



Great to see so many Abbeys at our Christmas Party on Friday! It was a fantastic evening and thanks again to Flick and Craig for organising. I have posted lots of pics of the night on our Facebook Group page, including all of our award winners. Congratulations to you all, particularly to Graeme Littlewood who you voted to be our 2019 Runner of the Year. A truly worthy winner!

As I mentioned on the night, it's great to look back and celebrate some of the amazing achievements this club has done over the last year (and as a reminder: we have organised the Eccup 10, Golden Acre Relay, YVAA West Park, PECO XC Middleton Park; socials: Poland trip, 5k handicap, Xmas Lights Run, Hash Run, Clumber Park, Camping Weekend, Club La Santa; we launched the C25K Beginners course; we entered teams into several relays - LCW, Washburn, Danefield, Calderdale Way, Leeds Uni XC, PECO XC; and of course our usual Runner of the Month, Abbey Cafe, monthly target parkruns, Grand Prix, XC League, etc, etc). Phew!

To me, Christmas is also about thinking ahead to the next year, and setting new running goals and challenges - whether that be a PB at a certain distance, completing the Abbey Grand Prix, running your first fell race or marathon or ultra, or simply more dedication to regular Tuesday and Thursday training. We've all had rubbish years when our training has gone to pot, we've lost our mojo or running confidence, or suffered a string of injuries. Doesn't matter. You start again by starting again. Check out the latest Abbey Diary - all the races for the next few months are listed right there with links. Enter some races. Set yourself simple, measurable and challenging targets. Share them on Facebook and tell the world what you're going to do in 2020.

We have seen time and time again that Abbey Runners performs miracles; it changes people's lives. Abbeys achieving things that they would never have once dreamed possible. So re-load over the break, enjoy your running and we look forward to another excellent year!

Merry Christmas and an Abbey New Year!

Jim



Your Committee/other positions:

Jim Whittaker, President  
Graeme Littlewood, Secretary  
Simon Jones, Treasurer  
Helen Roden, Juniors  
John Ward, Membership  
Tony Bastin, Website  
Alex Kilcoyne, Ladies Captain  
Ross Armstrong, Mens Captain  
Flick Jackson, Social  
Ordinary Members: Gill Nesbitt,  
Martin Jones (Grand Prix), Adam  
Ellis, Dave Jackson, Jasmine Salih  
Mark Hetherington (Head Coach)

[www.abbeyrunners.co.uk](http://www.abbeyrunners.co.uk)



All hail

Abbey spotlight on....

Lisa Persico



Each month, we pick on an unsuspecting Abbey to reveal their running aspirations, personal targets and darkest running secrets! Look out! Next month it could be you!!

1. **When did you join Abbey Runners?** July 2015.
2. **Why did you join us?** I did a Jane Tomlinson 10k run after my dad was diagnosed with prostate cancer, just so I could call him at the end and chat to him about it to take his mind off the cancer. He was a keen cyclist and used to cycle over 15,000 miles a year. I signed up for the whole series after that phone call as he was so excited I'd done it as I didn't run - I was a Zumba lady! I didn't fancy running on my own so decided to join the club so I could train with other runners and hopefully get a bit quicker. I still call him about my parkruns and races.
3. **What is your favourite running distance race?** 10k.
4. **What is your greatest running achievement?** Getting fit enough to run pushing Henry at parkrun. I'd watched Peter run with Henry for so long whilst I ran beside them, slowly returning to fitness. Was so happy that first time I got to run with him...and I'm still loving buggy running!
5. **What is your greatest running disaster?** Thinking dates were a good running fuel...I didn't realise they had other affects too LOL!
6. **Which is your favourite race in the running calendar?** So difficult to choose...but for me it has to be the Chevin Chase.
7. **Which is your most memorable Abbey event (club trip, party, etc)?** The Christmas party of 2015 where I won Newcomer of the Year. I was so surprised.
8. **What are your running goals for 2020?** To run 1,000 miles in 2020. Currently at 701 miles this year. Planning to run Henry to and from numerous local toddler groups I've found in order to achieve extra mileage...I'm sure our Henry will be very pleased with Mummy's new running goal.

Thanks for choosing me  
Lisa

Action shot(s) of the Month



PECO XC Race 2 - 15th Dec



Simon Jones and Alice Rogers powering to the finish at Middleton Park, PECO XC Race 2. First Abbeys back. In fact, Alice was 1st lady back!! Lawks!



...and plastic sheets?  
Jasmine informing Flick that either she has enough cutlery for the Xmas Party...or is about to go on a deranged rampage around Adel.

## Remembering Rolf



It was with immense sadness in December that we learned that former Abbey, Rolf Neugebauer passed away. Rolf was such a lovely person and will be missed by us all. He was a familiar face at Woodhouse Moor parkrun, being a regular volunteer most Saturdays. Although Rolf left Abbey a few years ago, he remained close to the club and helped us every year in preparing for the Golden Acre Relay and helping out at the Eccup 10 (as well as cheering us round many a race like the recent Abbey Dash).

Fantastic to see so many Abbeys at the 'Run for Rolf' parkrun that was held in his memory on Saturday, 14th December. See above pic taken just after the run with parkrun legend Sam Dooley.

## RoM for Nov - John Ackroyd!



Congratulations to John for being awarded our Runner of the Month for November. He was nominated for "a continuous improvement throughout the year, regular ringer of the PB bell, and in November, a best parkrun time of 24 mins. Not bad for a 50+ guy who just graduated from C25K".

## Xmas Lights Run!



A massive Abbey turnout at our Christmas Lights Run, despite the horrendous rain! Thanks once again to Duncan for organising, as well as his chocolate marshals!



## 2019 Grand Prix Final Results!

### Men Open

1. Simon Jones
2. Cal Clark
3. Duncan Clark

### Women Open

1. Faye Mullen
2. Andrea Ibanez
3. Alison Smith

### Men Age Graded

1. Duncan Clark
2. John Ward
3. Simon Jones

### Women Age Graded

1. Alison Smith
2. Andrea Ibanez
3. Liz Willis





# Abbey Xmas Party!!



What a night! Congrats to all our award winners for 2019:

**Best newcomer:** John Ackroyd  
**Most competitive female:** Andrea Ibanez  
**Most competitive male:** Cal Clark  
**Outstanding contribution:** Simon Jones  
**Most improved runner:** Faye Mullen

And our **Runner of the Year...**

**Graeme Littlewood!!**



Congratulations also to Angie Ellis, who you voted best 'Race Face' photo for 2019. This is particularly impressive when you consider the strength of the submissions this year (see above).

Duncan also received an award for running the Tadcaster 10 in the baggiest trousers you've ever seen in your life; Graeme won Superhero Abbey of the Year for saving the universe from Thanos plus rescuing a dog in a river; and finally Jim and Liz won Mr & Mrs Grand Prix Crack Addicts!! Well done, everyone!



The winning photo. What a gem!



## The 6<sup>th</sup> Vale of York Half Marathon (15<sup>th</sup> September 2019) and the Hull Marathon (22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2019)

Why a half can be so much better than a whole!! by Jon Laye

Two events on two consecutive weekends, and two very different experiences!

Several members of Abbey Runners will have a slightly vested interest in me reviewing the Vale of York Half Marathon due to their professional association with the event, but I absolutely promise you that I have not been coerced in any way to tell you just how good it is! It is just about my only yearly 'MUST DO' event (along with the Vale of York 10, oddly enough).

I have entered the Vale of York Half for a number of years and have always enjoyed it. The event seems to have just the right balance of club runners who want to get a personal best (PB) and those who go because it is traditional (six years now!) and because it is a good get together. This year the course was centred from a different location, no longer the airfield alas, but a pleasant enough farm property. Yes, there was a queue to get cars into the parking area (nearly a mile at one point), but my understanding is that the parking attendants were struggling with irresponsible parking on the behalf of entrants rather than a lack of organisation on their part. Perhaps next year we should all remember to set off 15 minutes earlier!

I noticed this year that the opening mile was a bit congested compared to the previous route. This time we set off along a narrow lane instead of the broad sweep of runway. Nevertheless, the slightly altered route remains a PB course, being both flat and very fast. For the last few years I have tried to make sure that I am the last runner to cross the starting line, and then I set off slowly and get 5-10 seconds faster per mile as I go. This normally results in a galloping charge at the end, but this short period of agony is outweighed by the opportunity to chat to numerous other runners in the earlier miles. If you have never done this, then just give it a go; it is a lovely way to spend an autumnal morning communing with fellow runners. All very life affirming, although unlikely to result in a PB! All the roads were closed to traffic and at every corner there were enthusiastic, cheerful race marshals and this year there were significantly more supporters than ever before. They were loud and appreciative!

So, there you have it: a fun, well organised, enjoyable Half Marathon. In direct contrast, I offer you the Hull Marathon!!! Double the distance, but my goodness not even half as good!

Several months ago, I offered to act as a personal pacemaker for a friend who was desperate to get a PB in an autumn marathon. I agreed, but then had to hide my disappointment when she chose Hull as the marathon to target (not least because she has done it twice before and has reported how much she hated it). So instead of Amsterdam, Venice or Berlin, I ended up driving across to Hull on Sunday morning picking up Tracey (aka the 'Haphazard Runner') on route and heading for East Park. This year the marathon route has been changed from its normal loop to an alternative point-to-point, starting at the Humber Bridge and then descending via Hessle, into the city and around its docks before a final flourish out to the eastern side finishing in a suburban park. This year, as per previous, there were several relay events being hosted at the same time.

Having booked bus tickets, Tracey and I planned to park at the finish and then along with several hundred other runners get the bus out to the start. Despite arriving over an hour and a half before the race start, we soon discovered that the car park was already full. I am sure the locals must have been a little miffed as hundreds of cars were soon parked up all around their quiet suburban streets before 8:00am on a Sunday morning. We successfully caught a free event bus to the Humber Bridge and the race start only to be confronted by a queue for the Portaloos. And what a queue!!!! I have calculated that taking into account all the marathon runners and all the (first leg) relay runners there was in excess of 900 people ready at the start of the race. And how many Portaloos were available? Answer: 5! Yes, just 5! Tracey queued and queued and then having performed her ablutions we had to run to the start line! We were just in time. Many runners were not, including several official pacemakers who ended up pushing their way through the crowds of runners or sprinting from the back of the pack to catch up!! Unforgivable really!!

Having said all that, running across and then back over the Humber Bridge was fun and the weather was mild and breezy, with the sun just beginning to shine. 20 miles later things felt very different. The weather was really very hot and humid and many runners were suffering. I am afraid to say this included the Haphazard Runner who had passed the halfway point at exactly the time she wanted, but not long afterwards the wheels fell off and she really started to struggle. I dragged her round and she managed an admirable PB (by 15 seconds) having battled with heat exhaustion, vomiting and hitting the wall!

Hull is not a beautiful city. And so, creating a marathon route which keeps the runners entertained (!) is always going to be tricky. But here are my observations: we spent a lot of time running around the docks or through industrial estates: not nice. The promised musical entertainment was few and far between: most of the bands were packing up to go home when we passed them. The water stations were undermanned and in the latter stages ran out of water almost entirely: hopeless. The section around the city centre was tortuous and complicated with the route diving down snickets and through alleyways and with constant kerbs to be stepped over and cobbles to be avoided: an accident waiting to happen especially when runners get tired. A 2 mile stretch consisted of a cycle track with runners going out and back seemingly in the middle of nowhere: this felt hopeless. The final section at East Park was really like taking the piss frankly: we entered the park and were within a hundred yards of the finish but had to complete a mind-numbing 2 mile long circumference before finally returning back to the start of the loop and the eventual finish line. Personally, I am not bothered by T shirts and goody bags, but there was so much consternation at the fact that the 10K runners got the same T shirt as the marathon runners (at least the goody bags didn't have a bottle of bleach in them like last year).

It all sounds a bit awful doesn't it really? And in all honesty, I don't think I can recommend it except for one overriding feature: the people! The volunteer marshals and the general public who turned up in their hundreds were utterly amazing!! They can be truly proud of themselves. They were lining the streets and giving out water and hosing down the runners and generally shouting and being supportive! The organisation and route may have been pretty lacklustre but the people of Hull shone that day!

To help the Haphazard Runner achieve her PB I had a running vest made for the occasion. On the back was printed the following, "Getting a Marathon PB is tough, you have to go through Hull and back". Like many runners on Sunday, I don't think she found it funny.

Vale of York Half Marathon Full Results... <https://racebest.com/results/73r8z>  
Hull Marathon... <https://www.sportstimingsolutions.co.uk/rd.php?id=348>



## Race Reports!!

The Wensleydale Wedge (probably the only cheese shaped run in the UK) is a 23 mile wedged-shaped hill route that takes in moors, waterfalls, rivers, a lake and a castle. Its about 2,700 feet of ascent and you have to get a card stamped at each of the check points. It's put on by the Long Distance Walkers Association and they provide food stops and drinks (so long as you bring your own mug) along the way. It's for runners and walkers and the cut off is 9 hours.

Driving in the dark along flooded roads on the way to the race I was a little apprehensive. I always have some doubts before a long hill run and bad weather makes it worse. It's easy to run out of energy, slow down and get cold. You need to carry extra clothes and snacks and you need to get the route right. I'd spent the night before packing then repacking as much kit as possible into the smallest rucksack I own. Map, compass, hat and not forgetting the foil survival bag you hope you'll never have to use. Also my secret fuelling weapon; dried sugared pineapple from Asda.

Askrigg Temperance Hall was buzzing with other participants when I arrive and it's reassuring to know 300 other people think it's a good idea to do this. Some even look relaxed about it!

At 8.00am we start in the rain. The hills we're about to run up to are hidden in low cloud. I'd reccied the route a few months earlier so I knew what was coming. Up past Semer Water, which looks like one of the Cumbrian lakes dropped into The Dales. The paths turn very muddy, some of them washed away by the recent heavy rains, exposing roots and rocks. Watch your ankles. I'm glad I wore my mud claws. Splash through the streams up to the shins. You begin to notice the water in the muddy fields feels warmer than the streams, almost pleasant.

Then the climb up Crag Dale to the desolate Stake Allotments to reach the high point of 1,732 feet. It's misty and I tap my coat pocket to check I've got my compass, just in case. My hoods up but the rain's easing and I feel pretty good as I descend to Bishopdale out of the mist. I'm catching some other runners, which is good, because it means I've not set off too quickly.

One of the things I don't like about long runs is refuelling. I have no appetite when I run and I'm already sick of Sugared Pineapple. I grab a piece of obligatory cheese from one of the check points. The Marshals are friendly and eager to feed you. At one of the refreshment tables they've got a bowl of Salsa! It's a major talking point amongst the runners.

Over The River Ure and a great view of Aysgarth Falls in flood. Up ahead at mile 18 and 20 I know there's still two climbs to go. The first climb is up to Castle Bolton. It's not too bad, especially when I stop pretending to run and slow to a walk. Walking is an acceptable part of these events. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

After the last climb at mile 20 my legs begin to go. I'm running again, just about. Two more swollen streams to stumble through. My knee hurts, my calf hurts and I wouldn't eat any more pineapple if you paid me. I catch another two runners, overtake them, then they catch and overtake me. This carries on over the last two miles, which are thankfully all down hill.

I finish at back at Askrigg Temperance Hall in 4 hours and 17 minutes. I was hoping to get under 4 hours, but I was content just to finish in one piece. I heard from other runners that times were slow this year due to the flooded conditions, and like all the other bedraggled and steaming participants, I was happy to agree that this was surely the case.



### The Wensleydale Wedge - 17th Nov Gareth Cavill



12	Derek Oliver		
13	Mike Allison		
14	Mathew Driscoll	207	4.01
15	Jamie Baker	52	4.03
16	Tony Taylor	298	4.06
17	Cathy Harrison	128	4.16
18	Gareth Cavill	154	4.17
19	Paul Scott	242	4.17
20	Julian Davis	235	4.17
21	Ray Raper	188	4.21
22	Mark Judkowski	226	4.22
23	Christopher Binns	119	4.22
		229	4.23
		47	4.23



Inspiring race reports, boys!

Email your race reports to the Newsletter Editorial Department at [abbeyweekly@outlook.com](mailto:abbeyweekly@outlook.com)

Plus if you have any other ideas, articles or contributions you would like to submit for the newsletter, then please do send them on.

Less writing for us!



See you next month!