



## Welcome to The Valley News

Our cover image this month shows when the January “Run to Breakfast” session became an OCR event 😊

If you have a favourite photograph which you would like to have featured as a cover image on your favourite monthly Avon Valley based newsletter then please send it along with a few words to [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk)

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

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**The Newsletter of Avon Valley Runners**

**Issue #262 – February 2024**



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

## Wrinty's Ramblings

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January, I made my quadrennial attendance at the club AGM and was pleased to have my Vice-Presidency extended for another four years.

I along with fellow club Vice-Presidents: Andrew Hoddinott, Ted Rockliffe and Bob Washbourne also with Club President, Denise Ellis will continue to provide counsel to the club committee and support to Wiltshire's premier running club.

It was also pleasing to see that Fiona Price was presented with a Life Membership of Avon Valley Runners.

Over our 38-year history we have awarded this honour 28-times. The first being in 1991 when the "Freedom of the Valley" was bestowed upon Ian "Stan" Farr and Judy Farr along with Life membership of AVR. To mark the clubs Silver Jubilee year in 2011, Life Memberships were bestowed up on the founder members of the club that were still active at the time: Bob Washbourne, Ted Rockliffe, Dave Gosling, Mike Hehir, Ron Whittle, Bernie Hobbs, Tim Northwood, Ray Withey and Bob Ellis. Recognition was also made of long serving member Tony Griffith for his contribution to the club.



Fiona & I at the South West inter-county Half Marathon championship in 2017

In 2012 to mark 10-years serving the committee as Club Captain and then as Honorary Secretary I was awarded Life Membership along with Gordon Russell. In 2013 the club awarded honorary life memberships to Rosemary Barber, Alistair Bartlett, Michael Towler, Alan Hayes and Denise Ellis. Further Life Memberships were awarded to Tina Vivian, Andrew Hoddinott, Richard Ayling, Sean Price, Warren Wade, Jacqueline Rockliffe and Frank Lamerton – all worthy recipients for their contributions to our club.

One item at the AGM though which did not go unnoticed was the comment that there was too-much multi-sport content in the pages of the Valley News. I make absolutely no apology for this; we are a club with over 300-members and have a very active multi-sport section of whom many enjoy writing about their adventures wearing the yellow & green of Avon Valley. So, if you want more content specifically about running, then please feel free to put your pen to paper and submit your articles to [news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk](mailto:news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk) - the deadline date for submissions to the Valley News is the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**Darren Wrintmore (Wrinty)**

## Sheila Jennings, a tribute

I met Sheila in early 1986 when she joined the fledgling Avon Valley Runners (only a month after it had formed). She had known Stan and Judy Farr and other AVR Founders as a former member of Trowbridge AC. Sheila had been passionate about athletics from childhood following in the footsteps of her father who was a keen runner. Before joining us, Sheila had run and race walked, gaining AAA (now England Athletics) titles. She ran multiple marathons both in the UK and abroad and she and Judy were rivals on the then, very prominent race-walking circuit.

By the time Sheila joined us she was 54 but still winning age categories in local and national road races, setting times that much younger women (and men) could only dream of. The London marathon of 1987 in 3.38.47 and European Championship 10k in Israel in 46.31 also 1987.

But mostly I remember Sheila as an inspirational figure. She was enthusiastic, passionate, encouraging and NICE. Along with Judy and another veteran Ann Whittle, these were the runners I aspired to be like. She was extremely modest but proud of her achievements.

Of course, as Sheila got older her race times began to slow but she was always so determined. As my race times improved, I eventually started to reach the finish lines before her, but the victories were hollow and not celebrated. How could you rejoice in beating someone 30yrs your senior, who was also so pleased at your achievements?

Sheila left the club in 2007 after Stan Farr died, but by then she was 76. Sheila was a passionate and prolific fundraiser and campaigner. She worked in charity shops in Bath and she formed the Friends of Alzheimer's Support Wiltshire in 1991. It was Sheila who became the link between our Over the Hills race (*always an event to showcase our countryside and raise money for charity*) and AS. With the volunteer group providing teas and cakes at the HQ they would raise considerable amounts. The race became one of their biggest fundraising events of their year. Sheila attended the race regularly and when not able she would bake some of the cakes.

The last time I saw Sheila was at our OTH event in November 2023. She delivered her cake in person and stopped to have photos taken in front of the finish funnel. She was just approaching her 93rd birthday but was still as enthusiastic about the race and keen to hear about my running and my family. Had she been able to stay for the prizegiving we would have asked her to present the awards.



Thankyou Sheila for your support, guidance and encouragement. A true champion, inspiration and for me, a 'Hero'.

### **Denise Ellis (Club President)**

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## C25K 2023 Beginners feedback

This is some of the feedback received from our "Couch To 5K" beginners' group from 2023:

*I have previously enjoyed running and got back into it in 2020 however it tailed off again. Signing up to AVR Couch to 5k was a great decision, Jay and the team were so supportive and the progress we all made was amazing in just 12 weeks. Being part of a team at a similar level and having to be accountable by turning up every week gave me the incentive I needed as I do not enjoy running on my own. It was a great achievement to get to 5km and I feel much fitter as well - Sarah Collins.*

*Huge thanks to the Coaches and Helpers, you inspired me and helped me believe anything is possible.*

*As a helper it was brilliant to see such a high retention with many people integrating into the run groups and 5-10k group.*

*I was grateful for the information that we gathered week by week and lovely the presentation and my medal.*

*I loved the team spirit of C25K, best decision I've ever made.*



*I just wanted to give a shout out and say thank you to Jay Sims-Bagshaw and her team of C25K volunteers. I did the beginners couch to 5k course last year as a way to get back into running after years out and loved it. It's a great route into the club and builds up base running fitness and fundamentals brilliantly for beginners.*

*At the end of the course last November, I gave it everything and finished Southwick parkrun in 28:29. I started training regularly with the club, and on my own, and did a few races through the summer. Today, a little under a year later, I did Southwick parkrun again and finished in 21:23! A parkrun PB for me (not quite an all-time 5k PB but I'll be coming after that soon!). I'm so pleased and massively grateful to Jay for her support last year in getting me back enjoying running again - Dan Crosby.*

**Jay Simms-Bagshaw**

# Multisport Musings

I attended a leadership seminar at work this month on the theme of "Resilience". There are many definitions of resilience, but in essence it is one's ability to cope through, and bounce back from difficulty. There are many common traits or approaches that resilient people have, a good sleep pattern, having a support network, taking some time out to enjoy hobbies and interests and cutting back on alcohol. However, when they polled the c400 attendees at the seminar, the highest scoring approach by far was EXERCISING – whether that was going to the gym, participating in sports, or simply just walking the dog.

Winter can be a really difficult month to find our motivation to train. It involves all sorts of trickery to convince my mind that going out in the dark, cold, rain and wind will be a good thing, maybe even fun! I do know from experience though, that being outdoors and active over winter really does help my wellbeing, both physical and mental and actually once I get out the door, I always enjoy it.

Being part of a club like Avon Valley and the support network it provides, can really help us when our motivation wanes. The biggest challenge is getting our kit on and leaving the house, so making a commitment or meeting up with others is a great way to get over that hurdle. There are some good introductory, AVT focus and social sessions being organised for the next few months, so please do come and join in, or why not put a post on the AVT Pathways messenger group and arrange to meet one or two others for a run or ride...you will not only be helping yourself, but you will be helping others too. At this time of year, it's not the numbers that matter, winning is getting out the door.

## The Big Swim

A small group of us signed up for the Big Swim, held at the 50m Bath University Olympic Pool on Sunday 14th January. Coached by Keith Withers and Stephen Clark, it was a fun 2-hours of technique drills, speed and hypoxic work as well as some turn practice.

## Try an Aquathlon

Hosted by Keith Withers and Analie Ibsen on Sunday 21st January. Despite the weather, there was a good turnout for this introduction to Aquathlon, with a pool swim at Clarendon, followed by a run around Southwick Country Park. Designed as an introductory event, or fun training session, AVT will be hosting more "Try a..." events in the coming months.



## Maria Harryman








### Run to Breakfast goes Brick!

On Saturday 3rd February - bike handling skills and run/ride bricks, followed by a social breakfast - all welcome.

Hosted by Keith Withers - see the [AVT FB](#) page for more details

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

A selection of forthcoming events which may be of interest:

| Date                                | Event                                     | Distance     | Details  |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|--|---|
| Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup><br>February  | <a href="#">The Lungbuster</a>            | 9-hard miles | Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds present race #5 of the Wiltshire Off-Road Race League at Broad Hinton |  |
| Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup><br>February | <a href="#">The Wiltshire 10</a>          | 10-miles     | Popular Stampede Sports race held out of Melksham and around the village of Lacock                 |  |
| Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup><br>February | <a href="#">The Smartt Smasher</a>        | 10K'ish      | One of the flattest off-roaders around.  |  |
| Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup><br>March     | <a href="#">The Bowerhill Bomber</a>      | 5K & 10K     | Redfish Events give you mud galore at Melksham   |  |
| Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup><br>March     | <a href="#">Chippenham Spring 10</a>      | 10-miles     | DB Max bring you a predominantly flat 10-miler at Chippenham                                       |  |
| Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup><br>March    | <a href="#">Chilly Duathlon &amp; 10K</a> | 5K/21K/3K    | DB Max popular Duathlon (Run/Cycle/Run) at Castle Combe with an accompanying 10K run.              |  |
| Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup><br>March    | <a href="#">Hullavington 20</a>           | 20-miles     | Ideal prep for the London or other spring marathons.   |  |

## The Wiltshire Road Race League 2024

Wiltshire Athletic Association has announced the following fixtures that will form the 2024 WRRL (and will also be the AVR Road League fixtures too). The events will be as follows (with the best 6 of 8 races scoring):

**Race 1: St Georges 10k** - 21<sup>st</sup> April (Corsham RC)

**Race 2: The Hullavington Half Marathon** - 12<sup>th</sup> May (Stampede Sports)

**Race 3: Westbury 5k Series** - 14<sup>th</sup> May, 11<sup>th</sup> June / 9<sup>th</sup> July / 13<sup>th</sup> August (AVR)  
your best time will count for the league result from which team points will be decided.

**Race 4: Broad Town 5** - 15<sup>th</sup> June (RWBH)

**Race 5: Langley Burrell 10k\*** - 11<sup>th</sup> August (DBMax)

**Race 6: Compton Bassett 5 mile\*** (Calne RC)

**Race 7: Chippenham Half Marathon\*** - 15<sup>th</sup> September (Chippenham Harriers)

**Race 8: Devizes 10k**, 29<sup>th</sup> September (Devizes RC)

\*County Championship Race - The first 3 male and female Wiltshire eligible athletes across the line in those chosen events will be crowned county gold (champion) / silver / bronze for the distance for 2024. Veteran categories will be included on a gold medal basis.

A note for all competitors: Please try and commit to races early (6-weeks before race day) to help race organisers provision for medical, chip timing, medals, HQ facilities (such as toilet rental), refreshments and drink stations. It was a common theme in 2023 where organisers were close to cancelling races to lack of entries 6 weeks before race day.

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

# All those years ago

Avon Valley Runners has now been around as a club for over 38-years and a lot has changed in that time but somethings have not, like members achieving success on a local, national and international level. So, I am going to look back at what we as a club achieved in this month 5, 10, 20 and 35-years ago...

## February 2019

In this month five years ago:

Holly Rush was first Lady at the tough off-road **Hoka Half Marathon** held in South Wales, where she recorded a time of 1-hour 31-minutes 55-seconds and few weeks later won the **Carsington Water Half Marathon** in Derbyshire recording 1:25:32.

Stuart Avery led home the thirty-one Avon Valley Runners at the **Wiltshire 10-mile road race** in Melksham clocking 61:22 for eighth place overall.

Mike Towler made it on to the podium at the fast **Weston Prom 5-miler**, with a time of 26:55 for third place with mum Tina finishing as 2<sup>nd</sup> FV60 in 40:18.

## February 2014

In this month ten years ago:

Fiona Price claimed a new club FV40 record of 65:08 at the **Wiltshire 10-mile road race** in Melksham and led the Avon Valley Runners Ladies to the team prize, with support from Jackie Rockliffe and Fleur Ross-Harris.

There was an AVR 1-2-3 at Race #1 of the Wiltshire Junior Race League with Tom Brown (07:29), James Welbourn (07:29) and Jack Wosika (07:48) all achieving new personal best times over 2K. 11<sup>th</sup> placed Freya Buglass set a new GU9 record of 08:50.

Twenty-eight Avon Valley Runners took on the hilly **Longleat 10K** with 8<sup>th</sup> placed Chris Roxburgh leading home the Men in 37:22 and Diane Hier the Ladies in 45:50.

Twelve Avon Valley Runners travelled to Parliament Hill in London for the **National XC Championships**. The Men had 12K of mud to cover: 290<sup>th</sup> Mike Towler 42:26; 650<sup>th</sup> Joby Hobbs 46:49; 739<sup>th</sup> Peter Veleski 47:45; 765<sup>th</sup> Paul Green 48:02; 775<sup>th</sup> Tim Lowrie 48:10; 1307<sup>th</sup> Bob Ellis 55:45 and 1545<sup>th</sup> Bernie Hobbs 61:47. For the Ladies in the 8K: 217<sup>th</sup> Jackie Rockliffe 35:30; 247<sup>th</sup> Diane Hier 36:02; 272<sup>nd</sup> Jill Westwood 36:26; 276<sup>th</sup> Jennifer Ford 36:30 and 366<sup>th</sup> Fiona Robson 38:22.



Fiona Price at the Wiltshire 10

## February 2004

In this month twenty years ago:

Martin Connor led home the AVR contingent at the **Blackmore Vale Half Marathon** in Dorset, finishing in 16<sup>th</sup> place and recording 1:24:27. In 106<sup>th</sup> place, Danny Kay bagged the prize as 1<sup>st</sup> MV60 with Viv Toms coming in well under two-hours finishing in 1:56:47 for 360<sup>th</sup> place.

A good AVR attendance was had at the **Bramley 20/10**. In the 10-miler 16<sup>th</sup> placed Alistair Bartlett broke the hour in 59:43; 62<sup>nd</sup> Steve Noyes 1:07:51; 67<sup>th</sup> Stuart Macgregor 1:08:17; 92<sup>nd</sup> Les Unsworth 1:11:28; 103<sup>rd</sup> Vanessa Morey 1:12:27; 106<sup>th</sup> Llewelyn Jones 1:13:28; 121<sup>st</sup> Derek Jarvis 1:14:57; 122<sup>nd</sup> Laurie Irwin 1:14:59; 141<sup>st</sup> Peter Hunt 1:16:40; 142<sup>nd</sup> Neville Yates 1:16:43; 158<sup>th</sup> Ted Rockliffe 1:18:33; 181<sup>st</sup> Bob Sales 1:20:15; 199<sup>th</sup> Kerry Hall 1:22:14; 200<sup>th</sup> Gerry Fice 1:22:14; 212<sup>th</sup> Julia Scott 1:23:44; 220<sup>th</sup> Joyce Field 1:24:33 (1<sup>st</sup> FV60); 249<sup>th</sup> Glyn Phillips 1:27:13; 307<sup>th</sup> Tony Griffith 1:34:01; 321<sup>st</sup> Helen Harrison 1:36:35. In the 20-miler: 212<sup>th</sup> Rachel Bown 2:23:40; 305<sup>th</sup> Liz Ringham 2:33:30; 358<sup>th</sup> Sue Macgregor 2:37:34; 366<sup>th</sup> Tina Vivian 2:38:05; 399<sup>th</sup> Simon Ringham 2:41:20; 548<sup>th</sup> Sonya Stephens 2:55:07; 635<sup>th</sup> Susie Phillips 3:03:49; 728<sup>th</sup> Dennis Mellor 3:20:55.

From the pages of the Valley News, we have this heartfelt message from the late Tony Bartlett...

## **The Frank Allen Cup**

### *A Personal Message*

On Saturday 7 February at the Avon Valley Runners Social and Prizegiving, I became the recipient of this award. This came as a total surprise to me, as well as something of a shock. I regard this award, not for any achievement that I might or might not have made, but as a sign of care. Care that has been shown to me. Care is not always forthcoming in this day and age, but you care, you Avon Valley Runners — *you care*. Your genuine encouragement and concerned support have been a constant source of comfort, especially during the last few years. It is a privilege and a real pleasure to be associated with you all. We are a great club, and you its members are great people!

God bless and thank you. — *Tony Bartlett.*

## February 1989

In this month thirty-five years ago:

5<sup>th</sup> placed Roger Carey led home Avon Valley Runners to the Men's team prize at the **Erlestoke Prison XC race** with Tim Northwood 8<sup>th</sup>, Gerry Fice 13<sup>th</sup>, Tony Nicholls 25<sup>th</sup> and Stan Farr 38<sup>th</sup>. Kerry Fice and R. Cleaverley both won their respective Junior races.

Avon Valley Runners had a good attendance at the **Great Western 10** held at Pucklechurch: 45<sup>th</sup> Dave Bristow 1:03:45; 87<sup>th</sup> Danny Kay 1:06:47; 107<sup>th</sup> Nick Rosier; 1:08:14; 122<sup>nd</sup> Peter Bray 1:09:19; 136<sup>th</sup> Ted Rockliffe 1:10:43; 137<sup>th</sup> Colin Stiles 1:10:44; 162<sup>nd</sup> Ann Bull 1:12:48 (1<sup>st</sup> FV40); 222<sup>nd</sup> K. Lee 1:15:51; 235<sup>th</sup> Dennis Mellor 1:16:36; 244<sup>th</sup> Judy Farr 1:17:00 (1<sup>st</sup> FV45); 261<sup>st</sup> Paul Turner 1:18:22; 265<sup>th</sup> P. Collier 1:18:33; 268<sup>th</sup> Stan Farr 1:19:01; 296<sup>th</sup> G. Babb 1:21:22.

Ray Withey crossed the border into Wales and recorded 2:34:53 at the **Cardiff 20-miler**.

# #Social Gallery

To tail-end this edition, some of my favourite posts, pictures and comments from the various Avon Valley Social Media pages that have been published over the past month...



**AVR at the Riverbank Rollick**



**Helen Farion was not expecting a swim leg on her training run.**



**Jenny Natrass:** Getting up close & personal with the Angel of the North



**Gary Day:** Happy with that - especially as I entered it thinking it was a 10k race

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