

THE DASHER

the newsletter of the

Datchet DASHERS

SUMMER 2009

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WELCOME!

What a great Summer we've had so far ~ ideal for picnics in the park, sandwiches & drinks after a sociable 5k, running for 5 days in the Sahara Desert (*what!*).

This newsletter is a bit thin I'm afraid, even with a double Secret Dasher article, but I'm hoping everyone will find something of interest, and feel inspired to contribute to the next one.

Cheers,

Rich Golding

newsletter@Datchet-Dashers.com

CAPTAINS' CORNER

Ladies first ...

Since last time.... Spring has sprung, and the sun has splashed out on a new hat!!! And the Lady Dashers have been running faster and further than ever before....

Way back in April, a lot of Dashers ran a very long way !! 26.2 miles through the streets of London ! Denisa was the first Lady Dasher finisher - running an incredible first marathon finishing in 3:31. Mandy had another superbly steady race to finish with a PB in 3:39 and Jo Griffiths also had a fantastic first - finishing in 3.43, all three ladies get a guaranteed place next year !! Annabel, Kathryn and Bella all ran great first marathons too, and will no doubt be back for more !!

A bit further north in Blackpool, Michelle ran a fantastic first in 3:37.

Further north still in Edinburgh, Elaine had a great first marathon - finishing in 3:45 (5 minutes ahead of Tom!)

Then it was time to think about much shorter races – the 5K series:

Michelle got off to a flying start at Wargrave with a PB, in 20.39, and throughout the series there was a PBs-a-plenty; Kathryn, Bella, Angela and Kate, and Rosie and Nikki improved with pretty much every race.

Sharon put in a fantastically-fast performance to win the Ladies' race at Burnham, and break the Club's ladies V35 record.

At Marlow 5M, Jo Logie was the first Lady Dasher in 32:37, and there were more PBs from Kathryn, Zoe and Mel Elliot. Well done to Jean who is steadily recovering and getting back into her running after her nasty fall last year at Yateley 10K !

There have also been some extra curricula activities, with some swimming and cycling before the running !!:

Barbara finished 6th in her category at Beaulieu Tri, and Sharon, Jane Drapkin and Charlotte Glazzard finished top 8 at Windsor Tri.

Then there was the team event at the Runneymede Relays, where the ladies team; Kim Moxham, Jo Loft, Hannah Lainton, Jo Griffiths and Elaine Culverwell finished 3rd !

We are just about 2/3 of the way through the season, with a record number of 41 ladies taking part so far !!

Michelle tops the table, followed by Denisa, Nikki, Barbara and Kathryn. But last year's winner Elaine is looking strong, as are Jo Griffiths, Holly and Rhian.

WITH FOUR RACES REMAINING IT IS PERFECTLY POSSIBLE FOR ALL 41 TO COMPETE IN THE REQUISITE 5 RACES TO COMPLETE THE CHAMPIONSHIP !!

**COME ON LADIES - GET ENTERED – KEEP ON RUNNING !!
JUST DO IT !**

Mel Golding

...and for the men:

Dear Dashers,

Since I last wrote marathon season has been and gone and, if Simon and Kathryn's leaving do was anything to go by, it's now party season! Which isn't really fair, because as always the shorter, faster races are proving to be ever more popular and there's some cracking times being set.

In my usual style I'm not going to mention times but want to acknowledge the men who have completed a marathon so far in '09; Steve Hopkins, Simon Black, Andy Cooney, Chris Hunt, Colin Evans, Dave Priddy, Brent Curless, Tim Clark, Mike May, Craig Sheratt, Andrew Ogierman, James Butcher, myself and by the time this goes to print Mark Colley too. Well done to everyone, it's one hell of an achievement!

Everyone seems to love the 5k series and having 55 Dashers turn up at Wargrave must have been some sort of record. There are some really competitive races being run, not least between Dave O'Flaherty/Mike May/Craig Sherratt, Claude Autrey/Mark Colley and Julian Algar/Ross McDonough to name just a few. With a number of recent club championship races, the championship is now hotting up, with Tony Curtin leading the age graded competition and Simon Black leading the men's championships.

I wanted to finish with a few words of thanks to Simon and Kathryn who are departing to pastures new. Thanks for being such an integral part of The Dashers during your time here. On a personal note it's been a pleasure running, socialising and working on the committee with you and I'm sure everyone at the club will agree that you will be greatly missed. All the very best in Barcelona, make the most of the fantastic opportunity and keep the training up! As the joke goes...

Simon [\[pictured right\]](#) turns up to the pub on Saturday night and the bouncer refuses him entry saying "sorry mate – no demin". Simon is pretty angry and says "Don't you know who I am? I'm Simon Black leader of The Datchet Dashers men's championship, holder of The Datchet Dashers senior men's 20 miles club record – I can run a 5k in 17:45 don't you know!" To which the bouncer responds "In which case it won't take you long to run home and get changed...."

See you at the club...

Tom Durance



CAPTION COMPETITION

Congratulations to **Chris Bradfield**, whose caption was selected as the winner by Dave.



Dave was always one step ahead of the drugs testers, and carried a clean sample wherever he went.

Here's the next one. All entries to me by **21st August 2009**.
The winner can choose any item of new club kit as their prize.



SECRET DASHER

Dashers Legends

After the last newsletter, I decided not to stir things up too much this time, but write about something which newer members may not know about, and the oldies amongst us might enjoy recalling.

1) Joyce: When you think of Joyce, you automatically think of the legendary founding member of the club who won an age category medal despite being over 20 years older than some people she ran against. For new members, Joyce is renowned for her Bread and Butter Pudding [[I'm still hoping she will send me the recipe for a future edition of the Newsletter](#)], normally keeping a secret stash for helpful Dashers at our 5km race. Joyce epitomises what the club is about, a giving nature, a love of running and great banter with the juniors (Mainly the rest of us except legend number 2).

2) Tom Emmett – What is there to say about Tom Emmett? His PBs have all been bettered by his son, he is the world's most practiced marshal and does an incredible job at all of the events. It's a good job the club does not pay him, or we'd be nearly bankrupt!!! A very fine runner in his day, he focused in later years on Triathlons and keeping his dignity on the 5k runs, which he's done with bells on. A great servant of the club.

3) Andy Crotty – Sadly plagued by a back injury, Andy has been the custodian of the Accounts for more years than he cares to remember and he must be doing an OK job given the bank balance of the club. Andy has been a loyal servant of the club and whilst no-one knows his PBs for any distance, he did win the Pint race with Chairman Dave at the last 4 Christmas parties.

4) Karen Whapshott-Downer – Anyone who holds the ladies Marathon record in 2:42 must be a legend of the club. Sadly we don't know too much more about her other races, but there can only be about 3 Dashers who've ever covered a marathon more quickly.

5) Ian Spencer – Chairman for 100s of years, holder of every record going in most of the categories, he can still run the youngsters very close and beat them on many occasions. Looking at the age grade club records, he has the best of anyone at 86.3%.... Wow!!

6) Jean Hayton – Imagine breaking your arm at 5k and still finishing a 10K race.... Legendary!! To cap it all, Jean wanted to get in her 6 races for the championship, so set off to [\[power\]](#) walk the Virginia Water Paddle last year... Brilliant!!

[As Secret Dasher has been so generous, s/he gets a chance to continue...](#)

7) Chairman Dave – Dave has done a cracking job as Chairman and running the Dash and many other events and we should all buy him a drink for his efforts.

8) Jasmine Flatters – If you've only just joined, ask anyone who has manned the London Marathon drinks station what a legendary job Jasmine does. Also the most recent Dasher to be featured in Runners World.

9) Jim Butcher – If you don't know why Jim is on the list of Dashers Legends, then ask anyone who knows Jim to explain... For many years a faithful servant of the club, he puts the rest of us to shame with his energy and his drive. Always appears at all of the races, does his 8 championship races and is an inspiration to all who talk with him and his wife. Always first to the Party, Jim turned up to the 2006 Christmas party at 4:30 in the afternoon to make sure he was not going to be late.

10) Mike Hayton – Jean got a mention earlier, but Mike is a pillar of strength and supports every single Dashers event. He constantly cheers the Dashers in rain, snow, sunshine and even the fog. He helps out and marshals at every event without fail, so when you see him, say "thank you", because he deserves all of our thanks in doing lots of jobs time and time again

11) Andrew Cooney – Never turns up to training, rarely runs the same races as anyone else, yet holds club records all over the place and the fastest marathon in a Dashers vest which is something to be proud of. In fact he holds the 3 quickest ever Dashers marathons.... Legend!!!

Are there any more?

Secret Dasher

RACE REPORTS

The Runnymede Relays & Picnic

Well, it was time for one of my favourite events of the year, a perfect opportunity to be in The Great Park with team mates, friends, the sun and food. The running was the main attraction (!) especially if you were lucky enough, like me, to be doing a short leg.

It was another great year with a total of 51 teams entering of which 3 teams were from The Dashers (2 male and 1 female). As most of us eyed up the competition, Kim, Jules and Mike M got The Dashers teams off to a great start.

Last year we were fortunate to have sunshine. This year it was warm but the sun was less forthcoming except if you were running one of the last few legs when it decided it would show its face in time for the BBQ.

I will remember in future years, that one of the negative things about being the last runner is that you cannot fully capitalise on the BBQ. Now this may not be a problem for some, however when you have Tom eating burgers in front of you saying "mmm this is good shame you can't eat this... etc., etc.", it is a little frustrating. What he did forget is that it is important to fuel up to perform to your best so a bite of his went down a treat.

The overall relay was won by Sandhurst Joggers in 2hrs 25 however we had some great finishing times with both the male teams finishing closely in 14th / 16th place and the females a respectable 42nd. The individual times were strong too, a particular well done to Jules who ran the fastest 2 (!) legs for the Dashers.

The support for our teams was superb, especially in the last kilometre when it really helped keep the runners' momentum up - so thanks to all. Also thanks to Chris B for the photographs which can be seen on the website. The deserved drinks followed and I am certainly looking forward to next year.

Good day had by all.

Elaine Culverwell



Marathon des Sables 2009 [toughest foot race in the world]

For those of you who haven't heard about it, the Marathon des Sables (MdS) is a stage race in the Sahara Desert in Morocco. It is typically about 150 miles spread over 6 days, with competitors carrying all their food, clothing, sleeping and safety kit for the whole event. It is organised by Patrick Bauer, who was a French foreign legionnaire, and his race has the reputation of being the toughest foot race in the world. This was its 24th running. Although it sounds like an event to avoid for anyone with any sense, a growing number of people seem to be crazy enough to want to do it. Nearly 900 competitors were registered this year and there is a 3 year waiting list for entries from the U.K. I'm not sure what that says about us!

I've been running for a long time and as I've gotten older (and slower) I've been looking for new running challenges, including some ultra running. The MdS is one of the classic ultras and I've wanted to take part in it for a number of years, but the long waiting list (and the cost) has put me off. I was "lucky" enough to be offered a place for this year's event by New Balance, one of the race sponsors, so despite only having a relatively short period of time to prepare and not being as fit as I'd have liked, I decided to go for it. I discovered that one of the advantages of the long waiting list is having plenty of time to prepare, not just in running terms (like getting used to running with a 10kg backpack) but also in sorting out food, kit and all the other details which make all the difference in getting round. I had less than 4 months to sort myself out and that was from a low base of running after a knee injury last summer (the last of my excuses, I promise). I discovered that some of the competitors went to great lengths to minimise the weight of their kit and had lengthy discussions about exactly what food to take and what type of backpack/ sleeping bag/ shoes/ socks/ etc. to use. I won't bore you with any more detail, but if any of you ever decide to take this event on, you'll be surprised at how dull you can become in your pursuit of getting the smallest detail of your kit right!

Having gotten myself sorted out as best I could, I was on a plane to Ouarzazate in Morocco at the end of March for a "little adventure in the desert". We were to drive straight down to our first bivouac before a "technical day" of checking mandatory kit requirements, acclimatisation, etc., before the start of the event proper the next day. Unbelievably, there had been flash floods in the area! Our coach was held up at river crossings and it took us 10 hours to get to the camp area before being told it was under water and we would have to stay in a hotel that night. The next morning it was confirmed that Day 1 of the event was cancelled and there was a real possibility of the whole event not going ahead. Some of the competitors were very unhappy about being "short-changed" and were talking about running extra miles to make up for what they were going to lose. I considered their viewpoint over a cold Moroccan beer followed by a sleep in a comfortable bed!

The weather began improving and the organisers did a fabulous job in completely changing the course to avoid the worst-hit areas, so it was announced that the event would begin with Day 2, the "dunes day", 33km of rolling sand dunes, without a bucket and spade in sight.

I very quickly discovered that the time taken to complete this event was going to have very little comparison with normal road-running because of the temperature, terrain, carrying a 10+kg rucksack and the cumulative effect of our days in the desert. Apart from the guys near the front, most of us were there to get round in one piece and to enjoy as much of the event as possible. After a day playing in the sand we returned to our camp. Open-sided tents were provided, but there are no toilet facilities apart from a hole in the ground, so we all started to get quite "grubby" pretty quickly. I was happy to complete the day relatively unscathed and was almost looking forward to the next day (clearly an early sign of heat exhaustion!). After a day in the heat of the desert it was surprising how cold it got at night and most of us wore every item of clothing we had inside our sleeping bags and still felt cold.



Continued ...

Day 3 consisted of 39km of mostly rocky terrain. This managed to make a mess of a lot of people's feet, including mine. By the end of the day there were a lot of tired runners (I say runners, but for most of us it was a mixture of run/walk/jog/survive, depending on the terrain). I was certainly reminded that I didn't have anything like enough training miles in my legs and realised that the next day/night, the "long day" was going to be tough. This was made worse by an announcement at the end of the day that the organisers realised that we wouldn't want to have taken part in the easy year of the MdS, so planned the longest and toughest day in MdS history (thank you very much, I thought!). Instead of the usual 80km, we were to do 91km [that's 2¹/₆ marathons!!] across sand dunes, mountains and whatever else they could throw at us so we could say we did the "special" year.

After another "wonderful" night sleeping on the desert floor, the big day, the real challenge of Day 4/5 began. My right foot felt like it had a 6 inch nail poking through the large blister under it, which isn't exactly the best way of starting an ultra-marathon. The cut-off times are quite generous, so it's really a case of keeping going and putting one foot in front of the other. I'd decided to walk a good deal of the route, which gave me a chance to enjoy the spectacular scenery and enjoy the company of my fellow competitors. After a break for a proper meal and a nap, the night section felt like a completely different experience, climbing enormous sand dunes and on all fours on some steep mountain passes (they'd never get a risk assessment passed in this country!). With my vertigo, it was probably better that I couldn't see to the bottom. By dawn we were nearly home and the sunrise brought a new optimism. I got back into camp and felt surprisingly good, but ready for a good rest. To add to the surreal experience of the event, the organisers shipped out a full symphony orchestra from Paris to play us classical music for the evening! Having broken the back of the event, we were almost looking forward to "only" running a full marathon the next day. I pitied some of the guys at the back of the field who were still coming in during the evening and had to get back out the next day. At least I'd had most of the day to recover.

And so to marathon day – Day 6. You wouldn't normally prepare for a marathon by doing over 100 miles in the days leading up to it and with painful legs and feet but hey ho! Having taken the long day easily, once I got myself warmed up, I actually ran most of the course. They still threw in the odd cliff and other bits of "interest" to keep our day "honest" and to ensure I ran a personal worst for the distance, but I finished relatively strongly both physically and mentally. Our reward for completing the event was to be a good old-fashioned hug from Patrick, a medal and tee-shirt, and a proper meal with a beer for our last night in the desert. The conversation focussed mainly on our war-wounds and the satisfaction of finishing. Although we "only" did 130 miles, I didn't hear any further talk of it being a soft year!



The Marathon des Sables had lived up to its reputation. There was a great feeling of comradeship, which I think is one of the reasons I like these challenges. One of the great things about running is that everyone from the winner to the last finisher is doing the same course and has largely the same experience, which you don't get in many sports.

The following day we returned to Ouarzazate for a final night in a hotel to clean up and sort ourselves out before the return trip home. It wasn't until we got cleaned up that we realised how bad the smell of our kit, and presumably us, had been! As you'd expect, the French managed to introduce some bureaucracy and plenty of queuing to bring us back to the real world, but that's all forgotten now. In the days after my return, if you'd asked me whether I'd do it again I'd have said that I'd enjoyed most of the experience but that once was enough. Now that my feet are starting to look relatively normal again and I've gotten back into my running, I'd say that I would definitely go back (but get myself fitter next time!). Does that mean I've finally lost my sanity, doctor?!

Mike Baldock

The Bewl 15

On Sunday the 5th July I represented the Datchet Dashers at the Bewl 15, a 14.2 mile run on the Sussex and Kent border. It was a thoroughly enjoyable run and I felt well prepared and fit for the event. It was a hot day, but the scenery was beautiful and I'd thoroughly recommend it to anyone willing to make the trip down to Kent.

The race started down a little country lane bottle necked with 668 runners, mainly from the Sussex area. We set off around the lake, firstly on sandy terrain, then dirt tracks, copious ridiculously long and steep hills, on road, and then back through the starting lane at 14 miles. The course takes you around Bewl water lake and the scenery is very, very pretty. The race was very well organised with 4 water points, jelly baby stations and a guy with a hose at about 10 miles who thoroughly drenched me and the woman running next to me.

As I ran towards the end I could hear the brass band playing to lead us in, making me smile in relief that I had managed it and knowing that Tom would be there at the end cheering me on, camera in hand to take yet another hideous photo of me running.

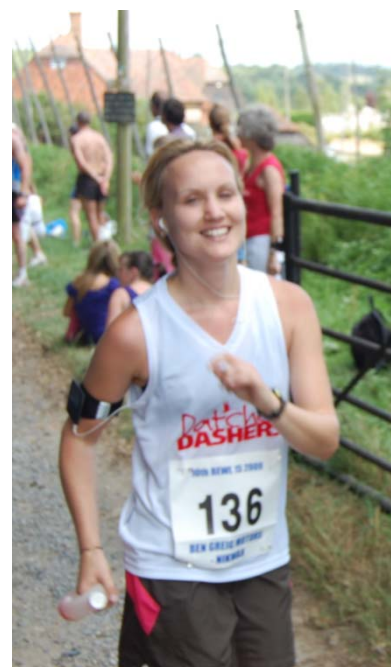
I completed the run in 2:25:55, 394th out of 668, which I was happy with considering the hills and heat. I was most happy about the fact I never stopped running, and the extensive hill training had paid off as I plodded past some of the people that had eagerly overtaken me at the start and had started walking.

Two years ago I completed a marathon in Essex... another hilly experience, which although I had been putting the distance and training into, was so tough it took me 4 months to even put on my trainers again afterwards. I only really started to enjoy it again when I joined the Dashers and started to regain my running confidence.

Therefore I just want to say a big thank you to all the people that have given me encouragement at the club, helping me to revive my passion for the sport and pick up my pace over the past months. I now put my trainers on with a smile, well most of the time anyway... ☺

Thanks Dashers!

Nikki Phillips



DIRECT FROM DASHERS

Maidenhead Easter 10 - Unsung Dashers

Amongst all the celebrations of Maidenhead Easter 10, which was a great race on what looked at first glance to be a terrible morning, I saw a number of great performances which were by people who do not normally shout about their great results. I wanted to give them airtime in a way which is not balanced or fair, in fact most of these people do not get PB's very often, and they have very challenging targets to hit as they've been running well for a long time.

I'm in a privileged position of finishing most races fairly close to the front, so can come back and support others and see how they look in the final metres of the race. Let me assure you that everyone looks the best part of Dreadful with agony stretched across their faces as fellow Dashers try to beat them, but within seconds, the joy returns to their faces when they cross the line.

The first to get the Plaudits is Colin Adams who ran a great race to get a PB. Colin has strong PB's, so beating them is a massive challenge, and when I saw him with 500m to go, I have to confess that I did not know whether to cheer or call for an ambulance, but despite the red face, bleeding nipples and working very hard, Colin did a great PB and deserves recognition for his energy, effort and commitment to the club.

Second in the firing line is Tom Durance. Our men's captain goes quietly about his running and it seems that marathon training is really suiting him. Sorry Tom, I just did not have you as a sub 7 min per mile runner, but you smashed through this barrier with ease and looked really good. Perhaps you will join the faster group on a Tuesday fartlek now? I hope so given your performance.

And Ross, the most consistent improver so far this year. Imagine having a 10 mile PB of 65 minutes and taking 2 minutes off it. An incredible run and Ross does not shout his PB's around, so do pat him on the back when you see him in the clubhouse (Don't pat him on the head, he'll see that as patronizing!) Perhaps it's his regular training on a Saturday morning or perhaps the fact that he's not had a football injury in 3 months (touch wood), but to run at 1:23 half marathon pace is brilliant and watch out for him in the 5k series.

Lots of other good runs at Maidenhead, and I've missed out lots of good performances as these have been widely recognized. It's great to see people coming down the finishing stretch, looking totally knackered and then the elation at finishing in a great personal time. Well done to all who ran and see you at one or two of the next championship races

Simon Black



Colin



Tom



Ross

Clothing that Panda's to your needs

While on honeymoon last year I decided to make the most of the excellent exchange rate (Ah yes, those were the days). Anyway, I found myself in possibly the best sports shop I'd ever encountered: Sports Basement in San Francisco. It had everything (Well apart from Cricket Bats, but that's bye the bye). It was while I was here I saw an interesting sign:

"Bamboo running tops" by New Balance. I was rather intrigued, so I started reading the info. It turns out (here comes the science) that bamboo charcoal particles are blended with polyester to form a fibre. Then these mixed fibres are drawn into yarn which is made into clothing.

Great you say, but I'm guessing you're not sold on the idea yet. Well, the garments have excellent antibacterial properties, are wicking, durable and provide excellent thermal regulation. And for the touchy feely people among you (I won't name names), they're extremely soft.

So is there a downside? Yes, the exchange rate is rubbish now and I only bought one. It's the best running top I've ever worn in my long 5 year career.

Thankfully Bamboo tops are now available in the UK. I noticed an advert for Running Shoes London stocking the brand Crew Room bamboo shirt. You can also get socks, shorts, all sorts of things.

So next time you're looking for kit, give bamboo a try.

Jon Elliott



DATCHET DASHERS ~ DIARY 2009

JUL			
Wed 29 th	Woodland 5 mile and a bit!	Race	Club Championship Race More like 6 off-road miles
AUG			
Sun 23 rd	Burnham Half Marathon	Race	Club Championship Race Will this be Steve Coleshill's 100th Half Marathon?
SEP			
Thu 3 rd	Jim Banks Handicap	Social Race	A very popular 5km race from the clubhouse. It's always great to see less active members help & support. With free Fish & Chips in the bar afterwards.
Sun 13 th	Wooburn Park 10k	Race	Club Championship Race A new event for the Dashers Championship
Sun 27 th	Windsor Half Marathon	Race	Not a Club Championship , but always well attended and well supported by Dashers
OCT			
Sun 11 th	Virginia Water Paddle	Race	Last Club Championship Race Informally run by the Dashers, starting near the Totem Pole
Nov			
Sun 8 th	Datchet Dashers Cross Country	Please Help	Our XC is the first in the series, on Remembrance Sunday
DEC			
	<i>More Cross Country Races</i>		