



## Garden City Runners News Release

15 September 2024

### Rebecca on top Down Under Outstanding performance at Sydney Marathon

**Rebecca Barden** travelled Down Under to compete in the *Abbott World Marathon Age Group Championships* as part of the *TCS Sydney Marathon*—Sydney being a candidate to join London, Berlin, Boston, Chicago, New York and Tokyo as one of the Abbott World Marathon Majors.

“They put on a great event for us Age Groupers,” writes Rebecca, from 10,500 miles away, “including a cruise of Sydney Harbour on Friday evening and a group photo on the steps of the Sydney Opera House on Saturday morning.”

Then came the harsh reality, as Rebecca set off bright and early before sunrise to travel to the start at the North Sydney Oval, lining up alongside 25,000 others. “It’s interesting to see the cultural differences in big city marathons,” she notes. “Unlike London, where most runners are swaddled up in warm clothes at the start, here in Sydney it seemed



more common to turn up wearing only the vest and shorts you planned to run in. There were even some runners in nothing but budgie smugglers—quite a disturbing vision—and I was glad that they were faster than me so only the back view presented itself. I also noticed a disparity in signage—the official Abbott volunteers were holding neat signs with kind

messages like 'Well done you're doing great!' while the homegrown Aussie signs were more of the 'If It Was Easy It Would Be Your Mum' variety."

The Age Groupers started at 6.01am, just behind the elite runners. "That threw me off a bit as everyone was going quite fast and we also had the faster runners from the mass start charging up behind us," she reports. "Therefore I went off rather fast, even though this was my 17th marathon and I should have known better!

"The first half felt good ... we ran over the Sydney Harbour Bridge which was amazing, very peaceful and with the sun just rising, before heading out to Darling Harbour and then a long out and back to Kingsford and a loop of Centennial Park. As a finale we ran into the Botanic Gardens, to Mrs Macquarie's Chair, back out and straight down Macquarie Street to the finish."

The course was undulating with quite a few out and back sections, she reports. "That felt like a slog at times although it did mean that the race stayed fairly central and made it easier for supporters to see us several times." She adds that the strong winds "seemed always to be headwinds no matter which direction we were running."

As to Rebecca's own self-appraisal: "I managed to keep a steady pace until about mile 17, then started to suffer about five miles from the end," she admits. "My quads seized up and running downhill, which is usually my special skill, felt very painful; then I developed cramp in my right calf. The last two miles were just a matter of keeping going until the finish by the Opera House steps finally hove into view. After my struggles at the finish I was pleased with my time of 3:37:48 ... not quite a PB but not bad for a testing course."



And her conclusion? "This is a great event in a wonderful city: I recommend it for anyone who can find a reason to be in Sydney in September!" Many congratulations to Rebecca on an awesome time, and magnificent accomplishment generally. *She is pictured with her medal, and brother Martin (from her support crew)!*

## **World Champions Grace the Hatfield 5k Series**

GCR, with Racesonline, hosted the Hatfield 5k Series held at Affinity Water's headquarters, writes **Peter Harvey**.

This year the Series attracted two world champions in the FV65 category. In race two multiple distance world champion and record holder **Sarah Roberts** from Dacorum AC ran a new world age best of all-time for a 74-year-old woman, clocking 21:17. Fellow world age best champion **Yuko Gordon** from Fairlands Valley Spartans was not far behind. Also in race two a new women's course record was set by **Annabel Gummow** from Herts Phoenix AC who timed 16:22. Gummow won the overall Series, comprising three races, whilst **Sam Pedley** from Bishop Stortford was the men's champion, averaging 15½ minutes (Gummow and Pedley were Hertfordshire's 5k Senior champions). **Kate Rennie** from Dacorum AC was the Vets champion and she also claimed bronze in the Seniors. **Steve Prosser** from Herts Phoenix was the men's Vets champion.

The fastest Garden City Runner was **Joe Ansboro** who ran 16:14 in race two—good enough to earn him 4<sup>th</sup> place. **Jessica Timmins** was the fastest women in just over 20 minutes. The Club men's team finished third in the Series team standings, comprising **Adam Wadley, Peter Harvey, Paul Guy** and **Martin Mitchell**. Individual honours went to Harvey who finished 2<sup>nd</sup> MV50 in the Series.

"This year's Series was very popular with a full field of 300 runners for each race," Harvey concludes. "Race one was warm, race two a little windy and race three cool with a breeze. The course is flat and extremely good for facilitating personal bests. A donation of £900 was made to KitAid along with much kit from the runners to support athletes in the poorest countries."

Bearing out Peter Harvey's assessment of a fast track, GCR's **Daniel Follon** writes, "In Race three I ran 22:29—a new PB over 5k. Last time I ran a PB for 5k was 22:49 at Catford parkrun in May 2022, so it was a long time coming!"

*Photos below (clockwise from the top): Sarah Roberts, Jo Ansboro, Peter Harvey, Russell Casey, Katherine Farrell and Carol Reid. Photos by Graham Smith*



## **Suffolk Coastal Path 50K**

Another weekend, another Ultra for the indomitable **Kath Evans**. And not just any run but a challenging coastal path. Kath writes: "This weekend offered the opportunity of a 50k along the stunning Suffolk Coastal Path from Lowestoft to Aldeburgh in the sunshine. This flat and varied terrain took us south through Southwold, Dunwich, to a seafront finish in Aldeburgh, allowing for fish and chips at the famous 'Golden Galleon' and a sea swim to celebrate!

"It was wonderfully organised by Runaway



Runners," she continues. "I was a little concerned about my ability to complete this after last weekend in the Peak District but thankfully my feet held up and gave me a finish time on 7:10:18."

## **Saucony English National Cross Championships 2024**

**Chris Jones** and **Dom Thomas** (*pictured*) were the sole GCR representatives at the *Saucony English National Cross Championships 2024* at Weston Park.

The event was postponed from February due to flooding. However, conditions were very different this time, writes Chris, with blazing September sunshine and firm underfoot.

"The 12.5km Senior Men's race still provided some significant challenges with some long climbs and long grass to sap the energy," he says. "It was a really beautiful location in Capability Brown parkland in front of a 17th Century country house.



Chris finished in 52:14 (270th) and Dom Thomas 59:00 (384th).

## **Easier Said Than Run**

**Aiden** and **Nadine Dwyer** returned to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park on Sunday, for a half-marathon this time dubbed *Easier Said Than Run*.



Nadine writes: "Rather than a race, we were aiming for a slow trot, as Aiden is injured and I'm taking it easy ahead of an event next weekend. The course is an

approx. 5k loop around Hinchingsbrooke Country Park. As it's a 6-hour timed event, you can run as many loops as you like within that timeframe. The course leads you through the woods and alongside the lake. It's a great place for a bit of trail running and we always look forward to coming back here. The last time we were here, it was a real mud fest—we had zero mud this time but there were still plenty of roots and bumps to dodge, which kept things interesting. As always, it was a well organised event and we can't wait to come back for the next event."

## **Stevenage 10K**

Although we've received no report of the weekend's Stevenage 10k, as such, GCR men's captain, **James Huish** finished a creditable 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 37:06. Other GCR's participating included **Steve Ellerd-Elliott** 41:45 (2<sup>nd</sup> in age category and 20<sup>th</sup> overall); **Richard Willcox** 42:55; **Leigh Chapman** 46:45; **Amber-Leigh Marvin** 46:51; **Steve Mowles** 46:59; **Daniel Follon** 47:24; **Keith McLellan** 49:25; **Justin Swallow** 50:52; **Clare Wildey Grover** 51:08; **Robert Dilley** 51:12; **Sarah Durston** 52:01; **Jamie Crilly** 54:23; **Elaine Moore** 55:35; **Richard Brown** 55:49; **Maggie Wright** 56:45; **Brian Robbins** 57:39; **Carol Reid** 58:38; **Elizabeth Dean** 1:00:24; **Miles Hubbard** 1:00:58; **Grant Carnegie Brown** 1:02:25; **Chrissy Johnson** 1:03:08; **Alison Patterson** 1:05:59; **Carly Alwin** 1:11:41; **Maureen Steed** 1:19:25; **Jane Molloy** 1:20:26; **Dawn Redwood** 1:22:53; **Charlotte Jones**:1:28:06 and **Tendy St. Francis** 1:28:07.

Daniel Follon writes, "After completing the mini mile with my 5-year-old son, I ran the 10k in a new PB by about 40 seconds. I was really pleased with the run and think the conditions were ideal today. I ran it last year in 51:11, so nearly four minutes quicker today." I'm sure the earlier warm-up run will have helped.

### **parkrun Tourism**

This weekend, **Rob Cartwright**, **Peter Laphorne** and **Willow Gibson** headed over to Norfolk for a sunny seaside parkrun at Hunstanton Promenade. They couldn't have asked for better weather—clear skies, sunshine and a welcoming breeze!

Writes Willow, "While we were soaking up the views and enjoying the course, we ran into



none other than **Helen Harrison**—who was a popular run leader coordinator for GCR before swapping city life for the coast. She was at Hunstanton with her local running group, gearing up for the Round Norfolk Relay.

"The run itself was a blast, with the sea glistening beside us and even a few windsurfers showing off in the distance. What a way to kick off the weekend!"

Rob finished in 24:48 (20th out of 98 runners); Peter Laphorne 33:20, and Willow Gibson: 39:48.

*The GCR trio are pictured above with Helen.*



## **parkrun Roundup**

There were 92 Garden City Runners out at parkruns this weekend, with **Roy Herbert** completing his 250<sup>th</sup> at Panshanger. Well done to him. Other notable results included a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish for **Robin Newby** at Bedfont Lakes in 20:37. **Wayne Aylott** ran a PB of 32:50 at Gunpowder, while at Panshanger **Matt Baker** (20:19) was the only GCR to finish inside the top 10, where **Daniel Follon** PB'd in 22:50 and **Amber-Leigh Marvin** did likewise in 25:51. Congratulations to them. At Cassiobury, **Laura Sach** also PB'd in 25:25 and at Tooting Common **Louise O'Donnell** recorded her best time of 35:22. At Jersey Farm the ever-reliable **Paul Guy** finished 7<sup>th</sup> in 18:43, and **Ceri Pollard** PB'd in **36:35**. Full results for GCRs participating in Saturday's parkruns can be found [here](#).

## **GCR Christmas Party: Last call!**

This is the final opportunity for GCRs to book tickets for the Club's Christmas party. At close of play Monday any tickets left unsold will be released, writes **Sophie Packman**. Please email her with your food order (*Christmas menu attached*) and send a £20 deposit (or full amount £55).

The event takes place on December 6<sup>th</sup>, at The View, Welwyn (Panshanger Golf Club formerly, and now run by Tewinbury Farm). The total cost of £55 per person includes a glass of fizz or beer on arrival, a three-course dinner and DJ.

This invitation is open to GCR's only and/or GCR +1. Deposits should be sent to: [sophie.packman@meuk.mee.com](mailto:sophie.packman@meuk.mee.com) along with food order (providing your name as reference). Bank details: Nationwide. Anne-Sophie Packman. Sort Code: 070806. Acc No: 34950676. Christmas party venue/details: [Christmas 2024 – The View \(theviewwelwyn.co.uk\)](#). The View, Old Hens Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 2ED.



## **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	18 <sup>th</sup> July
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	*cancelled*	SXCL Royston (Race #5 of 2023-2024 season)	Therfield Heath, Royston	Free	--
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	tbc	Completed
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	4 <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	Ridgway Academy, WGC	Free	Club will send out details via email
14	18 <sup>th</sup> July	FVS 3k Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email
15 (V)	4 <sup>th</sup> August	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)	13 <sup>th</sup> October	SXCL #1	Cheshunt	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	27 <sup>th</sup> October	SXCL #2	Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
21	3 <sup>rd</sup> November	SXCL #3	Trent Park	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	15 December	SXCL #4	Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email

## **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. Those attending by car are asked to **park in the school car park (Herns Lane)** and not the Sports Centre car park (Appletree Way).

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
11k	5 – 5:30	8 – 8:30

## **Interval Sessions: Tuesdays 6:45pm start from various locations**

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 6:20pm for 6.30pm start, Campus West**

Thursday group runs generally meet at Campus West on the steps outside the library. The What3Words location for the start is for start location: <https://w3w.co/eager.bliss.stuff>. 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
7-8km	Route to take approximately an hour
9-10km	Route to take approximately an hour
Introduction to intervals	This is often time-based intervals rather than distance

## **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. See club website for photos. Vests, t-shirts and long sleeved tops are £21 jackets 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/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/gardencityrunners/)

*Please send reports of races and milestones, with photos if available, before 7pm Sunday evening for (almost) guaranteed inclusion, to [results@gardencityrunners.org.uk](mailto:results@gardencityrunners.org.uk)*

