



## Garden City Runners News Release

**4 February 2024**

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)

### Watford Half



Above: GCRs at the start of the Watford Half

A strong contingent of GCRs tackled this testing half, with what is known professionally as an 'undulating' course (translation: many hills). **Rob Casserley** was first GCR and 2<sup>nd</sup> in his



age group M50 in 1:22:1. **Paul Guy** was next in 1:22:44. **Peter Harvey** was 4<sup>th</sup> M50 in 1:23:08 and 5<sup>th</sup> age graded overall, and **Richard Taylor** was next in 1:26:06. GCR men

were fourth in the team competition. Congratulations to GCR's women's team who won a bronze medal in the team championships – **Jess Timmins** finishing in 1:45:36, **Rebecca Barden**, who was also 3<sup>rd</sup> in her age category overall, in 1:48:42, and **Claire Wildey Grover** running a new ten minute half marathon pb of 1:50:03. (Left, two thirds of GCR's bronze medal women's team, Jess Timmins (l) and Claire Wildey Grover)



Also running a new half pb was **Sam Males**, continuing a run of excellent form to finish in 1:49:20. In the Herts Senior Championships, **Rob Casserley** was first in his age category M50 and **Peter Harvey** second, and **Rebecca Barden** was

second in hers W55. Results for GCRs taking part in the Watford Half are available [here](#), with the exception of **James Aitchison**, whose chip malfunctioned, who ran in 2:14:15, and **Tendy St Francis**, who ran in 3:11:08.

### GCRs go marathoning in Marrakesh

Before January was finally over, four GCRs escaped to warmer climes to compete in the Marrakesh marathon and half marathon events. **Anna Lillie** and **Thippi Rashleigh** tackled the marathon distance and **Samantha Hastie** and **Willow Gibson** ran the half marathon.



Above, Anna and Thippi; right, Willow and Samantha Willow reports: "everyone did very well, running in heat of 27 degrees. There were challenges (including no toilets at the start of the race) but overall it was an amazing experience, including seeing camels on the route.



## GCRs vs ultra runnings

Two of our toughest runners took on new ultra challenges this weekend:

### Pilgrim's Challenge

**Kath Evans** sent this report: "This weekend's little adventure was exploring the trails of the North Downs with the running company XNRG. We started at Sandy Farm in Farnham and covered 33miles (more like 34 in reality!) to Redhill, where we bedded down for the night in a local school before heading back to Farnham to complete the Pilgrim's Challenge. The organisation was fabulous and the views glorious, they are already open for 2025 bookings if anyone is interested!



### Brecon to Cardiff Ultra

Meanwhile, **Barbara Kubis-Labiak** reports from the Brecon to Cardiff Ultra:

"I travelled to Wales to take part in the 70km Brecon to Cardiff ultra, full of hope that maybe this time the Welsh weather would be on my side. As expected, it wasn't, and the first 40k were marked by wind and rain, all the way. It brightened up later which made a massive difference. I then took a wrong turn, adding 2.5k to my overall distance, wasting 30 mins on debating with myself as to which turn to take. Mentally I was ready to give up then, with about 30k to go. Decided to carry on for a bit and see what happens and then thought that I



might as well finish - I'm glad I did. It was another adventure, for the body and the mind (especially the mind) and I loved the views and the trails."



Left: Barbara on her epic run

### **Rob's 100<sup>th</sup> parkrun location**

**Rob Hughes**, *right*, joined the Cowell Club by completing his 100th different parkrun in Ipswich on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January. Rob has run parkruns from Hull to Ipswich to San Francisco, Sydney, Singapore and Seattle. Visits to family, conference trips and family holidays have added to the great range of local parkruns.

Highlights include the sadly defunct Crissy Fields in San Francisco and Italy's Mura di Lucca, but Panshanger and Ellenbrook Fields have been hard to top.



## parkrun roundup



It was all go at Panshanger parkrun as GCRs engineered a 'parkrun takeover', providing marshals, pacers (*pictured above at the start*) and collecting donations to support Hertford and District Food Bank. Among those running for GCR were **Dan Pudner**, first into the finish funnel in 18:33. **Bruce Judge** was 7<sup>th</sup> overall in 19:47, and **James Huish** did an excellent job as 20 minute pacer, coming in at 19:55 and 9<sup>th</sup> overall. **Andy Helliwell** paced the 22-minute runners in a skilful 21:56. For the women, **Katherine Lees** was 3<sup>rd</sup> female finisher in 23:01 and **Jess Timmins** showed her pacing expertise by bringing the 24-minute runners in at 24:03 to finish 4<sup>th</sup> lady. **Lucy Iles** was just behind, 5<sup>th</sup> woman in 24:06. Among others pacing, it was great to see **Terry Fowler** leading the 26-minute pack home in 25:33, **Helen Stafford** running under the 27-minute mark in 26:35, and **Hannah Frank** bringing the 28-minuters in in 27:44. **Matt Baker** led the 30 minute crew in in 29:50; **Sid Valentine** ran a sub-32 minute 31:39 and **David Hale** guided the 34-minuters to a 33:42 finish. GCRs continued their takeover in aid of the foodbank at Beehive Junior parkrun the next day.



Further afield, **Jamie Rose** was 8<sup>th</sup> overall at Cheltenham in 19:22 and **Alex Faulkner** 9<sup>th</sup> lady in 23:07. At Keswick, **Chris Eland** finished 6<sup>th</sup> in 18:05. At Letchworth, **Chris Baylis** was 1<sup>st</sup> in 18:37 and at Zegerplas parkrun in the Netherlands **Sharon Threlfall** was 2<sup>nd</sup> lady in 26:15.

### **GCR Awards Night – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

This year’s GCR Awards evening has been announced. It will take place on Friday, March 15 at the Cocktail Bar, Misya Meze & Grill, in WGC.

“Tickets at £12.50 each will buy you a wonderful evening with running buddies, celebrating all the magnificent achievements and contributions of Club Members over the last year,” says Jane Molloy. “This is when we have the chance to clap and whoop to show our admiration and gratitude for those who have done amazing things for and with the club. Delicious food, a bar and a disco are all promised. Don’t delay, as capacity is restricted to 100 people.

Tickets are available [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.

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.

## **Cross Country fixtures:**

Please note the dates of Cross Country fixtures, in addition to the Sunday League, over the 2023-24 season:

24 Feb 2024 - Nationals - Telford

26 Mar 2024 - Herts Vets – Watford

## **GCR Club Championships**

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:

Race #	Event	Date
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

The above are subject to change where unforeseen circumstances dictate.

### **GCR Avery Competition 2024**

The GCR Race Committee has produced the calendar of races for the Avery Championship and the Club Championships. Details on all of the 2024 races are below, and these will also be published on the GCR web site, 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. The club is also creating a new award for the winners of the Club Championships - details will be revealed in the next few weeks. Happy Racing!

Avery Event #	Date	Event	Venue	Cost <i>Registration fees may apply</i>	Status / Notes
1	21 <sup>st</sup> January	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£20.00 aff.	Completed
2	4 <sup>th</sup> February	Watford Half		£31.00 aff.	Completed
3	18 <sup>th</sup> February	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	<a href="https://www.parkrun.org.uk/panshanger/">https://www.parkrun.org.uk/panshanger/</a>
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.	<a href="#">Register here</a>
6	14 <sup>th</sup> April	Flitwick 10k	Flitwick	£18.00 aff.	<a href="#">Register here</a>
7	6 <sup>th</sup> May (tbc)	Kimpton Fun Run 10k	Kimpton	tbc	Details tbc



8	Mid-May (tbc)	MWRRL #1	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
9	End May (tbc)	MWRRL #2	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
10	Start June (tbc)	MWRRL #3	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
11	End June (tbc)	MWRRL #4	tbc	Free	Club will send out details via email
12 (V)	End June (tbc)	Welwyn 10k (if going ahead)	tbc	tbc	Details tbc
13 (V)	Start to mid July (tbc; poss. second week)	MWRRL Mob Match	Ridgway 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 (tbc)	Hatfield 5k #2 (Vets)	Hatfield	tbc	Details tbc
17	15 <sup>th</sup> September	Stevenage 10k	Stevenage	£16.00 aff. (before 31 Dec) £18.00 aff. (from 1 Jan 2024)	<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

*Aff. = affiliated. FVS = Fairlands Valley Spartans. MWRRL = Mid Week Road Racing League. SXCL = Sunday Cross Country League. Tbc = to be confirmed. V = participants can score by volunteering. WGC = Welwyn Garden City*

## **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](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/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/)