

**Abingdon Marathon  
Sunday 16 October 2011  
Report by Kay Farrow of Beverley AC**



**Stephen Male and James Pearson**

James Pearson of Beverley Athletic Club is celebrating after finishing second in last Sunday's Abingdon Marathon and beating his personal best at this distance by an incredible five minutes.

He was up against strong competition as the fast flat course which starts and finishes at Tilsley Park Stadium attracts quality club runners all keen to attempt a new personal best. Conditions were perfect for marathon running – cool and still – and more than eighty runners finished in less than three hours. However Pearson and the winner, Stephen Male of Oxford City AC, simply outclassed the rest of the field.

A leading group of five or six broke away soon after the start but despite the steady 5.45 pace the others fell off quite rapidly leaving Pearson and Male to share the front running. They ran the whole race together giving each other the incentive to maintain their pace. When they entered the stadium after 26 miles they were neck and neck and much to the delight of the crowds of spectators in the stands they proceeded to try to outspurt each other down the home strait. Male had the faster finish and crossed the line only three seconds ahead of Pearson. The third placed runner, Paul Fernandez of local club Abingdon AC, arrived more than five minutes later.



Pearson was delighted with second place as he was so happy with his finishing time of 2:31:49. He paid tribute to Male admitting that “if he had not been running I would probably have won easily but would not have pushed myself to achieve my target time.” He continued “It’s the first time I have really trained properly for a marathon and I was really pleased with my run.”

Pearson will now take a break from running for a couple of weeks to give his body the chance to recover. He will then join his clubmates for the cross-country race at Drewton Woods in November before starting his training for his next marathon event – the London Marathon in 2012 – when his aim is to break 2 hours 28 minutes.

**James Pearson proudly shows off his trophy**

There were 777 finishers and the race was won by Stephen Male of Oxford City AC in 2:31:46. The first lady to finish was Sophie Carter of Woodstock Harriers in 2:53:55.