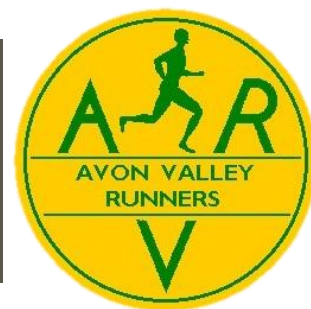


THE VALLEY NEWS



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Dates for your diary

- **Committee meeting** – Tuesday 5th October at 20:30pm at TRFC. If you have any points for discussion or would like to attend, please email secretary@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.
- **Halloween Party** – 29th October 19:00 upstairs at TRFC <https://www.facebook.com/events/369003171460682/?ref=newsfeed>
- **AVR Over the Hills** – 7th November – volunteers needed (see page 3)
- **AVR Wiltshire Half Marathon** – 28th November – volunteers needed (see page 3)
- **AVR AGM** – Tuesday 11th January 20:00 at TRFC
- **Presentation Evening** – Saturday 5th February 19:30 at the Civic Centre, Trowbridge <https://www.facebook.com/events/372848747881042/?ref=newsfeed>

London Marathon 2021

Good luck to our AVR mob at the London Marathon on Sunday 3rd October including Diane Hier who is running her 17th event!



L-R Robin-Mark Schols, Andrew Jefferies, Rich Harding, Diane Hier, Jackie Rockcliffe, Phil Harding, Josh Lay and Ade Kadiri.

Attending running sessions RunTogether

A reminder that, since restrictions changed on the 19th July, the way that you book onto runs has changed too. Links will be provided on Facebook and via email with all of the upcoming run sessions. You will need to choose one you will attend which will require you to register on www.runtogether.co.uk. Groups will be sorted once you arrive at the club. The speed sessions will be restricted to 12 participants per coach (so 24 per session) as per the guidance from England Athletics but all other sessions do not have restrictions on the numbers of runners who can attend. The current [link](#) is valid until the 10th October.

It is important that all club members sign up to a session as this allows us to keep track of who is attending for covid, to know how many runners to expect, it gives runners some accountability and it also gives us a good idea if there are any new members to welcome to the club. **Please do not turn up without signing up as it puts our volunteer leaders in an awkward position.**

AVR Race Kit – Col's Top Shop

If you have a race coming up, you may want one of our race tops? We offer 3 race tops for our runners. Race T-Shirts or Vests which come in both Ladies or Men's fits (sizes range from XS – 3XL). Plus we are also currently holding a small stock of Ladies Small (size 10) and Medium (12) Midi Crop tops. <https://www.avonvalleyrunners.org.uk/club-race-kit>

Size	Ladies	Men's
XS	8	36
S	10	38
M	12	40
L	14	42
XL	16	44
2XL	18	46
3XL	20	48

To purchase, please contact our Kit Manager Colin Sawyer to check if we hold a top in your size by email to kit@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk telling him your size and type of top required.

T-Shirts are £21 whilst our Vests and Ladies Midi Crop tops are both £20.

Volunteers Needed

Two of our main events are coming up on November: Over the Hills and The AVR Wiltshire Half Marathon. These events provide a vital source of income for the club and cannot happen without the organisation of the volunteer working groups and from members of AVR itself.



You do not need any qualifications, just a smile and willingness to help others along to complete a successful race.

Over the Hills November 7th 2021 – 2 volunteer points

Do you want a fantastic morning in the BOA countryside?
Do you want to see people getting muddy and then soaked crossing the river?
Then OTH volunteering is for you!
Please email us today volunteers@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk

AVR Wiltshire Half Marathon November 28th 2021 - 3 volunteer points

We need as many as 100 volunteers to make this event viable so why friends and family are very welcome to come along too!

This is your opportunity to represent your club and to encourage all of the runners at this fantastic event.

Please email us today
volunteers@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk



Helping at either event will earn you points towards your AVR volunteering total and get you closer to owning one of the coveted volunteer t-shirts! (pictured right)

New committee members

In the new year, the committee is looking to fill some vacant roles. We are looking for members who would like to have an input on how the club is run and to make important decisions to benefit other members.

The current roles available are:

- Honorary Secretary
- Minutes Secretary
 - Vice Chair
- Membership Secretary
- Volunteer Co-Ordinator
- Assistant Off-Road Secretary
- 2x non-specific committee roles

You can see who currently undertakes these roles by taking a look at the [club contacts page on the website](#). If you think you may be able to take on one of these roles, please make contact with the current role holder, Secretary or Chairman.

Junior AVR

This month, Dylan Neale took part in the Hullavington 10k:

Race report: The morning of the race I was up at 8 for breakfast and feeling very nervous. This would be my first 10k race as I only reached the required age of 15 two days before! During the drive over, my stomach was in knots. I have never felt this anxious before a race but this one was a big deal for me as my first ever 10k race.



We arrived at the village and parked up, walking to the registration desk and waited for Rich, my coach, to arrive. The nerves were really building by this point and my stomach was doing flips. As soon as Rich arrived we went off to warm up and I soon calmed down and felt so much better.



Having never raced a 10K before I had set myself a target of 41-41:30.

By the time I got to the start line I was feeling good and ready to go! For the first mile I was chatting to Rich and felt really comfortable. I could see the front runner ahead and told Rich I wanted to finish top 10. At this point I was about 8th as we tried to count the runners ahead. Around mile 2 there was a big hill and Rich just told me to think of it as a 30 second effort and remember there's a downhill the other side.

The course was all on country lanes with very little support other than when we went past a marshal. I think without Rich beside me I may have struggled to keep focus on a lonely course.

At the 5K point I checked my watch and it said something like 19:42 and I realised I was on track for a decent 10K. There was a water station just after this. I've never tried to drink and run before so this was a whole new experience and loads went up my nose. Needs practice! Shortly after this it began to get really tough and my breathing went to pot a bit and I was no longer able to talk to Rich. I started to panic a bit as I was worried I wouldn't be able to hold the pace. But I just kept going and giving everything I had.

It was around this point I lost sight of the front runner.

From around 6K I could see the runner ahead of me and he was only about 100 meters in front. I could see the gap was closing and this gave me a confidence boost and I managed to just say 'gaining' to Rich. He told me to stay focused and we would catch him. When we got to around 5 seconds off the other runner he realised I was behind him and he pushed the pace. We went with him and didn't let the gap grow. We passed him around the 8K mark and he remarked to me that it looked like I was running effortlessly which made me smile and gave me a huge confidence



boost. But believe me, it was not effortless!

As soon as I passed him I could see another runner ahead so went on the hunt again. At 9k there was a big old hill and my legs felt heavy. I thought of it as a 45 second effort and pushed up the hill. Just away from the top of the hill there was a down that made me have to focus on staying upright with legs fast turning to jelly. At the bottom, I checked my watch to see we had about 800m to go. Both my calves went solid, my quads were tight and my right glute was really tight and pulling. I felt a bit of panic and said to Rich 'my legs have gone'. The guy ahead was now about 50 meters away and I knew I just had to dig deep if I was going to catch him. I gave that last effort everything I could find and caught him with about 600m to go. I was really feeling it by now but we were in the village and there were supporters shouting and cheering which gave me such a boost. I pushed on as hard as I could and as we ran round the final bend I could see the finish line and hear my family cheering which was amazing.

I crossed the line in 39:27 and 6th place overall.

I had nothing left, I couldn't have given any more but I am delighted with this result. I am also hugely grateful to Rich for his coaching and constant support. And for running this race beside me!

AVR 2021 league

Rules for the combined Road and Off Road Race Series 2021

There will be 10 races from which to choose, 5 road and 5 off road, but your six (6) best races will count for the championship and a maximum of 8 (to count) can be either road or off road. The first AVR runner will get 1 point, the 2nd will get 2 points and so on until all runners are accounted for. Non-runners will get five points more than the number of points of the last runner of the highest attended race. The winner will be the runner with the least points. Only the best 6 races for each runner will count, so you don't have to run every race, however if there is a tie for the winners then the 7th and 8th etc. races will be taken into consideration until a winner is established. Awards will be made to the top three highest scoring men and women.

Races selected as qualifying races for 2021:

1. ~~Sunday, 23rd May, [Dilton Dash 10k](#)~~
2. ~~Saturday, 29th May, [Bratton Hilly 10k](#)~~
3. ~~Thursday, 24th June, [Great Chalfield 10k](#)~~
4. ~~Saturday, 10th July, [Brean Beach 10k](#)~~
5. ~~Tuesday, 13th July, [Westbury 5k](#)~~
6. ~~Sunday, 18th July, [Frome Half Marathon](#)~~
7. ~~Wednesday, 28th July, [Odd Down Track 5k](#)~~
8. ~~Wednesday, 11th August, [Hilly Helmet](#) – the live event~~
9. ~~Sunday, 15th August, [Bath Two Tunnels 10k](#)~~
10. ~~Sunday, 26th September, [Corsham 10k](#)~~

There was just one race left in the league to run in September and that was the ever-popular **Corsham 10k**. A huge 43 members took part and finished this event in the last race of the AVR and Wiltshire Leagues! The first AVR over the line was Chris Suter in a time of 38:35 in 13th position overall with the first AVR female being Diane Hier in 44:23.



Corsham 10k Race Report: Ben Phillips

Prior to the race I was a bit apprehensive due to numerous setbacks throughout the year. However, I had one thing in mind: to beat my Chalfield Manor 10k time (around 51:30). When running the first few kilometers during the race I felt comfortable but looking back, I should have eased down on the pace. I got to halfway and felt like walking due to the incline but luckily I maintained momentum and kept on going. The spectators along the way definitely provided me with the drive to keep on going; I kept examining my watch to ensure I was on track to running a sub-50 10k. In the last few kilometres was when my energy and focus started to return and when I came to the dip, the voices of encouragement gave me the chills and definitely helped me get up the massive hill! I finally made it onto Lacock Road where I maintained a fast pace and calculated the precise moment when I would accelerate.



From about the 200m mark I started to increase my pace greatly and before I knew it, I was properly sprinting. The cheers at the finish were mesmerising and crossed the finish line in a time of 47:21! I'm very happy with this because I beat my previous 10k time by over 4 minutes. When I was wandering around congratulating others and not paying attention to the tannoy, someone said to me that they heard them announce my name. I was unsure if this was true so I waited around and told a few members from my club who checked the age category results and it turned out I'd come first in my age category! I was immensely happy with this and I'd won an unexpected trophy. This reinforced one thing: hard work and perseverance pays off. I hope to now aim and train hard for a sub-20 minute 5k - I hope to achieve a 5k PB at the Calne Clock Change Challenge 5k on the 31st October.

Final AVR League standings – congratulations to the winners!

Male	Female
1st Tim Burrell – 24 points	1st Diane Hier – 10 points
2nd Stuart Arguile – 45 points	2nd Jo Farion – 14 points
3rd Peter Campbell – 54 points	3rd Paula Farrell – 31 points



The full set of results available online [here](#). If you think you are missing from the results or there is a mistake, please email offroad@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.

The Wiltshire Road Race League



As well as our own AVR league, the Wiltshire Athletic Association's road race league has been taking place since June. Seven races were selected with runners' five best results being taken for the league tables.

The Corsham 10k was the last race in the league and Avon Valley Runners have topped the table again and retain our road racing title! Well done and congratulations to all who took part.

Division A		Division B	
Club	Points	Club	Points
Avon Valley Runners - A	99	Team Bath AC - A	97
Calne Running Club - A	96	Swindon Harriers - A	93
Chippenham Harriers - A	89	City Of Salisbury A&RC - A	82
Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds RC - A	86	Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds RC - B	65
Avon Valley Runners - B	82	Swindon Striders - A	64
Calne Running Club - B	79	Chippenham Harriers - B	63
Calne SmartTT - A	77	Marlborough Running Club - A	62
Corsham Running Club - A	77	Frome Running Club - A	51
Devizes Running Club - A	72	Corsham Running Club - B	39
Slinn Allstars - A	24	Team Bath AC - B	33
Devizes Running Club - B	11	Calne SmartTT - B	27
Shrewton Running Club - A	0	Highworth Running Club - A	18
		St Mary's Running and Triathlon Club - A	13

Congratulations to Jo Farion who finished as the second female in the league too!

Female				Male			
Name	Club	Age Category	League Points	Name	Club	Age Category	League Points
Charlotte Preece	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FS	489	Daniel Giles	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MS	488
Jolene Farion	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV40	479	Philip Daniels	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MS	487
Julie Bean	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	FV40	433	Matthew Waite	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MV40	474
Emily Dye	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FS	428	Alwyn Royall	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	MV50	459
Sally Frawley	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV40	412	Darren Smith	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MV40	411
Joanna Charters	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	FV40	348	Adam Powell	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	MJ	401
Pauline Bradley	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV60	328	Stephen Heavens	ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT HOUNDS RC	MV70+	399
Celia Stevens	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FV60	307	Midge Bradley	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	MV50	385
Hayley Southgate	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV50	306	Jeremy Friend	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MV50	383
Lisa Penny	CALNE SMARTT	FS	303	Peter Callanan	CITY OF SALISBURY A&RC	MVet 50	364
Lois Mcpherson	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FV50	295	Martin James	SWINDON HARRIERS	MV60	356
Diane Hier	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV50	289	Courtenay Chessell	SWINDON HARRIERS	MV40	299
Michelle Coveney	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FV40	284	Craig Richardson	DEVIZES RUNNING CLUB	MV40	293
Debbie Ellis	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV50	267	Michael Gilbert	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MV40	285
Katy Griffin	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FS	263	Robbie Newton	DEVIZES RUNNING CLUB	MS	280
Paula Farrell	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV40	262	Timothy Eddy	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MV50	270
Clare Powell	CALNE SMARTT	FV40	247	Martin Hall	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MVet 50	270
Edith Edney	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FV60	233	Stuart Sweetlove	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	MV50	270
Amelia Fairbanks	ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT HOUNDS RC	FS	230	Richard Morgetroyd	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	MV50	259
Erika Masna	CALNE SMARTT	FV40	226	Colin Woodward	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	MV40	258
Rosemary Barber	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	FV60	204	Tim Burrell	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	MV50	246
Emma Haley	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	FS	197	Andrew Jefferies	AVON VALLEY RUNNERS	MV60	236
Slobhan Culver	CALNE RUNNING CLUB	FS	196	Richard Curtis	ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT HOUNDS RC	MV50	224
Joanna Thompson	TEAM BATH AC	FV60	194	Andy Maidment	DEVIZES RUNNING CLUB	MVet 40	211
Lisa Bennett	TEAM BATH AC	FV50	192	Mark Powell	CHIPPENHAM HARRIERS	MVet 50	209

More information about the league, including how scoring works and the different divisions, can be found [here](#).

Going Long – By Ken Pyper

In 2017, after previously running a few marathons and feeling that at nearly 50 my PB days were past, I decided it was time for a new challenge and entered Endure 24 Reading as part of a pair. After alternating 5 mile loops for about 14 hours my mate Carl picked up an injury and I found myself on my own with 45 miles under my belt amid a raging storm. I sheltered for a few hours then hit the trails and managed 25 more miles with back-to-back loops giving us a total of 105 miles. It felt so relaxed compared to marathon running that I was determined to try the following year solo. A year later I found myself on the start line with the aim of reaching 100 miles with a fellow AVR 'large team' runner next to me commenting "ah you're the idiot going solo". With no more than normal marathon training behind me I managed almost one 5 mile loop per hour for the first 12 hours and at midnight started to fade as expected. I finished my 20th lap making the 100 with about half an hour to spare. Cue hugs, medal, photos and severe nausea. Never again I said for several weeks – until both big-toe nails had fallen off and started to grown back and I was determined I could do better. The 2019 race arrived and I had a plan – don't even stop to eat and drink. I even had a plan to make the top 5 - not something I'd ever considered before at any race – but looking at past results I saw of those runners who reach



100 in whatever time tend to stop there. My run walk strategy worked and a combination of factors contributed to me sneaking on to the podium. Cue hugs, photos, medal, tears and more nausea. Also I'm pretty sure that year I was the only runner who stopped to open a bottle of prosecco half way through the race – well it was Saturday night and my wife was crewing for me, it was the least I could do. I knew I probably wouldn't top that Endure performance but later in the year spotted a report on the Gloucester Invitational 24hr track race – yes it does sound tempting doesn't it? I emailed the organisers with my running cv and was duly invited to the summer 2020 event, which was inevitably cancelled due to covid then at very short notice reinstated for Halloween weekend. I had an ambitious plan to run 500 laps or 200km but was beaten down by a horrible storm and severely swollen ankles. I stopped at 450 laps, 111.85 miles and was pleased with 5th place. This year I tried again and had my best ever start to the year's training but injury meant it was touch and go whether I should even start the race. I did, but limped around to just about reach 100 miles, 403 laps and abandoned the race with about 2 ½ hrs to spare. This time the injury and the heat – including the medics almost pulling me from the race with suspected hyponatraemia - had me beaten. My 24 hour running career is now over but I'd definitely recommend you try it. If you can run a marathon, you can run walk for 6/12/24 hours, just slowly. Want to find out about yourself? – well midnight, in the rain with 12 hours running behind you and 12 ahead is the place. You'll be happy, tired, tearful, ecstatic, desperate but be supported by club mates, strangers, fellow runners, marshals, other people's crews & medics. Just make sure you have a good support crew – someone to drive the car, feed and water you, help you in and out of clothing, cajole you, tell you how many laps you've done, tell you to slow down, apply lube, and catch you when you pass out at the end – thanks Steve Jeffries for all of the above.




Avon Valley Segment of the Month – by Darren Wrintmore

The results are in for our final SotM of the year:

Sign to the Top

This 0.7-mile segment took riders to the top of Westbury White Horse from Bratton at a 10% gradient for a **category 4 climb** tempted just three Avon Valley Triathletes with Darren Wrintmore and Isabel Robinson-Gordon proving to be the mountain goats this month:

Rank	Name	Date	Speed	HR	Power	VAM	Time
	Darren Wrintmore	Sep 21, 2021	6.6mi/h	-	-	1,020.3	6:26
2	Isobelle (Tizzie) Robinson-Gordon	Sep 24, 2021	6.3mi/h	182bpm	-	982.1	6:41
3	Vanessa Lucas	Sep 2, 2021	6.1mi/h	-	179W	946.7	6:56

Caught by the Fuzz

This 0.87-mile blast through Semington from the roundabout on the A361 to just before Melksham Police station proved to be a bit more popular with seven club members flirting with the law, with Darren Wrintmore and Sara Robert leading the way:

Rank	Name	Date	Speed	HR	Power	Time
	Darren Wrintmore	Sep 21, 2021	24.4mi/h	-	-	2:09
2	Sara Robert	Sep 19, 2021	22.0mi/h	127bpm	170W	2:23
3	Anne Clark	Sep 19, 2021	21.9mi/h	139bpm	205W 🏹	2:24
4	Emma Gage	Sep 25, 2021	20.6mi/h	133bpm	136W 🏹	2:33
5	Stephen Clark	Sep 19, 2021	18.6mi/h	107bpm	136W 🏹	2:49
6	Esther Frawley	Sep 11, 2021	17.5mi/h	129bpm	126W	3:00
7	Vanessa Lucas	Sep 2, 2021	17.0mi/h	-	93W	3:05

These may have been the final Segments for 2021 but you can still attempt to climb up the leaderboard on these and any of the other Segments that we have used as our SotM and I shall summarise the final results in a later edition of the Valley News:

April	<u>Bulkington and Keevil</u>	<u>Pub to Petrol station</u>
May	<u>South Wraxall to Monkton Farleigh turn</u>	<u>Sleight Wood Straight</u>
June	<u>Brokerswood to Bradley Rd</u>	<u>Gatehouse to Gatehouse</u>
July / Aug	<u>Steeple Ashton Southbound</u>	<u>Clivey to Marsh Rd Jct</u>
Sept	<u>Sign to the Top</u>	<u>Caught by the Fuzz</u>

AVON VALLEY TRIATHLETES

By AVT secretary Kat Taylor-Laird

Swimming Hats



AVT swim hats are on order for our social open water swims and events as a way of both promoting AVT and identifying AVT members.

These are available at a cost of £5 each. Email avt@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk to order yours and arrange collection.

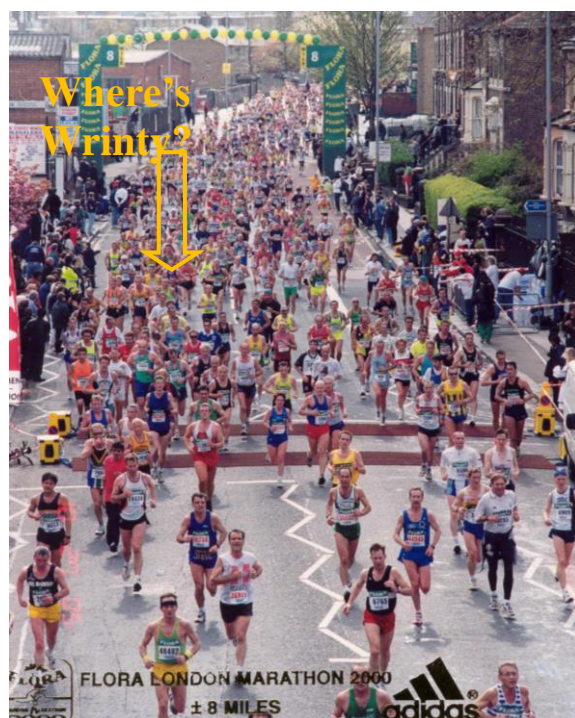


A Classic Tri – By Darren Wintmore, club VP

Back in 2000 I had just moved back to Wiltshire and had re-joined Avon Valley Runners after an absence of over ten-years. I was also about to run the **Flora London Marathon** in the light blue colours of my London club – Cambridge Harriers (*those of you that have entered the London Marathon will know that you have to apply the best part of a year in advance and at the time that I sent in my application I had no idea that I would be moving back to the West Country*).

It was through Cambridge Harriers the previous year that I had gotten my first experience of the London Marathon as they were one of the clubs providing the volunteers to manage the starting area on Blackheath. I was responsible for green start helping runners find the appropriate position for their estimated finish time and I received a specially minted London Marathon Officials medal in return for my services plus a desire to get on the start line the following year.

I made my Marathon debut later that same year, at Dublin where I just missed the three hour barrier so that became my target for London. Unfortunately, things didn't quite go to plan with a succession of injuries disrupting my training, causing me to hit the infamous "wall" still with ten miles left to run on race day but I had a lot of sponsorship money riding on me (*my father was recovering from a kidney transplant and so I had opted to raise funds for Bristol Area Kidney Patients Association, who had been providing excellent support for him*).



So, I struggled on at jog for those final miles determined not to stop as I would never have got going again and crossed the finishing line in three hours thirteen minutes which was a respectable time and also knocked the London Marathon off of my bucket list.



Fast forward twelve years and I found myself marshalling the cycle road races at the London 2012 Olympics, this inspired me to get out on my bike and so when the inaugural **RideLondon 100** was announced for the following year I knew that I had to be on the starting line.

My training went well, it seemed like my body actually agreed with cycling and with no real time aspirations just set out to enjoy the ride. The weather was kind too and I finished in five hours, twenty three minutes and straight away set my sights on doing the event again (and again). In fact, I went back to complete RideLondon 100 six times, lowering my times down to below the five hour barrier and converting me from a runner into a cyclist.

Now I have never particularly enjoyed swimming and this is probably because I am not particularly good at it either. I did however try a few triathlons back in the 1990's, I recall my first: "the Bananathon Triathlon" at Theale in Berkshire that when I viewed my splits found that I had been the third fastest runner, the fourth fastest cyclist but the fifty-second fastest swimmer. I had finished 9th overall. The following year I had taken swimming lessons, learned front-crawl (and to do tumble turns) and returning back to the Bananathon finished 8th overall but with over a minute improvement on my 400m swim. I followed this up with a third place at the White Oak Triathlon at Swanley in Kent but then decided not to take it any further – with an imminent family arriving, training twice a day became a luxury that had to go (along with the Sky Sports subscription).

In 2017 **The London Classics** was launched to recognise those who had completed the London Marathon, the RideLondon 100 and the two-mile event at Swim Serpentine. Well, I had two of the three crossed off already and when I saw the size of the Classics medal on display at the following year's RideLondon 100 thought that it would make a welcome addition to my collection. Unfortunately, my commitments as a Race Organiser prevented me from committing to the **Swim Serpentine**, until 2020 and so I set out my journey to complete the London Classics in October 2019.



I started with a visit to Melksham Blue Pool and having not swum for at least 18-years after just a few lengths felt that I was going to drown with aching arms and rasping breath but I persevered and within six months was up to swimming 2-miles... then the world fell apart and like so many events in 2020, Swim Serpentine was cancelled.

When lockdown restrictions started to ease towards the end of the summer, swimming pools remained closed but Open Water swimming was allowed. This presented me with an opportunity but I was somewhat apprehensive having never swam in Open Water before, fortunately experienced swimmer Sarah Jewers agreed to join me on my first trip up to Lake32 to act as my chaperone. Sarah shadowed me on my first tentative 400m loop and then let me loose to complete a further four. I ventured up to Lake32 a few more times and feeling more and more

confident until I started experiencing a sharp pain in my right shoulder and not just when swimming.

My shoulder pain continued to plague me over the next eight months and swimming was off the agenda, with no improvement, I had to seek medical advice and was diagnosed with a "frozen shoulder". A cortisone injection seemed to bring almost immediate relief.

The Swim Serpentine date for 2021 was looming and so I made a point of making a visit up to the Cotswold Water Parks at least once every couple of weeks throughout the summer. I was still unable to do much front-crawl not so much because of restricted movement in my shoulder but more so that I had no sense of direction when doing so. Notwithstanding I was confident that I could complete the distance, even though I knew that it would be neither quick or pretty.

On Saturday 18th September 2021, race day arrived and I made my way through Hyde Park to the Serpentine where I was joined by another five thousand or so swimmers, including Sarah Jeffries who would be going for her second Classics medal.



Starting off in Red Wave I made my way down the starting ramp and straight into the water, no acclimatisation or dip pools this year as a concession to the pandemic.

My first thought was of how much sediment was in the water compared to Lake32 / Lake86 and then I had to shut out of my mind the comments that I had heard about swimming in "Duck-Pooh soup". I started off as planned with breaststroke whilst around me the water was being whipped into a foam by eager front-crawlers and a steady stream of swimmers were passing me by.

As I rounded the bottom bend of the lake on my first lap, I stole a look across the lake and could still see plenty of swimmers behind me but more and more were passing

me but I was feeling comfortable and my goal was to finish not to win.

As I completed that first lap, I am sure that I heard the announcer call a time of one hour two minutes, which was a little disappointing but not unexpected given how I was swimming. I was actually hoping to clock around 1:50, though with sub-two hours being the more realistic goal.





On my second lap, I decided to risk some front-crawl and using a line of bright blue pedalos tied to the bank as a sighting aid, I seemed to make good progress. This propelled me to the top end of the lake and I may have even over-taken a swimmer or two. For the long stretch back down the lake I adopted the approach of switching to swimming front-crawl every time that I reached a marker buoy, I was further helped when I found myself being caught by later and faster blue-wave swimmers and could use them for directional guidance. It didn't seem that long before I was once again rounding the bottom of the lake and heading into the finish.

As I stumbled out of the water and on to the landing pontoon, I spotted a watch showing the time of eleven o'clock – wow, I must have clocked 1-hour 40-minutes a negative split for sure but I also must have misheard the announcer on that first lap. My official time came up as 1-hour 37-minutes – double wow and then I got that coveted Classics medal hung around my neck

and my entry into the “London Classics Hall of Fame”.

So now for my London Classics split times:

Run	T1	Cycle	T2	Swim	Total
3:13:22	13 years, 3 months, 18 days, 17 hours, 16 minutes, 38 seconds	5:23:49	8 years, 1 month, 13 days, 20 hours, 36 minutes, 11 seconds	1:37:46	21 years, 5 months, 2 days, 1 hour, 27 minutes, 46 seconds

Normally during a transition, you would slip out of a wet suit and get on your bike or dismount the bike and pull on your running shoes. Whereas I managed to father two children, celebrate my silver wedding anniversary, become a Vice President of Avon Valley Runners and much more!!!

AVT results

Don't forget all AVT race results need to be e-mailed through to avt@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk for inclusion in the results spreadsheet. At the moment this is looking a bit sparse and I know that there has been some races taking place. Please go through your races for this year and send through your results, with race distances and times. Please also send link to official results page too if possible.

Remember you need to enter the race as a member of Avon Valley runners/triathletes and wherever possible wear your AVT kit to promote the club. Tri suits can be purchased from <https://www.halosports.co.uk/clubs/avon-valley-triathletes/>

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