



# AVON VALLEY NEWS

Issue 214

October 2019



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## Dates for your diary

- Every first Wednesday – **post training social** in the TRFC bar – next date: 6<sup>th</sup> November
- Every second Tuesday – **post training social** in the TRFC bar – next date: 13<sup>th</sup> November
- **AVR Over the Hills** – 3<sup>rd</sup> November at 10am
- **Bingo Night** – 15<sup>th</sup> November at TRFC from 7pm
- **Christmas Party** – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December from 7pm at TRFC
- **Awards Night** – Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February – Civic Centre Trowbridge
- **JAVR dates...**

November: 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> (TBC) Gwent Cross Country Fixture – Pembrey Country Park.  
 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Training at TRFC not Bath Uni.  
 30<sup>th</sup> JAVR 2K & Dash Southwick Country Park.

December: 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Training at TRFC not Bath Uni.  
 7<sup>th</sup> Gwent Cross Country Fixture – Blaise Castle, Bristol.  
 11<sup>th</sup> Open fun training session – 12 Days of Christmas.  
 18<sup>th</sup> Final Training session of 2019  
 18<sup>th</sup> JAVR Christmas social – meal after training.  
 28<sup>th</sup> JAVR 2K and Dash at Southwick Country Park.



January 2020: 8<sup>th</sup> First session back for the year at Bath Uni  
 26<sup>th</sup> JAVR 2K and Dash at Southwick Country Park.

February: 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> (TBC) Gwent Cross Country Fixture – Chepstow Race Course.  
 19<sup>th</sup> Training at TRFC not Bath Uni.  
 29<sup>th</sup> JAVR 2K and Dash at Southwick Country Park

March: 4<sup>th</sup> Training at TRFC not Bath Uni  
 28<sup>th</sup> JAVR 2K and Dash at Southwick Country Park  
 29<sup>th</sup> Gwent Cross Country Fixture – Singleton Park, Swansea.

## New Club Record!



Congratulations to Rich Harding for breaking the MV40 Marathon club record! The record has been held by Tim Northwood since 1986 – it's taken 33 years but it was beaten by just over 1 minute by Rich at the Abingdon Marathon this month in 2:47:51.

This is Rich's first club record and so will receive the coveted AVR star vest. Something which he has been aiming for...

# Abingdon Marathon, the Perfect Race

– by Richard Harding

If you are new to running you may not have experienced the 'perfect race' yet, but if like me you turn up on race day, lace up and give it 100%, it's a day when everything goes right. No matter what hurdles you have had to overcome or the worries you have had on the build-up, it all just falls into place. It doesn't happen very often but when it does, it is what all us crazy runners live for, why we all train so hard, it makes it all worth it.

Anyone who knows me will tell you that my running is motivated by beating my own times in the pursuit of PBs. I also love a good bit of friendly competition that the running community provides so well, I love that you can scrap it out for an entire race and then be best friends after.

Going back a few years ago at a summer AVR party there was a presentation to members of the club who were holders of club records, they were all being presented race vests with a star embroidered on the chest that signified they were a club record holder. I remember thinking to myself "I want one of those", but listening to the times being reeled off for my V40 age group I quickly came back down to Earth as the times were way beyond what I could achieve so I put that thought to bed. Also at this event I was privileged to meet the late Tim Northwood, a founding member of AVR and the holder of the club record for my age group in both the half marathon and marathon, I only had a short chat with him but it was evident how passionate he was about running.

Fast forward to last weekend and it was the day that I had been training so hard for, I had completed a 14 week block of solid training, it wasn't perfect but I had never been in such good shape. Previous to this my best marathon time was 3.03:50, so my main aim was to get under that 3 hour barrier which I felt confident I could do but I wanted to see how close to the V40 record of 2.48:54 I could get. To beat the record meant running 6.25 minute miles, in my head I honestly thought that would be too fast and what I didn't want to do was blow up pushing too hard and jeopardise the sub 3 hour result.

I lined up with friends Pete and Tom, we were quite a way back from the front of the field which was unusual for me as I like to start near the front but this tactic meant I wouldn't go off with the front runners and get dragged along too fast, I've done that before and then spent the whole race being overtaken and going backwards which is not good for the mind. Once we got going the first mile was a bit off the target pace going through in 6.35, in hindsight I probably started a bit far back but it was fine and I just let the field open up. Mile 2 was very slightly downhill and I clocked a 6.10 so gained any time lost. By the end of mile 3 I had become a bit isolated with a gap of about 30 meters between me and a group of 6 in front so I made the decision to push a bit harder to close the gap as I didn't want to be running on my own, this I believe was one of the best decisions I made as I then ran in this group up to mile 16 before it began to split up. Slowly runners started to drop off the back of the group but we were also picking off runners in front of us as the pace just stayed a consistent 6.25.

Before I knew it I could see the mile 20 marker up ahead. Anyone who has run a marathon before will know this is a crucial point of the race and when things start to get tough. People will say it's when the race starts and that is so true, if you haven't done the training or you have gone too quickly this is when things get real. I consciously did a head to toe body check and everything felt fine, in fact I felt really good so I reminded myself

of all those long runs I'd done and told myself it's just 10k to go. At this point I had no idea how I was doing regarding the record time as I'd missed a few splits along the way and a few of them I did see were a few seconds off but at this stage of the race it didn't really matter as I know first-hand how things can go wrong very quickly so I concentrated on running to feel, if I could keep this pace going and not drop off in the final 6 miles I knew I'd be on for a good time.

As we edged close to mile 24 our group was down to just myself and a runner called Matt from White Horse Harriers, we spoke to each other for the first time with some words of encouragement as we forged on towards the finish. I was still feeling strong and we were reeling in runners who were really struggling. Going into mile 25 I knew there was a very slight incline, not much but enough to hurt and the slight wind we had had the whole race seemed to have picked up and was against us. Bang, all of a sudden Matt pulled a few seconds on me and I felt tired and I could feel the legs slowing down. Mentally when things start to stack up against you it's so easy to stop pushing and just slow down to get to the finish but I couldn't let this happen, I took a deep breath, told myself to relax and gave myself a good talking to. I went through mile 25 in 6.40, I told myself it's just one more mile but one mile at this stage of a marathon feels like 4. Then all of a sudden I felt better, the legs came back and I managed to pull back onto the heels of Matt. As we entered the running stadium the finish was 300m around the track, I finally took time to look at my watch and it said 2.46 something and it suddenly dawned on me I could do it so I just gave it everything I had, I entered the final straight running side by side with Matt who I had run the best part of the last 22 miles with and we both crossed the line together and both with huge PBs. My final time was 2.47:51 beating the V40 club record which had stood for 33 years by 1 min 3 secs and my previous marathon time by 16 minutes. Happy was an understatement, a perfect race!



## Street 5k (11<sup>th</sup> Dec) – By Liz Richardson

The Street 5k series runs from October to March, on the second Wednesday of each month. A few people have expressed interest in a group trip to the December race. So, we have booked the minibus and there are still places available for anyone who wants to run. The event is 'sign up on the night' so no need to be registered for the race ahead of time. Cost of fuel only (TBC based on numbers but expected to be around £2-£3 each)



Timings will be:  
Leave the Civic Centre at 1730  
Arrive in Street about 1840  
Race starts at 1930  
Leave by 2030  
Arrive back at the Civic Centre about 2130.

If you would like a seat on the minibus, please contact Liz Richardson ([liz.richardson@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:liz.richardson@yahoo.co.uk)).

Did you know, AVR has an agreement with Trowbridge Town Council for our members to make use a community minibus? This is the perfect opportunity for group trips to events at a fraction of the cost of the fuel for one or two people to travel by car. Anyone wanting to use the minibus should contact [chairman@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:chairman@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) to check availability.

## Bingo Night – By Vicky Bodman

Come along to another of our popular bingo nights at TRFC! This is a fun event aimed at all the family. Most games will award chocolate prizes and there will be one cash prize for adults only. It's sure to be a fun night!



as many of your there as possible at what is sure to be a fab event.

Funds raised from tickets sales and on the night will be split as 50% to the charity Mind, 25% to JAVR and 25% to AVR. The social committee hope to see



## AVR Committee

As the year draws to a close, attention turns to 2020 and tapping into the knowledge, skills and interest of our members. Have any of you ever wanted to offer more or do more for the club? Could you spend a couple of hours a month helping your club? The committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 8:30-10:00pm at TRFC to discuss club matters. If you think you might be able to offer help and pragmatic insight that can support our club, then please get in touch with any existing committee members to register your interest: <http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/index.php?page=Whos-Who>

## Club Discounts

A few questions have been raised recently about the various discounts that AVR are offered as part of their membership. Firstly, our discount for Places for People leisure Centres no longer exists as they believe they have existing offers that are better than the discount we had. Secondly, our More Mile discount has been withdrawn as the website now offers free delivery. Discount codes are regularly emailed out to club members (the latest of which was dated 10/9/19). Please inform committee members if you find that any other discounts stop working so that we can investigate the problem.

## Fundraising Superheroes

The main committee would like to recognise and celebrate the charity work of our members at the presentation night in February. If you'd like to tell us about a friend (with permission) or yourself, then please drop an email to [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk). Send information about the charity, how much has been raised and some background information for a new part to the event.

Don't forget to book your tickets too and you can hear all about what fundraising our members have been getting up to and celebrate with them: <https://www.entrycentral.com/event/111281>

# AVR goes international

Something seems to be in the water in the club this month – there's been a mass exodus to events abroad!

## Canada by Jay and David Bagshaw



With a romance that started through AVR it was only fitting to add an international run or two into our wedding plans in Canada.

Starting with a Parkrun at Beach Strip in Hamilton the day before a large Thanksgiving meal. Parkruns are not huge in Canada just yet but they are certainly friendly and very inclusive. 24 runners on a windy but scenic out and back course, David taking it steady due to a knee niggle and me unintentionally getting my fastest Parkrun time this year. The

volunteers insisted on taking us for a post run coffee and a giving us a lift home.



Fast forward to the post wedding Toronto half Marathon with over 26,000 entrants and me unwell the night before hand and David still with knee problems so we took to the start line with plenty of medication and plan B. Safe to say no records were broken but we got to see the sights, had a good time and collected a smashing medal.

## Lisbon Half, October 20th by Michele Platten

Three of us were due to run Lisbon half marathon but sadly one AVR member landed on the injury bench a few weeks before the event. Therefore they had to stay in England and recover. So, me and a fellow runner from Westbury Running club set off to the sunnier climate and stayed in an Air B&B and had a two bedroom flat to ourselves. Lisbon has amazing culture and even more amazing cakes - I think I checked out most of the cake shops! We spent 4 nights in Portugal and had an amazing time.

### Race Day

We were up and early as we had to be on Lisbon Bridge which was only accessible by the planned buses and the last bus left at 9 am. I do not know what happens after this time but I presume if you miss the bus, you miss the event. So two metros



and one bus later we were on the bridge by 8.30 am and then had two hours to wait to the starting time and it was freezing on the bridge and only portaloos as our shield from the wind - I counted 60 of them! Sadly, there were no coffee or stalls selling drinks, so dehydration was a factor when we eventually set off at 10.30 am.

Eventually setting off with stiff legs, which was caused from standing for two hours, we were on the home run (ok we had to run 13 odd miles). It was a closed road event with plenty of police marshals and an awesome route but it was not flat - there were hills, a few downhills, but a hill at mile 11 that went on what seemed like forever and then downhill for the last mile.

There were loads of spectators to encourage you on the way, however, as I was turning around a corner, a barrier was pushed over by a spectator so whilst running, I had to jump hurdles! Not the way forward as my injury took the blunt of it. Yes, I did say a naughty word, but the policemen didn't arrest me!

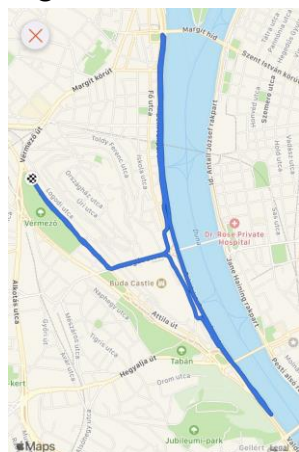
There was a brilliant medal, nice t-shirt and awesome ice cream at the end of the event.

### **NATO 10Km – Budapest, October 20th by Ed Knudsen**

The NATO 10Km is a flat city 10Km in the heart of Budapest, incorporating an inter armed forces competition. This year there were over 1800 runners, including military teams from 18 countries, and it was held on a lovely warm



Autumn day (24 degrees and sunny in late October!). The route starts just down from Budapest Castle before heading through a tunnel towards the Danube, where it stays flat along the river for about 7km. With the only climb being a short stretch into the finish, this makes for a nice flat course and so long as there isn't too much wind on the Danube, it is a very



speedy route too. I had a great time in the military competition, finding the route ideal for smashing my PB, as well as helping the UK team win the NATO team competition. The views as you run along the Danube are lovely, and there are plenty of bars and spas to explore after the race to make the most of your time in Budapest. Although it's a long way to go for 10Km, Budapest is a lovely city and it's a long weekend I'd definitely recommend!

### **The Niagara Falls Marathon - By Michael Guy**

At a point earlier this year, just when I thought that I'd got the whole years races planned, I was asked by a friend if I wanted to go to Canada and run the Niagara Falls Marathon. I was initially a little reluctant as it took place just 3 weeks after my first Ultra-marathon but was then informed that it crossed the USA/Canada border and the finish line was at the brink to Niagara Falls. Well that clinched it for me.



On the morning of the race we got to the pick-up point where we got taken into Buffalo, USA on a school bus and a 40 minute ride on seats



that felt like church pews i.e. not comfortable. It was the start of a fairly unique experience.

The start of the race was at the Buffalo University Sports arena and takes you through the residential streets of Buffalo which were lined with supporters, lots of marshals and more police and border security guards than you ever thought possible. They were all in good spirits and some of the police officers were having a laugh and joke with the runners, it looked intimidating but really wasn't.

We headed through the streets and came towards the Peace Bridge, this is where we changed countries. Annoyingly in the USA the race was all in marked in miles but when we crossed the border we had kilometer markers. There's probably not another race in the world that does that!

For the next 20 miles or so we followed the Niagara river road, with the river on one side and occasional residential properties, wooded areas or wineries on the other. I had decided before the race that I was taking it easy on this run and with the scenery and it being such a gorgeous day I was in no particular rush to get to the finish. I took lots of pictures, chatted to other runners and marshals on the way round and generally had a good time. The icing on the cake for this run though was where the finish was, right at the brink of Niagara Falls where there was a rainbow over it to greet the runners in. One 'sprint' finish and the run was done.



Sometimes having a good time is better than setting a good time in a race, I planned to enjoy it and really did. This was a superb experience for me and one I would recommend to others.

## Volunteer of the month – by David Hyde

Of the many members who have volunteered in October, there is one in particular that really stands out.

Paul Buckingham has been really helpful in sharing club posts, posting on Devizes FFT and getting friends of his own to volunteer for us at the AVR half. Paul also volunteered for the half himself and is volunteering at Over the Hills too. He takes a real interest but also understands the needs.

On another note, the volunteer working group are seeking another member of the group. If you have an interest in helping by encouraging others and supporting the club, please get in touch by emailing [volunteers@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk).

# AVR Leagues

## AVR LEAGUES 2019

### 2019 Road Race league races:

<http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/index.php?page=road-race-series-2019>

### 2019 Off-Road Race league races:

<http://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/index.php?page=off-road-race-series-2019>

All information on the **Wiltshire leagues** can be found here:

<https://wiltshire-athletics.org.uk/road-running/wiltshire-road-race-league/>

<https://wiltshire-athletics.org.uk/cross-country/wiltshire-off-road-league/>

### ROAD LEAGUE:



**Calne Clock Change (race 11)** – 28 members of AVR took part in the final race of the road race league. Overall AVR took 3<sup>rd</sup> FV45 thanks to Carly Hodgson in 43:39, 2<sup>nd</sup> FSEN thanks to Holly Newman in 43:13, 3<sup>rd</sup> MV40 with Alan Button running in 46:03 and 1<sup>st</sup> MV50 with Chris Suter running in 37:51. AVR also took the female team prize thanks to Carly Hodgson, Holly Newman and Jen Marlow.



Photo credit, Warren Wade: Daniel Miles, Holly Newman, Jen Marlow, Vicky Bodman and Stewart Graham running at the Clock Change Challenge

## **FINAL standings in the AVR road league:**

A huge congratulations to the members who have taken part in any of the road races this year. Eight out of the ten listed races counted towards the AVR league and the lowest overall score reigns supreme.

The 2019 winners are....

<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Daniel Miles – 15 points (8 races)	1 <sup>st</sup> Gemma Knudsen – 11 points (8 races)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Chris Suter – 19 points (8 races)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Jen Marlow – 24 points (9 races)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Gary MacAlister – 27 points (8 races)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Holly Newman – 33 points (8 races)

Being the last race of the season, there are also a few Wiltshire road league results to celebrate: Chris Suter was crowned the MV50 Wiltshire champion, Gemma Knudsen is the FSEN Wiltshire champion and Daniel Miles is the MSEN champion. A huge well done to all!

## **OFF-ROAD LEAGUE:**

**Marshfield Mudlark (race 4)** – 12 members took part in this muddy 11km race with Ed Knudsen winning the race outright in a time of 45:35 with Jen Marlow as the first female AVR over the line in 58:37.

Standings after race 4 have made a difference to the men's table: Paul and Simon are tied in first place with Frank Lamerton now in 3<sup>rd</sup> whereas the female standings remain unchanged.



## **Current standings in the AVR off-road league:**

<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Simon Taylor – 26 points (3 races)	1 <sup>st</sup> Gemma Knudsen – 5 points (4 races)
1 <sup>st</sup> Paul Hosking – 26 points (4 races)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Adele Cooper – 16 points (4 races)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Frank Lamerton – 34 points (3 races)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Jen Marlow – 32 points (3 races)

## **FUTURE OFF-ROAD LEAGUE RACES**

Race 5 in the league is the Roundway Revenge on 16<sup>th</sup> November <https://events.Englandathletics.org/event/roundway-revenge/profile> followed by Plain Crazy on 29<sup>th</sup> December <https://www.entrycentral.com/event/109723>.

# Wiltshire Athletics Junior League

The final race in the Wiltshire Junior league was the Chippenham Youth Challenge organized by the Chippenham Harriers Youth (*pictured*). At the time of writing, the final standings in the Wiltshire Junior league had not been updated but currently JAVR are in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> place behind both Chippenham Harriers A and B teams who are in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.



Full details of the league can be found here: <https://wiltshire-athletics.org.uk/juniors/junior-race-league/junior-league-fixtures/>

## Would you like to write for the newsletter?

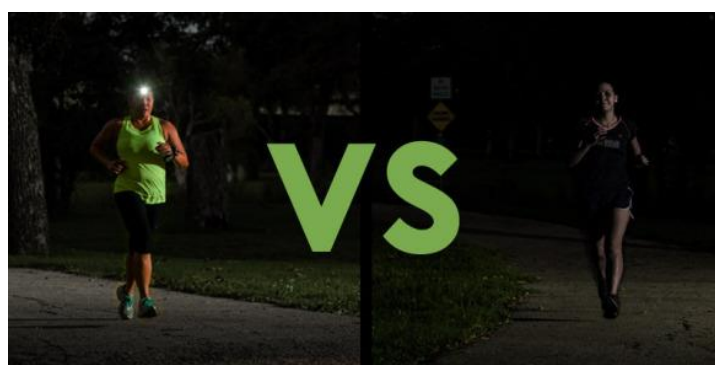
The club is looking for a regular writer for the JAVR section of the newsletter. Each month, we'd like to share the achievements of our younger runners and let them know what races are upcoming. It would be the perfect opportunity for the parents of the club to get involved.



We would also encourage members of JAVR to write race reports too! Your published work can be celebrated and shared at school as well as with the whole club. Email [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) to register your interest or to send articles through.

## Lights please!

Whether you're running out with an AVR group or running elsewhere on your own, please make sure you can be seen now that the clocks have gone back. It's so important to be seen and wearing bright clothing at a minimum.



# MEMBER PROFILE

**Name:** Jackie Rockliffe

**5k PB:** 18:01 Aztec West 2016

**Half marathon PB:** 1:23:21

Salisbury 2018

**Age category:** FV45

**10k PB:** 38:16 Cardiff 2016

**Marathon PB:** 3:04:05 London  
2019



**How long have you been with AVR?** Twenty Seven years

**Favourite race(s):** The Heddington 5k series

**Favourite medal:** This is from the New Forest running festival 20 miler.

**Most proud running moment:** Getting a PB and being the first lady at the Salisbury Half Marathon in 2018 (*pictured below left*). Also, beating my dad for the first time at the 2000 London Marathon – I'm still chasing his PB though. It's 2:56!!!

**Most embarrassing running moment:** I honestly can't think of an embarrassing moment! In 27 years, you'd think there would be at least one!!

**Best piece of running advice:** when it gets really tough, remember why you started running the first place. Also, never underestimate what you can achieve.

**Anything else?:** Running has played a huge part of my life for so long. It has given me friends, the best times and pulled me out of some dark places time and again. I love our AVR!



## Christmas Party – By Vicky Bodman

It may only be October, but the social committee have been hard at work planning for the festive season. This year we thought it would be fun to go on a fun Christmas themed run before the party. Wear your Christmas hat, jumper, suit or tinsel for the run, then join us for a party at the rugby club after. Everyone is welcome.

This is traditionally the event when the club ballot for the London Marathon is announced too. Details about how to qualify for this ballot will be announced nearer the time.



Save the date! The awards night is coming in the New Year. This year's theme is black red and gold!

Tickets are available now on Entry Central at £20 each – get them quick to beat the price rise on 1<sup>st</sup> January to £25.

Price includes a buffet dinner and amazing entertainment. All AVR members and their partners are welcome.

<https://www.entrycentral.com/event/111281>

# PB CORNER

If you want to be recognised on the wall of fame for your Personal Bests (PBs) or Course Personal Bests (CPBs), then make sure you send your results, position, time plus a link to your race results to [results@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:results@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk)

## WALL OF FAME

### 10km

<u>Westbury</u>	Jo Farion	46:12
<u>Calne Clock Change</u>	Jackie Hall	1:00:21
	Martin Bull	50:50

### 10 miles

<u>Great South Run</u>	Chris Perry	1:14:58
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### Half Marathon

<u>Cardiff</u>	Elizabeth Morris	2:19:57
	Chris Perry (CPB)	1:43:16
	Gary Day (CPB)	1:24:31

<u>AVR Wiltshire Half</u>	Martin Bull	1:55:21
	Jo Farion	1:45:10

<u>Oxford Half</u>	Liz Richardson	3:03:58
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### Marathon

<u>Abingdon</u>	Ray Pemberton	3:24:43
	Peter Veleski (CPB)	3:15:29
	Richard Harding	2:47:51 *NEW MV40 CLUB RECORD*

### Southwick parkrun

James Brett (CPB)	20:17
Ben Mees (CPB)	17:59

### Melksham parkrun

Annette Holley (CPB)	34:13	Simon Woodhead (CPB)	24:27
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### Other parkruns

#### The Old Showfield

Simon Evans (CPB)	21:52	Jim Chalmers (CPB)	35:22
Katy Nickless (CPB)	37:32	Simon Evans (CPB)	21:25
Kenneth Piper (CPB)	20:58	Linda Unsworth (CPB)	27:24

<u>Salisbury</u>	Ed Knudsen (CPB)	18:25
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<u>Graves</u>	Helen Maria (CPB)	29:00
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<u>Princes</u>	Linda Unsworth (CPB)	27:45
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<u>Tetbury Goodshed</u>	Elizabeth Morris (CPB)	36:17
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<u>Minehead</u>	Christopher Middup (CPB)	24:15
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# AVON VALLEY TRIATHLETES

By AVT secretary, Lil Morris

You know you are truly a walking cliché when you find yourself saying things like “isn't it dark outside now” as soon as the clocks changed! Please stay safe, and seen, when you are out training and make sure you are making the most of high-vis clothing when out and about.



### AVT Big Bobble hats

I still have a limited number available at £18 per hat. Please contact me at [avt@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:avt@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) if you are interested and I will add you to the Facebook Messenger group where you will find details on how to make payment and collection.

### Multisport training/workshops

I want to gather members' feedback/ideas on multisport training sessions and/or workshops for the New Year. There is a discussion thread on the AVT Members Facebook group and we have already received some fantastic feedback with ideas such as:

- Beginners cycling/social bike ride
- Brick sessions including transition skills
- Swim training
- Bike maintenance

Please keep the ideas coming.

### Tim Lowrie – European Qualifier!!!

It is now no secret now (as Strava tells the full tale!) that Tim Lowries have earned a place on the roll down list for the Europeans.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> October Tim took part in the Bedford Autodrome standard Duathlon (10k run, 39k bike, 5k run), which was a European Qualifier for GB Age group. The weather was dreadful and the competition fierce however Tim finished with a time of 2hrs and 10 minutes being 54<sup>th</sup> out of 126 entrants and 8<sup>th</sup> in his age group. Congratulations Tim!



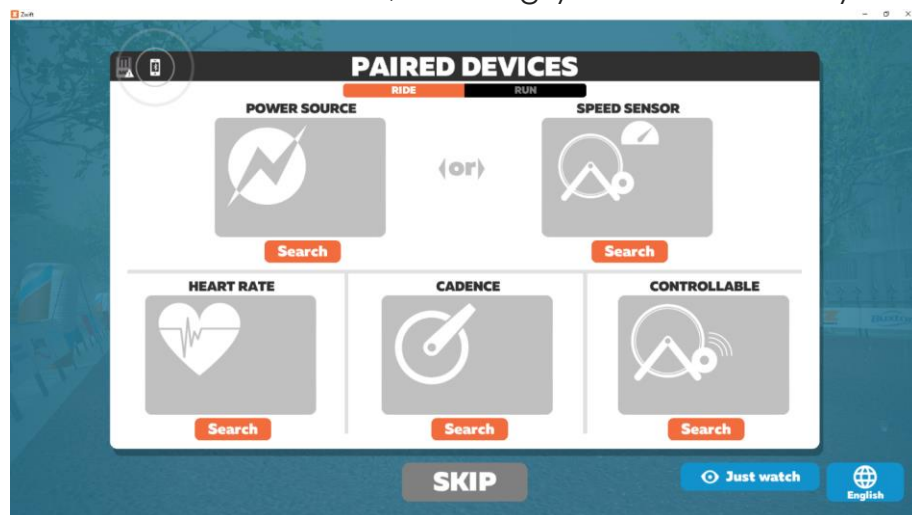
## Welcome to Watopia – Darren Wrintmore, Vice-President

I look out of my window and the skies are grey, the trees are swaying a little bit too much for my liking and now it has started to rain. British Summer Time has ended. Farewell to early morning rides up into the Cotswolds and early evening rides at Castle Combe. Time to wrap up warm and charge the lights before heading out on the damp roads with the cars getting impatiently closer. Sod that, I am heading off with my bike to Majorca or may be to the South of France but can I really put up with the hassle of boxing up my pride &

joy only to be thrown around an airport by couldn't careless baggage handlers and now with Brexit on the horizon my purple passport does not seem to be as welcome at border control as it used to be. I am going to head to Wotopia instead!

For those that do not know, Wotopia is one of the destinations offered within the virtual world of Zwift and in reality, is based on the South Pacific islands of Te Anu and Naunonga. Zwift was launched in 2014 as massively multi-player online cycling and running videogame, offering structured training programmes, races, group rides and the opportunity to explore new routes and places in the comfort of your own home. As well as Wotopia, Zwift offers Innsbruck, Richmond, New York, London and Harrogate as destinations.

So how to get to Wotopia: well you will need the Zwift application for starters and this is available as a free download for Windows and macOS platforms, you also need a Zwift account and this is free, allowing you to have 7-days of uninterrupted access until you



need to cough up £13.99 per month for a subscription. Then if you plan to cycle, you need to connect your bike to the Zwift application. By far the easiest way to do this is through an all-in-one smart-trainer like a Wahoo Kickr or Tacx Neo however the cost of these is not far off of being the same as for an entry level carbon framed road bike! My approach was to purchase an ANT+ compatible

cadence sensor (~£30) to attach to the crank arm of one of my existing road bikes, a speed detector (~£30) to attach to the rear wheel hub and finally an ANT+ receiver dongle (~£20) to plug into my laptop – then you can just use a standard turbo-trainer. For runners, as well as the ANT+ receiver dongle you will require a run pod (~£30) to attach to your shoe before you can hop on the treadmill and start putting in the miles. You then need to synchronise your devices with Zwift which is actually a pretty painless process and you are ready to immerse yourself in some virtual training.

When you get to Wotopia you have a number of routes on offer to you, ranging in distance from the 2.6-miles provided by the **Volcano Circuit**, which as the name suggests is around (and through) an active volcano, up to the 79.7-miles of the **Uber Pretzel** route which starts in Wotopia's Downtown area and takes you through the **Fuego Flats** desert, some **Mayan Jungle Ruins** before finishing at the summit of **Alpe du Zwift** which has been modelled on the Alp d'Huez of Tour de France fame with its 21 hairpin bends. Though my favourite route is the 33-miles of **Dust in the Wind** which provides me with around 90-minutes of escapism and the chance to spot the dinosaurs in **Titans Grove**, the sloth in the **Mayan Jungle Ruins** and race the train across the **Fuego Flats**.



If that was not enough for you then there are the 'game play' elements which as well as riding to overhaul other virtual cyclists from around the globe, you can attempt to take King of the Mountains sections which unlike those in Strava are reset every hour and your avatar could find itself riding in a polka dot jersey or in a sprinters green jersey or even both.



There are also achievements within the game to unlock which range from distance awards of completing 10 to 100-miles for cyclists or 1 to 26.2-miles for runners in a single session; speed awards for cyclists who break 30 to 50-mph or for runners who crack out a mile in under 9-mins to sub-5mins.



Then there are what I would call the obsessional awards: Climb the Alpe du Zwift 25 times, Ride 25 laps of the Volcano Circuit in a single activity; Everest by climbing 29,029 feet, Do a session on Zwift every day for 14-days or be really sociable and give (or receive) a number of "Ride-On's" which are similar to Likes on Facebook, only earned.

To help you with achieving these, there are in-game power-ups such as "Draft boost" which doubles the draft effect you are experiencing for 30 seconds; "Aero boost" which makes you more aerodynamic for 15 seconds or "Featherweight" which reduces your weight by 9kg for 15 seconds.

You can also earn XP (experience points) for every mile that you cover and these unlock new Zwift courses and along with Drops (of sweat) can be cashed in at the Zwift shop for upgrades to your virtual experience, I am currently saving up for a Pinarella Dogma F10.

So "how do you play Zwift" ?, There are many ways to do this, you could opt for a structured training session, there are several of these pre-built workouts on Zwift, at the last count there were over 1,800 of these which range from Fat-burner to FTP sessions and can even be combined to make a full training plan aimed at the specific needs of a Time Triallist, completion of Century ride or even getting a cyclist to run 10K! Just select the workout required from the Zwift home screen once you have synchronised your turbo-trainer/treadmill. When cycling around Watopia or any of the Zwift worlds you can see who is following session plan as they look like they are reading a book whilst riding.

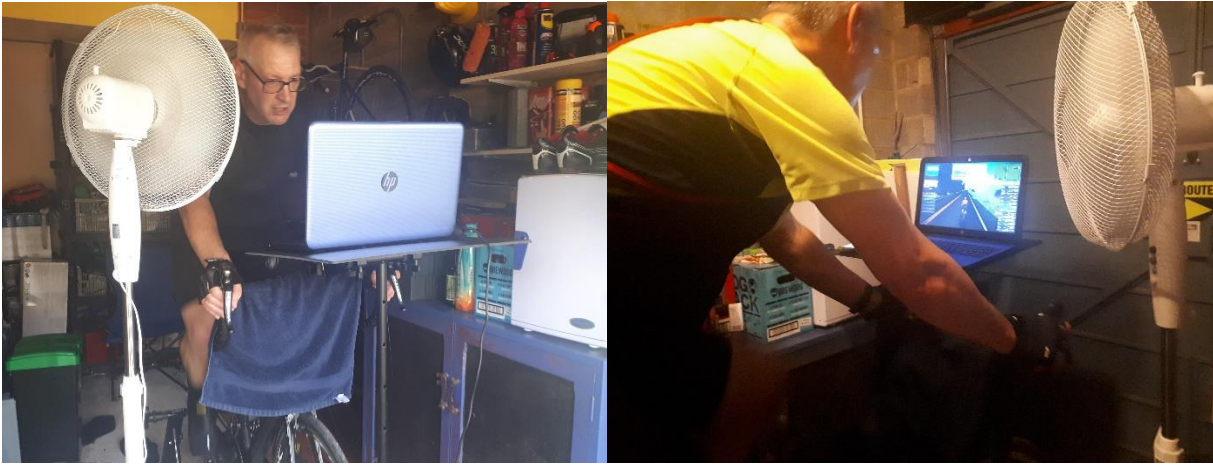
Another option is to join a group ride and can be fun to ride with others from around the world exchanging "Ride-On's" and if you have also paired up your smartphone to Zwift using the **Companion** app you can message each other either through gesticulating or by sending an in-game text.

If you are less social and more competitive, then you can race. These are advertised on the Zwift site and results posted on the **Zwiftpower** website, think Power of Ten for Turbo-trainers. Though these are starting to attract the attention of some of the Pro-cycling teams and some races are even giving Pro-contracts as prizes!!!

Or just ride.

One final note is on how does riding on Zwift compare with the real-world, apart from the obvious: there are no cars on the road and I haven't had a puncture (yet) it is pretty good up to a point. Your cadence, which is measured in Revolutions per Minute is spot on accurate, though without the effects of gravity or wind I am getting an extra 10rpm on average when on the turbo. The speed detected is also spot on, I have checked this against an app that I use to calculate the gearing on my bike and is accurate whilst the elevation in Zwift is between +1% / -1%. However when the gradient increases beyond this and despite my telling Zwift my weight it does seem to be rather over-generous in calculating my power to weight ratio, an example being that during this year's **London-**

**100 Sportive** I climbed the infamous Leith Hill (1.2 miles and 440ft elevation) in shade over 9-minutes which equated to an output of 268w at a speed of 8.4mph, however in Zwift over their virtual Leith Hill I managed to complete the climb in under 7-minutes at 11mph with a power output of over 400watts. So just don't get too carried away with the results that you see, though it still doesn't stop me from looking for that "Featherweight" power-up when I start an ascent up Westbury White Horse ☺



## Ride-On

### Dart 10k Swim - by Steve Clark

I've done some crazy challenges over the last four years since starting getting back into sport, but the Dart 10k swim is up there as the craziest. When I entered in January I thought it would be another. Challenge, a 10k (6 mile) swim in a river seemed perfectly feasible. But in the days leading up to the weekend in September, and approaching the starting gate by the bank, I was full of trepidation. 750 people swam on there Saturday (day before my turn) faced down the River Dart, in places a mile wide with the chop and salt of the not too distant sea it feeds.

My plan was to take my time and try and enjoy the experience, focusing on technique, a smooth stroke and keeping out of the way of the other 740+ swimmers. I was in the "medium" speed group. Starting behind the leisure swimmers and ahead of the fast and elite groups. Entering the water I was surprised as to how comfortable the temperature was. I was wearing my neoprene socks, as I was warned about getting out at the other end is tricky and broken shells, rocks and things can cut your feet. The start was relaxed and swimmers made to get to the right hand bank. The first two km's are virtually straight, passing a dead tree where cormorants like to perch - and yes, there were several perched in trees overhanging the river.

Getting into my stroke I found the tide helping and felt the trees and bushes on the banks moving past fairly quickly. Rounding the bend after about 3.5k I saw the big White House on the bank in the distance which meant the 4k feed station was approaching. Reaching this in around 50 minutes confirmed that the tide was definitely helping. Grabbing a few jelly babies and taking a quick drink, I felt strong as I pushed off. I was passing lots of yellow hatted swimmers from the leisure wave, and a few in the red wave (mine). The river widened as we approached Bow Creek and got a bit choppier. It was here I felt a "nudge" on my foot. Thinking it was another swimmer I looked round, but

nothing...we were told that the day before swimmers spotted a seal in this area. Was it giving me a helping nudge???

Swimming between rows of moored yachts the second feed station came up quickly with the tide pushing us along. I just managed to grab the rope at the side, where others missed and the tide was too strong to swim back. I grabbed another handful of jelly babies and set off for the last two km. I did not think the last bend would ever end, but after what seemed an age I saw the huge 10K sign on its pontoon in the river. Pushing on I started to see the crowds in the distance on the bank, my arms now burning, but still thinking "focus on your stroke". I swam as far as I could, then scrambled along towards the bank and finally stood up. I was glad I wore my neoprene socks. Running ups the bank, crossing the timing mat at 2hrs 18m an enormous feeling of achievement came over me. This was the longest swim by about 5k I had ever done, and one that I will definitely want to do again. It also made a change that I did not have to get on a bike, then do a run. That was the best part! I was pleased to finish 149/713 overall and 6th in age group.

### Upcoming events

- DB Max Chilly Duathlon (24<sup>th</sup> November)

When entering events, it really does help if you enter any multisport events as **Avon Valley Triathletes**; this makes it easier to check results whenever needed. Please remember that if you are a paid up AVR member, then you are already automatically a member of AVT.

