

# Avon Valley News

April 2018

Issue #197



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Another fantastic month of running with some very adventurous members taking on incredible challenges, such as the Marathon des Sables, Exe to Axe and the London Marathon to name but a few.

The club has also seen 4 new club records across a variety of distances - congratulations to all! There are also a record number of PBs on the Wall of Fame, so apologies for how tiny the font is!

Our own 5x5x5 events have kicked off in Steeple Ashton and work on the new Westbury 5k series is heading towards its first event on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

So all in all, a very busy starter to Spring running - let's hope the weather settles into something in between the heatwave from Corsham 10k and now!

Sarah - Editor

## **VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR'S UPDATE APRIL 2018** – *By David Hyde, volunteer co-ordinator*

Firstly thank you to you all who have volunteered at various events in the last month or so and many congratulations to Alex Fearon who was voted Marshall of the evening at the April 5x5x5 by the competitors.

We are looking for volunteers from every sector of the club, from JAVR to our elite runners, as events can't go ahead without marshals etc. Please email me on [volunteers@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) if you can help at any of the future events:

- **5x5x5 - Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June**
- **Westbury 5km - Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June**
- **Mob Match ('Over the Hills' route, backwards) - Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June**

First Aid is one position we struggle to fill. We have a few regular volunteers for this role, but if anyone has got the 'one day first aid at work' qualification, please get in contact as that's all you need. We are working on a plan for a few volunteers to complete a course.

We have had a few changes on our committee and I would like to thank Michele Platten and Carole Alston for agreeing to join us. Many thanks!

## EXE TO AXE – By Sara Robert

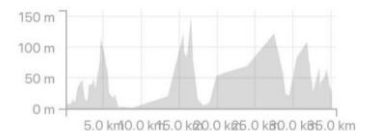


Judy and Sara tackle the tough course along the south coast

Having run this event as part of a relay team of 4 last year, Judy Schols and I decided to run a 50:50 split this year. All good I thought, 11 tough miles but I can do that. Until about 4 weeks before the event, when in a moment of weakness, I agreed to run the entire distance together with Judy. Not time to train long as we'd already entered in to what should be tapering time!! So on the 8<sup>th</sup> April Judy and I, along with some better prepared AVR's in Mandie Bygrave, Kate Hails, Fiona Gibbs, Edric Hobbs and Justin Peters, set off along the sea front at Exmouth. And almost immediately the climbing began up to the coast path. At the half way point in Sidmouth, I was running on empty. But I don't give up, I never give up! Judy was looking stronger than me but she stuck with me. And then leg 3 began. Oh my word!! We climbed, and climbed and climbed some more!! We both wondered if we would ever stop climbing. Eventually back down to check point 3 before setting off on leg 4; the final 4 miles. An easy 4 by comparison to the 6 we'd just done! I was on empty, had nothing but grit and determination to keep me going. I've never had a DNF beside my



35.6 km 949 m Trail  
Distance Elevation Run Type



name and I wasn't about to start. The final 750m along the sea front at Seaton was awesome. Judy and I ran arm in arm to the support of the AVR's who had finished well ahead of us. Cider handed to me by Mandie - what a star! It was a brutal race to take on without the training...but we did it! Next year, I'll be better prepared.

## BOURNEMOUTH BAY HALF MARATHON – By

Michele Platten

A few of us were running the Bath Half for ThreeAs Brain Injury charity. We had trained properly and got the long training runs in. We tapered down and we were all ready for the off. However, as we all know, the weather had other ideas, and it decided to snow, and kept snowing, cancelling the race. Nooooooo! So having tapered down, we had to taper up, then taper down in 2 weeks which was disheartening for many of us. So with our sponsorships in mind, we found another half to complete; Bournemouth Bay Half.

They said it was flat, but there was a little bit of fibbing I feel! Slight inclines with a hint of a hill at the beginning. The route was well marshalled, a lot of supporters on route shouting out 'Bugalugs' (the nickname my dear mum give me as a child, which I continue to use on my running vests.) The route went past the coastline and then inland and then back along the coast again. So David Hyde, Rebecca Hex and I completed the half marathon for the ThreeAs charity. We are still collecting sponsorship and will update you with final amount when we have it. We met so many other lovely AVR runners down there too; there was Michael Guy, Michelle Gibbs and a friend of David Hyde called Paul Sutton.



Rebecca Hex, David Hyde and Michele Platten

The only negative of the event was paying for parking at £15 for 5 hours but the fish and chips in my tum at the end out-weighted parking charges. So fellow runners, maybe a half for next year?

# AVR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

## AVR LEAGUES 2018

2018 Off Road league races: <http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/index.php?page=off-road-race-series-2018>

2018 Road Race league races: <http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/index.php?page=road-race-series-2018>

**Race #1** - The official start to the Road Race league was at the Highworth 5. The flat race saw 45 AVR members run around quiet country roads with good views of the town, until they were tested with a large hill at mile 4! Luckily, 'Hurricane Highworth' stayed away this year to allow Avon Valley Runners to claim a fair few prizes. Mike Towler came second overall in 26:26 while Bethan Francis was third lady home in 31:40. Damian Spreckley was the first MV40 runner over the line in 27:37 and Andy Stanley the first MV50 in 31:35.



*Mike Towler running to finish in second place*



*Bethan Francis and Andy Stanley*

**Race #2** - The inaugural Compton Bassett 5 provided the second WRRL and AVR championship race at the end of April. To say that AVR dominated the event, is an understatement! 55 members took part and took home:

- First male and female team prizes
- First and second overall - Ed Knudsen (1<sup>st</sup>) and Mike Towler (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- First and second female - Bethan Francis (1<sup>st</sup>) and Rebecca Beck (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- First MV40 - Damian Spreckley
- First FV45 - Fiona Price
- First FV65 - Rosemary Barber
- First MV70 - Frank Lamerton



*TEAM PRIZES - presented by Denise Nott of Calne Running Club*

*L: Damien Spreckley, Ed Knudsen and Mike Towler*

*R: Leah Sartain, Bethan Francis and Rebecca Beck*



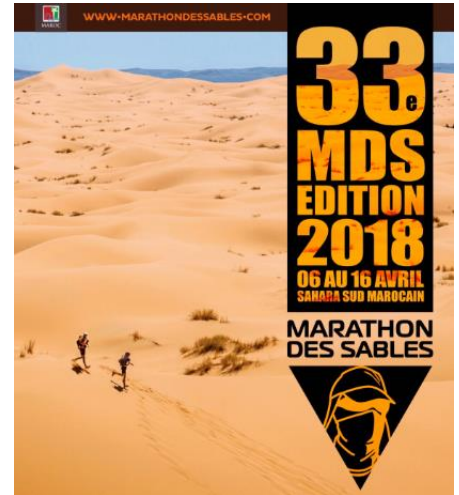
**Race #3** - Chippenham 5 Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June - entries available: [at https://register.primoevents.com/ps/event/Chippenham5Mile2018](https://register.primoevents.com/ps/event/Chippenham5Mile2018)

# THE CALL OF THE DESERT – By Anne-Marie Watson

Utter the infamous words the “Marathon des Sables” amongst the running community and it’s likely you’ll receive a mix of responses...

- a) *OMG* that race sounds insane. Why would anyone want to do that?!
- b) That sounds amazing but I’d never be able to do something like that.
- c) What a challenge. Maybe once in a lifetime...cue little glint in eye ;-)

The concept originated from a solo traverse across the Sahara Desert by Patrick Bauer, a French concert promoter in 1984. Two years later the Marathon des Sables was born with twenty-three runners. Fast forward thirty-three years to April 2018 and nearly a thousand runners and walkers stood on the start line as ACDC’s Highway to Hell boomed out across the desert. Just for the record and in case you are really insane: Christian Ginter holds the highest number of completed MDS events - thirty-one!



The Marathon des Sables has gained a notorious reputation, once described as “more hellish than hell” by Sir Ranulph Fiennes who’s tackled a fair range of epic challenges across the globe. The approximately 250km route changes slightly each year with six stages over seven days requiring participants to be fully sufficient excluding water and Bedouin “tent” (forget Cotswold’s type tent, think more blanket tied down with a couple of pegs and held up by sticks) so pack weight can vary from 6.5 to 13.5 kg.

## BIG DREAMS

My personal MdS journey started eighteen years ago when I encountered a collective of hobbling, broken runners at Gatwick Airport and discovered each had completed the equivalent of six marathons in six days in the Sahara Desert. This physical and mental feat was literally beyond my comprehension; I’d yet to tackle a “normal” marathon in the UK, let alone an ultra or multi-stage event. In the past, my chequered teenage sporting achievements had been particularly minimal and PE lessons were avoided where possible. However, a seed had been planted and I’d wonder if I’d ever be a “good enough” runner to even dare to enter.

Fast forward to 2015, after months of training in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia where I was living at the time, getting cosy with the kitchen scales weighing out rehydrated food and cutting the end off my toothbrush amongst other load lightening measures, I was ready! I stood on the Marathon des Sables start line alongside over a thousand ultra-runners from fifty different countries as ACDC’s “Highway to Hell” boomed across the desert. My BIG running goal had come true. The next seven days were hard. It was tough. Think “Type II Fun”, that type that only becomes real and fun with hindsight. Temperatures soared above 40°C. Sand storms appeared from nowhere so the tent would collapse for fifth time at 3am. Hunger was a constant friend as 2,000 calories/day fails to replenish energy consumed. Out on the course, my world shrunk down to simply taking the next step.

Despite the physical and mental hardship, it's the friendship, laughter and collective sense of achievement that endures. I'll never forget the sense of elation crossing the finish line each day; to place 2<sup>nd</sup> lady in 2015 was the figurative cherry on top. Back to reality, and the inevitable question is never far from away whenever I talked about the event...will you go back?

## NEVER SAY NEVER

Anna-Marie's running ethos:

- #1 Have fun.
- #2 Discover new races.
- #3 Explore the world.
- #4 Don't repeat races (with notable exceptions for Jura Fell Race and Southwick parkrun).
- #5 Have fun.

In line with my running ethos, the answer was always a resounding "No".

However, sometimes life has other ideas. After placing 1<sup>st</sup> lady in the inaugural Half Marathon des Sables Fuerteventura in September 2017, rather ironically the prize was entry into the 33<sup>rd</sup> Marathon des Sables in April 2018. Much deliberation ensued and you've probably worked it out by now that I eventually opted to tackle the beast once again.



It felt different stood on the start line the second time. It's impossible to pinpoint what changed exactly. I'd done it before. Metaphorical bucket list , I certainly didn't feel the need to repeat the process. Maybe a deeper residual fatigue remained from the previous seven months' endeavours with Ultra Trail de Mont Blanc, Half MDS and Trans Gran Canaria. I find the beauty of the unknown adds a different dimension. Unlike in 2015, this time I knew I could and would complete the race.

My favourite memory is from the long stage during that magical hour when day shifts to night. The shadows lazily lengthen across the dunes and the desolate splendour of the desert stretches into the distance. The relentless heat finally cools and a welcome breeze brushes across your skin. There's still several kilometres that separate you from savouring the Moroccan sweet tea at the finish line and your sleeping bag, though you know it's within reach. Running heaven.

At the core of the Marathon des Sables is an ethos of solidarity amongst the runners, volunteers and support from overseas. Time and time again I'm humbled by the inspirational stories which lie hidden behind a race bib number. The team of London estate agents on a mission to raise money to fund two MacMillan nurses for a year, bubbly Jenny back to lay her Long Stage demons to rest after a much feared previous DNF, and kind-hearted Kerry who recently overcame cancer and the end of a relationship but was now determined to start a new chapter. It's taking time for conversations, building new friendships and the deeper human connection amongst like-minded people that brings a smile to my face.

Back home, Ben orchestrated a phenomenal campaign to share my progress across Facebook and Twitter. The response from Avon Valley Runners and beyond who kindly took the time to write a few words of support through the message system simply blew me away. It was the highlight of my day, tucked up in my sleeping bag with my feet up reading through these emails that were printed out and delivered to our tents each evening. Thank you.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

It's that question again!!! For once, my calendar is a blank canvas with the exception of a little 50km around Gozo to pop Ben's ultra cherry at the beginning of May. I suspect something will creep in towards the end of the year though for \*now\* I'm content to rest and relax to let my body and mind recover. I'm a firm believer that in order to be fit, recovery is just, if not more, important than training and racing so it's time to focus on recovery.



If you're vaguely tempted by the prospect, though not quite ready for the Full Monty yet; the Half Marathon des Sables Fuerteventura is a great stepping stone (and far more affordable!) that takes place at the end of September. Check out the link: <http://www.marathondessables.com/en/half-marathon-des-sables-fuerteventura-0>

## NEW CLUB RECORDS



Four new club records have been recorded this month! Congratulations to Holly Rush in the Manchester Marathon who ran 2:47:33 (FV40) and to Max Davies who ran 04:31 in the AVR Spring Mile event. Then two 5 mile records were broken at the inaugural Compton Bassett 5; Ed Knudsen who won the race in an incredible time of 25:54 and Fiona Price in an equally impressive time of 34:10 (FV50). Well done to all!

## THE LONDON MARATHON

On one of the hottest days of the year so far, 14 brave AVR's took on the course around London including Anna Spiers and Carrie Almeida who were winners of the club ballot. The ballot is available to any club member who has been with the club and a member of EA for at least a year and is drawn at random.

*"Thank you for the opportunity to run the VLM in AVR colours and for the amazing support by team members and training from Steve. It was wonderful, fun, amazing and I was buzzing! I could go on and on! I am very happy and lucky to finish the course with a smile all the way around."* - Anna



Frank Lamerton  
who competed the  
course in 4:19:14

Congratulations to Carrie, Anna, Rich Harding, Robin-Mark Schols, Diane Hier, Richard Wood, Ali Atkinson, Frank Lamerton, Nick Bracey, Edward Webb, Samuel Fairfield, Mark Hayes, Olivia Zych and Matthew Walker for their amazing achievement.

Club ballot winners, Anna and Carrie

# MEMBER PROFILE

Not everyone can make it to regular club runs, so the only time some of you spot another AVR member is when you see some familiar club kit at a race. In this section of the newsletter, you will meet a different member of the club each month who would like to share more about themselves with you.

**Name:** Holly Rush

**How long have you been with AVR?** 2 years

**Age category:** Vet 40

**5k PB:** 16:40

**10K PB:** 34:12

**Half marathon PB:** 74 minutes

**Marathon PB:** 2 hours 37 minutes

**Favourite race:** Cotswold Way 100

**Favourite medal:** European Championship Team Bronze medal marathon - Barcelona

**Most proud running moment:** running for GB in the European Athletics Champs, winning team bronze and 3<sup>rd</sup> Brit in extremely tough conditions.

**Most embarrassing running moment:** Not much embarrasses me! I've even wee'd myself during the Commonwealth Games and it didn't worry me at all!

**Best piece of running advice:** Do what makes you happy and remember why you are doing it.



# THE JOYS AND FUN OF BEING A RUNNER – by Steve

Williams, coach

*(Or at least there should be...some)*

There are days out running when you feel 'why am I (still) bloody doing this?'. We have all had them. The grind of adhering to a schedule, particularly a marathon one, or your obsessive need to do a particular distance, no matter what, or a specific weekly mileage, no matter what. Sound familiar? Sometimes, we lose touch with why we came into this great sport of ours. We enjoy running. Without this fundamental enjoyment and no matter how it manifests itself - senses of well-being or freedom or being out in the wonderful countryside we all have close to hand - would you still be running?

This article, based upon my centuries of involvement with the sport and consequent observations, offers you a personal tried-and-tested approach that you could adopt, now and again, to maintain your enthusiasm and, often, have a bit of fun. Fun? Do you remember that concept?

1. Schedule some runs that are purely for enjoyment. You must all have favourite areas you like to run in or a location that you haven't tried yet but would like to. Then make sure you make time to run there off-road (a must) at **least** a couple of times a month. Run through the environment with your eyes and ears and nose wide-open, the latter two may be physiologically difficult...but eh, you get the point. As I say to some of the runners I work with - do a 'listen to the birds run'. In other words, take more time to notice where you are running through - it will reward you in unexpected ways.
2. Leave the watch/Garmin at home. (Not literally for all of you of course as I know that many are physically welded to it.) Simply go out and run as you feel. Taken with the point above it is especially liberating. No time pressures, wonderful environment, able to stop and even explore that 'new' path that you've never dared run down before. Which brings me to my next point.
3. Run without a preconceived route in mind. You must all be very familiar with certain areas you run in. Then make your way there and start taking those paths you've never tried and seeing where you end up. If you get 'lost' then that's part of the fun. (Fun? Remember that concept?) This is a great idea for a group session. You get each member of the group to lead for 5 minutes or so and they can take you wherever they want to go. Quite often this will be a lesser used route that they know and you don't. It's a great way of reinforcing a group togetherness, making everybody feel as they are contributing to the run. Incidentally, I have used this approach, in the past, as part of summer fartlek sessions as each runner took it in turn to lead the rest of us 'unknowingly' on the fast bits.
4. Finally, and coming full circle, don't get obsessed with covering a specific distance in a session or a specific mileage in a week. All schedules that you follow are guides. Whilst you would be expected to follow the spirit of them there is no difference between covering 5.90 miles on a run and the 6 miles in the schedule. Running up and down your street or driveway to make up the difference is moving into an obsessiveness that at some point can manifest itself as a rule you must adhere to. A rule that states you **must always** cover the exact scheduled distances. This in turn can detract from the enjoyment that you should get from running.

Enjoy your running. Avanti the Valley!

If you want to be recognised on the wall of fame, then make sure you send your results, position, time plus a link to your race results to [results@avonvallyrunners.org.uk](mailto:results@avonvallyrunners.org.uk)

## WALL OF FAME

### 1 mile

#### AVR Spring mile

Vicky Ody	00:08:32
Max Davies	00:04:31

### 5km

#### Semington Slog

Michael Guy (CPB)	00:52:05
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### 5 miles

#### Highworth

Sharon Cleverley	00:40:41	Rich Harding	00:29:24
Gary MacAlister	00:30:31		

#### Compton Bassett

Mandy Moore	00:52:31	Carole Alston	00:47:05
Charlotte Cook	00:46:29	Laura Gregson	00:45:30
David Hyde	00:44:15	Michael Guy	00:40:30
Helen Davies	00:40:15	Gill Perry	00:39:09
Jo Farion	00:37:57	Caroline Watson	00:36:46
Gemma Lawton	00:36:21	Laura Hoskins	00:36:11
Frank Lamerton	00:35:37	Leah Sartain	00:32:59
Gary Day	00:32:01	Andy Stanley	00:31:19
Jackie Hall	00:50:06	Michele Platten	00:49:10
Joby Hobbs	00:28:15	Pippa Brewer	00:33:57
Sharon Firkins	00:44:26	Judy Schols	00:41:44

### 10km

#### Clock Change Challenge

David Bagshaw	00:44:25 (Missed in March newsletter)
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#### Corsham

Michael Guy (CPB)	00:51:58
Gary Day	00:43:02

### Half Marathon

#### Bournemouth Bay

Michele Platten	02:15:54
Michael Guy	01:57:03
David Bagshaw	01:39:28
Clare Wood	01:37:28

#### Devizes

### Marathon

#### London

Rich Harding	03:03:50
Anna Spiers	04:11:46

### Southwick parkrun

Jenna Lovelock (CPB)	00:34:39	Louise Wood (CPB)	00:29:02
Clare Wood (CPB)	00:21:29	Leslie Unsworth (CPB)	00:23:35
Lottie Brown (CPB)	00:22:23	Claire Heathcote (CPB)	00:33:50
Marie Worley (CPB)	00:31:33	Liz Mason (CPB)	00:31:03

### Melksham parkrun

Jon Williams (CPB)	00:34:33	Nicola Clyde (CPB)	00:34:08
Heather Osak (CPB)	00:34:22	Heather Osak (CPB)	00:33:00
Dale Morgan (CPB)	00:31:26	Helen Thorne (CPB)	00:30:59
Richard Newman (CPB)	00:24:22	Dale Morgan (CPB)	00:29:23
Jennifer O'Connor (CPB)	00:26:41	Ryan Jones (CPB)	00:22:16
Richard Morgetroyd (CPB)	00:20:09	Gary MacAlister (CPB)	00:19:08
Laura Newman (CPB)	00:28:18	Helen Donald (CPB)	00:26:36
Andy Cunningham (CPB)	00:21:10	Liz McMillan (CPB)	00:35:21

### Other parkruns

#### Ashton Court

Sarah Barker (CPB)	00:30:55
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#### Salisbury

Sean Price (CPB)	00:27:12
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#### Chippenham

Helen Donald (CPB)	00:27:26
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#### Shepton Mallet

Lewis Green (CPB)	00:21:13
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#### Beeston

Peter Bryant (CPB)	00:17:02
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#### Weymouth

Ruth Barnes (CPB)	00:17:09
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#### Chipping Sodbury

Helen Davies (CPB)	00:24:47
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# AVON VALLEY TRIATHLETES



**SAVE THE DATE**

**AVT  
AQUATHLON**

**Adult and Junior events**

**21<sup>ST</sup> July 2018**

**Registration 1200**

**Swim starts from 1pm**

**Details to follow very  
soon.....**





# JAVR News

## Meet the Captains:

Hi. My name is Daisy Davis and I've been a member of JAVR for a few years now. I was elected JAVR girls' team Captain in January this year. My favourite distance is 800m. I'm always at the track on Wednesdays. If you want to chat about anything to do with JAVR just come and find me. I will also be at as many of the Wiltshire Race League events as I can get to. Daisy 🏃🏻‍♀️



## Southwick 2K—Wilts Junior Race League 2018



There was a good turn-out for the April JAVR 2k (which this month, was also part of the Wiltshire Junior Race League).

In the boys' race, Max Hopcraft won with a time of 6.49, with Joe Milton taking 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lewis Green (pictured) ran a great race for a PB. Other JAVR athletes putting in strong performances were Ben Hails, Harry Jerram, Harvey Payne, Josh Thorne, Toby Withers, Freddie Pickford, Elliot Firkins, Leo Harris and Ben Lewis.

In the girls' race, Freya Buglass took 2<sup>nd</sup> with Lottie Brown also having a strong race. Lola Harris, Imogen Gray, Lottie Jerram and Danielle Ross all ran well for JAVR.

## Devizes Fun Run: 8th April 2018

A number of JAVR athletes took part in the Devizes half marathon fun run, and there were some strong finishes from the club. The overall boys' race was won by James Pickford, with Leo Harris a very close second and Dan Wood third. Orli Cranston won the girls' race with Lola Harris 3<sup>rd</sup>. There were strong runs from other JAVR athletes too, including Freddie Pickford (2<sup>nd</sup> u11 boy) and Louise Wood (3<sup>rd</sup> U11 girl.)



## London Mini Marathon (British Athletics Road Race Championships)



On the day that many of the AVR adult athletes were sweating it out at the London Marathon, one of the JAVR runners was also competing in the capital. Max Davis had been selected for the South West regional team, following his performance in the South West Cross Country Championships. The race is the official British Athletics 3 mile road championships for athletes aged between 11 and 17 and ran from Old Billingsgate to the Mall. Max completed the race in 15.09 and finished in 32<sup>nd</sup> place.

### Forthcoming Events:

**AVR 5x5x5 race—Steeple Ashton: Thursday 3rd May**

**Trowbridge Fairytale 5K—Trowbridge—Sunday 6th May**

**Avon County Track and Field Champs—Saturday 12th May**

**Wiltshire Track and Field Champs—Tidworth: Sunday 13th May**

**Jack and Jill Fun Run: Sunday May 13th**

**May Mile—Chippenham: Sunday 13th May**

**Westbury 5K: Tuesday 15th May**

**Bristol and West Open –Yate: Wednesday 23rd May**

**JAVR 2K and dash—Southwick: Saturday May 26th**

**Vitality Westminster Mile: Sunday 27th May**

**Chippenham Harriers Fun Run: Sunday 3rd June**

**AVR 5x5x5: Thursday 7th June**

**Lacock Road Race 1K: Sunday 10th June**