



Garden City Runners News Release

7 May 2023

Please send reports of races and milestones, with photos if available, before early Sunday evening for (almost) guaranteed inclusion, to results@gardencityrunners.org.uk

St Illtyds Ultra



ALEX YATES ran the St Illtyds 50km Ultra Marathon on Sunday, Alex reports, "Highly recommended if you like fields full of wildflowers, woods filled with bluebells, big hills and the best views of the South Wales coast. Really well organised, with friendly aid stations and markers along the whole out and back course. There were also a few marshals and a gpx for gadgety people. Medal, t shirt and a bottle of beer for all participants."

Chiltern Ridge Ultra

Also putting in the miles was NICK GENEVER who completed The Chiltern Ridge Ultra Trail, a 50k race along the Ridgeway, Chiltern Way and the Ashridge Estate with a 877m total ascent. Nick reports that after Saturday's rain the paths were very muddy and waterlogged and the race start was delayed because of parking congestion and many cars had to be pushed out of the mud. Nick finished in 13th place out of 190 starters, 1st V60 and ahead of the 1st V50.

Peter flies in for the Routeburn Classic

PETER JASKO sent in this report from New Zealand.

"When I reached out to a business buddy to arrange to meet, little did I know that the ideal place was on an iconic 20-mile trail run. Normally this race is booked out, but I was super lucky to be able to book last Tuesday, giving me 3 days for training i.e., taper.

As I arrived in late the day before, I joined the 15% of runners who opted to helicopter to the start and back from the finish. The rides were amazing in themselves.



The race started at 8:35am, but I was up at 5:45am to prep and get to the chopper. Combined with 11-hour time difference from the UK, this left me a bit jetlagged, which affected my balance over the long technical sections where you were constantly looking for the best foot placement.

The first ascent ranges through some Entish rain forest. It was here that a took a step and my leg plunged down as there was any solid ground there. Saved myself with a solid second leg and hands. Bit scary. The Routeburn trail is easy to follow. It is stony, steep, windy making it a technical challenge to move fast on it. I twisted my ankle a couple of times and clipped toes in rocks but managed to save without falling. I strongly suspect my medium trail shoes cause me to clip on rocks more often.



After the first two ascents, there was a long undulating section. A smaller final ascent and then a lovely 10k downhill in.

This was a tough event. The jetlag, a slightly dodgy knee and elevation combined to make it feel hard. I also got cramp just 10miles in, which is really unusual for me. My time of 5:12 also suffered from stopping to look at the

awesome scenery and take photos. If you are ever in Queenstown, this makes an excellent hiking route."

Letchworth Greenway Half Marathon



James, Richard and Rob looking very fresh after the run

Sunday morning saw three GCRs venture the short distance up the A1 to run in North Herts Road Runners' Letchworth Greenway Half Marathon, a low-key event which prides itself on not presenting any medals, t-shirts or any of the usual paraphernalia which accompany more high-profile events. There is however plenty of cake and the chance to run around Letchworth Garden City and, providing you take all the corners as widely as possible, just about clock up the 13.1 mile half marathon distance.

ROB DILLEY was first GCR over the line in 1:50:42 followed by JAMES AITCHISON in 2:04:58, whilst bringing up the rear RICHARD DARLEY got round in a time of 2:16:50.

Bluebell Trail Run

Last Sunday 30th April 2023, SHARON STEPHENS, DEBBIE PIERSON and PETER LAPTHORNE travelled down to Tring, and ran the Bluebell Trail Run in the Forest of Ashbridge, in the Chiltern Hills. Sharon reports that (The) running conditions were good, there were some challenging hills but very enjoyable. This was a guided run so lots of knowledge was given on the general history of the area, and the beautiful bluebells.



Peter & Debbie ready to go



Sharon in search of bluebells

Barbara & Lucy Tackle Gozo

GCR's Mediterranean Correspondents BARBARA KUBOS-LABIAK and LUCY ILES Barbara sent the following race reports from the Maltese island of Gozo where they had entered the XTERRA Gozo Trails races; Barbara the 50k Ultra and Lucy the 21k Half Marathon.

Barbara ...



I entered the 50k ultra last year, I loved the island of Gozo (flight to Malta followed by a ferry to Gozo) and really wanted to have a go at running around it. 50k is my favourite, most comfortable distance, so all made perfect sense. Having been to the island before I knew how rocky and steep the paths were, so knew what to expect.

What I didn't expect is that from our UK temperatures of 5-10 degrees I'd end up in boiling 30, which was sudden and unexpected even to the locals - I've spoken with a few Gozitans about it after the race. I don't cope well in hot weather, never have - back home I have actually pulled out of races when I knew it was going to be a hot day. Here the flights and B&B were booked, the forecast showed 22-25 plus there would be the breeze from the sea!

I set off at 8am - first thing I noticed was how very few women there were compared to our ultra races back home. I felt ok and strong for the first 15k, lots of climbs on the rocks, felt very hot but ok. Then it started - I began to feel dizzy from the heat, then tummy cramps kicked in, then my left arm started going numb, I felt sick - I realised this was my body simply not coping with the heat. My legs felt absolutely fine, ready for a long run. I got to the check point at 20.5k and was advised to pull out. The organisers told me how more people than before have been pulling out, not coping with the heat.

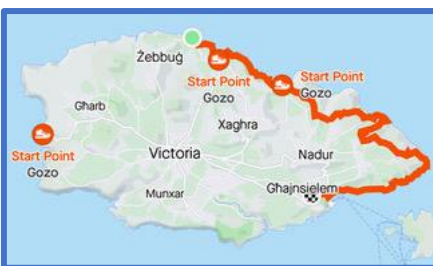


I feel it's just another lesson about my body - one where it wasn't at all about my legs being able to do it (otherwise it always is and I know so well how to cope with it) but rather about something I completely couldn't control. I'm glad I did the half marathon distance, saw a lovely part of the island and met some amazing people on the

way, including a Dutch guy who travels around the world looking for ultras. Also - feeling happy with myself that I stopped. Just glad I did.

Lucy ...

Barbara mentioned a few months ago she was doing the 50k ultra, and that I should consider the half marathon option. Barbara's trail adventures have interested me, so I thought I'd challenge myself to a little adventure and booked myself in for the 21k race... without having really read up on the race/terrain/elevation/anything at all...



As the date got nearer, and I read the reviews of the race ("challenging uphills and most of the time technically demanding", "tough", "extremely challenging route") and looked at the photos and videos from last year, I realised that perhaps this event was meant for serious/elite athletes. I am neither ☐. Why would someone travel

internationally for a race unless they were really good?! I started thinking I'd bitten off more than I could chew. I tumbled down a spiral of self-doubt and had a huge crisis of confidence, which almost made me not go at all.

A few pep talks from my best friend and a stern talking to from myself ("you will really regret not giving it a go"), and I got myself on the flight.



The morning itself dawned warm and sunny. Race HQ in Ghajnsielem's main square saw the athletes congregating for the 50k start (and last-minute pick-up of race packs). I saw Barbara start her race, and then nervously waited around for the minibuses to take the 21k runners over to our start point on the other side of the island. Whilst the 50k ultra is a whole circuit of the island, the half

marathon option consists of the last 21k section of the ultra. We started at 10:30am in Xwejni on the north side of the island. It was already getting very hot - definitely hotter than the 20C the forecast had been predicting.

Almost as soon as I set off, I felt much more at ease than I expected. Even being careful to pace myself (something I'm not very good at), I wasn't left for dust by the others, and even started daring to hope I wouldn't finish last. The terrain was, per the reviews and the photos, challenging, demanding and tough. Lots of scrambling and climbing up and down rocky sections, very uneven and overgrown trails with shrubs and bushes waiting to trip you, loose stones and jagged rocks waiting to ruin your ankles, and even a beach to cross. But what the reviews hadn't prepared me for were how absolutely stunning the scenery was and how much fun it was! I loved every minute of it, and was so pleased I'd made myself do it.

When I made it back to Ghajnsielem and crossed the finish line I felt very emotional about what I'd achieved, having thought I'd never do it, or never complete it, or come last. In fact, I very nearly cried because I didn't want the experience to be over! I was over the moon when I checked the results and realised how I'd done: Gun 2:56:07, chip 2:55:55, 64/119 overall, 16/44 women and first in my (F40-44) age category. Feeling very happy now despite ridiculous sunburn on my ankles between bottom of leggings and top of socks (Note to self for next sunny run...).



Parkrun roundup

No doubt wishing to gear up for that extra slice of Coronation Quiche later in the day, there were plenty of GCR runners out taking on a weekly 5k run with 106 members rocking up to thirty different parkruns up and down the kingdom.

KATHARINE FARRELL was First Lady home at Presint 18 in a time of 22:50 while in Stevenage, ZOE STEPHENS was second lady in 21:17. DANIEL PUDNER took the third place spot in Lowestoft (18:25) and JAMES HUIISH took the same position at Upton Court just a few seconds quicker (18:18).

At ever popular Panshanger GCR members took six of the first 20 places with THOMAS BUZZARD crossing the line 19:28 to take third place and ANNE-SOPHIE PACKMAN was first GCR lady, and fourth lady overall, in a PB time of 24:44.

There were PBs for Chris Baylis and Chris Dungate in St Albans, Richard Darley, William Rial and Dave Faulkner at Stevenage, Dom Thomas at Southwark, Gail Munro at Panshanger and Alexandra Faulkner at University Parks.



Finally, Captain Sidney Valentine together with shipmate Sarah dropped anchor at Chalkwell Beach parkrun near Southend, to collect their 5th C on the pirate club challenge. The course is a flat out and back along the Seafront towards the pier and was a busy Parkrun with 368 runners. Sidney hoisted the Jolly Roger after 26:52 whilst Sarah was walking the plank for a nip of rum after 37:32.

Full results for all GCRs taking part in parkruns can be found [here](#).

Peter Westlake

It is with much sadness that we report the death of longstanding GCR member and former Chairman, Peter Westlake. Peter was at the heart of Garden City Runners (or Garden City Joggers as it was then) from the early days of the 1980's and was still running with the Club until quite recently, when his health began to deteriorate.

Terry Fowler sent these fond words: "Peter was an established member of Garden City Joggers, as it was known in 1988 when I joined. Even then as a V55, Peter was a very talented runner and was someone who I instantly warmed to and was always on hand to give sound advice as I was fairly new to running. We often went to races together and my overriding memory was when we travelled up to the Round Norfolk Relays together as Peter did the 16th leg, handed over to Elaine [Terry's wife] on the 17th, who handed over to me on the final leg.

Peter was just a really lovely guy and I thoroughly enjoyed his company. Unfortunately, his health started to deteriorate 2-3 years ago, and I'm pleased that a few of the old guard from GCJ got together to celebrate his birthday in August.

I was terribly upset at hearing of his passing and he'll be missed by so many. RIP Peter my friend."

Our sincere condolences go to Peter's wife Gill, his wider family and his friends.

There will be a posting on the GCR Facebook page too and we welcome all tributes, which we will pass on to Gill.

Beginners Course

The next latest beginners couch-to-5k course begins this Tuesday, 9 May. If you know anyone who might like to join, please let them know. As usual, the course will be led by encouraging and enthusiastic Run Leaders who are experienced in working with running novices. Those wanting to join the programme should come along to the Sports Centre at Ridgeway Academy at around 6.15 pm on Tuesday, to be registered and to ask any questions they might have.

GCR AGM and Presentation of XC Awards – 7.30 pm Monday, 22 May 2023

This year's AGM will take place in Attimore Hall at Ridgeway Academy. All members are encouraged to attend, to hear more about what's happening in the Club, ask any questions you might have, and contribute ideas.

In addition to the AGM, we will also be doing the XC Awards Presentation, as the season's rearranged fixtures only finished after our own Awards evening in March.

AGENDA

1. To receive the Chair's Report.
2. To receive the Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements.
3. To receive the Membership Secretary's Report.
4. To receive the Captains' Report.
5. Presentation of XC Awards
6. Election of Officers.
7. Election of Committee Members.
8. Any Other Business.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Any member wishing to place business on the Agenda must give written details via email to the Secretary, Sean Bowen, at secretary@gardencityrunners.org.uk no later than Monday 8 May.

ELECTIONS (of Officers and Committee Members)

Nominations for election should be sent to the Secretary via email not later than Monday 8 May with the email containing the following information:

- Name of person nominated
- Position nominated for
- Name of proposer
- Name of seconder

Save the Date: Welwyn 10K @ Panshanger Park, 25th June 2023

The word is out! This year's Welwyn 10k goes back to its roots as a trail race and is happening in a brand new location – Panshanger Park! This will be the first ever chip-timed 10k race within the park, and the route (ingeniously mapped out by **Chris Eland**) will take in all the main historical sites within the park, including the Great Oak, the Orangery, and the new plantation for the Queen's Green Canopy. As well as an exciting new location, we are aiming to make this race as environmentally responsible as we can, in line with the ethos of Panshanger Park. 2023 also sees the return of the kids' 2k race. As usual, all monies raised will be donated to the Welwyn Festival Charities. We are working closely in partnership with Tarmac and with Panshanger Park to make the event a huge success. This is where we need all the help we can get from everyone in the club! Do sign up to run, and spread the word far-and-wide to encourage others to join us on the day. Registration is open for both the adults' and the kids' races. Here is the link to more information and to enter online <https://my.raceresult.com/235110/info>

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.

Hatfield 5K race series

The dates of the Hatfield 5k race series have now been confirmed. The fast and flat road route is an excellent opportunity to develop your speed in a competitive field. Race 1 is an Avery race, and details are in the Avery calendar. Dates of the three races are as follows:

Race 1: Wednesday 30th August 2023 (Herts Senior Champs)

Race 2: Wednesday 6th September 2023 (Herts Vets Champs)

Race 3: Wednesday 13th September 2023

Further details on registration to follow.

Avery League Competition 2023

Please find this year's events table below. Eight Avery races, marked CC, are also part of the Club Championship competition (best five to score). Races marked V offer a volunteer point equivalent to a competing point.

nt no.		Date	Event	Venue	Cost	Status / notes
1	CC	22/01/2023	Fred Hughes 10	St Albans	£21.20 affiliated	Completed
2		19/02/2023	XC 3	Cassiobury Park, Watford	free	Completed
3	CC	05/03/2023	Berkhamsted half	Berkhamsted Cricket Club	£33 from 01/01/23	Completed
4		12/03/2023	XC 4	Therfield Heath, Royston	free	Completed
5	V	18/03/2023	Stevenage parkrun	Fairlands Valley Park	free	Completed
6		07/04/2023	St Albans Easter 10k	St Albans	£25.44	Completed
7	CC	30/04/2023	Hitchin 10k	Hitchin	£18.00	Completed
8		17/05/2023	MWRRL 1: Chingford (Orion Harriers)	Chingford	free	Club will send out details via email
9		31/05/2023	MWRRL 2: St Albans (St Albans Striders)	St Albans	free	Club will send out details via email
10		08/06/2023	MWRRL 3: Trent Park	Trent Park	free	Club will send out details via email
11	V	25/06/2023	Welwyn 10k	Panshanger Park	£20; £18 affiliated	https://my.raceresult.com/235110/info
12		29/06/2023	MWRRL 4: Stevenage (NHRR)	Stevenage	free	Club will send out details via email
13	V	12/07/	MWRRL Mob Match: WGC	Ridgeway Academy, WGC	free	Club will send out details via email
14	CC	July tbc	Fairlands Valley Relays	Fairlands Valley, Stevenage	free	Club will send out details via email
15	V	06/08/2023	GCR Centenary 20.2k	WGC Centenary Route	free	Club will send out details via email
16	V/C C	19/08/2023	Panshanger parkrun	Panshanger Park	free	https://www.parkrun.org.uk/panshanger/
17	V	30/08/2023	Hatfield 5k Race 1	Hatfield	tbc	Details tbc
18	CC	1/10/2023	Standalone 10k	Letchworth	£18.00 affiliated	https://my.raceresult.com/230198/registration
19		15/10/2023	XC 1	Cheshunt	free	Club will send out details via email
20	CC	22/10/2023	Stevenage Half Marathon	Stevenage	£28.00 affiliated	https://my.raceresult.com/235374/
21		29/10/2023	XC 2	Watford	free	Club will send out details via email
22		5/11/2023	XC 3	Trent Park	free	Club will send out details via email
23	CC	26/11/2023	Hatfield 5	Hatfield	£22.26	https://www.atwevents.co.uk/e/atw-hatfield-5-8980
24		17/12/23	XC 4	Stevenage	free	Club will send out details via email

25	V	December tbc	Festive 5	Welwyn Garden City	Entry cost tbc	Club will send out details via email
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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. All items are £20 (£19.99 if you pay by bank transfer) except for 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 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/