



Club Newsletter

Autumn 2025 Issue



Evening Sun at the top of Winchester Hill on the Pizza Run

Editor's Note

Tom Reader - GRR Newsletter Editor

Another brilliant summer, with GRR doing everything from parkrun tourism, out-of-towns (sometimes involving pizza - see cover photo), HRRL, the Great North Run and some other 'halves', and several marathons - not to mention lots of excellent club nights with chatty runs, intervals, and England Athletic coaching: There's a full round-up in this 'autumn' issue of the newsletter, which I've tried to get done before the clocks go back*

Also this month, Brian Fisher has been using his "historical archives" skills to uncover some interesting history about our beloved Dell of Doom and the surrounding "playing fields". And, by complete coincidence, not one but two of our articles for this issue arrived in the form of 'acrostics' - if you don't know what one of those is, you soon will :-). I'm thinking about a Haiku-special for the next issue... Thanks to all article contributors this time round, and please do keep them coming in - the newsletter would be nothing without people contributing to it.

On that note, by the end of this year, I'll have been 'doing the newsletter' for 3 years, believe it or not, so this is my penultimate issue. I'm taking on other duties both in the club and beyond, so it's time to hand the newsletter on to someone who can bring a fresh pair of eyes. If anyone thinks they'd like to take up the mantle please get in touch (if not, I'll just choose someone and surprise them!) - there's always plenty of support from people willing to write articles, and anyway, as I've shown, a 'monthly' newsletter doesn't necessarily have to be done every month: I think I've done 18 over the 3 years.

In the meantime, we've got a busy autumn ahead. I'm dusting off my trail shoes (actually, that's not dust, it's caked-on mud...) and looking forward to the Southern Cross Country League getting underway next weekend, and before we know it, it'll be the Mulled Wine Run. See you out there!

*SO nearly made it...

Tom

Chairman's Corner

Ken Eaden

Hi All,

Well, we blinked, and summer has gone, and we enter the Autumn Season. What a great summer of running. Our club sponsored events have been fully supported, notably the out-of-town events and Steve Cawte's pizza run were particularly popular. So, a massive thanks to our Captains for pulling things together and thank you for your support. Several members have worn the yellow vest and represented GRR globally ranging from Paphos in Cyprus to Tokyo Japan. Well done all.

Our membership is growing steadily, and we welcome members old and new. We also have an influx of faster runners and we have seen some blistering 5K and 10K time trial results. We encourage them to participate in the HRRL and to build on last year's successes and begin to steadily climb the league table.

As we approach mid term since the AGM the committee are reflecting on what has gone well and what has not gone well. In the main I believe we have a vibrant and enthusiastic running club, however we strive to improve member's experience. We value your comments and if you have not already done so, please complete the members survey by following the link below.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/X14Y2L/>

On another note if anyone has any grievance or complaint could they email their concern to the "secretary@gosportroadrunners.org.uk" CC: Chairman@gosportroadrunners.org.uk, Vicechairman@gosportroadrunners.org.uk, Treasurer@gosportroadrunners.org.uk

The secretary will collate the issues, and we will sentence the concern and decide how to deal with it. We will always endeavour to respond, and the answer may not necessarily be what you were looking for. This process aims to negate the risk of mail getting lost in spam boxes and the onus does not sit with individuals. There may be exceptions to this, for example safeguarding issues which must be reported immediately.

At the beginning of the year, we introduced a revised club standard awards to make it more accessible and achievable to our members. The objective is for incremental improvement. We believe that the system is balanced and fair, however we will be making some adjustments by adjusting the standard times to be at the higher end of the age category. For example, in the 40-45 Age group the standard time will be set at 44. This means if you are striving for a gold award at 44 it will be commensurate with your age. It means that the lower awards will be marginally easier at the lower end. It must be stressed we cannot adjust times to meet individual requirements. Please take the time to read the award criteria on our website.

Our members have been asking about our new design club kit. Andy Clutton and Deborah have been working hard on this and I thank them for their efforts. Just a quick update:

- We have two designs and members will be able to choose either to wear at events.
- We have not changed the club colours so there is no requirement for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). The designs have been sanctioned by England Athletics.
- Andy and Deborah are in discussions with the supplier to iron out final details.
- We aim to have the kit available by Christmas.

We are sure you will be delighted with the new kit and look to launching it in the very near future.

Finally, the 40th Gosport Half Marathon is just round the corner. We are extremely proud of our event and to reach this milestone is a terrific achievement. We could not have achieved this without your enduring support so a massive thank you to all volunteers past and present. We still require volunteers. If you would like to become part of the best Half Marathon on the South Coast, please follow the link below and complete the short Survey. As a “thank you” you are invited to participate in our Helpers Half the preceding weekend, and you will be entered into a raffle to win a pair of trainers and a chance to win spot prizes.

This is our 40th anniversary – let’s make it the best one yet. We might be the smallest club, but we put on the biggest and best event on the south coast.

Thank you in advance for your support – we can’t do it without you! Gosport Half Marathon needs you.

Link to Survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/ZaZU2pCeFa>

Email: chiefmarshal@gosporthalf.org

Anyhow that is all for now. Thank you for supporting Gosport Road Runners. Stay safe and look after each other.

Yours in Running

Ken

Chairman GRR

Chief Marshal Gosport Half Marathon

Contents

Club News	Page 6
Coach's Corner	Page 8
Butser Hill Challenge	Page 11
History of 'The Dell'	Page 12
Technology Corner	Page 14
The Big Pilgrimage	Page 15
Jersey Half Marathon	Page 17
Great North Run	Page 19
Dates for your Diary	Page 20
And Finally....	Page 22
GRR Online	Page 23

Club News

EA Coach Intervals

We recently had a very successful evening Intervals session, including Q&A afterwards, led by EA Coach Kerry Newell, which followed on from a previous session she led with our LIRFs and Coaches. The group session, which was well-supported by a large turn-out of GRR members, included ideas for warmups for different events, an excellent Intervals session, followed by ideas for strength-based training for injury prevention. The group then moved on to a Q&A session, which I'm led to believe included buffet food. Thanks very much to Kerry for these sessions. Please see a full article from Deborah later in this issue.

Men's Vice Captain



We are pleased to welcome **Adam Crook** as the new Men's Vice Captain! Thanks for stepping up, Adam!

London Marathon Bronze Medal

Big congratulations to Jackie Tombs, who won a Bronze medal for coming 3rd in her age-group in the London Marathon this year - an incredible achievement, and the medal itself is something to treasure. We are hoping to publish an article from Jackie on this and some of her other events in the next issue.

Clarendon

We had another highly successful (and bigger than ever) group outing to the Clarendon marathon. GRR fielded 6 teams in the relay, as well as Mark Jakins doing the Marathon 'solo', and Yvette Eastman and Ken Eaden each running the Half. There will be a full write-up in the next issue, but in the meantime thanks to Gill and Nigel Thomas for organising this excellent club 'day out'.

Spond

Another reminder for anyone not yet on the 'Spond' app: We are now using this app for planning future events, specifically who's going! It's really 'got traction' and is now the Club's main way of listing events. If you're not already on the app, please consider installing it and joining the 'Gosport Road Runners Information Page' within the app - and keep an eye on it for updates.

Helpers Needed for Gosport Half Marathon

A last repeat of our usual plea for help from all Club members the weekend of the Gosport Half Marathon. This year it'll be our 40th anniversary, so we need as much help as possible to make it the most successful one ever. Please sign up to help, either by filling in the survey (link from facebook page) or email chiefmarshal@gospoorthalf.org. Many roles are available, including marshalling, filling goody bags, giving out race numbers, putting up signs, or preferably all of the above.

Coach's Corner

Deborah Birch

May the Forth Be With You!

One Bank Holiday Sunday morning in May (4th) run leaders and coaches that were available enjoyed a morning training session with Kerry Newell (EA Coach/Club Development). This was an opportunity we appreciated because some leaders had only experienced on-line courses and some completed their training some years ago. The only annual refresher training all leaders and coaches have to complete to keep their license valid is safeguarding and first aid and nothing to do with running sessions. There is access to on-line information but nothing compares to having a coach here at our grounds to offer ideas in situ.

The aim, therefore, of this session was to bring up to date knowledge, enhance leaders knowledge and develop session ideas and delivery for the whole membership.



Our thanks to Kerry Newell for travelling down from Gloucestershire to provide these sessions

Funding for this session came from a bid GRR made to EA. We were informed that the bid would only be considered if the club was compliant in the 7 Club Standard Awards. This required some work by committee members to bring our club up to date with these standards. We were delighted when this work enabled our club to be considered and successful with our bid.

We have introduced some ideas from this training for example whole club sessions of intervals and out and back sessions. Change is never easy, please work alongside us. We take comments from membership on board too so please continue to feed back and offer ideas. Thank you.

Group Session

The committee agreed to fund a further session for the club members. We were delighted to be able to agree a date with Kerry and be able to get this before the summer evening light faded. Some of us now know another member's favourite chocolate bar! Kerry said the club membership were lovely and engaged. Well done to the 46 members who were able to contribute to the session.



Strength Work

Kerry shared her 5 top tips for strength that would be ideal to be done at home twice weekly to make a more robust runner less likely to get injured and to run faster. They are:

- **Squats** – feet shoulders width, chin up, back straight, stay upright.
- **Lunges** – straight down, chest up, stay upright.
- **Plank** – side plank and can add knee drive. Good for core.
- **Step ups** – onto a chair with something to hold onto.
- **Crab walk** – with a resistance band just below knees. Squat side step sideways.

Our website has some videos that Kerry shared with us.



The Question and Answer following the practical session was held at the Park Tavern. The pub provided a delicious mini buffet of sandwiches, salad and vegetarian chilli and rice with a kettle to make tea and coffee.

Balance

Just a quick word on balance Balance is a good skill to practise, for running (we spend a lot of time on one leg), for life to help prevent trips and falls as well as leg strength.

From the coaching course - 'balance and co-ordination is a quality that allows accuracy of movement'. When exercises like grapevine and hopscotch are added to our training these help develop the above mentioned skills.

I read the late Dr Michael Mosley's book *Change One Thing* and think it has a great chapter on balance with a chart to indicate balance time against age. There are other charts around that give suggested balance time with eyes open and balance time with eyes closed.

Deborah Birch

Butser Hill Challenge

Shirley Faichen

Not sure how I was talked into entering the Butser Hill Challenge but I think Sylvia Cawte had something to do with it!! It is a small, friendly, local race/challenge and well worth the drive to Queen Elizabeth Country Park. It is as it states a challenge but the achievement of finishing is immense, I even won a gift card for a sports shop.

I have written a few words/thoughts to sum it up:-

Beautiful scenery

Undulating course!

Totally crazy

Steep inclines

Enthusiastic and encouraging marshalls

Read achievement, whatever your age

Challenge yourself to something different

How did I come to sign up for this?

Among friends, both Gosport and other clubs

Lots of laughter or maybe hysteria??

Long downhill at finish

Entertainment from school band

No pressure, just run/walk at your own pace

GR support from our own Mike Stares with his banner on the fence

Everyone made it to the finish and we all enjoyed a well earned cup of tea in the cafe



Shirley Faichen

Editor's Note: Shirley is being very modest here - she actually won her age category in this event!

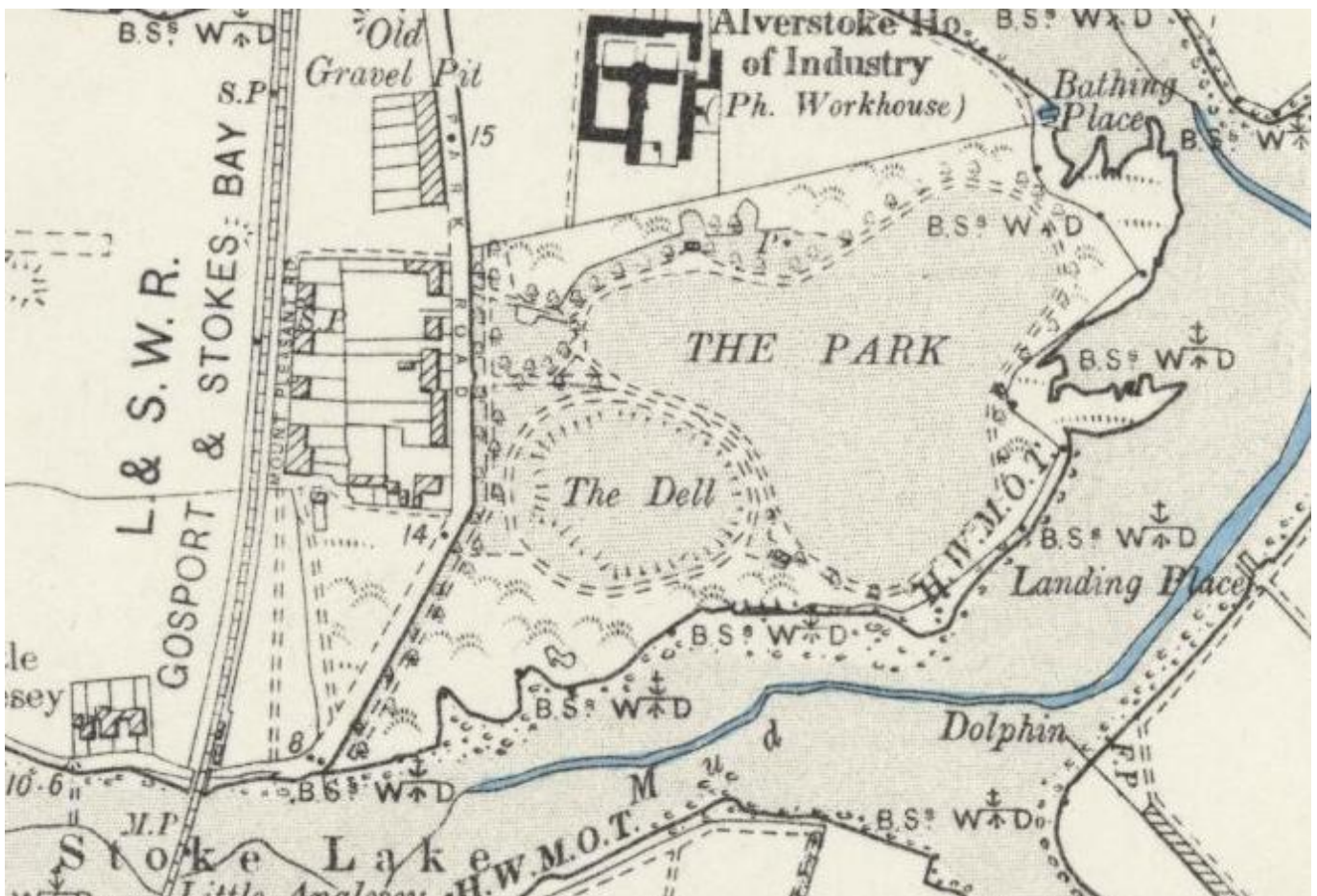
History of 'The Dell'

Tom Reader and Brian Fisher

Brian Fisher recently used his 'historical archives' expertise to uncover some interesting history of our much loved (and sometimes much hated!) Dell of Doom, and the surrounding playing fields.

The Evening News, June 18th, 1891 contains a long article which congratulates "*our Gosport friends upon the success of yesterday's proceedings in connection with the public opening of the park and pleasure grounds laid out upon [27 acres of] waste land known as Ewer Common*". A piece of land which "*was useless*", "*is now transformed into a well laid-out recreation ground, with a capital cycle track and running path*".

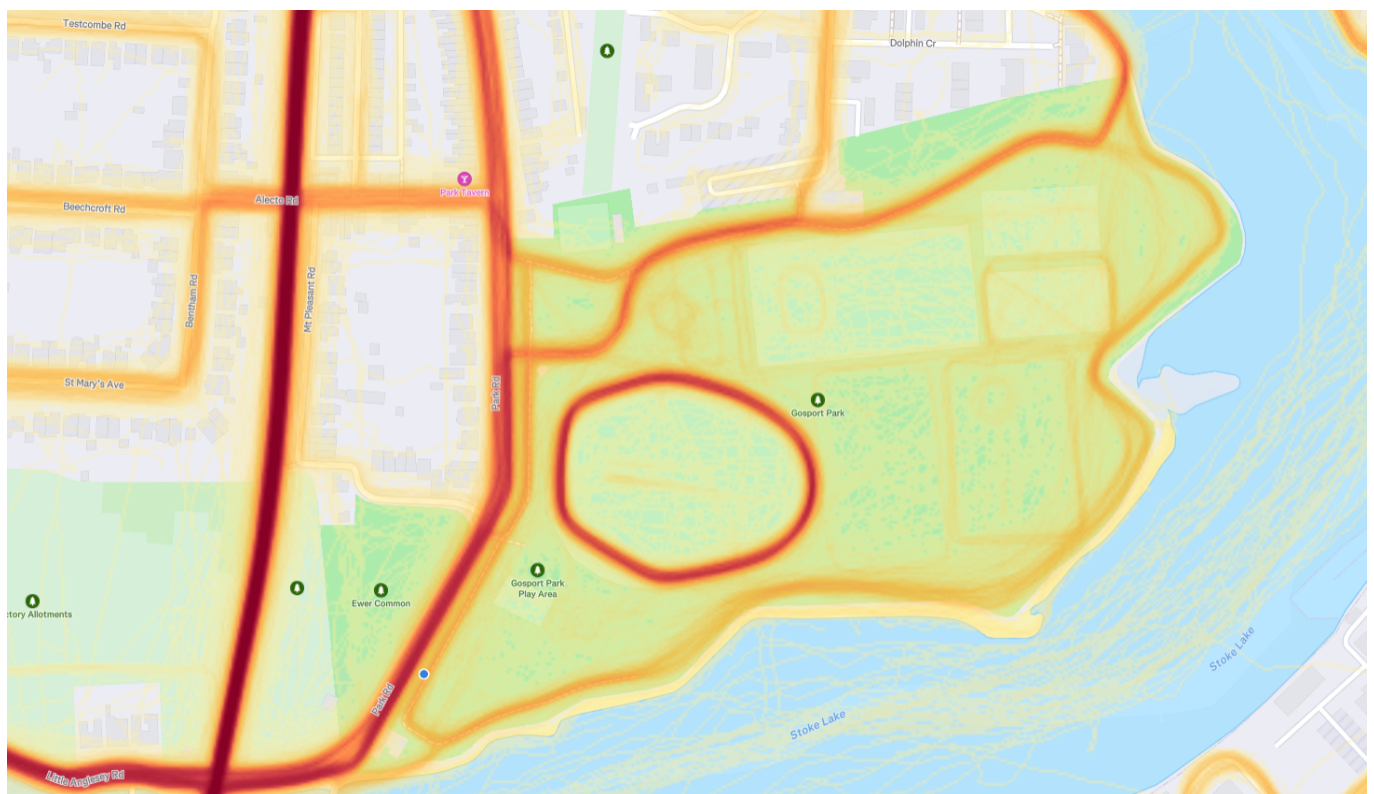
Describing the Dell, it says "*The track itself, which is about three laps to the mile, is egg-shaped, the curves making easy sweeps. An unsightly gravel pit has been turfed, and will make excellent courts for tennis, the sloping sides sheltering the players, and effectually keeping the balls from straying too far*". They also note that a "*spacious carriage-drive runs around the whole ground*", and that the whole park is "*an ornament and a credit to the parish*". By 1896 it had made it onto the Ordnance Survey map of the area:



The newspaper made it clear that a lot of work had been done to secure this land for public use, and that it brought the outdoor recreation facilities in Gosport into line with Fareham, Havant, and even Portsmouth. The opening day itself was reported as a momentous occasion: Colonel Mumby (Chairman of the Gosport and Alverstoke Local Board, who were responsible for the purchase and development of the park) organised the day of celebration. It was described by the newspaper as “*almost a general holiday, with many of the tradesmen closing their establishments*”, and that “*there must have been nearly 5,000 people present*”. “*The whole town was en fete, and never perhaps has anything excited more general interest than the opening of this fine piece of land*”.

The celebrations started with a cricket match between Portsmouth and Gosport on the new playing field, where Gosport “*sustained a severe beating*”. Moving along, there was then a “*full luncheon*” (“*a capital meal, to which full justice was done*”).

After the meal, an afternoon of sports events started, including “a 220 yard flat race, a sack race, half-mile race, three-legged race, throwing the cricket ball, a pebble race”, and then something called “Six Men and Officers’ Turn Out Drill (wet)” which seems to have involved “an engine, two 40ft lengths of hose, two lengths of suction, men seated 25 yards from the engine, a strike target 12ft high, tunics, helmets, belts and axes” - it sounds brilliant. All in all, “the proceedings throughout were of a thoroughly pleasing character”.



Over 130 years later, the ‘heatmap’ from a well-known sports tracking app shows how much the Dell is still in use to this day, and how lucky we are to have it in ‘our’ corner of Gosport - it really is “a credit to the parish”. So next time you’re in the middle of a killer Intervals session on the pitch, or running “Mike’s Mile”, think to yourself, “it could be worse - we could be doing *Six Men and Officers’ Turn Out Drill (wet)*”.

Tom and Brian

Technology Corner

Steve Calder

As I approach 5 years of running every day, I thought I would share an insight on some of the technology that has helped me to keep going. Whether you're a seasoned marathoner or just starting out, integrating technology into your routine can provide motivation, track progress, and connect you with a community of like-minded runners.

Strava: Your Social Running Companion

Strava is more than just a GPS tracker; it's a social network for athletes. By recording your runs, you can analyse performance metrics like pace, distance, and elevation. Strava's segments feature allows you to compete virtually with others on specific stretches of your route, adding a fun, competitive edge to your runs. Plus, the ability to share your activities and give kudos to fellow runners fosters a supportive community. Basic Strava is free but you can pay for a premium version which has a lot of additional features. Alternatives would be **Garmin Connect** (if you have a Garmin watch), **Runkeeper** and **Komoot**.

Smashrun: Deep Dive into Your Data

For those who love data, Smashrun is a fantastic tool. It provides detailed analytics on your running habits and performance over time. With features like badges for achievements and ranks against peers, Smashrun turns your running data into a motivational tool. It's perfect for those who want to understand their running patterns and see tangible progress.

CityStrides: Explore Every Street

CityStrides is a unique platform that encourages you to explore your city by running every street. It automatically tracks your progress and shows which streets you've completed. This can be a great way to discover new areas and keep your runs interesting. The visual representation of your progress on a map is both satisfying and motivating. I have completed Gosport and am now working my way around Fareham. An alternative to this would be Summitbag which leans more to trail running recording hills you "bag" and your elevation gains.

Why Embrace Technology?

- **Motivation:** Seeing your progress and earning badges can be incredibly motivating.
- **Community:** Connecting with other runners, sharing your achievements, and participating in challenges can make running more enjoyable.
- **Insight:** Detailed analytics help you understand your performance and identify areas for improvement.
- **Exploration:** Discover new routes and explore your city in ways you never thought possible.

So, lace up your shoes, fire up your favorite app, and let's hit the road! Whether you're tracking your run on Strava, analyzing your data on Smashrun, or exploring new streets with CityStrides, technology can be a powerful ally in your running journey.

Happy running!

Steve Calder - Men's Captain

The Big Pilgrimage

Tom Reader

This is a recommendation for a run to think about signing up for next year - I did it this year and really enjoyed it. It's a bit different, and being right on our doorstep it might be a good one to try to get a GRR group to in 2026.

The BigFeat "Big Pilgrimage" run (17th August this year - next year's date to be announced) was a bit out of the ordinary, in a number of ways. For a start, it's a 'point to point', so we parked the car in Titchfield, got on the coach transport provided to the start which was in Mayflower Park, Southampton, then ran back. That was the 15 mile route - a full Marathon option is also available, with the finish of that route being at Boundary Oak School outside Wickham. Another 'different' feature of this run was the requirement to collect a number of stickers, each different, which were being given out at waypoints along the route, and attach them to our running number.

This was a run on very mixed terrain: The first part was on pavements through Southampton City Centre, past the cruise ship terminals, over the Itchen Bridge, then out of the city, through the grounds of Netley Abbey and Royal Victoria Country Park - some of which was very much 'off-road' - along the waterfront and then into Hamble-le-Rice.

At this point was another of the unusual features of this run: a ferry crossing. With the number of runners taking part, there was a queue for the 'Pink Ferry' to take us over the Hamble, so this was never going to be a run to 'race' or worry about times. While we waited, we took full advantage of a feed station placed just before the ferry crossing: We were invited to take a paper 'pick-n-mix' bag and fill it from a selection of sweets, including a delicacy called "Peanut Butter Filled Pretzel Nuggets" (how I got to the age of 52 without previously being aware of these, I don't know).



Better than just another photo of me running

After the ferry crossing, with its short opportunity for a sit-down in the sun, we continued: There was some great support outside the Rising Sun in Warsash, then we ran along the waterfront on shingle, past the Solent Breezes holiday park, along the 'cliff-top route' to Meon, then finally turned in-land for the 'last little bit' back along the canal to Titchfield. The last 2 miles were, for some reason, some of the longest miles I can remember running - I nearly ran out of steam, but right at the last minute before getting to the finish, was another feed station (presumably aimed at the Marathon-distance runners) where I was able to replenish on - you guess it - more of the Peanut Butter pretzel-things.

Getting back to Titchfield (the finish line was in the grounds of the Abbey), I was given the most colourful medal I think I've ever seen, then grabbed a coffee and sat in the sun, pleased with myself for making it through a tough but very enjoyable and varied run.



Even the medal's got sweets on it

Memorable comment: "Amazingly, I've never fallen over on a run so far".

Number of times fell over during the following hour: 2.

Number of peanut butter filled pretzels eaten: I think I got my money's worth.

Tom Reader

Jersey Half Marathon and parkrun

Zoe Windsor



Our adventure away included both the Canaccord Jersey Half Marathon and the Jersey parkrun for those chasing a 'J'. We all flew from Southampton which was lovely rather than having to go all the way to Gatwick!



Saturday was parkrun day, starting at the Les Quennevais Sports Centre, which involved two laps of an undulating course. Those needing a J successfully achieved this. Gosport even got a shout out on their Facebook page for making an appearance.

Sunday was half marathon day, again starting at the sports centre. Coaches were laid on for transport for both ways. This was the nicest day of weather we had had so far and so we knew it was going to be hot. We got the coach at 7am which left plenty of time for toilet stops. We started off with what was the parkrun route before exiting the park and heading out onto the roads.

Suddenly at about mile 3ish we took a sharp decline that went on for a long time, all I could think was I hope we do not have to run up here at the end! The roads continued to be undulating, until a very steep hill at mile 6 which everyone walked up: this was rewarded with stunning views at the very top. From there we descended downhill and along the flat 5 mile road. Not much to see along here except lots of old German emplacement and bunkers.

Mile 11 was approaching and I knew this was going to be a tough hill, needing to walk up this I could hear the shouts from the support crew. The hill seemed to go on and on, it was great to see everyone, and this gave us a boost as we knew we would be near the end. Even once at the top it continued to be undulating until about mile 12 where we found ourselves back around the park where we had started off. Overall, 392 runners completed the half, it was well marshalled and organised, views and scenery were lovely. Course route of over 1100ft elevation.

Some of us stayed in the cheaper hotel which we nicknamed 'nans' bedroom due to dated décor, however it was local to everything we needed and had a great breakfast, and I would stay there again.

We made the most of our time there going to:

- Jersey War Tunnels
- The Lido
- Maritime Museum
- Tourist Train
- Howard Davies Garden
- Jersey Museum
- Elizabeth Castle

Plus all the bus rides and great food - we had a great weekend.

Zoe Windsor



Great North Run

Honor Reader

Geordies give the best support
Run, keep running
Every step, one step closer to the end
Amarzing weather
Toilet queues - enough said

Never give up
Over the Tyne Bridge
Red Arrows flying by
The Brain Tumour Charity supported
Happy just to make it to the start line

Run, keep running
Undeniably emotional
Newcastle race... or was it?



Honor Reader

Dates for your Diary

Club Events

See 'Spond' app for most up-to-date information.

Tuesday 4th November	8:00pm	Pafos information meeting. After the Time Trial at Kingfisher.
Tuesday 25th November	6:45pm	Joint Intervals session. Location TO BE CONFIRMED.
Sunday 14th December	9:20am	Christmas Handicap - meet at Kingfisher
Thursday 18th December	6:40pm	Mulled Wine run. Meet at clubhouse, run to Alverbridge Nursery for mulled wine.
Friday 30th January 2026	7:00pm	Club Awards Night. Alverbank Hotel
Sunday 6th-10th March		GRR on tour in Paphos

HRRL Events

Saturday 8th November	Gosport Helpers' Half (qualifies as HRRL for helpers)
Sunday 16th November	Gosport Half - HELPERS NEEDED PLEASE
Sunday 7th December	Victory 5 mile
Sunday 1st February 2026	Ryde 10
Sunday March 8th	Solent Half
Sunday April 12th	Salisbury 10 mile
Sunday May 10th	Alton 10 mile
Sunday May 17th	Netley 10k
June (DATE TO BE CONFIRMED)	Alresford 10k
Sunday July 5th	Lordshill 10k

SCCL Events

Sunday 2nd November - 11:00am	Benyons Inclosure
Sunday 23rd November - 11:00am	Bourne Woods
Sunday 21st December - 11:00am	Lord Wandsworth College
Sunday 18th January 2026 - 11:00am	Chawton House
Sunday 8th February - 11:00am	100 Acre Wood
Sunday 1st March - 11:00am	Alice Holt

Other Events

Saturday 27th December	10:30am	Portsmouth Joggers "Pub 2 Pub" 10k (Rowans Hospice)
------------------------	---------	---

And Finally...

"On your own, you go faster. But with friends, you go further".



GRR Online...

GRR Website

All Club information relating to official meets and events can be found on the 'events' page of our website, and all members are encouraged to look at this regularly.

Not all details are posted on the Club's Facebook page, so make sure you add the GRR website to your bookmarks list:

<https://gosportroadrunners.org.uk/>

Social Media

The Club's Facebook members' page is very active, and is the main place where Club members share stories, race experiences, photos, arrange out-of-Club meetings, etc. Search Facebook for 'Gosport Road Runners Members page' or follow this link to see what's going on:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1930144613918921>

We are also on Instagram: <https://instagram.com/gosportroadrunners>

GRR Newsletter

If you have anything that you would like to contribute towards future editions, all input is very much appreciated; from brief details of races that you've taken part in, photos that you have taken of Club runners/events, interesting articles that you have come across, funny stories - basically anything that you would find of interest or think other Club Members will enjoy reading!

Please continue to help make this an interesting read and don't leave it all to Tom! It's OUR Club and OUR newsletter.

You can send comments, articles, and any content to us either via Facebook, or by email to newsletter@gosportroadrunners.org.uk