



Welcome to The Valley News

Our cover image this month comes from the Lightning Bolt 10K at Langley Burrell, which was race #5 in the 2024 Wiltshire Road Race League.

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.

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The Newsletter of Avon Valley Runners

Issue #269 – September 2024



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

Wrinty's Ramblings

As another Olympics comes to a close, I am casting my mind back to London 2012, when myself and several other club members had the unique opportunity to 'get involved'. The partner of one of our club members at the time was the Director of an Event Security company and had been awarded a contract by Transport for London (TfL) to implement and manage the road closures along with other activities relating to those Olympic events taking place on the roads of the capital. So, sensing a pool of willing 'volunteers' canvassed the local running, cycling and triathlon clubs and had a very positive response from those willing to take the opportunity for a front row seat!

It did however mean an early start and I remember having to leave my home whilst the Opening Ceremony was in full flow to board the coach from Melksham that would disembark us in the Fulham Road at early o'clock ready for the Men's cycle road race.

Why so early? We had to close the road ready for the fleet of contractor vehicles that were setting off around the course to remove street furniture and then sweep the road, ready for the off. We then had to 'protect' the course ready for the riders to pass by after the start just up the road on The Mall at 10:00. This was the first day of the Olympics and our actions were not the most popular, especially among the black cab drivers and other road users who found their normal routes blocked for an event that they "hadn't voted for" 😊



Team GB were the favourites for what would be the first gold medal of the 30th Olympiad with Bradley Wiggins, Chris Froome, David Millar and Ian Stannard charged with propelling Mark Cavendish to victory. Unfortunately, the rest of the field didn't read the script and Kazakhstan's Alexander Vinokourov was crowned Olympic champion with Rigoberto Urán of Columbia the Silver and the Alexander Kristoff of Norway the Bronze with Cav coming home in 29th position, almost six hours after setting off.



The break away in the rain

We still had to maintain the road closures and crossing points until we were eventually stood down at seven o'clock in the evening to board the coach back to Melksham, arriving home around ten and then catching a few hours' sleep before returning back to London and repeating the process for the Ladies cycle road race. This time though the great British summer had brought rain and Lizzie Armitstead (now Lizzie Deignan) claimed the Silver behind Dutch cycling legend Marianne Vos.

We then had a couple of days rest before heading back to London, this time disembarking in Kingston upon Thames ready for both the Men's and Ladies cycle Time Trials which were starting at nearby Hampton Court. Again, we had to prepare the road closures and manage the course crossings before watching Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome claim the gold and bronze medals.



I was unable to take on marshalling duties for the Ladies Marathon the following weekend, as I had tickets for the Olympic football quarter final at Cardiff featuring Team GB which included Ryan Giggs, Daniel Sturridge and Micah Richards against South Korea with the eventual bronze medallists going through on penalties. This disappointing result, was overshadowed by the events back in London at the Olympic Park where Super-Saturday was delivering gold medals to Team GB through Jessica Ennis, Gregg Rutherford and Mo Farah.

I did though make a return to Olympic marshalling on the final day of competition to marshal at the Men's Marathon with my location being outside of the Museum of London in the heart of the city.

The atmosphere and the whole Olympic experience was certainly a lifetime highlight, albeit rather tiring.

Darren Wintmore (Wrinty)



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

New Chair Appointed

On Monday 5th August the club held an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) in order to appoint a new Chair for the club.

Following the member vote on the evening, we are delighted to welcome Tim Burrell and Vicky Bodman to the position who will be taking on leadership of the club in a joint capacity. This therefore means that we no longer have a Vice Chair position on the committee.

Congratulations to both Tim and Vicky for the appointment, and a big thank you for stepping forward for the position. There is no doubt that Avon Valley Runners will continue to go from strength to strength with both at the helm.



Parisian Highlights

The 33rd Olympiad in Paris saw around 10,500 athletes from 206 countries compete for the gold, silver and bronze medals, which for 2024 included a piece of the original iron used to construct the Eiffel Tower embedded within them.

The opening day of competition saw Team GB make a good start with Anna Henderson bagging a silver medal in the Women's cycle TT but I felt for Josh Tarling who missed the podium by just 2-seconds after suffering a puncture enroute ☹️



A day or so later and we had Tom Pidcock take the gold medal to the boos of the French spectators in the mountain bike cycling.

Ongoing though we had the 'will they / wont they' decision on the Triathlon where water quality in the River Seine was posing great concern. After a delay of a day or two they got the green light to go, with Beth Potter delivering a bronze medal in the tightest of finishes. For the Men, Alex Yee put in a fantastic final push over the last 200m to grab the gold medal. Following another round of 'will they / wont they' Team GB managed to bag the bronze in the Triathlon Team Relay.



Meet the Phryges – the games mascot



Who was the mystery runner?

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



As the games progressed onto the track, the medals kept flowing to Team GB.

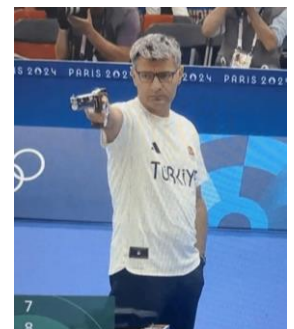
Keely Hodgkinson delivered on her potential to claim an impressive Gold in the 800m.

Despite running a new British and European record in the 400m Matthew Hudson-Smith was pipped by just 0.04-seconds and you didn't need to be a great lip-reader to know what he said when he crossed the finishing line and realized that the gold medal was not his.

The penultimate day of competition saw a gutsy run from Yorkshire Fell Runner, Emile Cairns in the Men's marathon where he finished fourth, which is probably the worst position that you can finish in a championship event, though I did learn that the first 8-finishers do receive an Olympic Diploma, so he does come away with something.

A special mention must go to Ladies Marathon winner Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands who clocked 2-hours 22-minutes 55-seconds to take the gold medal and set a new Olympic Record just six days after making the podium in the 5,000m and three days after medaling in the 10,000m too!

Away from the roads, much was made of the antics of 51-year-old Turkish pistol shooter Yusuf Dikec, who nonchalantly dispatched his rounds into the target with the demeanor of a Hollywood hitman to claim the silver medal and generating many an online meme. Rumors that after the event he was seen wiping down the handle of his gun before throwing it into the River Seine have not been confirmed :-)



With Hollywood in mind, it was Tom Cruise who zip-wired into the Closing Ceremony to mark the handover of the Olympic 'baton' to Los Angeles ready for the next games in 2028.

Darren Wintmore (Vice-President)

Autumn Targets

AVR are pleased to announce the launch of our Autumn target race training programme:

Following the results of the survey circulated (*and thanks to so many of you for responding with such an overwhelmingly positive response*), we have finalised the plans for our Autumn race training. We will be running the training programme on Thursday evenings for ten weeks, commencing on 15th August, and culminating in participating in two great races:

1. **The Great South Run** (October 20th). A popular 10-mile course; flat and fast with a great atmosphere. This is also an England Masters qualifying race.
2. **The Gosport Half Marathon** (November 17th). Another popular race, this time a club organised run of 2,000 participants, and like the Great South Run, flat and fast.

We're also offering the training for anyone who has already signed up to another Autumn race, so you don't have to miss out!

So, what can I expect?

As we will be training for a 10 mile and Half Marathon distance (or both if you fancy it!), you should currently be able to run a 10K distance (at any pace). However, this programme is designed to cater for everyone. Whether you are nervously wondering whether you can achieve your first half marathon (you can!), or are an already proficient runner looking to achieve a PB in these distances, this programme is for you.

The coaching plan has been compiled so that over a period of 10 weeks you will have improved your speed and endurance in order to run your best event on the day. While the training programme won't be easy, it is certainly achievable for all abilities. We have also designed the sessions to be interesting and varied, with intervals at our own track, benchmarking sessions so you can see how much you've improved, optional sessions at the brilliant Bath University Running Track (paid for by the club), a little off-road strength and endurance training, and a few surprises thrown in. Yes, the aim is to give you an opportunity to do something new, and have fun in the process!

What will also be unique about this programme is that while headed up by a lead coach (Tim Burrell), training will be carried out in groups of people with similar aspirations. These groups will be led by some amazing and inspirational runners, including Ed and Gemma Knudsen, Hayley Anderson, Paul Dredge and Becky Fletcher; they will be your mentors, training alongside you, allowing you to learn from their experiences, and are there to ensure that the training is tailored to your individual needs.

On race day, the club has agreed to lay on a coach to the event, in what we hope will be a fabulous celebration of our achievements, and a celebration of what a great club we are!



What next?

If you missed the survey, or need a refresher on the programme, you can find it on our website at AVR Autumn Target Races and Coaching Plan | News | Avon Valley Runners

If you have not yet signed up to secure your place, and be allocated to the group appropriate for your aspirations, we to invite you to join us in this exciting programme, which you can do on the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MRYDPZC>

We look forward to training and racing with you!

Tim Burrell (Joint Chair)

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

A selection of forthcoming events which may be of interest:

Date	Event	Distance	Details	
Sunday 1 st September	Carnival Chase 10K	10K, 3K or 1.2K	Organised by Redfish events at Warminster and offering a choice of distances.	
Saturday 7 th September	Cotswold Big Swim	Various	DB Max invite you to Lake32 in the Cotswolds for some watery fun.	
Sunday 8 th September	Compton Bassett 5	5-miles	Calne Running Club present race #6 in the 2024 Wiltshire Road Race League.	
Sunday 8 th September	Cotswolds Lake 62 End of Season Events	Various	Just about every combination of multi-sport is going on here.	
Wednesday 11 th September	Pronto Bikes TT incorporating the AVT TT championships	10-miles	Cycle Time Trial organised by DB Max at Castle Combe circuit.	
Sunday 15 th September	Chippenham Half	Half Marathon	A local favourite organised by our friends at Chippenham Harriers and Race #7 in the 2024 Wiltshire Road Race League.	
Sunday 29 th September	Devizes 10K	10K	Organised by LPS events this is Race #8 in the 2024 Wiltshire Road Race League.	
Sunday 6 th October	Westbury Lions 10K	10K	Organised by Westbury Lions group – from White Horse Country Park to Bratton and back.	
Sunday 13 th October	Thrupton TT Festival	Various	DB Max offer a choice of TT events including a 4up and Mixed Relay.	
Sunday 20 th October	The White Horse Gallop	7-miles	Get up close and personal with Westbury White Horse at this challenging trail run.	

Multisport News

In August AVT had both a "Run to Breakfast" organised by Keith Withers and a "Segment Saturday" ride organised by Maria Harryman. These sessions provided a chance to socialise and train together but there is no obligation to stay for breakfast or coffee.

The routes are always socially paced and fully inclusive. We hope to continue these into the Autumn on the first and third Saturday of the month, so please do come along. Keep an eye out on the [AVT Facebook page](#) for details.



AVT was well represented in the second **Vobster Aquathlon/Open Water Swim time trial** which took place on Friday August 16th. This summer series of events which offers several distances of Aquathlon or Timed Swims.



Once again it was a sunny and warm night, with the water temperature of 21 degrees creating a wetsuit/no-wetsuit debate. Whilst a wetsuit can help with aerodynamics and buoyancy, taking it off definitely takes longer in transition!

Well done to: Paul Banfield (15th Open); Sarah Jewers (5th Female); Jenny Natrass (7th Female); Maria Harryman (11th Female) in the 750m swim/5k run aquathlon & Eve Green (3rd Female) in the 1500m Swim.

AVT swim sessions restart on Thursday 5th September at Melksham Campus. Save the date!

Don't forget if you need an AVT swim hat they can be collected from Annalie Ibsen or Caroline Scott. Payment is £5 payable to the Club account with Ref "AVT Hat".

Also coming soon - details of a new AVT tri suit supplier. As a club we are keen for our members to have top quality kit to train and race in. We believe we have found a new supplier, EPIC Custom for our AVT Trisuits. EPIC comes highly recommended and offers many advantages including significantly quicker delivery times and premium fit and comfort. An announcement and design options will be made on the [AVT Facebook page](#).



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

AVT Leagues

Here's the scores on the door's folks... Well done to Keith Withers, Simon Williams and Andrew Jefferies who are at the top of the AVT Men's Open. Also well done to the fabulous Annalie Jane, Emily Dye and Jenny Natrass who are leading on the AVT Ladies Open league. Here are the Top-10 AVT results of the Open and Ladies league so far this year, where your best performances count towards your overall "Average" score:

Pos.	Name	Time Trial	Aquathlon	Aquabike	Duathlon	Triathlon	Average
1	Keith Withers	100	100	38.89	74.41	19.87	66.63
2	Simon Williams	100	100	22.22	100	17.31	67.91
3	Cliff Dye	89.06	100	30.77	100	56.79	75.32
4	Andy Jefferies	80.54	100	100	66.14	31.41	75.62
5	Graham Livingstone	100	100	44.44	100	34.62	75.81
6	Paul Banfield	100	74.72	100	100	30.86	81.12
7	Alan Best	100	100	100	53.54	69.15	84.54
8	Darren Wrintmore	32.81	100	100	100	100	86.56
9	Graham Anderson	100	100	100	100	38.27	87.65
10	Scott Green	100	100	100	100	41.98	88.4
Pos.	Name	Time Trial	Aquathlon	Aquabike	Duathlon	Triathlon	Average
1	Emily Dye	71.88	75	23.08	73.33	37.04	56.07
2	Jen Natrass	100	55.81	38.46	66.93	33.33	58.91
3	Annalie Ibison	100	57.89	77.78	83.86	28.21	69.55
4	Jen Davies	100	100	100	75	52.53	85.51
5	Sarah Jewers	100	34.88	100	100	100	86.98
6	Maria Harryman	100	67	100	100	71.24	87.74
7	Caroline Scott	100	100	100	100	39.74	87.95
8	Caroline Tassell	100	100	100	100	42.95	88.59
9	Jayne Williams	100	100	65.38	100	100	93.08
10	Eve Green	100	100	100	100	66.67	93.33

In the "How Hard Did You Tri" competition, it is the number of kilometres covered in competition that counts and these are our Top-10:


Rank	Name	Total Distance (km)	Rank	Name	Total Distance (km)
1	Andy Jefferies	309.446	1	Emily Dye	281.4
2	Cliff Dye	222.15	2	Annalie Ibison	192.9
3	Keith Withers	155.4	3	Caroline Scott	166.65
4	Alan Best	142	4	Pauline Bradley	107.65
5	Simon Williams	138.95	5	Jen Natrass	103.9
6	Graham Anderson	76.75	6	Emily Wollacot	73.696
7	Adrian Holland	61.55	7	Jen Davies	69.8
8	Dave Clarke	53.65	8	Maria Harryman	63
9	Steve Clark	51.5	9	Eve Green	53.65
10	Graham Livingstone	48.65	10	Rosemary Barber	44.4

Don't forget to send all your multisport race results to Emily Dye at AVTRESULTS@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk to be included in the AVT League or How Hard Did You Tri competitions.


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Segment of the Month – September 2024

Our first segment for August was [Up Broughton Gifford](#) which is a gentle climb of 0.8-miles starting at the Norrington Common junction in the village and finishing at the turnoff to Great Chalfield. We had ten club members tackle this segment with Tom Carpenter taking the full 25-points with his 2:11 clocking (22.5mph) and also Caroline Scott with her 2:23 (20.7mph).

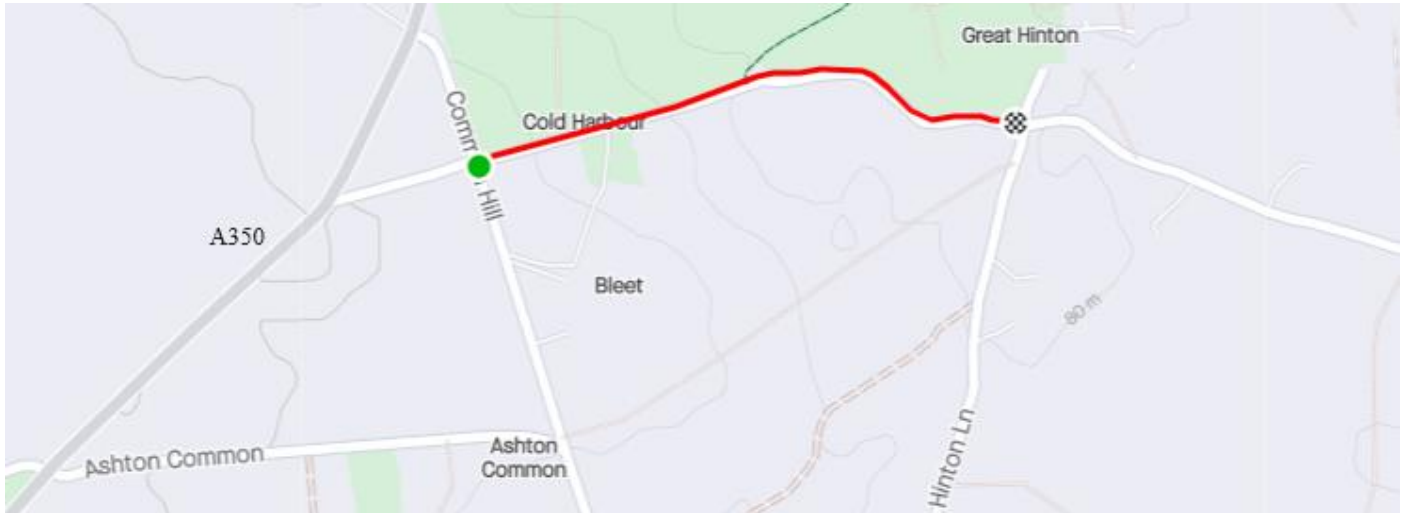
Rank	Name	Date	Speed	HR	Power	Time
	Tom Carpenter	Aug 10, 2024	22.5 mi/h	145 bpm	-	2:11
2	Alan Best	Aug 11, 2024	21.6 mi/h	162 bpm	279 W ⚡	2:17
3	Darren Wrintmore	Aug 3, 2024	20.7 mi/h	161 bpm	-	2:23
3	Caroline Scott (AVT)	Aug 11, 2024	20.7 mi/h	153 bpm	215 W ⚡	2:23
5	Jenny Natrass	Aug 17, 2024	19.1 mi/h	144 bpm	-	2:35
6	Maria Harryman	Aug 17, 2024	17.5 mi/h	-	-	2:49

Our second segment in August was the [The Semington Drag!](#); this segment provides a gentle climb of 0.7-miles through the village starting by the Police HQ and finishes at the Church Street turning. We had sixteen members take on this challenge, with Alan Best leading home for the Men in 1:43 (25.1mph) and Caroline Scott for the ladies with 1:49 (23.9mph).

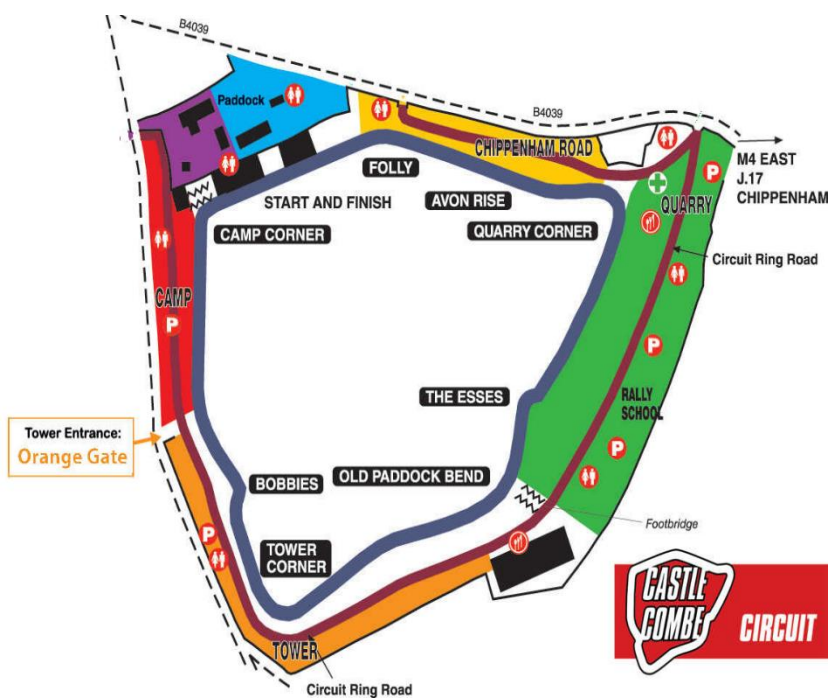
Rank	Name	Date	Speed	HR	Power	Time
	Alan Best	Aug 11, 2024	25.1 mi/h	161 bpm	275 W ⚡	1:43
2	Tom Carpenter	Aug 3, 2024	24.9 mi/h	151 bpm	-	1:44
3	Darren Wrintmore	Aug 3, 2024	23.9 mi/h	161 bpm	-	1:48
4	Caroline Scott (AVT)	Aug 11, 2024	23.7 mi/h	154 bpm	244 W ⚡	1:49
5	Jenny Natrass	Aug 17, 2024	23.5 mi/h	153 bpm	-	1:50
6	Caroline Tassell	Aug 16, 2024	22.1 mi/h	-	-	1:57

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September sees our final round of monthly segments, with the first being the [Hinton Services Climb](#) as suggested by Fiona Price with a 3% climb over 0.56-miles and starts at Cold Harbour (just off of the A350) and climbs up to the cross-roads at Great Hinton. So far this year 26 club members have made the climb with Jenny Natrass (2:09) and Paul Banfield (2:24) being the quickest.



Our second segment for September was set to be [Castle Combe Lap #2](#) which is a 1.82-mile anti-clockwise lap around the race circuit with the intention of tying in with the [Avon Valley Time Trial](#) which takes place on Wednesday 11th September and so far this year Darren Wintmore in 4:24 (24.8mph) and Caroline Scott in 4:47 (22.8mph) have been our fastest riders .



However, anyone who has taken part in any of the Pronto Bikes TT's this year will have seen that they have for 2024 been going clockwise and this will be the case on 11th September too.

So as to ensure that anyone taking part in the [Avon Valley Time Trial](#) gets points we will add a thirteenth segment of [Castle Combe Lap](#) which is the clockwise equivalent, **BUT** we will only accept your fastest (best points scoring) ride **on either [Castle Combe Lap](#) OR [Castle Combe Lap #2](#)** as part of your Segment of the Month and Segment of the Year submissions.

If you haven't raced a TT or at Castle Combe before there will be plenty of us there to advise and support on the night. It's a great low-key event suitable for all abilities...come and give it a go. You may even earn a Goal Getters point!

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

So here is the Top-10 Leaderboard after 5-rounds...

Rank	Athlete	Total Points	SotM Ridden	SotM Points	Bonus Segments	Bonus Points	Movement
1	Tom Carpenter	487	10	244	10	243	□
2	Darren Wrintmore	459	10	229	10	230	□
3	Alan Best	450	9	213	10	237	□
4	Paul Banfield	302	7	152	7	150	□
5	Andrew Jefferies	297	7	142	8	155	□
6	Cliff Dye	221	4	88	8	133	↑
7	Will Whitmore	194	4	97	4	97	↓
8	John Naish	173	2	33	8	140	↑
9	Simon Williams	156	3	60	5	96	↓
10	Stephen Clark	143	4	69	5	74	↑

Rank	Athlete	Total Points	SotM Ridden	SotM Points	Bonus Segments	Bonus Points	Movement
1	Jenny Nattrass	483	10	243	10	240	□
2	Caroline Scott (AVT)	442	8	198	10	244	↑
3	Caroline Tassell	431	10	224	10	207	↓
4	Rosemary Barber	344	9	182	10	162	↑
5	Annalie Jane	332	7	159	8	173	↓
6	Sarah Jewers	276	6	131	9	145	↑
7	Jo Mumford	205	3	58	7	147	↓
8	Maria Harryman	179	2	45	7	134	↑
9	Esther Frawley	156	2	43	6	113	↓
10	Fiona Price	142	1	21	8	121	↑

The next month could prove interesting as Deductions come into play and those who are high in the Leaderboard by virtue of completing a lot of segments may find themselves dropping back as only the 10-best scoring segments in both the Monthly and Yearly elements of the competition will count towards those final standings.

For a fuller explanation of the Avon Valley Segment of the Year competition and full list of segments in the challenge, check out the [January 2024 edition of the Valley News](#).

Off-Road Scoring

I have been reviewing the rules for Avon Valley Runners off-road league scoring. Currently we follow Wiltshire Off Road League races (8 in total for the season) but not their scoring system. The purpose of scoring is to recognise performance for each race and across the season (overall and by category) and (very importantly) participation. Our current scoring system does not sufficiently recognise participation. A variety of options have been reviewed and the conclusion is to revert to a scoring system used some years ago, this is very similar to the scoring system used by Avon Valley Runners Road League.

It works as follows:

- Separate standings for men (M) and women (W).
- 1st finisher (M/W) gets 1 point, 2nd gets 2 points, etc.
- The last finisher gets points equal to the number of M/W finishers for that race.
- Any No-Entry/No-Show/No-Finish members having run in a previous league race are awarded the same points as the last finisher in the busiest race of the season, plus 5 points.
- Individual end of season reconciliation takes the sum of the best (lowest score) 6 races.
- The lowest M/W overall scores (for their best 6 races) of all who participated win the league.

The fewer the points the better you are doing!!

Any questions, then please make contact. If necessary, I am happy to run a forum at TRFC or similar.

Andrew Sharratt (Off Road Secretary)



SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER
FROM 2:30PM @ TROWBRIDGE RUGBY CLUB

AVR Summer Social

IN MEMORY OF SARA ROBERT

JOIN US FOR A SOCIAL AFTERNOON AND BBQ,
PLUS TAKE PART IN OUR SPECIAL 63-LAP
TRACK EVENT

RAISING MONEY FOR
THE BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION



Avon Valley Runners
COUCH TO 5K - BEGINNERS COURSE

Would you like to start running?

Join our 12 week beginners course starting on Monday 16th September from Trowbridge Rugby Club (6:50-8:00PM). Everybody welcome!

Scan the QR
code to sign
up to each
session!



SCAN ME



AVR requires you to take out membership after three free sessions.

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

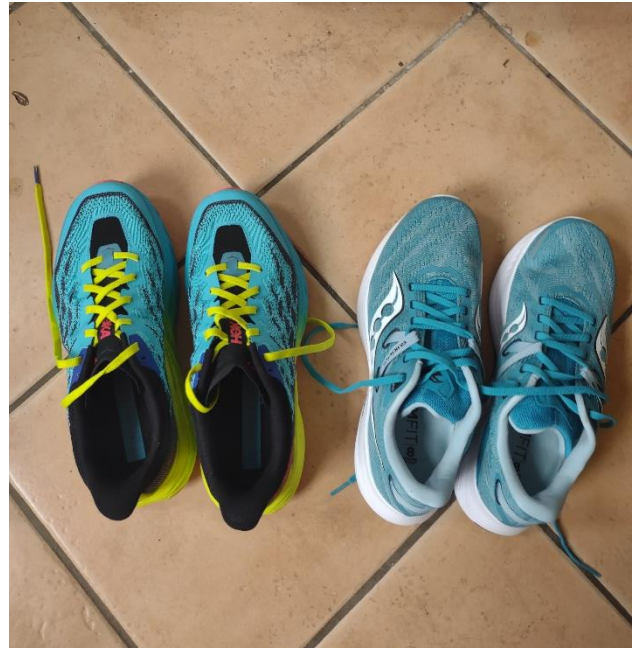
A Runners Tale

As I looked out of my bedroom window on this Sunday morning, I saw it was one of those dreary January days. The sky was a dismal shade of grey and the more sinister part of my imagination sensed that the dark clouds had the ability to enclose and consume our fragile human world.

As I snuggled back under my quilt, I attempted to rediscover the warmth from the previous night; unfortunately, like my dreams, they had disintegrated. From the depths of the utility room downstairs, I heard the alert on my phone, as my exercise schedule for the day was delivered by a daily email.

My muscles tensed as I recalled my fraught glance earlier in the week when I had scanned a ten-mile run for today. The morning dragged on, and I busied myself with 'must-do tasks': cleaning the hob, replenishing the toilet rolls, and sorting through the papers on the coffee table.

By 1 pm after much internal discussion I preceded to work through my list of running rituals; the purpose of these were to enthuse me into the required running mindset. These included selecting my running gear, packing my running pouch with tissues, water and a mid-run snack and doing selective warming-up exercises up and down my narrow hallway.



Post-ritual, my mind felt ready, only to be met by the protesting screams of every muscle in my body, who had found many reasons why I should stay home. Somewhere between friend or foe, these voices said, "It is too cold; it might rain; stay at home with a pot of tea and snuggle up on the sofa."

Yet within me was a strengthening desire to go. I knew that I would cherish the feeling of warming muscle fibres trickling through my physique once I was out. A few seconds later, I found myself shouting goodbye as I ran out of the front door and up the path to the street. With the crunch of gravel and then the stability of the tarmac, my run was underway

The first mile, often the hardest, passed by quite quickly. I knew the area well, and I allowed my body to decide the route. The cool breeze was refreshing on my cheeks and nose as I established my familiar running rhythm.

As I settled into my natural pace, I was able to relax and think about other matters: the unsolved dilemmas of the week began to merge with solutions, the conversations that needed to be had about the mundane, for example decorating and saving plans. The anxiety I often felt dissipated, and I began to be in awe of the power of my body. After a lifetime of despising exercise; crippled by the harshness of school PE and well-meant but cruel comments of others.

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

Two years ago, I had ventured out with a basic running app, started from the basic walk 1 minute, run one minute. This had gradually grown and in midlife I had found my thing. Running was now a regular and important self-care activity for me.



In the summer it was a joy, I loved sneaky out of the house into the sunrise mist as the rest of the house lay sleeping and running through the woods, with the company of the occasional fox, rabbit or duck. At the other end of the day, I would leave the incompleteness of work and family life behind and head out for the best view of the disappearing sun, racing against its disappearance as I attempted to get home before dusk consumed me from the sight of other town dwellers.

The winter was a different entity and last year I had refused to run in the dark or rain. The darkness lost out to my strong desire to stay indoors as I attempted to create at home the self-nurturing cocoon I longed for. Alongside this at this time I could not identify with anyone who would want to run in the rain. I had come to appreciate that both actually provided an opportunity for a different type of running. In the dark it was adventurous to find safely lit routes or to run unlit routes that I knew well.

On several occasions this winter I startled a late-night dog walker as I turned a corner with my flashing chest light and luminous running gear. I looked up at the dark sky and hoped it would not rain, mile 3 had just passed and I could see the canal path on the horizon. This was a popular recreational route all year round with families, dog walkers and cyclists. However, the footpaths were narrow and there was an unspoken rivalry around who would move for who. Cyclists seem to despise runners, runners dog walkers and so and so on. I took a breath and acknowledged the kind gestures of those who stood to one side, fighting my innate tendency to always focus on the negative.

Mile 5 was a delight to embrace as I enjoyed my mid run snack of jelly babies. There was a required skill to be able to run and eat. I had developed the art of dissolving them on my tongue and guessing the colour from their taste. Never a fan of synthetic flavours the lime ones sent a shiver down my spine, whereas the blackcurrant ones were few and far between and could not last long enough. I felt a surge of glucose energy transferring through my body.

Mile 7 was my traditional low point and in order to maintain some interest I decided to turn right rather than left where the canal path joined a footpath. I had lived in this town for over 20 years and yet never ventured down this path. I had to stoop as I passed under the railway bridge, as the brambles and shrubs desperate for light had grown out from under the metal structure.

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A robin let out a shrill cry and seemed to pose for a photo as I ran past the old oak tree. The pathway came to an end and merged into a side street. The traditional terraced houses ran either side and I made the connection that this side street was in fact a short cut home. I smiled as this link felt satisfying like that moment when you find the long-awaited jigsaw piece and tap it in.



The street although short was busy; people were cleaning their cars or gardening and children were looking for adventure as they scraped sticks in the gravel at the side of the road.



I was flagging every muscle in my body had found a reason to stop, however my spirit was strong and determined to finish. I negotiated between these two polarities and decided that I would run the final 2 miles at a slower speed. I have always been fascinated by people and at times whilst running find myself curious about the stories that the houses I pass contain. I am constantly surprised, sometimes shocked how often people have their curtains open on dark mornings or evenings, so anyone could look in. I have a weird insistence at home that curtains are shut as soon as it got dark. This provides me with protections from people peering into my home.

This curiosity within me got the better of me and my head glanced right, and I was faced with the frontal view of a man stark naked stood by his bay window. The vision only lasted a couple of seconds and to be honest was not worth lingering on.

As a result of this I felt the warmth of embarrassment and found myself running fast away from the scene. My sports watch beeped, to indicate an increase in heart rate and I noticed that my running pace had increased.

Perhaps this was the surge I needed to complete the remain 1.5miles.

As I reached the entrance of the road where I lived, my face erupted into a radiant smile. I felt invigorated by the run and the rain had not made an appearance.

The family cheered as I ran down our gravel path and opened the front door. A hot bath and a mug of tea waited for me. As I slid beneath the bubbles in my bath, I wondered about the man I had seen in the window. I smiled as I wondered what he had seen as he had stood there in all his glory.

Gemma Mason

Road Race Update

The Westbury 5k Series completed this last month with thanks to Gary MacAlister who organised the event and his many volunteers. This was a great success with lots of positive feedback.

Diane Hier won the FV60 age category for the series and has now achieved three of the all-time top-5 times for her category ever run at the event.

WOMEN – Vet 60+

20:58 – Jill Harrison	Bristol & West	(Jun 22)
21:11 – Jill Harrison	Bristol & West	(July 22)
21:18 – Diane Hier	Avon Valley	(July 24)
21:19 – Diane Hier	Avon Valley	(Aug 24)
21:38 – Diane Hier	Avon Valley	(June 24)

The Langley Burrell (Lightning Bolt) county championship 10K also took place with George Sawyer 1st Junior, Tim Burrell & Jez Bennett both top-10 MV50, Andy Jefferies top-10 MV60, Jen Natrass 4th FV40 (1st Wilts FV40) and Rosemary Barber the 1st FV70.

Next month are the final three road races in the 2024 Wiltshire Road Race League:

- 8th Sept - Compton Bassett 5 miler
- 16th Sept - Chippenham Half
- 29th Sept - Devizes 10k

I hope to see as many as possible of you there as we are currently second to Chippenham Harriers in Division One.

Martin Russam (Road Race Secretary)

The Top-10 Westbury 5K times

Thank you to Gary MacAlister for compiling the Top-10 fastest times ever recorded at our Westbury 5K race:

MEN

14:25 – Kurt Taylor	Bristol & West	(June 22)
14:30 – Harry Allen	Bristol & West	(Aug 19)
14:34 – Kurt Taylor	Bristol & West	(July 21)
14:35 – Jack Bancroft	Bristol & West	(July 21)
14:38 – Max Davis	Avon Valley	(June 22)
14:38 – Jack Bancroft	Bristol & West	(Aug 19)
14:44 – Harry Smith	Bournemouth AC	(May 22)
14:50 – Jack Millar	Bristol & West	(July 19)
14:51 – Alex Bampton	Highgate Harriers	(Aug 19)
14:52 – Max Davis	Avon Valley	(July 19)



WOMEN

16:02 – Verity Ockenden	Swansea Harriers	(July 19)
16:40 – Jo Pavey	Exeter Harriers	(Aug 21)
16:41 – Sarah Wilson	Team Bath	(July 24)
16:50 – Ruth Barnes	Avon Valley	(Aug 18)
16:53 – Hannah Alderson	Bristol & West	(Aug 21)
16:58 – Kate Maltby	Bristol & West	(June 19)
17:46 – Emily Davies	London Heathside	(June 24)
17:49 – Freya Spruit	Team Bath AC	(July 23)
17:49 – Sophie Maxwell	Team Bath AC	(June 24)
17:53 – Imogen Gray	City of Salisbury	(June 24)



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...

September 2019

In this month five years ago:

Avon Valley Runners had ten runners at the **Hullavington 10K** with 10th placed Scott Green being our first club member back, with 21st placed Andrew Wareham, 37th Simon Woodhouse, 59th Sara Robert, 123rd Claire Heathcote, 129th Carrie Almeida and 132nd Sandra Sharratt.



Carrie Almeida having fun in Hullavington

September 2014

In this month ten years ago:

Junior athlete, Max Davis displayed a sign of things to come when he won the **Rode 3-mile fun run** in 18:41,

Mike Towler ran an impressive 33:15 to finish in 19th position overall at the **Cardiff 10K** but it was the AVR Ladies who stole the show with Ruth Barnes, Fiona Price, Jackie Rockliffe and Jen Ford taking the Ladies team title.

Fiona Price set a new club FV40 record at the **Yeovil 5K** recording 18:40, ahead of her was Max Davis in 32nd place who lowered his PB down to 17:55, also in the prizes was Rosemary Barber who ran 24:49 to take the FV65 title.

Mike Rose ran out as the winner of the **Melksham 10K** and supported by Thomas Coney, Peter Slade and Peter Veleski took the Men's team prize. In the same race, Laura MacGregor set a new ladies club record of 36:03 to make it a double AVR presence on the top step of the podium.



The Melksham 10K gets underway

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September 2004

In this month twenty years ago:

Danny Kay kept clocking up the Marathons with 3:49:05 at the **Robin Hood Marathon** in Nottingham and then 3:50:56 at the **New Forest Marathon** in Brockenhurst.

The **King Alfreds Torment**, 7-mile multi-terrain race at Stourhead proved popular with Alistair Bartlet leading AVR home in 5th place and Bob Ellis claiming the 2nd MV40 prize and Tina Vivian the 1st FV45.

Rosemary Barber recorded 20:58 at the **Yeovilton 5K** to claim the FV55 title. Alistair Bartlet was our first runner back at the **Warminster '10'**, finishing in 4th place with a 61:18 clocking and 98th placed Judy Farr claimed the 1st FV55 prize in 1:42:02.

Seventeen club members took part in the **Bristol Half Marathon** with Kevin Sparey leading us home in 91st place recording 1:19:50 with 230th Darren Wrintmore - 1:25:35; 709th Mike Maidment - 1:34:13; 719th Llewelyn Jones - 1:34:20; 1194th Chris Atkinson - 1:38:47; 1352nd Laurie Irwin - 1:40:06; 1429th Tina Vivian - 1:40:49; 1468th Sue Macgregor 1:41:06; 1543rd Liz Harding - 1:41:41; 1804th Tom Simpson - 1:43:28; 2204th Michelle Clarke - 1:45:56; 2234th Bob Sales - 1:46:07; 2338th Julia Scott - 1:46:46; 3321st Mark Kirkpatrick - 1:52:10; 4863rd Julia Shaw - 2:00:19; 6190th Tanya Maidment - 2:09:48; 7043rd Tom Frost - 2:18:50.



Wrinty at the Bristol Half

Ten club members headed to the **Oldbury Powerstation '10'** where 9th placed Kevin Sparey led us home in 58:38 followed by 27th Doug Barber - 63:17 (1st MV40); 45th Darren Wrintmore - 65:31; 108th Danny Kay - 73:47; 114th Sue Macgregor - 74:09 (1st FV45); 126th Tina Vivian - 75:30 (2nd FV45); 138th Jo Mumford - 77:37; 159th Stuart Macgregor - 80:31; 178th Denise Ellis - 84:13; 218th Tony Griffith - 99:57.

September 1989

In this month thirty-five years ago:

A very busy month for Avon Valley Runners. Danny Kay started the month with a 3:33:52 timing at the **New Forest Marathon** where Martin Connor was our first man back in 2:47:25 and Bernie Hobbs clocked 4:10:19 before Danny finished the month with 3:34:00 at the **Birmingham Marathon**. Plenty of Half Marathon took place too. At the **Calne Half Marathon**, Ann Bull was first Lady in 1:42:26 and was also first lady at the **Pewsey Half Marathon** with 1:39:20 with husband Vic claiming the MV50 prize in 1:34:08.

Judy Farr was the leading Lady Vet at the **Neston 6** and was also the first lady at the **Warminster '10'** recording 76:41. At the **Chippenham '10'**, four Avon Valley Runners broke the one-hour barrier with Keith Elsey 56:12, Gerry Fice 57:13, Martin Connor 58:00 and Terry Chappell 58:39.

At the **Frome 5**, 18th placed Gerry Five led home the AVR challenge in 27:55 with 22nd place Bob Ellis in 28:22, 23rd placed Darren Wrintmore in 28:26 and 30th placed Tim Northwood in 28:53 being our leading runners.

Just 3-seconds separated Martin Connor and Terry Chappel at the **Sutton Benger 5** where they recorded 27:56 and 27:59 for 12th & 13th places respectively with Bob Ellis completing the AVR team with 29:36 for 25th place.

#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...



Bacon butties - the post-race choice of champions 😊



Gary Day coming into win the Hilly Helmet challenge



The Bern-Col Relay teams

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