



Garden City Runners News Release

3 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

Couch to 5k Graduation at Panshanger parkrun

Yet another cohort of beginners have completed our popular Couch to 5k programme and graduated with honours on Saturday 2nd December at Panshanger parkrun. These dedicated folks, well-supported by 40 fellow GCRs, showed their true grit on the icy course, and were full of smiles and GCR spirit. Well done to graduates **Emma Carroll, Helen Gouldstone, Karen Porter, Victoria Hellum**, and many thanks to all those who have led and supported the beginners throughout their programme.



Emma Carroll, Helen Gouldstone, Karen Porter, Victoria Hellum pictured right to left, with Naz Gezer-Clarke, Donna Staughton O'Toole, Tandy St Francis and Debbie Pierson in support.

Moonpacer

Richard Willcox (*pictured below in blue*) was the 50-minute pacer for RunThrough's Chase the Moon 10km race in Battersea Park on Wednesday November 29. He reports: "It was an extremely cold evening but 458 runners turned up for the 10km and another 332 ran the 5km, which started a few minutes earlier on the same course. It was four laps around the park with clear km markers and very enthusiastic volunteers making it a fun occasion. I ran some consistent splits and came in a couple of seconds under with a chip time of 49:44."

St Edmunds Trail Marathon and LDWA Steppingley Step

Nick Genever has gifted this 2-for-the-price-of-1 report of two races he has completed: the St Edmunds Trail Marathon (Sunday 3rd December) and the Long Distance Walking Association (LDWA) Steppingley Step (Sunday 19th November).

"Ickworth National Trust provided the setting for the St Edmunds trail races of half-marathon, marathon, and 50k distances. The marathon was 2 laps of a circuit around the Ickworth estate on an all-weather track and a circuit outside the park on footpaths and some road. For the first lap, temperatures were just above freezing but the ground was frozen with a lot of black ice on the estate track. The cold, rain, ice, wind and mud made for uncomfortable running conditions. I finished the course in 4:00:19.

2 weeks ago I had an eventful time at the LDWA Steppingley Step marathon starting at Barton-le-Clay. There was plenty of le clay in the waterlogged fields on the route that went to the Sharpenhoe Clappers (a steep chalk escarpment), Center Parcs Woburn Forest, Ampthill, Flitwick, and back to Barton. At mile 6, I misjudged the clearance under a low-hanging branch and cut the top of my head on it. At the first checkpoint I showed the cut to the paramedic that I was running with and he was concerned about a deep cut and as he put it "a flap of scalp". The marshal with the first aid kit was a retired GP and she applied a dressing to the cut and tied a bandage under my chin to hold it in place. She advised me to stop and get a lift back to the start. I told the 3 runners I was with to go on as I didn't want to hold them up. I felt ok so I said I would carry on. I have yet to DNF a marathon or 50k ultra and this didn't feel serious enough. I put a hat on to protect the dressing and set off to catch up with the others. The combination of hat and bandage chin strap meant that I ran the next 20 miles wearing what looked like a twee bonnet. I caught up with the 3 runners I was with and we finished the race without further incident. After finishing I had to wait to complete the accident report form where we identified the OS map reference of the offending tree. Then a long wait in A&E to have the wound glued and receive a tetanus jab.

I completed the 26.5-mile course in 4:43 in 2nd place."



Not all heros wear capes. Some wear bonnets.

Hales do a Hoohaah

David Hale (and his four-legged companion Albie 🐾, both pictured below) participated in the Grafham Water - Barr Ellison hoohaah Canicross race on Sunday 3rd December. Albie, lacking in opposable thumbs and typing skills, outsourced his run repawt to David to send in: "Ran my first Canicross event today around Grafham Water. Shortened to c9 miles due to icy conditions and finished in 1:23. Lovely course and well managed event. Starting the run with 30/40 dogs was great fun and I'm definitely going to do some more events. My dog was very well behaved and definitely provided some assistance on the hills. As communicated in previous news release we are starting to organise some running with dog meet ups, so if anybody is interested please give us a shout."

Results of the canicross are available [here](#).



parkrun roundup

75 hardy GCRs stuck their toes out from under warm duvets and thought "Heck, it's not cold enough to miss parkrun". As mentioned above, the largest contingent (40) skated down to Panshanger, where the latest participants of the popular Couch to 5k program were graduating. Top 10 finishers were **Chris Baylis** (2nd; 18:45), **Adam Wadley** (4th, in a new course PB of 18:54) and **Paul Guy** (8th; 19:39) for the men, and **Jessica Timmins** (3rd lady; resetting her course PB down to 21:35), **Felicity Wadley** (6th lady; 24:40), **Katherine Lees** (7th lady; 24:57) and **Lauren Potter** (8th lady; 24:58) for the ladies.

Top 10 finishers elsewhere were as follows:

- At St Albans, **Alex Faulkner** was 9th lady in 24:17
- **Martin Mitchell** was 4th at Stevenage in a new course PB of 19:46
- **Alida Preis** was 5th lady at Winterton in 31:00
- **Lizzie Belcher** was 9th lady at Presint 18 parkrun, Putrajaya in 28:46
- **Lucy Iles** was 3rd lady at Dunstable Downs in 25:07

Michael Germany achieved a new course PB St Albans (24:18), whilst **Jonathan Foan** and **Nikki Cowen** reset their course PBs at Panshanger (in 21:50 and 30:01, respectively).

Other parkrun locations attended by touring GCRs were: Brooklands, Chipping Norton School, Cotsford Fields, Crichton, Gadebridge; Gunpowder, Hockley Woods, Itchen Valley Country, Jersey Farm, Letchworth, Linford Wood, Millennium Country, Mote Park, Oak Hill, Osterley, Oxford, Rickmansworth, Tamworth Castle Grounds, Wimpole Estate

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

2023-4 Sunday League XC fixtures

Three down, two to go! The next cross-country fixtures are as follows:

- Stevenage - 17 December 2023
- Royston - 18 February 2024

They're also 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 Trent Park or 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:

- 9 Dec 2023 - Southern Vets Champs - Oxford
- 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

Seasonal Jollies

Here are three dates for your diaries – opportunities to get together, have fun and celebrate Christmas with your GCR buddies.

Sunday 10th December – Festive 5. GCR's traditional 5-mile romp round the streets of WGC, raising funds for Isabel Hospice. Festive attire much encouraged. Sign up here <https://my.raceresult.com/257922/registration>. There are only 300 places available, so make sure you don't miss out. There will be cakes at the end.

Friday 15th December - 80s Night Fancy Dress at Homestead Court

Wednesday 20th December – Christmas Drinks & London Marathon Draw, 7 pm, Postino Lounge Come along and raise a glass of festive cheer with club mates. Expect to see a lot of Christmas jumpers. First drink for everyone is on the club.

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, as the evenings are getting darker

*****We will be doing bump weeks for the next 2 weeks. This means the paces set by the leaders and the groups will be set at the lowest pace , e.g., 7k group will run at a 8 min/k pace. This is to allow any runners wishing to move a group to do so, Anyone who is doubling back a lot in their groups currently is encouraged to consider moving up to the next group.*****

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.

Tuesday 5th December: intervals will be at Longcroft Lane for 1km reps. Meet at the junction of Longcroft Lane and Birdcroft Road at 6:45pm warmed up and ready for drills and strides.

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.

Avery League Competition 2023

Please find this year's events table below. Eight Avery races, marked CC, are also part of the Club Championship competition (best five to score). Races marked V offer a volunteer point equivalent to a competing point.

Event no.		Date	Event	Venue	Cost	Status / notes
1	CC	22/01/2023	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£21.20 affiliated	Completed
2		19/02/2023	XC 3	Cassiobury Park, Watlington	free	Completed
3	CC	05/03/2023	Berkhamsted half	Berkhamsted Cricket Club	£33 from 01/01/23	Completed

4		12/03/2023	XC 4	Therfield Heath, Royston	free	Completed
5	V	18/03/2023	Stevenage parkrun	Fairlands Valley Park	free	Completed
6		07/04/2023	St Albans Easter 10k	St Albans	£25.44	Completed
7	CC	30/04/2023	Hitchin 10k	Hitchin	£18.00	Completed
8		17/05/2023	MWRRL 1: Chingford (Orion Harriers)	Chingford	free	Completed
9		31/05/2023	MWRRL 2: St Albans (St Albans Striders)	St Albans	free	Completed
10		08/06/2023	MWRRL 3: Trent Park	Trent Park	free	Completed
11	V	25/06/2023	Welwyn 10k	Panshanger Park	£20; £18 affiliated	Completed
12		06/07/2023	MWRRL 4: Stevenage (NHRR)	Stevenage	free	Completed
13	V	12/07/2023	MWRRL Mob Match: WGC	Ridgeway Academy, WGC	free	Completed
14	CC	20/07/2023	Fairlands Valley Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	free	Completed
15	V	06/08/2023	GCR Centenary 20.2k	WGC Centenary Route	free	Completed
16	V/CC	19/08/2023	Panshanger parkrun	Panshanger Park	free	Completed
17	V	30/08/2023	Hatfield 5k Race 1	Hatfield	tbc	Completed
18	CC	01/10/2023	Standalone 10k	Letchworth	£18.00 affiliated	Completed
19		15/10/2023	XC 1	Cheshunt	free	Completed
20	CC	22/10/2023	Stevenage Half Marathon	Stevenage	£28.00 affiliated	Completed
21		29/10/2023	XC 2	Watford	free	Completed
22		5/11/2023	XC 3	Trent Park	free	Completed
23	CC	26/11/2023	Hatfield 5	Hatfield	£22.26	Completed

24	V	10/12/2023	Festive 5	WGC	£12.00	https://my.raceresult.com/257922/registration
25		17/12/2023	XC 4	Stevenage	free	Club will send out details via email

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.

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/