

Pro-Chancellor

Liz Yelling is an Olympic athlete who won the bronze medal for the marathon at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. With her husband Martin, who is a former Steeplechaser; they run a sports performance company and support a number of initiatives in the Dorset area. Liz is a Grants Board member of the Women's Sports Trust and Patron/Ambassador for Julia's House Hospice.

Liz was keen on sport at an early age and discovered her passion for long distance running at middle school. In her first cross country race, she left her contemporaries in her wake, and won by a large distance. Liz later found a running club that introduced her to a number of likeminded young female athletes, that despite being fierce rivals on the track, produced a network of support and friendship that lasts to this day.

After studying physical education and art at De-Montfort University, Liz spent some time as a part-time secondary school teacher. In 2001, Liz secured a small amount of lottery funding, which enabled her to focus full time on training and competing.

Liz puts her world class achievements down to her own 'steely determination'. Whilst there were many times that she could have missed a training session, or quit the sport completely, she pushed herself to go out to train on those miserable, cold and wet winter months when most of us choose to stay indoors. Liz knew that her competitors would be out training in all conditions, which drove her to keep going and striving to be the best.

You will often find Liz running round Poole Park as a keen supporter of the ever growing 'parkrun' movement. She is planning to run the Ultra-Trail Du Mont-Blanc, tamely billed as just 170 kilometres and 10,000 meters of positive altitude change over about 24 to 48 hours. Liz is also contemplating entering the world of interior design and will be practicing on the family home first.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Liz Yelling, and I ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Arts, *honoris causa*.