



Vegpatch

The Newsletter of the Vegetarian
Cycling and Athletic Club



September 2012

Welcome

Hi All, and welcome to what I hope with the AGM looming may be my last Vepatch, mind you I've a notion I may have written that about this time last year. It's an interesting job that keeps you well in the centre of all things VCAC but as ever it would be good to bring new people onto the committee and spread the workload.

With the wonderful sporting jamboree of the Olympic Games now past, leaving a few treasured memories – David Rudisha, David Weir, Mo Farah and a wonderful ladies football match between Canada and the USA being amongst mine all the talk is of legacy. You may be an old cynic like me who thinks that in our mayfly-minded society the London Olympics will prove to have been no more than the biggest thing since the last big thing and rapidly to be succeeded by the next, who sees school playing fields still being sold off and councils closing facilities, or someone sees a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform our nation and its health

Either way, I hope there is something more to it than just training up the next batch of Olympians. As someone who spends a lot of both work and play time on computers I value the time I spend doing kids stuff – running, having adventures in the hills, playing catch or whatever - as an antidote to the pull of a sedentary life. What I do know, though, is that for most of us we aren't, and were never going to be, the next Jess Enis or Oscar Pistorious; if legacy there is going to be it's got to be one based on sports being about fun and personal achievement, not just another way to becoming a celeb. There's too much hard graft along the way for that.

An old friend of mine, retired from active running now though he still coaches, is someone I've come to regard as a true athletics veteran. He doesn't qualify by being 35 years old (35, get some miles in your legs) but by having been involved in training and competing in running for over 35 years - at a reasonably high level once, most recently in taking out beginners groups. Now that's what I call a sporting life.

AGM – This year's Annual General Meeting will take place on Sunday 4/11/12. The hall is booked from 1100 to 1600 with the AGM commencing at 1200. The venue is Willen Pavilion, 28 Portland Drive, Willen, Milton Keynes MK15 9JP. This is due to our regular venue being unavailable due to building work. Many thanks to Sharon Hammond for sourcing this alternative venue for us. To facilitate the preparation and distribution of agendas, please ensure all agenda items are notified to the General Secretary, Steve Coote, by the 7/10/12. Items for Any Other Business may be taken on the day according to the rules set out in the Constitution, but this should not be relied on as a catch-all category for everything else as notified agenda business takes precedence.

CYCLING NEWS by Noel Molland

Was it something I said? Have I upset people and no one's told me? Practically no one has submitted any cycling reports recently.... But here is a summary of what news I have received.

SPORTIVES / AUDAXES

In June 2012 I took part in the 100km Dartmoor Classic. The weather was lovely and with 2,500 riders taking part there was always someone to ride along with. Apparently the Dartmoor Classic is now a UCI registered event and attracted people from across Europe to ride it. Including someone on a small wheeled Brompton bike! The views across Dartmoor were as always lovely but the hills didn't appear any easier than last year. And thinking of last year, in 2011 I missed out on a Bronze medal finishing time by finishing just under 4 minutes too slow for a Bronze finishing time. Last year I publically stated that I would be able to reduce my time by half an hour. And so this year that was my target, and yes folks I peddled like crazy to try and beat my 2011 time. In fact I finished this year's course in 5h 18m 29s. I was really pleased with this until I realised I'd missed out on a Silver medal position by..... 4 minutes!!!! ARGH. The curse of four minutes.

In July 2012 Steve Coote took part in the 100km Stockton Sportive. Despite the bad weather that dominated July, cyclists tend not to want to cancel their cycling events and the Stockton Sportive riders certainly felt this way. The rain had washed lots of gravel and mud onto the road making the ride tougher than normal. In fact Steve described the sportive as "probably the hardest cycling I've ever done". Despite this Steve finished his ride in a very respectable time of just under 5 hours.

Further south, also in July, I was busy looking forward to the inaugural Jurassic Classic (peddling around East Devon). But less than 24 hours before the ride was due to take place the news came in that the sportive was cancelled! Apparently parts of the route were under several feet of waters with roads looking more like fast moving rivers. The organisers offered a refund but the majority of the riders just wanted the ride rescheduled for a later date.

In August 2012 a second sportive I was booked to go on was also cancelled. Last year I rode the inaugural 100k Twinings Pro-Am. Twinings pulled out of sponsoring the sportive for a 2nd year, but British Cycling was determined it should go ahead. Therefore the Wiltshire Sportive was created. But this sportive was alas doomed. To run a sportive properly there is a cost involved which includes police time and due to the



Olympics all the police were redeployed to London. So the sportive was cancelled.

But August was not a complete washout for sportives as on the 18th of August the rescheduled Jurassic Classic took place. The 100k ride took riders from our start in Exmouth, along the coastal roads to Sidmouth before heading inland. The views at the start were fantastic and there were some interesting hills at the start. But once in land the route became a little dull and followed a series of trunk roads. Still I completed the ride in just under four and a half hours, which I was happy with.

Also in August Talitha Burnett completed the Exmouth Exodus. A 100 mile through the night ride from Bristol to Exmouth in Devon. Talitha completed the ride in 6h 58m 6s. Speaking after the event Talitha described it as "really great! I'd recommend it to anyone, just for the atmosphere and incredible transcendental experience of riding through unlit roads for hours on end. Totally unlike anything I've ever done before... Legs were very tired by the last climb, but feeling fine all round now."

TIME TRIALS

VCAC's very own "tester", Steve Wigglesworth, has been undertaking a number of TTs this year including in March the Diss & District 25 (25 miles) putting in a time of 1h 5m 23s. In April Steve took on the Ravensthorpe 10 (10 miles) completing it in 25m 26s. May saw the Yorkshire Cycling Federations 10, which Steve completed in 25m 40s. June was the Matlock 10, with a time of 24m 24s and in July Steve took on the Yorkshire CF 10 again, finishing in 35m 43s.

ROAD RACING

Okay she isn't a VCAC member, but she is a vegetarian! At this year's 2012 London Olympics, British cyclist, Lizzie Armitstead, who turned vegetarian at the age of 10, won a Silver medal in the Womens Olympic Road Race. Huge congratulations to Lizzie on her marvellous win and it was fantastic to see her promoting her ethical vegetarian diet to the British media.

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DAISY DAISY by Noel Molland

As children we all learn the song "Daisy Daisy" who has to give the singer her "answer true". It turns out that the singer is in love with Daisy, he wants to marry her, but he "can't afford a carriage" however he does think that Daisy will "look sweet, upon a seat, of a bicycle made for two".

Maybe suggesting a tandem bike ride as part of a marriage proposal is not everyone's idea of ideal romance. However if you are looking for a social ride, with a friend or relative, then tandems can be fun. I remember my first wobbly tandem bike ride. It was a bit weird to start with, but was great fun as you got used to the way the tandem works.

For anyone who is interested in tandems and who would like to meet other tandem riders, The Tandem Club of the United Kingdom has been promoting tandems since 1971. The Tandem Club is a national Club and has 40 regional officers organising social rides around the country. Membership costs £10 a year for a Full Member, then second person being able to join for FREE, with all subsequent memberships (for a third or fourth person) cost just 50p each. And as part of your membership you receive a bimonthly, A5 size glossy magazine called "The Tandem Club Journal: Twice the fun" which has lots of news about social rides, ride reports, a kids page, a for sale section, etc. The magazine comes across as a friendly publication designed to inspire you to join in and ride. For more sporting types, the Tandem Club also organises Time Trials and Hill Climbs.

For anyone interested in tandem riding, The Tandem Club is certainly worth joining. For more information about the Club including membership details check out their website <http://www.tandem-club.org.uk/nf2002/index.htm>

Multisport Report – Steve Coote

I, too, have not been having a great time garnering results for this edition, though I'll have to confess in my case it's probably been as much a lack of attention as I have been spending ridiculous numbers of hours learning drupal ahead of putting together a trial VCAC site.



My apologies for that, and my congratulations to Paul Kerrison who completed the Ostseeman Ironman Tri in under 14 hours. Paul is one of those rare – not to say perverse- types who prefers swimming to running, so a great effort. The evergreen Jon Zigmond completed the Bala Middle Distance Tri in June in 6:19, second in his age group.

The only get together, and that a chance one, was at the Marbury Sprint Tri in Cheshire. Steve Wigglesworth took overall 6th even though this is a relaxed season for him before entering a new age group next year, while I just hugely enjoyed myself after a lot of yoga-based rehab on a back I had decided was too bad to let me do serious road cycling. Sportive cycling I have come to enjoy for the specific challenges it presents, but to just go eyeballs out again over a relatively short distance was total fun.

VCAC Athletics Secretary's Report – Keith Hammond

Summer 2012 is now drawing to a close, but will of course be long remembered for the London Olympics. I'm sure that alongside the iconic moments each of us will have particular memories of the games, which will help to motivate us during the colder months ahead.

One notable aspect of the Olympics (eg compared to the football world Cup) is how many of the athletes have similar lifestyles and training regimes to the rest of us. For example on the day that the men's marathon took place I was running the Bearbrook 10K. For the last three years this has been won by the same local runner, but this year he was representing Sri Lanka in the marathon. I also recall the BBC commentators mentioning that GB's Freya Murray, who received a late call up for the women's marathon, had to book the week off work and set up her 'out of office' email.

While athletics undoubtedly has its superstars, it still retains its connection with amateur participants of all abilities and hopefully this will be a positive influence on the much talked about Olympic legacy. Only time will tell how successful the legacy is, but in the short term there appear to be more younger runners at my local parkrun event, which is good to see, even if it means I often find myself battling it out with some sprightly 14 or 15 year old. Of course if they beat me I have the consolation of knowing that my advanced years will usually ensure that I will have a higher age grading.

From a VCAC perspective the last few months have been characterised by 5K and 10K events. In particular parkruns have proved popular and if you are fortunate to have a parkrun nearby I would encourage you to take part. Parkrun results also count towards the clubs 5K League, which has been tried out for the first time this season. Details are on the website at: <http://www.vegetariancac.org>

In November there will be an opportunity to represent the VCAC in the Luton Marathon Relay. Those of you on the email list will already have received details about the race. I should stress that although it's a relay there is no need to carry a baton around the 8.74 mile lap, so no risk of being disqualified (and hence sharing another experience with some of the Olympic athletes).

Finally on the subject of marathons, well done to Robert Mottram-Jones who finished first MV50 at the Wolverhampton marathon in early September (following up on a fast marathon at Hull and a half marathon PB at Stafford earlier in the year).



A weekend of the Other – Steve Cooté

It's nice being reasonably fit. I first noticed it years back when a bus didn't arrive on time to get me to an interview. I ran and ran and kept on running and arrived in time hardly out of breath. Think I got the job, too. But it can get you into trouble.

With my partner still unable to drive long distances as she is recovering from a broken arm and me having nothing better to do, I offered to drive down to Dunstable so she could do the family bit. My plans for a gentle weekends drinking with old friends were soon scuppered by Dave explaining to me in front of Di that they had a team in a local charity cricket tournament – well half a team to be more exact. 'You'll enjoy that,' piped up Di. 'I can look after Len at Matt's.'

And so the die was cast and noon on the Saturday saw me trying to neck the first pint of the day to ease my hangover while we waited for our lift. I used to play a lot of cricket at a reasonable club level before running took over, but have only played twice in the seven years since we moved to Manchester. But how much harm could be done in a four five over a side thrash matches. The answer as it turned out was quite a lot, not least as another team were similarly short of players so we fielded for each other throughout the eight hour tournament and so nearly doubled our exercise.

Batting would have been easy even after such a break if I were doing my usual nudging and nudling, using the bowlers' pace to deflect the ball for runs, but with many none bowlers having an over, others waiting their turn to bat and in the spirit of the thing wides not being called often, if no other stroke were available it was incumbent on the batsman to launch a wild yahoo at anything within a couple of metres either side of the wicket. The occasional inevitable air shot contributed to the impression that one's arms were gradually coming out of their sockets and, as I couldn't hit boundaries often, sprinting singles soon had us all puffing. My bowling varied between the sort of unplayable deliveries I used to bowl fairly often and balls that for anyone used to holding a bat were easily clipped for runs as I couldn't hit a consistent length. And fielding. I used to keep wicket but had long since passed over that role as I found it frustrating as my reflexes went with age and I couldn't do those special takes, but have come to enjoy silly mid on and cover fielding, the bit of extra distance giving me enough time to react.

What you may gather from all of this is that I am incapable of playing even friendly team sports in anything other than a totally committed fashion, and one diving attempt at a caught and bowled off a savagely struck drive left me with a livid bruise on my hand – which I stopped to worry about after darting to my feet to run the batsmen out.

Enjoyed it? Sort of. When you're marking your bowling run up or fielding position with a tin of lager, and teams are darting off to the local pub between matches as they sold better ale than the clubhouse, it's difficult not to get merrier as the day wears on. And the sight of Dave, well into his seventies now, taking a wicket with the first ball of his first over with a prodigious donkey-drop that the batsman was not only through his shot on before it reached him but had he been on the qui vive could probably have re-set for a second stab at

it, being encouraged by the umpire to give it the full Dale Steyn chainsaw celebration was worth the fiver we each dropped into the memorial fund pot of itself.

Sunday morning saw me crawling out of bed at the unreasonable hour of 5.30, with more hurting muscles and joints than I knew I had, to take Len out for a walk while Di packed the car. A quick go at the gears and handbrake reassured me I could use my hand if I was careful and we headed off on a vaguely thought through plan to take part in the cani-cross event at Cannock Chase en route home.

The day was warm and muggy early and the organisers' had brought forward the start time, which is good so long as they don't bring it forward too much or at least let you know about it in advance. I'd fallen out with them at the end of last season not so much because we missed the start of an event but their evident lack of interest since I'm not one of their 'elite' in the fact I wasn't getting their emails. But as me and Len both get so much out of these events I've ended up just not renewing membership and paying full entry fees for races— actually a cheaper option for me but I like to support organisations where I can. We lined up for a mass start at 1000 – mass meaning waves of a dozen or so teams heading off together. This would normally suit us since Len goes off fast but with me unable to go with him as usual we couldn't get to the head of the pack and Len had too much time to be interested in the dogs to either side, so we had to completely drop off the pace for awhile to avoid territorial disputes. It was a tough little course. One of those you remember the flat bits off as most of it was sharp ups and downs, just what I didn't need. Four of us settled for passing and re-passing each other depending on our relative strengths and I even committed a walk up one muddy rise.

Seldom has the finish line of a 5km event been so looked forward to. For Len, the event



must have been like dragging a sack of spuds around the course. But he's a forgiving lad and by the time we had cooled off and reached the visitor centre, me a damp rag of sweat and pain, his bright eyes and swinging tail letting everyone know that with a less dissolute partner he could have been a contender, he was happy to accept Di's offer of coffee and cakes.

Reaching Manchester some hours later, struggling now to even get my feet to move from brake to accelerator, about fifteen hours before I needed to get up and head for work again, the prospect of a relaxing weekend to help me recover from the stresses of running Hell on the Humber two weeks before, was but a distant memory.