



Garden City Runners: News Release from a Distance

Issue One: 22 March 2020

In these strange and worrying times, we're here to keep you in touch with your fellow club members, bringing you news and views of solo runs and challenges, plus tips and info to keep you fit and motivated. Please send any content for future releases to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk

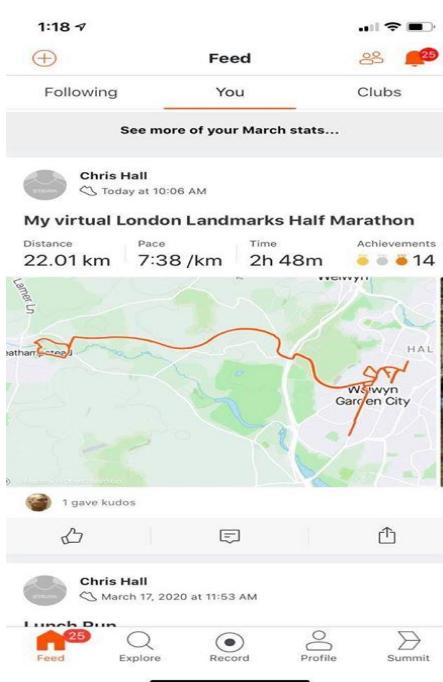


Frank Family 5K Buggy Run

Sunday was a big day for the Frank Family – Hannah, Mat and Florence. With Florence reaching her half birthday it was time to test out the running buggy in a 5k route around the woods in Moneyhole Park. Hannah (pictured left, with Florence) writes: "massive respect for speedy buggy runners, it's certainly not as easy as they make it look!"

London Landmarks Virtual Half

Christine Hall (below, right) completed this popular half, running an alternative out-and-back route from Welwyn Garden City to Wheathampstead (below, left). Christine writes: "I ran the London Landmarks Virtual Half Marathon today. It was really tough but I was determined to complete it. They will still send me a medal, which is nice."



The Gilbert 10K and 10 miles

Jerry Gilbert writes with details of two classic routes: "When I joined a food queue at Tesco, at 5.50am this morning (for a 6.00am opening) I found myself already 400 yards from the front of a fast-lengthening snake of trolley-wielding shoppers, physiognomies etched either with the determination of being on an F1 starting grid, or with just plain and simple *weltschmerz*. A Tesco operative with a booming voice then appeared, and started barking orders: "The store will open in 5 minutes ... there will be no fighting or you will be ejected ... no more than two items per person."

Was this a glimpse into a totalitarian state, or a return to the Russian food queues (circa the Cold War)?

On the other hand, perhaps this is the new form of binary living. After the ignominy of scrummaging for toilet rolls I sought the polar opposite ... an antidote in search of the One to counteract that big fat Zero.

I discovered it (as is so often the case) in a 10K run.

ELLENBROOK TO TYTTENHANGER / HIGHFIELD PARK

This is the first of two routes. What makes this one of my go-to runs is (a) that it is a classic 10K route, and (b) it can be run on hard track or virtually cross-country off the Alban Way through Smallford, Tyttenhanger (via Hixberry Lane) and out to Nightingale Lane off the big A414/M25 spur roundabout at Colney. When I do this in trails, crossing the fields by the former Barley Mow pub (now long gone) and out to Highfield Hall my speed times out at around 10.00m/m.

However, itching to don a pair of road shoes again this morning after a saturated winter, I took the easy option of running 2.5 miles down the A414, turning into Highfield Lane, running a



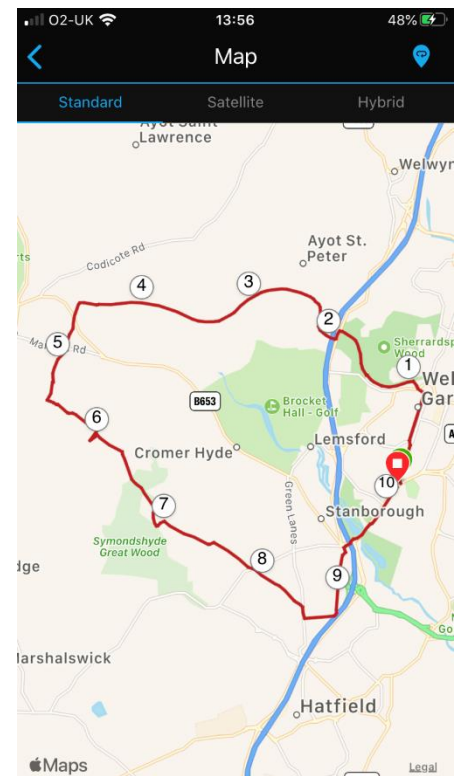
mile up to the footpath along the edge of Highfield Park, past the allotments and onto the Hixberry Lane footpaths (which GCRs will know from the MWL, hosted there by St. Albans Striders. Pick up the Alban Way at Hill End and complete the final 2.19 miles, passing through Smallford, bordered by Butterwick Heath (which itself offers a splendid trail across to Smallford Farm), and later Deadman's Crossing, the floral tribute that marks the grisly spot where a hanging took place on the Alban Way a few weeks ago, and then past the wonderfully restored Nast Hyde Halt platform at Ellenbrook Lane. For me this is a 9:30m/m run but being Over 70 (and evidently branded 'High Risk' of contracting or passing COVID-19), I made certain to "socially distance" myself from the many others on the Alban Way this morning (of which there were many). But in high summer, when the tracks are hard, the XC route as far as Nightingale Lane offers far greater rewards (and extends

to an 8.5m run). I'd be happy to show anyone the route (who is of similar speed and is contagion risk averse).

THE SUNFLOWER TRAIL

Again, this will be familiar to some GCRs. A classic 10 miler, it starts and finishes at Gosling Sports Park. Shrouded in mythology, it was always known as the Sunflower route though no-one really knows why. Someone once said they saw a sunflower growing incongruously in the middle of a barren field. But I reckon that must have been down to those weird mushrooms in the previous field.

In brief, this circular route takes runners up Parkway > Campus West > Sherrardswood up to Red Lion > Ayot Green > Ayot Greenway to the very end. Up Sheepcote Lane, over Marford Road, through Devils Dyke, (where we all pray in supplication to Julius Caesar and the Welwyn Hatfield Planning Authority who at last appear to have rejected the asinine proposal to build something misleadingly called "Symondshyde Village" between there, Coleman Green and Symondshyde Great Wood). The trail goes cross country from Dyke Lane across Beech Hyde Farm, and up to the field on a clearly marked footpath to the back of the John Bunyan pub. Cross Coleman Green Lane and prepare for a 20-metre section of deep quagmire



(which seems permanently saturated, year round). Emerge into a clearing, continue straight on a clearly marked footpath for quarter of a mile until it intersects a footpath at 90°. Turn left and you can return to Gosling via Cromer Hyde, the Crooked Chimney, Brocket Park and Lemsford (a route that will be familiar to GCR's). Turn right and it brings you to Symondshyde Farm (also home to the fabulous 3 Brewers microbrewery). A hard track then takes runners across Coopers Green Lane, to Great Braitch Lane at the top of the Business Park and into Green Lanes. Turn right and then left and at the next junction (roundabout), pick up the footpath which skirts around the A1 and ends up back at the Stanborough roundabout (at the end of the cul-de-sac). Turn right, under the A1M, pass Stanborough Lakes on the left and right) and return to Gosling. I rarely run this quicker than 10:15-10.30 m/m (but I reckon I could shave 15 secs of that were it not for the fear of being sucked, quicksand style, to an early death). The same offer applies."

Running is my therapy by **Becca Hayden**



Becca (above, centre right) with fellow GCRs

"With organised races on hold and social group sessions suspended, it's hard to stay motivated to run during these strange times.

With many aspects of daily life slowing down to a halt and everyone practising social distancing and self-isolation, it's not surprising we're finding life a struggle, and feeling distanced from each other in more ways than one.

Despite all the changes to our daily routines the unknown and the worry, there is still one thing that is always there, through the good and the bad ... running.

For me running is more than exercise, it provides me with a sense of release and escape.

When I run, all of my worries, anxieties and the pressures of daily life go away.

Nothing matters for that moment in time but the steps I make, the breaths I take and the feeling of being free.

Running has helped me a lot to overcome my anxieties over the last few years. I am not ashamed to say that I continue to struggle with my mental health, and have done so over the past few years. Therapy has helped a bit, but to be able to get out and be at one with my mind and body in nature has helped me big time. This is my therapy! Time to think, time to myself, to be able to push my body to keep going and to push my mind when it wants to give up.

Running for a lot of us is something we crave, if we can't get out we will go crazy! We associate it with friendships and strengths with like-minded people. It's something we can't live without. Running makes me feel like myself again and I am sure a lot of you will agree. During these difficult times it is so important to try and schedule in your routine runs, if you choose to run with others remember to keep your distance and if you can't run due to injury or are having a rest day, walk! It's so important to get some fresh air and escape from the isolation of your home, even for just five minutes.

We will miss the mid race high fives for a while, the hugs at the end of a session and the group selfies but we will be back! We will not give up and if running has taught us anything it's to push through the difficult times and come out the other end feeling stronger.

The lovely GCR committee are coming up with some great ways to keep motivated and in contact with each other, and I can't wait to see what they have planned.

One way I will be keeping motivated is to do some litter pick runs, just to change things up a bit over the coming weeks, and doing something positive for the environment makes me feel good.

While social runs are on hold we runners are a social bunch and while we may be socially distancing physically we have all got one thing in common emotionally.

So stay positive, try and get outside to run or walk, and at least we know running is something contagious that we won't want to eliminate!"

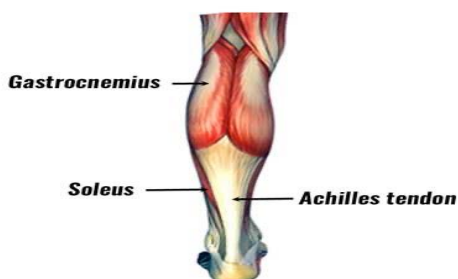
Injury Clinic with Dr Terry



This week, our in-house expert Terry Fowler looks at a common, and painful, condition affecting many runners: calf strain.

"You cannot "run off" a calf strain. Any attempt to do this will result in further damage and a prolonged period on the sidelines.

Your calf muscle is actually two muscles, the gastrocnemius muscle and the soleus muscle. These muscles can be injured if they get overstretched and this is a very common injury sustained by runners. The gastrocnemius is the more common of the muscles to be injured.



Injury occurs when movement stresses the calf muscle, stretching it beyond its normal limits. This can happen suddenly (acute injury) or over time (overuse injury). Most calf injuries suffered by runners come in the second category, overuse.

For the first 72 hours after a sprain or strain, you should avoid the following:

Heat (such as hot baths, saunas, or heat packs)

Running (or any other exercise that could cause more damage)

Massage - do not massage in the first three days post-injury. This may damage newly-formed blood vessels and increase bleeding.

Driving (unless it's your left calf and you've an automatic gearbox.)

Severity of Muscle Strains.

Muscle strains are graded as mild, moderate and severe. The more severe the strain, the longer the time taken to recover.

First Degree (Mild). This injury is the most common and usually the most minor. This injury is a 'pulled muscle' with a structural disruption of less than five per cent. With a first-degree injury, you can expect to be back to sports within one to three weeks.

Second Degree (Moderate). This injury consists of a more significant, but still incomplete muscle tear. This a partial muscle tear and requires three to six weeks of rest and recovery before you can return to full activity.

Third Degree (Severe). This injury results in complete tearing of the muscle–tendon unit. A third-degree muscle strain can take many weeks or months to fully heal.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a calf strain vary significantly depending on how bad your injury is.

- A mild strain may feel more like an ache during or after exercise.
- With a more severe strain, you will feel a sudden sharp pain at the back of the lower leg at the time of injury.

Treatment

- Protect your muscle from further damage by taking a break from running
- Rest – in the early stage the best advice is completely rest from any activity - even walking maybe painful so any attempt to run would be pointless
- Cold therapy can be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every hour initially, reducing frequency as symptoms allow
- Compression – wear a compression bandage or calf support to support the muscle and reduce swelling
- Stretching - when pain allows, begin gentle stretching and strengthening exercises.
- Foam roller – in the later stages of rehabilitation, a foam roller may be used to help mobilise the muscle and fascia

Stretching

1. Stand near a wall with one foot in front of the other, front knee slightly bent
2. Keep your back knee straight, your heel on the ground, and lean toward the wall
3. Feel the stretch all along the calf of your back leg
4. Hold this stretch for 20-30 seconds. Don't stretch too hard, just till you feel a gentle stretch in the calf.



Foam Roller

Every runner should own a foam roller – it's an ideal piece of equipment to help release tension and tightness on most parts of the body, and for runners, ideal for the legs.

- 1) Begin in a seated position with the foam roller directly under the top of your calves and your hands just behind your hips.

2) Lift your hips off the ground and slowly pull body backwards so the roller glides up your calf. Move back and forth gently, stopping at any tight areas

For a deeper stretch put one leg on top of the other whilst rolling the calves.



Returning to Running

This must be a slow process, otherwise the calf is likely to get injured again, requiring a longer period out of recovery. I normally suggest to runners returning from a calf injury to use a grass football pitch and to **gently jog** the length and walk the widths, building up the number of laps slowly over a period of weeks. If at any time you feel the calf then stop immediately.

I've suffered from several calf injuries over the years and to help combat these injuries I now wear compression sleeves which seemed to have help considerably."

not-parkrun roundup

It was not-parkrun Super Saturday as GCRs shook the mud off their trainers to take part in self-navigated 5k routes of their own devising. Birthday girl Helen Paine ran with husband Michael in the Welwyn Village not-parkrun, with Helen finishing first lady and first in her new age category W45-49. Jane Molloy gave herself a first timer's briefing before testing out the Burnham Green- Coltsfoot-Datchworth-Bulls Green not-parkrun. Alex Faulkner (pictured right at the start and finish) ran with her dad, reporting "a prompt 9am start for my first not-parkrun. Today there were two GCR runners (myself and my dad) who battled through the wind, keeping to social distancing standards. Post run coffee to follow in



the kitchen!" Meanwhile, Brad Smith ran the Stanborough Lakes not-parkrun, which follows an exact and handy 5k route from Brad's front door, round both lakes, finishing at Harry's Bench. Brad ran in an unofficial time of 26:11. Also running the not-Stanborough were Nigel Cavill, although he took a slightly different route starting at his front door;

Caroline and Rob Hughes (pictured, above), and Adam Wadley and family. Sarah Lynn completed the Panshanger not-parkrun as her beginners' graduation parkrun and ran all the way round.



Melanie King ran a not-parkrun from Digswell to the edge of Tewinbury farm and back. Melanie (pictured, left) reports that it was “not a great time but I did stop for a selfie.” Lou Smith (right) did a bright and early not-parkrun sandwich miles around Burnham Green, Datchworth and Digswell, and was back in time for



the usual post-run coffee with the Panshanger parkrun team - all on the Zoom cloud meetings app.

Running safely

We love to see club members being active in inventive ways in these difficult times. We urge everyone to exercise safely – not just for their own benefit, but especially that of more vulnerable members of our community and our NHS. As a club we have an opportunity to set the best example in how we exercise. Ways you can help:

- Ideally, exercise on your own or with someone you live with, and in groups of no more than two. Running in larger groups makes it much more difficult to adhere to social distancing, especially if you encounter other larger groups
- While out running, keep a safe distance of at least two metres from others, stopping if necessary to allow others more room to go by
- If possible, plan routes that take you away from town centres and out into the countryside
- Try to run outside popular times when larger family groups are likely to be out and about
- If you cough or sneeze while running, it’s extra important to sneeze into your elbow
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

Happy and safe running everyone!

London Marathon Coach

ÅSA MOBERG GROUT is very nobly organising the GCR London Marathon coach for a second year running (running!). Åsa writes: “For any of you who are running or supporting at the VMLM on the new date of 4th October: I’ve organised a coach to the start at Blackheath and the cost is £12 per person. As long as we have space this is also open to non-club runners so if you know anyone else who’d like a seat please let me know.

The coach will leave from the carpark at Premier Inn, Stanborough Road, WGC, AL8 6DQ at 06.30 on Sunday 4th October.

To reserve a seat please contact me via messenger or email at asamgrout@yahoo.co.uk and either BACS the money to account number 48529376, sort code 07 01 16, Mrs A M Grout, Nationwide Building Society.

Club Kit

A reminder that new club kit is available from Kit-Meister Richard Somerset. All items cost £20, you can pay by cash or bank transfer, either FB message or text Richard on 07790 591868 or email rich.somerset@ntlworld.com to arrange pick-up. Kit available includes:

- Men's vests, from XS to 2XL
- Men's t-shirts from XS to 3XL
- Men's long sleeve tops S to XL (please contact Richard if you want XS or 2XL and he will place an order)
- Women's vest from XS to 2XL
- Women's t-shirts from XS to 2XL
- Women's long sleeve tops, from XS to XL

Avery League 2020

The Avery League is currently suspended.

GCR Strava Group

If you'd like to join the GCR Strava community, [click here](#) for details of the group. It's a great way to keep in touch with your fellow club members during this time of isolation.

Join Garden City Runners

Do you live in or near Welwyn Garden City? Like running? Garden City Runners is your local running club. It has nearly 300 members and encourages participation by all. The club has a varied training programme to suit everyone, from working up to 5 kilometres right through to full marathons. Try a few sessions before joining. Membership is only £20 per year and is available on the GCR website via the new Membermojo platform (note that it is no longer possible to join via the old application form). Simply log into <https://membermojo.co.uk/gcr> and follow the instructions. If you want to know more about the Garden City Runners please contact Helen Paine (Secretary) or Sue Fletcher (Membership) at gcr@gardencityrunners.org.uk, visit our website <https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/> or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/

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