

The road to recovery is not always straight

As 2025 drew to an end I started to draw up a list of races to enter in the New Year. This is a ritual that I've done for many years – the plan being to run for a medal each month. Romsey 5, Stubbington 10k, Ryde 10 mile, Winchester 10k. All signed up and paid before New Year's fireworks. And all before my Achillies decided it had other things in mind.



With the eve of Romsey 5 around the corner, I decided to withdraw. Everything would heal for Stubbington. Physiotherapy and recommended exercises duly undertaken and things started to feel better.

But I've been here before. Achillies heel injuries have literally been my Achillies heel. If anything is going to scupper a race for me, its going to be my heel. So, for once, I followed sage advice. Plenty of warm-up exercises, before a single lap of the local park – gravel and grass to reduce any impact – and no more. Mild pain after six weeks off, but manageable. Two days later I ventured to two laps, repeated again two days later. By now Stubbington had been rejected. Then three laps and then four (around two miles).

At only two miles, trekking all the way to the Isle of Wight for 10 miles would have been madness. Fortunately, I was able to sell my place and get a refund for the ferry. But I did complete a parkrun, confirming that for a short distance, running was back on.

My Winchester 10k did include walking up the hills and was my slowest time of all eight attempts, but it was successful. Now, where's the credit card to sign up for another race?

In this edition

- The road to recovery is not always straight
- Recent results
- Doing something different
- Athletics Heroes
- Forthcoming Events

Andover Athletic Club
Charlton Track, West Portway,
Andover SP10 3LF
www.andoverathletics.co.uk



Recent Results

7th February: South-West Schools Cross-Country, Exhibition Fields, Exeter



Super muddy at the southwest schools race today! I came 3rd out of the Wiltshire girls and qualified for the national finals in Liverpool!

Report and photo: Sophie Warner

Recent Results

7th February: Hampshire County Cross-Country Championships, Dinton Pastures Country Park



Photo: Rebecka Searle

Proper XC conditions today at Dinton Activity Centre for the final round of the Hampshire Cross-Country League

Senior & Veteran Men

- 41st Alex Culley 40:59
(U20 Season 12th) & (Sen. Season 42nd)
- 62nd Mike Webber 43:13
(Sen. Season 77th) (Vet. Season 17th)
- 102nd Darrell Waite 48:35
(Sen. Season 127th) (Vet. Season 57th)
- 120th Craig Kennedy 50:35
(Sen. Season 138th) (Vet. Season 62nd)

Peter Warner
(Sen. Season 167th) (Vet. Season 81st)

Senior Men Division III (Season results)

2nd Andover AC

NEWBURY ATHLETIC CLUB

NEWBURY 10K

MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY, BERKSHIRE
MONDAY 25 MAY 2026

RACE TIMES

0.9k @ 9.10am
FOR 5-10 YEARS, ENTRY FEE £5

1.5k @ 9.20am
FOR UNDER 15s, ENTRY FEE £5

10k @ 10.00am
ENTRY FEE
£23 AFFILIATED
£25 UNAFFILIATED

Register online



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FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE RUN ROUTE:
newburyac.org.uk/road-running/newbury10k

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Recent Results

7th February: Hampshire County Cross-Country Championships, Dinton Pastures Country Park

Senior & Veteran Women

34th Christina Searle 33:22 (1st in age category)
(Sen. Season 51st)

Sophie Warner (Sen. Season 45th)

U11 Girls

21st Aurora Short 9:18

(U11 season 24th)



Recent Results

22nd February: Wokingham Half Marathon

371st Georgie Annett 1:27:18

374th Chris Dewey 1:27:20

862nd Craig Kennedy 1:40:14



Photo: R.Searle



Photo: C.Kennedy

22nd February: Winchester 10k

93rd Archie McKellar 41:32

454th Lisa McKellar 53:44

836th Tom Evison 1:02:34



Photos: A.McKellar / T. Evison

'Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather, to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, a loudly proclaiming, "Wow, what a ride".'

Hunter S Thompson

Remember, anything that adds years to your life, will be adding them to the end, not the beginning or now. So, live in the now.



What's with the ducks?

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Southern Athletic League Meetings 2026

Following the UKA Fixtures Meeting held recently the SAL have been allocated the following dates ...

1. Saturday 16th May – Andover (Dorset hosting)
2. Sunday 21st June - Aldershot
3. Sunday 19th July - Andover
4. Saturday 8th August - Aldershot

Division 3 West

Aldershot F&D (Relegated)

Team Kennet and Marlborough (Composite)

Team Dorset (Composite)

Andover Havant Chichester

Wessex League Matches 2026

The following fixtures have been confirmed for the Wessex League.

Sunday 19th April – Basingstoke

Sunday 14th June – Andover

Sunday 5th July – Salisbury

Sunday 12th July – Swindon

Team Managers: Fliss Stuart /

2026-27 Membership Renewal

The annual membership renewal comes into effect on 1st April. Any member not renewed by 1st May can have their membership (access to training and entry to events) removed.

Membership forms will be available from the website [Membership | Andover Athletic Club | Andover, Hampshire](#) by the end of February.

There will be three membership renewal forms:

- Athletic / Competing members
- Supporter members
- Ad hoc / monthly membership

The Athletic / Competing members form lists fees for the whole year, half year and last quarter. The latter two categories ONLY apply to newly joining members. If membership has lapsed for less than two years, you need a full annual membership.

The Ad hoc / monthly membership has been introduced for EA athletes looking to train at the club whilst on holiday, (e.g. university students) and not for returning members. Further details will be on the forms.

Note also that the EA fee has increased this year to £23, but your overall fee has not increased.

Articles for submission.

The Andover Athletic Club newsletter is about the members and their exploits on track, field, road and cross-country.

Whether you compete in club, school, or Country colours, we'd love to hear how you get on. Articles are often less than 20 words long! Forward your story, ideally with a picture, to aacchairman@yahoo.com



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Doing something different.

If you're serious about your sport, why would you do another? When you mix in a few different activities that strengthen your heart, lungs and muscles, you'll also be teaching your brain how to understand your limits and how to go longer and harder, no matter what sport you're doing.

If you only do one type of sport or exercise, you'll exercise the same muscles, possible to exhaustion and injury.

Running.

Almost all sports benefit from including running. If building stamina through your running is your goal, your body and mind will learn and adapt by doing lots of it. Long runs at a steady pace improve your economy, aerobic capacity and fuel-burning efficiency. But its best to mix things up, including sprint intervals.

Walking and Rucking

Don't underestimate the simplicity of walking. Firstly, its time on your feet and usually outdoors in fresh air. However, add a load (backpack or a weighted vest) and you have rucking – not the rugby scrum. The additional weight increases your heart rate, increases the intensity of movement, but without the impact of running on joints. This will also have a positive effect on bone density.



Swimming and aqua jogging

Swimming is inherently low impact, making it a great cross-training exercise. Swimming will build strength in the heart and lungs, especially if you build in harder efforts. Depending upon the stroke, you'll also work upper and lower muscle groups.

Strength and plyometric training

Strength training largely includes exercises like jumping, squats and burpees. You don't need to start lifting weights! This is about making muscles stronger, not bigger. You're improving your power delivery. However, this helps with endurance and stamina, moving with greater economy and efficiency. Exercises such as press ups, planks, balancing and Russian twists will improve core muscles and lead to great stability.

Cycling

Cycling, like swimming, removes some of the impact experienced in running. Cycling allows you to develop stamina in your heart and lungs without the impact on the musculoskeletal system.

By engaging with a range of different sports or training exercises, not only will you improve your primary event, but you'll also go a long way to improving overall health and fitness, together with avoiding any injury.

As with any exercise, consult your coach, physiotherapist, or doctor before starting any new routine of exercises.

Athletics Heroes

Sophie Hitchon

Trailblazing and much respected hammer thrower who broke new ground and new barriers in women's throwing.



Photo: Daily Mail

Sophie Hitchon is a true trailblazer who continually broke new ground and new barriers in women's throwing across a successful 12-year domestic and international career. The first milestone for the young Lancastrian emerged in April 2007 when she set an Under-17 National Record (NR) of 49.61. By the end of that season, she had gained experience at the World Youth Championships in Ostrava and further improved her PB to over 54m. The following year she set a new Junior record with a throw just shy of 60m and from there the podium finishes began. The Commonwealth Youth title came first at the end of 2008 and was followed by European Junior bronze in 2009 (63.18 for another junior NR).

In 2010, she was a key figure in the British team at the world juniors in Canada. Once again leading by example, Hitchon took the title with her first throw over 66m and an U23 NR. Clearly at home in her new age group, European U23 bronze was added to the collection of medals in 2011 (69.59 U23NR) before she picked up invaluable experience and no shortage of plaudits, finishing 8th in the Olympic final in London 2012 (with a fantastic PB of 71.98 in qualifying).

Athletics Heroes

By now, 70m throws were becoming the norm and she upgraded Euro U23 bronze from 2011 to gold in Tampere in 2013, again adhering to her now familiar pattern of saving her best throw for the final round.

Commonwealth bronze in Glasgow was the highlight of 2014 before she flew tantalisingly close to the global senior podium in the searing heat of Beijing at the world champs of 2015, finishing 4th with 73.86 (NR) in the last round. And so, to the crowning moment of her career. All those medals and achievements led her to Brazil and an Olympic final packed with talent and experience. Lying just shy of the medals going into the last round, Hitchon summoned all her composure and self-belief to launch the throw of her life. A new NR 74.54 saw her leap onto the podium, becoming the first British hammer thrower in history to win an Olympic medal. To do it with her final effort was testament to the talent and dedication which had defined her progress over the previous 10 years.

For an athlete to produce a personal best in an Olympic final is the ultimate sign of peaking at the right time under incredible pressure. To do so knowing history beckoned makes Sophie Hitchon's bronze medal even more remarkable. She eventually retired in 2021 with the respect, admiration, and gratitude of the whole athletics community.

Courtesy of the athleticsmuseum.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

A list of future Track & Field, Road Race, Cross-Country and Open Events. You are encouraged to wear your club vest wherever you compete and let us know your results, ideally with a photograph.

7th-8th March: BMAF Winter Throws, Horspath Oxford <https://data.opentrack.run/en-gb/x/2026/GBR/bmaf-itfc/>

8th March: Solent Half (HRRL7)

10th – 13th March: Cheltenham Festival

14th March: Basingstoke Throws Winter Series

15th March: Junior Cross-Country, Wellesley Wood

15th March: Siren Craft Brew 10k, Finchampstead [Barnes Fitness : Siren Craft Brew 10km](#)

22nd March: Eastleigh 10k

22nd March: Reading Half Marathon

22nd March: EFL Cup Final (Carabao Cup)

22nd March: [Wellow Way 10K | March 22, 2026](#)

29th March: Combe Gibbet to Overton 16 mile

29th March: Fleet Half Marathon

4th April: Basingstoke & Mid Hants AC Young Athletes Open Meeting
<https://meets.rosterathletics.com/public/competitions/details/about?id=27603>

4th April: [Testway Ultra | And Over Trail Event](#)

6th April: [Mortimer 10km - April 6th | Racing Line Running](#)

11th April: Grand National

12th April: Salisbury 10 (HRRL8)

19th April: Wessex League, Match 1 – Basingstoke

26th April: London Marathon

3rd May: [ABP Southampton Marathon Festival 2026 – Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K & 5K](#)

10th May: Alton 10 (HRRL9)

16th May: SAL Match 1 Dorset

Forthcoming Events

17th May: Netley 10k (HRRL10)

19th May: Thruxton 10k Series, Race 1

25th May: Newbury 10k

6th June: Endure Reading

14th June: Wessex League, Match 2 – Andover

16th-20th June: Royal Ascot

18th-21st June: US Open Golf

21st June: Alresford 10k (HRRL11)

21st June: SAL Match 2, Aldershot

23rd June: Thruxton 10k Series, Race 2

5th July: Lordshill 10k (HRRL12)

5th July: Wessex League, Match 3 – Salisbury

12th July: Wessex League, Match 4 - Swindon

19th July: SAL Match 3, Andover

21st July: Thruxton 10k Series, Race 3

8th August: SAL Match 4, Aldershot

30th August: Totton 10k (HRRL1)

6th September: Overton 5 mile (HRRL2) (tbc)

25th October: New Forest 10 mile (HRRL3) (tbc)

15th November: Gosport Half (HRRL4) (tbc)

6th December: Victory 5 (HRRL5) (tbc)

International / Elite Events

6th – 15th March: Winter Paralympics, Milano Cortino, Italy

26th April: London Marathon

11th June-19th July: FIFA Worlcs Cup, North America

29th June-12th July: Wimbledon Tennis Championships

5th July: British Formula 1 Grand Prix

2nd November: New York Marathon

7th December: Valencia Marathon