



Garden City Runners News Release

24 December 2023

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

Pre-Christmas Drinks Social and GCR Marathon Place Draw

The pre-Christmas drinks social at Postino Lounge on Wednesday 20th December was very well attended, with plenty of Christmas jumpers, hats and sequins. Jane presented a cheque for £1500 to Isabel Hospice, from monies raised from Welwyn 10k and cake sales etc. The representative from Isabel Hospice gave a brief summary of the work done by the hospice charity, and encouraged GCR to take part in the 'Step Up for Isabel' Challenge to complete 100 miles in 4 weeks in January 2024 (see more info [here](#)).

A limited edition commemorative map of the Round Norfolk Relay, donated by the wife of the late Peter Westlake (former club chair) was auctioned in aid of the Digswell dementia-friendly community café. Peter Harvery, chief auctioneer, brought down the hammer on the winning bid of £32 from Lee Mansfield.

Two places for the London Marathon were up for grabs, and the winners were drawn from a hat. The club, by its affiliation to England Athletics, receives one place: any club member who had entered the ballot and received a rejection email **and** is a member of EA was eligible to enter the draw. A place is also offered to anyone who volunteered on the baggage lorry at this year's marathon event.

The winners of the draws were:

- EA place: **Lee Mansfield** (with Rob Jones as reserve)
- Volunteer place: **Michael Paine** (with Ann Hayden as reserve)

We wish them well in their training, and look forward to supporting them in the lead-up and on the day itself!

Club Championships 2023

Peter Harvey reports on an exciting end to Garden City Runners Club Championships with new winners announced!

Garden City Runners concluded their Club Championships with a thrilling decider for both the men and women at the ATW Hatfield 5 miler. The Championships comprise eight races throughout the year. In each race, the top 20 male and female Garden City Runners are awarded points. Each runner's best 5 results are totalled to give their overall score.

Men's Championship: Inaugural club champion Peter Harvey took an early lead and was the first Garden City Runner in two races. However, Chris Baylis slowly pegged him back to draw level. Baylis won the last race amassing three wins and more points to take the Championship. Jamie Rose improved throughout the year and took third place. The MV40 category ended with a tie in points between Simon Bostock who did well in the first half of the year, and Paul Guy whose races comprised the second half. Bostock took the win on the tiebreaker with a higher degree of placing. Russell Morris was promoted to MV50 winner due to Harvey being an MV50. Roger Adey scored well to take the MV60 title. Jim Davis scored points in two races to triumph in the MV70s. Dennis Draper's 18th GCR place at the Standalone 10k meant he scored and won the MV80s!

Ladies' Championship: Sophie Packman (FV40) had a strong start, leading the table with four solid scores after the first five races, with Helen Stafford (FV40) also scoring well. After race 7, inaugural ladies' club champion Rebecca Barden (FV50) was leading with 5 scoring races, closely followed by Packman (also with 5 scoring races), and Lucy Iles (FV40) with 4 scoring races. The ATW Hatfield 5 saw a twist to the tale, with Iles leapfrogging Barden (who was unknowingly being hampered by the onset of Covid) to claim a 2nd place race win, and in doing so taking 1st place in the Championships from Barden by 1 point. Clare Grover FV40 had a strong finish to the championships to overtake Stafford, and was promoted to age category win due to Iles and Packman being in the overall top 3. Maggie Wright FV50 was very consistent throughout the year, promoted to the age category win due to Barden being in the overall top 3. Veronica Shadbolt took the lead at the start of the year but with only three races did not trouble the top 3; however, she claimed the FV60 win. Commiserations to Anne Henson, who would have got the FV70 win but was a few months too young at the start of the year.

Men	Ladies
Overall 1st Chris Baylis (144) 2nd Peter Harvey (139) 3rd Jamie Rose (111)	Overall 1st Lucy Iles (131) 2nd Rebecca Barden (130) 3rd Sophie Packman (117)
Vets 1st MV40 Simon Bostock (96) 1st MV50 Russell Morris (82) 1st MV60 Roger Adey (41) 1st MV70 Jim Davis (4) 1st MV80 Dennis Draper (3)	Vets 1st FV40 Clare Grover (103) 1st FV50 Maggie Wright (79) 1st FV60 Veronica Shadbolt (74)

Avery League and Club Championships 2024

The GCR Race Committee is working on the 2024 calendar of events for both the Avery Competition and the Club Championship, and we'll publish them as soon as possible.

Before that, we'd like to give everyone a heads up for the first few races in 2024. The popular Fred Hughes 10, most likely hosting a Herts County Championship race, and the Watford Half Marathon, incorporating the Herts Vets County Championships, will be both an Avery and GCR Club Championship event, so you can enter these straight away here:

Fred Hughes 10: 22nd January 2024

<https://www.atwevents.co.uk/e/fred-hughes-10-mile-10377>

Watford Half Marathon: 4th February 2024

<https://www.atwevents.co.uk/e/atw-watford-half-marathon-8841>

The Sunday League Cross Country race at Royston on 18th February 2024 (the final race of the 2023/24 season) has now also been confirmed as an Avery event.

2023-4 Sunday League XC fixtures

The last of the 2023-2024 Sunday League cross-country fixtures will be Royston on 18th February. Details of past and future fixtures are on the runherts website:

<http://www.runherts.com/xc.htm> which has a link to previous years' results. The XC races also form part of GCR's Avery League.

The Sunday League is for all runners, irrespective of pace, experience or ability. League placings are determined by the first eight men and first five women in each club, but there are B/C/D teams as well. The races are an enjoyable way to spend a Sunday morning, with events always being a distance of five to six miles (usually 8km).

All five venues are challenged for parking spaces at the venue, and the popularity of the League means ever more cars trying to park. After the popularity of the MWL, we have arranged for a coach to take runners from WGC to each venue. Further details on how to book to be issued shortly.

Any queries about the wider series, should be directed to GCR captains: James Huish, Dan Pudner, Hannah Frank or alternatively Rebecca Barden.

Please also note the dates of other Cross-Country fixtures over the 2023-24 season:

- 8 Jan 2024 - Herts Senior Champs - Watford
- 27 Jan 2024 - Southern Main Champs - Beckenham
- 24 Feb 2024 - Nationals - Telford
- 26 Mar 2024 - Herts Vets – Watford

The 12 GCRs of Christmas

Nick Genever wishes us all Avery merry Christmas and Aylott of running in the New Year, and has gifted us this song:

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me
Twelve Darleys drumming,
Eleven Packmans piping,
Ten Laphornes a-leaping,
Nine Lillies dancing,
Eight Molloys a-milking,
Seven Stephens a-swimming,
Six Goosetrees a-laying,
Fiiiiiiiive Grover rings,
Four Cowen birds,
Three Frank hens,
Two Tedy doves,
And a junior parkrun near Peartree!

And finally... a gift from this week's editor...

The Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the City,
The footpaths were icy, the roads they were gritty,
Trail shoes were laced up by the front door with care,
In hopes that Garden City Runners soon they would wear;

The runners weren't nestled all snug in their beds,
Because visions of medals danced in their heads,
Rebecca in pink running shorts, Sid V with bandana,
Had just started eating a pre-race banana;

When out on the streets there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my sofa to see what was the matter,
Away to Ridgway I ran swift and keen,
And switched on my head-torch to better be seen;

The moon on the pavement gave a lustrous glow,
Illuminating the runners lined up in a row,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a group of beginners, full of energy and cheer;

With a speedy run leader, so smiley and trendy,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Tandy,
More rapid than eagles, Martha's gang also came,
Each interval completed, each rep was the same;

"Now, Rose! Now, Baylis! Now, Morris and Casey!
On, Faulkner! On, Spencer! You must keep it pacy!
To the front of the pack, to the top of the league!
Now dash away! Dash away! Don't show fatigue!"

Dave Edwards, Sean Bowen, they called out the drills,
To help build our speed and to tackle the hills,
So, up to the finish the runners did sprint,
With their hearts full of passion, and eyes with a glint;

And then, whilst panting, I heard on the street,
The pounding and thumping of each runner's feet,
As I picked up my heels, and was turning around,
Down the road, Peter Harvey came with a bound;

He was dressed in short shorts, his forehead was wet,
And his race vest was tarnished with mud and with sweat,
A sackful of trophies he had flung on his back,
A champion veteran, ready to attack;

Kath's eyes -- how they twinkle, with encouraging nod,
(she's already been out for a bit of a plod!)
Her determined expression, set firm like a bow,
Showed the passion and drive that runners all know;

Social Sophie rounded everyone up as a bunch,
And made sure that all were invited to brunch,
After road races tiring and cross country so slippy,
(With photos from Willow, Hiran and from Thippi);

Tim and Race Committee (some serious, some merry),
Fine-tuned the Club Champ list and planned the A-very,
The newsletter editors wrote up the stories,
Of races competed, our PBs, our glories;

With training completed, all tired and sweaty,
The runners returned to carb-load on spaghetti,
They made sure they'd cooled down and properly stretch'ed
(So they won't feel stiff and their muscles all wretched);

Jane sprang to her feet, to her club was all smiles,
And away they all went to plan their next miles,
But I heard her exclaim, ere they ran out of sight,
"Happy running to all, and to all a good night!"

parkrun roundup

115 GCRs went out to work up an appetite at parkrun ahead of Christmas with almost half attending Panshanger. **Adam Wadley** finished 7th in a new course PB of 18:46 and **Katherine Lees** was 5th lady in 22:39. **Bruce Judge** achieved his 100th parkrun, and **Wendy Leversuch** and **Simon Bostock** celebrated their 50th parkruns. **Rob Cartwright** achieved a new course PB of 26:16.

Top 10 finishers elsewhere were as follows:

- **Thom Buzzard** was 3rd at Westmill in 20:04, and **Sharon Threlfall** was 7th lady in 29:25
- **Rob Casserley** was 9th at Wanstead Flats in 20:41
- **Amber-Leigh Marvin** gave her previous course PB at Shrewsbury a good hiding, finishing as 6th lady in 22:26
- **Barbara Kubis-Labiak** was 2nd lady at her other home parkrun Opole (Poland), finishing in 27:28
- **Neil Hume** was 6th at Rutland Water in 19:29
- **Richard Willcox** was 10th at Severn Bridge in 19:32
- **Lizzie Belcher** was 3rd lady at Presint 18, Putrajaya in 27:52
- **Paul Guy** was 7th man (8th overall) at Jersey Farm in 19:41
- **Caroline Hale** was 2nd lady (4th overall) at Sunny Hill in 22:19

Jamie Rose and **Dave Faulkner** both celebrated their century of parkruns at Stevenage, with Jamie finishing 3rd in 18:21 and Dave in 30:01. They were supported by **Alex Faulkner** who finished 9th lady in 24:08. **Bailey Newington** bagged himself a new course PB of 21:33.

Kath Evans and her beguiling smile looked quite innocent on the surface as she completed Swansea parkrun with her family, with her dad completing his first ever parkrun. Don't be fooled though – she'll have him doing ultras before 2024 is out.

Andrew Pocock was the furthest-flung GCR parkrun tourist at Coff's Harbour in Australia.

Other parkrun locations attended by touring GCRs were: Ally Pally, Barnstaple, Central Plymouth, Dolgellau, Hogmoor Inclosure, Lanhydrock, Letchworth, Luton Wardown, Mile End, Oak Hill, Quakers Walk, Southampton, Southend, Southwark, St Albans, Storeys Field, Wallaceneuk, Wepre, Woodhouse Moor

Full results for GCRs participating in Saturday's parkruns can be found [here](#).

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.

Please remember to charge your head/chest torches

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	9 - 9:30
12k	5 - 5:30	8 - 8:30

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

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 6.30pm Campus West

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
Introduction to speed session	A training session for those who are daunted by the track. A mixture of intervals, fartlek and speed sessions. Ideal for those trying to improve their 10k time
Steady Group	Steady group run

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. All items are £20 (£19.99 if you pay by bank transfer) except for the jackets which are £42.

Additionally, bobble hats are now available (£12), as modelled by Peter Harvey.



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/