



Vegpatch

February 2010

*Newsletter of the
Vegetarian Cycling and Athletics Club*



The White Band of Vegetarian Cycling – Noel Molland

If I was to describe a black cycling jumper with a distinctive white arm band many people might think I was talking about the modern Rapha Condor's cycling kit. However back in 1910 this look marked you as a vegetarian cyclist!

In September 1887 an enthusiastic vegetarian and keen cyclist, Leslie Large started the Vegetarian Cyclists Club with its formal foundation the following year. The aim of the Club was to get like minded vegetarian cyclists together and also prove you didn't need to eat meat to be an athlete. The Club proved popular and by the Autumn of 1888 it had over 100 members.

In 1896 the Club won its first significant success when Jim Parsley won the prestigious Catford Hill Climb, one of the country's premier cycling events at the time. Ten years later, Club member George Antony Olley, started setting records by breaking the London to Edinburgh and Lands End to John O'Groats records in 1907 and 1908. He also broke the 1000 mile record in 1907. Many other Club members were marking their own significant achievements.

With the Club going from strength to strength and taking part in more and more competitions a problem arose at the feeding stations set up to assist cyclists on longer rides. At the time all cyclists, regardless of what team they rode for, all wore the same black cycling kit. On longer rides it became problematic for vegetarian cyclists who

were stopping at the feed stations because they were being slowed down as they needed to identify themselves as vegetarians. Therefore in 1910 it was decided that to help identify a vegetarian cyclist at the feed stations the Club members would wear a white band on their left arm. This meant as soon as the feed station volunteer saw a white band coming towards them they were able to select the appropriate food and the vegetarian cyclist would be able to collect their food supplies as easily as their meat eating counterparts.

This quickening up at the feed stations must of worked, as Club members continued to mark themselves out as superb athletes even to the point that in 1912 three Club members were selected to represent England on the Cycling Road Racing team at the Olympic Games in Stockholm. A further two Club members rode for Scotland and one member rode for Ireland at the same Olympics. Six Club members in one Olympics! Not bad for a small band of vegetarian cyclists and athletes.

Foot Note: At the 2009 AGM it was agreed that Club members could once again wear a white arm band over their Club cycle jumpers, if they wanted to, in recognition of our history and the fact the white band marks us as vegetarians.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Peter Simpson whose history page about the Club (found on the Club website) proved so useful in writing this article.

Henry Light Memorial Trophy



Henry Light was a founder member and Captain of the Vegetarian Cyclists' Club, later to become the Vegetarian Cycling and Athletics Club.



VCACs' Geoff Guy wears the white armband on the Catford 24 hour time trial. Guy won the event in 1938 (433.25 miles), 1939 (440.25) and 1948 (430.50)

Social Bike Rides in Devon & Cornwall

In Devon & Cornwall, local Club members organise social/leisure bike rides throughout the year. The rides take place across the whole of Devon & Cornwall and the groups tend to quite small (usually just two or three people). By having small groups it means we are able to design our rides around the people taking part (usually we just ride somewhere that is nice and easy so we can enjoy a good chat and just enjoy being out - The rides are never strenuous - Although when a couple of CTC members joined us last year we did organise a hilly ride, through some rural back lanes, to keep them happy).

If anyone is either based in Devon or Cornwall or is visiting the two counties and fancies joining us for a ride, please do get in contact. We welcome all veggie, vegan & fruitarian cyclists and everyone is welcome, regardless of age, experience or cycling skills.

Predicting Race Times – Keith Hammond

I would guess that most of the club's regular runners are aware of the various race time predictors that can be found on the internet. As someone who is interested in the statistical aspects of running, I have built up quite a collection of links to various online race calculators; I have even found a calculator that takes into account changes in elevation, the effect of wind speed etc (perhaps I need to get out actually running more than I already do).

With the VCAC running results for 2008/09 now collated, I thought it would be interesting to compare the ratios between different race distances, to those used in some of the race calculators.

I have used the average of five different prediction tables to calculate what I have called the 'theoretical ratio'. These are based on the ratios used on the online calculator on the Runner's World website, together with ratios used by the following writers/coaches; Pfitzinger & Douglas, Bob Glover, Greg McMillan, and Jack Daniels.

For the VCAC results I have taken a runner's fastest time for the season at 10K, Half Marathon and where appropriate, at the Marathon.

Predicting Half Marathon from a 10K time.

The theoretical ratio is 2.22, ie if a runner completes a 10K in 50 minutes, their predicted half marathon time would be 1hr 51 mins.

Based on twenty one runners the VCAC ratio is 2.21. While there are variations in the actual VCAC results, none of these were significantly different to the average.

Predicting Marathon from a Half Marathon time

The theoretical ratio is 2.10, while the VCAC ratio (based on twelve runners) is 2.32.

Predicting Marathon from a 10K time

The theoretical ratio is 4.67, while the VCAC ratio (based on twelve runners) is 5.00.

The Runner's World calculator uses a ratio of 4.60, so based on a 10K time of 50 mins, this would predict a marathon time of 3hr 50mins, while the VCAC ratio would predict 4hrs 10 mins, a difference in pace of around 45 secs per mile.

I think the comparisons of the ratios for predicting marathon times actually highlights one of the weaknesses of the online calculators. As far as I can tell, the data used to calculate the theoretical ratios is based on times for elite/fast runners, presumably all of whom will have trained specifically for their specialist distance. For those of us who are not so fast, it isn't possible to cover the number of miles that top marathon runners achieve, hence there is likely to be a disparity between the theoretical ratio and the actual figure.

You won't be surprised to hear that I tracked down some research on this and it appears that to achieve a ratio of around 4.60 to 4.70 it would be necessary for most runners to average about 65 to 70 miles or more per week in training.

An average weekly (marathon training programme) mileage of 45 to 50 miles would equate to a ratio of around 4.85 to 5.00. Viewed from this perspective, the VCAC ratio is probably what would be expected, given the likely average mileage for most of the club's marathon runners.



Keith Hammond

For shorter distances most, if not all, club runners are able to run up to 10K and 13.1 miles in training, or complete slow runs that will equal their expected race time. In effect it is possible to have a similar training pattern to elite runners (albeit with proportionally lower mileages).

In fact the half marathon is as popular with VCAC members as the 10K, with about the

same number of runners sending in results for the two distances, so it is quite likely that training for half marathons is also benefiting 10K times.

Conclusions

While the above comparisons are based on an admittedly small number of results, I think it is fair to say that online race predictors are genuinely useful when considering race times in the range of 5 miles to half marathon. Even the most cautious runner would only have to add about 2 to 3 mins to their predicted half marathon time (assuming that the 10K and half marathon races are on similar courses etc)

For predicting marathon times (particularly from 10K races) it is probably best for most club runners to take a cautious approach and to add at least 10 minutes, probably more, to the online predictions, or to use a ratio in the range of 4.85 to 5.0. For those who regularly run marathons, it should be possible to develop your own personal ratios, which should prove more reliable.

Keith Hammond
VCAC Results Secretary

Athletics

VCAC Athletics Secretary Steve Coote asks members about their plans.

Given the disruption to racing over the last few weeks, and that I only took over this role in January, I thought that rather than looking backward for this piece I would ask various running members to look

forward to their year. So the first point I learnt is that not everyone enjoys setting themselves targets way in distance so they can then enjoy the process of scouring the fixture lists, as do I.

Response was, to say the least, patchy.

One who does seem to share my approach is Graham Tracey, a former Athletics Secretary for the club.

“I don’t know how much credence to attach to the work of Malcolm Gladwell or indeed how well known he is. He’s written a few books on how you can seize opportunities and play the hand you have to your full potential. His most recent book was called ‘Outliers’ and put forward the proposition that whatever you do, either in work or leisure, will take 10 years of consistent effort before you are fully utilising your talent and experience.



Graham Tracey

Well, my first ever race was almost exactly 10 years ago, and I think I probably had 8 years of improvement. I’ve had plenty of things that I’m proud of and can never be taken away, most notably for me a 2:58 marathon – for a long time I planned just to have those 3 numbers on my tombstone. I guess like everyone, I savoured

the good times whilst they lasted, but never really thought they would be gone all too fast. Slowly, slowly, work got more and more hectic, I couldn’t maintain a sub-11 stone weight, and I acquired a family unit. In the autumn I was diagnosed with a treatable thyroid condition, which explained a lot, but a return to those salad days seems unlikely.

But running remains as enjoyable as ever. The demands of work and home make the window for a run one to be seized with relish – be it enjoying the daylight of the odd day working from home, or a quick half hour at 9 pm when my step-daughter has finally settled. The challenge to beat last year’s time in races remains powerful. I am keen to maintain my average weekly mileage of 30 over a 10 year period. And with plans to relocate to the attractive but flat Wirral, any chance to run on the West Pennine moors which made me the half-decent runner I was at one time, and introduced me to many fiercer competitors than I, is taken as if it is my last ever run (memories of Steve Coote breaking his ankle on Rivington Pike may influence this). Next

year I turn 40 and whilst the Veteran classes don’t excite me too much, the two guys I travel to races with also hit 50 and 60 around the same time and so the talk of a beer-fuelled overnight stay after the Coniston 14 in the Lake District next spring certainly does.

Finally, my most left-field motivation at present is to run over 30 miles a week, which I have read skews the odds of conceiving a daughter instead of a son to 60:40 instead of 50:50. This is the preference of my girlfriend (and her daughter), and so being encouraged to run by my sport-hating partner is an unexpected treat!

There are a few things that many people who know me will think of me when they hear of them: Morrissey, Leicester City Football Club, distance running and vegetarianism. Long may it continue.”

In stark contrast to this, Glynis Simmons has had the misfortune to be advised by her doctor to retire from running due to an arthritic knee. Determined, after a longish lay off, to regain some fitness and shed those extra few pounds that suddenly appear on all of us when we stop

running, she is concentrating on gym work. 'Really wish I could have been writing about my plans for 2010,' she signed off a touch sadly. Husband John is looking to improve his times with two or three half marathons in the coming year, with Glynis hoping to help him fulfil his goals.

Andy Jordan, meantime, has no set plans either, but is looking to continue doing the ultras with which he had so much success in 2009.

For my own part, I have found that as I get older that I can no longer just identify things I would like to do in the knowledge that I will in any case be doing

sufficient base training so that even the most apparently outlandish goals will only require a few weeks event-specific training; planning is required to give me good shot at achieving them.



Steve Coote

So for this year, whilst I am looking to return to the Hull 24 hour in July, having given it away last year largely due to the death of a much-loved

friend in my dog Max, it's much more of a one step at a time approach. My first distance event in The Hebden 22 miler was done as planned mid-January, whilst I hope to go to Hell and Back in early March – that is to 'Ell and Back, an LDWA 30 mile run/walk. Assuming training for, and running this, go to plan then a 50 miler and a 100km routes will be done in April and May. Of course the event itself will have to be entered well before this lot has been completed, but the process of acclimatisation seems necessary.

Steve Coote
VCAC Athletics Secretary

An Introduction to Audax – Nik Windle

So what is Audax?

Audax United Kingdom (AUK) was formed in 1976 to enable UK cyclists to qualify for the classic Paris Brest (PBP). Since then AUK has grown a membership of over 4000 and has spawned various challenges requiring not just distance but climbing (AAA), riding fixed wheel (FWC), riding all year round (RRTY) and so many other competitions that AUK has been said to offer more badges than the boy scouts.

These cycling challenges are all built on the same foundations though, the brevet. A brevet

(which is actually a card the rider gets stamped and is then validated) is awarded for completing a pre-entered ride usually at a speed between 15kph and 30kph including stops. To prove the distance has been covered proofs of visiting pre-determined 'controls' must be gathered en route, these were traditionally stamps on the card itself but now often take the form of till receipts etc. Rides vary from 50k to over 1400k with 'serious' audax riding starting at 200k.

AUK record all validated rides but do not record the time taken. A rider who takes 20hrs to complete The Elenith 300 is as worthy of

merit as one who takes 14hrs. The challenge is between the rider and the route. Champion audax riders look to increase the quantity and distance of their rides, not to beat the next man into the finish. An Audax is not a race.

Ok, how does this work in practice for the 1st timer?

A good way for an experienced cyclist to get a feel for audax is to enter and ride a local 100 (kilometres, audax is always kilometres). To view the AUK events calendar go to the [AUK website](#) where a listing of rides can be found with details of start location, facilities, climbing etc. It currently offers 207 events in the next 4 months, about half of these will be 100s. Have a read of the FAQ on the AUK website while you are there. (If you don't have internet access the AUK calendar is published in their magazine Arrivee, I can copy this and post it to members on request.)

So say I'm thinking to ride Dustman Dave's Duddle 100. What do I do?

Ok, well I've never ridden one of Dave's rides but I've ridden with him and he is an experienced club rider and a fine chap who I'm sure won't mind me using his ride as an example. The calendar entry tells me that parking, toilets, luggage storage and refreshments are available. I also see that the minimum speed is (unusually) reduced to 10kph which allows the ride to be treated as a leisurely day out. He gives no further information via the calendar entry but a look at last years results, also available on the AUK website, tells me he had 72 finishers which is a reasonable field for a 100 so he must be doing something right. Note that Dave Saunders is the organiser *not* AUK.

At least 2 weeks before the event you need to print out and complete an entry form and send this off with the required SAEs and cheque. In return you will be sent a route sheet and other information. The route sheet is essential, there will be no arrows or marshals. Usually it consists of a list of instructions such as 'L at T

sp Dunhill' (go left at T-junction signposted Dunhill). There should be an instruction wherever the route deviates from the road you are on. A good route sheet is easy to navigate from once you've got the hang of the format and abbreviations. Many riders trace the route through on a map and some will convert it to a GPS track to navigate by.

Ok so far, so now I've just got to ride it?

So you are at the start and parked up at least 15 minutes early with your bike in good repair and all your usual spares and rations. You will need some way of reading that route sheet on the move. Map holders are often used but I've seen all sorts of improvisations – the route sheet needs to be in front of you, legible and protected from rain. Make sure you collect your brevet card from the organiser and fill in the back, the brevet card will be your proof of passage and will also give any questions you need to answer at Info Controls such as 'Distance on signpost to Marlborough?'.


Nik Windle rides the Kidderminster Killer

Riders usually start as a group which gradually splits into smaller bunches as the ride

progresses. Unless you are one of them you best avoid starting at the front with the fast riders. Informal groups often occur but don't expect riders to wait while you fix a puncture. There will be no sag wagon to bail you out if bike, body or soul fails. Keep a close eye on that route sheet and always try to have the next instruction in mind. There should be at least one control offering food, a café or a village hall maybe. Many audax riders are vegetarian and I've not had a problem finding vegetarian food but as a vegan I now carry my own food and just have coffee at cafés if I want a rest.



Always carry a little something 'just in case'!

Expect some challenging terrain and road surfaces. Organisers like to treat riders to the quietest of back lanes and rarely miss a chance to show off the view from the top of their favourite hill. If you find the going tough or start getting disillusioned remember this is all part of the challenge and your aim should just be to complete the ride before the cut off point. On longer rides it's best just to focus on

reaching the next control in time as telling yourself 'just another 476k to go' is not always comforting.

At the finish ensure you have filled in your card and supplied any required control proofs then sign the back and hand it to the organiser. He will get the brevet validated and recorded by AUK then you will get the card back in the post. There may well be tea and cakes and maybe hot food on offer.

I sort of enjoyed that, what now?

Well have a look at that calendar for your next ride, maybe you're up for a longer one or a hillier one. Riding audax through the night can be a fine adventure. If you think audax is for you then you should consider joining Audax UK. Membership entitles you to Arrivee, a well produced quarterly magazine with loads of photos, ride reports and temptations to new challenges. Membership also gives you access to a whole range of motivating awards. Many, but by no means all, of these only count rides of 200k and above, and only rides over 200k will go towards the VCAC club total recorded by AUK.

Some web links:

You can read about VCAC AUK Dominic Burford's rides at [Dominic's Cycling Adventures](#). A lot of audax chat goes on at the [YACF forum](#) where good advice, conflicting opinions and arcane discussion are rife. Don't forget that [AUK website](#)

If you have any specific audax questions then don't hesitate to email me.

Nik Windle

Steve Coote and Len look at what keeps them going.

I once won a race. I say won, I was joint fastest finisher; I say race, it was an LDWA event with those finishing over three separate distances converging on the community centre simultaneously. It was bizarre. LDWA events can be confusing, so at the time we weren't even sure we were the quickest on our route, just knew we were going well and up the sharp end. Trying to beat each other didn't come into it. Although we had only got to know each other during the run, we had relied on each other's encouragement and navigational skills too much for that. I do remember that even though the tail-end of the route required concentration to avoid stumbling over roots and rocks, and no prizes or even recognition for 'winning' was accorded in such circles, we were both flicking glances over our shoulders to ensure that no one was coming up on the blind side as we sprinted for home.

Such an unlikely scenario is unlikely to be repeated in this life. Even if age were not a factor, over the time I have been into off road, rather than cross-country, running the numbers of runners taking part have mushroomed. At a recent 'walkers' event I attended some two-thirds of the field declared themselves as runners, and I heard two old lags in the changing room afterwards lamenting how they used to win such events with times that would now see them barely in the top third of the field.

So if not winning, and in the nature of things that's an experience for the few rather than the many, what is the drive that keeps those of us who have been in the sport a long time going. Certainly for my time in the sport there have always been veteran categories, but the whole age-group thing seems to have acquired more emphasis over the years, providing an additional spur to many. That moment when one slips into a new category could

be depressing but it does now afford the chance to be the youngest in one's five-year cohort and offering the chance to re-ascend the rankings. I'll have to admit, though, that it's never really grabbed me, being good for my age doesn't seem to quite crack it as much as just pride in not yet being too far down the overall rankings.

PBs. Hope springs eternal and I guess that in long and ultra long distance running in which just keeping on keeping on matters more than direct speed there is always the chance of a PB. More likely as I struggle up yet another hill thinking of my dad who so far as I can recall seemed to settle into comfortable old age in his late thirties, the only real chance is in odd distance races that I have only run once or twice before. Again, many seem to do age group PBs. I can just about see it, and good for those for whom it inspires to some remarkable performances. Doing a twenty-four hour race at Tooting Bec one year I witnessed Don Ritchie beat the 50+ 100km record with six hours of metronomic sub-six minute miling – one for the connoisseurs, that. To me, though, in my own running rather than in that of others, it does speak of inevitable decline rather than triumph over the odds.

Coaching I am afraid I am neither empathetic nor selfless enough to get much from, though a friend of mind kept running well into his seventies largely because he enjoyed having the slowest of beginners, with whom he could keep up, to set on the road, and proud when they started to surpass him.

Triathlon. In some article back when I first got into this it was described as a non-sport in that if one couldn't quite make it, it was always possible to shift the goalposts – find the combination of discipline distances that best suited one,

do it on mountain bikes, introduce kayaks, why not an egg and a spoon? Combining being a runner, and an endurance runner at that, with being a slow swimmer, it's been a whole different experience knifing my way through the field on the run as others tire. But at the end of the day, rather than the running it has been the swimming that has brought me back to triathlon again and again. The challenge that I would otherwise not have dared to take up of swimming in high waves and crashing surf, crossing lakes and even swimming against the flow in swollen rivers, all done in relative safety with the reassuring presence of power boats and canoes on hand.

These days Canix with my dog Len is something I think a lot about. I have learnt a lot through being with dogs, and maybe re-learnt a few things as I have got

older and road races have become repetitive and hills steeper. From the excitement the one walk a day we managed for every dog at the sanctuary I worked at for awhile, to the sheer animal enjoyment my dear old Max experienced to the end when sticks had to be thrown not very far and in a straight line so he knew where they were going as he did when he used to weave through trees to locate the one stick in amongst a pile of other sticks with incredible speed and precision. And one thing Len knows is that whether doing a route on his harness with me or chasing a frisbee, whatever else it is about, running is about fun.

Enjoy the photo; it makes me laugh every time I see it.



Vegetarian Cycling & Athletics Club Roundup

Fragments of VCAC results and news from the last few months – a comprehensive listing of results submitted can be found on our website:

VCACs' Manuel Corriente demonstrated veggie power in the Abingdon Marathon last September with his time of 3:13:59 136/706. Guy Thompson came 1st in the AESS DAS BACK 4.5k with a time of 17:47. Kathleen Hoyle fought through wind, rain, mud and fog to finish October's Beachy Head Marathon. With around 3,500 feet of off-road climbing this sounds like a toughie!



Manuel Corriente runs the 2009 Abingdon Marathon

Ade Gibbon, Mary Davis and Nik Windle got blown about and a good soaking during the Marlow Half Marathon on 1st November. Ade Gibbon first VCAC in with 1:46:09. Peter Simpson was meanwhile experiencing similar condition in Finsbury Park running the Rainforest Foundation 10k in 44:30 31/549.

Conditions were better a week later for Paul Horne who completed the Stowmarket Scenic 7 in 48:42. Paul's run of good weather continued through the Hadleigh 10 mile on 22nd which he completed in 1:09:54 54/330. Nik got on his bike to ride November's Upper Thames 200k Audax.

Off-road Ade ran Herbets Hole XC in 51:15. Emma Smith completed the PECO XC League Race 1 5 mile in 46:10 59/113 then Race 2 in 52:50 69/102. Gideon Stanley ran the Bordon 10m in 1:25:00 85/856.

Our fame has apparently not spread to Clowne as Steve C reports, 'Ran this yesterday, not very well it has to be said, though the rain and wind chill affected lots of people. The final ignominy was arriving at the finish line to hear the announcer say - *'Number 337, that's Steve Coote, Vegetarian Cycling and Athletic Club. Never heard of them!'* Steve W didn't fare much better when he crossed the line in December's Edwinstone 10k Trail Race to a shout of, *'Steve Wigglesworth of the Veterans' Cycling and Athletics Club'*. Steve W ran 40:29 17/433 at Edwinstowe with Emma doing 58:02.

At the Luton Marathon Andy Jordan ran 3:33:48 154/492 and Andy Harper 3:42:24 211/492. Glenn and Caroline Chapman sensibly avoided the UK chill and ran in Jamaica where Glenn completed the Reggae Marathon in 4:29:00 and Caroline the Reggae Half in 2:07:05.

December proved not to be too late in the year for PBs with Keith Hammond knocking 47 secs off his at the Bedford

Half Marathon finishing in 1:27:11 13/173 in the MV45 category. Nik managed to new 10k PB of 47:47 at the Andy Reading 10k 212/445. Noel Molland celebrated cycling 12,000k in 2009, at the beginning of the year he'd set himself the target of 5,000k which he'd raised to 10,000k then 12,000k as the year went on. Nik was pleased to have covered over 1,000 miles in his first year of 'serious' running. Dominic Burford completed his December 200k Perm celebrating 2 years of monthly audax rides of over 200k: RRTY(x2) in AUK jargon.

The worst Winter for 20 years started disrupting plans by dumping several inches of snow on the UK leaving Mike Betts with no choice but to abandon his solo round-England cycle ride. Mike reports, *'The trip was a huge success, and an amazing experience. I got through 26 of the 28 days, 1160 miles ridden in the face of some pretty crappy weather at times, but then got stopped in my tracks by a massive, and massively annoying, snowfall in Colchester.'* Dangerous conditions continued disrupting plans throughout early January resulting in the postponement of the Hit the Trail 5 till the 31st Jan and the effective cancelling of the Poor Student 200 audax. Noel didn't let a bit of snow and ice phase him though and after being snowed in for 3 days gave up

on trying to drive to the shops and just rode his bike there instead.

Paul H and his wife decided a break from the UK weather was needed and went on a dog sledging holiday in Sweden instead. We are told *'that -32C is VERY VERY COLD'*. Whilst they were fed good veggie food and had an experience that he'll never forget Paul did opt out of *'the night out in the open under the stars'*.

A bit of cold didn't stop Andrew Harper, Sharon Hammond and Keith Hammond running the Pirton Boxing Day 3m with Keith first VCAC in 21:01 31/323.

As the snow thawed and temperature crept above zero members were able to resume activities. Keith H and Manuel C ran the Fred Hughes 10 mile at St Albans. Keith achieving 1:06:23 54/617 and Manuel 1:07:17 60/617. Steve C completed the Hebden LDWA event, this year running the longer 22 mile option in 5:14. The hilly going made tougher by chilly melt water and mud. Nik got round the Perm version of the Poor Student.

Stop Press: A quick look at the results of the rescheduled Hit The Trail 5m on 31st January shows Steve Wigglesworth coming in 3rd place with 30:21 and Steve C finishing in 35:46 14/86. Well done guys!