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Dates for your diary

- 1st-30th November **Virtual AVR Over The Hills Event**
<https://www.entrycentral.com/event/112317>
- 3rd November **AVR Main Committee Meeting (Zoom)** contact any committee members if you wish to discuss any club matters.
- 5th November **National Lockdown starts.** Training suspended until 2nd December.
- 20th December **Hullavington Secret Santa 10** (almost sold out!)
<https://www.entrycentral.com/SecretSanta>
- 3rd January **Melksham 10k** (registration not open yet)
- 12th January **AVR Annual General Meeting** - all welcome

AVR training sessions



As you will know from the announcement on Saturday 31st October, we will be heading into lockdown from Thursday 5th November which will mean organised training and running is suspended until we are allowed to run together as a club again – we hope this will be from Wednesday 2nd December so long as everything goes as planned. We will be offering you all training sessions up until that time.

We will be sending you all an email on Wednesday 4th November, following the AVR committee meeting the day before, to let you know what will be doing to support you in this time. Please remember that exercising with one other from the 5th is allowed and we encourage you to keep running through this time.

When attending any runs please remember your hi-vis and lights - it is for your safety and the safety of others.

A reminder on how to use the run together app can be found on the AVR youtube page here: <https://youtu.be/eps1cNvtfo4>. PLEASE do try and contact us if you are unable to attend so that the leaders know who to expect on their runs.

Halloween run

What's that coming over the hill? Is it a Monster?

Don't be silly, it's just a group of Avon Valley Runners!



As is the recent custom, a group of daring members dressed as spooky characters and took to the streets of Melksham to cause terror and mayhem (or just to give everyone a bit of a laugh on a damp Friday). Rich and Kate were doubling up, dressed as escaped convicts, and making their run count towards a virtual gin 10k too!



Left: at the start by The Water Meadow. Right: a pit stop at the Melksham Town Hall



Volunteer opportunities with AVR

Junior AVR secretary

We are also looking to recruit a new **JAVR Secretary** to the committee. Holly Newman is stepping away from the role as she embarks on a university course in Oxford. Is this a role that you would be interested in taking over? The main priorities of the volunteer role are:



- Maintain records of all junior members.
- Attend committee meetings as appropriate.
- Regularly attend junior training sessions (this doesn't have to be EVERY session however the juniors do need some consistency. It especially helps if you are able to build a rapport with new nervous junior members).
- Promotes JAVR events amongst members, parents and social media.
- Help liaise with Bath University regarding track hire times/fees.
- Liaise with adult AVR coaches in regards to the progression and training of older junior athletes.

If you would be interested in this role or would like further information, please email secretary@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

Social Media volunteer – You Tube

Did you know that AVR have a You Tube channel? Set up recently, its primary aim was to share the Zoom sessions the happened during the first lockdown and now the club are looking for a volunteer with creative ideas to work alongside Katy Nickless to develop the channel with exciting new content for members and potential members.

Ideas are also welcome for content through the next lockdown too.

If you're interested in the role please email news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSJIK2xtIbV1cxV0SvFmOiQ>



DB Max Rainbow Run



This month saw the last free, weekly timed Rainbow Run. A huge well done to those who have taken part since April – there have been some great times from AVR including **Gary Day** who recorded the 10th fastest time from the whole series of 17:47!

Gary MacAlister came 3rd on the MV40 leaderboard with a combined running time of 3:07:54, **Sharon Firkins** was 3rd on the FV50 board with 4:33:58 and **Sara Robert** was 1st FV60 with a time of 4:25:29.

Finally, a special mention to **Gary MacAlister** for logging a time every single week!

Week 29 3rd October	1 st AVR male: Tim Burrell (top 2) 1 st AVR female: Carrie Almeida Gary MacAlister was 3 rd MV40, Tim Burrell was 1 st MV50 and Carrie Almeida was 3 rd MF60.
Week 30 10th October	1 st AVR male: Gary MacAlister (top 10) 1 st AVR female: Carrie Almeida Gary MacAlister was 3 rd MV40 and Carrie Almeida was 3 rd FV60.
Week 31 17th October	1 st AVR male: Gary MacAlister (top 2) 1 st AVR female: Mel Ward-Nicholls Gary MacAlister was 1 st MV40, Sarah Barker was 1 st FSEN, Mel Ward-Nicholls was 3 rd FV40 and Sara Robert was 1 st FV60.

Full event break down by Gary MacAlister...

Way back at the beginning of lockdown, there was a strange limbo on Saturday mornings. No parkruns, no (not)parkrun, no races, no training, no anything! Lockdown had hit a lot of our normal Saturday morning routines hard and as runners we were calling out for something to keep us motivated and focused during these challenging times.

Step forward DB Max, who decided that they would fill this gap with their own virtual fundraising 5k race series. The Rainbow 5k series kicked off on 25th April 2020 with 105 people all taking part. The way it worked was that you signed up and were issued with a



printable race number. Once you were registered you kept that number throughout the rest of the race series. When you signed up you were also asked if you wished to donate to the DB Max chosen charity at that time (these changed throughout the months).

In total **£2,669.04** was raised for various charities over the events. This broke down as:

NHS £751

Children's Hospice SW £550

Firefighters Charity £558

Wiltshire Air Ambulance £236

Fairshare £571

6 months and 26 different events later, the Rainbow 5k series has finally come to an end. 40 different AVR Runners took part in at least 1 event over the 6 month period. Some went a bit further though and managed to get into double digits, so congratulations to:

	<u>Best 10</u>		
	<u>Runs</u>	<u>Cat Position</u>	<u>Total Runs</u>
Gary MacAlister	03:07:54	3rd MV40	26
Sara Robert	04:25:29	1st FV60	21
Carrie Almeida	05:56:50	4th FV60	20
Jennifer Buckle	05:42:57	6th FSEN	20
Sarah Barker	04:49:38	4th FSEN	16
Martin Russam	04:39:05	15th MV50	15
Sharon Firkins	04:33:58	3rd FV50	13
Melanie Ward-Nichols	04:13:42	5th FV40	12
Martin Pearce	04:35:43	14th MV50	12
Christopher Middup	04:22:21	13th MV50	12

The fastest logged times by AVR runners were:

Male - Gary Day 17:47

Female - Rebekah Carrivick 19:54

Honorary mention to AVR legend Ruth Barnes who was fastest lady overall with a speedy 17:34



Left-Right: Vicky, Kat, Jen and Dave



Send any news, articles or achievements to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.

Also check the closed Facebook page for regular news as well as emails straight into your inbox.

All change!

This month Alan Button, our outgoing Road Race secretary, is passing the baton onto someone new...

"So 2020 has of course been one of those years, and with lots of changes to how AVR has adapted is going extremely well and for all the hard work behind the scenes, it is great seeing so many of you running with the club, leading sessions, continuing to get involved in your club and enjoying your running.

No doubt we have all had to adapt our lifestyles in some way, including our running and exercise etc.

Due to my soon-to-be change in my personal circumstances, (all good ones), it is a delight that a worthy member has accepted the road secretary role! Known to grace us with his elegant style, humour, warm and friendly attitude, I call him Trojan, as this work horse continues to always run so well, puts a lot of effort in that inspires! So please welcome the fantastic Andy Jefferies!

I'm sure that Andy will have some great ideas and fresh impetus he can bring to the role that will add lots of value and inspiration to members. So thank you very much Andy, we all look forward to seeing you in the Wiltshire Road Race League etc next year!

I have much enjoyed being part of AVR in this capacity, to the committee, working groups, volunteers etc, I thank you. And thank you to all of you who have got involved and supported. I will continue to be an active member of AVR as that is where my heart is, I look forward to seeing everyone on a regular basis.

Thanks again Andy, and good luck!"

Welcome to the Judge...

"Hi all at AVR! I have been given the great honor of being asked to be Race Secretary for the Road league for 2021. Following Alan Button and Gary McAllister who both did such a good job, will be hard acts to follow indeed.

I joined AVR just over 6 years ago and I have got to love my running. I have done many sports at club level i.e. cricket and football but can honestly say AVR has been the best club atmosphere I have known and made so many friends.



We don't know how 2021 will pan out do we but some races are now going ahead and we really have to hope for the best and see what happens. Hopefully I will soon get the fixtures for the coming season and will let you know. I plan to get the Lemon Army out in mass numbers if I can with the knowledge that everyone is important and a valued asset to our team. I will come and see as many of you as I can, to get you to run for the club and help our league effort. It's early days, but I will keep you informed as much as I can will regular updates on Facebook (not the greatest on social media but sure I will learn.)

So hoping 2021 will be a better both in life & running."

Ultra Running – by Vicky Bodman

So, this year I have mostly been...training for an ultra. I'm not sure why I signed up for it as I love running on roads but it turned out to be the only race on this year for me so the training had to happen.

Gone were the lie-ins on a Saturday morning as I met with Hayley, Kathryn and Leah to go running and get miles in the legs. But I felt totally ready to do it. Mentally I was there and as they say, sometimes it's just a case of mind over matter - 32 miles was not going to be too daunting. I'd broken it down into sections of 8 and I was ready.

Off we went on our run, sticking together as a team was the way we were going to get through it. At mile 5 I got stung by a wasp but luckily Kathryn had her handy first aid kit to help me out. On we went, taking a slight wrong turning which meant we went through a field with cows and a bull which is not Hayley's idea of a good run route!



I felt good, I felt strong, I had my AVR vest on. Then at around mile 12 the little niggle in my calf that I was planning on ignoring till after the race started to hurt and then at 13.5 miles my leg made a pinging noise and I couldn't really put any pressure on my leg. Walking was OK to start with but painful and running was a no go. I thought I would walk to the next check point at mile 16 but I was in a lot of pain. Luckily, there was a man at 13.7 miles who was support for his friends and he offered me a lift back to the start. Leah came with me whilst Hayley and Kathryn went on. I am super proud of us all for attempting it and for the 2 finishers.

When I couldn't run, everyone walked with me even though I told them to go on. When I got back to the start our very own Jo and Judy were First Aid and



looked after me. So many of the volunteers were AVR which made me SO proud to be part of such an awesome club.

I am so lucky to have such good friends who have supported me with all the training (Hayley plans the routes, I have no idea where we're going) and got me to the start line. It has given me a real focus through these trying times.

Even though I am injured and resting there are positives from it:

1. I know I can and will complete an Ultra (March 2021 Covid permitting)
2. I now like some trail running, We are very lucky to live in such a beautiful area
3. I managed 21 miles in a training run
4. I've made some great friendships and some hills aren't too bad!

So maybe try it, you might like it.

If you'd like to try running an ultra for the first time, AVR organise the Imber Ultra every year, the next event being pencilled in for Sunday 7th March 2021: <https://www.imber-ultra.org/>

My Virtual Mission – by Darren Wrintmore

With Lockdown descending across not just the United Kingdom but across the world, the opportunities for physical challenges and competition disappeared almost in an instant. It made pretty bleak reading as one after the other events were cancelled.

Upcoming events

MAY 17	Hullavington Half Marathon & 5K This event was cancelled.	The Hullavington Arms
JUN 25	The Great Chalfield 10K This event was cancelled.	Broughton Gifford Broughton Gifford, Melksham
AUG 9	The Action 50 sportive This event was cancelled.	Devizes Leisure Centre Devizes
SEP 20	The Hullavington Marathon & 10K This event was cancelled.	The Hullavington Arms

However, coming forward to fill this void were the virtual challenges. Ever fancied running around the Ring of Kerry - all 124-miles of it or cycling the 2,280-miles of Route 66 across the USA, or even swimming 21-miles to cross the English Channel? Well these were all on offer to achieve without straying too far from your front-door.



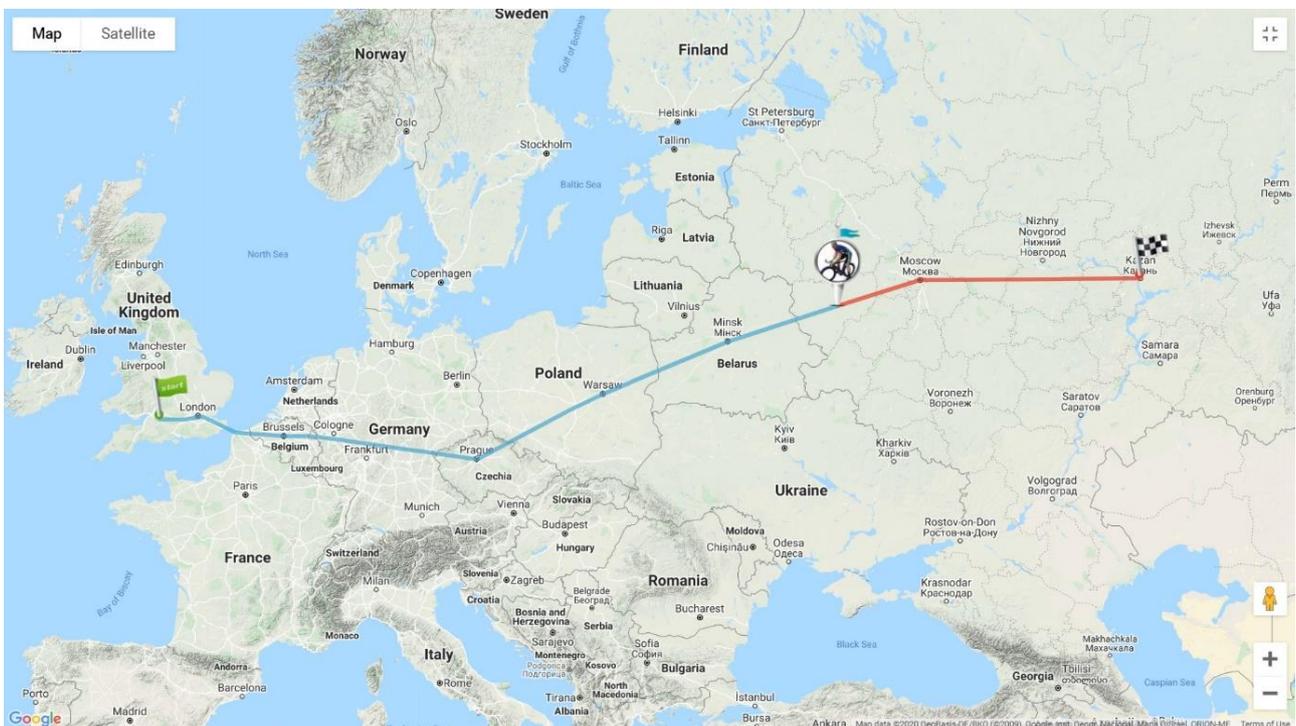
I signed up my family to take on the **Inca Trail Virtual marathon** to provide them with a fitness focus whilst locked down and having run my last marathon back in 2006 decided that I would walk this one. Even walking though I was surprised by how quickly the miles were racked up and within a few of weeks walking the dog I had reached Machu Picchu and a very nice medal was on its way to me...though I must confess that as nice as the medal was, before the day was out it had been consigned to storage in a shoe-box, whilst my teenagers have theirs on display.



On a more local level, virtual events were being set up allowing runners and cyclists to complete a target distance within a set time frame at a location of their own choosing. Evidence to support the claim that the challenge had been completed was accepted from Strava, Garmin Connect or any of the main sports tracker sites with a subsequent post to Facebook or other supporting social media platforms.

Pictured: Robin-Mark Schols with his Ride Lockdown Gold Medal for cycling 100K.

I also set myself a custom challenge through the www.myvirtualmission.com website, which was to cycle 2,222 virtual miles on Zwift which if mapped into the real world would see me head out from Melksham, crossing Europe to finish in Kazan, Russia where my project team are based.

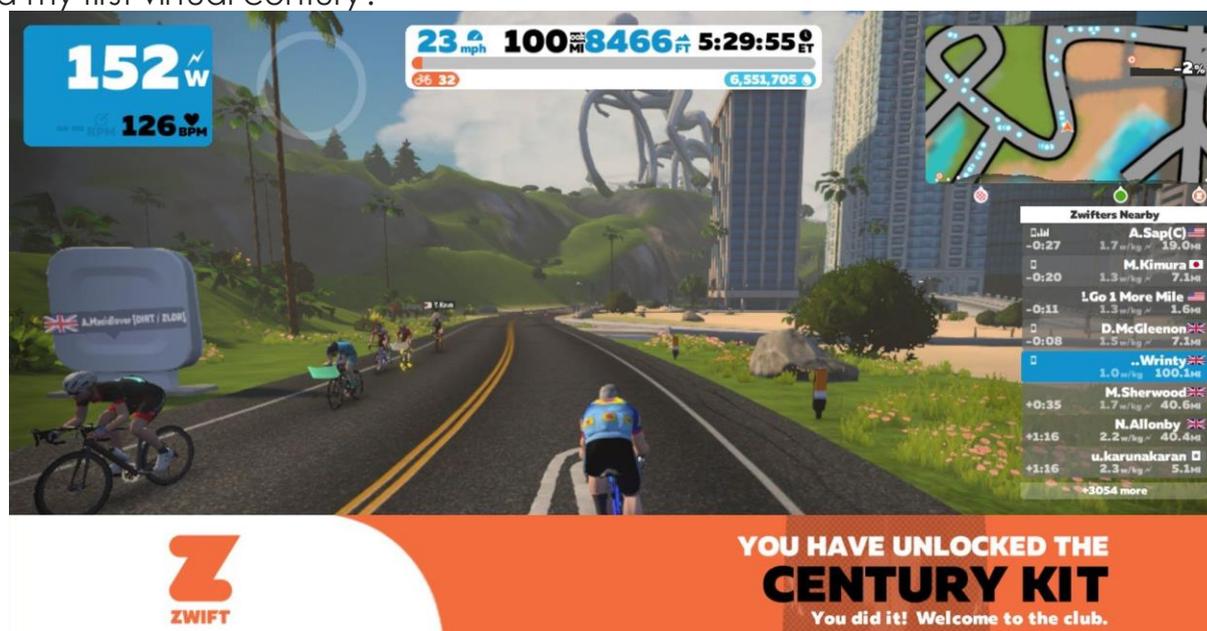


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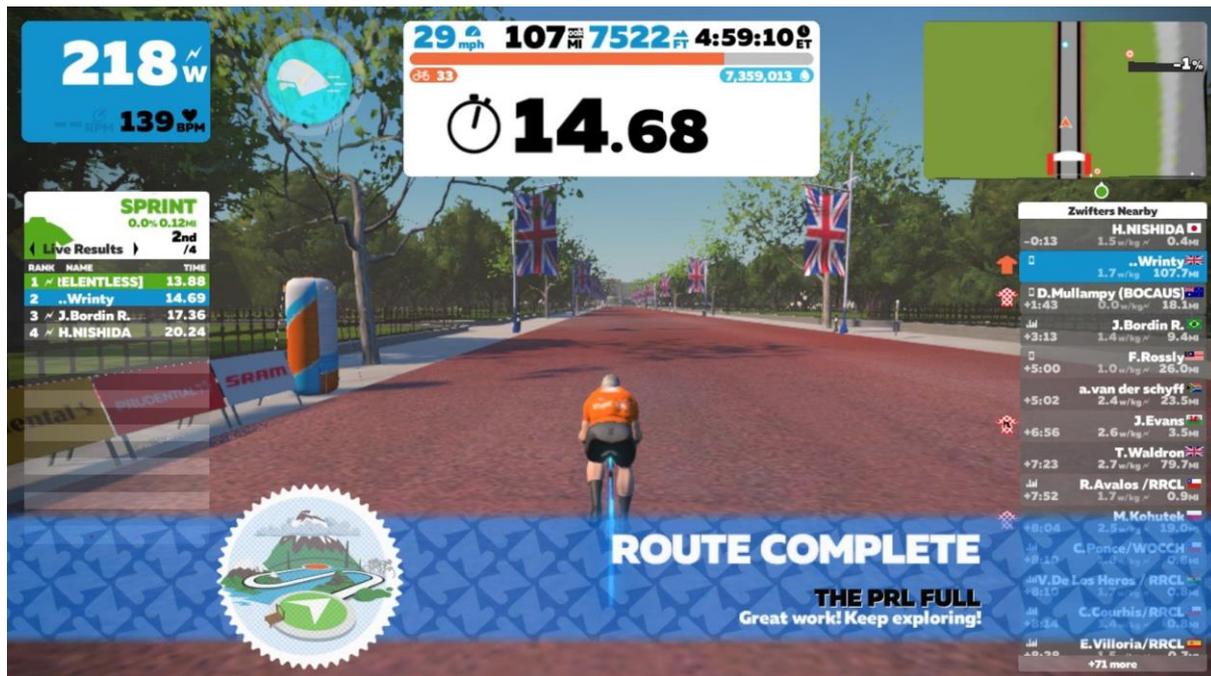
On the way to completing my mission Zwift threw up plenty of challenges to keep me focussed. The introduction of Route Achievement badges had me working to tick them off until I was left with just two biggies to get: the ominous sounding **"Uber Pretzel"** of 78-miles finishing with an ascent of Alpe du Zwift and the 107-miles of **"The PRL Full"**.

One Friday morning in July when I was supposed to be exploring the mountains and glaciers of Iceland (a trip that fell victim to the pandemic) I headed into the garage and fired up Zwift and selected the **"Uber Pretzel"** route and began pedalling. After covering 70 virtual miles I found myself at the foot of Alpe du Zwift and settled into some steady grinding up its 21 hairpin bends all the while keeping my eye on the screen for a sighting of the elusive Yeti that is said to inhabit its upper slopes, five ascents of this mountain so far and not so much as spotted a footprint in the snow, though I did see a rather eerie looking tree. After the best part of an hour I reached the summit and unlocked the achievement but instead of stopping there I allowed myself a relaxing descent of the mountain – this is where virtual cycling comes into its own as reaching speeds of 50mph are quite scary in the real world where one has to worry about blind bends, oncoming traffic and potholes. The mileage counter was showing 90-miles so why not carry on and record my first virtual century?



That just left the **"PRL Full"** over 11 circuits of a course winding through the virtual streets of London and (rather weirdly) after entering Lambeth Tube Station taking on the hills of Surrey. The first 8-laps just flew by with my covering 70-miles but a lack of nutritional planning (*I had run out of Jelly Babies*) and my cadence then slackened lap by lap but I still held on to pass through the virtual Century mark in 4-hours 38-minutes and with a final sprint up the Mall ducked just under five-hours for the full 107-miles.





I didn't have too much time to celebrate the full house of route achievement badges as Zwift launched a new world **"France"** with several new courses to complete including a virtual Mont Ventoux. As I worked through these my mission goal was getting closer and with a final 34-miler around the island of Watopia's **"Bigger Loop"** I completed the mission and finally "made it to Kazan".

Virtual London Marathon – by Robin-Mark Schols

I've done at least one marathon a year since 2011, with my fastest coming in 2015 at London. This year I was scheduled to run my 6th London in April and run Berlin in September and having completed New York City last year, had an eye on being fast enough to gain places next year at Boston and Chicago to leave just Tokyo to complete the big 6 world marathon majors in 2022.

Nobody saw Covid-19 coming and it was with resignation we saw London cancel the marathon in April, postponing it until October. We were all disappointed as we watched all our races getting cancelled around us and on a personal level, I also had to take the tough decision to cancel Hilly Helmet and hope runners would support a virtual version so we could continue to help the charity we have supported over the years with the event.

During lock down we were still allowed to run, an hour a day was ok but on your own, no club mates or events which left you frustrated and wondering how you could offload all that fitness you were building up. A number of event companies offered virtual events, trying to offer something you could throw your training at and get a medal for a small fee. It wasn't ideal but it was better than nothing and everyone was trying to be creative.

As summer came to an end, autumn marathons were also looking unlikely to go ahead, and whilst they appeared to drag their feet on a decision, London marathon finally offered a virtual option to all those who were signed up as well as deferral of their 2019 places.



It was something to consider. I've made London marathon every year since 2014 but this didn't feel right. Initially I didn't feel the same motivation and I certainly didn't feel strong enough mentally to run round my garden but I take my hat off to those who had. Luckily, my friend Stuart talked me into it, offering to run long with me every weekend during the weeks leading up to the big(ish) day. He reasoned we both needed a goal to aim at with so many snatched away from us this year and this would be ideal. We planned to take it on as a series of 10k loops with regular opportunities to take gels and drinks.

A few weeks before the day I succumbed to a hamstring problem that seemed to come from nowhere. I tried a few days rest then a comeback but the only solution was a proper rest meaning being short on training mileage if I was even able to start on the day.

The week before I managed a tentative 10 miles and considered if I was able to do another 8 miler in the week it might just be enough to see me through. The good thing was the pain had gone.

On the morning of October 4th conditions were biblical with high winds and heavy rain. I decided to try for a couple of laps and maybe complete the marathon distance later in the day depending on how things went. I decided to run a little behind Stuart as I didn't feel confident I would maintain the pace he was looking for.

Lap one went ok and I had started lap 2 before I knew it, keeping a pace of around 7:20 per mile and feeling better than expected. Club mate Tim Burrell came to join me for lap 3 and as we approached the end of the lap I realised it was looking like I'd actually get it done in one go after all. At 20 miles it dawned on me I might even come in under 3:15 too based on the pace I'd been keeping. I'd recognised as I was short on training miles the last few miles were going to hurt but I reckoned I had built up enough of a cushion over the early miles. I was right though, the last 5k did hurt and it was good to finally finish with a time of 3:13:18.

This was my 12th marathon and maybe my hardest of all. There were no crowds to cheer me on or other runners to distract me or for me to try to pass or stop passing me. It was just lanes and rain and wind and wet feet. The thing that kept me going was the fact we set it up as laps so I could count them down. That and wearing a real race number helped to bring out a determination in me normally only found on race day.

2020 has been a year of uncertainty, disappointment and injury but my 12th marathon finally left me with a feeling the year had finally given me and no doubt many others a sense of achievement. Our mental health has without doubt been challenged harder than ever before and it's clear there are further mental challenges on the horizon both as a runner and a human being, but completing the classic distance even on a quite country lane with nobody there to cheer many of us across the finish line just gave some of us a feeling of achievement even if only for one day. Roll on 2021.



Compliantly running compliantly – by Darren Wrintmore

Back in the dim and distance past, well the 12th May 2019 to be precise, though it does seem like a very long time ago now, with the assistance of the team at the Hullavington Arms and wearing my Stampede Sports hat I organised the inaugural Hullavington Half Marathon with a supporting 5 Kilometre fun run. On that sunny Sunday morning we had 120 runners take on the 13.1-miles of the Half Marathon with another 50 runners taking on the 5K. The 5K runners were led home in a little over sixteen minutes whilst the Half Marathon was won outright by our former England international marathon runner: Holly Rush.

The second running of the event was scheduled to take place earlier this year on Sunday 19th May but like so many races it was forced to be cancelled due to the spread of the COVID19 pandemic. As the summer progressed a light appeared at the end of the tunnel and a plan was formulated to stage the races in a manner compliant with the UK Government recommendations. We would start the runners in waves of up to six runners with a one minute gap between each wave. We would also take the temperature of each runner using Infra-Red thermometers; to minimise contact further race numbers and timing chips would be posted out to runners before the event and if any were fortunate enough to grace the podium with their performance then their awards would be posted out after the event. Of course, the item that all runners like best at the Hullavington events is the post run FREE CAKE and this would be pre-bagged and collected by the runners as they cross the finish line along with their medal.



The 5K race provided an opportunity to run through our COVID19 compliance processes and we limited our entry to just 100-runners but we could have filled the race twice over as runners were desperate to engage in some real-world racing rather than the virtual races that had been the norm for the previous six months or so and this was also reflected in the distances that runners were prepared to travel to participate (*remember that local lockdowns were not in force at this time*). The winner was Ben Cole of Tonbridge AC in a



time of 15-minutes and 10-seconds ahead of Ethan Pierce of Swindon Harriers and Zak Hurrell of Wells City Harriers; the Ladies race was just as competitive with less than 20-seconds separating the top-3 headed by Chloe Ridewood of Abingdon AC who led home in 19-minutes exactly just ahead of Kelly Dicks from Bristol's Great Western Runners and Rachel Stowell of Bitton Road Runners. Several lessons were learned on the day like giving constant race briefing to each of the departing waves is hard on the vocal chords especially if you are trying to make your voice heard from beneath a face mask; and that a runner who collapses in exhaustion after crossing the finish line is particularly difficult to move on out of the finish area, which we needed to keep clear to maintain social distancing.

We were prepared for the 200-runners that had signed up for the Half Marathon on Sunday 18th October with 45 waves scheduled to get underway and runners graded according to their estimated finishing times so that we could minimise the number of runners at given points of the playfully undulating course. Local lockdowns meant that there were a number of late withdrawals as the socially responsible runners withdrew from the race to adhere to the new restrictions.

The race proved to be a fast one with the first three runners all recording seventy minutes (over 13-minutes quicker than the winning time set the previous year). The overall winner



was Adam Stokes of Bristol & West AC ahead of the Stroud AC pair of Nicholas Coyle and Lee Stopford. The Ladies race saw Charlotte Taylor-Green of Clevedon AC set a new course record of 1-hour 18-minutes and 42-seconds ahead of returning champion Holly Rush.

The next race from Stampede Sports will be the Secret Santa 10-mile run on Sunday 20th December and again the entry will be limited to 200 runners with early signs that this will be a sell-out event. Quite how Santa will manage with PPE is a challenge that we are still working on.

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Virtual Vitality London 10k – By Rosemary Barber

After reading about this event I thought I would enter to give me something to train for other than my 5k's. Ken (my Husband) said he would work out a flat 10k around the Westbury Trading Estate, incorporating the AVR 5k course. It didn't take him long to include Victory, and Engineer Road which broke up the boredom of too many laps. Although I was as nervous as a normal race morning, it didn't take long to get into the zone! It seemed strange proudly wearing my AVR vest with an official number on the front, and being the only one on the start line! I had worked out that I would aim not to go any slower than 5.50 mins per k if I was going to achieve a decent time, and being such a flat course I was able to keep well below this target. Eventually finishing in a time of 57.29, pace 5.44. Ken was at 6k to hand me my Hi 5 drink, then at the finish to encourage me - who needs crowds eh?

The organisers will be mailing our medals and T shirts. I was a bit disappointed though after uploading my results, to read that they were not publishing any official results. It would have been interesting to see where I would have finished in the FV70's group.

I think it's important during these Covid times to keep your fitness up, and to set yourself goals so that you are race ready when they invite us back to competition. Running 'Not' Park Run is a good idea to do occasionally if you are unable to get to speed sessions.



COTSWOLD COUNTRY PARK & BEACH 5K – By Chris Perry

We all know that the race calendar has been decimated since late March 2020 with a huge void to fill on a Saturday morning; due the cancellation of parkrun, and Sunday race days, that we all took for granted. I wanted to use the lockdown period to retain the fitness I had built up that had served me so well throughout my Manchester Marathon training plan, one of many big city casualties that thousands had trained for over the winter and early spring. But, alas, injury struck in early April and left me frustrated on the sidelines for the best part of 2 months with only my mountain bike for company. The timing couldn't have been any worse.

With the gyms opening again towards the end of the summer and my injury woes finally behind me, fitness slowly began to return. Myself and Lil decided to enter the Cotswold Country Park & Beach (CCPB) 5K to give some meaning to training runs and gym sessions and get back into the long awaited habit of actually racing again.

The event looked really well organised with social distancing being achieved by sending the runners out 20 seconds apart in half an hour waves (maximum entrants per wave was 20, I think). We signed up for the first wave at 10am, with the second going out at 10.30am and so on, into the early afternoon. To ensure that runners wouldn't bunch or needlessly overtake, we were lined up in order of anticipated finishing times in segregated pens.

Prior to us entering the starting area, we had to pick up our race numbers from the Dragonfly Cafe, which was transformed into the race HQ, situated by one of the lakes. The weather was absolutely horrendous and it took every ounce of enthusiasm to tentatively get out of the car in vests and walk across the flooded car park to sign-in! The rain had been relentless for what seemed like days and the very high wind and chilly conditions was not what we'd signed up for!

The organisation was very slick at registration with runners' temperatures taken, hand sanitizer available and instructions provided. Over at the starting area, the race team were full of enthusiasm, encouragement and key information in respect of the course layout and the need to social distance. This was well received, as I doubt that many people would have raced in such unique and unprecedented conditions, so there was bound to be varying degrees of apprehension.

I was keen to get going as it was freezing cold by the lake and the wind seemed to be battering us from all angles! I went off second and the guy in front of me was soon out of sight, so it was more of a time trial than a race. Lil was luckier with race-like conditions having a runner to chase down, and one to prevent from overtaking, for the duration of the run. I quickly realised that it was not going to be a day for PBs, with paddling pool sized puddles to negotiate, following by saturated grass and muddy, slippery paths. If the



weather hadn't been so bad then the course (two laps of the first lake, following by a final lap of an adjacent lake) would have been much quicker.

Given the conditions and the lack of fellow runners or crowds out on course, I must admit that I lost motivation within half a mile and ended up treating it as a training run. All I could think about was warm, dry clothes and a hot drink and I just wanted the race to end as quickly as possible.

Once I'd finished I chatted to the guy who won our wave (Stroud AC) and cheered Lil on as she came down the home straight. As soon as we got our medals, we dived back to the car to change and went off in search of somewhere to get some lunch and drink.

When the results were posted, we'd come 5th and 16th overall, which was a pleasing little confidence booster for the future. The organisers did such a good job in arranging a safe and friendly race. My heart goes out to them as it was the worst Sunday weather since lockdown, but even with these challenges, they laid on a great event!



Races are coming through thick and fast now and achieving personal bests too! At the moment, the results page on the website is going through a handover of volunteers and may not be kept up-to-date so please email results@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk and copy in news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk as well.

WALL OF FAME

5km

Newbury Racecourse Gemma Knudsen 19:17

10km

Newbury Racecourse Leah Sartain 43:26

Half Marathon

Hullavington Debbie Ellis 1:44:59 and 1st FV50

Devizes Gary MacAlister (CPB) 1:25:46 and 10th place

Jo Farion 1:42:22 and 3rd in age category

Competition!

How closely have you been paying attention to this issue? Did you spot some spooky additions to this month?

How many pumpkins, bats and scary trees did you see?

Email news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk by the end of November with your count for each character to be in with a chance of getting your name in the next newsletter and a tube of Science in Sport electrolytes.



AVON VALLEY TRIATHLETES



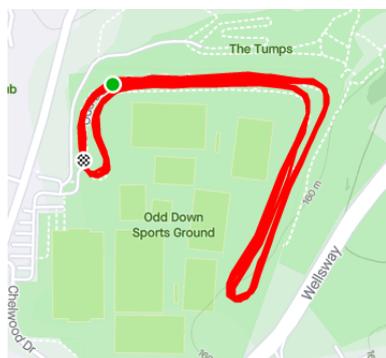
AVT Bobble Hats

Do you want to keep your head warmer in the winter now with the change in temperature? There are a very limited number of AVT bobble hats available for £18. If interested, please email avt@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk to arrange payment and collection.



Bath Duathlon – by Steve Clark

I had the best of the day's weather on October 31st by opting to do the Bath Duathlon in the afternoon. Although the rain had stopped and the sun was out, the wind at Odd



Down seemed even stronger, so it was a battle on both the run and bike. The run ground was cut up as they had been racing on it since 9am but great fun slipping and sliding around. The bike was probably the hardest ride at Odd Down I've done with the wind. The two 1.5k runs were at a pace faster than normal even in those conditions. The sessions with Fiona and Sean on Tuesdays seem to be paying off. The organisation was very covid friendly and the support from all the marshals was fantastic in the conditions.

Westonbirt Duathlon – by Steve Clark

Sally Frawley and Anne Clark took part in the Westonbirt Duathlon as a team on the morning of the 31st October, with Sally doing the two 5k runs and Anne the 22km bike leg. They both enjoyed the race even though the conditions were horrendous. The rain was torrential and wind gusting to over 30 miles an hour so the bike course was changed due to flooding and the wind conditions.

Sally did the first run just as the rain started, on her last lap it started getting heavier and by the time Anne went out on her



bike it was pouring. At the start of Sally's second run it had eased up a bit, but the ground had cut up a lot and it was like running through a mud bath. Sally did both 5ks in under 30 minutes in horrendous conditions, and Anne did the 22k in 46 minutes, managing to avoid the floods and running water on the course.

Both enjoyed the event, finishing in an overall time of 1:46:36 and had a lot of fun, which was what it was all about and they both came down the finish shoot together as team, 'Birds of a Feather'. DB Max as usual put on a fantastic covid friendly race and a huge thank you has to be given to the marshals and organisers for the support and encouragement during the event in such atrocious conditions. Even "Shouty Dave" was on good form as always!



Winter Wild Swimming – by Sarah Barker



With the covid restrictions in place this year, I signed up for a Vobster summer membership for the first time then after a prompting email towards the end of the summer, I paid an extra £15 to extend it for the whole year. This got me thinking about whether to swim throughout the winter to get my monies worth but then the more pressing matter of the temperature had me questioning my sanity, especially as I had been lucky enough to swim there over the summer when the water was over 22 °C!

The coldest water I'd ever swum in for an extended period was 15.1°C when I signed up for the 2 mile Swim Serpentine event in 2017 (pictured). I got severe cramp in the second mile and I had blue lips for hours afterwards. Even the finish

line hot tubs didn't help. So when I headed off to Vobster a couple of weeks ago knowing that the water temperature was almost down to 13 °C, I wasn't filled with optimism.

I wore my AVT tri suit under my normal wet suit and had some neoprene gloves ready if my hands got too cold. I got chatting to a couple of other swimmers who agreed to be my swim buddies (I had foolishly thought it was a life guarded session and I wasn't allowed in without one) one of which only wore his trunks in the water! I got in the water and floated for a few minutes while I got used to the temperature – it's important to use this time to get your face in too as this can make you feel much colder and take your breath away when you start swimming.

I had decided only to swim the short laps just in case I ended up stuck at the furthest point on the long lap with cramp. My body got used to it fairly quickly but it took almost one full lap for my face to stop feeling like it was being attacked by needles! I only stayed in for three laps as the memories of the Serpentine (and being in the water for 90 minutes) made me be sensible and leave with all the feeling in my fingers and toes intact.

As the temperature continues to drop, I will have to start doing other things as it gets down towards single figures such as buying some extra layers, although by the end of the next lockdown I'm not entirely sure whether I'll want to swim in December!

Some useful tips I found from the Outdoor Swimming Society are:

- Neoprene will keep you warmer: neoprene costumes, neoprene wetsuits and full swim wetsuits all increase time in the water.
- Hands and feet can feel the bite of cold the most in winter: consider investing in swim gloves and booties.
- Swim close to the shore.
- Increase your time in open water gradually, and acclimatise to the cold. Don't push the acclimatisation phase, it takes time.
- Know your limits and beware 'afterdrop' - you will feel colder 10 minutes after you get out than you did in the water.



I know there are members who regularly swim throughout the winter, so if you would like to give it a go once lockdown is out of the way, it's always worth putting a shout out on the AVT Facebook page to see who's about. I am always willing to be a buddy too.



Send any news, articles or achievements to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.
Also check the closed Facebook page for regular news as well as emails straight into your inbox.

