



Garden City Runners: News Release from a Distance

Issue eleven: 31 May 2020

This week, Club Members are gearing up for the second race in the virtual Midweek League calendar, reporting on not-parkrun PBs, and submitting pictures of their favourite things on their favourite routes. With mass participation events off the agenda for the foreseeable, we're including a round-up of some of the virtual races available if you're hankering after a challenge and a bit of bling. Keep your creative and helpful contributions, as well as the fabulous pictures, coming into results@gardencityrunners.org.uk

not-parkrun highlights

It was great to see NEIL HUME back to running ways with his first post-injury not-parkrun in 19:04. Also back after an 8-week lay-up was PAUL COTTRELL, who ran Welham Green not-parkrun with LYNNE COTTRELL in 32:39. PAUL GUY ran his tenth consecutive Kimpton not-parkrun, and returned to his PB habit (19:11), after breaking out the Asics Glideride for those extra seconds. Other not-parkrun course PB's were notched up by STEVE EDWARDS at Ellenbrook (20:25) and JANE MOLLOY at Burnham Green (33:44 - 1:46 smashed off her previous PB). Also owning up to running not-parkrun on Saturday were SHERRY PEARSON, SHARON THRELFALL (possibly finally breaking the kids with the 8th running of the Balls Park not-parkrun), HOLLY CASEY, and JUSTIN HILL. ELAINE GILES, in her new-found enthusiasm for not-parkrun has yet to get the hang of the rules, as she decided to do several at once, turning it into a 14-mile run.

Congratulations to MATTIE LABIAK doing a not-parkrun not-on-a-Saturday, by achieving a 5k PB of 18:54 this week, his first sub-19 5k.

European Masters Virtual 5k Championships

The Club had two entrants in this race. Congratulations to MV50 PETER HARVEY who ran 18:35 and MV45 PAUL GUY 19:03, with both finishing an impressive 20th in their age groups.

Run Leaders Challenge – Favourite Things on Favourite Runs

This week, CHARLOTTE JONES set us a challenge of running our favourite routes and taking a picture of our favourite thing on that route. This resulted in some beautiful pictures capturing some of the best of our glorious surroundings.

JERRY GILBERT answered Charlotte's clarion call for a favourite route. "What better than this nine-mile run which I dub the 'Shenleybury Shuffle'?"



The mostly flat trail and woodland route starts on the Alban Way at Ellenbrook across to Colney Heath and London Colney and out towards Shenleybury, taking in some of the Watling Chase Timberland Trail and tributary footpaths, and offering spectacular vistas. This weekend run took in sheep with their new-born lambs, pigs and muntjac deer. The route passes two of the county's best pubs (The Plough at Sleepshyde and Green Dragon at London Colney), two of its most historic buildings (Tyttenhanger House and Salisbury Hall), two of its leading training grounds (Watford FC and Arsenal FC), two of the best visitor attractions (Willows Farm and DeHavilland Museum – though best done during lockdown or midweek to avoid the traffic), two of the county's best fishing lakes (Albans and Willow Lakes), with the River Colne constantly weaving its way magically in and out throughout nine miles of sheer joy."

Others who took on this challenge with glee, and posted fabulous pictures on our Facebook page, were STEVE BUTTON, JAMES HUIISH, PETER LAPHORNE, CATHY WIDDEN, KAREN ATKINSON, STEVE WILLIAMS, ELAINE GILES, LEE WOOD, HOLLY CASEY, RICHARD DARLEY, REBECCA BARDEN, and CHARLOTTE JONES. Tongue-in-cheek from JAC MCCALLUM and EMMA DEMPSTER, who both posted pictures of their houses as their favourite thing on their routes was getting back home!

Here's an offering of visual delights from this challenge, starting with KAREN's favourite run to Ayot St Lawrence.:

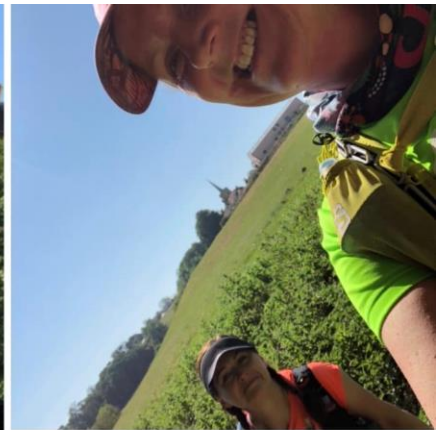


And here's a selection of the best of the rest...



Ultra Achievement

Since restrictions have been lifted on the time allowed outdoors, KATH EVANS and BARBARA KUBIS-LABIAK decided it would be fun to run 50k. They completed the round trip via Hertford and Ware to Much Hadham in very warm weather on Saturday. BARBARA commented on one particular challenge – “I have to add that Kath is not afraid of cows. I am, after being chased by a bull across a field once and jumping on a barbed wire fence and cutting my leg (the bull was actually running towards his barn not me, because it was feeding time, and there was a gate right behind me but this minor detail takes away the drama). Today we had to cross a number of fields with cows and Kath just calmly walked across and it was absolutely fine!”



This Week's Virtual MWL Challenge

RICHARD SOMERSET has set out the challenge for the second event of MWLockdown series for this Wednesday/Thursday. The theme of race two is road, hilly. Please try to do a 10k route with a minimum of 350ft (107m) of climbing. If you don't fancy it or are struggling to find a route in your area with this amount of climbing, then do what you can. Remember there are points for participation not performance. There are no disqualifications as long as you run 10k.

104 runners for race 1, let's see if we can beat it!

The rules are:

1. You need to be a paid-up member of GCR
2. Run anytime Wednesday or Thursday
3. Pick your own route, it must be either there and back, circular or laps, and the finish must be near the start (it doesn't need to be near where you live).
4. Distance must be a minimum of 10k (6.21 miles, not 6!)
5. Wear club kit (if you like)
6. Run solo, respect social distancing

Please send or update your results by lunchtime June 7th so they can be published in the newsletter. Richard will send out provisional results on Friday.

This week Richard needs to see your time, distance and elevation gain, so let him know by:

- If you use Strava then join the Garden City Runners group, upload your run and rename it MWL Race 2 (or words to that effect)
- If you use Garmin or other app then send him a screen grab of your time/distance/elevation or upload to the GCR Facebook group
- Take a picture of your time/distance/elevation from your watch and upload to FB group or send to Richard
- Or if you don't use GPS, then upload or send Richard your time from your stopwatch
- Or simply tell Richard what time you did
- Send to rich.somerset@ntlworld.com

Couch to 10k

*Thanks to long-serving club member **DEREK AVERY** who sent in this account of his running roller-coaster – a hopeful read for anyone who has known struggles with their running mojo. (Ed: I hope you'll be out cracking this week's MWLockdown challenge, Derek)*

For those that don't really know me, I've been a member of the club since about 1991/2, some time after running my first London marathon in 1989. I only ran that marathon (8 in all) because everybody was doing it and both my elder brothers had run one several years earlier. It took 4 years to gain my first entry, so I'd had plenty of time to change my mind. After that first marathon and bumping into Dennis Draper (actually he overtook me), my running journey started. It has had its ups and downs, but I'll say now, I'm not a natural runner..... We have moved on from the term jogging.

Over the following years I served on the club committee, became a run leader but in 2014, "We" (Mandy and I) purchased a property in France to renovate and convert into Holiday lets. Whilst Mandy maintained her Physiotherapy Clinic at Gosling stadium, I ventured out for the summer to start the renovations. With a tiring and at times a heavy workload, the heat of the summer days (and nights) in the Dordogne, running opportunities were very limited. Over the next two years, my running was almost non-existent for 6 months whilst living and working in France and on my return to the UK winters, I would try to resume where I had left off. To start with I "survived" because of my general fitness levels, but by early 2016 my running had virtually ceased. For the next two years, I only managed the odd few miles here and there. It would be a mixture of running and walking but in the winter of 2018, I tried to restart again but insisted that this would be the last time. I did manage to achieve one social Tuesday evening club run and a following Sunday trot with John Davis TT and Rich 'why are you here' Sidlin for about 6/7 miles, but then it all went into decline again. My running career over or so I thought.

Come January 2020, being overweight, unfit and a pandemic looming, Mandy suggested we do something about it. I couldn't do dry January, I'd failed veganuary last year and I can't grow a beard, so with some encouragement we decided to embark on "**Couch to 10K**" using the App. What was there to lose? We started as per the App (which I can highly recommend for motivation), week by week, walking and jogging. Five minutes of walking to start with followed by Jogging and walking to various degrees until after 14 weeks, we had both achieved our aims of running 10K!

Lockdown has given us plenty of time to exercise. Not just running, but walking also. We have had time to explore the delights of Stevenage and the surrounding countryside. Now with restrictions easing, it's time to look ahead with a return to France for the summer imminent. Can I maintain the effort during the hot summer days and nights ahead? Will I get a chance for at least one run with club buddies before I go? For now, I'm happy to be running (even though I still don't really like it), but pleased I achieved my goal and delighted to have **run 13+ kilometres** this weekend for the first time in 4 Years!

Welcome and Gratitude

Welcome to new members who joined us in May, whether you are brand new to GCR or are returning to the bosom of the GCR family after a period of absence. Looking forward to running with you in person soon. PRITHVI BOYINAPALLI, PAUL JAMES, HELEN ROBINS, SEAN TAYLOR - good to have you on the team.

Gratitude to TERRY FOWLER from GEMMA SLOAN who asks us to "give a shout out /thanks to Terry Fowler for getting in touch to give me recovery advice and help after a post where I stated that I was getting pain when running - excellent advice and has led to a massive improvement".

Upcoming events: Virtual run events

For those that love a bit of bling or the challenge of a race or competition to spur them on, please find below a list of upcoming virtual races of various distances, a number of which are for charity. Here's an example from GEMMA SLOAN, who's delighted with her medal, that arrived this week.

Don't forget to share results of any virtual events for inclusion in the newsletter.



5k

https://medalmaid.com/index.php?option=com_digicom&view=product&id=784

10k

<https://www.virtualrunneruk.com/product/run-the-rainbow-2020-challenge/>

<https://www.virtualrunneruk.com/product/alder-hey-10k-virtual/>

Half Marathon/Marathon

<https://www.runthrough.co.uk/event/virtual-wimbledon-common/>

<https://www.virtualrunneruk.com/product/half-or-full-spring-marathon-2020/>

High Mileage

<https://endtoend.run/> **(N.B. Starts Monday 1 June)**

Any distance

<https://www.saturnrunning.co.uk/post/run-for-heroes-virtual-challenge>

<https://whitestarclothing.co.uk/products/virtual-races>

<https://racethedistance.com/collections/all-current-challenges>

Complete against someone or collaborate in a team to achieve a goal, or just run solo

<https://findarace.com/plan-b-virtual-race>

Running safely

We love to see club members being active in inventive ways in these difficult times. We urge everyone to exercise safely – not just for their own benefit, but especially that of more vulnerable members of our community and our NHS. As a club we have an opportunity to set the best example in how we exercise.

Government advice is changing regularly. Please check before you run. At the time of writing:

- Limit exercise outdoors to groups of up to six people from different households, following social distancing guidelines;
- Continue to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines when you are outside your home, particularly ensuring you are two metres away from anyone outside your household;
- Stop if necessary to allow others more room to go by, and give a wide berth when overtaking;
- If possible, plan routes that take you away from town centres and out into the countryside, the fields and footpaths are nice and dry so take advantage;
- Generally, places are quite quiet due to social distancing but it is best to avoid busier areas;
- If you cough or sneeze while running, it's extra important to cough or sneeze into your elbow;
- Avoid touching or contacting other surfaces with your hands, like gates or stiles, use your sleeve or gloves to open gates if necessary;
- Wash your hands before you head out and as soon as you get home.

Route planning

Struggling to find a suitable route without your run leaders' guidance? This week's FB page postings have lots of lovely photos and maps (as mentioned above). Also, check out the GCR Strava members group for more inspiration. Strava have created a route planning feature for Summit members. The following apps/websites also come recommended by club members:

- Footpath (app)/ MapAMeter (online): Editors recommendation! Footpaths and distances across the UK and Europe (I've successfully used it in Norway and Italy), with a handy "snap to path" feature for the less-diligent route planners amongst us;
- Map My Run: Also has others saved nearby routes for inspiration.
- Plot A Route: Same as above.

Happy and safe running everyone!

Club Kit

A reminder that new club kit is available from Kit-Meister Richard Somerset. All items cost £20, you can pay by cash or bank transfer, either FB message or text Richard on 07790 591868 or email rich.somerset@ntlworld.com to arrange pick-up. Karen Atkinson also has some women's kit stocks. Kit available includes:

- Men's vests, from XS to 2XL
- Men's t-shirts from XS to 3XL
- Men's long sleeve tops S to XL (please contact Richard if you want XS or 2XL and he will place an order)
- Women's vest from XS to 2XL
- Women's t-shirts from XS to 2XL
- Women's long sleeve tops, from XS to XL

Avery League 2020

The Avery League is currently suspended.

GCR Strava Group

If you'd like to join the GCR Strava community, [click here](#) for details of the group. It's a great way to keep in touch with your fellow club members during this time of isolation.

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 nearly 300 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 Karen Atkinson (Secretary) or Sue Fletcher (Membership) at gcr@gardencityrunners.org.uk, or visit our website <https://www.gardencityrunners.org.uk/>

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