy but the sun also made a showing. Having arrived in Newcastle by the 'race bus' (noticeably different to a normal bus journey because everyone was talking to each other), I briefly met up with several other Striders before deciding that it would be sensible to join the queue for the Ladies' loos. After that there was the queue to put luggage on the bus back to Blaydon by which time, having met up with Angela, it seemed sensible to go back to the loo queue...

It was now getting very close to 7.15pm, the start time, so we had to wheedle our way as far forward as we could get, which was not very far! Having a height advantage, I could at least see over the heads of much of the crowd and so had an idea when people started to move off. After an inevitably slow start, we rounded the corner to the actual starting point and to the sound of the Blaydon bell, set off at barely more than a walk before managing to find enough space to start running.

The race itself is not especially interesting although there is a slightly eerie quietness, running through Newcastle with only the sound of thousands of feet rather than the usual buzz of traffic. There are a few musical interludes along the way and some supporters along the Scotswood Road cheering us on but otherwise it's a question of following the crowd. Crossing the flyover is a bit tricky because you are funnelled almost to single file at one point which I'm sure had a detrimental effect on my time (!). It was at this point, when you have a section that doubles back on itself, that I spotted a few others – Lyn, Julian, Sally, all concentrating hard and looking good.

On the final approach to Blaydon, the increasing numbers of spectators were encouraging even though there was no-one I knew. The final bend through the car park and towards the finishing line saw lots of us trying to shave a few seconds off our time only to be told to slow down so we could filter into the lanes to have our names and numbers recorded. Typically, I'm sure I was in the slowest lane. I'm not sure how the official time will compare with my timing (50.02) but I was happy to have completed my last race before moving into the next age category. I just hope it isn't all downhill from here!

Linda Holmes

Official Results

Philip Hindmarsh 43.47

Andrew Moore 45.13

Paul Watson 45.28

David Reed 49.10

Lyn Brown 49.52 and 9th lady in her age category

Linda Holmes 51.26

Jill Robertson 52.29

Julian Bates 54.13

Claire Adamson 54.41

Maria Hindmarsh 55.21

Sally Hails 56.26

Julie Stoves-Robson 56.29

Katharine Russell 60.38

Lesley Reed 63.56