



## Garden City Runners News Release

14 April 2024

### Couch to 5K and to half marathon in year – the story behind it

**Tracy Behr, Katie Coates** and **Sharon Reynolds** met in May 2023 when they joined the GCR C2 5K (Couch to 5k) group and this is their story (*pictured below, Tracy, Katie and Sharon at their graduation and first park runs, followed by the first 10k at Knebworth and London Half*).

**Sharon** writes: "What started with a decision to join GCR and the couch to 5k challenge in May 2023, has resulted in us completing our first half marathon, the London Landmarks on the 7th April this year.

We didn't know each other before we joined the club, but all felt the pull to try and get into running and get fit. We were all very committed and slowly, with the help of **Tendy** and **Charlotte**, gradually built up over the course of the ten weeks. I remember our collective joy when we found we could run 10 minutes non-stop, a few weeks into the course - it seemed like a big achievement!

We did our first parkrun as part of our graduation in July 2023 and then started joining the social 5k groups until we were told we should be moving up to the 7k group. This seemed like a big jump, and we were all quite nervous, but with the support of the group we made the transition. We then decided we needed a little challenge to keep us focused, so signed up to the Knebworth 10k in October. It was our first race and we finished in 1:09.

We loved the experience and it really spurred us on. Then a family member committed to running their first half marathon and persuaded us to join them. This seemed hugely daunting, but once again, through the power of our friendship and the group we committed to the training, gradually working up to the 8k group, tried some track training (brutal!!) and started doing long Saturday morning runs at Cole Green. Getting past 10k felt like a big

hurdle but once again, with the encouragement of GCR members, we gradually built up our runs by 1k a week, getting up to 19.5k.

On 7 April we ran the London Landmarks half marathon for Macmillan and Sarcoma. We all stayed together as we wanted to enjoy the experience and support each other. I finished in 2:47:23, Tracy finished in 2:42:54 and Sharon in 2:47:25. We were on such a high and even managed to sprint the final part! If someone had told us when we joined the club that we would be running a half marathon within the year, we never would have believed them. It has been an amazing experience.

To think the three of us had never run before and we didn't know each other, we have come out of this as amazing friends, and I guess you would now have to call us runners! Thank you to the huge support and encouragement that GCR members have given us, we couldn't have done it without you!"



## **Flitwick 10k**

A group of GCRs (*pictured, 2<sup>nd</sup> below*) took part in Flitwick 10k on 14 April, Sunday.

**Clare Wildey Grover** (*pictured below, with Amber*) sent us her run report: "**Amber-Leigh Marvin** was 1st GCR female, smashed her Personal Best with a stunning time of 45:50. I was delighted to be 2nd GCR female coming in at 49:21 which is also a PB.

**Sarah Durston** 3rd GCR achieved a fantastic time of 50:57 and completed the trio that won 2nd place in the ladies' team competition."

The men's team also came 2<sup>nd</sup>, well done **James Huish, Ian Harper** and **Peter Harvey**.





## **Manchester Marathon**

**Spencer White** (*pictured below*) took on another challenge, taking part in the Manchester Marathon. **Spencer** writes: "Today I ran the Manchester marathon. With 32,000 runners and 125,000 spectators these were new records for the marathon. It was my first time running it. It was a fantastic experience taking in this great city that I was a student at almost 30 years ago."

I completed the marathon in 3 hours 33 minutes, a new PB. I was absolutely thrilled."



### **Huntingdon Challenge for the Dwyers**

**Nadine** and **Aiden Dwyer** (pictured, below) - His and hers Huntingdon Challenge for the Dwyers on Sunday, and congratulations on your Anniversary!

**Aiden** writes: "It was a timed event with 5.3k laps around Hinchingsbrook Country Park. Lovely scenic loops but very muddy. I completed 8 laps for the marathon and Nadine completed 5 laps/26k. A great day out and a special treat for our 29th Anniversary."



### **parkrun roundup**

With lovely sunny weather finally settling in, 108 GCRs took part in various parkruns this weekend.

- **Katy Healy** was 1st lady at Westmill, in 25:20, and Chrissy Johnson was 14<sup>th</sup> lady in 32:03
- **Zoe Stephens** was 1<sup>st</sup> lady at Stevenage, in 21:18
- At Upton Court, **Nick Portalski** was 12<sup>th</sup> overall, in 23:12
- **Robin Newby** was 7<sup>th</sup> overall at Aldenham, in 21:49

- **Juliet Vine** was 1<sup>st</sup> lady at Jersey Farm, in 20:42
- **Sharon Threlfall** was 4<sup>th</sup> lady at Unisee, in 28:08
- **Hannah Frank** was 2<sup>nd</sup> lady at Cyclopark, in 22:40
- **Michael Germany** was 14<sup>th</sup> overall and **Katharine Farrell** was 4<sup>th</sup> lady at Carlisle Park, Mortpeth, in 25:10
- **Lucy Iles** was 1<sup>st</sup> lady at Leavesden Country, in 24:39

**Nicholas Summers** was 10<sup>th</sup> into the finish funnel at our local parkrun, Panshanger, in 20:08, closely followed by **Rob Casserley**, 11<sup>th</sup>, in 20:20. **Katherine Lees** was 2<sup>nd</sup> lady in 22:08, and **Rebecca Barden** was 4<sup>th</sup> lady in 23:28. **Felicity Wadley** was 5<sup>th</sup> lady in 23:40 and **Caroline Griffin** 10<sup>th</sup> in 26:49.

**Justin Swallow** achieved another PB at Panshanger with a time of 25.09

### **Gunnersbury parkrun**

**John McDowall**, **Richard Somerset** and **Johan Preis** (*pictured, below*) travelled to Gunnersbury parkrun, finishing in 20:51, 20:12 and 24:26, respectively.

**John** writes: "Cracking day, a 1x lapper round a nice park that's flat as and has a great PB potential. Big field with over 600 runners with 27 under 20 mins. Worth a tourist visit, 5 min walk from Acton tube. Greasy spoon cafe nearby for the required Breakfast of Champions."



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

## **GCR Walks**

Just a reminder that the next GCR walks have now been scheduled as follows—part of a provisional walking programme of different routes running throughout the summer. These include a couple of spectacular bluebell wood walks during May.

**Wednesday, April 17th** — just under 10K loop (via Kimpton and Codicote Bottom) starting at the Brocket Arms in Ayot st. Lawrence. Meet 9.30am.

In May we head for the bluebell woods, including Gustard Wood and the Hitchwood Trail, two of the finest bluebell walks in the county. Anyone needing further information, or wishing to be added to the list for forthcoming info, contact: [jerry@jgp-pr.com](mailto:jerry@jgp-pr.com)

## **Tuesday steady runs**

GCR offers a number of steady run groups on a Tuesday evening. The table (included in the [Tuesday Group Runs section](#)) shows the **target distance** for each group and also the **target pace**. When deciding which group to join runners should consider both pace and distance. All groups aim to complete their run in about 60 minutes.

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

Each group has a volunteer run leader who will plan a route to meet the target distance and then during the run they will do their best to run within the target pace. The target pace is an average over the whole run. Downhill sections may be slightly faster and uphill sections will inevitably be slower.

For safety reasons it is important that the group stays together and does not get too stretched out. The run leader should be at the front of the group both to set the pace and because they are the only one who knows where they are going. If other runners get ahead of the leader it is vital that they **loop back**, not just to the front of the group but to the back of it.



If a runner finds that they are regularly ahead of the leader then their natural steady pace is faster than that group and they should really move up to a faster group. The difference in pace between groups is not huge and they will normally be absolutely fine in the faster group. Likewise if a runner is regularly falling a long way behind the leader they should really drop down to a group where they will be more comfortable with the pace.

If these simple rules are followed each group should get back on time, having covered the target distance at the target pace on a run that was relaxed, safe & enjoyable for everyone in the group.

### **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

### **Mid Week League**

Dates and venues for the Mid-Week League fixtures have been announced – see the Avery league table below. Further information will be sent out nearer the time.

### **Club Championships 2024**

The Club Championships principally consist 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.

For 2024 the Championship races are:

<b>Race #</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Fred Hughes 10	21 <sup>st</sup> January
2	Watford Half	4 <sup>th</sup> February
3	Panshanger parkrun	9 <sup>th</sup> March
4	Flitwick 10k	14 <sup>th</sup> April
5	St Albans Half	9 <sup>th</sup> June
6	FVS 3k Relay	End July (tbc)
7	Stevenage 10k	15 <sup>th</sup> September
8	ATW Hatfield 5	24 <sup>th</sup> November

## GCR Avery League 2024

The GCR Race Committee has produced the calendar of races for the Avery League Competition and the Club Championships. Details on all of the 2024 races are below, and these will also be published on the GCR website as soon as possible, and on the GCR Facebook group. Please note that the Avery Rules have been simplified by removing the Tiebreaker - in future, joint winners will share the trophy. Happy Racing!

<b>Avery Event #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Cost</b> <i>Registration fees may apply</i>	<b>Status / Notes</b>
1	21 <sup>st</sup> January	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£20.00 aff.	Completed
2	4 <sup>th</sup> February	Watford Half	Watford	£31.00 aff.	Completed
3	*postponed*	SXCL Royston (Race #5 of 2023-2024 season)	Therfield Heath, Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
4 (V)	9 <sup>th</sup> March	Panshanger parkrun	Panshanger Park	Free	Completed
5	24 <sup>th</sup> March	Run Fest at Lee Valley (choice of Half or 10k)	Lee Valley Water Park, Waltham Cross	10k: £26.00 aff. Half: £34.00 aff.	Completed
6	14 <sup>th</sup> April	Flitwick 10k	Flitwick	£18.00 aff.	Completed
7	6 <sup>th</sup> May	Kimpton Fun Run 10k	Kimpton	£10	<a href="https://www.kimptonmayfestival.co.uk/">https://www.kimptonmayfestival.co.uk/</a>
8	15 <sup>th</sup> May	MWRRL #1	Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email
9	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	MWRRL #2	Ware	Free	Club will send out details via email
10	6 <sup>th</sup> June	MWRRL #3	Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
11	27 <sup>th</sup> June	MWRRL #4	Trent Park	Free	Club will send out details via email
12 (V)	30 <sup>th</sup> June	Welwyn 10k	Panshanger Park	tbc	Details tbc
13 (V)	10 <sup>th</sup> July	MWRRL Mob Match	Ridgeway Academy, WGC	Free	Club will send out details via email
14	End July (tbc)	FVS 3k Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email
15 (V)	4/11/18 <sup>th</sup> August (tbc)	GCR Centenary 20.2k	WGC Centenary Route	Free	Club will send out details via email
16 (V)	4 <sup>th</sup> September	Hatfield 5k #2 (Vets)	Hatfield	tbc	Details tbc

17	15 <sup>th</sup> September	Stevenage 10k	Stevenage	£18.00 aff.	<a href="#">Register here</a>
18 (V)	Mid October (tbc)	SXCL #1	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
19	20 <sup>th</sup> October	Stevenage Half Marathon & Marathon	Stevenage	tbc	<a href="#">Register here</a>
20	End October (tbc)	SXCL #2 (poss. Jersey Farm parkrun as back-up)	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
21	Start November (tbc)	SXCL #3 (poss. Jersey Farm parkrun as back-up)	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
22	24 <sup>th</sup> November	Hatfield 5	Hatfield	£22.00 early-bird aff.	<a href="#">Register here</a>
23 (V)	Early December (tbc)	Festive 5	WGC	tbc	Club will send out details via email
24	Mid December (tbc)	SXCL #4	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email

### **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.

### **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, **and \*new\* a cosy GCR-branded woolly hat**. See club website for photos. All items are £20 (£19.99 if you pay by bank transfer) except for the hats which are £12.

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

"Puffa" jackets are also available for £42, please contact Martha Hall on: [ma-hall28@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:gcr@gardencityrunners.org.uk), visit our website <https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/> or our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/)

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