



## Welcome to The Valley News

*The 2025 edition of the AVR Wiltshire Half Marathon takes place on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November.*

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

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**The Newsletter of  
Avon Valley Runners**

**Issue #281 – September 2025**



Please send any news, articles or achievements to [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk).

## Courir dans la chaleur

Running in France seems idyllic, some may even say romantic; those beautiful countryside views with rolling hills, sunflowers, vineyards and the smells of freshly baked bread and sea food. Add to that the chance to compete for AVR in another country and enjoy some summer sun and the sign up almost happened automatically.

I've been holidaying in the Vendée with my wife and after a disappointing race year (*mainly due to repeated minor injuries*) I decided that a gentle race in some warmer weather would be just the tonic so began the search for a local run. Parkrun has yet to make it to this part of France so that was out of the question and there didn't seem to be an abundance of 5k road races either. I stumbled on a very reasonably priced 15km trail run at €14 and it was only couple of miles from where we were staying. The race distance was a bit further than I'd have liked but that was all that was available.

Two days before the race I was emailed offering me the chance to get a refund as the race was subject to '*des fortes chaleurs annoncées*' and that I had to be self-sufficient for water. To give some context, it has been 36°C until about 7pm at night here so I did consider it but thought I'd give it a go anyway.

Originally my plan had been to run at 10-minute miles as that was a nice pace to cope with the heat but had not anticipated just how aggressive the route was going to be. The French organisers were lovely in not providing a GPX file or even a chance to look at the route so I had no idea what I was letting myself into!

I turned up at 5pm to pick up my bib number and collect my timing chip. At the same time was offered the choice of a packet of pasta or a beer. As the writing on my bib shows, I chose wisely.



There were 500 spaces and after a long speech from the Race Director and the village mayor, we departed. I was in the middle and so it was more of a walk than a run for a while but gradually the field split up. We ran through ploughed fields, a dried and cracked river bed, up sand covered hideous hills, about a mile on the beach with all the sunbathers clapping us and along a number of tracks.

There were two water breaks which in reality were more about someone pointing a hosepipe at you and soaking you to cool down rather than drinking water but all part of the experience.

People often talk about different types of fun...this was definitely type 2! I finished it eventually, came 252nd out of 400 runners in a time of 1:40 but the time was unimportant for me...I was glad to finish it!

The race was won by Noe ROUTHIAU in a time of 1:00-a little research and it turns out he's a pretty good runner!



A great experience and proud to wear the vest. If you get a chance to run in France, choose a cooler day!



**Jez Bennett**

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# Bern-Col Relay

Over fifty Avon Valley Runners descended upon Victory Fields in Braford on Avon to eat chips...oh and to run a leg in the annual Bern-Col Relay.



Place	Team	Time	Team Members		
1	10	00:35:59	Amelie Higgins	Jennifer Burke	Julian Roughley
2	14	00:36:15	Neil Gregory	Katie Oliver	Mel Ward Nicholls & Gabriel
3	15	00:36:20	Stuart McMahon	Sharon Firkins	Locke Walsh-Hill
4	18	00:36:49	Will Hargreaves	Sam Grant	Bex Walsh
5	13	00:37:54	Ben Gregory	Sonia Pateman	Frank Lamerton
6	3	00:38:11	Dan Jewell	Ali Alderton	Dave Hyde
7	7	00:38:24	Eric Whitehouse	Margaret Thompson	Molly Braham
8	4	00:38:31	Tim Burrell	Gill Perry	Ruby Thursby
9	8	00:39:21	Simon Woodhead	Chris Hackett	Anne Scully
10	2	00:39:42	Paul Dredge	Pauline Bradley	Barry Moger
11	1	00:39:53	Robin-Mark Scholls	Louise Belbin	Vicky Bodman
12	6	00:40:13	Phil Rimmer	Amber Whitehouse	Eve Green
13	17	00:40:28	Andrew Trigg	Katie Laming	Wendy Staden
14	12	00:40:36	Jay Hookins	Tina Towler	Chris Morris
15	5	00:40:54	Garry Owens	Sarah Emery	Jo Guy
16	9	00:42:07	Leo Chetwyn	Rosemary Barber	Caroline Barham
17	11	00:42:55	Dave Bagshaw	Louise Oldel	Gretchen Tucker
18	16	00:43:50	Imogen Smart	Adrian Holland	Liz Bundy

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# All those years ago

Avon Valley Runners has now been around as a club for over 39-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...

## September 2020

In this month five years ago:

A small group of Avon Valley Runners headed to **Hullavington** for a COVID compliant 5K. In 29<sup>th</sup> place, Toby Firkins clocked 18:35 and in 51<sup>st</sup> position was Andy Wareham, who clocked 22:39. Our Ladies were led home by 61<sup>st</sup> placed Sara Robert with 26:51 who was very closely followed by 62<sup>nd</sup> placed Sharon Firkins in 26:54.

## September 2015

In this month ten years ago:

George Gurney set a new club record time of 1:11:12 at the **Bristol Half Marathon**.

The club trip to Germany for the **Leer Running Festival** saw some good results, with Fiona Price setting a new course record for the Half Marathon, which she won in a time of 1:27:40. In 4<sup>th</sup> place was Suzann Large in 1:50:26; 17<sup>th</sup> Michele Platten - 2:41:26; 18<sup>th</sup> Laura Oatley - 2:41:26. Whilst for the Men, 4<sup>th</sup> was Thomas Coney in 1:23:58, followed by 6<sup>th</sup> Peter Veleski - 1:26:16; 42<sup>nd</sup> Ian Isaacs - 1:49:36 and 65<sup>th</sup> Sean Price - 2:10:01 – whilst dressed as a lemon!!!

In the 10K, Rich Ayling just missed out on the podium with a fourth place finish in 36:32, ahead of 22<sup>nd</sup> Warren Wade - 44:27 & 125<sup>th</sup> Jim Chalmers - 72:33. For the Ladies we had 93<sup>rd</sup> Sharon Cleverly – 52:52; 169<sup>th</sup> Sara Robert – 65:19; 170<sup>th</sup> Allison Perkins – 65:39; 175<sup>th</sup> Helen Veleska – 68:07; 176<sup>th</sup> Hayley Bell – 68:07 and 178<sup>th</sup> Vicky Ody – 73:01. Darren Wintmore was our lone representative in the 5K and clocked 20:37 for 17<sup>th</sup> place.



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## September 2005

In this month twenty years ago:

Paul Mumford clocked 3-hours 10-minutes 39-seconds to finish 12<sup>th</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> MV40 at the **Wolverhampton Marathon**. Danny Kay ran 4:11:08 to finish as 3<sup>rd</sup> MV60. Danny also finished as 3<sup>rd</sup> MV60 at the **New Forest Marathon**, where he clocked 3:49:00.

Susie Phillips was 1<sup>st</sup> FV55 at the **Shepton Mallet 10K**, a title that she also claimed at the **Haresfield Beacon 10K** in Gloucestershire and also at the **King Alfreds Torment** trail run at Stourhead.

Alistair Bartlett continued his assault on the Somerset Race Series when he finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the **Ash Excellent 8** race at Martock, where Doug Barber came in 9<sup>th</sup> to claim the 2<sup>nd</sup> MV40 prize.

## September 1990

In this month thirty-five years ago:

Avon Valley Runners fielded 26 for the **Chippenham "10"**: 22<sup>nd</sup> Martin Connor - 58:07; 34<sup>th</sup> Terry Chapple - 60:33; 37<sup>th</sup> John Green - 61:01 (1<sup>st</sup> MV50); 47<sup>th</sup> Ted Rockliffe - 62:04; 56<sup>th</sup> Roger Carey - 63:00; 59<sup>th</sup> Nick Rosier - 63:29; 64<sup>th</sup> Tim Northwood - 63:52 (3<sup>rd</sup> MV50); 70<sup>th</sup> Neil Fyfe - 64:26; 80<sup>th</sup> N Whittle - 65:22; 83<sup>rd</sup> Mike Hehir - 65:35; 109<sup>th</sup> C Stiles - 68:10; 114<sup>th</sup> Ray Withey - 68:30; 115<sup>th</sup> C Williamson - 68:31; 124<sup>th</sup> Linda Brown - 69:12; 143<sup>rd</sup> M Johnson - 70:56; 147<sup>th</sup> M Brooks - 71:12; 154<sup>th</sup> Peter Bray - 71:45; 158<sup>th</sup> Vic Bull - 72:12; 171<sup>st</sup> Stan Farr - 73:24; 185<sup>th</sup> Mike Beirne - 75:12; 188<sup>th</sup> Judy Farr - 75:24; 197<sup>th</sup> G Babb - 76:10; 199<sup>th</sup> Bill Howsego - 76:38; 212<sup>th</sup> Rosemary Barber - 78:52; 267<sup>th</sup> Denise Ellis - 87:51; 269<sup>th</sup> Joyce Field - 90:00.







John Green was 1<sup>st</sup> MV50 and Linda Brown the second lady at the **Marshfield 10K**.

Rosemary Barber was first lady at the **Sherston "10"**, clocking 75:33.

[The Autumn edition of the Valley News](#) was published – the first completed using a Word Processor!

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

A selection of forthcoming events which may be of interest:

Date	Event	Distance	Details	
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	<a href="#">"Run for Tash" 10K</a>	10K	Team Bath invites you to Odd Down race circuit for this charity run.	
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	<a href="#">The Carnival Chase</a>	10K & 3K	Redfish events race around Warminster	
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> September	<a href="#">Swindon Half Marathon</a>	13.1-miles	A new course in the North of the county.	
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> October	<a href="#">Marshfield Mudlark</a>	11K	Race #2 in the Wiltshire Off-Road Race League	
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> October	<a href="#">Grittleton 10K</a>	10K	Flat & potentially fast course presented by i-Compete	
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> October	<a href="#">The White Horse Gallop</a>	7'ish miles	It is back – the quad burning run to the top of Westbury White Horse, courtesy of Redfish events & #3 in the WORL.	

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# Multi-Sport News

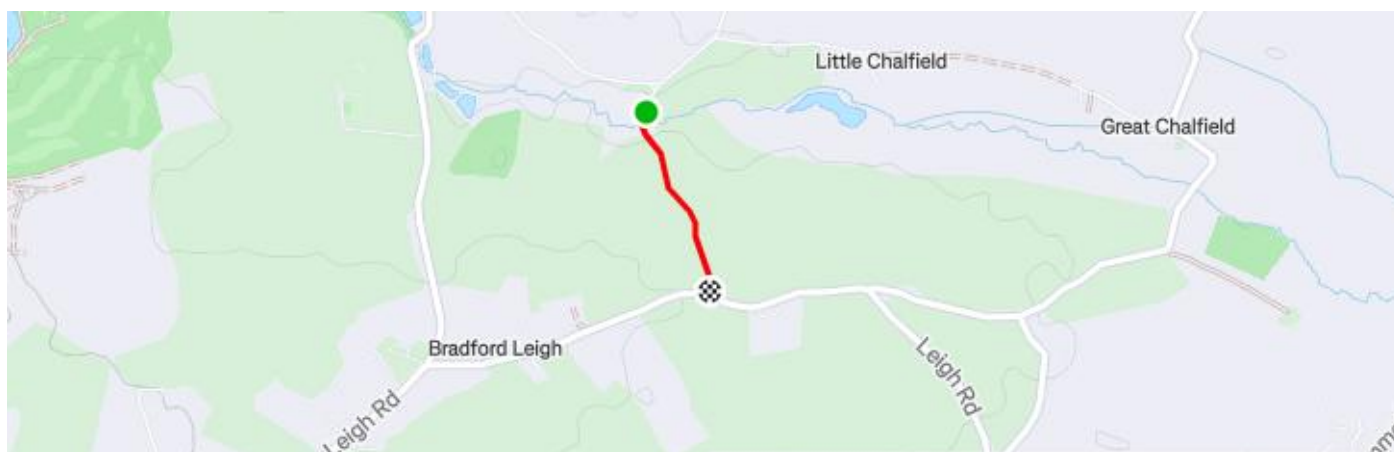
**Segment of the Month** - Our penultimate round of segments brought us two climbs:

[Sign to the Top](#) was a quad burning 10% climb up from Bratton to the top of Westbury White Horse. Just ten members tackled this ascent with Tom Carpenter (5:25) and Jenny Natrass (6:18) being the leading "mountain goats".

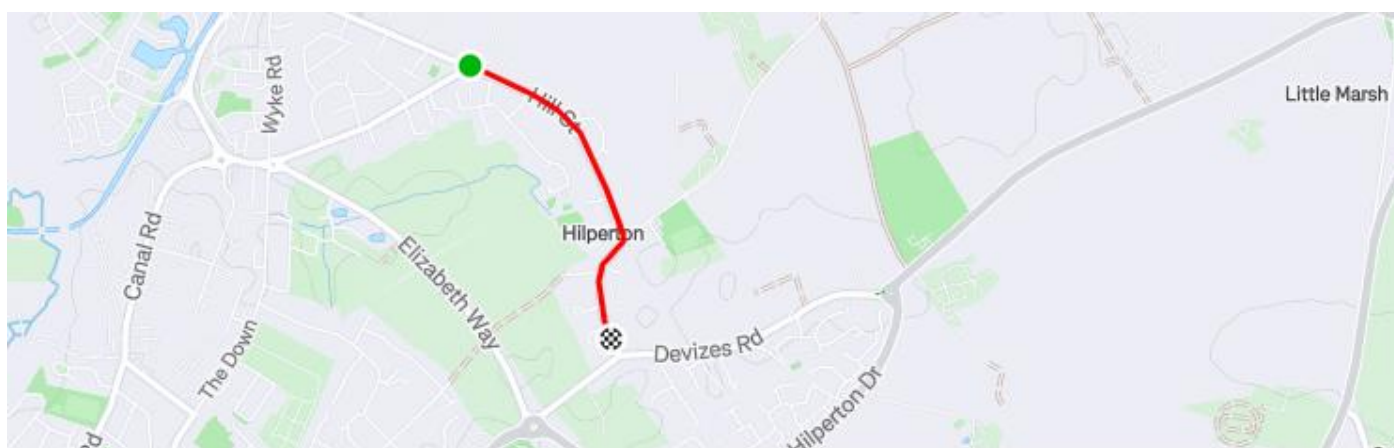
Our second climb in August was the [Keevil Rise](#) which proved a popular 2-mile segment starting just outside of Bulkington and finishing near to Great Hinton. Nineteen members tackled this ascent with Tom Carpenter (5:43) and Caroline Scott (6:09) being quickest speedsters over this lengthy incline.

So on to our final round in the monthly element of our Stava Segment Challenge competition...

For September we see the return of the [Worm Hill](#) climb at Bradford Leigh which despite its diminutive sounding name is quite a leg sapping climb albeit at just 0.38-miles in length and at a 3.4% gradient. So far this year 29 club members have tackled this with Darren Wintmore 1:12 and Annalie Ibison 1:19 being the fastest so far.



Our second segment, last featured in 2020 and is the 0.7-mile climb up [Hill Street](#) in Trowbridge. Thirty-six club members have ridden this route so far in 2025, with Alan Best in 1:56 and Emily Dye in 2:01 are the quickest so far.



For a fuller explanation of the Avon Valley Segment of the Year competition please check out the [January 2025 edition of the Valley News](#).

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## #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...



After 3 years & 12 races, **Gary MacAlister** directed his final AVR Westbury 5K.



After 30+ years with AVR, we say farewell to **Ian and Barbara White** who are moving to Devon.



**Ali Alderton** at Boscastle Harbour, gets a GG-point



**Andrew Thackery** showing off his AVR vest at Buckingham Palace.

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