

THE BATH PLUG



Bath Halfers ready to go full throttle

The weekend before last saw the Bath Half return to its traditional March slot in the running calendar, attracting 93 TBACers. Tom and Paul both provide short write-ups of perhaps our most popular hometown event. Eoin's report of the Green Man Ultra on that day in March when we awoke to snow is enough to put anyone off doing a winter ultra.

Unless of course you're Guy Landon who finally took his long overdue overall victory at The Imber Ultra at the start of March. Read on for the gory details.

Simon Brace.

The Plug Editor - email me [here](#).

PLEASE ADD MY EMAIL TO YOUR CONTACTS SO I DON'T END UP IN YOUR JUNK



Bath Half

17th March

By [Tom Hutchison](#)

Ray Brigden directed the first Bath Half in 1981, the same year as the first London Marathon. It was then run by various Club members including our own Pat Rogers, until the race was sold to Andrew Taylor in 1999. Andrew has organised the race for 25 years, but this was his last as the race ownership now passes on to London Marathon Events Ltd. Pat Rogers [photo above] has run every year, and this year he finished 1st of 13 MV75s in a time of 1.58.

Overnight rain blew away west in dark clouds just in time to leave Bath damp but bright and gently breezy for the 42nd running of this race. The race village turf was soddened and looked set to muddy up when I arrived for the white start. The baggage check-in was quick and painless. Toilets for male and female in separate enclosures! First time I have seen that, but it seemed a good idea. It was a little crowded getting into the start pen but I was there on time and off out and down the hill. The speedy first km only marred by the anticipation of ascending for the finish.

Running anti clockwise, the road to Newbridge was clear with plenty of room for supporters. The organisers had tightened up the marshalling lane system as the course spiralled in two laps leading to Queens Square and the big trick: the snake head has to cross the tail to finish with the dreaded climb back up past the Royal Crescent into Victoria Park. No worries here: The Donalds were in charge. However, the placement of a pedestrian road crossing exactly there, with its oscillating red and white tape must have made life quite hard. It certainly muddled my tired brain. Can I suggest a scaffolding overpass next year.

It was great to see so many TBAC taking part, and I really enjoyed myself. Thank you, Andrew Taylor for 25 years and some tough times particularly during the pandemic. If you want to get running again the new TBAC membership has just opened and I am sure we can do you a good for age membership deal.



...and by Paul King

A star performance from Anna Domville who finished 2nd Senior Women narrowly behind Becky Briggs in a time of 74:52. Photo above.

There were a number of absentees from the TBAC Senior Men however newcomer Harry Palmer had an excellent run finishing 23rd in a time of 68:49 closely followed by Alex Carter (recovering from a recent knee injury) in 69:55, Lester James (70:50) and Elliott Avis (70:52). The 4 formed the Senior Men's team that finished 2nd overall to Dulwich Runners.

In the other team categories however TBAC were victorious in taking 1st place for the Senior Women (Anna Domville, 74.52; Amber Gascoigne, 79:17; Annabelle Wallace, 85:59) and also 1st place for the Women Masters (Amber Gascoigne 79:17; Jenny Carter, 89:59; Victoria Randall, 1:33:15).

Not to be out done the Men's Masters also took 1st place (Andy Fooks, 73:00; Simon Brace, 77:03; Guy Landon, 78:42; Richard James, 78:52).

In the individual age category groups, there were great results from Annabelle Wallace 1st U20 F (85:59) and Phoebe Aspinall 2nd U20 F (90:42). Amber Gascoigne 2nd WF40 (79:17) and Jo Thompson 2nd WF65 (1:38:56). And on the male side Mark Mackintosh was 3rd MV60 (88:12) [photo below], Tom Hutchison 2nd MV70 (1:40:36) and finally the ever-present Pat Rogers 1st MV75 (1:56:53) [photo below].

A special mention should go to TBAC's Lisa Bennett who unofficially broke the world record for the fastest HM for a female witch in a time of 1:39:54. Lisa is awaiting verification from Guinness World Records. Photo of Lisa with TBAC colleagues below.







The Winter Green Man Ultra

2nd March

By Eoin Cremen

After two days of solid rain, we woke at 445 to a blanket of snow in Bath. Had to laugh because crying wouldn't have done any good. A nervous drive to Ashton Court School and then the usual pre-race mix excitement and apprehension. The positive energy from the race support staff and other runners was infectious though.

Being my first ultra-distance race and given the conditions I was surprised by how quick the front group set off. I tucked in with my friend in a second bunch and got to work. Within a few minutes we had encountered shin high mud and freezing water. Welcome to UK ultra-running in winter. No amount of kit can protect you from the inevitable in these conditions. The 45 mile / 72+ km route circumnavigates the Bristol city limits on a forestry trail primarily, which we had to self-navigate. Most of us finished with 75km and only a few detours. Total elevation gain came in at over 1200m, with the steepest climb at about 10k in, Dundry Hill. I gave that a decent go and came away one place shy of the KOM on the day.

The story of the day, however, was just how hard the conditions were to run in. There was not an easy minute for the whole day. It was either heavy mud, hill climbing, descending, or attempting to pick up the pace on the hard road while laden down with mud and bog water.

The group I was in got through the 42k marathon mark in 4:15, which I thought was good going given the day. Though by that stage the wheels had come off. At 40k we had to wade waist deep through an icy river that had burst its banks. My core temp plummeted, and I began to really struggle. Check point 3 was at 45k and the couple kilometres to get

there became a shuffle. At this point I realised that I had undoubtedly not respected the demand of this race enough and under tapered!

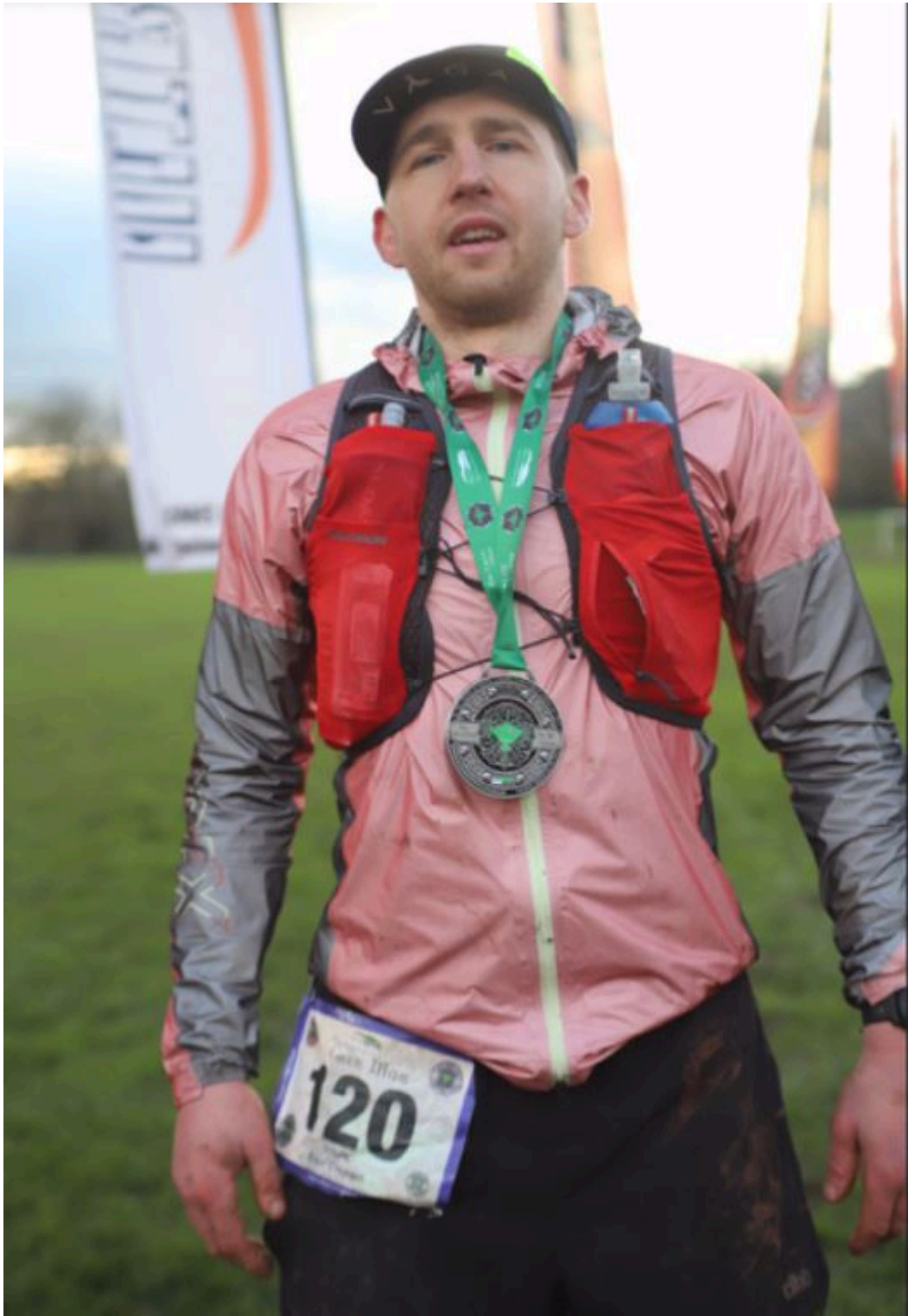
I took some time to eat, drain my socks, and heat up. Telling myself the 20k to the last check point was a distance I do all the time. It was the toughest 20k I've ever done, I think. Body began slowly shutting down again. I was struggling to take on water and gels as they were so cold. The option to stop wasn't there though. What could I do? In a field in the middle of nowhere, somewhere on the edge of Bristol. No option but to put one foot in front of the other and dig in.

By the fourth and final check point I was shuffling and barely lifting the legs. 10km to finish though, after this long why not get through that last stretch. It felt like it went on forever. I found a friend however and the spirits rose. We walk-ran where needed and squeezed everything out until I was reduced to barely more than a walk. Finally, we got to see the finish line. 8h44mins later. I ended up in 23rd place out of 152 finishers. Far off where I wanted to be but considering the experience I was just incredibly relieved to have gotten through it.

I was realistic that my personal goal was primarily to complete it and have fun in my first ultra. Though I certainly wanted to be at the competitive edge of the race as well. I didn't quite achieve that but at the same time I have no idea how I managed to even get to the finish. It was so much suffering for so long. The talk afterwards was that it was the hardest edition of the race to date. According to the DNF rate on the day it seems to be true. There is something to learn from experiences like that. Though I don't feel any need to repeat it. Not that it killed off the enjoyment of long trail runs. I just don't want to see mud for a little while.

For the next one, it's non-negotiable for it to be somewhere warm, sunny, and dry!







In other racing news

March

By the Editor and Paul King

Sunday 3rd March, Guy Landon (photo above) finally claimed overall victory at **The Imber Ultra**, an annual 33+ mile trail run organised by Avon Valley Runners and the Rotary Club of Westbury. After several second places over the years, Guy paced the perfect race to pass second and third placed runners during the final third, in the end taking the win by over 20mins. In the process, Guy recorded a new MV50 course record of 4hrs23, to add to his still-standing MV40 record of 3hrs59.

Saturday 9th March, a number of TBAC endurance athletes were at the **UK CAU Inter Counties XC Champs at Woolerton Park**. Freya Spruit representing Avon & Somerset had a good run finishing 41st in the Senior Women's race and Annabelle Wallace finished 42nd in the U20 Women's race. The performance of the day came from Harry Maxwell (photo below) in the U17 Men coming 2nd overall. His brother Josh was 75th and along with Tom Dewey (80th) and Henry Haslam (130th) completed the Wiltshire Team that finished a creditable 14th overall.

And while everyone else swarmed to the Bath Half, Victoria Ratcliffe (photo below) was 6th F and 1st v45 (3:01) at **The Grizzly** trail race in Seaton. Great training for London!





The Bath Plug is the weekly magazine of Team Bath AC. Copy and comment for publication, questions and corrections to the editor at plugeditor@teambathac.org. Copy to the editor by Wednesday 16.00 for inclusion. Available online at teambathac.org.

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