

**Veterans Athletic Club
Newsletter Autumn 2019**



**Multiple Gold Medals
for Clare Elms and Ian Richards in
European Champs in Venice**

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Veterans Athletic Club was established in 1931 and is affiliated to England Athletics, BMAF, South of England AA, Surrey County AA, the Race Walking Association and the South of the Thames Cross Country Association. We offer athletic competition for men and women aged 35 and over. Cross-country, road, track & field as well as race walking - there is something for everyone. Based in London with members across the South East, we can provide opportunities to compete with other like-minded masters/veterans. A fixture list is printed in the newsletter. Please support these events. The newsletter welcomes contributions and events always need volunteers, as well as competitors. If you want to get involved, contact any of the Committee members listed above



**Message to VAC
Members from
Membership
Secretary, Peter
Kennedy**

With the sad death of Mike May, we lost a dear friend and also our lead for track & field athletics. I would like in his name to launch a new vision for T&F in VAC.

Our offering has declined in the last 10 years to just our annual indoor and outdoor championships and participating in the two inter-area competitions. Last year however our 10,000m championship burst into life, followed by a similar success with a new 5,000m championship this year.

In future, I would like to see a series of separate track & field “fests” for each of horizontal jumps, pole vault, high jump, throws, sprints, hurdles, relays, 800m/1500m, 5000m and 10000m held throughout the year. More of these are now being staged by promoters for athletes of all ages within a county or an area such as London. They are very popular and don’t require large numbers of officials. If the growth continues, UKA might

be persuaded to make provision for them in its calendar.

For us to move forward, you the members would need to do three things:

- a) Identify and let us know about specialised events that are taking place at stadiums near you and if there aren’t enough, help to find someone willing to organize such events, hopefully for a profit.
- b) Help to make the events viable by training as an official (VAC will help with payments for this).
- c) Volunteer to assist in assembling a programme of events for VAC members.

We would welcome your feedback on these suggestions and offers of help to cover the vital roles of VAC Track & Field Secretary and Inter-Area Team Manager which are both vacant.

Membership Renewals

Subscriptions will be due at the end of March. The good news is we are holding the annual fee at £12.

Peter Kennedy

Email: pkennedy@bmaf.org.uk

Editor Angela Kikugawa Writes



Last newsletter I wrote about parkrun and I am returning to the theme for this newsletter. I wrote that parkrun had finally arrived in Japan and that I would be making efforts to bring it to our town. I said in the Spring that this would probably take some time but I am now able to report that the Shimanami Earthland parkrun in our town of Imabari is now up and running! We have had two events so far and both went well. Myself and my husband are joint event directors and at the start I say a few words in what is probably horrible Japanese. Having read Richard's article (page 16) about the success of the octogenarians' parkrun at Bushy Park I intend to use this next week to highlight to new parkrunners what a popular event parkrun is among senior runners in the UK.

Many of you will know that Sumitomo Vitality, a Japanese company, is the new sponsor of parkrun and they aim to establish 100 parkruns in Japan over the next three years. One of their aims is to make some contribution to tackling social isolation of all age groups. I hope we can contribute to this, and I was pleased to be able to meet Paul Sinton-Hewitt, founder of parkrun, at an event he attended in Matsuyama, a nearby town where parkrun launched at the end of September.

I really hope parkrun can be successful in Japan. The report of the octogenarians' success at Bushy Park is truly inspirational and I am delighted that I can share it here. In a world and time of so much division it is wonderful to be part of something that is truly inclusive.

What's in the newsletter?

Fixtures	Page 5
News	Page 8
Track and Field	Page 9
Race Walking	Page 13
Parkrun	Page 15
Road running	Page 17
Obituaries	Page 23
Cross Country	Page 25
Biography	Page 27
Letter	Page 29

Winter 2019 and Spring 2020 Fixtures

Refer to the VAC website (www.vetsac.org.uk) for updates and additions.

Date	Organiser	Event/ Race	Venue	Entry	Closing Date
Sat. 23 Nov 2019	South of the Thames Cross Country Association (VAC is affiliated to the SOTCCA)	5 mile XC Team Race (VAC team – 1st Claim only)	Morden Park London Road, Morden. SM4 4SF	Start time 2pm 1st Claim VAC Names to Entries Secretary	Closing date for VAC team 13 Nov
Sat. 7 Dec 2019	South of England Athletics Assoc.	SoEAA Masters XC Champs	Horspath Track, Oxford OX4 2RR	Online entry at SoEAA website Women 40+, Men 70+ 6km Men M40 – M65 10km	Closing date 22 Nov.
Sat. 21 Dec 2019	South of the Thames Cross Country Association	SOTCCA Champs. 7.5 miles. (VAC team – 1st Claim only)	Lloyd Park Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 5RA	Start time: 2pm 1st Claim VAC. Names to Entries Secretary	Closing date for VAC team 11 Dec
Sat.11 Jan 2020	Men's Surrey League Division 4	XC Race Match 3 (VAC Men's team)	Oxshott Woods Oxshott KT22 0TA Close to Oxshott Railway Station	Start: 2.30pm VAC 1st and 2nd claim eligible, subject to conditions. VAC vest necessary.	Advance notice to Paddy Clark
Sat. 18 Jan 2020	VAC UKA Permit: entrants should be registered with EA or equivalent.	VAC XC Champs. and Masters Open race	Wimbledon Common SW19 4UL. Awards/refreshments at Belgrave Hall Denmark Road, SW19	Start time: 2pm Approx 7km. Masters guests welcome. Enter via BMAF .	Online entry by 15 Jan. Entry on day accepted
Sat. 8 Feb 2020	Men's Surrey League Division 4	Cross Country Race Match 4 (VAC Men's team)	Lloyd Park, Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 5RA	Start time 12.00. VAC 1st and 2nd claim eligible. VAC vest necessary.	Advance notice to Paddy Clark

Sat. 15 Feb 2020	Canons Park parkrun	5km parkrun. VAC “mob match” gathering.	Canons Park, Donnefield Avenue, Middlesex HA8 6RH	Start time: 9am New parkrunners must register with parkrun	Enter on the day-need Barcode
Sun. 16 Feb 2020	SCVAC	SCVAC Indoor T&F Champs Incl. VAC 3k track walk Champs	Lee Valley Athletic Centre Meridian Way, Edmonton London N9 0NR.	VAC members welcome at all events. Enter via BMAF OpenTrack	Closing date 2 Feb.
Sun. 23 Feb 2020	BMAF/VAC/EMAC/South of England	VAC Indoor T&F Champs. BMAF Indoor Pentathlon.	Lee Valley Athletic Centre, Meridian Way, Edmonton London N9 0NR.	Enter via BMAF OpenTrack	Closing date 9 Feb.
Sun. 1 March 2020	EAMA (England Athletics Masters Association)	Indoor T&F Inter Area Challenge (VAC team to enter)	Lee Valley Athletic Centre Meridian Way, Edmonton London N9 0NR.	Enquiries to Team Manager tfsec@vetsac.org.uk	Initial team selections made in Dec 2019
7-8 March 2020	BMAF	BMAF Indoor T&F and Winter Throws Champs.	Lee Valley Athletic Centre Meridian Way, Edmonton London N9 0NR.	Entry via OpenTrack.	Closing date 23 Feb.
Sat. 14 March 2020	BMAF	British Masters XC Champs.	Rhug Estate Corwen Denbighshire North Wales LL21 0EH	Two races. Details on BMAF website in due course.	Closing date 28 Feb.
15-21 March 2020	European Masters Athletics	European Masters Indoor T&F Champs	Braga, Portugal	See BMAF website in due course	To be announced

Sat. 21 March 2020	VAC and Enfield League 10k	Cecil Gittins Memorial Walks	Cyclopark The Tollgate Wrotham Rd Gravesend Kent DA11 7NP	Start time: 1pm All ages welcome. Distances 2.5k, 5k,10k,15k (road)	Closing date 20 March. Entries accepted on the day.
2-4 April	European Masters Athletics	European Masters Non-stadia Champs	Madeira, Portugal	Road runs and race walks. CC relays. See BMAF website in due course	To be announc ed
Tuesday 7 April 2020 (also 28 April, 9 June, 7 July and 4 Aug)	VAC Held under UKA rules. Course certified accurate	Battersea Park Series 5 Mile Masters Road Race and Open Race Walk. (5km races on 28 April and 7 July)	Battersea Park, London SW11 4NJ Close to Millennium Arena	April dates confirmed. Others are provisional. Start time: 7pm Enter via OpenTrack. Masters guests welcome.	Online entry by 6 April. Entries on the day accepted .
Sun. 24 May 2020	Vitality Westminste r Mile events	British Masters & VAC One Mile Road Champs.	Race assembly area in Green Park, London W1. Start on The Mall.	Medals in five- year age groups. See BMAF fixture list for details.	Online entry via official website.

For other regional/national/international masters events refer to the [BMAF website](#).

NEWS

Our New President



Thank you to Peter Torre for reviving the role of VAC President and performing the duties with good humour and passion. Our new President for 2019-2020 is Anna Garnier who many will know as a top class middle distance runner who has represented her country at cross country and will do the shot put and high jump when called upon. Welcome Anna. We look forward to seeing you at the club championships both competing and presenting the medals and trophies.

Countdown!

Those of you who watch this popular TV quiz show may have seen VAC member Martin Garrett as a contestant in August. Martin tells us about the experience....

“I recorded the show at MediaCity, Salford on 20th May (the day Manchester City were parading their Premier League trophy) and it aired on 22nd August. I didn't 'overstay my welcome', going down by 84 points to 79. However, I can at least say I lost to an Octochamp who'll be reappearing later in the year. I did manage to get a brief name check for Veterans AC in the preliminaries, along with my other clubs, Sudbury Court and Serpentine. If any other members of the club are interested, I can definitely recommend the experience and I was reassured that I can apply in another ten years for a second crack at winning a Countdown teapot!”

Edwin Bartlett Ever Present!



Edwin has a remarkable record at VAC's Battersea Park road races. He has run in every single race since May 2008 and at least 15 before then. He joined VAC in 2003 and as a member we think he's run in around 75 of our Battersea races. His first recorded appearance is as a guest in July 2001.

Edwin is also an almost permanent feature at the Serpentine Runners' Last Friday in the Month 5km in Hyde Park. He has competed in this monthly race a phenomenal 200 times since his first one in April 1986. In recognition, he was recently presented with an award by Serpentine Running Club for being the first person to achieve this. The photo shows Edwin receiving his award from Race Director, Malcolm French.

Edwin's 5M and 5km times over the years have been very consistent and he never gets injured. What's your secret Edwin?

Vets Unmatched!

Joe Aspinall cheers us with the news that in the runbritain Masters rankings, we have 4 Over 80 veterans who regularly feature in the top 10 for the Mile, 5km, 5M and 10k distances. No other club can match this! Thank you Joe, and credit to you, Cliff Collins, Doug Milsom and Richard Pitcairn-Knowles for your great performances!

TRACK and FIELD

European Masters Athletics Championships, Jesolo, Italy 5-15 September 2019

Report by Andy Murray

The venue for this year's championships was the flat coastal area just east of Venice, with three tracks being used at Lido di Jesolo, Eraclea (10k away) and Caorle (another 20k further away). Whilst the organisers provided transport it was only for those buying expensive season tickets. Public buses were available but slower and with confusing timetables.

Events were split evenly between the three venues so there was much head-scratching as athletes and spectators tried to work out how to get to races. With spectators and athletes spread out so much, the atmosphere was good but not as lively as at previous championships.

Overall the weather was fine and sunny, allowing us to appreciate, when we weren't competing, the beaches, cafes and restaurants of this popular Northern Adriatic resort area and many people visited Venice by bus and boat.

Over forty VAC members competed in Italy. Athlete of the games was VAC's Clare Elms, (pictured on the back cover) who won five individual Golds, a team Gold and an individual Silver. Ian Richards (pictured on the front cover at the World Masters Championships in Malaga in September 2018) won five walks Golds, three individual and two team. Mike Cummings (M35), Fiona de Mauny (W35), Susie McLoughlin (W40) and Ros Tabor (W70) each won two individual Silver medals.

The next European championships outdoors will be in Tampere, Finland in 2021. Other forthcoming international championships are listed on the BMAF website.

VAC Gold Medal Winners, i.e. European Champions

- Women 40:** Zoe Doyle 1500m
Susie McLoughlin team 4x100m
- Women 50:** Lisa Thomas 2000m steeplechase (below left photo by Fotocastagnoli)
- Women 55:** Clare Elms 1500m, 5,000m, 10,000m, 10k, XC, team XC.
- Women 70:** Ros Tabor 1500m, W65 4x400m (below right)
- Men 45:** Simon Baines 10k
- Men 55:** Andrew Ridley 800m (below centre)
Ben Reynolds team half-marathon
- Men 70:** Ian Richards 5000m walk, 10k walk, 20k walk, team 10k walk, team 20k walk.



England Masters Outdoor Inter Area T&F Challenge, Coventry 6 July

Seven area Masters clubs competed at the new venue. The competition featured a full range of track and field events for which there were typically four age groups: V35-49, V50-59, V60-69 and V70+. VAC's team was depleted and we finished 6th in the men's competition and 7th in the women's. Nevertheless, our team members were full of spirit. Many did multiple events and ran in younger age groups to cover as many events as possible, orchestrated by team manager, Nick Lauder, who himself gained valuable points in the 100m and 200m. Each one of the VAC team was cheered loudly.



For the men, on the track, Allan Long was our star performer, coming first in the highly competitive M70 200m race and second in the 100m. Paul Wignall (M65) dropped down an age group to fill spots in both the 100m and 200m races. Malcolm Davies ran the 800m and the 1500m, in which he finished third. Top three placings were also achieved by Glen Reddington (3rd in M50 110m Hurdles) and Trevor Solomon (3rd in M70 1500m). The men's 4x100m M35 relay team was also third. In the field, Vaughan Ramsay gained points in the M35 High Jump and was a good third in the Long Jump. Richard Weekes excelled to come first in the M50 Triple Jump, as well as 4th in the Long Jump, just missing third by 3cms. Allan Long complemented his track successes by placing second in the Long Jump. Our only thrower was Peter Wishart (pictured) who stepped up and placed solidly in the M50 Shot, Discus, Hammer and Javelin throws.

For the women, the 800m was our best event with Lisa Webb, Anna Garnier and Margaret Moody all achieving second places in the W50, W60 and W70 categories. Helen Davies also gained points in the W35 category. In addition, Margaret competed in the 100m. Andrea Sanders-Reece also ran twice – in the W60 200m and 400m. Avril Riddell was third in the W60 1500m. In the field, our throwers impressed. Caroline Garratt was first in the W50 Javelin in a new Championship Best Performance of 31.51m. Caroline has thrown 33.77m elsewhere this season and is convincingly at the top of the 2019 W55 Javelin runbritain rankings, and also heads the W55 All-Time list. Tracey Gould covered the W35 Shot, Discus, Javelin and Hammer in which she placed second. Kim Weir was a solid third in the competitive W50 Hammer Throw. Anna Garnier placed third in the W60 Shot as well as being VAC's only jumper, putting points on the board in the W60 High Jump.

Team Manager, Nick Lauder, has decided that the time is right for him to step down from the role he has filled for well over five years. We thank him for all his hard work in selecting, organising and inspiring VAC teams in the annual indoor and outdoor challenges.

We urgently need a new Team Manager for the Indoor Inter-Area T&F Challenge at Lee Valley on Sunday 1 March 2020. Maybe two team managers, one for track, one for field? If you are interested or can help in any way, please contact a Committee Member at tfsec@vetsac.org.uk.

If you wish to be considered for the VAC team at the Indoor Inter-Area match on 1 March, please email tfsec@vetsac.org.uk and let us know which events you could do.

The post of T&F Secretary is also vacant and assistance is needed if VAC's 2020 T&F programme is to be sustained. Please come forward if you can help.

VAC Track and Field Championships, Kingsmeadow Stadium, 14 July

The championships were earlier than previous years because European and British Masters' championships were both in September. The July date was chosen to avoid clashing with other events, but the summer timetable is always full and so some athletes and officials could not make it. We held a stand-alone event. Although the championship was open to all masters athletes there were definitely fewer competitors than when we have held joint championships with the South of England or SCVAC. Most events contained athletes with different age groups. Conditions were good and there were some excellent individual performances. Full results are available on the VAC website.

VAC 5,000m – 24th July



Because 5,000m races have for the last two years been squeezed out of VAC's T&F Championships, we made the decision to hold a separate 5000m event for all masters in July at Battersea Park. It proved to be very popular. We allowed for 80 entries and were full two weeks in advance. There were four races, with a mix of genders and ages and as the races were seeded, they provided some good competition on what was probably the hottest evening of the year. John Herbert of EMAC was the winner of the fastest race in a time of 15:59.40. Ian Johnston, third in the race and 1st M50, was the VAC Champion in a time of 17:03.31. Lucy Woolhouse (pictured) was the VAC Women's Champion in a time

of 20:06.73, a new W55 Championship Best Performance. Despite the heat, competitors commented that they found the new event very enjoyable. We intend to repeat it.

VAC 10,000m – 18th September



The annual VAC 10,000m event was held in at the Battersea Park track and comprised three seeded races. Such is the popularity of this distance, we were overwhelmed with entries for the 60 places, closing six weeks in advance and building up a waiting list of twenty. The fastest race was won by Ben Goddard, a BMAF Open member, in a time of 33:12.50. VAC's Aaron Burgess was second in a time of 33:43.87 and was awarded the McDowell Cup as VAC champion. Ben (number 46) and Aaron (44) are pictured. The first woman was Susan McDonald, also winning the W50 Gold medal, in a time of 39:11.01. All results are on the VAC website.

RACE WALKING

Battersea Park Summer Series



The first 5 Mile fixture in April took place in higher temperatures than expected. Dave Annetts from N Herts RR achieved a good win with a new PB in the times we have come to expect from him. Melanie Peddle of Loughton AC continued her good form to win the women's race in only a second outside her PB. Belgrave's Stefano Zennaro also achieved a PB.

The second 5M fixture in June had a lower than expected attendance due to proximity of other events. We were pleased to see a new men's winner, Stefano Zennaro and also a new VAC championship winner, Dan Maskell from Surrey Walking Club. In addition, Stefano chopped another two minutes off his PB. Maureen Noel from

Belgrave and Mark Culshaw also walked well.

In the July 5km fixture, the overall winner for the second month running was Stefano Zennaro, remarkable given that he does not come from a running or walking background. Penelope Cummings (pictured) from AFD was the women's winner. Maureen Noel and Tom Casserley did their usual respectable times with a personal best from Tom by about 20 seconds.

The fourth 5M fixture in August had a lower than expected attendance on a moderately sunny evening giving an ideal temperature for racing. Penelope Cummings followed up her 5km win with another success in a time only a few seconds outside her PB.

The last race at the end of August was convincingly won by Dave Annetts, who continued his form, improving his 5M PB set in April by about half a minute. Belgrave's new signing Alicia Drenda had a good result in only her second race.

Jack Fitzgerald Walks, 22 June, Tilgate Park, Crawley

VAC were pleased to host the seventh running of this event on a lakeside course in perfect June weather. On the start line, ages ranged from 9 year old Charlie Perry (Lewes AC), to prolific veterans record breaker Arthur Thomson (Enfield AC), recently turned 83. Charlie was mentored round the circuit by Ollie Hopkins (Lewes AC) who is presently recovering from an injury and regularly supports VAC fixtures.

In the headline race over 10.325 km, VAC was pleased to welcome back Trevor Jones from Steyning AC for his first win at this event. All the women achieved good results, in particular Emily Ghose (Tonbridge AC) with her first win. From the same club, new signing Grazia Manzotti, will be a name to watch out for in the future.

The race was held to raise funds for Blind Veterans UK, as a tribute to RAF fighter pilot Jack Fitzgerald and is dedicated to his memory.

Men's 10.325 km			
1. Trevor Jones	M60	Steyning	59:52
2. Jimmy Ball	M55	Steyning	1:00:33
3. Mark Culshaw	M50	EMAC	1:05:58
4. Dan Maskell	M70	SyWC	1:09:47
5. David Kemp	M60	Arena 80	1:09:52
6. Steve Cartwright	M60	Colchester & Tendring	1:13:24
7. John Killick	M70	Steyning	1:13:25
8. David Hoben	M65	SyWC	1:15:43
9. Arthur Thomson	M80	Enfield	1:18:27
Women's 10.325 km			
1. Emily Ghose	U23W	Tonbridge	1:01:26
2. Penelope Cummings	W40	AFD	1:01:28
3. Melanie Peddle	W50	Loughton	1:03:27
4. Grazia Manzotti	W45	Tonbridge	1:04:14
5. Geraldine Legon	W60	Bexley	1:17:47
Men's 5.9 km			
1.=Peter Selby	M75	SyWC	48:02
1.=Peter Hannell	M75	SyWC	48:02

Women's 5.9 km			
1. Andrea Ingram	W60	Lewes	38:26
2. Judith Carder	W60	Brighton & Hove	42:07
Men's 4.425 km			
1. Nolan Simmons	M75	SyWC	37:06
Boys 1.475km			
1. =Ollie Hopkins	U20M	Lewes	08:18
1. =Charlie Perry	U11B	Lewes	08:18
3. Lewis Burr	U13B	Tonbridge	09:39
4. Harvey Perry	U13B	Lewes	10:19
Girls 1.475km			
1. Rosie Gaughan	U13G	Lewes	09:57

PARKRUN

Old Deer parkrun, 8 June

Eight VAC members visited the lesser-run of the Richmond parkruns at the riverside Old Deer Park for our regular mob meet-up. The course was just over three flat laps on short grass, open enough for the whole lap to be visible at all points but also exposed to strong winds. We were welcomed at the start and set off into the wind, recovering on the way back on a long straight section. By the third lap we had adjusted to the conditions but were grateful to reach the finish funnel. Ros Tabor (W65) (86.39%) and Lesley Bowcott (W75) (84.01%) achieved the top two graded positions for the day's event. They were joined by Alan Davidson, William Fordham, John Grigg, Mike Mann, Andy Murray and Patricia Thomas.

Clapham Common parkrun, 21 September



On what may well have been the last hot day of summer, ten members (pictured) enjoyed the early morning sunshine on Clapham Common. With 760 finishers, the first kilometre over stony and dusty surfaces was congested. It was necessary to take care to avoid tree roots and low hanging branches, but the field eventually spread out. Ros Tabor set a

new W70 age group record for this parkrun to accompany the W65 record she already holds. She also achieved the highest age-graded performance on the day. Others present were VAC parkrun regulars, Alan Davidson, William Fordham, Martin

Garrett, Mike Mann and Andy Murray, plus Liam O'Hare who hot-footed it back to the Tooting parkrun afterwards to produce their results, Maggie Statham, Trevor Solomon and new member Bruce McLaren.

For VAC's next parkrun gathering we will be venturing north to Canons Park in Middlesex on 15 February. Please come along if you're local or be a tourist and tick it off your list.

Record Number Of Octogenarians At Bushy Park Parkrun



At the third annual Octogenarian Get-together at Bushy Park Parkrun on 6th July a record number of 48 men and women aged over 80, with a probable combined age of over 4,000 years, celebrated their longevity by finishing this 5K run over a dusty course on a very warm and sunny morning. They travelled long distances and came from far and wide.

Space does not permit mention of all 48 finishers but, once again, there were some outstanding performances by both men and women. Margaret Smith lowered the W85-89 age group best by almost two minutes with 42:55. Of the seven in the younger women's age group, W80-84, first was Margaret Williams in 34:09. First of the 32 M80-84 male finishers was Doug Milsom in a remarkable 27:17. Of the eight men in the M85-89 group Allan Smith was first with 37:25, Richard Pitcairn-Knowles second in 37:56, and Albert Yee third in 38:45.

It was Albert Yee who donated medals to celebrate the event at the party after the run when the Octogenarians and their families tucked into cup-cakes and prosecco very kindly organised once again with tables, chairs, glasses, etc., by Carol Dickinson of Bushy Park.

Afterwards, the brain behind the idea of celebrating being over 80, George Frogley, thanked Carol, the many helpers and, of course, all the marshals and other volunteers who made it possible for all 1365 runners to enjoy the whole event.

Photo by Carol Dickinson – Report by Richard Pitcairn-Knowles

Top Finishers Times and Age Grades

M80-84 (32 finishers)

578	Douglas Milsom	27:17	77.03%
1195	Roger Wilks	37:57	60.04%
1213	Alan Palmer	39:04	55.16%

M85-89 (8 finishers)

1177	Allan Smith	37:25	67.31%
1194	Richard Pitcairn-K	37:56	66.39%
1210	Albert Yee	38:45	67.48%

W80-84 (7 finishers)

1059	Margaret Williams	34:09	78.04%
1276	Monique McInnes	42:58	65.17%
1279	Anne Middlemiss	43:12	61.69%

W85-89 (1 finisher)

1274	Margaret Smith	42:55	71.88%
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ROAD RUNNING

Battersea Park Summer Series

VAC's unique series of Masters road races had good support from members of VAC and BMAF clubs and also attracted guests from further afield. All appeared to have enjoyed the experience. Our friendly welcome helped as did our willingness to take entries on the evening and support all abilities. Thank you to all the VAC members who made the races intensely competitive, yet relaxed and sociable before and after.

Attendance continued its upward trend. In 2019, there were 220 finishers in the five races, compared with 91 four years ago. In particular, the 5km Championship race attracted a record number of 70 finishers, compared with an average of 38 at the 5M races.

Well done to the five VAC members who competed in all five of the races: Joe Aspinall, Edwin Bartlett, Tom Cheetham, Penny Elliott and Terry O'Neill. Edwin hasn't missed a Battersea Park fixture for ten years (see feature on Edwin earlier)! Thanks go to our loyal timekeepers and recorders and to Dennis Williams for setting up the courses.

For the first time, we used the new 5M and 5km courses measured by Hugh Jones based on Wandsworth Council's designated route. There were some issues. The start lines are in completely different places in the park and the 5M route is clockwise whereas the 5km route is anticlockwise. This caused confusion, despite information and signposting. Also, importantly, there are concerns for the safety of runners and walkers on the 5M clockwise route as they race directly into the prevailing path of cyclists, skaters, fitness groups and pedestrians, many with children and dogs, causing an accident hazard, especially on the bends. We intend bringing Hugh Jones back to devise and measure a suitable 5M anticlockwise course for the 2020 series.

The first fixture of the 2020 series will be a 5 mile race on 7 April. Clashes with other events, including the nearby Chelsea Flower Show, mean that once again we will be unable to stage a race in May. Instead there will be a second April race. Because the 5km distance proves to be very popular with VAC members, we propose to hold two 5km races and three 5M races in the series. The other races have been provisionally set for 28 April (5km), 9 June (5M Champs), 7 July (5km Champs) and 4 August (5M).

5 Mile Road Championship, Battersea Park, 11 June

There were 38 finishers on a cool evening, ideal for fast times, which were certainly achieved. Marilyn Clarke's women's 5M course record which had stood since 1997 was well beaten by Clare Elms in a magnificent time of 29:05 which was also a W55 all-time British best. Penny Elliott also rewrote a VAC course record. Her top-ranked time of 41:32 set a new mark for the W75 age group, bettering Pam Jones's time of 43:03 achieved in 2012. Gold medals were won by Lynn Wilson (W60) and Jane Georghiou (W65).

For the men, Richard Tomlinson (pictured) pulled away from defending champion,



Stuart Beaney, to win the race in a time of 27:29 which is a new M50 course record, beating Ben Reynolds's previous 2015 record by one second. In sixth place overall, David Ogden won the M60 Gold medal, with a sub 30-minute time of 29:48. Peter Giles, in his last week of the M70 age group, won a close-fought contest with fellow top-ranked M70, Richard Piotrowski. Other Gold medallists were Martin Daoud (M55), Terry O'Neill (M65), Michael Johnson (M75), Cliff Collins (M80) and Richard Pitcairn-Knowles (M85).

5km Road Championship, Battersea Park 9 July

Regrettably, the fast times achieved by many of the 70 finishers were too good to be true. Personal GPS and Strava readings

indicated that the course was short. An inspection showed that the start and finish points had been confused with the various marks left by other races, including the Sri Chinmoy 5km the previous evening. We had "lost" around 50m from the course measured by Hugh Jones. We apologise. The times set could not be included in the runbritain rankings nor could they be considered for course records. However, it was race positions which counted for medals so VAC's 5km championship was preserved.

The race was won by 5M champion, Richard Tomlinson, taking the M50 Gold medal, followed by Robin Jones, M45 Gold medallist. Other Gold medals were won by Sam Rahman (M35), Matthew Munro (M40), Philip Cross (M55), Nigel Burnell (M60), Jim Brown (M70), Peter Giles (M75), Doug Milsom (M80) and Richard Pitcairn-Knowles (M85).

Hannah Roberts (W35), a guest from SCVAC, was the first woman, ten seconds ahead of Lucy Woolhouse, the VAC women's champion and W55 Gold medallist. Other Gold medals were won by Carlie Qirem (W35), Soraya Bux (W40), Patricia Thomas (W50), Lynn Wilson (W60), Marion Rayner (W65), Ann Bath (W70) and Penny Elliott (W75).

August Battersea races



ESM's Martin Daoud, Patricia Thomas, Lynn Wilson, Carol Jones and Martin Wilson

On 6 August, Stewart Overton (M35), a guest from EMAC, won the race in 27:35 followed by Tony Tuohy (M55) in 27:51, only four seconds short of Gary Ironmonger's M50 record of 27:47 set last year. The first woman was Patricia Thomas (W50) who had a fine battle with her Ealing, Southall & Middlesex (ESM) clubmate, Lynn Wilson (W60) just holding her off by one second. ESM provided five finishers (pictured) in the race and are great supporters of VAC events. Peter Giles, as predicted in his new age group, demolished the M75 record of 40:38 set by Joe Aspinall in 2014. Peter's time of 34:24 puts him at the top of the runbritain 5M M75 rankings.

On 27 August, there were 39 finishers in a race won by Andrew Mitchel (M50) in 27:34.. The first woman was Helen Taranowski (W45), a new member from W4H, another club which is a great supporter of VAC events.

Battersea Park Grand Prix



Congratulations to Penny Elliott (W75 pictured left), the worthy winner of the Battersea Park Grand Prix with an excellent average age grading of 92.86%. Peter Giles was a close second with an average of 89.81%, followed by Lynn Wilson, W60, with 85.00%.

Twenty one VAC members qualified for the 2019 competition. Members had to register times in at least three of the five road races. The person with the highest average of his or her three best age-graded performances is awarded the “Challenge Cup presented by W Snow Esq” a trophy with names on it from 1950. It used to be awarded annually to the member who scored the most points in club events as

determined by a rather complicated, labour intensive, handicap system which was discontinued in 1998. Previous winners still with VAC include Jeremy Hemming in 1984, Liam O’Hare in 1992 and 1994, and Maggie Statham in 1993. The “Snow Cup” trophy was resurrected in 2017 for the Battersea Park Grand Prix.

VAC One Mile Championship at the Vitality Westminster Mile, 26 May

For the second year, the Masters Mile was used for VAC’s 1 mile championship. It was also the BMAF championship. The course is almost flat, with a slight downhill start around three sides of St. James Park, finishing in front of Buckingham Palace. The day is a London Olympic Heritage event: a day of mile running in different waves. These include club runners, families, parkrun, football mascots, and ex-Olympians. These waves were followed by serious championships: BMAF and then national seniors and age groups.

This year, Masters men and women ran in separate races, started by Donna Fraser, ex Olympian and UKA Vice President. There were 153 finishers in the men’s race and 45 in the women’s, including at least 60 VAC members in the two races combined.

VAC medallists are listed on the VAC website. In addition to age group medals salvers were awarded to the first three men and women on age grading. The women’s silver and bronze salvers were awarded to VAC members – Clare Elms (103.3 %) and Ros Tabor (94.8%). Clare Elms also broke the W55 world and British best for a road mile with her time of 5:09.

VAC 10 Mile Championship at the Dorking 10, 2 June

The race was also the BMAF championships. VAC had at least 22 members running. Matthew Jones (M35), Paul Cheetham (M45), Alice Riddell-Webster (W50), and Jane Georghiou (W65) were BMAF gold medallists. The Ron White shield, awarded to the member who gains the highest age graded score in the race, was won by Alice Riddell-Webster with a score of 88.4%. Like the Snow Cup, the shield originally served a different purpose. It was presented to the club in 1985 by “Ron (Chalky) White” for “The oldest man under 90 minutes” in the VAC 10 mile championship. It fell into disuse in 2011 but was revived in 2017 to become a less sexist and ageist award. As a matter of interest, if the original criterion had been applied to this year’s 10 mile championship, the winner would have been Jim Brown who posted a time of 78:46 just two weeks short of his 70th birthday.

VAC 10km Championship at the Caterham Rotary 10k, 21 July

The race was chosen for the VAC championships because it had been named as a qualifying race for selection for the England team for this year’s Masters CC International. Eighteen members competed for medals. VAC had four runners in the top ten, and seven in the top twenty. Andrew Mitchell was the first VAC finisher and first M50, with a time of 34:57. Tony Tuohy (M55), David Ogden (M60) and Peter Giles (M75) all won their age groups. The first VAC woman was Helen Pool who was also the first W45 in a time of 42:49. Jo Quantrill (W60) and Jane Georghiou (W65) won their age groups.

VAC Golds at the BMAF Marathon Championships, York, 20 October

The popular Yorkshire Marathon hosted this year’s BMAF marathon championships. Fifteen VAC members competed in a field of 110 BMAF athletes. VAC’s Richard McDowell (M40) convincingly won the BMAF Championship in a time of 2:25.00, placing him third in the whole field of over 4,000 finishers. Paul Martelletti (M40) was third BMAF finisher in 2:27.16. The first VAC woman was Gill Bland, fourth BMAF woman and W35 Silver medallist, in a time of 2:56.24. Our second woman was Lynda Hembury who won W60 Gold in a magnificent time of 3:15.21. Her chip time of 3:14.47 was tantalisingly close to her own British record of 3:14:37 set at the Chester Marathon in 2017. Her age-graded percentage of 94.4% was easily the best on the day. Cathy Ulliott won the W55 Gold medal and Sarah Willams won W50 Bronze. Other medals were won by Steve Hobbs (M45 Silver) and Ralph Gomarsall (M55 Bronze). Remarkably, VAC’s world champion walker, Ian Richards (M70), race-walked the distance in an amazing 4:00.19.

Obituaries

We are sad to report the passing of three members who have contributed much to athletics and to VAC.



Michael May 1960-2019

Michael passed away peacefully on 7 September 2019, aged 59. He supported athletics as a competitor, official, team manager and committee member. His many friends in the athletics community recently awarded him the inaugural Michael May Masters trophy in recognition of his fortitude in the face of adversity and his fine example of giving support and encouragement to others, despite his cancer diagnosis. The trophy will be awarded in his memory to people who have similarly shown dedication, commitment and resilience.

Michael started his athletics career running cross country for Durham University. In 1983 he joined the newly formed Wimbledon Windmilers club, continuing as an endurance runner and racing all distances up to the marathon. He also tried out various distances on the track, from the 100m to the 800m, and found that he particularly enjoyed the sprints. In 1991, he joined a coaching group run by VAC member Chuck Isetts and refined his fast kick to become a successful sprinter and long jumper.

Michael joined his final club, Kingston & Polytechnic Harriers in 1993 in order to focus on track racing and benefit from the training facilities at the Kingsmeadow stadium. He fully embraced Masters athletics and was proud to wear the GB kit in championships all over Europe and the world on around 25

occasions. His last competition was in March 2019 at the World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships in Torun, Poland.

Michael was a Level 2 Track and Field judge and a long-serving Team Manager for his club. For VAC, he was a loyal member for nearly 20 years and dedicated much time and effort to the roles of President and Treasurer. Latterly he brought his considerable experience and expertise to the role of Track & Field Secretary. He will be greatly missed. Rest in peace, Michael.

Ron Franklin 1928 - 2018

We have been informed of the passing of Ron Franklin some time ago. Ron finished 6th when representing his beloved Wales at the 1958 Commonwealth & Empire Games held in Cardiff. He was a prolific and high mileage trainer, still clocking up to 80-100 miles per week when aged over 60. He will be remembered for his encyclopaedic memory for statistics and names; he became an iconic figure and voice at domestic and international Championships. A lifelong vegan and extremely well read on nutrition, stories abound of his dialogue with Customs Officers when he landed at airports loaded with bags full of his chosen food and collection of running shoes.

Ron was a member of Barnet & District AC. He joined VAC in 1968 and had been the club's longest serving member. He competed in many VAC races and made respected contributions on the Committee for many years. Latterly, he was living with dementia and the "voice of athletics" slipped quietly away in a care home in Lincolnshire. He will be fondly remembered.

Jack Rutherford 1953 – 2019

Jack Rutherford passed away peacefully on 29 May 2019. Jack was a member of VAC and his first claim club was Walton AC where he had been an athlete, official, team manager, coach, committee member and ultimately chairman.

He was a versatile athlete and threw the hammer and discus, jumped the long and triple jumps, did the sprints and even turned out for his club in Surrey League cross countries. He was a dedicated and respected coach of a group of athletes, including several runners who have represented VAC at interarea events. He was always positive and enthusiastic as shown by his trademark pre-competition instructions "just go out there and enjoy it" - epitomising his own attitude to athletics and life.

CROSS COUNTRY

England Masters Inter-Area Challenge, 28 September

The race was held at Bury St Edmonds for the second year in succession, with the first race of 5.7km including all the women and M65s+ while the second race of 8km included all the remaining men. There was an overall turnout of 80 with 5 women and 10 men from VAC competing. In the men's competition the club finished in a creditable third position, not far behind EMAC and NMAC. Full results can be found on the BMAF website.

In the first race, Clare Elms finished second woman and first W55, with Sue McDonald second W50. Amongst the older men Dave Cox finished high up the field as second M65 and Peter Giles continued his recent good form with a comfortable win as first M75. In the second race Andrew Mitchell finished first M50 with Andy Weir, just under a minute behind, second M50. Mike Boucher and Robert Laing finished second and third M40s.

Men's Surrey League, Richmond Park, 12 October

After being threatened by a proposed “cull” of underperforming teams, VAC emphatically displayed its credentials as a competitive force at the opening Division Four fixture at Richmond Park. Our 13-man team finished a magnificent 5th out of 12 teams. We were boosted immensely by speedy newcomer, Chris Beecham (M50), of Highgate Harriers, who finished 5th and by top M55 Gary Ironmonger who was 12th. Another welcome newcomer, Bruce McLaren, was in the top forty together with top M65 Ian Kitching. This strength up front and solid packing in the middle did us proud. Let's keep it up for the second fixture at Epsom Downs on 9 November.

Many of our members compete for their first claim clubs in the Surrey League, and that's fine. However, if your first claim club doesn't need you, you would be most welcome in the VAC team. First-claim VAC members are eligible to compete for VAC. Also second claim members are allowed to run for VAC **as long as they do not compete for their first claim club in any of the four**

Surrey league matches in any of the four Divisions in the 2019-20 season. Members from outside Surrey are also very welcome, although the Surrey fixtures often clash with those of other county leagues.

Ten men are required for a complete scoring team, but there is no limit on the VAC turn-out. The more team members we have, the greater the strength in depth and the bigger the impact. Every VAC runner is welcomed and appreciated. Please let team manager Paddy Clark (paddyclark@hotmail.com) know if you intend to run in any of the fixtures (see fixture list).

Vets AC Open Cross Country Championships, 18 January 2020

Please support our flagship cross country championship which will be held as usual on Wimbledon Common, using the familiar two-lap, 4.5 mile course dropping to the Putney Vale playing fields, following the Beverley Brook and sloggling back up the long drag of the sandy horse ride. Please enter online via the BMAF website, although it will be possible to enter on the day. After the races, there are refreshments and an awards ceremony at Belgrave Hall, Denmark Road.

BIOGRAPHY



Peter Cassidy is well known for his regular appearances as judge on the national race walking circuit, together with his wife Pauline, and he still competes as M75. In addition, Peter has published a book covering the first 100 years of the Race Walking Association (RWA). He is also a musician and after-dinner speaker, but there is much more to tell. This is his story...

‘I was born on the 28th November, 1939, in a nursing home in Victoria Park Road, Hackney. Although my father was disinterested in sport, he did, oddly enough, have a slight contact with race walking. His family was a politically active one and through that he knew Sydney Sarel, a local councillor and competitor in the 1908 Olympic Games. (He was eliminated after finishing fifth in his heat of the 3500m.)

After primary school, I went to Hackney Downs School, where, if I remember correctly, we won the North London Grammar Schools’ Athletic Association Championships year after year; I competed in the Mile Walk at about the same time as Peter Marlow, but neither of us has any recollection of the other’s participation.

After University, I joined the Operational Research Unit of the newly-formed Greater London Council (G.L.C.). A colleague there was a good sprinter - after the general metrication of athletics, he claimed that he was the eternal 220-yard record-holder for Middlesex Schools - and I went to the Council’s Inter-Departmental Sports to support him. The programme included a one-mile walk and I came away thinking, “Well, if I can’t beat that lot, even after years of inactivity, I must be wet!” I therefore trained and eventually came second in the event. Some may remember David Hay of Havering A.C., who was the perpetual champion.

I had already begun doing a bit of gentle running and another colleague recommended Loughton A.C., which, he said, was a good drinking club. Happily, he was right. I soon concentrated on walking and had some modest success, although I was generally a “near-miss”; I won silver and bronze at every Essex distance except the ten miles (which was the one I really wanted), but the only gold was at 3000m, in what must have been a “soft” year. I suppose that my peak was in the Inter-Counties’ 10k Championship when, finishing about twelfth, I led Essex to victory.

At some point I had carelessly let myself be talked into doing some officiating and administration, which led to office firstly in the S.R.W.A., where I was Secretary and then President. Later I was national General Secretary of the R.W.A. for twenty-odd years and on my retirement, the Association kindly elected me as President.

Officiating has taken a lot of what others might call spare time. I was joint Chief Recorder for the Commonwealth Games in Manchester and the European Race Walking Cup in Leamington Spa in 2007 (for which I was also – not sure why – Finance Officer), and the Manchester Commonwealth Games of 2002. I hit my peak as Chief Recorder at the Olympic Games in London and was also, at very short notice, Chief Judge at a couple of Permit events in Ireland, as well as being Chief of various sorts (including Chief Timekeeper, because I had my own watch, I suppose) at numerous National Championships. It can be seen, therefore, that I have spent much more time beside the track and road than on them.

Perhaps my most arduous participation was in a twenty-four hour track walk at Woodford in 1986, an event in which I did not walk and wasn’t an official. I had married Pauline Wilson, another G.L.C. colleague and had somehow involved her in running and race walking as she prepared to climb some of the way up Annapurna. The G.L.C. was browbeaten into having a women’s walk in its Inter-Departmental Sports and she, on about an hour’s training, won it and then became hooked. Eventually, she won the Woodford twenty-four hour walk and it was my supporting her in that race that strained me to the limit. Subsequent experience of

judging in six-hour shifts at similar events was nothing in comparison. After all, no competitor is going to complain if you nod off and miss his transgressions, but the reaction of a walker not receiving the expected bridge roll soaked in orange juice at three o'clock in the morning can be disturbing!

My life in race walking has been a very enjoyable one, with, perhaps, one regret. I could probably have got Olympic selection if only I had been a Liechtensteiner.'

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I was pleased to receive this lovely, but sad in part, letter from Mike Martineau full of his memories. Thank you Mike. VAC members send you their best wishes. I can also tell you that your name has now been added to the photograph (below) on the website!

'I've been a member of VAC for some time but somehow my membership has lapsed although my photo still occupies the obituaries section on the website as I receive the Gibson Cup from the late Chas Walker.

I knew Mike May of course and was sad to hear the recent news about his death. He died in the same Hospice as my Dad, Bert Martineau, a 1948 Olympian who was 5th in the 50k Walk. Consequently it was interesting to read in the last newsletter the piece on Shaun Lightman who I know well and who I sat next to at the Surrey WC 100th anniversary dinner in 1999. We ran in the same Bromley Parkrun on many occasions.

The photographs in the newsletter by Tom Phillips are lovely as always. I was Blackheath President in 1996/7 and Tom and I shared Vets team management and captaincy duties very successfully for 3 years. We won the Kent section of the SCVAC Vets League and twice won the Area Final. We had Jim Day in our team who was an excellent team man. I officiated at his last Pole Vault competition at Ashford and it was his

Club Vets records at 400 and 300 Hurdles that I was pleased to beat. I remember a brilliant tussle between him and Peter Field in the National Vets sprint hurdles one year. It is wonderful what Allan Williams has done with the Jim Day event every September. The event involves another brilliant Vet Dave Blunt, to whom I'm sort of related by marriage. He is the brother of my wife's brother's wife.

I know Richard Pitcairn-Knowles well and, representing Bromley Vets AC, I have sprinted against him in Vets League fixtures and run against him in the Bromley Parkrun. What a lovely man and what a lovely family with 3 generations all active. Richard and I walked into Gateshead Stadium together for the Opening Ceremony of the 1999 World Vets Championships (sorry Masters!). I remember Kate Hoey being there, having just become Sports Minister and we were so proud to wear GB kit and tracksuits.



I've been involved in Athletics all my life, one way or another. I won medals as a 70 year old sprinter and jumper in the Kent Masters Championships excellently organised by Barry Ferguson. I won my only National medal as runner up to Barry in the Sprint hurdles as a Vet 60. Since 2011 I gave talks on the 1948 Games and had raised several thousands of pounds for charities.

I intended to compete as a Vet 70 at the 2018 Kent Masters and had entered the 200m. I was getting myself into good shape. But 10 days beforehand I was struck down by bacterial meningitis and was lucky to survive. But I'm left wheelchair bound, deaf, with impaired vision and I have been told I will never walk again. I was in hospital for 7 months, in Care Homes for another 4 and at home for 2. Recovery has been slow and slight. I do as much exercise as I can and I'm hopeful that I can defy medical opinion.

There was no real warning of the attack. The day before I'd done an interval session in the woods. Most days I did something be it run, swim, cycle, gym. I had done my 50th Parkrun earlier in the year and was a leader with Zero to Hero's - encouraging people new to running.

Important lesson learnt. Don't put things off. You never know what's round the corner! Good luck to all at VAC and best wishes to all who remember me.'

Mike Martineau

Six Gold Medals for Clare Elms in European Champs in Venice

