

Local news

'I thought it's easy to give money. I'm going to get off my backside and do something.'

By **Lucy Stephens**

HE has been through months of gruelling cancer treatment - now this brave athlete is determined to run his way back to fitness.

Martin Smith, 35, of Heworth in York, was dealt a devastating blow last year when an innocent-looking lump on his neck turned out to be cancer.

But after an operation and months of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, he was determined to get fit and raise money for Britain's biggest cancer charity at the same time.

Next month he is taking part in the Great North Run to raise money for Cancer Research UK - joined by his fiance, two sisters and brother-in-law.

"I honestly didn't feel ill or anything," said Martin - who manages his family's Heworth Court Hotel part time and also runs his own hotel software business. "It was a little pea-sized lump in the middle of my neck - almost like a spot, nothing to worry about. You wouldn't think there was anything wrong with you," he said.

After being diagnosed with cancer, Martin underwent a punishing regime of chemotherapy and radiotherapy in Leeds, leaving him extremely weak at the end of it.

"It was quite a shock. It was not something that was expected," he said. "I was positive with it all - I just got on with it."

But since April he has been determined to get fit again, putting in training for the Great North Run which is on October 1.

He said: "I felt there were toxins in my body from all this treatment. I could have sat back and said it was bad luck or I could look at what my lifestyle was and change it - that's all I've really been concentrating on. Cancer Research UK, as I see it, is an organisation that's trying to cure cancer. They want to eradicate it - I'm also supporting that."

Martin's sister, Linda, is joining him on the Great North Run, together with her husband, Garry, sister Wendy, and Martin's fiance, Julie.

"I'm doing it to support Martin. We all love Martin and want him to get better, it makes you realise how lucky you are," said Linda. "I thought it's easy to give money, I'm going to get off my backside and do something. It's a big commitment to do this."

Linda and her husband have so far raised £200 towards their target of £1,000 for the Great North Run. To support them, you can log on to www.justgiving.com/linda_garrymoss, or visit their fundraising page on www.justgiving.com/heworth



Linda Smith, who is tackling the Great North Run, with her brother, Martin, who has recently undergone treatment for head and neck cancer