



Welcome to The Valley News

Taken on the club Christmas run around Bradford on Avon.

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.

The Newsletter of Avon Valley Runners

Issue #261 – January 2024

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

Wrinty's Ramblings

When racing, one of the biggest boosts that you can receive is the support from the crowd. It may be that you have brought your own entourage drawn from family & friends to cheer you on which is great. If not, you can pull on your club colours and get the "Go Avon Valley" cheer, something that I have experienced racing all over the world and it is a fantastic boost. You can go one step further and get your name printed on your vest, then any random support that you receive will be personalized "Go Wrinty".

It is not just when racing that a boost is required, but there are many activities which go on to operate a successful club for you all to enjoy. There are the obvious triumvirate of Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer but then we have the Road/Off-road/Junior/AVT Secretaries, Welfare Officers, Kit Managers, Social Media coordinator, Web-Master, Coaches/Run Leaders and er' Newsletter Editor all of whom work tirelessly for your benefit. So, the occasional thank you or supportive acknowledgment is appreciated. A good opportunity to do this will be at the club's Annual General Meeting which takes place on Tuesday 9th January at TRFC after training.

See you there.

Darren Wrintmore (Wrinty)

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

A selection of forthcoming events which may be of interest:

Date	Event	Distance	Details	
Sunday 7 th January	South West XC Championships	various	Put on your spikes and head to RNAS Merryfield near Taunton.	
Sunday 7 th January	The Pronto Bikes Winter TT	10-miles	Presented by DB Max at Castle Combe circuit	
Sunday 28 th January	Slaughterford 9	9-hard miles	Brought to you by our friendly rivals at Chippenham Harriers	
Sunday 4 th February	The Lungbuster	9-hard miles	Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds present race #5 of the Wiltshire Off-Road Race League at Broad Hinton	
Sunday 11 th February	The Wiltshire 10	10-miles	Popular Stampede Sports race held out of Melksham and around the village of Lacock	
Sunday 18 th February	The Smartt Smasher	10K'ish	One of the flattest off-roaders around.	
Sunday 3 rd March	The Bowerhill Bomber	5K & 10K	Redfish Events give you mud galore at Melksham	
Sunday 10 th March	Chilly Duathlon & 10K	5K/21K/3K	DB Max popular Duathlon (Run/Cycle/Run) at Castle Combe with an accompanying 10K run.	

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Street 5K

Hi, I'm George Sawyer, some might recognise me from my parents; my Mum (Dawn Sawyer) helps out with the GoalGetters and CouchTo5K and my Dad (Colin Sawyer) was former kit man and currently my coach and training partner.

I have been running seriously since 2019 and have mainly participated in intermediate to long distance whilst dabbling in XC throughout the winters of 2021/2022. I have primarily focussed on road events, evidenced through my Great South Run of this year coming in at 77:57 and my progress during the Street 5k Series. The Clive & Angela Thomas Street 5k Series is run on the 2nd Wednesday of the Month from October thru to March, a 5-lap race through the centre of Street;



My first Street 5k was on the 9th December 2021, where I finished in a time of 23:19. Finishing the 21/22 series with a best time of 22:43, a gain of 35 seconds across that series. It was really the 22/23 series that I entered a greater transition in pace as I began the series with a time of 22:47 (narrowly missing out on a course PB by 4 seconds) on the 12th October 2022 with the last event of the series clocking in at 21:29 on the 8th March 2023. The 22/23 series was also particularly significant as I claimed the 1st Junior Male for the March Race and the 1st Junior Male of the overall Series (a big surprise but a very welcome one).

Along came the 23/24 series, on which the first race I clocked in at 20:58 (*an overall 5k PB and Series PB*) on the 13th December 2023. The time has now allowed me to claim the bragging rights as the fastest in the Household, beating Dad's 5k PB (21:13) by 15 Seconds. My progression is all down to the excellent coaching I have received from Debbie Ellis, Chris Redshaw and Jackie Rockcliffe of the AVRY coaching team throughout the 2021-2023 period, plus the coaching of Scott Green, David Bagshaw, Sean & Fiona Price, Jay Sims from 2023-present as I have begun transitioning from the Juniors to the Adults. As well as all the internal coaching of AVR, the progress or desire required to achieve this was instilled from Day One by my Dad; as he has been there every step of the way by first of all dragging me to Southwick Country Park for Parkrun in 2019 whilst still maintaining some level of competitiveness over the first lockdown of 2020 with our "mad dash" family handicap race.





Where Mum would start at her PB prior to Covid, I would start at my PB (approx. 10 minutes after Mums start) and Dad would start (approx. 4 minutes after my start) with the general idea of it being that we should all 'in theory' turn on to our Close at the same moment.

The Virtual Bath Half Marathon was a brainwave from a bored Sunday in January 2021 by Myself and Mum as a 'bit of fun', requiring Dad to devise a whistle stop Half Marathon Training Plan where he ran with me to pace me to a time of 2:35:00 which I will be aiming to smash at the 24th Dresden Half Marathon on Sunday 27th October 2024.

The longer distances took a backseat during 2022. Focusing on the 10k I was able to set a PB at the Southport 10km of 50:13 thanks to all the boring 5min/KM parkruns in the build-up. During this period my 5km PB improved from 24:16 to 22:43.

This year's focus has been the Great South Run which again Dad helped me train for. Dad ran with me up until 9km before age (and too much golf) began to catch up with him and he had to drop off. Thankfully Steve Morgan (Father of YouTube Sensation, Jog On with Harry Morgan) joined me for the next 5k until the extended sprint finish.

Thanks to Mum are also in order as she has been dragged to and fro for races to support me and look after my kit bag in in all weathers. Memorably the fog at the Tri-Counties XC of 2021 where you couldn't see more than 3 paces forward.

So, the sub-21-minute 5k barrier has been broken. This year I will be striving for a sub-45-minute 10km and a sub-2-hour half marathon in Dresden; and in time the completion of the marathon and as far as I can possibly go...



George Sawyer

Multi-sport Mumblings

At this time of year there are few, if any, multisport events (unless you are willing to travel overseas to a warmer climate). Most multisport athletes have either gone into hibernation enjoying a little rest and recovery or, are wintering with some indoor base training sessions. So, as you polish off the remaining Christmas turkey/nut roast and chocolates, we are going to celebrate our league winners in 2023, update you on our swimming pilot with Hot Chilli Tri and, recap on the types of multi-sport events available in the hope that I can tempt a few of you to try something new as you plan your goals for 2024.



You may recall that AVT have been piloting a 5-day a week collaboration with Hot Chillies Tri club to share swim coaching and pool time resources, enabling both clubs to offer a variety of swim options, from beginner focus days to those that want to be stretched more.

This pilot came to an end on December 15th and was deemed a great success. Over 14 club members participated and half were beginners who could not swim 2-lengths front crawl when they started.

We are therefore pleased to announce the committee have approved the continuation of this collaboration on the proviso that attendance continues to make the cost viable.

The sessions are as follows from the New Year and cost £7 per session:

- Monday 7am-8am: Coached Swim - Trowbridge Swimming Pool
- Tuesday 7am-8am: Coached Swim - Trowbridge Swimming Pool
- Wednesday 9pm-10pm: Coached Swim - Trowbridge Swimming Pool - Beginner focussed session
- Thursday 9pm-10pm: Coached Swim - Melksham Community Campus - Normal AVT booking
- Friday 7am-8am - Coached Swim Trowbridge Swimming Pool - upweighted for beginners

Please contact Annalie Ibison (AVT Swim Champion) or Caroline Scott (AVT Secretary) via <mailto:avt@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk> who will advise you on booking details.

Do you know your Swim-Run from your Aquathlon? If not, read on...

Triathlon - Swim (Open or Pool), Cycle, Run - this is probably the most ubiquitous multisport event, with various distances from Super Sprint, Sprint, Olympic/Standard, 70.3/Half/Middle and Full/Ironman. Courses can vary in terrain including Road and Mountain biking options and Road or trail runs. Search www.britishtriathlon.org

Long Course (100) - Spread over multiple days, the Long Course is usually Swim on day one, cycle on Day two and Run on Day three. Examples are the Mumbles Centurion or the Long Course weekend Wales @Tenby.

Duathlon - Run, Cycle, Run - Perfect for athletes who don't fancy the swim, these events also often run into the Autumn/Winter months. They come in a variety of distances Super-Sprint, Sprint, Middle and Long and can be Road or off Road. Search www.findarace.com/duathlons

Aquathlon - Swim, Run OR Run, Swim, Run - One of the simplest and most accessible forms of multi-sport. If you don't own a bike, or simply don't like cycling then maybe this is an option for you. The Swim can be open or pool based and a typical distance is 1000m Swim/5km Run. Pool based swims may be shorter. Search www.britishtriathlon.org

Aquabike - Swim, Cycle - As the name suggests a Swim (Open or pool) followed by a bike. Perfect if you struggle with running. As this is a fairly new event, distances vary. Search <http://www.aquabike.world> for more information and events.

Swim-Run (aka Otillo) - Originating in Sweden, in essence you run in your wetsuit and swim in your shoes! Always an Open Swim and Trail run, there may be multiple swim and run legs over varying distances. For more information and event ideas see www.swimrun.com

Quadrathlon - Swim, Bike, Kayak, Run - Is an endurance event composed of four individual disciplines, they can be completed in any order. During Winter months Swimming and Kayaking can be replaced with Cross Country Skiing or snowshoeing. Search <http://www.quadrathlon.com> for more information and events.

Biathle - Run, Swim - originating from modern pentathlon, Biathle involves running then swimming. Race distances vary with age group. Search <http://www.UIPMworld.org> for more information.

Adventure races - multi-sport events usually over long distances, multi-day, self-navigational and often completed in teams. Disciplines can involve a mix of Trekking/running, mountain biking, kayaking, horse riding, skiing, climbing and white-water rafting depending on the event/course. There are lots of companies offering a variety of Adventure races. For general info see www.sundried.com otherwise I'd suggest a general search to find the right event for you.

Tri Dog - Swim, Bike, Run - with your dog! - think Cani-cross but triathlon! There is only one event in the UK run by <http://www.Tri-dog.com> but other events are available across Europe and the US.

And the winners of 2023 are....

In addition to the Strava Segment Challenge, AVT runs two members-only competitions throughout the year:

How Hard Did you Tri (HHDYT) - Where we add up the distance of every leg, of every event you did this year - furthest distance wins!



Ladies - How Hard Did you Tri - 2023

2nd Analie Ibsen 1st - Caroline Scott 3rd Diane Hier



Open - How Hard Did you Tri - 2023

2nd Stephen Clark 1st Alan Best 3rd Will Whitmore

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AVT leagues (Open and Female) - which is a performance-based league with your best results taken over a number of different multi-sport events and expressed as a percentage, with the lowest score winning.



Ladies AVT League - 2023

2nd Anlie Ibsen

1st Emily Dye

3rd Kathryn Butt



Open - AVT League - 2023

2nd Will Whitmore

1st Alan Best

3rd Stephen Clark

If you would like to participate in 2024, there all you have to do is send your results to Emily Dye and look out for more information on the 2024 competitions in future newsletters - AVTResults@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

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An honourable mention needs to be made to one of our younger members: Will Smith, who had an exceptional year as an AVT Junior. His results include:

Winner – Bath Duathlon (Tri Stars 3) in March

Winner – Vale Tridents Childrens Aquathlon (Tri Stars 3) in June

Runner-up – Bowood House Triathlon (Tri Stars 3) in June

And a very respectable 28th out of 58 in the KinecticOne Time Trial in August. Although racing as a junior, that placing is against the adults!

Well done on your achievements Will, we look forward to seeing what you'll do next year!

Maria Harryman

You have got to be in it to win it

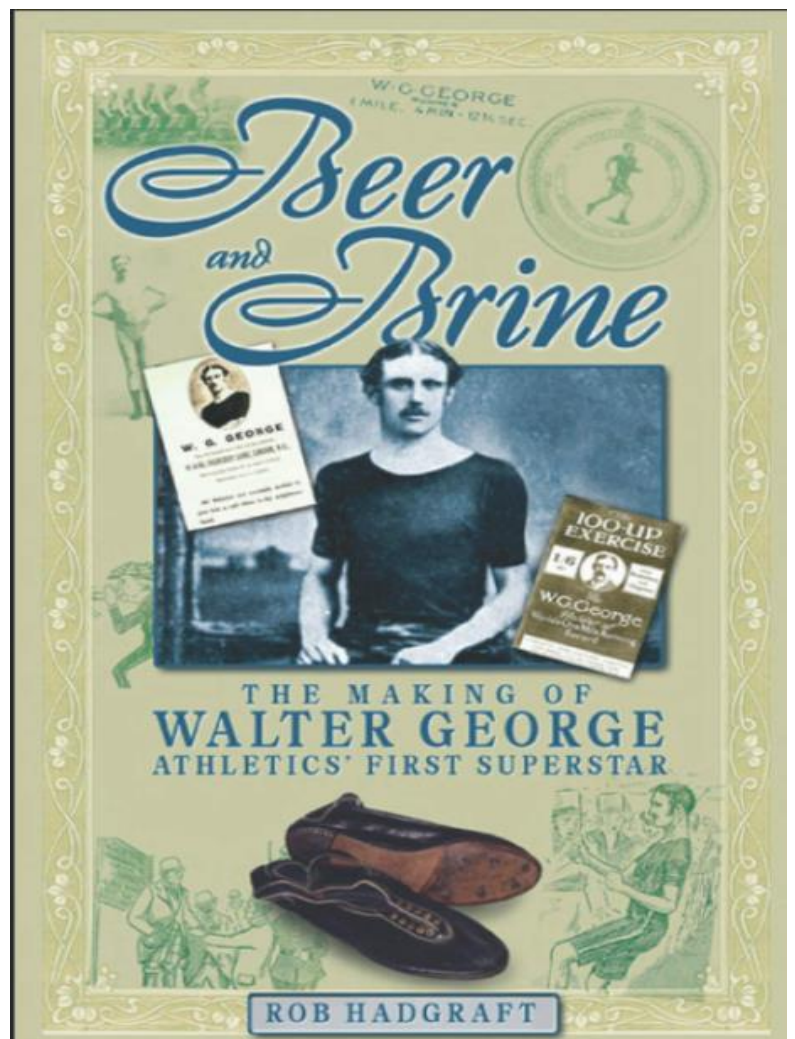
It was recently brought to my attention that I had been referenced in a book about running legend Walter Goodall George which had been published back in 2006. So, I had to get a copy, fortunately it was still available on [Amazon](#) 😊

On receiving my copy, I turned to page 233 (yes – I was even listed in the index) and found that I had supposedly won a race held in Calne to commemorate 100-years since Walter Goodall George set the world mile record back in 1886.

The only problem is that although I did run in the race, I do not recall being first over the line (*I think I was tenth*) but I did run a Personal Best time for the mile of 4-minutes 29-seconds.

It also stated that I was with AVR but I didn't join our club until 1987...still I'll take the win, "you have got to be in it to win it" as they say 😊

Darren Wrintmore (Vice-President)



AVT Segment of the Year - 2024

It doesn't seem like it was that long ago that we were wrapping up the second Avon Valley Segment Challenge competition and yet here we are again announcing the next edition.



As before, the challenge comprises of two parts, the first being a **Segment of the Month** for which you are invited to take on two Strava segments which can be incorporated into your training sessions and whoever records the fastest time (Male & Female) within the specified month (*actually up to the 25th of the month as I will need time to compile the results*) will earn 25-points. The next fastest (Male & Female) get 24-points, the next fastest (Male & Female) get 23-points and so on down to the 25th fastest getting 1-point and in the unlikely event that we should get more than 25 members tackling a segment in a month then they will each get a point as well.



The first two Segments of the Month will be offered up in April and the final two in September, giving you a total of twelve segments on which you can test your speed; with your best ten results of the twelve being your series-points score, with a maximum of 250-points per person up for grabs.

The second part of the challenge is held over the same twelve segments as in the monthly part, but this time the points are awarded according to your best performance throughout the year, well at least until the 25th of November. For this part there will also be 25 bonus-points going to the fastest (Male & Female) riders over a segment. The next fastest (Male & Female) gets 24 bonus-points, the next fastest (Male & Female) gets 23 bonus-points and so on down to the 25th fastest getting one bonus-point and should we have more than 25 then they will each get a bonus-point per segment as well. Only the best ten bonus-point scores will carry through to be your final score after being added to your series-points. You can undertake a segment as many times as you like in a month and it is your best time that will be taken for the segment of the month and you can undertake a segment as many times as you like over the course of the year (not just when it is segment of the month) and it will be your best time that will be taken to earn the bonus-points.

In order to participate you will need to register for a (free) account on Strava if you have not already done so, which will log your miles recorded from your Garmin or other compatible GPRS device. On Strava you need to join the **Avon Valley Triathletes** club which will be used for tracking results on the identified segments. Simply search for the words "Avon Valley" from the Strava Dashboard, being sure to change the default setting from "Athletes" to "Clubs" using the drop-down list:

Search		Sport Type	Club Type	
<input type="text" value="avon valley"/>	<input type="text" value="Location"/>	<input type="button" value="All"/>	<input type="button" value="All"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
	Avon Valley Triathletes Westbury, England, United Kingdom	103 members	Triathlon	Club
	<input type="button" value="Join"/>			
	Avon Valley Runners England, United Kingdom	304 members	Running	Club
	<input type="button" value="Join"/>			

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So, what segments have been selected for this third year of competition, well we reached out to some of the main protagonists in last year's Avon Valley Segment Challenge competition to solicit their feedback.

We kick off the 2024 challenge in April with two segments that have been put forward by last years champions. Caroline Scott brings you [Worm Hill](#) which is near Bradford Leigh and is just 0.38-miles long and climbs at 3.4%. Alan Best and Jo Mumford have been our quickest members on this segment in 2023, recording 1:05 and 1:18 respectively. Our second segment is presented by Will Whitmore at Staverton and is called [Climb Home Baby](#) and is 0.36-miles climbing at 2.6% where again Alan Best and Jo Mumford have been our quickest members with 1:14 and 1:22 timings.

For May we have Alan Best challenging you to climb up [Winsley Hill](#) all 0.71-miles of it at a quad burning 9% gradient. Our second segment for May counters the climb with a slight descent at the [Combe lane to Great Chalfield Turn](#) suggested by Annalie Jane, our fastest riders this year have been Stephen Clark and Esther Frawley.

June should give us some quicker segments with Darren Wrintmore offering [Edington Road North](#) which is nice and flat but runs for 2.62-miles, Dan Coleman and Isabella McNally both cruised this segment in 7:47. We also have the [Bratton VC Sprint](#) championed by Sarah Jewers, Darren Wrintmore and Isabella McNally have achieved the fastest times in 2023 over this undulating 0.82-mile segment with 2:16 and 2:27 respectively.

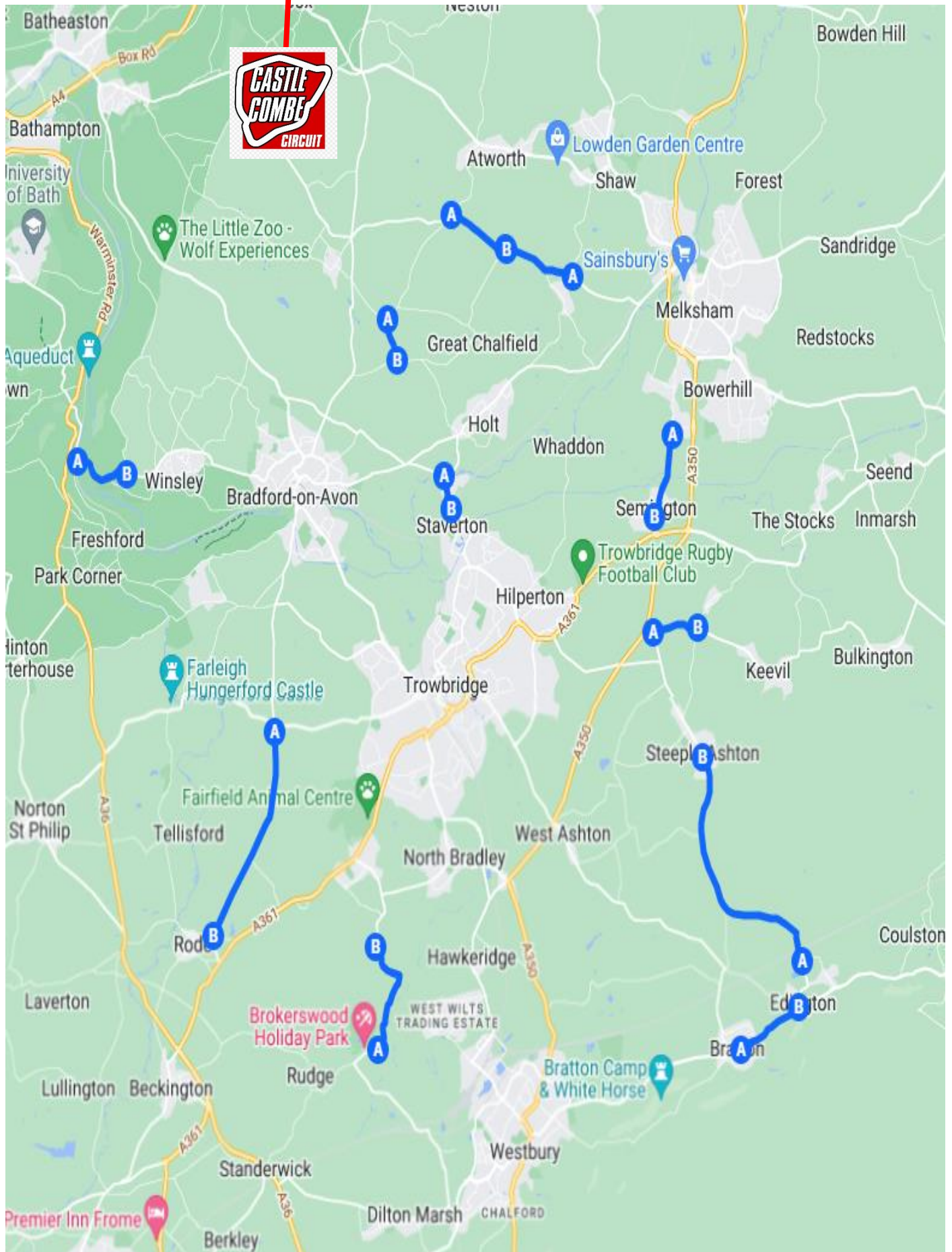
In July, Rosemary Barber offers up the [Brokerswood Rd Lump](#) segment which measures at just shy of a mile with an average gradient of 1.2% but don't let that fool you as it is a back-loaded route with the final yards rising at over 4%, Martin Disney and Jo Mumford have been our quickest members this year with 3:02 and 3:08 respectively. We also have another lengthy segment at 2.2-miles with the [Bradford Road Straights](#) heading out from Wingfield down to Rode, Neil Everett and Vanessa Lucas have been our quickest in 2023 with 6:36 and 7:01.

For August we have [Up Broughton Gifford](#) suggested by Jenny Natrass which is a gentle climb of 0.8-miles and in 2023 Simon down and Sarah Jewers proved to be the fastest clocking 2:51 and 3:14 respectively. Our second August segment is [The Semington Drag!](#) Suggested by Sara Robert and provides another gentle climb of 0.7-miles which has seen Daren Booth and Esther Frawley clock the fastest times of 2023 with 1:58 and 2:15.



Our final segments come in September and we lead with the [Hinton Services Climb](#) as suggested by Fiona Price with a 3% climb over 0.56-miles where Ben Mees and Jo Mumford have been our quickest riders with 2:23 and 2:24. The final segment is at Castle Combe Race Circuit where we will be once again hosting the **Avon Valley Time Trial** as part of one of the Kinetic-1 10-mile TT races which would be a good time to put in your effort on the [Castle Combe Lap #2](#) segment, which is 1.82 miles in length and the road surface makes it really quick. There will be several other chances throughout the year to tackle this segment, either at the Andy Cook Tuesday night sessions or if you fancy a bit of competition, at the DB Max TT race series which take place on the circuit over the summer months.

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All those years ago

Avon Valley Runners has now been around as a club for over 38-years and a lot has changed in that time but some things 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...

January 2019

In this month five years ago:

Mike Towler (51st), Ed Knudsen (57th) and Tim Lowrie (975th) took on some of the best athletes in the South of England at the **Southern Counties XC Championships** over 15K. Bethan Francis (109th) led home our ladies' team with Jackie Rockliffe (122nd), Vervan Cranston (162nd), Rebecca Beck (171st), Gemma Lawton (192nd), Diane Hier (264th) and Holly Newman (290th).

A little nearer to home Max Davis led the AVR challenge in 11th place at the South West XC Championships at Bicton College near Exeter supported by 39th Chris Roxburgh, 61st Niall Thorne and 112th Gary MacAlister. Karen Butler in 30th led the Ladies home with 34th Melanie Nicholls and 42nd Rosemary Barber.

Robin Mark-Schols clocked 39:35 at the **Speedway 10K** near Chepstow.

Carrie Almeida finished 17th at the **Beyond the Far side 10K** at Westbury.

January 2014

In this month ten years ago:

Mike Towler ran out as the winner at the **Corsham Court Challenge XC** race.

18th placed Thomas Coney led home the fifteen Avon Valley Runners who took on the **Rough 'n' Tumble** race at Milton Lilborne.

Mike Towler (99th), Joby Hobbs (348th), Tim Lowrie (518th) and Bernie Hobbs (953rd), represented the club at the **Southern Counties XC Championships** held at Parliament Hill, London. Jill Westwood (159th) was our sole lady. At the **South West XC Championships** at Bicton College in Devon, Jill Westwood in 43rd led us home with 51st Diane Hier, 55th Fiona Price, 56th Jackie Rockliffe and 60th Jen Ford. Joby Hobbs in 80th and Warren Wade in 124th were our men.

Laura MacGregor was third lady at the **Cliveden XC** race.



January 2004

In this month twenty years ago:

A good selection of prizes was had by AVR at the **Hangover 10K** which took place at Kewstoke near Weston Super-Mare: 14th Doug Barber 38:03; 16th Daryl Spicer 38:36; 32nd Rachel Bown 41:30 - 1st Lady; 38th Danny Kay 43:21 - 1st MV60; 41st Sue Macgregor 43:54 - 1st FV40; 52nd Stuart Macgregor 45:40; 58th Rosemary Barber 46:49 - 1st FV50; 65th Susie Phillips 48:55.

Sixth placed Daryl Spicer led home the eleven Avon Valley Runners at the **Slaughterford 9**, dipping just under the hour with 59:04; 37th Martin Connor 1:06:26; 48th Bob Ellis 1:08:26; 64th Ian White 1:10:09; 169th Vanessa Morey 1:20:30; 202nd Alan Meadow 1:24:58; 206th Susie Phillips 1:26:23; 256th Barbara White 1:32:36; 257th Mike Pratt 1:32:36; 284th Tony Griffith 1:37:28; 333rd Tony Bartlett 1:56:11.

Rosemary Barber clocked 36:20 to finish as 1st FV50 at the **Romsey 5**.

Joyce Field was 1st FV60 at the **Big Bung Bang Half Marathon** - really that was what the race was called 😊

January 1989

In this month thirty-five years ago:

Tim Northwood finished 19th overall at the **Lauriston 10K** at Wimbledon, clocking 36:16.

Phil Mitchell, Miles Holland and Stan Farr represented AVR at the **Wessex XC League** race at Weymouth. A week later and it was the **Avalon XC League** race at Bristol with Phil Mitchell, Tim Northwood, Gerry Fice, Stan Farr and Dennis Mellor representing AVR in the Senior Men's race. Another week on and the **South West XC Championships** were held at Bournemouth and Tim Northwood was our sole representative.

Phil Mitchel and Stan Farr decided to escape the British winter and headed to Tunisia where they completed the **Sahara 5K** in 17:50 and 21:06 respectively. The next day was the **Sahara 10K** where the dynamic duo finished in 36:50 and 43:14.



#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...



Wiltshire XC Championships 2023



Jen Buckle: Swansea 5K dressed in my Christmas Pajamas



Martin Russam: Well done all who ran Bromham Pudding Run



Isabella McNally: Second place Lady at Hullavington, paced by Dan Coleman

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