



Garden City Runners News Release

19 November 2023

Eland leads GCRs at St. Neots' Half

While others go Gdańsking

Four GCR's members headed up the A1 to join the 1000 or so runners who lined up for the ever-popular St. Neots Half Marathon. **Janet Bream** reports that the event was extremely well organised, and the race took place over a lovely undulating course. "On a personal note I was really pleased with my best result since March 2019," she said.



However, she wasn't the fastest GCR ... that honour went to **Chris Eland**, who finished 50th in 1:23:58. Other results included **Roger Adey** 1:55:25, Janet herself (*pictured left*) in 2:07:59 and **Louise Smith** 2:23:10.

Running the parkrun alphabet to Zamek

The attraction of running down the alphabet never seems to lose its attraction for parkrun tourists.

But when it comes to the final letter they know it is necessary to stray beyond our sceptred isle. While the less ambitious hop over to the Netherlands (Zuiderpark), the hardcore head for Poland, and Zamek w Malborku (Malbork Castle).

Thus it was that nine GCRs (plus an extra) completed the alphabet with a chilly run in Poland. Setting out in the middle of the night (4:45am) on Friday morning, they flew to Gdańsk for a weekend of fine eating and a little bit of running.

On Saturday, two taxis drove them to the parkrun destination, for an out-and-back route alongside the river, next to the impressive brick castle, billed as the world's largest. Despite near freezing temperatures, they received a warm welcome from the volunteer team, and

got chatting to other tourists from the UK who were also pursuing their alphabet challenge. Some 38 runners plus a tail walker competed the course, with the GCRs bagging many of the top age group places. These included: **Johan Preis**, 10th overall, first VM55-59; **Lucy Iles** 11th overall, first lady, first FV40-45; **Barbara Kubis-Labiak**, 12th overall, second lady, first FV45-49; **Richard Somerset** 14th overall, first GCR to have happy birthday sung in Polish by a parkrun volunteer team; **Sophie Packman**, 18th overall, 3rd lady; **Caroline Griffin**, 20th overall, 4th lady, first VF50-54; **Andy Lancaster**, 22nd overall, first VM60-64; **Ann Hayden**, 24th overall, first VF60-64; **Shena Lancaster**, 30th overall, first VF65-69 and **Caroline O'Dwyer**, 31st overall, first VF55-59

With the elusive Z parkrun in the bag, both Lucy and Caroline were pleased to have completed their parkrun alphabet challenges. Hats, coats, gloves, scarves were quickly back on as the posse set off in search of the obligatory post-parkrun coffee and pastry.

The team sent grateful thanks to Barbara for organising the trip and being a great tour guide and translator. *Dziękuję!*

A selection of photos are posted below.





parkrun roundup

Closer to home, these are the other highlights from weekend parkruns across the country where 79 GCRs braved the muddy conditions. Most notable was **Wayne Aylott** (*pictured far left*) who was celebrating his 150th



parkrun at Linford Wood ... where coincidentally he finished 150th. News of a bit more parkrun tourism, although closer to home in Great Denham, where **Hiran Fernando, Debbie Pierson, Peter Laphorne, Willow Gibson** and **Sharon Stephens** all participated.

Casting round the various sites, starting on our doorstep, GCRs

occupied four of the first ten positions at Panshanger, which was won by **Adam Wadley** in a commendable 19:19, given the conditions. Behind him were **Rob Casserley** (5th in 20:23), **Steve Ellerd-Elliott** (6th in 20:42), and **Peter Jasko** (9th in 21:12). Another remarkable achievement came at Leavesden, won by **Jamie Thomas Rose** in 19:35. Other notable times were **Chris Dungate** (12th at St. Albans, in 20:11); **Paul Guy** 6th at Stevenage in 19:10, with **Neil Brittan** 11th in 20:50 and **Nigel Cavill** PB'd in 21:13 to finish 16th. **Jas**

Newington also PB'd at Stevenage in 30:57 now with sub-30 firmly in her sights. At Lydney **Peter McKenzie** finished 2nd in 20:24; **Andrew Holt** finished 9th at Southall in 21:19, while **Richard Darley** turned in a "majestic" performance at East Park, recording a best time of 24:23 to finish creditable a 19th (*sorry Richard ... I couldn't resist that reference*).

Apologies for any significant achievements overlooked, but for all the results can be found [here](#).

Canicross calling

Canicross—running with dogs—is a fairly new and fast-growing sport. Reports **David Hale**, "It was suggested at last AGM that we should explore organising some canicross meet-ups. We are looking at organising an initial Sunday morning meeting, which would be a social 5K run around the Tewin area. If you are new to canicross, we are able to provide equipment to try out (ie leads, harnesses, belts) and some basic instruction. Dogs would have to be kept on leads and it should be noted that this is a social event not a GCR event, so not covered by club insurance. At this stage we are trying to assess who might be interested, so if you are, please email davidnhale6@gmail.com and include a brief description of dog (size, weight) and whether or not you have canicross kit.

Seasonal Jollies

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

Sunday 10 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

There are still a few places left for what will be a great night out. £42.50pp – 3-Course Dinner and disco. Please phone/email Kaska at Homestead Court asap (contact details below) to book your dinner/disco and place your food order direct with her. It's £10 deposit to hold your place or pay in full £42.50. Please also let her know of any allergies/requirements at the time of booking. Deadline for booking is Thursday, 30th November, if tickets haven't sold out before.

Events Tel: (01707) 385515

Email: events@homesteadcourt.co.uk

Wednesday 20th December – Christmas Drinks and London Marathon Draw, from 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.

Group/Distance	Pace (mins/km)	Pace (mons/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.

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, Watford	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/C C	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	http://hatfield5mile.co.uk/
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

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 and the jackets which 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/

Avery Events / Club Championships

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 - that's likely to be in about three weeks' time.

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 (the final race of the 2023/24 season) has now also been confirmed as an Avery event.

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