



Garden City Runners News Release

20 October 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

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Sunday League Cross Country – Race #1 Hoddesdon

Sunday 13th October saw the first race in the 2024/2025 cross country season, held in Hoddesdon at Barclay Park. The combined GCR Men's and Women's teams finished strongly in second position with 266 points, behind St Albans (237 points) and holding Royston Runners to third (280 points).

GCR came 4th in the women's A teams (**Martha Hall, Rebecca Barden, Lucy Iles, Sarah Durston** and **Sophie Packman**), with our next batch of finishers (**Clare Grover, Jen Williams, Elizabeth Dean**) scoring 3rd out of the B teams. GCR's women scored 2nd in the Masters teams (**Martha Hall, Rebecca Barden, Lucy Iles**).

GCR men were in fine form with our A team (**Peter Harvey, Jamie Rose, James Huish, Bruce Judge, Richard Taylor, Chris Eland, Matt Baker, Nick Summers**) scoring 2nd position and our B team (**Daniel Hodson, Steve Ellerd-Elliott, Dom Thomas, John McDowall, Justin Hill**) scoring 1st position. GCR men scored 2nd in the Masters teams (**Peter Harvey, Bruce Judge, Richard Taylor, Chris Eland**).

Results of the SLXC are posted on the [Run Herts website](#) a few days after each race.



Stevenage Marathon and Half Marathon

There comes a time, every 10 years, when not only do you have the opportunity to run the underpasses of Stevenage for a half marathon distance, but you can do a full marathon's worth of underpasses. And so it came to (under)pass on a very rainy and windy day in the midst of Hurricane Ashley, that GCRs took to the mean streets of Stevenage to show that they would not be surpassed or under the weather.

Indeed, both the GCR Men and Women came home with gold team titles and individual honours.

In the marathon race, **Peter Harvey** was 6th overall, 1st open MV50, and 2nd Herts MV50 in 3:03:08 which was 10 seconds faster than he did 10 years ago when the Stevenage Marathon was last held. **Steven Coetzee** was 3rd Herts MV40. Honorable mention to **Katharine Farrell** (first GCR lady home) 4th lady in the Herts Seniors race.

In the half marathon race, GCR men (**Matt Baker, Adam Wadley, Steve Mowles, Keith McLellan**) and women (**Clare Wildey Grover, Sophie Packman, Sarah Durston**) took the Herts Vets Team gold awards. Other awards went to:

- **Felicity Wadley** 1st open FV40, 1st Herts FV35
- **Clare Wildey Grover and Sophie Packman** were 2nd and 3rd Herts FV45s
- **Joe Ainsbro** 3rd overall
- **Martin Mitchell** 2nd open MV40, 1st Herts MV40
- **Matt Baker** 3rd Herts MV40
- **John McDowall** 3rd Herts MV50
- **Terry Fowler** 3rd Herts MV60: "Despite being asked by the organisers (Fairland Valley Spartans) to do pacemaking duties, taking up the 1:50 pace, I amazingly managed to get a V60 County Bronze medal. Very pleasant surprise."

Carol Reid was 2nd FV60 in the open race.

Full results (which are slightly complex with the open and County placings, plus teams needing to comprise EA-registered athletes) are available [here](#).

Marathon Results				
	Peter HARVEY	3:03:08	Katharine FARRELL	3:54:57
	Stephen COETZEE	3:28:32	Anna LILLIE	4:27:17
	Philip BROOKS	3:54:33	Thippawan RASHLEIGH	5:44:42
	Spencer WHITE	3:57:11	Charlotte JONES	6:33:11
	Matthew RENNEY	3:57:52		
	Malcolm BARON	3:57:20		
	Andrew HARPER	4:07:00		
	Aiden DWYER	4:58:05		
Half Marathon Results				
	Joe ANSBRO	1:18:32	Felicity WADLEY	1:49:37
	Martin MITCHELL	1:27:35	Clare WILDEY GROVER	1:51:34
	Andrew KNIGHT	1:28:10	Sophie PACKMAN	1:53:57
	Matt BAKER	1:28:56	Sarah DURSTON	2:00:03
	Adam WADLEY	1:30:13	Maggie WRIGHT	2:04:54
	John MCDOWALL	1:38:44	Carol REID	2:15:16
	Daniel GORDON	1:43:16	Elizabeth DEAN	2:24:08
	Steve MOWLES	1:46:19		
	Lee CHAPMAN	1:46:58		
	Terry FOWLER	1:49:15		
	Keith MCLELLAN	1:49:22		
	Robert DILLEY	1:57:34		
	Robin CATTLE	2:17:54		



(Above: Sophie Packman, Clare Wildey Grover and Martin Mitchell with their county medals)

Amsterdam Marathon and Half Marathon

Several GCRs spent the weekend in Amsterdam chasing marathon and half marathon dreams. **Hannah Frank** recounts her successful day of racing:

"As I write I'm on the train back from Amsterdam with Florence asleep on my lap. I'm meant to be teaching tomorrow but I might give that a miss.

As many of you know, my husband kindly bought me the Amsterdam Marathon as a birthday present this year. His reason being he was fed up of hearing my moan about not running under 4 hours.

So I decided to actually train properly this time. I bought in to a training plan and set myself a target pace. Most of my long runs were done on my own, other than the last few with Helen Stafford (a wonderful training companion). I spent a number of Thursday evenings doing laps of Gosling track, watching in awe of all the incredible GCRs putting in great sessions.

Race day came around very quickly. It was cool with a light breeze. Perfect for me. I set off steady and then my watch went into melt down. Luckily I had my phone on me so I could ring Mat who text me my pace every once in a while. Eventually my watch settled down and before I knew it I was 20 miles in. The crowds were incredible, there was support throughout the whole race. I even had the pleasure of Mat and Flo cycling next to me for a mile. Drink stations were crazy but I managed to navigate my way through without taking a cup to the face.

With 4 miles to go I felt good so I thought I'd go a little faster, but was cautious of not blowing up too soon. As the miles ticked off I got a bit quicker and eventually got to the entrance of the Olympic stadium (at which point I had an emotion wobble). With 200m to go I knew it would be very tight if I wanted to dip under 3:50. I dug deep, thought of all those track laps and sprinted.

I came in at 3:49:57. My target was 4 hours and I achieved a 28 minute PB.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me on runs and donated to Essex and Herts Air Ambulance in memory of one of my students."

Also participating in the marathon were **Richard Robinson** and **James Dunmore** (*pictured below*). Richard reports: "A great marathon in a great city. Exceptional support along the whole course. A marathon to highly recommend. We both had great runs - James finished in 3:37 and I came in 3:30 for a big 17 minute PB."

Richard Darley (*pictured below, right*) travelled to Amsterdam to compete in the Half Marathon. Having managed a sub 2-hour time in 2023, this year's aim was to accompany his younger brother James as he tackled his first race at the half marathon distance. Unfortunately some tight calves and sore hips put pay to James's 2:20 target but they did cross the line together in about 2:45.

Richard reports that local support was very boisterous, especially in those sections passing through the city centre, although he suspects this may be because by the time the two of them ran past, a few Sunday lunchtime shandies may have been partaken. A great event, very well organised and the 1pm start for the half makes for a very civilised Sunday breakfast

Lee Wood (*picturd below, with new Dutch friends*) also took part in the Amsterdam Half, reporting: "I'd entered the full [marathon] but my various health problems meant that was never going to happen. Thankfully the Dutch are as relaxed with race organisation as they are most things and confirmed weeks ago that I could simply collect my number and then start the half [marathon] instead.

To be honest the run was a struggle, I wasn't feeling great, the start pens felt like I was being kettled and it was strange to start a race at 2:00 in the afternoon!

Thankfully I enjoyed the latter part of the run much more once there were bigger crowds and a better atmosphere, a highlight was being offered and accepting a pint from some Dutch spectators! Well until they challenged me to down it in one!"



Bilbao Night Marathon

Because the night belongs to runners, **Miles Hubbard** has sent us this report: "A bit of a different race for our group including my wife, brother and friends this weekend. The Bilbao Night Marathon begins at 7pm at the impressive San Mames stadium, follows a couple of different routes through the city and along the river banks before finishing at the iconic Guggenheim. Most of us opted for the half so we could finish with plenty of evening remaining to enjoy Cañas and Pintxos!

We're already planning on coming again next year with a bigger group as we've had such a fun weekend."

Yorkshire Marathon

Katy Healy was up in God's own country this weekend for the Yorkshire marathon. She writes: "It was a very blustery and foreboding start to the day with rather a bleak weather forecast, but no fretting or moaning allowed, I was in Yorkshire. Getting on with it was the only option. Really well organised start and a great route: good support in parts especially around the centre of York, the early part of the route taking in the town centre, York Minster and some cobbles before heading out to the villages around York. Somewhere in this section the heavens opened and the winds got very gusty which made for some tough conditions but very enjoyable day out."

And by 'eck, she did it in a reet good time of 4:06.

Running Tribe Races

Nadine Dwyer (*pictured below, with friend*) sent in another report of weekend racing adventures:

"On Saturday, I made my way back to Running Tribe Races in Buckinghamshire to run a marathon with a friend. Little did we know that we were going to be in for a rather character building day. The day started with biblical rain lasting several hours and us having to navigate flooded roads and muddy, slippery trail sections. It didn't bother us too much though as we were in no rush thanks to a generous cut off and we were really just out for a good old catch up, rather than an actual race.

I've done 7 of their events now and they only seem to get a very small number of runners, possibly because few people are aware of their events: Running Tribe Races are low key timed races and take place once a month. Up to now, they only put on events between October and March but they are now going to offer these events all year round. There are 3 different courses which they alternate - all are a mix of road and trail and are approx 10k long and you can do as many or as little loops as you like within the 9hr time limit. A great event option not far from us and it would be great to see some GCRs there."

parkrun roundup

90 GCRs took part in parkruns this Saturday. 23 GCRs took in the panoramic views of Panshanger, where **Lauren Potter** celebrated the milestone of her 250th parkrun by finishing 5th lady in 24:04. **Rebecca Barden** was 6th lady in 24:38, with **Steve Ellerd-Elliott** finishing 10th man in 21:18. **Ran Takhar** reached the milestone of her 25th parkrun.

Top 10 finishers elsewhere were as follows:

- **Jess Timmins** was 1st lady at St Albans in 23:04
- **David Ivie** was 7th at Westmill in 23:38
- **Andrew Holt** was 7th at Stevenage in 21:18
- **Helen Stafford** was 6th lady at Gunpowder in a new course PB of 22:50, and **Laura Storer** was 9th lady in 24:28
- **Jo Grant, Sam Males, Louise Beale, Alison Paterson** and **Michelle Cotter** were 2nd, 6th, 8th, 9th and 10th ladies at Aldenham in 27:33, 30:16, 30:41, 31:08 and 31:19, respectively.
- **Bruce Judge** was 5th at Castle Park in 19:10
- **Rob Casserley** was 7th at Quakers Walk in 20:13

Course PBs were achieved by **Maisie Potter** at Stevenage (33:01), **Steven Rivett** at Huntingdon (24:14), **Steven Rivett** at Pocket (24:12).

Willow Gibson and **Samantha Hastie** enjoyed their first visit to Y Promenâd parkrun. Though it was a quick trip, they loved every minute and are already planning to return to Wales! Out of 121 participants, 81 were first-timers, many aiming for alphabet challenges. Congratulations to Samantha for completing her 2nd alphabet! She only started running in Jan 2022, so this is pretty impressive!

The scenic course featured views of the river Usk and the Brecon Beacons, with a mix of tarmac and grass (parts of the path were submerged in water but that made it more fun!).

Free parking, toilets and nearby cafes make it a convenient location to run.



Lee Wood (*pictured below*) took advantage of being in Amsterdam for the half marathon, and squeezed in a parkrun the day before: "I did Amsterdam Bos on Saturday having decided a lie in and being back at my hotel before they stopped serving breakfast was a better plan than chasing the Z that was the original plan! A lovely flat course through a large park on the edge of Amsterdam, would definitely recommend!"

Other parkrun locations attended by touring GCRs were: Amsterdamse Bos, Barnstaple, Bicester, Black Park, Dalby Forest, Dinton Pastures, Fountains Abbey, Jersey Farm, Lingwood, Malling Rec, Markeaton, Oak Hill, Princes, Rickmansworth, Street, Tooting Common, Upton House, Wickford Memorial, Y Promenâd parkrun, Aberhonddu

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

GCR Christmas Party

Sophie Packman says she still has some tickets remaining for the GCR Christmas Party on 6 December (on a first come first serve basis). Please email her your food choice (sophie.packman@meuk.mee.com) and send a deposit of £20 or full amount £55 asap (drink on arrival, plus three-course dinner & DJ).

Menu and venue details on the link. <https://www.theviewwelwyn.co.uk/christmas-2024/>

Bank details: Name: Anne-Sophie Packman. Sort code: 070806. Account number: 34950676

Other Dates for the Diary

Sophie also gives indication of two other exciting upcoming events.

- 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 st January
2	Watford Half	4 th February
3	Panshanger parkrun	9 th March
4	Flitwick 10k	14 th April
5	St Albans Half	9 th June
6	FVS 3k Relay	End July (tbc)
7	Stevenage 10k	15 th September
8	ATW Hatfield 5	24 th 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 st January	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£20.00 aff.	Completed
2	4 th 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 th March	Panshanger parkrun	Panshanger Park	Free	Completed
5	24 th 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 th April	Flitwick 10k	Flitwick	£18.00 aff.	Completed
7	6 th May	Kimpton Fun Run 10k	Kimpton	tbc	Completed
8	15 th May	MWRRL #1	Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email
9	23 rd May	MWRRL #2	Ware	Free	Club will send out details via email
10	4 th June	MWRRL #3	Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
11	27 th June	MWRRL #4	Trent Park	Free	Club will send out details via email
12 (V)	30 th June	Welwyn 10k	Panshanger Park	tbc	Details tbc
13 (V)	10 th July	MWRRL Mob Match	Ridgway Academy, WGC	Free	Club will send out details via email
14	18 th July	FVS 3k Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	Free	Club will send out details via email
15 (V)	4 th August	GCR Centenary 20.2k	WGC Centenary Route	Free	Club will send out details via email
16 (V)	4 th September	Hatfield 5k #2 (Vets)	Hatfield	tbc	Details tbc
17	15 th September	Stevenage 10k	Stevenage	£18.00 aff.	Register here
18 (V)	13 th October	SXCL #1	Cheshunt	Free	Club will send out details via email
19	20 th October	Stevenage Half Marathon & Marathon	Stevenage	tbc	Register here
20	27 th October	SXCL #2	Royston	Free	Club will send out details via email
21	3 rd November	SXCL #3	Trent Park	Free	Club will send out details via email
22	24 th November	Hatfield 5	Hatfield	£22.00 early-bird aff.	Register here
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

***new* 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 22 October) the session, hosted by Dom, will be at Old Herns Lane (the side of Panshanger Golf course). Meet at Ridgeway Academy at 6:30 and jog to venue for WU & start drills 6:40. Given Royston XC coming up next Sunday we will try:

12 x reps alternating between 90 secs & 30 secs - 6 of each.

Sets at 70% effort - not a flat out sprint.

what3words location for venue meeting point: <https://w3w.co/wiring.asks.intro>

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 will be at Turmore Dale/ Fearnley Road. The session is 5-6x Split 1000m. Run the loop from Turmore Dale down Fearnley Road / turn left and then left

again at Barleycroft/ take left back to start — 30secs recovery/ run 200m through the middle to end of Fearnley Road/ rest 1min 30 then go again in the same direction (finish where you start). Note : you will then run your next 200m in the opposite direction back to the Turmore Dale end of Fearnley Road.

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.

This week we'll be doing a 3km time trial, in four waves. This will be a good chance for you to test your race pace over a short distance, and help you work out a realistic target for yourself at the next Resolution 5K at on the Ridlins track at Stevenage on Weds 30 October
*3K TT starts at 45 sec intervals: **wave #1** (target outside 13:30); **wave #2** (target 12:15 to 13:30); **wave #3** (target 11:15 to 12:15); **Wave #4** (target under 11:15). Then 400m jog / 5 min recovery*

Then back in your normal groups for keirin: Start steady, work together as a group to increase the pace gently, until the final lap free-for-all: Group 1 - 3 laps; Group 2 - 4 laps; Group 3 - 5 laps; Group 4 - 6 laps

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 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/