



Welcome to The Valley News

On 8th April 2017, the Avon Valley Runners Team of Mike Towler, Rich Ayling, Dominic Beddis, Peter Slade, Dan Shepherd and Mike Rose won the **England Athletics South West 6 Stage Road Relays**.

After 7 years, we finally got the engraving done on the award!

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

The Newsletter of Avon Valley Runners

Issue #274 – February 2025

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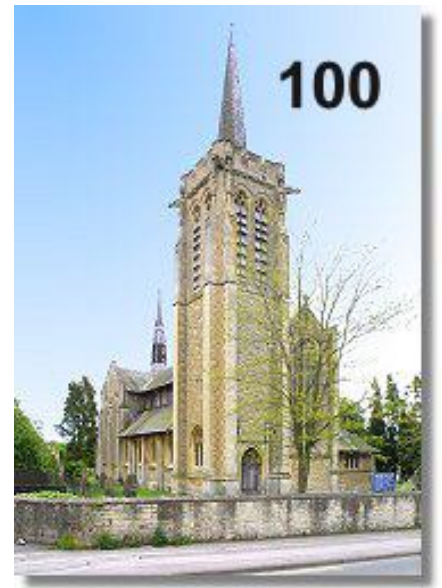


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Wrinty's Ramblings

In 1905 the small church which had existed in Shaw (near Melksham) since 1838 was rebuilt and this was to be marked with a number of events around the village to celebrate its centenary year (2005). One of the main events was to be a fete, which I don't recall ever having been hosted in the village before, having moved there some six years previous.

I was approached, as I had been recognised as 'the local runner' to see if I would organise a fun run to accompany the fete in the hope that it would bring in people to the fete from a wider area than just the village. With the support of Avon Valley Runners, I agreed and would use one of my multi-terrain training routes that I frequently ran around Shaw, Whitley, Neston and Atworth, of around 6-miles. This was to be the **Shaw & Whitley Stampede**.



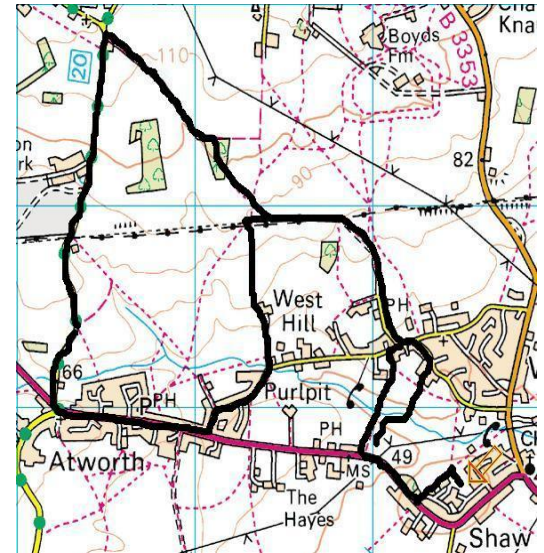
The race was going to start in the field behind "the Beeches" in Shaw with the runners heading out of the bottom of the field and onto the A365 Bath Road which our local community Police Officer agreed to close for 5-minutes to allow the runners to head off up the farm track to Whitley Farm and out onto Top Lane. Just one problem, with the race being in May, the field where we would start the race was home to a small herd of cows!

I hatched a plan with the farmer, that when the race was about to begin, he would head into the field with the cattle feed and lure the cows away from the route of the runners. This worked, for all of about two minutes when a few cows decided that they could make a break for freedom and join the runners. Seeing the potential disastrous start to the race I ran headlong at the advancing cows flailing my arms and shouting. Fortunately, the sight of a Race Director dressed head to toe in hi-viz and wailing like a banshee was enough to persuade the cows away from the runners and back to their feed.



With that incident out of the way, all I could do now was wait. Hoping that the course marshals had gotten into their positions OK and that the course signage had stayed in place and arrows were still pointing in the intended direction. I recall a rather nervy half an hour standing on the rise behind the Beeches with a pair of binoculars looking out towards West Hill. Then I spotted a runner heading across the fields towards Lowden Garden Centre, followed by another, then another and then lots more...I could relax. Now all they had to do was head up the path alongside the A365 through Beltane Place and a final sprint across the Playing Field to the finish line.

John Burns of Devizes Running Club and local triathlete Sarah Lewis took the victories for that inaugural race with 115 runners completing the course. There was no village fete in 2006 but there was in 2007 and so the Shaw & Whitley Stampede made a return with well over 100 runners signing up. In 2008 a 3-Kilometer fun run called the "**Keane Kanter**" (*in memory of a young pupil at Shaw School who sadly lost his life*) was added to the main race, well over 100 runners finished, with the profits from both runs going to local cancer charity CLIC Sargent. 2009 proved to be the most successful year with nearly 250 runners signing up for the races.



The race had a bit of an overhaul for its next edition in 2010; with the memory of the stampeding cattle and withdrawal of police support, forcing the race to start directly on the Farm Track off of the A365. The course was also amended to add some extra distance adding a bonus climb and stretching the course out to 10K. This edition once again saw over 200-runners sign up and a sixteen-year-old Simon Nott (*now Calne Running Club and a recurrent county champion*) taking the victory. The event continued, albeit with declining numbers for further editions in 2011 (*150 runners*); 2012 (*104 runners*); 2013 (*120 runners*) until 2014 which saw less than a hundred runners taking part and with no plans for another village fete it became time to draw the event to a close.



Darren Wrintmore (Wrinty)

Please send any news, articles or achievements to news@avonvalleyrunners.org.uk.

Off-Road Review 2024

The AVR Off-Road League season runs annually from October to March so this 2024 review covers two seasons and there is no carry over between the two. The AVR Off-Road League runs the same races as the Wiltshire Off-Road League (WORL) albeit with a different scoring system.

In the 2023/24 season there were five races held in 2024:

- Riverbank Rollick
- Smart Smasher
- Lungbuster
- The Terminator
- Frampton Globe Trot

Our leading Ladies over these five races were:

- Isabel McNally (FSEN) - came 1st AVR overall lady
- Gemma Knudsen (FSEN) - came 2nd AVR lady overall
- Fiona Gibbs (FV50) - came 3rd AVR lady overall

Our leading Men for the same five races were:

- Ben Mees (MSEN) - came 1st AVR man
- Gary Day (MV40) - came 2nd AVR man
- Daniel Coleman (MSEN) - came 3rd AVR man.

For whole of the 2023/24 WORL season our leading individuals were:

- Ben Mees 3rd man
- Gary Day 5th man
- Isabella McNally 7th lady
- Fiona Gibbs 17th lady.

As a club AVR Team - A came 5th in Division One & AVR Team - B came 3rd in Division Two. 33 AVR male and 20 female runners competed in at least one League race.

Relatively few AVR runners took part and as a result, our final team positions were not great.

In the 2024/25 season there were five races held in 2024:

- Cirencester Slog
- Over the Hills
- The Stickler
- Avebury Eight
- Yarnbury Yomp

Our leading Ladies over these first five races were:

- Fiona Gibbs (FV50) was 1st AVR lady and 8th in WORL (5th FV50)
- Pauline Bradley (FV60) was 2nd AVR lady and 21st in WORL (1st FV60)
- Isabella McNally (FSEN) was 3rd AVR lady and 33rd in WORL

Our leading Men over these first five races were:

- Gary Day (MV40) was 1st AVR man and 1st in WORL
- John Naish (MSEN) was 2nd AVR man and 3rd in WORL
- Andrew Trigg was 3rd AVR man and 13th in WORL (2nd MV60)

After the five races in the 2024/25 WORL, AVR Team - A stand 5th in Division One & AVR Team - B are 11th in Division Two.

Andrew Sharratt – Off-Road Secretary

Multisport Musings

As January comes to a close, I start to get hopeful for Spring and the lighter/longer days to train. The multisport season doesn't get started for a few months yet but whilst Vobster and the outdoor lakes won't be warm enough to tempt most of us until at least April/May (unless you are one of those hardy wild winter swimmers) there are still some good weather days for cycling and running outdoors. Yes, you might end up with freezing fingers and toes but you'll get a warm glowing feeling afterwards and, at this time of year it's not about the numbers it is just about getting out. Winter miles = summer smiles.

AVT Cycling News

So, whilst I've been dreaming of Spring, I have also been planning all of the Segment Saturday ride routes. (See Darren's announcement of 2025's Strava Segments competition in the January edition). I am sharing the links to routes below for anyone who wants to use them, remember you get bonus points for doing the segments at any time of the year. Note you will need a free "Ride with GPS" account to download the routes, but they are all public and can be downloaded in a variety of formats to upload to your own respective navigation computers or watches.

April - 25 miles starting and finishing in Steeple Ashton.

Nestle Climb and Caught by the Fuzz <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49490896>

May - 26 miles starting and finishing at Widbrook.

Fairwood Road Decent and Capps Lane TT <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49490977>

June - 21 miles starting and finishing at Bradford Leigh.

Gatehouse to Gatehouse & Atworth Clock Tower. <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49491079>

July - 20 miles starting and finishing in Hilperton.

Snake Hill and The Monk <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49490821>

August - c 22 miles. Starting and finishing in Westbury.

Keevil Rise and Sign to the Top. (No route map - We will join the Westbury Wheelers Green Ride and throw in an ascent of the Westbury White Horse at the end).

September - 25 Miles starting and finishing in Holt.

Worm Hill and Hill Street <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/49491148>

I will be leading these as group rides in each month between April - September for those that want to join me - details will be posted nearer the time on the AVT Facebook pages.

AVT Swimming News

Sadly, in December the committee had to take the decision to discontinue the AVT Thursday evening swim. The late lane time of 9-10pm meant we struggled to get enough attendance to make it viable. A huge thanks goes to Keith Withers and Steve Clark who coached those sessions over the past two years and just a reminder we still have the swims with our partner club (Hot Chilli's) at Clarendon Swimming Pool in Trowbridge. They offer coached swims @7-8am on Mondays & Tuesdays (*more endurance based*), 9-10pm on Wednesdays and 7-8am Fridays (*more technical*). These are PAYG sessions, please contact Annalie Ibison (our swim champion) if you would like the booking links or more details.

Maria Harryman

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All those years ago

Avon Valley Runners has now been around as a club for over 39-years and a lot has changed in that time but some things 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 2020

In this month five years ago:

Eight Avon Valley Runners headed to Pewsey for **The Terminator** with 11-miles of tough terrain to be conquered: 15th - Tim Lerwill; 73rd - Geoff Goodway; 101st - Simon Taylor; 321st - Barbara Goodway; 420th - Hayley Southgate; 454th - Chris Ashton; 502nd - Jo Guy; 504th - Mark Bygrave.

Avon Valley Runners were among the prizes at Castle Combe at the **Chilly 10K**: 13th - Ben Psaila 38:07 (2nd MV40); 15th - Daniel Piper 38:41; 42nd - Anna-Marie Watson 41:17 (1st Lady); 67th - Simon Reece 41:48; 68th - Richard Morgetroyd 42:51; 86th - Rebekah Carrivick 43:52 (1st FSEN); 132nd - Alan Button 46:56; 176th - Martin Bull 49:20; 295th - Catrin Pullinger 54:59; 322nd - Vicky Bodman 56:23; 341st - Martin Russam 57:18; 342nd - Rosemary Barber 57:18 (1st FV70); 386th - Joan Carpenter 59:22; 440th - Jennifer Buckle 64:17; 465th - Liz Mason 65:49.

February 2015

In this month ten years ago:

Avon Valley were represented at the **National XC Championships** on the Parliament Hill course in London. In the Senior Men's race over 12K, Michael Towler was our first finisher in 299th place followed by 460th - Rich Ayling; 557th - Pete Slade; 790th - Dominic Beddis; 1582nd Stuart MacGregor and 1970th Richard Newman. In the Senior Ladies race over 8K, Ruth Barnes led us home in 51st place followed by 156th Jackie Rockcliffe and 752nd Adele Cooper. Max Davis finished 187th in the Junior Boys race over 5K and for the Junior Girls we had 101st Jade Day and 231st Holly Newman.

The Wiltshire 10 at Melksham hosted the ARC National Championships for the distance and AVR were well in the prizes with Fiona Price running a new club FV40 record of 64:09 to take the win and with Diane Hier and Sarah Jewers took the ARC Team Gold medal too.

Fourth placed Rich Ayling (56:42); 5th place Mike Rose (57:48); 13th place Pete Slade (60:22) and 14th place Justin Peters (60:42) claimed the ARC Team Gold medal for AVR.



February 2005

In this month twenty years ago:

Eighteen Avon Valley Runners took on the lumpy course at the **Longleat 10K**, 8th placed Alistair Bartlett was our first club member back recording 37:10, whilst Rosemary Barber claimed the 1st FV55 prize and Joyce Field was 1st FV60.

Barbara White was runner-up in the Ladies race at the **Quantock 7 Fell Race**.

Fifteen AVR members took on the **Bramley 20-miler**: 147th - Llewelyn Jones 2:23:50; 148th - Rachel Bown 2:23:50; 165th - Stephen Payne 2:26:05; 183rd - Chris Atkinson 2:27:23; 209th - Stuart Macgregor 2:29:48; 214th - Mike Maidment 2:30:07; 219th - Stephen Payne 2:30:48; 230th - Simon Ringham 2:31:19; 243rd - Jackie Rockliffe 2:33:00; 255th - Ted Rockliffe 2:34:06; 408th - Laurie Irwin 2:49:19; 454th - Jim Anderson 2:52:37; 455th - Sonya Stephens 2:52:37; 493rd - Denise Ellis 2:56:15; 530th - Tom Simpson 2:59:54. An another eleven AVR members took on the supporting **Bramley 10-miler**, where we took the Men's team prize with: 10th - Alistair Bartlett 00:59:11; 20th - Daryl Spicer 61:20; 26th - Paul Mumford 62:28; 37th - Steve Noyes 64:25; 45th - Bob Ellis 65:23; 96th - Anthony Hickson 72:05; 112th - Rosemary Barber 74:15; 113th - Phil Mitchell 74:20; 124th - Kerry Hall 74:46; 169th - Lisa Berrington 78:30 and 252nd - Joyce Field 84:04, who took the 1st FV60 prize.

Alistair Bartlett started his assault on the Somerset Race Series with a seventh-place finish at the **Babcary Road Race** over 7.5-miles.

Seven Avon Valley Runners headed to Pewsey for **The Terminator** with 11-miles of tough terrain to be conquered. 9th - Daryl Spicer; 35th - Doug Barber; 207th - Stuart Macgregor; 262nd - Neil Whitehead; 396th - Gary Thwaites; 477th - Barbara White; 709th - Tony Bartlett.

Danny Kay finished 46th at the **Malta Marathon**, recording 3-hours 28-minutes 50-seconds.

February 1990

In this month thirty-five years ago:

21st placed Bob Ellis led the seven Avon Valley Runners home at the **Yate 10K** recording 37:03. In 70th place overall, Judy Farr was the third Lady to finish.

Seventeen Avon Valley Runners went to prison for the **Erlstoke XC race**. In the Senior race over 6-miles, Keith Elsey led us home in 9th place overall, followed by 12th - Martin Connor; 15th - Phil Mitchell; 18th - Bob Ellis; 20th - Neil Fyfe; 37th - C Noakes; 49th - Tim Northwood; 77th - Vic Bull; 88th - Ann Bull and 89th - Stan Farr. We managed to claim the second team prize. In the Junior Boys race over 3-miles R Cleverley took the victory with Darren Earney joining him on the podium in third, we also had 5th - D Brown; 6th - Alex Keay; 10th - Tom Brooke Taylor and 11th - R Jones. Whilst D Clarke led home in the Girls race.

Twelve Avon Valley Runners went to Pucklechurch for the **Great Western 10-miler**: 42nd - Bob Ellis 61:09; 80th - Maurice Cockell 65:12; 82nd - Danny Kay 65:24; 83rd - Ted Rockliffe 65:27; 114th - C Stiles 67:30; 141st - Peter Bray 70:14; 182nd - M Johnson 73:02; 205th - Vic Bull 74:11; 225th - R Porter 76:32; 226th - K Lee 76:37; 231st - Judy Farr 77:04 and 247th - Stan Farr 80:07.

Gerry Fice finished 25th at the **Malta Half Marathon** recording 1:19:39.

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

A selection of forthcoming events which may be of interest:

Date	Event	Distance	Details	
Sunday 2 nd February	The Lungbuster	9-miles	A challenging multi-terrain race organised by Royal Wootton Bassett Hounds.	
Sunday 2 nd February	Tri an Aquathlon	30min / 5K	Swim & Run - Aimed at beginners but all are welcome. <i>For more details see the AVT Facebook page</i>	
Sunday 9 th February	The Wiltshire 10	10-miles	Stampede Sports race held out of Melksham.	
Sunday 16 th February	SMaRTT Smasher	10K	A flat off-road 10K at Calne.	
Sunday 16 th February	Pronto Bikes Winter TT	10-miles	First cycle Time Trial of the year at Castle Combe.	
Sunday 23 rd February	The Terminator	12-miles	Its Back!!! A tough off-roader at Pewsey	
Sunday 23 rd February	Two Tunnels races	5K / 10K / Half	A run at Bath through Europe's longest traffic free tunnels.	
Sunday 2 nd March	The Bowerhill Bomber	5K & 10K	Redfish Events give you mud galore at Melksham	
Sunday 16 th March	Chilly Duathlon	5K/21K/3K	Sprint distance at Castle Combe and 'draft legal' too.	
Sunday 23 rd March	Hullavington 20	20-miles	Stampede Sports provide some ideal preparation for a spring Marathon.	



Saturday 1st March

Trowbridge Civic Hall

Join us for a night of fun, food and dancing, all whilst celebrating the amazing achievements of our members throughout 2024.

The evening decor will be Hollywood themed, and the dress code is simply '*dress to impress!*'

Register online [here](#).