



Valley News

THE NEWSLETTER OF AVON VALLEY RUNNERS

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Wrinty's Greatest Hits

As you may be aware last March I was appointed to the role of Road Running Secretary for Wiltshire Athletic Association, where I have the task of promoting road running within the county and managing teams to compete at a National level. This led me to make the difficult decision that after ten years serving on the committee at Avon Valley Runners that I would step down at the AGM. So after spending the last five years as Honorary Secretary, three years before that as Club Captain and a couple more before that as a general committee member I thought that I would take the opportunity to reflect upon my achievements during this time....

When I rejoined AVR at the turn of the century (I had first joined AVR back in 1987 for a few years) the Dot-com bubble had yet to burst, and it was during a time when I was delivering projects for Fujitsu (or ICL as we were at the time) on behalf of companies like Nokia, Polaroid & Orange. One of the common deliverables was that of a website. So I mentioned the possibility to Stan Farr of my creating a **website for AVR** (I had picked up a thing or two from the programmers who were working for me) and he agreed that it would be a good move for the club particularly as "City of Bath AC" (now Team Bath) had just launched a website. I had some ideas as to what the website should feature but I needed to get the buy-in from the rest of the club, after all it was going to be 'our' website. So Stan suggested that I joined the committee in order to get some proper requirements. After several meetings and a lot of resistance from the rear guard of Trowbridge & District AC I finally brought an online presence to AVR in September of 2001. Using the free Geocities web hosting service provided by Yahoo, the site was an immediate hit and has gone from strength to strength. In 2005 I managed to secure the rights to the avonvalleyrunners.org.uk domain and moved the site over to a professional hosting service offered by Streamline. With the assistance of Andrew Hoddinott the site had a serious make over in 2010 and attracts hits from the world over.

Whilst I was working on launching the website, one of requirements was to bring the Valley News on-line, however this was one area that met with fierce resistance. I made moves to take over the editorship of the newsletter but I was discouraged from doing so in order to preserve harmony within the club. However it was becoming apparent that the quality of the newsletter was not what it could have been, with the technologies that were now readily available. So at the end of 2003 I took it upon myself to produce a version of the **Valley News** for presentation to the committee. The use of clear colour photographs rather than the grainy black & white images were viewed as the way forward, however once again the Trowbridge rear-guard dug their heels in, but a compromise was reached and so was born "Captains' Corner" the colour supplement for the Valley News. Captains Corner ran for just over two years with Tina Vivian and me generating the content. Then in 2007 the newsletter editor stepped down and I was able to deliver the Valley News that our members wanted. I am glad to say that this is a position that Richard Morgetroyd is continuing on behalf of the club.

The screenshot shows the Avon Valley Runners website with a green header and navigation menu. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'AVR Events', 'Welcome to the Avon Valley Runners Website', and 'Notes'. The 'AVR Events' column lists the Stan Farr 5K race on Dec 26, 2009, and the Annual General Meeting on Jan 7, 2010. The 'Welcome' column features the AVR logo and a description of the club. The 'Notes' column contains announcements about the Bramley 20/10 race and cancelled training sessions.



In the spring of 2004 it was announced that the charity "Comic Relief" would launch a new initiative in the summer of that year: "Sport Relief". 2004 also marked the 50th anniversary of Roger Bannister breaking the four minute barrier, so the event would take the form of a series of one mile races open to anyone who could commit to raising money for the charity. After consultation with Stan I agreed to organise a mile event in

Bradford on Avon. It so happened that the proposed day of the mile coincided with the Woolley Street festival - so there would be a road closed in Bradford on Avon that was nearly half a mile long - I had a course! The event was supported by the BBC and they provided me with an events counsellor who I could call upon for advice in organising the run and of course I had Stan as a mentor too. Another further stroke of luck was that one of the organising committee of the Woolley Street festival was also the Team GB Triathlon manager and advised that he would get one of his athletes to attend as a guest of honour at the event. The race was a sell out with my 200 entrant limit being reached several weeks before the big day, which saw Alistair Bartlett win the main race recording a time of 05:05 - Julie Dibbens who a few weeks later represented GB at the Athens Olympics presented the awards. The success of this event then gave me the confidence to organise further races, the next being the Shaw & Whitley Stamped.

Then in 2006 Sport Relief came again but this time the Woolley Street festival did not and so Barton Farm Country Park became the venue. We held an Elite Mile race to get proceedings underway and give the local racing snakes a chance to flex their fast twitch muscle fibres - Ewen Malloch of the British Milers Club won



that day in 04:22 but in third place our own Michael Bryant recorded 04:47 to set a new club best (that stood for five years) and Jackie Rockliffe also finished third and her time of 05:37 still stands as the ladies club record. A capacity field of 200 runners then ran the main event, but afterwards we held a special mile race for those Avon Valley Runners who had agreed to help on the day, Bob Ellis ran out as winner in 05:21 with me a few seconds behind - **The Avon Valley Mile** had begun.

Another initiative that I undertook in 2004 wearing my Club Captain's hat was arranging a **club trip to Amsterdam** where our members could have a choice of race distances as well as engaging in as much Euro-culture as can be crammed into a weekend. Seventeen members signed up for the first of what became an annual pilgrimage for the next three years with Viv Toms opting for the Marathon, Stan Farr & Genevieve Sharam the 10K and the rest of us the Half Marathon where Doug Barber led us around the flat fast course. The following year and twenty four members signed up for the race followed by an evening's entertainment at the "Boom Chicago" impro-comedy club and then a tour of the city's more seedy side. Unfortunately just before the 2006 trip got underway we learned of the passing of Stan Farr and this led to most members cancelling the trip. Perhaps the club trips to Amsterdam are something that should be resurrected in the future?

Throughout 2005 my training was geared towards one goal - that of competing in the Walt Disney World Marathon in Florida. It just so happened that the event fell near my fortieth birthday in January 2006, so what better way to celebrate becoming a Veteran. This was one of the best races that I have ever run in, but alas far from my best performance as my sub-3:00 aspirations disappeared before reaching the 20-mile mark! However I had the miles in my legs and needed a fresh goal to take me through the rest of 2006. The previous year Alistair Bartlett had taken part in the Somerset Race Series where your finishing position in 8 of the 12-races held in the county were totted up and a score awarded - does that sound familiar?



Alistair finished the Series in a very creditable 4th, so I set my sights on a top-10 finish. I had a good series of races and despite the latter half being hampered by a recurrent injury and toothache, I finished 7th overall. However an idea had been sewn for the **AVR Race Series** and it became a reality the following year and rather fittingly won by Alistair Bartlett (Rosemary Barber won the Ladies Race Series). This concept also forms the basis of the Wiltshire Race League which I am launching next year with the focus more on club performances rather than individuals, and I would dearly like to see this title come to the Valley.



2006 saw the 20th anniversary of the club and so I suggested that a revision of the club colours was in order. The club vest at the time was plain yellow with the words "Avon Valley Runners" on the front. I thought that the style should be of the club logo on the front breast and "Avon Valley Runners" on the reverse so that our rivals could see who had just passed them! I also added the green go-faster stripe on the sides. It must of been fate that the first batch of club vests arrived at my house by courier just as I was preparing to leave to take part in the "Heddington Hill Climb" near Calne - well the new club vest got the launch it deserved by my winning the race. I am pleased to say that the Jubilee vest created for the 25th anniversary of the club made a similar debut courtesy of Tom Fisher at the 2010 "Over the Hills". Both styles of vests have since seen a good level of success.

Also in 2006 as Captain I received an invitation for the club to take part in the "**Cotswold Way Relay**" for the first time. This really caught the imagination of the club and I managed to mobilise three teams with Kathy Kinsey captaining the Ladies, Chris Atkinson the Mixed and myself the Vet Men's team. I took leg one and then followed the race over it's 103-miles all the way to the finish outside of Bath Abbey where Kevin Sparey put in a great performance to help us take 3rd place in the Vets category in thirteen hours & thirty five minutes, finishing behind Bitton Road Runners and Halesowen AC. This was the start of many ventures along the Cotswold Way and we have since also started being a regular entrant at the **Uphill to Wells Relay** where we have also met with a good degree of success.



In 2007 I was elected Honorary Secretary and set about building a development plan for the club. One of the key objectives of this plan was "*Facilitating members to achieve their running goals through training and mentoring*", well my goal was still to win stuff (though my body had other ideas), and the goal was however shared by, then Chairman Chris Atkinson and new club Captain Carl Davis. So the three of us met with Alan Hayes at the Reefa Tandoori restaurant in Melksham to discuss how we could achieve this goal. I had met Alan shortly after becoming Secretary, as I sought advice on how to run a running club and he was Secretary of Wiltshire Athletic Association (WAA). During our meetings at WAA I discovered that Alan was not only an experienced Level-2 endurance coach but also lived in Trowbridge and it took very little persuasion to get Alan to accept position as our Head Coach and in 2008 the first coach led sessions were held in Trowbridge Park, the rest as they say is history. I firmly believe that this initiative is instrumental to the current level of success enjoyed by our club – "*thank you Alan*".

Another move that I made in response to delivering the development plan was the establishing of a **Wednesday evening training session in Melksham**. I was aware that Melksham had not had a running club of its own since the 1980's and that runners from the town would either come to AVR or journey further up the valley to our rivals Chippenham Harriers. So to tip the balance as it were, I proposed setting up a mid-week training session hosted out of Christie Miller Sports Centre. So in 2008 these sessions got underway, however the uptake was not as great as expected and only a few new faces arrived in the Valley and attendances were typically in single figures. However all that was to change, as I had qualified as a Level-2 endurance coach along with Andrew Hoddinott & Julia Drewitt - we also managed to persuade a few others to attend the UK: Athletics "Leadership in Running Fitness" course.

So in September 2009 we launched our first **Beginners programme in Melksham** - we were astonished to have forty people turn up for the first week and absolutely ecstatic when the following week over fifty arrived for training! It was also quite rewarding that Melksham Town Council bestowed upon the coaching team a special Sporting Achievement award. Numbers have remained consistently around the twenty-mark with the occasional dip, however Tammy Phillips who was one of the initial beginners has since become a Running Group Leader and champions the "Slow but Social" sessions at Melksham on a Wednesday which are going from strength to strength.



One of the features of Avon Valley Runners throughout the years has been "The Book" this tome was meticulously kept by Stan and later by Ted Rockliffe to record all of the results achieved by our members. However in this digital age all good things must come to an end. So to mark our 25th year I masterminded **Project Jubilee** in an attempt to bring together all things AVR in one place - www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk. Twenty five years worth of results were transcribed by a team of volunteers before Hodd entered them into the database that sits behind the website, I took on the challenge of scanning every issue of the Valley News and converting them into a Portable Document Format or PDF files which allowed me to complete one of the objectives set back in 2001. Using the database of results I was able to conclude the Project by calculating the "Greatest ever Avon Valley Runners" and took much delight in presenting Alistair Bartlett and Rosemary Barber with commemorative awards at the Jubilee meal held back in the summer.



Although I am stepping down from the committee I will still remain a member of Avon Valley Runners and will continue to train with the club whenever possible. Of course organising the Wiltshire Race League means that I will be seeing club members on a regular basis as the club attempts to win the inaugural title – I will try and do my bit too and will continue to wear the yellow club colours and hope that those green go-faster stripes help keep me ahead of my rivals on the roads.

Darren Wrintmore

Brokerswood Santa Dash 5K



AVR Santa's. Left to right: Darren Wrintmore, Rosemary Barber, Genevieve Sharam and Alistair Bartlett

As mentioned in last month's edition of the Valley News, a popular pursuit for runners in December is to dress up as Santa and partake in races often to raise money for local charities. An event which has increased in popularity over recent years is the Brokerswood Santa Dash 5K in which four Avon Valley Runners members entered. Alistair Bartlett was the first Santa home in a time of 18:55. Darren Wrintmore couldn't quite keep the pace on the second lap but still finished in a credible 20:49 and was placed in 7th position.

Rosemary Barber narrowly missed out on making it an Avon Valley double but was the second Mrs Claus to finish. Genevieve Sharam also took part, electing to walk around with her family.



Left: Darren does the Turkey Trot to 7th place.



Above: Alistair celebrates his victory with chocolate money.

Xmas at Southwick Parkrun



Also getting into the seasonal spirit were runners at Southwick country parkrun on Saturday 24th December where the dress code was strictly red hats and white beards. Although some chose differently and attended in comedic dog outfits. It's fair to say that these outfits were somewhat of a handicap and not many new personal best times were set on the day.

Xmas outfitted runners await the start along with some of the more serious athletes

First of our runners home was Peter Bryant who was placed 3rd overall in a time of 18:35 for his first attempt at this event. Carl Davies, who whilst slightly delirious due to lack of sleep (or other influences) stated on the day his new year's resolution was to avoid beer until at least July, was

our second member home in 6th place overall whilst a Santa suit clad Richard Morgetroyd following behind in 7th place. Warren Wade was a little off his usual blistering pace probably due to the Scooby Doo outfit and was placed 8th. A returning from injury Stuart MacGregor recorded a new PB for this course and was just behind Warren in 20:05.

Fiona Price was our first lady runner to cross the line in 23:43 followed by Rosemary Barber resplendent in her Santa jacket and hat in 24:15. Sarah Jewers in a Tutu probably borrowed from Shaun Oakman was the third of our ladies home in 24:57.

The prize for most interesting outfit however has to go to AVR committee member and Southwick Parkrun organiser Sean Price. The picture below says a thousand words....



Stuart MacGregor leads an unshaven Richard Morgetroyd and Scooby Wade



Sean Price in his Christmas best



Fiona Price heading home to get the turkey on



Richard and Hayley Southgate looking Elfish

Stan Farr Boxing Day 5K

Monday 26th December saw 41 Avon Valley Runners lining up at Hilperton social club to work off a bit of the Christmas excess. The runners used the more usual route out and back along the Kennett and Avon canal towpath after 2010's hasty change due to snow and ice.

First home was Michael Towler in 17:15 with Ceri Whitmore not far behind in 17:57, whilst third place went to Warren Wade in a time of 18:34. The MV40, 50 and 60 prizes were claimed by Richard Morgetroyd, Stuart MacGregor and Gary Jardine respectively.

Lianne Tilley brought the ladies home in 20:41 followed by Jo Mumford in 21:19 and then Mel Nicholls in 22:32. FV40 went to Sarah Jewers and the FV50 category was won by Tina Towler.



Serious Stuff!

From left to right are:

1st, 2nd and 3rd placed runners

Michael Towler,
Ceri Whitmore
And
Warren Wade



All smiles!

Left: The event gets the thumbs up from Andy Strange

1st for the ladies, Lianne Tilley looking happy as she heads for the finish line

2nd in for the ladies, Jo Mumford also looking happy to be on the home straight

All Those Years Ago

Tales from the "Valley" 5, 10, 15 & 25 years ago:

<p>2007: Avon Valley Runners fielded 17 entrants at the Slaughterford 9 multi-terrain event. Leading the team home was Doug Barber in a time of 1:05:24. For the ladies Sue MacGregor was the lead runner in a time of 1:19:10.</p>	<p>2002: By January 2002 the Valley News was reporting that club membership had swelled to 98 with 18 of those being new members in the previous year. Subs remained at a very reasonable £5.00.</p>
<p>1997: Nursing a new year's day hangover was not on the agenda for five determined AVR members, instead the Kewstoke Beach Race was calling. Rosemary Barber claimed 3rd lady and 1st FV45 prizes whilst Stan Farr crossed the finish line in 53:07 to claim the 1st MV60 prize.</p> <p>Southwick Village Hall rocked as the membership attended the annual party and prize giving with 28 awards being made in between the disco and buffet supper.</p>	<p>1987: The third edition of the Valley News published in January 1987 looked forward to the club's first birthday and AGM and reported that 53 members had joined in that first year.</p> <p>The news also reported that the biggest attendance at a race by the club in the previous year had been the Bath Half Marathon where 29 members had taken part.</p>

Fixtures

Sunday, January 15th Rough 'n' Tumble 10 – Milton Lilbourne Village Hall, Marlborough @11:00

Sunday, January 15th Highworth Half Marathon – AVR members by invitation, please see below

Sunday, January 29th Slaughterford 9 – Leafy Lane, Rudloe Nr Corsham @9:50

Sunday, February 5th Longleat 10K** - Longleat House Nr Warminster @10:00

Sunday, February 12th Wiltshire 10 – King George V playing field Melksham @10:00

Sunday, February 19th SMaRTT Smasher 10K – Calne Town Hall @11:00

** *Wiltshire League Race Series Event ++ Off-Road Championship*

Plea for Ladies to sign up for Highworth Half.....

The men's team is now complete for our attempt to win some honours at the forthcoming Highworth Half Marathon on Sunday 15th January but sadly we are lacking any female members to make up a team. I am aware that this clashes with the Rough 'n' Tumble but please can our lady runners give this event some consideration and indicate your interest as soon as possible to me at news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.

Presentation Night

On Saturday 21st January the club's annual presentation evening including buffet and disco will take place at the Farmhouse Inn at Southwick.

Tickets for this event are on sale now and are available from Jules Green or other committee members at the very reasonable price of £10.00 so get yours now.



Please send Reports or Articles to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

Where in the Valley?



Two correct answers for the December Where in the Valley feature courtesy of Bernie Hobbs and from outside the club, Brian Gibbs of Corsham Running Club. Nice to see that the Valley News has appeal to non AVR members!

The location of the water turbine is at the end of Hercules Road at Bowerhill in Melksham and for those who are interested in the pastime of *geocaching*, may like to know that a cache is located here.

Here's Bernie running past said turbine at the Melksham 5K race in 2010.

This month we try a well known feature of the Valley from a not so well known view.



Answers to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

Poets Corner with Tony Bartlett

WEIGHT AND SEE

I really am aware of our anniversary of 30 years wed
 And I still love her dearly from her toes to the top of her head
 Five children, our union hath produced and she still retains her diminutive figure.
 Reluctantly I must say that doesn't apply to me, I just bigger and bigger

Sad to repeat I'm ready to eat anything that comes my way
 At any hour of the clock, be it night or day
 The Doctor has put me on a very strict diet
 When seeing cream cake in the shop I'm really tempted to buy it

Nut cutlets, shredded carrot and lettuce which I hate
 Are the only things allowed on my dinner plate
 With watercress and thinly sliced tomato into my mouth I poke
 Not much of a meal for a hardworking bloke

As I sit in my armchair gently nodding off to sleep
 To this miserable regime I could not keep
 "now" said my soulmate, my wife "you really must take the Doctor's advice"
 "Don't be an old grumpy, you shouldn't need telling twice"

Now the pressure is mounting from the chef and 'her indoors'
 Counting the calories, they keep the score
 Whilst I dream of lobster en crouete and rich smoked kippers
 Relaxing in the chair with pipe and slippers

But the vegetarian cafe has closed down for the night
 Which gives my opponents a terrible fright
 All they can find to feed me are Blackberries (including the pips)
 While I'm off to Harry Ramsden's for a big bag of fish and chips.

Late Breaking News... AVR Member to Carry Olympic Torch.



Rachel Bown has been selected to carry the Olympic torch through Trowbridge when it passes through the town on Tuesday 22nd May. Rachel has been a member of Avon Valley Runners since 2003 and is the current Wiltshire Ladies 10K champion.

Pictured left is Rachel at the 2011 Castle Combe 10K.