



## Garden City Runners News Release

**17 November 2024**

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)

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## **Chiltern Ridge Winter 50k Ultra**

On Saturday **Martin Mitchell** (*pictured, right*) took part in the Chiltern Ridge Winter 50K Ultra organised by Runaway Racing.

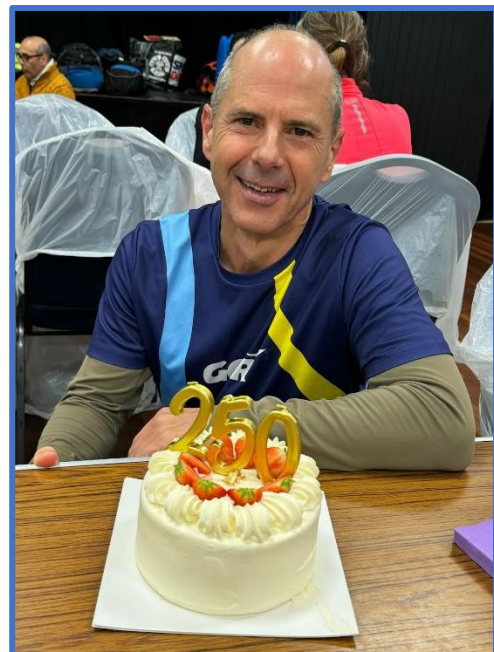
Martin writes: "It was a well organised event that started in Berkhamsted and looped through the Chiltern hills. The weather wasn't great and it was a bit treacherous going through the woods trying to avoid tripping over tree roots covered by leaves. I struggled for the first 10k but after a couple of energy gels I got into a good rhythm and managed to finish in 16<sup>th</sup> place with a time of 4:22:27, knocking off over 20 minutes of my 50k P."



## **Shillington Shuffle**

**Nick Genever** (*pictured, right*) has sent in this report of his most recent event, and summarising his very impressive marathon/ultra career to date. Nick writes: "The Shillington Shuffle is an LDWA challenge event following trails between the villages of Barton-le-Clay, Lilley, Pirton, Meppershall, and Shillington. Andrew Ackrill & Stuart Whitford joined me for the marathon. I completed the marathon distance in 4:18 and it was my 250<sup>th</sup> marathon. I have now run 11 road marathons, 193 trail marathons, and 46 ultras - a total of 7,000 miles and 115 miles of ascent.

I ran 2 road marathons in 1982 & 1983 but I didn't run another one for 24 years. I took up trail running and my 5<sup>th</sup> race was the UTMB CCC 86k Ultra in 2007. Since then I've seen a lot of the



British countryside, and I have also run in Canada, USA, Austria, Norway, and Iceland. In the early years I concentrated on long ultras and I had 2 unsuccessful attempts at the UTMB. After that I decided to limit myself to trail marathons and 50k ultras. I'm happiest doing low-key self-navigation races in hilly and challenging terrain.

My 100<sup>th</sup> was at Leila's Run in 2016 and 3 years later I was back at Leila's Run for my 200<sup>th</sup>. Progress slowed due to the pandemic and 2 injuries, so from June I've been eager to make up for lost time and get to 250 as quickly as possible, completing 17 in 5 months."



*(l to r: Nick Genever, Stuart Whitford and Andrew Ackrill)*

## **Dirt Half**

On Saturday **Ann Hayden, Caroline O'Dwyer, Gail Munro, John McDowell, Thippi Rashleigh** and **Alison Meaden** travelled to Leighton Buzzard to take part in the Dirt Half Challenge.

This trail half marathon started off very sedately along the tow path of the Grand Union Canal. For the most part dry and firm, it was deceptively hard going in trail shoes. The trail shoes were need however, as after around 4 miles the route left the canal and we encountered plenty of steep climbs up rugged paths and some very scenic sections, swooshing through the leaves in woods.

Just after the 9-mile point it was lovely to see fellow GCR, **Lee Woods** on the trail. This was not his first time running this event and it was very encouraging to be told by him that we were near the top of the last hill.

After the woods and the hills we descended into fields and a very muddy path alongside a reed bed. It was here that Thippi earned herself the nickname Thippi One Sock, after neatly dipping her left leg deep in the mud almost up to her knee.

The final section saw us rejoin the tow path to the finish. Encouragement from bystanders included a small pug offering up high fives (with some help from its owner).



This was a friendly, well-organised event with good facilities at the start and finish. Preparation for the event has also been very enjoyable with some lovely trail routes in the last few weeks with fellow GCRs. We have also had some laughter trying to remember the name of the event. Dirt Half, not Dirty Half!



## St Neots Half Marathon

**Rebecca Barden** (*pictured, below*) reports on getting a little tied up getting to her most recent race:

"I ran the St Neots Half marathon this morning. After a slightly stressful journey to the start, I arrived at the start line with only two minutes to spare - just long enough to do the traditional retying of the trainer laces. The course consists of two loops round country roads to the east of St Neots, passing twice through the village of Abbotsley with a testing uphill. I quite enjoyed the undulation and there was friendly support around the course, but found the long stretches along country roads with blustery head winds a challenge, particularly in the second half of the race. Having slogged my way to mile 11, I managed to speed up a bit in the final few miles and finished in 1:42:46, my second best time at this event, and third in my age group.

Also running for GCR was **Sarah Merrigan** who finished in 2:10:33.



## **parkrun roundup**

115 GCRs took part in parkruns this Saturday. 42 GCRs took in the panoramic views of Panshanger, where **Katherine Lees, Lucy Iles, Katy Healy** and **Clare Wildey** got the 2, 4, 6, 8 for the ladies, in 22:56, 24:27, 24:40 and 25:18, respectively (with Katherine reaching her 25<sup>th</sup> parkrun milestone). **Matthew Renney** and **Daniel Follon, Keith Mclellan, Brian Robbins**, and **Nichola Few** scored new course PBs of 22:33, 22:46, 23:33, 27:40, and 31:01, respectively.

Top 10 finishers elsewhere were as follows:

- **Neil Hume** was 4<sup>th</sup> man (5<sup>th</sup> overall) at Southsea in 17:59
- **Amber-Leigh Marvin** was 4<sup>th</sup> lady at Rickmansworth in a new PB of 21:06
- **Jamie Rose** was 6<sup>th</sup> at Congleton in 18:48
- **Tom Buzzard** and **Andrew Knight** were 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at Gunpowder in 18:31 and 19:08, respectively
- **Rob Casserley** was 10<sup>th</sup> at Osterley in 19:20
- **Jess Timmins** was 3<sup>rd</sup> lady at Jersey Farm in 22:25
- **Joanne Grant** was 6<sup>th</sup> lady at Sunny Hill in 28:59
- **Katharine Farrell** was 6<sup>th</sup> lady at Tsurumi Ryokuchi in 22:25

Course PBs were achieved by **Jessica Plant** (21:05) and **Maisie Potter** (31:00) at Stevenage, **Adam Wadley** (19:44) and **Jess Buzzard** (25:56) at Gunpowder, **Martyn Perrin** at Harlow in 23:07, **Mark Seaman** at Cassiobury in 26:52.

Other parkrun locations attended by touring GCRs were: Aldenham, Barnstaple, Buckingham, Castle Park, Colney Lane, Cyclopark, Dulwich, Franschoek, Great Denham, Hackney Marshes, Hove Promenade, Leavesden Country, Marple, Mildenhall Hub, Mile End, Nonsuch, Northala Fields, Oak Hill, St Albans, Three Brooks, Tooting Common, Walmer and Deal Seafront, Wimpole Estate, Zuurfontein

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

## **Other Dates for the Diary**

Sophie also gives indication of two other exciting upcoming events.

- 6 December GCR Christmas Party Night at The View (7pm)
- 18 December the GCR London Marathon Draw will take place, from 7pm upstairs at Postinos Lounge (with first drink free). Sophie invites anyone who wants to join her and pay for their food ahead to let her know.
- 15 March 2025 is the date for next year's GCR Awards Night. Venue to be confirmed.

## 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:

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

## 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!

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	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)	8 December	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 – 6:15	9 – 10
11k	5 – 5:30	8 – 8:30

## **Hill Reps – Tuesdays 6:30pm**

With XC season in full swing now, **Sid Valentine** and **Dom Thomas** are hosting hill repeat training sessions.

This week (Tuesday 19 November) the session, hosted by Dom, will be at Harwood Hill / Sewells. Meet at Campus West at 6:30 and jog to venue for WU & start drills 6:40. This week we're doing a pyramid session with 30 / 60 / 75 / 90 / 75 / 60 / 75 / 90 / 75 / 60 / 30 second efforts with recover to regroup before next rep. Session is on road which is street lit but please bring head torches / high viz

what3words location for venue meeting point: <https://w3w.co/digs.drain.shop>

These sessions will be open to all members of the club at all paces and are a good way to improve your overall stamina and performance.

You may require a sports watch or timer but if you have not got either of these do not worry you can still come and join in the fun (please see Sid or Dom for the definition of 'fun').

Please be sure to wear bright clothing and or head torches.

## **Interval Sessions: Tuesdays 6:45pm start, various locations in Welwyn Garden City**

*Intervals this coming Tuesday 19 November will be at Watchmead. We will be doing a mixture of timed efforts ranging from 1min to 3mins. Meet at the Ridgeway at 6:30pm to warm up of at the venue at 6:45 already warmed up.*

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 run meets 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.

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**New Kit Alert!!** We've heard you asking..... so we have been working very hard behind the scenes and excited to present to you 3 new GCR kit items!

- GCR Quarter Zip top
- GCR Hoodie
- GCR Buffs

Please keep your eye on your emails and the Facebook page this week for designs, prices and details of how to pre-order!

I (Alex Faulkner) will be at group run at the Ridgeway on Tuesday 19th Nov and track on Thursday 21st Nov if you have any questions. I will also bring will samples of the quarter zip material and buff if you wish to feel. I have the quarter zips in a size women's S/10 and M/12 if you also wish to try on (sorry I don't have any more sample sizes- I have tried to request others!).

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**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/)