

Avon Valley News

March 2017

Issue #184



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....plus loads more

Hello,

Phew, what a month! March has seen so much going on that I've almost struggled to fit it all into one newsletter.

Bath Half Marathon was a huge success, with our very own AVR winner, we kicked off the Wiltshire Road Race League with a win at Highworth, we helped organize a hugely successful Imber Ultra race, and some of us even conquered the sunny shores of Cyprus with the club tour.

And we have only just begun the Spring season! April will see the Marathons really start with London, Manchester, Southampton & many more coming up. Devizes Half Marathon is just around the corner & our very own new race the 5x5x5 starts this month.

Plenty to look forward to!

Gary MacAlister

RUTH BARNES WINS BATH HALF MARATHON!!!



Well I have run out of words to describe this lady in my newsletters. RUTH BARNES has achieved AVR legendary status by winning the 2017 Vitality Bath Half Marathon.

There is a write up later in the newsletter, but for now I'll just let this picture speak for itself! AWESOME!!!

NEW – 5x5x5 RACE

AVR's brand new off-road race series, the 5x5x5 starts this month. The idea is a 5km race, costing £5, held over 5 months is the inspiration for the name.

Starting in Steple Ashton on Thursday 13th April at 7pm, the route covers beautiful scenic countryside on an out & back course. The first event is limited to 50 spaces, so check out the entry forms on [Entry Central](#), or turn up on the night at the Long Arms in Steple Ashton.

SERIES DATES (All Thursday): 13th April, 4th May, 1st June, 6th July, and 14th September.

AVR TOUR 2017 - CYPRUS



AVR on tour (L-R) Darren Wrintmore, Michelle Platten, Gary MacAlister, Sonia Bundy, Michael Guy, Irene Warden & Bob Washbourne.

AVR took their 2017 club tour to Paphos in Cyprus to take part in the Cyprus Marathon, which was also run alongside the Half Marathon, 10k & 5km races. As you can see from the picture above, runners were greeted on race day with clear blue skies, 20°C temperatures and a light breeze off of the Mediterranean Sea.



First race to start was the Marathon, where runners were bussed from Paphos to Aphrodite's Birthplace. Here Gary MacAlister lined up with 300 other runners from around the world to run the 42.195km route back into Paphos for the finish in front of the famous Castle. Even at 7:30am in the morning the sun was shining brightly and was at the runner's backs almost all the way to the finish line.

The course also had its fair share of climbing, with a couple of significant climbs along the route which followed the beautiful coastline. In the end Gary would finish the race in a new PB of 3:18:51, which included 5 minutes on the medical bench after getting cramp at 30km. Training in freezing conditions along the Kennet & Avon canal were obviously not ideal preparations for running the marathon in the blazing sunshine!

The 2nd race to set off was the Half Marathon. AVR had 3 runners in this race which started outside Paphos castle and headed out of town and back to the castle for the finish. Sonia Bundy, Michelle Platten & Michael Guy all finished the course with Sonia setting a new PB of 2:37:29. Finally the 10km runners took to the coastline to run. Darren Wrintmore & Bob Washbourne flew the AVR flag here and were already finished & enjoying a free beer when the Half Marathon & Marathon runners got to the finish. It is safe to say that everybody that came to Cyprus had a great time, and a 2018 club tour is sure to be announced soon. Watch this space!!!



IMBER ULTRA

Mick Farrar is an AVR athlete & enjoys Ultra Races. He has a blog that he writes at <http://runningoffthedadness.blogspot.co.uk/>. He has kindly allowed me to use his Blog about the Imber Ultra for this newsletter.

Imber Ultra - Some days you should stay in bed.

The Imber Ultra is a local race which is organised by my running club, Avon Valley Runners (AVR), and it starts in the neighboring town of Westbury. The route covers 33 miles of self-navigating footpaths around Salisbury Plain using the Imber range path.

I arrived at the car park and caught the minibus to the start at the leisure center, to be met by many AVR club members working around the course throughout the day. I met Mina whom I had run with at the Pilgrim's Challenge (I had managed to talk her into running the Ultra) and we chatted briefly before the start.



The weather was due to be heavy showers, strong winds and possible localised thunder storms - what could be better? The ground was waterlogged from days of rain, not normally an issue - but lack of sleep, my head not being in a good place at the start of the race meant I probably should not have run it.

The runners were called to the briefing just before the 9am start and then with a bell ring from the Town Crier we were off with a lap of the leisure center field, to shake out the competitors, before heading down the lane and into the first muddy climb at 1 mile up onto the Plain.

Once up onto the Plain the route heads south to the military camp at Warminster, through the camp and climb up on to Battlesbury Wood. At 7.4 miles we arrived at CP 1 at a road crossing before climbing up on Scratchbury Hill, across to Cotley Hill, overlooking Norton Bavant. The wind at this point was behind us and the rain was holding off.

The course at this point heads east, near Heytesbury, and becomes open and desolate before a mile long rutted narrow track with copious amounts of mud and water. Along this track I managed to slip and face-plant the bank, luckily no damage was done and we arrived at CP2 on the edge of Chitterne village at 13.5 miles.

Pushing on the path is fairly flat past Copehill Down German Village and small convoy of Armoured Personnel Carriers cut across our route, something you don't see on every ultra, and then north towards Tilshead and CP3 at 18.5 miles where a much needed hug from Denise Ellis helped me keep going. At this point the wind was hitting us from the side but the rain still held off!



From Tilshead the route runs parallel to the A360 until Gore Cross, at 21.5 miles, where we hit the road and turned west and straight into the wind. The route also climbs at this point, for 3 miles, and I used sign posts to run between to keep up some momentum.



Coming down the hills were bunches of DofE "youths" who cheered us on - a much needed mental lift at this point. Through CP 4 at 22.5 miles and climbing again.

Once finally up on the level again the wind was full-on in our faces and the early hills had started to take their toll but I knew the route and realised there was only one more hill to climb at 27.5 miles, which was also CP5. The miles were slow, running between two signs and walking to the next one, and the wind relentless. Occasional showers passed over us so quickly there was little point in reacting to them.

I eventually hit CP5 and then pushed on to Bratton Camp where I saw Matt Charlton waiting for me. He had travelled out to the course and received a massive hug for his troubles. My heart and head lifted a touch and I pushed on yet again for the last few miles past the chalk pit. The turning off the Imber path needed a quick check of the notes and eventually, after three of us conferred it was decided we were on the right track. Back down the natural muddy chalk steps to Westbury, a quick dog-leg, back along another track before the final few meters along the road and the bell of the Town Crier to alert the finish that I was on my way.

I crossed the line at the leisure center in 6:32:10, 63/103. It could have been worse, my head was not in the race and I really doubt if I should have run it. Friends, on or off the course, helped me around. It's done.

The prize was a mug, a very wonderful mug, and well worth the miles. Would I do it again? Maybe, I like the mug!!



About the Imber Ultra

The Imber Ultra Marathon is a trail run of approximately 33 miles. It starts at the Leighton Recreation Centre in Westbury at the north west of the Imber Ranges. Over the first couple of miles runners ascend the escarpment of Salisbury Plain, then follow the Imber Range Perimeter Path in an anti-clockwise direction. In the first 10 miles they pass round the town of Warminster and a number of Iron Age hill forts on footpaths. Then they run on metalled roads, bridleways and tracks east then north.

On the way they pass through some of the most remote parts of southern England, apart from a German village around the halfway mark! The final 10 miles are westward along the north side of the training area. Here the going is good on roads or big tracks, but it will be against the usually prevailing wind to add to the challenge. The final couple of miles include the biggest descent of the day, back to the finish at the Leighton Recreation Centre.

2017 results can be found here. <http://www.imber-ultra.org/results/>. Well done to **Daniel Piper** who came 3rd overall!

ROAD RUNNING

Road Race Secretary: Gary MacAlister

Wiltshire Road Race League

The Wiltshire Road Race League for 2017 started in March with the Highworth 5. In 2017 there will be a reduction in races to 10, with your best 8 to score. The AVR Club championship will mirror the Wiltshire League.

FIXTURES

The 2017 Wiltshire Road Race League Fixtures have now been released:

1. ~~Highworth 5~~ ~~Sunday 19th March~~
2. Devizes ½ Marathon Sunday 9th April **
3. Trowbridge 5km Sunday 7th May
4. Heddington 5k Series Tuesday June 13th / July 11th / Aug 8th
5. Broad Town 5 Saturday 17th June
6. Two Tunnels 10km Sunday 9th July
7. The Bustard 5 Wednesday 2nd August
8. Chippenham Half Sunday 10th September
9. Grittleton 10km Sunday 15th October **
10. Clock Change 10km Sunday 29th October

**Grittleton 10km will be the County Championship Race for 10km

**Devizes Half Marathon will be the County Championship Race for Half Marathon

Results

If you've run a race please make sure you get your results sent into results@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk so they can be added to the results database. You need to put the race name, your time & position, and ideally a link to the results page.

Entering Races

Remember to put yourself down as "Avon Valley Runners" when entering races (Not AVR, Avon Valley or other variants).

HIGHWORTH 5

AVR started the 2017 Wiltshire Road Race Season with a bang as they took the maximum 20 points in the first event, the Highworth 5 Miler.

34 AVR started the race in cool & blustery conditions, and it wasn't totally clear just how blustery it was until runners turned direction at about the 3 mile mark only to come face to face with "Hurricane Highworth"! Even the climb in the last mile was a small relief as it offered some shelter from the wind.



Despite the challenging conditions, AVR had some great performances. Ben Psaila came 2nd overall, and because the 1st place runner is not from a Wiltshire Club, Ben now also leads the Wiltshire Road Race League after the first race. Daniel Piper, Richard Harding, Gary MacAlister & Peter Dyer were the other runners that made up the AVR 'A' Team.

In the ladies race, after much confusion and a bit of a shambles of an awards ceremony, Leah Sartain was 3rd overall (trophy in the post soon!). Pippa Brewer, Carly Hodgson, Anna Spiers & Jo Farion made up the rest of the AVR 'A' score. Such was the strength in our numbers, the AVR 'B' team were able to secure 4th place overall, behind Chippenham Harriers 'A' & Royal Wootton Bassett 'A'. This is a great start to the season, and let's hope we can keep the momentum going into the next race, the Devizes Half Marathon on 9th April.

WILTSHIRE LEAGUE STANDINGS AFTER 1 RACE...

Pos.	Team	M-Score	F-Score	Total Score	Points
1	Avon Valley Runners - A	447	446	893	20
2	Chippenham Harriers - A	408	454	862	19
3	Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds - A	433	396	829	18
4	Avon Valley Runners - B	357	349	706	17
5	Calne SMaRTT - A	354	329	683	16
6	Chippenham Harriers - B	278	304	582	15
7	Swindon Harriers - A	338	65	403	14
8	Frome Running Club - A	0	100	100	13
9	Devizes Running Club - A	0	49	49	12
10	Team Bath AC - A	36	0	36	11
11	Corsham Running Club - A	0	0	0	0
11	St Mary's running and triathlon club - A	0	0	0	0

BATH HALF MARATHON



12,000 runners, including 48 from Avon Valley Runners took part in the Bath Half Marathon. It's the 36th time the event has run in the city. The two lap traffic-free course, which is well known for being flat and fast, starts and finishes in Great Pulteney Street and straddles both sides of the River Avon, taking runners through the beautiful World Heritage Site of Bath.

As mentioned earlier, the ladies event was won by our very own Ruth Barnes, but there were other fantastic performances throughout the field. Rich Ayling clocked 1:11:23 to finish 13th overall. There were PB's for Richard Harding, Phillipa Brewer, Michael Guy, Sharon Firkins, Sarah Nunn, Rebecca Millard, David Hyde, Alexis Harris & Melanie Coupe.

There was an issue with some of the later finishers not receiving their finisher's medal, but overall the feedback from the field was very positive. Advanced entries for 2018 race at an "Early Bird" rate (£5 discount) are open until 14th April, so if you are looking to take part next year, get your entries in early!

OFF-ROAD RUNNING

GWENT LEAGUE – Pembrey Country Park, Llanelli

The last race of the 2016/17 Gwent League took place in Llanelli and AVR headed down to the South of Wales with a spring in their step. The Men had already secured promotion to Division 3 as Division 4 Champions. The Ladies needed one more good performance to gain promotion from Division 2 into the top flight!



The stand out performance of the season has been Mike Towler, who finished 2nd Male overall in the whole Gwent League. Mike was 1st AVR over the line today in 6th place, with Rich Ayling just one place behind in 7th (pictured below Mike & Rich running in close formation). Pete Slade, Joby Hobbs & Tim Lowrie made up the other 3 runners in the top 5 scoring runners. Phil Harding & Richard Newman scored for the AVR 'B' Team.



The Ladies only managed to get 3 runners for this event, but there were all quality runners and did enough for the AVR 'A' team to finish 2nd in Division 2. Leah Sartain (Pictured), Holly Newman & Sue Jeddi did enough to beat Bridgend AC for the promotion spot.

So, overall success for Men & Ladies in the Gwent League. The 2017/18 season will start in October 2017, with dates yet to be confirmed, but just ask anyone that has taken part this year if they have enjoyed it and the overwhelming response is YES!

The team spirit is fantastic, and it is one of the few occasions that you get to cheer on your team mates whilst they race. The juniors get just as much attention as the seniors and the quality of all the fields from Novice (U11) all the way up to V60's is fantastic.

See you all there in 2017/18!



AVR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

APRIL FIXTRUES

DEVIZES HALF (Road Race) – April 9th, Devizes

MAY FIXTRUES

TROWBRIDGE 5k (Road Race) – May 9th, Devizes

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP RULES 2017

There will be 2 leagues in 2017, a Road Race League & Off-Road league. Both of these will mirror the races in the Wiltshire Leagues.

OFF ROAD LEAGUE

After 2 races in the 2017 Off-Road Series the standings are:

MEN:				LADIES			
1 st	Daniel Piper	2 points	(2 Races)	1 st	Jo Farion	3 points	(2 races)
2 nd	Alan Tate	10 points	(2 Races)	=2 nd	Justine Macalister	13 points	(2 races)
=3 rd	Tony Dunford	15 points	(1 race)	=2 nd	Rosemary Barber	13 points	(2 races)
=3 rd	Mike Sargeant	15 points	(1 race)	4 th	Melanie W-Nicholls	17 points	(1 race)

The Off Road League will now rest over the summer, resuming with the first Wiltshire League race in Sept 2017.

ROAD RACE LEAGUE

After 1 race in the 2017 Road Race Series the standings are:

MEN:				LADIES			
1 st	Ben Psaila	1 point	(1 Race)	1 st	Leah Sartain	1 point	(1 Race)
2 nd	Daniel Piper	2 points	(1 Race)	=2 nd	Pippa Brewer	2 points	(1 Race)
3 rd	Rich Harding	3 points	(1 Race)	=2 nd	Carly Hodgson	3 points	(1 Race)
4 th	Gary MacAlister	4 points	(1 Race)	4 th	Anna Spiers	4 points	(1 Race)

AVR MEMBERSHIP 2017 – NOW DUE!!!

The Entry Central website is now set up for you to renew your membership for 2017/18. The current membership year ended on 31st March 2017, so if you have not renewed your membership, you need to get online and do it ASAP.

The membership year has moved to April to align itself with the EA registration year. If you are looking to be a competitive athlete looking to race regularly and in events such as Gwent League, then you will need the EA membership. This currently sits at £14 per year. This isn't compulsory, but the more EA members the club has, the more access we have to EA perks like ballot places, training courses and resources.

Rules

The AVR Club Championships will now mirror the Wiltshire Leagues for 2017. There will be an Off-Road & Road running league, and prizes will be awarded individually for both disciplines.

Scoring

1st place will score 1 point, 2nd place 2 points and so on. None runners will score a forfeit score which equals the largest race attendance +5, but if you run sufficient races, these forfeit will not show on your total.



JAVR News

Editors Notes

March saw the close of the Cross Country season, and the start of the Junior Wiltshire Road Race League. JAVR are looking for a fourth consecutive title in the league, but it certainly won't be easy this year. Also in March was the 3rd JAVR 2km event, which brought several great performances. Read on for more!

Pete Slade

JAVR 2k – Saturday March 25th, Southwick Country Park

A lovely spring morning in Southwick attracted 44 runners to the third JAVR 2K of the year. A good turnout from the JAVR contingent—with 23 runners taking part. This month's overall race winner was Freya Buglass, finishing in a time of 7 mins 21 seconds, just outside her PB. Orli Cranston was third overall, just 13 seconds behind Freya. Leo Harris and Ben Hails were 1st and 2nd boy respectively—Leo finishing in 7 mins 47 seconds & Ben finishing 3 seconds behind and 5th overall. Toby Withers had a good run, finishing in 10th place, in 8 mins 25 seconds. 13 out of the first 15 finishers were JAVR - great stuff! Harvey Payne and Olivia Hails had a close battle, finishing in 18th & 19th place, recording just over 9 mins for the 2K distance. Other good performances from Oscar Purdy (9mins 40sec), Jasmin Martin (9mins 47sec) and Isaac Filsell (10mins 54sec).



NEXT FIXTURE – SATURDAY 29th APRIL

Forthcoming Fixtures

Avon Valley Mile – (Bradford on Avon)	Thursday 6th April
Devizes Half Fun Run – (Devizes)	Sunday 9th April
St Georges 2K – (Corsham)	Sunday 23rd April
Semington Slog Fun Run – (Semington)	Saturday 6th May
Trowbridge 'Colourific' 5k – (Trowbridge)	Sunday 7th May
Wiltshire County AA Champs & Quad Kids – (Swindon)	Saturday ?? May
The May Mile – (Chippenham)	Sunday 14th May
Jack n Jill Challenge Fun Run	Sunday 14th May
Are you faster than a 10 year old? – (Southwick Park)	Tuesday 16th May

Clock Change Challenge 1.5km run – Race#1 Wilts Junior Race League (26 March)

The first fixture in the Junior Wiltshire road race league was a very competitive one! 120 runners took part in the event—a quarter of those runners were JAVR, so once again it's good to see us being able to field so many runners. There's a mix of the experienced runners, but also newer faces—which is a great balance to have. The race, held at Calne Leisure Centre sports field is a popular one and the course is all on the grass, so tough on those legs!



JAVR didn't have it all their own way, with our arch rivals Chippenham Harriers Youth taking the first 3 spots. James Pickford was the first JAVR runner home, finishing in a time of 5 mins 18 secs, earning him a 3rd overall for his category, he just managed to pip Niall Thorne to the post - Niall finishing 2nd U17 Male in a time of 5 mins 19 secs (Niall had just finish 4th place in the 5km adult race that finished only 10 minutes before this race started). Jack Webb, who led the race for the first 300 metres, finished in a time of 5 mins 23 secs, which earned him first overall for the U13 Category. Freya Buglass was the first JAVR girl home, finishing in a time of 5 mins 26 secs, which was good enough for 2nd girl overall. There were good performances too for Freddie Billing, who was 3rd overall in his category, completing the 1.5kilometres in 5 mins 26 secs. The continually improving Leo Harris, Josh Thorne and Ben Hails finished 17th, 20th and 22nd overall respectively—all of them running under 6 minutes.



Clock Change Challenge 1.5km run – Race#1 Wilts Junior Race League (26 March)



Although the points are still to be confirmed, its likely Chippenham Harriers youth gained maximum points in this fixture, so we need as many runners as possible to take part in the next fixture at Devizes on Sunday 9th April. Of course, it's important to be fighting for silverware both as individuals and collectively as a team, but it's just as important to see lots of our runners coming through and representing the club at these fixtures and enjoying themselves. It was an enjoyable morning watching them all take part and every one of them really gave it some beans on the finishing straight! Well done to you all!



This is where we can celebrate all our runners & their fantastic achievements over the last month. All PB's will be logged here, whether it be a mile, a parkrun or a marathon. If you want to be recognized then make sure you send your results, position, time & a link to your race results to results@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.

WALL OF FAME

5km

Clock Change Darren Harris (21:02) Mandy Bygrave (24:27)

5Miles

Hiighworth Rich Harding (31:17) Jo Farion (39:28)
Mandy Bygrave (40:47) Helen Davies (42:50)
Paul Manual (42:50)

10km

Clock Change Adam Morris (49:13) Michael Guy (51:48)
Sarah Nunn (56:00) David Hyde (59:48)
Sonia Bundy (1:05:14)

10Miles

None

Half Marathon

Bath Richard Harding (1:23:07) Phillipa Brewer (1:38:55)
Michale Guy (1:59:10) Sharon Firkins (2:08:49)
Sarah Nunn (2:13:23) Rebecca Millard (2:26:15)
David Hyde (2:22:53) Alexis Harris (2:33:41)
Melanie Coupe (2:35:40)
Cyprus Sonia Bundy (2:37:29)
Weymouth James Williams (1:36:20)

Marathon

Cyprus Gary MacAlister (3:18:51)

Southwick parkrun

Leo Harris x 2 (21:59, 22:16)	Sarah Nunn x 2 (26:57, 27:43)
Ben Psaila (17:23)	Marek Miszta (20:10)
Leah Sartain (20:35)	Clare Wood (21:32)
Fiona Gibbs (22:18)	Holly Newman (22:56)
Mandie Bygrave (24:48)	Elizabeth Morris (26:25)
Michelle Gibbs (26:32)	Arthur Gage (27:41)
Christina Vivian (30:29)	

Other parkruns

Lymington Jennifer O'Connor (27:13)
Pollock Alastair Brownlie (28:57)

OVER THE HILLS DONATION TO ALZHEIMER'S



AVR's fantastically organised & supported Over the Hills (OTH) race was run in November 2016. Part of the race's success is measured by the amount of money they are able to raise for good causes within the community. This year the race was supporting Alzheimer's support. Some of you may even have seen their fantastic cakes at the finish this year.

James & Kay Crawford and Tina Vivian are here presenting the charity cheque of £1400 to Alzheimer's Support Trowbridge. James has given his many thanks to AVR for the marshals and organisation of a very popular multi-terrain race held in November every year. Of significance is that the cheque is held by Sheila Jennings who was a previous AVR runner and is key in providing the very popular AS cake and teas for the event.

AVR races are always looking to support local charities through their races, with the Wiltshire Half raising funds for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. These events wouldn't happen if it wasn't for the volunteers that give up their time to ensure we can put on these fabulous events. If you ever see AVR putting out pleas for volunteers, then why not consider helping out, because when you do, fantastic charities like this can benefit significantly!



Avon Valley Mile



Closed Event for Members of AVR and JAVR

Take the opportunity to find out just how quickly YOU can run 1 mile?



THURSDAY 6th. April 2017

Please arrive by 7pm for registration

History: The Avon Valley Mile was first held in 2006 as part of the Sport Relief event staged in Barton Farm Country Park, Bradford on Avon.

Route: The run takes place over a measured mile of 1609 metres or 1760 yards starting adjacent to the slipway near to Barton Packhorse Bridge, running down towards Avoncliff but doubling back by the Pump house and finishing near to the Park Information Board.