



Welcome to The Valley News

Our cover picture this month comes from Kat Taylor-Laird who completed the 2-mile Swim Serpentine event in an impressive one-hour six-minutes and is now looking to conquer the Ride London-100 and the London Marathon to complete her London Classics.

If you have a favourite photograph which you would like to have featured as a cover image on your favourite monthly Avon Valley based newsletter then please send it along with a few words to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

The deadline date for articles, results or any other submissions to make the next edition is the 25th of the month.

In this issue:

Wrinty's Ramblings

Judy Farr revisits

My journey back...

The Avon Valley Mile

Vitruvian

Journey to Ironman

Not the Shropshire Tri

All those years ago

AVR do Weymouth

Walls of Lucca

#Social Gallery

The Newsletter of Avon Valley Runners

Issue #258 – October 2023



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

Wrinty's Ramblings

When I used to be a competitive runner, I adopted the SMART model when setting my goals, whether that be running a target time for a race or getting a team together for a relay. However, the SMART model really came into its own when I took up cycling not that many years ago, I set myself two targets: the first was to ride 100-miles in under 5-hours and the other was to ride 10-miles in under 25-minutes.

They were both SPECIFIC the objective was clearly defined; they were MEASURABLE – I could check the time recorded on my Garmin and also there would be an event timekeeper for both; ACHIEVABLE – it would be just me against the conditions and the clock and no other factors outside of my control; REALISTIC, if I put the necessary work in then there was no reason why I could not; TIMELY, the RideLondon-100 was annual and there were plenty of local 10-mile Time Trials on the calendar, so I should be able to find the time.



I soon succeeded in riding 100-miles in under 5-hours, a goal which I have likened in terms of effort and gravitas to running a sub-3hour marathon but had completely failed to accomplish due a succession of injuries which never allowed me the necessary training to make it achievable. However, my body seemed to agree with cycling a lot more and I managed to clock 4-hours 59-minutes and 42-seconds at the **London-100** in 2015. Further century rides resulted in my personal best time over the distance being lowered down to: 4:47:38 (London-100 in 2016) -> 4:44:26 (National TT Championships @Royal Wootton Bassett in 2020) -> 4:37:45 (London-100 in 2022) -> 4:36:17 (London-100 in 2023).

My sub-25 minute 10-mile objective proved a little more elusive to crack with a few unsuccessful attempts having been made until on a still summers evening in 2019 I managed to clock 24-minutes 39-seconds at the **Kinetic-1 Time Trial** at Castle Combe. It was nearly a year until I was able to repeat the feat and then shaved off another 3-seconds from my 10-mile PB. In 2021 I dropped my 10-mile time down to 24:05; then in 2022 at the inaugural **Avon Valley Time Trial Championships** I broke the 24-minute barrier with 23:43 and this year I have lowered my PB time even further down to 23:16. My thoughts are now turning to breaking the 23-minute barrier.

One goal though that I never set, mainly because I did not believe that for me it was either Achievable or Realistic, was the breaking of the one-hour barrier for cycling 25-miles; this was a target for serious competitive cyclists. I had managed to get a time of 1-hour 2-minutes 30-seconds on a windless evening at Castle Combe in 2021 when they had also removed the chicanes from the course configuration and I was going full-gas. Aside from that, my other efforts were all in the region of one-hour five minutes. However back in July, I decided to enter the **Reading 25TT** so I could at least register a time for my cycling club's Best All Round (BAR) competition, and 1:05 is still a pretty respectable time for cycling 25-miles.

It was a windless morning; the roads were dry and the A4 between Theale and Thatcham pretty flat. I was going well, very well, I looked at my Garmin with just one mile to go – 57-minutes and I was moving at 27mph – could I really be heading to break the hour?

Just one final roundabout to cross and I would find out.

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

I am not sure what happened next or what was going through my head, but instead of crossing the roundabout I went around the roundabout and headed back down the A4 the way I had just come. After five minutes of not seeing a finish line I stopped and asked a marshal and he pointed back the way that I had just come. So, I span around and crossed the finish line in 1:14:50 having ridden over 29-miles and was awarded with last place. However, I couldn't get out of my mind that if I had not suffered the "brain-fart" then I may have broken the hour.

Ten days later though and there was a 25-mile Time Trial at Castle Combe; let me give it my best shot on a circuit that I have come to know very well - *according to Strava I have cycled around it over 1,300 times since 2018.*

It was a typical summer evening at Castle Combe with a fresh westerly wind blowing along the top straight at between 10-12mph. So, I adopted a strategy of making myself 'small' and working hard into the headwind, then cruising along the bottom of the track where the wind could give me a gentle push. I went through 10-miles in 23:23 which only a year ago would have been a PB for that distance; My second ten as was to be expected was slower with 24:06 but putting in all that I had for those final five miles got me over the finishing line in 58-minutes 48-seconds and second place overall for the **Kinetic-1 Time Trial** race.

I had done it – I had broken the hour – it was ACHIEVABLE – I just needed BELIEF.



Not letting things rest, I revisited Castle Combe a couple of weeks later and took my 25-mile time down to 57:59 (*second overall again*). Not just limiting myself to my local track, at the end of August I headed to Usk in South Wales and lowered my PB down further to 57:52. I can see where there are more seconds (*may be even a minute or two*) to come off, so planning my next set of SMART objectives will be coming soon.

Darren Wintmore (Wrinty)

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

Judy Farr re-visits AVR

Founder member Judy Farr is a resident at Goodson Lodge in Trowbridge and asked if she could visit Avon Valley Runners to check out how the club has grown. The below is from the OSJCT Goodson Lodge Facebook page:

We have been asking residents for their bucket list wishes. Judy Farr before coming to Goodson was an accomplished athlete and also founder of Avon Valley Runners. Judy hasn't visited the track since and requested to go and visit and see how much has changed from when she was a track and road race champion.

The activity team went away to contact Avon Valley Runners and see if they would like to visit Judy at Goodson Lodge and reminisce about her achievements over the years and see if it was possible for Judy to visit during an evening that the club train.

This Wednesday Judy achieved getting to the track and seeing some old friends and had lots of memories to share.

In the photo below you can see Judy and members of Avon Valley Runners reunited together after so many years... also pictured below is Judy in action representing England and also as part of an early AVR team at the Burnham on Sea Half Marathon in 1986.



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

My journey back to running

I have been running with AVR for just over a year having completed the Couch to 5k in 2022 with Jay and her fantastic team of volunteers. I used the C25K as a way to get back into running after 3 years out after surgery in 2019, and it's been a brilliant gateway into the club.

Having completed the C25K course at the end of November 2022 and finishing the park run in 28:34, I joined the club and started attending the Tuesday interval sessions. And with the aim of challenging myself and giving myself something to shoot for I signed up for Goal Getters (GG) - what can I say about it: it's been fantastic!

I've met lots of members of the club, learned about the local races and leagues, signed up for races that have pushed me out of my comfort zone, and most importantly had amazing support from my mentor Frank Lamerton. Frank is an outstanding runner in his own right, and his knowledge and motivation have carried me through the year, keeping me pushing on - thanks, Frank!

Coming into September I had achieved my goal times for 5km and 10km, but had one more to go...**The Chippenham Half Marathon.**

The Chippenham Half was the final race on my list, and my chance to get my Half Marathon goal time for the GG Me vs Me challenge, and achieve that elusive Gold award!



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

My training went really well - I followed a power-based plan and focused on building up my mileage with easy runs and one long run a week, plus 1-2 quality sessions a week improving my speed endurance. My GG target time was 1:52:56 (*my previous time from Bristol HM in 2019*) and I was feeling really confident I could go quicker. It was a great race, lots of runners from AVR turned out and there was a great buzz in the morning. Special thanks to Martin Russam for the lift over to race central and back!

My race went well up until 10-miles, then came the dreaded hill from 10-12 miles that Frank had warned me about. I pushed on and even managed a sprint finish for the final 400m coming in with a time of 1:44:28 and smashing my target time by 8 minutes and 28 seconds.

I got my Gold award!

Earlier this year I had a conversation with Sean Price at an intervals session about my training, at the time I was using heart rate zones to train with. Sean mentioned the idea of running with power, and specifically a power meter for runners called Stryd. It's safe to say I was intrigued! I did my research for a few weeks and eventually ordered one.

For those unfamiliar with Stryd, it's a foot pod that attaches to your running shoe and wirelessly connects to Garmin and other running watches. It provides real-time power data (*similar to cycling power meters*) and offers an array of statistics on running performance and efficiency. Since adopting Stryd, my running has become more efficient and my training has been progressing well with consistent improvements.



Stryd has been instrumental in predicting finish times for various race distances and keeping my target training zones aligned with my current fitness levels. It even adjusts for factors like hot weather, wind resistance, and uphill and downhill sections, ensuring that I maintain the right intensity during my runs. It has now become a key part of my training.



If you would like to know more about power training, I'm happy to chat and show you how it works - feel free to grab me at an intervals session or drop me a message on the Facebook group!

Looking ahead, I'm determined to beat my personal bests for 5K, 10K, and Half Marathon, despite a lengthy 12-year gap since I set them!

I'm looking forward to returning to the weekly interval sessions shortly, and I'm starting to plan in some races for the autumn and winter. Finally, I'm setting my sights on completing as many GG challenge points as possible, with my eyes firmly fixed on achieving the Bronze award or better!

Dan Crosby

The Avon Valley Mile

The autumn edition of our closed one-mile race took place on Thursday 7th September over the certified accurate course in Barton Farm Country Park.



Results are as follows:

Men

- 1st Niall Thorne – 4:57.61
- 2nd Dan Crosby – 6:05.31
- 3rd David Bagshaw – 6:26.35
- 4th George Sawyer - 6:26.71
- 5th Martin Russam - 7:47.72
- 6th Stuart Mackie – 10:24.22

Ladies

- 1st Amelie Higgins – 6:03.82
- 2nd Rosemary Barber – 8:25.38
- 3rd Sharon Alexander – 9:41.54
- 4th Sarah Russam – 10:34.52
- 5th Ceri Sonnet – 10:35.19

Our Fantastic Volunteers on the night were:

Sara Robert; San Dra; Debbie Ellis; Hayley Southgate and David Bagshaw - thank you all.

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

The Lunchtime Sessions

The lunchtime intervals started in March 2022, being the first daytime session and it was not known if it would take off or be a success. Over the last 18-months though it has gone from strength to strength and growing in numbers. Athletes who have availability during the day, work shifts, or cannot train in the evenings come along and benefit from the session.

It has become a standing joke among the athletes that every Wednesday you can almost guarantee it rains, yes even in the summer and sometimes just for the lunchtime hour and believe me when I say we have had a few howlers, or it's so hot we almost fry. However, the lunchtime athletes are there every week giving it their all, regardless. The improvement in everyone's running performance, posture and pace has improved so much and continues to do so.



It is a very happy group with lots of running, hard work and focus. But most of all lots of laughs, fun and a supportive camaraderie from everyone, for everyone who attends regular or occasional, that is second to none. This sessions success is down to the support and commitment of all the wonderful athletes.

The lunchtime Intervals are held every Wednesday between 12.30 and 1.30pm at the track if you would like to come along and join in. Maybe see you there - **Debbie Ellis**

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

Multi-Sport News

Wow, what a month September has been for AVT. Mother nature finally gave us some sunshine and with the triathlon season almost at a close, many of our members were out racing this month and achieving some amazing end of season goals. It brought to mind the TS Elliot quote "only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out just how far one can go".



So big shout outs to: Kathryn Butt, Emily Dye and Stephen Clark who came 3rd, 7th and 9th respectively in their age group for the **Sprint triathlon GB World Championship qualifiers** in Bournemouth and will all be representing GBR in Malaga next year. Also at Bournemouth, Annalie Ibsen finished 3rd in her age group for the Aquabike event.

Maria Harryman completed the **Sandman Standard triathlon** in Anglesey and congratulations to all of those who competed in the **Ironman 70.3** at Weymouth.

Scott Green who came 1st in his category at the **Shropshire Triathlon**, Vicky Bodman who completed her first 70.3 at the **Vitruvian** in Rutland Water, Keith Withers in the **Across the Mersey Swim** and of course not forgetting our two new Ironmen/women Alan Best and Caroline Scott at **Ironman Wales**.

Apologies to anyone I have forgotten, we'd love to share what you have been up to in future editions.

Don't forget, AVT kit from Halo can take up to 8 weeks to arrive so best to get your orders in early: <https://www.halosports.co.uk/clubs/avon-valley-triathletes/>

Maria Harryman

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

Vitruvian

On Sunday 10th September I took part in the Vitruvian middle-distance triathlon. It was in the middle of the country in Rutland. My friend Kathryn and I chose this one to do at the beginning of the year as we had heard it was really friendly and flat (it was not!)

I've spent the majority of the year training for it. Attending AVT swim sessions, swimming in the lake, taking part in the YAW100K sportive and trying to improve my running. Not everything went to plan, there were hiccups along the way and sometimes I just had to prioritise family and friends over training.

I went with the intention of finishing it. When I started my training, I wanted to get a certain time, but in the end, I just wanted to get it done. I'd signed up to Weymouth Half Ironman the year before and had to pull out as I had an arm injury that went on for around 3 months, in which time I lost a lot of my fitness. Committing to the training was a big ask, especially with a busy job that takes me away from home. So, on the day, I was ready! I thought my swim was going to be my strongest area and it was. I was so happy with that part: 1,900m in 42 minutes 😊

My bike was slow, there were a lot more hills than I thought. I hadn't spent enough time on the bike and I knew it. It was also getting hotter at this point. And then there was the run... the weather was unexpected to say the least! It was 30-degrees. I do not like running in the heat. I found it hard and my plan to run 9 minutes and walk a minute went out the window. I had many arguments with myself. I hoped I would pass out from the heat so I had a good reason to stop. I could feel a blister on my foot and wondered if that was a good enough reason to stop. But I didn't and you know why? Because the "back of the pack crew" are simply AMAZING!! Total strangers sticking together encouraging each other. People telling me not to quit. Just before I got to the half way turnaround point, having others say they're going to be waiting for you at the end.

It was emotional and just what I needed.

So, at mile 8 I had a firm word with myself and accepted that it was ok to power walk. I was hot, I was tired, I just couldn't get the energy to run for a decent amount of time. On I travelled knowing I could get to the end with this approach. And then at about 11 miles the sky went dark, the wind increased and a torrential storm happened!!

The Race Director came out to check if us last few were ok to continue. I loved it!! It finally cooled down! I was finally able to run. Mile #12 was my fastest mile 0 over 8 hours after I'd started this!

I ran across the finish line trying not to cry. I'd done it. I'd completed what I set out to do. I will be forever thankful to the back of the pack crew for making me not quit!

The medal is pretty awesome too!

Vicky Bodman



Journey to Ironman

Caroline: When I think back, I started this journey when Chris Walford convinced me to do Ironman Weymouth 70.3. I didn't have a bike and I certainly wasn't a swimmer! Never in my life did I think I would end up doing an actual FULL Ironman (2.4 mile swim, 112 miles on the bike and then a full marathon). In fact, I thought the whole idea was thoroughly ludicrous. What mad person might undertake such an overwhelmingly difficult feat and how on earth does one get fit enough to deliver to this level. It seemed like a huge waste of time to me! What a nutter, I thought!! And here I am, 2 years on with an Ironman under my belt. What happened to my sanity?

Well, it just kind of crept up on me! I started training on the bike indoors because I had decided I was a fair weather cyclist and I definitely wasn't going out in the winter getting cold! Why would I do that? So I spent the first winter on Zwift... 3 months later I was fed up with Zwift and couldn't wait to get outside! I think during that time I fell out of love with Zwift ... I have since made my peace with it, but it's taken a while! Alongside my regular cycles I began swimming twice a week. Once on my own and once in a lesson. I must have made a fair bit of progress but I don't think my speed changed very much... I am partial to a bit of a plod on my running and I tend to do the same when swimming and cycling. So,... time went by and I felt myself getting fitter. I did have a personal coach who helped me but I don't think that's always necessary. However, it did help me as I didn't really know how to help myself in swimming and cycling. I would now know how to support myself.



A few months down the line and a lot of learning, I did the Weymouth 70.3 along with about 14 other AVT athletes. I succeeded to complete it and I actually found myself having a kind of strange obsession with the whole sport. It felt so holistic, each discipline balancing the other so that you didn't wear yourself out in training! I love the training. Following Weymouth, we decided on a great little inclusive AVT event called Long Course Weekend. You could choose your discipline and your distance. It was in Tenby and you could choose to swim one day, bike the next and run on the last day. This was perfect and I thought I'd do all three and take on the full distances of each - equivalent to the Full Ironman distance, only over 3 days. It was quite some feat and required a lot of training. I guess the whole event inspired me to enter the full Ironman. That and Alan Best, who seemed keen too so I knew I wouldn't be alone with my training. It was only 2-months before the full ironman which was also in Tenby so I threw my hat in the ring and thought, well, you're almost there Caroline, you could do this. And I signed up! I thought I'd make it worthwhile and raise some money for charity too.

I felt I was getting stronger on the bike and I knew I could manage the run but doing them together was going to be quite some feat!

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

Alan: I am not a swimmer. One of my new year's resolutions this year was to be able to swim 400m continuous front crawl. How did I end up entering a Full Ironman? Going back to 2022 I rarely considered the AVT part of AVR as my ability to swim was non-existent. Watching last September's Weymouth 70.3 event though did motivate me to want to be able to do something similar.



Swimming though is so unlike running or cycling that I found it incredibly tough going to be able to do continuous front crawl. I often thought about stopping and just staying running and cycling. Caught up in some excitement though as I had entered Long Course Weekend (LCW) at Tenby which is the Ironman distance over three days so there was no backing out. What made the difference for me was going swimming every day over the Christmas holidays and eventually being able to do more than one length at a time.

So in January 2023, 400m continuous front crawl was achieved but a long way from the 2-miles or so required for the Ironman distance. The 51 Fiver at Lake32 back in May was an AVT focus event and I had been put in for the swim leg as part of a Relay team - a 1500m lake swim and I had never swum in open water before. I had a couple of lake swims before the race and on the day it was awful...but I got around with a mixture of breaststroke and front crawl. Also in May, Caroline voiced an opinion that if you could do the Long Course Weekend then you may as well do an Ironman. I stupidly thought that this was probably true although I still had an issue with being able to swim the distance and actually get out to do the rest of the race. The LCW and the Centurion proved that I could do the distance even if it was not overly fast or my strongest discipline.

Caroline: The swim, which I considered a given, was not! They'd changed the swim direction and the resulting current meant many of us got stuck, battling against the tide. I did my second 1.2 mile lap about 15 minutes slower than my first lap due to the current shift! Many got stuck at the back, some going backwards and had DNF as they weren't going to make the cut off.

Alan: The beach was packed. I was expecting it to be a bit more friendly but found I got beaten about in the swim to the first buoy, kicked in the face and generally wondered what I was doing to myself. First lap though was 42 minutes so I thought it was fine. My second lap was better as I had more space, however the trawler smelling of fish and ingesting too much saltwater caused me to be sick in the sea. I finished, saw my time and wondered how I did so badly.

Caroline: I made the bike cut off by around 30-minutes, which felt far too close for me. Lots of people missed it. It's really hard to complete the bike course with all those hills in that space of time. I consider myself to be a fairly ok cyclist but clearly this was quite an undertaking in the time given! There are no breaks in Ironman - there's no time for one! This is tough considering you may be on the go for up to 17 hours!

Alan: Even though the swim took a bit longer than I had hoped it was within my window time wise. I got back to transition, changed and was fairly comfortable going out on the bike although I probably went a little hard to start. What I found really tough was eating. I told myself to eat every hour and after the first two bars my body just did not want to eat anymore. The heat was also unexpected so I ended up drinking more than I planned, however the feed stations were great at keeping me on the move.

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



Caroline: This event was really hard... not that anyone is doubting that. But I just need to say it... Literally, the chances of a DNF are so high, Tenby is just so hilly! What was I thinking!?

Alan: It's not a game! Seriously, I was wondering why I ever agreed to do this. On the bike, my quads were on fire and I had no idea how I was ever going to do a run.

Caroline: I was sick in the street at mile 25 of the run and had to start walking more - I think partly all the awful feed station food I took on and partly the obscene exertion. I have never been sick from exercise in my life!

Alan: Some of the feed stations were beginning to smell really badly (*probably the portable toilets*). I had been told to start drinking coke but not too early. I waited until lap 3 and that saved my life! A coke and water then on at every feed station got me home.

Caroline: My training defo stood me in good stead (*my body played ball and that made it more manageable but in the end, it's in the mind*)....four hilly run laps to complete a full marathon at the end was brutal! We got coloured bands every time you did a lap and I started getting band envy as many participants had more than me!

Alan: Training was good but I think that I would tweak it if I was ever to do another. The bands though became the most important thing in my life for 5-hours. Once I had one, I knew I just had to get to three to be over half way, then four and then I would be done.

Caroline: The support from the people of Tenby was absolutely incredible, especially the support on Heartbreak Hill. It was like nothing I have EVER seen in my life! I almost cried at the top of the hill!

Alan: The crowd support from the swim to the end was unlike any other event I have raced in. On the bike and on the run course my fellow competitors were so supportive. Heartbreak hill has to be experienced to be believed, you could almost get to the top on crowd support alone!

Caroline: So, I completed it! Yes, little old me managed a Full Ironman! Little miss plodder, snail, tortoise (*all those things I call myself*)... she managed a FULL ironman! Oh my! I did it! That was my one hit wonder, that's what I told myself! The first and last! Never again!

But then... at the awards ceremony, the roll down for the Ironman World Champs began... Ummmm..... Here is a clip of me qualifying for the World Championship in Nice next September! Oh crumbs! And it all begins again... I guess I will continue that Ironman journey for just one more year! I must be nuts!



Alan: For me, on the day, I thought it was incredibly tough but more or less within the time windows I had set for myself. I was pleased to finish, no real injuries just a couple of blisters, but I had finished. It has only been since finishing, knowing the difficulties on the swim and how hard the cutoffs were that I have realised what a sense of achievement it is.

I really enjoyed the awards ceremony, especially with Caroline signing up to do another !

Caroline "Ironman" Scott & Alan "Ironman" Best

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

The Shropshire ~~Triathlon~~ Duathlon

My first encounter with UKTriathlon was 'The Ultimate' (Long course) 5 years ago at Alderford lake, it was an amazing experience and made extra special by the fantastic support and great organisation by their team, a company founded in 1992 with inclusivity and the opportunity for competitiveness at their core. On the back of this I returned a couple more times and completed the 1/4, always combining with a short break. This year a clash with the Alderford dates meant a season reschedule and I entered the Ellesmere Sprint Tri on 3rd September. There were also options for Middle, Olympic and at the pointy end The British Sprint Championships.

The glorious late summer weather began on our journey up and I registered the Saturday afternoon and I didn't at first notice the lack of swimming hat in the race pack. While my wife was feeding the ducks after lunch on the beautiful Ellesmere Lake, we did notice some dubious clumps of weed. The email came through shortly after to inform us that the prolific late burst of sunshine had brought the blue/green algae to life. Unfortunately, I was not going to put into practice all the excellent swim coaching that I've had from the fab duo of Stephen Clark & Keith Withers at the Thursday Melksham sessions. The swim was cancelled and a duathlon it was to be.

On Race Day the bike racking was straightforward even though the Sprint was the last category to go ahead. The age old "too many people, not enough toilets" certainly was not the case as there were portaloos aplenty!



All that out of the way and it was down to business, 2.5K out and back run, which was undulating and got the HR up quickly. Into transition for the 25K bike which had a pretty sharp incline just as the lake went out of view. This again was quite a bumpy ride with the road conditions very comparable to Wiltshire if not worse! Particularly after the descents which gave cause to hang on a little bit more.

Off the bike and it was the 5K run, beginning with the same run route but going on an extra 1.25K to the turn then it's all in for the finish. A very encouraging crowd and marshals cheer you in with the man on the mic since '98. Vic, calling you out across the line.

A most enjoyable morning, 17/73 overall and 1st in my age category. Remembering the old adage though 'there's always someone faster & always someone slower', I certainly wouldn't have podiumed in the earlier British Championships, but that's what can be a motivation and keeps you keen yet again for that end of season feeling.....maybe next year?

Scott Green

AVT coached Open-water swim

'Let's give it a try! It's a goal-getter point'. So, on a Sunday afternoon in late August, we made our way to Vobster Quay for our first Open-water swim. Were we nervous? Er, yes, just slightly!

Having donned our wetsuits and caps we met the Tri group who were all very supportive and encouraging, as was Christian the coach. We started to relax safe in the knowledge that if we weren't happy, we could just leave the water.

In we went, down the ramp, expecting to be met with cold water - Not at all!

We swam under the guidance of Christian and with the encouragement of the others to the first buoy. Then to the next and the next. Amazing!

We loved every moment of the experience. Swimming in the fresh air with friends, surrounded by nature, feeling calm and relaxed.

Was it just for a GG point - not any longer! We went home searching for wet suits online and promising to meet up soon at Vobster.

What did the afternoon show us? What a supportive and inspirational group the AVT's are and how all things are possible-you just have to dip your toe in the water (so to speak!).

Paula Phoenix and Jen Buckle



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

The Avon Valley TT Championships

Time Trials are becoming increasingly popular within AVT as an easy and quick way to test bike fitness and compete in a race. Throughout the year we have joined DBMax at Castle Combe for closed-road TT racing as well as with Westbury Wheelers for their "Watercress cup" club race series.

For the club championship we had ten members racing on what proved to be an excellent night for fast times. Normally around Castle Combe there can be a strong wind however on Wednesday 13th September, the night for the Championship this was very marginal meaning it was flat out for the whole lap!



Men

- 1st Will Whitmore – 23:54
- 2nd Stephen Clark – 25:15
- 3rd Alan Best – 25:17
- 4th Keith Withers - 29:03

Ladies

- 1st Kathryn Butt– 26:59
- 2nd Jen Nattrass– 27:55
- 3rd Annalie Ibison – 28:11
- 4th Caroline Scott – 29:17
- 5th Rosemary Barber – 34:31
- 6th Sandra Sharratt – 37:12

*Well done everyone and don't forget we have the Team TT at Thruxton coming up on the 8th October – **Alan Best***

AVT SoTY 2023

Some good weather in September meant that plenty were out to try our final segments of the year.

Twenty-two club members took on the [Flat 'n' Fast](#) segment at Worton which covers a flat 1.35-mile straight. Alan Best claimed the top spot, dipping under the 3-minute mark with 2:57 representing a speed of 27.3 mph. For the Ladies it was Fiona Price and Caroline Scott who led the way averaging a fantastic 24.4mph, both covering the distance in 3-minutes 18-seconds.



Rank	Name	Date	Speed	HR	Time
	Alan Best	Sep 17, 2023	27.3 mi/h	168 bpm	2:57
2	Will Whitmore	Sep 2, 2023	26.7 mi/h	163 bpm	3:01
3	Darren Wrintmore	Sep 16, 2023	26.1 mi/h	-	3:05
4	Fiona Price	Sep 5, 2023	24.4 mi/h	143 bpm	3:18
4	Caroline Scott (AVT)	Sep 17, 2023	24.4 mi/h	150 bpm	3:18
8	Jenny Natrass	Sep 10, 2023	22.4 mi/h	155 bpm	3:35

Our second segment was set to tie in with the club's Time Trial championships at Castle Combe on 13th September which attracted ten members but it was Darren Wrintmore (4:00) and Esther Frawley (4:48) who clocked the fastest times on the [Castle Combe Lap #2](#) during the Andy Cook session earlier in the month.

Rank	Name	Date	Speed	HR	Time
	Darren Wrintmore	Sep 5, 2023	27.3 mi/h	155 bpm	4:00
2	Will Whitmore	Sep 13, 2023	25.8 mi/h	165 bpm	4:14
3	Stephen Clark	Sep 13, 2023	23.9 mi/h	-	4:34
4	Alan Best	Sep 13, 2023	23.7 mi/h	172 bpm	4:37
5	Esther Frawley	Sep 5, 2023	22.7 mi/h	-	4:48
6	Caroline Scott (AVT)	Sep 19, 2023	21.9 mi/h	149 bpm	4:59
7	Annalie Jane	Sep 13, 2023	21.8 mi/h	-	5:01
8	Keith Withers	Sep 13, 2023	20.7 mi/h	178 bpm	5:17
9	Anne Clark	Sep 5, 2023	20.5 mi/h	127 bpm	5:19
10	Rosemary Barber	Sep 13, 2023	17.6 mi/h	145 bpm	6:12

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

So, after the scores achieved for the September segments of the Month have been locked in; Bonus Points awarded across the year to date and points deducted for those who have completed ten or more segments, the Top-20 leaderboard now looks like this:

Rank	Athlete	Total Points	SotM Ridden	SotM Deductions	SotM Points	Bonus Segments	Bonus Deductions	Bonus Points
1	Will Whitmore	492	12	48	246	12	47	246
2	Alan Best	489	12	45	245	12	45	244
3	Darren Wrintmore	465	12	43	232	12	42	233
4	Andrew Jefferies	428	10	0	215	11	15	213
5	Martin Disney	287	6	0	132	7	0	155
6	Keith Withers	267	6	0	123	8	0	144
7	Simon Williams	172	3	0	62	6	0	110
8	Sean Price	161	3	0	60	6	0	101
9	Simon Reeves	142	3	0	58	5	0	84
10	Stephen Clark	111	1	0	23	5	0	88
11	Graham Anderson	104	2	0	40	4	0	64
12	Cliff Dye	96	1	0	18	5	0	78
13	Mark Sims	82	1	0	19	4	0	63
14	Tony Dunford	78	0	0	0	4	0	78
15	Dan Colman	75	0	0	0	4	0	75
16	Ben Mees	71	1	0	22	3	0	49
17	David Clarke	69	1	0	17	4	0	52
18	Tommy Davies	64	0	0	0	5	0	64
19	Martin Russam	48	1	0	18	2	0	30
20	Ben Vincent	45	1	0	16	2	0	29
Rank	Athlete	Total Points	SotM Ridden	SotM Deductions	SotM Points	Bonus Segments	Bonus Deductions	Bonus Points
1	Caroline Scott (AVT)	494	12	46	248	12	46	246
2	Jenny Natrass	482	11	23	242	11	22	240
3	Annalie Jane	460	12	43	232	12	38	228
4	Rosemary Barber	391	10	0	206	10	0	185
5	Caroline Tassell	320	6	0	135	9	0	185
6	Sarah Jewers	180	4	0	85	5	0	95
7	Gemma Knudsen	144	3	0	60	5	0	84
8	Anne Clark	127	2	0	37	5	0	90
9	Jo Mumford	125	1	0	20	5	0	105
10	Fiona Price	123	2	0	43	4	0	80
11	Esther Frawley	99	1	0	25	4	0	74
12	sandra sharratt	96	3	0	52	4	0	44
13	Izzy McNally	94	1	0	17	4	0	77
14	Diane Hier	93	1	0	14	4	0	79
15	Vicky Bodman	84	2	0	38	4	0	46
16	Jen Davies	83	2	0	38	3	0	45
17	jay sims	78	1	0	18	5	0	60
18	Fiona Gibbs	74	1	0	18	4	0	56
19	Sara Robert	72	0	0	0	5	0	72
20	Amélie Higgins	68	1	0	16	4	0	52

With all twelve of the monthly segments now completed it is just revisiting and bagging bonus points that can affect the standings now. Will Whitmore sits atop the Men's leaderboard but Alan Best is uncomfortably close. Whilst Caroline Scott remains sitting pretty at the top for the Ladies with Jenny Natrass and Annalie Ibson close behind.

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

All those years ago

Avon Valley Runners has now been around as a club for over 37-years and a lot has changed in that time but somethings have not, like members achieving success on a local, national and international level. So, I am going to look back at what we as a club achieved in this month 5, 10, 20 and 35-years ago...

October 2018

In this month five years ago:

Dominic Beddis and Niall Thorne finished first and third at the **Westbury Lions 10K**. A week later and Daniel Piper finished second at the **White Horse Gallop** trail run at Westbury, where Gary MacAlister was 1st MV40 with Leah Sartain and Gemma Lawton getting onto the podium as the second and third placed Ladies.

Chris Roxburgh clocked an impressive 2:40:03 at the **Amsterdam Marathon**.

Ruth Barnes also impressed at **The Stickler** where she finished 2nd overall, setting a new Ladies course record for this tough 10+ miler in deepest darkest Dorset.

Damian Spreckley finished as 1st MV40 at the **Salisbury Half Marathon** in 1:17:39 with Jackie Rockliffe the 1st FV40 in 1:23:21 and Fiona Price the 1st FV50 in 1:32:44.

October 2013

In this month ten years ago:

Quite a bit of horsing about for our teams at the **Badminton Horseless Trials**. In the 9-miler: Pete "Pegasus" Veleski took overall victory and supported by Tim "Lamrei" Lowrie, Warren "Wooden horse of Troy" Wade, Darren "Dobbin" Wrintmore and Andy "Aldiniti" Gibbs took the Men's team prize for the AVR Thoroughbreds.

The AVR Mares were led home by 59th placed Kay "Kalypso" Middleton, Tina "Topsy Trotter" Vivian, Natasha "Najinski" Drane, Lisa "Lady" Berrington and Denise "Wonky Donkey" Ellis but just missed out on the awards to Grittleton AC.

In the 5-miler, Carl "Crazy Horse" Davies finished third overall with Richard "Hi-Ho Silver" Morgetroyd in fourth; Kev "Kentucky Derby" Bush 35th; Dave "Desert Orchid" Bashaw 40th and Richard "Red Rum" Newman in 44th place.

The AVR Fillies were led home by 51st placed Sarah Jewers, with Mel Nicholls in 53rd, Liz Gard 60th, Fiona Newman 201st and Sarah Bailey completing the winning Ladies team.

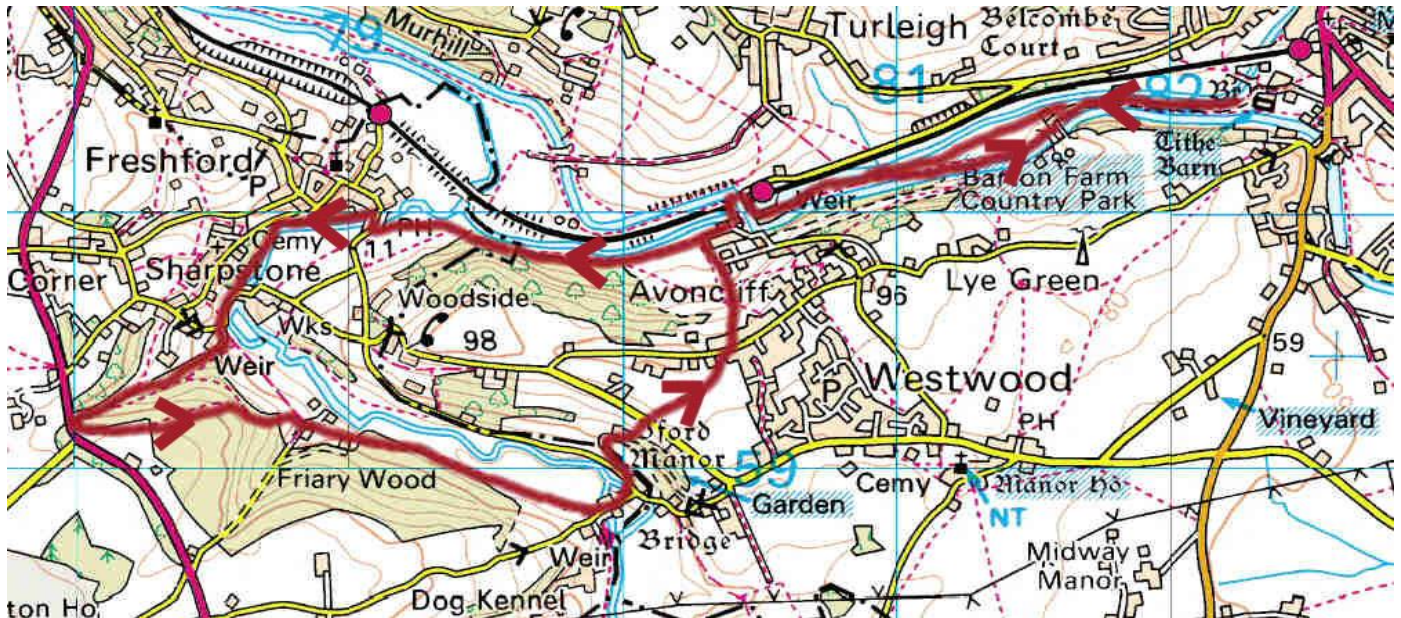


October 2003

In this month twenty years ago:

Alistair Bartlett was in the runners up spot at the **Box Fun Run**. Kevin Sparey finished in third place at the **Cricklade Half Marathon** with a 1:16:21 clocking.

Mark Goodridge of The Royal Navy AC and Emma Whittaker of Bristol AC ran out as the winners at our **Over the Hills** race.



October 1988

In this month thirty-five years ago:

Nick Rosier and Judy Farr both landed the runners up spots at the **Box Fun Run**. Also having fun was Hazel Connor who was first Lady at the **Gloucester Fun Run** and Darren Wrintmore was the winner at the **Bratton PTA Fun Run** and also at the **Little Cheverell XC** run.

More serious was Ann Bull who finished as first lady at the **Shepton Mallet Half Marathon** clocking 1:41:59.

At the **Bradford on Avon 7**, Avon Valley dominated the field at this local event: 1st Bob Roots 38:41; 2nd Martin Connor 39:04; 4th Keith Elsey 40:06; 5th Tim Northwood 40:30; 6th Phil Mitchell 40:41; 7th Maurice Cockell 41:02; 8th Mike Hehir 41:15; 12th Tom Roberts 41:56; 13th A. Whitehead 41:57 (1st U16); 15th Neil Fyfe 42:18; 16th P. Reed 42:23; 21st Andy Lilley 43:16; 22nd M. Mason 43:28; 23rd Nick Rosier 43:55; 24th Bob Ellis 44:03; 25th Danny Kay 44:37; 26th Miles Holland 44:55; 28th Ted Rockliffe 45:12; 29th Tony Frost 45:24; 30th M. Wilmott 45:24; 31st Peter Bray 48:54; 32nd Tom Frost 46:13; 44th Ann Bull 47:08 (1st Lady); 47th Pete Chapple 47:40; 48th Stan Farr 47:54; 49th N. Sewell 48:03; 51st B. Merrell 48:27; 57th Judy Farr 49:02 (3rd Lady); 61st Linda Brown 49:20; 63rd K. Lee 49:50; 70th I. Craig 50:45; 76th J. Sewell 51:28; 82nd G. Babb 52:03; 84th R. Cleverley 52:08 (1st U13); 90th Frank Allen 53:55; 99th B. Churchill 56:12; 100th Bill Howsego 56:14; 101st John Millichip 56:44; 118th Denise Ellis 61:43; 124th M. Bailey 62:33; 144th M. O'Callaghan 70:20; 146th Joby Hobbs 71:08; 147th Bernie Hobbs 71:08 .

AVR do Weymouth Parkrun

AVR have been on the parkrun tourist trail since January 2020 when our first jolly was to Cardiff but the pandemic stopped us before we'd barely got going. Since the parkrun re-start, we've now been to many more using the minibus hired from Trowbridge Council and Saturday 23rd September at Weymouth, marked our 7th parkrun trip.

However, we almost didn't make it off the starting blocks at 6:20am when, a problem with a sensor in the door of the minibus kept cutting the engine off every time it was put into first gear. Ten minutes of consulting manuals and slamming the door later, and we finally got going much to the relief of everyone on board. We picked up Les, Linda and Terri on the way but decided that no-one was allowed to use the side door in case we got stranded again so poor Fiona had to get out of her front passenger door and the new arrivals had to climb into the back!



After a winding and slightly queasy journey, it was clear that Weymouth was a good choice as it has everything you could possibly need: a large car park, lots of free public toilets, and easy-to-find start line, a very clear and concise first timers brief and very friendly marshals.

I got chatting to a very tall runner at the start about where AVR had travelled from as his daughter lives in Melksham and so do I! We chatted about our local parkruns and what to expect on the course that we were about to run. I found out that we were on the summer route and that the winter course runs along the seafront.

I bumped into him again at the end of the run and it turned out that he was the same volunteer I'd spoken to when I checked in when we arrived - that pink volunteer vest was like a superhero's disguise that he removed to then run!



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

The course at Weymouth is gorgeous. I couldn't quite figure out the route from the description online and I still wasn't sure during the briefing but it's actually very simple - you do the loop first (*the top of the lollipop*) and then onto the out and back section (*the lollipop stick*) before repeating some of the loop before going through the finish funnel. Both sections offer very different views which makes the route interesting. The loop through the trees offered lots of dappled shade and a miniature railway while the out and back had houses, another park and a distant view of a McDonalds and a Costa! We were told about a turnaround point at the 'pineapple' and a marshal dressed as the same fruit which turned out to be a lovely monument welcoming people to Weymouth and Portland. The route is very flat with very few tiny rises here and there which made for a quick time for a lot of AVR who were all very happy with their performances.

After scanning in at the end, we all headed off to the beach and into the water for a very leisurely swim in surprisingly warm water before eating breakfast from the nearby 'Top Cat Cafe' (thoroughly recommended!)





When looking through the results afterwards, I noticed that it was Fiona Newman's 200th parkrun but she didn't mention to anyone all morning! So, although it is not an official parkrun milestone, I would like to say a huge CONGRATULATIONS to her!

I thoroughly recommend Weymouth parkrun to anyone who fancies a day out or who happens to be holidaying nearby. I would love to return again one day but perhaps not on the same minibus until the door is fixed - we got stuck in the car park for 10 minutes again when we wanted to go home!

Our next jolly is to **Mallard's Pike parkrun** on Saturday 11th November. The bus is currently fully booked (and hopefully fixed by then!) but keep an eye on the event page for any spaces that may become available.

Sarah Emery

Off-road News...

The Wiltshire Off-road League (WORL) is getting going soon with 8 races between October 2023 and March 2024. Below are the details available so far. Registration is already open for **White Horse Gallop**, **Over the Hills**, **Yarnbury Yomp** and soon for the **Riverbank Rollick**. There are some interesting races in the WORL this year and of course there are classics not in the League list, such as the Slaughterford 9.



22/10/23 Race #1 - White Horse Gallop, 12k, BA13 3PT £22 affiliated

<https://www.entrycentral.com/form/103352>

05/11/23 Race #2 - Over the Hills, 11k, BA15 1LF, £15 affiliated

<https://race-nation.co.uk/register/avon-valley-runners-1/avr-over-the-hills-2023>

26/11/23 Race #3 - The Yarnbury Yomp. 7 miles, SP3 4JL, £18 affiliated, £20 unaffiliated

<https://race-nation.co.uk/register/shrewton-running-club/yarnbury-yomp>

14/01/24 Race #4 Riverbank Rollick, 15.5k, Castle School, Bristol BS35 1HT, £tbc

<https://www.thornburyrunningclub.co.uk/trc-races/riverbank-rollick/>

04/02/24 Race #5 Lungbuster, 9 miles, £tbc

<https://www.royalwoottonbassetthounds.co.uk/Cms/Spaces/DEFAULT/Lungbuster>

18/02/24 Race #6 SMaRTT Smasher, 10k, SN11 0JJ

25/02/24 Race #7 Terminator, 11 miles, SN9 5BL

<https://www.pewseyvalerunningclub.org/races>

24/03/24 Race #8 TBA

Andrew Sharratt

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

On-Road News

At the **Chippenham Half Marathon** which was race #7 in the Wiltshire Road Race League (WRRL) we had 15 runners in the field with Ed Knudsen representing Wiltshire finishing in 6th place overall, whilst Bob Nixon was 5th in the MV60 category with Holly Stables (FV40) and Fiona Price (FV50) in the top-10 for their respective categories.



The **Devizes 10K** was the final race in the 2023 WRRL. We had 19 runners with Fiona Price 2nd in the FV55 category, Rosemary Barber 3rd in the FV65 category, Peter Veleski 4th & Gary Day 5th in the MV40 category, Robin Mark 2nd & Bob Nixon 5th in the MV60 category and Peter Campbell 3rd in the MV70 category.



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

Well done to all of you who ran in the WRRL, we are still awaiting confirmation of final standings but below we have the Top-20 results of the AVR road race league for 2023:

	Athlete	Raced	Devizes HM	Corsham 10K	Broad Town 5	Heddington	Gt Chalfield 10K	Langley 10K	Chippenham HM	Devizes 10K	TOTAL
1	Peter Veleski	8	4	2	1	3	3	3	2	1	12
2	Gary Day	6	29	7	2	4	2	2	29	2	19
3	Paul Dredge	6	29	5	29	6	5	5	3	4	28
4	Robin-Mark Schols	6	29	9	4	8	8	8	29	7	44
5	Scott Green	6	5	10	5	9	29	9	29	6	44
6	Tim Burrell	5	29	29	3	7	6	7	29	3	55
7	Robert Nixon	6	29	17	6	29	9	10	4	10	56
8	Simon Reeves	6	6	16	8	13	29	12	29	11	66
9	Jon Pittard	4	29	3	29	5	4	4	29	29	74
10	Martin Russam	6	8	29	10	18	16	14	29	14	80
11	Peter Campbell	5	29	23	9	16	15	29	29	13	105
12	Tom Gurney	2	1	29	29	29	1	29	29	29	118
13	Ben Mees	2	29	1	29	1	29	29	29	29	118
14	Stuart Avery	2	29	29	29	2	29	1	29	29	119
15	Mark Harris	4	29	15	7	29	10	29	29	29	119
16	David Bagshaw	3	29	18	29	12	29	29	29	12	129
17	Gary MacAlister	2	29	29	29	29	29	6	29	8	130
18	Richard Morgetroyd	2	29	8	29	29	7	29	29	29	131
19	Darren Messen	2	29	29	29	10	29	29	5	29	131
20	Simon Down	2	29	11	29	29	29	29	29	5	132
	Athlete	Raced	Devizes HM	Corsham 10K	Broad Town 5	Heddington	Gt Chalfield 10K	Langley 10K	Chippenham HM	Devizes 10K	TOTAL
1	Fiona Price	7	1	29	1	2	1	2	2	1	8
2	Sharon Firkins	7	2	9	15	5	12	29	6	4	38
3	Annalie Ibison	5	29	5	3	4	29	29	3	2	46
4	Rosemary Barber	5	29	11	6	8	29	8	29	5	67
5	Emily Dye	3	29	29	2	3	2	29	29	29	94
6	Hayley Southgate	4	29	10	9	7	13	29	29	29	97
7	Rose North	3	29	29	29	29	7	4	5	29	103
8	Maria Harryman	3	29	29	5	6	29	6	29	29	104
9	Gemma Knudson	2	29	29	29	1	29	1	29	29	118
10	Beverley MacPherson	2	29	3	29	29	3	29	29	29	122
11	Kathryn Sinclair	2	29	4	29	29	5	29	29	29	125
12	Sarah Hillman	2	29	29	29	29	6	29	4	29	126
13	Debbie Ellis	2	29	29	29	29	10	3	29	29	129
14	Megan Orrell	3	29	19	14	10	29	29	29	29	130
15	Pauline Bradley	2	29	29	29	9	29	7	29	29	132
16	Ceri-Ann Case	2	29	18	11	29	29	29	29	29	145
17	Jo Farion	1	29	1	29	29	29	29	29	29	146
18	Holly Stables	1	29	29	29	29	29	29	1	29	146
19	Sarah Fenby	2	29	17	13	29	29	29	29	29	146
20	Jenny Natrass	1	29	2	29	29	29	29	29	29	147

Martin Russam

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

Walls of Lucca Parkrun

Saturday is Parkrun day in Mura di Lucca in Italy. One loop on top of the city walls. Fab course. Highly recommended if you're ever near Pisa.



Rosie with daughter Sarah who finished second overall

Rosie Wilson – 48th in 28:52

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

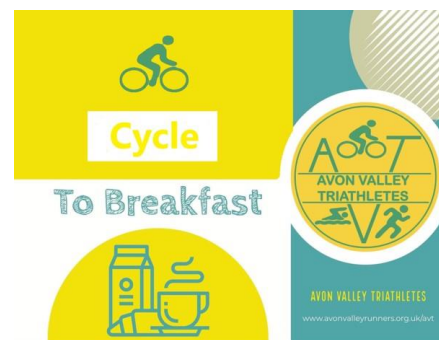
Where to Run...or Ride...or Swim

A selection of forthcoming events which may be of interest:

Date	Event	Distance	Details	
Sunday 8th October	Westbury Lions 10K	10K	Organised by Westbury Lions group – from White Horse Country Park to Bratton and back.	
Sunday 8th October	Thrupton TT Festival	11-miles	Organised by DB Max offering a choice of TT events including a 4up and Mixed Relay.	
Sunday 15th October	Bath Half Marathon	Half Marathon	Still surprisingly popular.	
Sunday 22nd October	White Horse Gallop	7'ish miles	The 2023/24 WORRL kicks off with this hilly challenge at Westbury	
Sunday 29th October	Lightning Bolt 10K	10K	Organised by DB Max at Langley Burrell; Flat and Fast 10K.	
Sunday 5th November	Over the Hills	12K	AVR's flagship race at Bradford on Avon	
Sunday 12th November	Mo-running Bristol 10K	5K & 10K	Support "Movember" at Ashton Court	
Sunday 26th November	AVR Half Marathon	Half Marathon	Volunteers needed for our Half which starts at Edington.	
Sunday 3rd December	Bromham Pudding Run	10K	A flat, fast, two lap course.	
Sunday 10th December	Tri-counties XC Championships	various	Wiltshire XC Championships at Bath Uni alongside Avon & Somerset.	
Sunday 10th December	Hullavington Secret Santa	10-miles & 5K	Flat course and a gift from Santa's sack when finishing	



Check the [AVT Facebook page](#) for details of these events which take place on a Saturday morning.



#Social Gallery

To tail-end this edition, some of my favourite posts, pictures and comments from the various Avon Valley Social Media pages that have been published over the past month...



Alan Best: Where did I rack my bike?



Hayley Southgate: it was a golden opportunity to have a photo taken at the iconic signpost.



Spot the Hayleys 😊



The Avon Valley Mile



Please welcome our AVR Beginners C25K 2023

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