



Garden City Runners: News Release from a Distance

Issue Two: 29 March 2020

Letter from (one of) the editor(s)

All, welcome to week two of our temporary new normal! We hope you're enjoying the new format – the brainchild and hard work of fellow editors Rebecca and Jane. Thank you to those that shared feedback or messages of gratitude – I'm glad you're still finding the newsletter, despite a slight lack of news, useful and entertaining.

In this week's round up, I'm delighted to introduce our new weekly challenges – including the run leader challenge; 10K training day; not-your-average-parkrun; and the time-honoured Sunday long run day. Thanks to our club leadership for putting these together, hopefully they will be an inspiration to us all.

As a slightly remote GCR member – ironically my new lack of commute means this is probably the first time in well over a year I could make the mid-week training sessions – it's been fantastic to see the GCR community come together online over the past few weeks; the Facebook page is busier than ever, and to see people getting out and finding solace in running. Now more than ever I'm grateful for our shared sport and for the mindfulness that running provides.

Personally, I've taken Boris' daily exercise advice rather to heart and have got out daily for a lunchtime run, a step up from my usual 2-3 runs a week, helped in part by the glorious weather we've enjoyed. With spring marathons postponed I've been able to get back to running for the sake of running, rather than worrying about my mileage – or lack of! Those 20 milers haven't been entirely to waste though; I've managed to put some of my training to good use, finally getting the whole way up Digswell Hill without stopping. It might be a few months yet before I start aiming for 26.2 miles again but it's time to set out training sights closer to home, and I'm pretty pleased to see that new segment PB sitting on my Strava account! Do share if you've tackled a nemesis segment or set yourself a new challenge during this strange time.

A new highlight of remote working for me is meeting everyone's new "co-workers", and it's been equally great to see new "running buddies" – be they two-legged family members or four-legged pets! Keep sharing your anecdotes and photos (particularly dog-related!) for future newsletters.

At a time when gyms and other group sports are closed, I think we're also seeing an influx of people taking up running - let's carry on giving any fellow runner a friendly nod or wave, at a safe social distance of course. I'm sure we will see some fresh GCR faces once this has blown over.

Thank you to those club members who are fulfilling key worker roles at the moment – including supermarket workers, teachers, and, most importantly, the NHS. Kudos to you all!! As a slight word of caution, if I may, I think we should all be aware that now is not the time to push beyond our limits – our NHS and other already over-stretched emergency services don't need the added burden of our running-related injuries and ailments. Of course, please continue to get out running if you can, but please do so safely and in line with all government and NHS guidance. And finally, hopefully it goes without saying, but any member who may be finding things particularly challenging at the moment, please do turn to the GCR community if we can help in any way – whether that's having someone to talk to or someone to run (perhaps even literally!) errands.

Forgive my ramblings, happy running! ☺ Rachael

Introducing the new GCR coronavirus weekly challenges!

While our usual group running routines are out because of social distancing, we are inviting club members to take on specific challenges on certain days of the week. The overall aim is to help us all to be as fit and strong – if not more so – when we come out of the other side.

Tuesday	Run Leaders Challenge As members are missing out on all the fun of our regular training sessions, each week a different Run Leader will come up with an idea for club members' solo sessions that day. It's a day to work on your own personal goals, the reason why you come to the club each Tuesday. It's also a day when the Run Leader's challenge will aim to bring us closer together virtually in our running community. Please keep an eye on the GCR Facebook page for the weekly challenge.
Thursday	10k Training Challenge We were all set to initiate two different 10k training regimes – and we're not going to let a pesky virus stop us! 10k is the average distance for both Midweek league and Sunday Cross-Country League, where we aim to shine for both performance and inclusivity. If you've just completed your Beginners programme, or maybe you've never run a full 10k, then there is the Bridge to 10k programme, thanks to Helen Harrison. If you're keen to improve your current 10k performance, then follow the excellent plan devised by Tom Wackett. The aim is to dazzle with our league performances next available opportunity. For more info - https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/covid19-2/
Saturday	Not –your-average-parkrun Challenge Run 5k. Wherever you want. Simple. Let's continue to get 60+ members out doing their best 5k on Saturday mornings, come rain or shine. Wouldn't it be amazing if GCR achieved a host of course PBs on the first official day of parkrun's return?
Sunday	Long Run Challenge Sunday is traditionally the day when endurance runners gambol far and wide, often going further than anticipated as a result of joyfully getting lost. This is your opportunity to get an impressive number of miles under your belt. Maybe you have had a marathon or half-marathon cancelled – do one anyway! Without the encouragement of the crowds or companion runners, what are the things that make you want to keep going?

There'll be weekly reminders on our Facebook page, and we want to see lots of submissions to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk of photos, reports of personal achievements and stories for future newsletters.

Tuesday challenge: Selfies galore!

Inspirational run leader, selfie queen, and recent recipient of one of the club member of year awards, Gill Sol set this week's inaugural run leader challenge – without even realising it – when she asked GCRs to share their mid-run selfies on Tuesday.

A selection of GCR's finest selfies below:



Virtual London Landmarks Half

It should have been the London Landmarks half today, so STEVE EDWARDS completed his own local landmarks half around the sites of Hatfield and St Albans. Steve finished in 01:52:37.

Some of the landmark highlights on Steve's route:



Early bird 5K

TERRY TRISTAM was first GCR out the door on Sunday morning, completed a pre-dawn 5K at 5am! Terry completed his 5K non-stop in 35 minutes.

Thursday 10K

Taking inspiration from the Facebook post launching the Thursday 10K challenge, CATHY LAUGHLIN upped her 5K route to a 10K – not helped by mistaking a T junction site for a cul de sac mid-route. Cathy finished her 10K in 52:44, and reported “feeling much for it so THANK YOU GCR!”

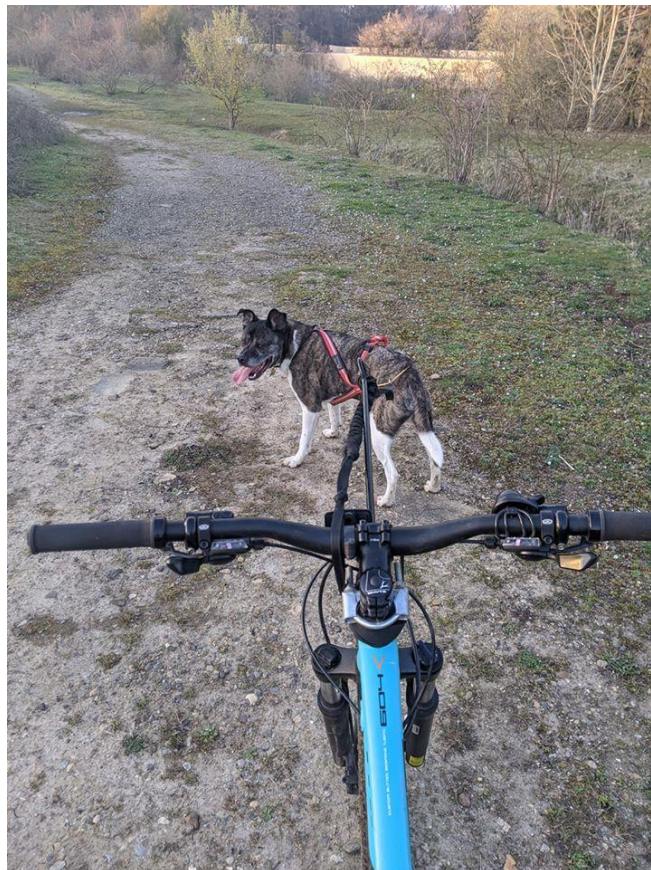


Although not strictly on a Thursday, JACKY O'LEARY took inspiration from the 10K training plans to get out for a run with a friend and fellow poodles last Saturday (before the stricter social distancing measures were introduced) in the woods near Knebworth. Jacky and husband Gary now live on the Pharoahs Island on the River Thames and have to get a boat across to the main land to run, but are still active GCR members!

HANNAH FRANK also reported running her first 10K in over a year since the birth of baby Florence, across the woods and fields near Tewin.

New running buddies

In the absence of group training sessions and restrictions on being able to meet up with family and friends, GCRs have been turning to new running buddies within their households – both two and four legged!



JEN DENHAM and DEBBIE MORRIS both introduced their four-pawed friends to the wonders of running. Jen reports it was her first time running with her mad spaniel, and with one or two trips in four miles it was a success!

GEMMA SLOAN, WILLOW GIBSON and NICK PORTALSKI got out and about with younger members of the family.

Not-parkrun: Saturday morning 5Ks

GCRs continue to let the cancelation of the traditional Saturday morning parkrun bring them down! Please share your not-parkrun prowess on the GCR Facebook page for inclusion in the newsletter.

A round-up of the alternative parkrun routes and their conquerors:

Ayots not-parkrun

REBECCA BARDEN celebrated her fifth parkrun anniversary in style, finishing 1st lady in a time of 27:11 on a route that starts and finishes at the entrance to the Ayot Greenway, taking runners on a multi-terrain route across road, field and trail.

Birch Green not-parkrun

SARAH LYNN completed this novel loop, along with her two daughters.

Frank family not-parkrun

Baby Florence pipped the post on this not-parkrun loop around Moneyhole Park, but having forgotten her timing barcode mum HANNAH FRANK took home the title of 1st lady – remember runners, no barcode no time!

Unofficial Ellenbrook parkrun-route-but-not-parkrun

STEVE EDWARDS completed a 5K loop that looks suspiciously like the parkrun route at Ellenbrook Fields, along with wife and brother-in-law (same household). Steve finished 1st place in an impressive time of 21:49.

Bessemer Road not-parkrun

GULNAZ GEZER-CLARKE finished 1st lady at this Hertford/ Bessemer Road event, joining some four-legged friends for an unusual route.

Kimpton not-parkrun

Part of the Kimpton working-and-running-from-home festival, PAUL GUY finished 1st on this out-and-back route.

Tewin Water not-parkrun

Father and son duo NICK and FINN PORTALSKI completed this novel loop, finishing 1st and 2nd in 33:14.

Roenyoe Way not-parkrun

SOFIE MARCHANT completed this inaugural loop, finishing 1st lady in 31:37.

Parkway not-parkrun

KAREN ATKINSON ran a not-parkrun loop along Parkway, taking time out to hide behind a hedge and ensure proper social distancing along the way!

King George V Fields not-parkrun

This unofficial not-parkrun loop starts and finished on the playing fields, heading out along Howlands. WILLOW GIBSON was first finisher in a time of 36:41.

Route of the week

This week's route recommendation is the Welwyn Garden City Centenary Loop – 20.20km of linked footpaths around the town's perimeter.

The route has proved popular with GCRs, especially in recent weeks, and is a great one to tackle either walking or running, in looped instalments or as a 20.20km long run.

With no official starting or finishing point, a sensible place to start may be Stanborough Lakes or the Wagoner's Inn at Ayot Green, both popular GCR running points with ample parking right by the route. The route is very clearly signposted (look out for the orange arrows) in both directions – personally I'd run anticlockwise to avoid a long very slightly uphill slog from Stanborough to the Sherardspark Woods.

Watch out for the flood diversion currently in place at the A1M underpass at the top of Stanborough Lake, north lake; if you can't cross under the bridge then follow the diversion route up to Lemsford Lane and rejoin the route by the Lemsford Mill.



Podcasts

New to solo running and missing your running buddy chatter? Lena Green, a great listener to podcasts, has the following recommendations:

The below can be found on the BBC Sounds app which I have found fine to use but that might just be my relative inexperience with streaming platforms as many say it's clumsy.

For the midlife woman

Fortunately with Jane Garvey (Woman's Hour) and Fi Glover (erstwhile Greater London Radio breakfast presenter – these days does some stuff for 5 Live and the World Service I think). Weekly released on a Friday – though not sure under current circumstances. Two women nattering about the important and the trivial (your age and gender might dictate which discussions are which) for about 40 minutes – perfect for a pre-work run. Some laugh out loud bits (in my view) when I've been glad to be alone in the woods. Available on BBC Sounds only.

Older and Wider – Jenny Éclair and Judith Holder (writer and producer and old friend of Jenny's). Jenny Éclair very much on form here as a plain speaking just 60 year old with Judith as her foil. If you like her stand up (liked – realise the first time I saw her live was about 35 years ago) you will enjoy this. Not for the faint hearted or easily embarrassed (one recent episode had a reasonably lengthy segment on which bits of sex Jenny misses least now she doesn't bother with it anymore). But then again you'll be running alone so no-one to witness your blushes – or guffaws. Also good if you are a crafter as it turns out she and Judith are. Thoroughly recommend the one where they make beaded Christmas baubles at a Denman Residential Crafting course. A good place to start. Available on Apple and other platforms.

Life Enhancing/Improving

Feel better, Live More -Dr Rangan Chatterjee - centred on the theme of living your best life and tips to do this on resilience, mental health and lifestyle changes, with an interview each week based on a different theme. Look for Episode 91 – “If this man can turn his life around so can you”. It is two hours and 43 minutes long so save it for a longer outing but I defy you to not be utterly compelled by this man's life story. If you listen in shorter run sections you will be desperate for your next run to hear the tale continued.

Don't tell me the Score - - Centred on the theme of manage your mind and face your fears. I think this one is linked to Sports Psychology (the clue is in the title) but I listened to an episode from March 2019 “Learning to manage your mind” because it was an interview with Prof Steve Peters on the Chimp Theory. Recommended.

True Stories – Documentaries

Intrigue -Tunnel 29. The true story of how a group of university students dug a tunnel from East to West Berlin to escape East Germany after the Wall went up. Be patient about the first episode which has a slight feel of a schools' broadcast in its simplistic tone which assumes almost no prior knowledge about The Wall, why and where. The story is a good one and builds genuine tension.

Short episodes.

End Of Days – The story of Waco and specifically the 30 Britons who got caught up in this cult with tragic results. Told through interviews with survivors and members of their families.

13 Minutes to the Moon

The story of the final descent of the Apollo 11 and Apollo 13 Missions. Just started this one. Concentration required.

Language Learning

News in Slow... - I have been listening to News in Slow German but many languages are covered. It is basically the week's news headlines stories read slowly for foreigners. Paid and free content. The free content includes a transcript with links to vocabulary.

Self-isolating? At home workouts

You could take inspiration from the man who ran a marathon in his garden yesterday – 873 laps in 4 hours 57 minutes (see news story [here](#))!

But if running in circles doesn't inspire you, there's a wealth of home workouts and tutorials available, particularly online, for anyone who may be self-isolating or unable to find the time to get out for a run at the moment.

A round-up of some favourites below:

Runners World home workouts

A selection of home-based exercises and workouts, including strength and conditioning, Pilates and core workouts, available to download from <https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/home-workouts/>

Joe Wicks daily PE class

Live on Youtube every weekday at 9am, an opportunity to work out with the whole family with the king of home exercising.

Yoga with Adrienne

A series of home yoga videos and tutorial on Youtube: from one-off "flows" to manage injury or back pain to 30-day courses. Adrienne has a welcoming style and some great intro to yoga content on her channel. Particularly recommend the 30 Day Revolution course for those wanting to pick up a new yoga habit.

Royal Parks half marathon live classes

The team behind the Royal Parks half marathon have started hosting bi-weekly live workouts on their Instagram. These vary from strength and conditioning workouts to yoga for runners. Check their Instagram page for more detail.

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.

Government advice is changing regularly. Please check before you run.

At the time of writing:

- Exercise on your own or with someone you live with;
- Remember only one outdoor exercise a day and that you should only travel if essential, avoid driving to your running route and instead plan a route from home;
- 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, and give a wide berth when overtaking;
- If possible, plan routes that take you away from town centres and out into the countryside, the fields and footpaths are nice and dry so take advantage;
- Generally, places are quite quiet due to social distancing but it is best to avoid busier areas – at the moment that seems to be the Waitrose car park queue and Sherardspark woods at lunch time;
- If you cough or sneeze while running, it's extra important to cough or sneeze into your elbow;
- Avoid touching or contacting other surfaces with your hands, like gates or stiles, use your sleeve or gloves to open gates if necessary;
- Wash your hands before you head out and as soon as you get home.

Route planning

Struggling to find a suitable route without your run leaders guidance? Check out the GCR Strava members group for inspiration from your fellow GCRs! Strava have also just realised a route planning feature for Summit members.

The following apps and websites also come recommended by club members:

- Footpath (app)/ MapAMeter (online): Editors recommendation! Footpaths and distances across the UK and Europe (I've successfully used it in Norway and Italy), with a handy "snap to path" feature for the less-diligent route planners amongst us;
- Map My Run: Also has others saved nearby routes for inspiration.
- Plot A Route: Same as above.

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.

GARDEN CITY RUNNERS - NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

In accordance with Club Rule No.7 (3), you are hereby notified that the Annual General Meeting of the Garden City Runners will be held on **Wednesday 22nd April 2020** at 7.30pm. Due to Covid-19, this year's AGM will be hosted virtually using Zoom, with a link being sent to members a week before the event.

AGENDA

1. To receive the Committee's Report.
2. To receive the Financial Statement.
3. Election of Officers.
4. Election of Committee Members.
5. Any Other Business.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Any member wishing to place business on the Agenda must give written details via email to the Secretary (helenpaine@hotmail.co.uk) not later than Sunday 12th April.

ELECTIONS (of Officers and Committee Members)

With a number of committee members standing down, the following posts require election:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- 1 x general committee member

Nominations for election should be sent to the Secretary via email not later than Sunday 12th April with the email containing the following information:

- Name of person nominated
- Position nominated for
- Name of proposer
- Name of seconder

Yours in sport,

Helen Paine
Secretary

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.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BY 1st APRIL ☺

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/