



Garden City Runners News Release

21 April 2025

GCRs in action at ATW Easter events

St. Albans 10K and Stevenage Spring Half

Being led astray by an AI-generated Google post informing that ATW's St. Albans 10K would be taking place on "April 18th (Easter Monday)"—and not bothering to check that the 18th was in fact Good Friday—your editor set off up the Alban Way on his bike, blissfully unaware that he would be riding into an oncoming tsunami of Good Friday race leaders shouting "Keep right mate". He decided instead to weigh anchor and become a spectator, as other cyclists precariously overtook, and for the next 20 minutes was sidelined on this narrow strip of racetrack as the seething mass hurtled/jogged/meandered past—some toggled in running kit, some as the Easter Bunny—accompanied by various pacers. All well-organised and good-natured, and he was at least able to cheer on a number of slightly bemused fellow GCRs, including **Sid Valentine, Peter Laphorne, Willow Gibson** and **Philippa Thorogood**, who waved good naturedly back. Apologies to GCRs overlooked.

ATW rightly promote this event on being the flattest course in the Cosmos (ideal for PBs) as it starts and finishes in Highfield Park.

Describing the race, **Willow Gibson** reports on what was a bright and sunny Good Friday run. "The friendly, well-organised race provided the perfect start to the Easter weekend, with great running conditions and plenty of smiles all round."

This was backed up by **Sid Valentine**, who added, "One of my favourite local races of the year is the St Albans Easter 10k, which runs along the Alban Way from Highfields before



Amber-Leigh Marvin and Thippi Rashleigh (above). Top: Peter Laphorne, Philippa Thorogood, Willow Gibson and Thippi Rashleigh



looping around Smallford. Both myself and Sarah (*pictured left*) completed the course in our projected times and enjoyed the race day vibes which made for a very good, Good Friday!"

Although official results weren't in at press time, the uncorroborated GCR results are as follows: **Martin Mitchell** 00:38:43; **JJ Foan** 00:39:15; **Amber-Leigh Marvin** 00:44:30; **James McGeehan** 00:50:40; **Andrew Pocock** 00:51:31; **Sid Valentine** 00:53:27; **Maggie Wright** 00:54:03; **Richard Brown** 00:56:03 (3rd in age category); **Thippawan Rashleigh** 01:07:02; **Peter**

Lapthorne 01:07:26; **Sharon Reynolds** 01:08:23; **Tracy Behr** 01:08:26; **Charlotte Jones** 01:10:17; **Sarah Valentine** 01:18:45; **Philippa Thorogood** 01:23:08; **Willow Gibson** 01:23:09.

Stevenage Half Marathon & 10k

Three days later the Stevenage Half Marathon and 10K set out from Ridlins Stadium along the tarmac routes and through Fairlands Valley Park.

Nicola Smith

reports, "The rain held off as a small group of GCR's spent Bank Holiday Monday at the Stevenage Spring 10k where lots of underpasses



awaited! A great atmosphere with lots of encouragement helped achieved a number of PB's. *Nicola is pictured left, ringing the Bell of Glory, with fellow GCRs.*

An official list of results was not available at press time.

P.A.U.L for Brain Recovery Charity 10k



Daniel Follon (*left*) ran Hull's annual P.A.U.L for Brain Charity 10k at the weekend. Having grown up in Hull, he says it was great to do this run, which takes place through a couple of small villages in the local area.

"I ran the 10k in 46:12, and finished 24th out of the 250 runners. Pretty decent conditions for a run, and a really good atmosphere with supportive marshals across the course," he reports.

Phoenix Running: The Unbreakable Potion Run & The Invincible Potion Run

After a week hiking in the Peak District, **Aiden** and **Nadine Dwyer** were back with Phoenix Running for two consecutive half-marathons at The Unbreakable Potion Run and The Invincible Potion Run on Easter Sunday and Monday.

These events were part of their annual Spring multi-day series where runners can tackle 12 in 12's, 10 in 10's and 5 in 5's over their chosen distances. Nadine writes, "Aiden and I were able to join for the final two days and the atmosphere was amazing. All Phoenix events are very social, as they are lapped events, and as it's mostly the same group of runners attending. But during a multi-day series, everyone steps up a gear: that includes Rik, the owner of Phoenix Running, who helped keep spirits up by turning up in different costumes each day and running a couple of laps, be it dressed up as Captain Jack Sparrow (see *photo right*) or a French maid, Snow White and so on.

"The encouragement from fellow runners is equally brilliant. Having completed my first 10 in 10 series of half-marathons with Phoenix last year, I can't recommend it highly enough—it's a great challenge and a fun experience. I can't wait to do another multi-day series and will get Aiden to join me."



The Dwyers, pictured with Jack Sparrow (and their medals)

GCR Walking Group

Moving the planned Easter walk from Sunday to Saturday resulted in a large turn-out of mostly GCRs, who largely followed the trail route of the Kimpton 10K (starting and finishing at the Bocket Arms in Ayot St. Lawrence). With a short bluebell detour thrown in, this resulted in a total distance of 6.5 miles. *The group are pictured on the bridge over the River Mimram at Codicote Bottom.*



parkrun Roundup

GCR saw an impressive 124 of its members take part in the Easter Saturday parkruns around the globe. However, there were three stand-out performances, worthy of special mention. Congratulations to men's club captain **James Huish**, who won the Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School parkrun in Horncastle, in a staggering time of 17:11. After an appalling, and seemingly endless series of injuries and illnesses which would have floored a lesser mortal, **Nikki Cowen** made it three PBs on the spin at Panshanger Park when she ran her first sub-24 (23:56). And at the other end of the spectrum, JM10 runner **Henry Bostock**, recorded yet another stunning PB of 21:14, the latest of a series of similar times.

Elsewhere there were a number of other impressive times set. **Dan Pudner** recorded 19:12 to finish 9th at Richmond. Just outside the 20-minute barrier was **Andy Morgan**, who ran an impressive 20:11 down in Cardiff. Club chairman **Sean Bowen** continues to maintain good form as his 21:11 in Southampton showed. There was the usual good showing of GCRs at Stevenage where **Chris Baylis** took the bragging rights, finishing 6th in 19:45. Another sub-20 run was recorded by **Matt Baker**, whose time of 19:30 earned him 7th spot at Sheringham. GCRs largely dominated our local Panshanger parkrun course, which saw a massive turnout of more than 40 runners among the 326 participants. Finishing in the top 10 were **Paul Guy** (18:57), **Graeme McSorley** (19:17) and **Chris Eland** (19:40). PBs were recorded by **Lee Chapman** (21:04), ever improving (JM10) youngster and **Karen Porter** (38:57). Also locally, a fantastic run by **Juliet Vine** at Jersey Farm saw her finish as leading lady in 19:54. **Jess Timmins** continued her current good form, running 21:03, 3rd female, at Belton House. At Pocket parkrun, **Thomas Buzzard** came through the finish funnel in 20:16. At Henlow Bridge Lakes, **John McDowall** finished in 19:47 while **Mattie Labiak** ran 20:15. **Bruce Judge** finished 2nd at Ashbourne Recreation Ground, in 19:13. **Jamie Rose** ran Ben's Yard in 19:13. Full results for GCRs participating in Saturday's parkruns can be found [here](#).

Club Championship (competing for the Westlake Trophy) - 2025

The Club Championship principally consists of races open to the public, although other races may be included as long as they are not hosted by Garden City Runners. The races are ideally chosen from the Avery calendar; however, Race Committee may express flexibility including prestigious events and those facilitating Hertfordshire County Championships. parkruns may be included and should be local. Runners' top 5 scores to count.

For 2025, the Championship races are:

Race #	Event	Date
1	Fred Hughes 10	19 th Jan
2	Watford Half Marathon	2 nd Feb
3	Panshanger Parkrun	8 th Mar
4	Hitchin 10k	4 th May
5	Fairlands Valley Spartans 3k Relays	end Jul
6	Standalone 10	start Oct
7	Stevenage Half Marathon	end Oct
8	ATW Hatfield 5 miler	end Nov

GCR Avery League 2025

The GCR Race Committee has produced the calendar of races for the Avery League Competition and the Club Championships. Details on all of the 2025 races are below, and these will also be published on the GCR website as soon as possible, and on the GCR Facebook group. Happy Racing!

Avery Event #	Date	Event	Venue	Cost Approx.	Notes	Status
1	19 th Jan	Fred Hughes 10	St Columba's College, St Albans	£22	enter at ATW Herts Seniors	completed
2	2 nd Feb	Watford Half Marathon	Cassiobury Park, Watford	£38	Herts Seniors enter at ATW	completed
3	16 th Feb	Watford XC, race 5 Sunday League	Cassiobury Park, Watford	free	Club will send out details by email	completed
4 V	8 th Mar	Panshanger Parkrun	Panshanger Park	free	see parkrun website	completed
5	6 th Apr	St Clare Hospice 10k	Hastingswood, Harlow	£16	https://stclarehospice.org.uk/event/st-clare-hospice-10k-2024/	completed
6	4 th May	Hitchin 10k	Hitchin town centre	£22	Herts Vets tbc enter at Racesonline	
7	Weds 21 st May	MWRRL #1	St Albans, venue tbc	free	Club will send out details by email	
8	Weds 4 th June	MWRRL #2	Epping Forest	free	Club will send out details by email	
9	Weds 18 th June	MWRRL #3	West Herts venue tbc	free	Club will send out details by email	
10 V	22 nd June	Welwyn 10k at Panshanger Park	Panshanger Park		enter at Racesonline	
11	Weds 2 nd July	MWRRL #4	North Herts venue tbc	free	Club will send out details by email	
12	6 th July	Ware 10s	TheChauncySchool, Park Rd, Ware		10k or 10 miler enter at Racesonline	
13 V	Weds 9 th Jul	MWRRL Mob Match, WGC tbc	Ridgway Academy, WGC	free	Club will send out details by email	
14	17 th July	Fairlands Valley Spartans 3k Relays	Fairlands Valley Park, Stevenage	free	Club will send out details by email	
15 V	17 th August	20.20k Centenary Run	Stanborough Park South Lake near railway bridge	free	Club will send out details by email	
16 V	10 th Sept	Race 3 of the Hatfield 5k Series	Affinity Water HQ, Hatfield		enter at Racesonline	
17	start Oct	Standalone 10k	Standalone Farm, Letchworth		Herts Seniors tbc enter at Racesonline	
18	mid Oct	XC, race 1 Sunday League		free	Club will send out details by email	
19	end Oct	Stevenage Half Marathon	Hampson Park, Stevenage		enter at Racesonline	
20	end Oct	XC, race 2 Sunday League		free	Club will send out details by email	
21	start Nov	XC, race 3 Sunday League		free	Club will send out details by email	
22	end Nov	ATW Hatfield 5 miler	Herts University, Hatfield		Herts Vets tbc enter at ATW	
23 V	start-mid Dec	Festive 5	Stanborough Common, WGC		enter at Racesonline	
24	mid Dec	XC, race 4 Sunday League		free	Club will send out details by email	
25	end Dec	Buntingford 10 miler	Freman College, Buntingford		Herts Vets tbc BMAF tbc	

Note: we anticipate there will be 3 XCs held in 2025 to the 2025/6 season but have shown 4 races to reflect 2024

V – Volunteers get an Avery Point

ATW – enter at Active Training World: https://www.atwevents.co.uk/calendars/sport-events?category_page=1&category_id=21

Racesonline: <https://www.racesonline.uk/>

Group Runs - Tuesdays 6:20pm for 6:30pm start, Dance Studio Ridgeway Academy

The group runs are planned to take approximately an hour, the following table gives an idea of the pace. To give variety, especially in the summer, distances will vary a little. Those attending by car are asked to **park in the school car park (Herns Lane)** and not the Sports Centre car park (Appletree Way).

Group/Distance	Pace (mins/km)	Pace (mins/mile)
5k social	A gentle-paced run that would suit those who are still new to running, like a slower pace, are returning from injury or a break from running	
7k	7:30 – 8	12 – 13
8k	7 – 7:30	11 – 12
9k	6:30 – 7	10 – 11
10k	5:45 – 6:15	9 – 10
11k	5 – 5:30	8 – 8:30

Hill Reps – Tuesdays Lunchtime and Evenings

Hill reps are enjoying an Easter break and will be back in May – watch this space.

Interval Sessions: Tuesdays 6:45pm start, various locations in Welwyn Garden City

Approximately 25 mins of high intensity intervals over distances from 400m to a mile, with rest periods, in various locations in WGC. Runners of all abilities are welcome, pace is dictated by the runners themselves, slower runners will simply do fewer repetitions. Members will be notified of the locations and session format on email and Facebook.

Group Runs – Thursdays 6:20pm for 6.30pm start, Campus West

Thursday group run meets at Campus West on the steps outside the library. The What3Words location for the start is for start location: <https://w3w.co/eager.bliss.stuff>. There are usually three groups as follows:

5k social	A gentle-paced run that would suit those who are still new to running, like a slower pace, are returning from injury or a break from running
7-8km	Route to take approximately an hour
9-10km	Route to take approximately an hour
Introduction to intervals	This is often time-based intervals rather than distance

Track Intervals – Thursdays 8:00pm Gosling Track

Meet at the track for 15 minutes of warm up activities followed by approximately 30 minutes of track intervals. Sessions comprise laps or multiple laps of the track followed by rest

periods. Runners of all abilities are welcome, runners will be formed into groups based on targeted pace.

A reminder to GCRs that there are now parking charges at Gosling Sports Park – this page has details of car parking charges:

<https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/welwyn/gosling-sports-park/gosling-car-parking>

Circuit Training - Homerswood School

For those interested, former GCR member Steve Livingstone runs a very good one-hour circuit training session every **Monday at 6:30pm at Homerswood School**, Kirklands, WGC, AL8 7RF.

The cost is £5 (free for first timers). Five minutes warm up, 40 mins circuits, 15 mins stretching (great for runners). Bring a towel and some water.

Club Kit

Club kit is available from the Club Kit Secretary Richard Somerset.

We have vests, t-shirts, long sleeve tops and jackets in club colours in all sizes. See club website for photos. Vests, t-shirts and long sleeved tops are £21 jackets are £42.

You can pay by cash or bank transfer. Please Facebook message or text Richard on 07790 591868 or email rich.somerset@ntlworld.com to arrange pick-up.

"Puffa" jackets are also available for £42, please contact Martha Hall on: ma-hall28@hotmail.com for availability and more details.

GCR Strava Group

If you'd like to join the GCR Strava community, follow this link:
<https://www.strava.com/clubs/garden-city-runners>

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 over 350 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 Sean Bowen (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/

Please send reports of races and milestones, with photos if available, before 7pm Sunday evening for (almost) guaranteed inclusion, to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk

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