1. ACP and Electronic Proof of Passage

A couple of Board meetings ago, we had a rambling conversation about "validation by gps", and its ins and outs, the upsides and downsides, and the various methods of going about it, including the promising e-brevet app developed by Dave Allison. During the discussion I was asked to talk with Audax Club Parisien about it all.

This was an interesting project because as a general topic, it's hard to pin down with different people having many and varied views about it and its feasibility. Reporting back to the most recent Board meeting I had eventually decided that I had to go back to first principles and ask what randonneur cycling is. We refer to it as audax but I don't want to get into any arguments about that. Event entrants cycle a predetermined distance to be completed within a specified time limit, calling in at checkpoints placed en route such that the distance between them determines the distance. They collect some proof (proof of passage) that they have visited these checkpoints and submit a full set of proofs of passage to the event organiser. The organiser checks the full sets of proofs and if he finds them acceptable he submits them to the Validation Secretary with a recommendation to validate (or in France, to homologate). The validation secretary is the person who validates each ride. Some trusted organisers are delegated to validate some rides, including BP and BR events up to and including 200 km nominal distance, but they do that as delegates of AUK, and not as organisers. It is AUK that validates events.

Unfortunately, riders on social media often write about validating their own rides by various methods including by gps. Organisers often write about validating the events they run by gps or other means. They are not. Riders use proofs of passage in an effort to prove that they have completed the course of an event within the time limit specified. Event organisers consider those proofs of passage submitted by riders and recommend to AUK that these rides are validated.

What the riders have done is providing proof of passage by gps, not validation by gps.

This understood, I wrote to Jean-Gualbert Faburel at ACP. He remains the contact for all oversea BRM matters and is forward looking. I noted that we administer a lot of permanent events which are not BRM events and we validate (the word we use for homologate) a large number of these rides by identifying proof of passage using gpx tracks. Given the experience of and our experience with the DIYxGPS organisers, I added that this is a cumbersome process with many possible faults and would not, in my opinion, transfer easily to BRM-registered events, given the high levels of organiser expertise required. However, I did note our developing e-brevet smartphone app which continues to undergo testing and development, noting that this produced a virtual brevet card that could be used easily to populate a real brevet card with timed proofs of passage at controls. I gave him a few more details, access to the app and its instructions, etc., and hoped that ACP might be interested.

I received a reply, a short one, from him about a month after our last Board meeting. It would appear that ACP would prefer not to get too involved with such an app for the time being. Jean-Gualbert noted that

> *"Your app is very interesting. Unfortunately, our webmaster can't help us to implement the same for other BRMs. It's a bit frustrating..."*

However, I did wonder if things might be moving a little, and I subsequently received news from Jean-Gualbert that there had been some amendments to the BRM regulations to allow for electronic proof of passage on BRM events.

Clearly, ACP had been doing some thinking about the possible implications of electronic proofs of passage. Jean-Gualbert Faburel wrote:

> *"You can find also a new version of the BRM rules. We added electronic means as proof of passage to validate BRM."*

Yes indeed, a revised version of the BRM regulations for riders will allow that, in a fashion, but the offer of conventional brevet cards if required by riders must remain possible.

The revised regs are in the dropbox in the authoritative French and English. As usual, although the English translation is an official one, the original French is the authoritative one. While I might take some issue over Jean-Gualbert's imprecise use of English (or is it Google Translate's version?), he's not on his own, and I think we know what he means.

Briefly, Article 9 allows a 5th choice of proof of passage at an unmanned control, namely for a rider to

> *"validate her/his passage by an electronic control (reading of QR code, electronic chip, etc...)"*

and greets the possibility of fully gpx passage-proofed rides by noting that

> *"The homologation of a BRM by a GPS track can be a solution adopted by an organizer for all or part of the course. Nevertheless, the organizer must always leave thepossibility of using a brevet card."*

I would like to see both BRM and BR calendar events continuing operating with the same practices as far as possible, but this is where we probably have to think carefully, otherwise organisers may move from BRM to BR events, adversely affecting our international standing and our members' eligibility for ACP awards. Organisers may seek to minimise their purchase of brevet cards, affecting our ability to provide them for riders requiring them. Mandating the use of the e-brevet system in conjunction with brevet cards would allow a charge to be made for use of the e-brevet, possibly solving that problem. Just some of the possible issues, and food for thought.

Development of E-Brevet

As effectively noted above, I have been impressed by how the e-brevet smart phone app ticks a lot of boxes without any other intervention. It provides what is a proper virtual brevet card on

the phone, with timed proofs of passage confirmed, and aggregated to give a view that indicates whether a course has been completed within the required time limits.

I have spent time recently corresponding now and then with the developer, and the Validation Secretary. The picture is not all rosy, as work needs to be done in order to make it a polished and professional product, and decide exactly what it is that we want to do with it. Maybe it is easier for organisers who think that they do not have to bother with brevet cards (or paying for them). Or maybe they don't have to submit finish lists, as the app will provide those. Unfortunately, a reduction in the amount of work saved by the organiser is paid for by the Validation Secretary whose workload is increased because she is working with a different results system. She also has additional work to do with regard to event finances and sums due to AUK, which are not covered in the app.

It does seem to me that the developer has spent considerable time working on validation while less aware of the validation system than is ideal, and the Validation Secretary spends considerable time doing her job while unaware of the development of the app. This is not to criticise either of them. Conversations between them are becoming more common, and I am hopeful that the development of e-brevet will be strengthened as a result.

In recognition of how brevet cards will likely be with us for some considerable time, and before ACP included that in their new regulations, I have been having a conversation with the developer about providing a print-out of an individual rider's proofs of passage on an event that can be affixed to a brevet card.. Those of you familiar with PBP will recall the neatly printed label showing your times of arrival at each control that had magically appeared on your brevet book when you got it back. The developer is working well on this and it does take some work, a suitable label size to fit on the card along with validation stickers, suitable fonts, the wording and the format. And even what to do if/when the app malfunctions or doesn't recognise a control for whatever reason, and what is then recorded, and how. Work is in progress on these and other points.

I am less certain about continuing to roll out the app for calendar events any further than we are at now, as I think we need to evaluate and take stock. While informal reports from the Membership Secretary have been very informative, and I'm grateful for her work on this, we do need feedback at Board level from a director more involved in the area of validation about its development and state of readiness, and to whom the developer can report.

LRM

LRM President Mark Thomas sent out his Autumn (Fall) letter (email) in September. In it he wrote

"I hope that this letter finds you all healthy in our world that is still changed by the pandemic. About one-third of the LRM events in 2021 were not able to be held as scheduled. Many others

were held in modified formats and with mostly local riders. I am cautiously optimistic about 2022, but I think we can expect that our organization and our events will continue to be affected.

2022 Calendar Submissions Requested
It's time for us to assemble the calendar of LRM events for 2022 (and, in some cases, for November and December 2021). Please send the following information about LRM events in your country to me prior to October 15:

- Name of the event
- Distance of the event
- Date of the event
- The start city or town
- The time limit for the event (including any request for additional time for events with significant vertical ascent)
- If available, the website address for information about the event (or the sponsoring club's website)
- The name and email address for the ride organizer or other responsible person

As was the case this year, we recognize that it is difficult to be sure whether and when any particular event will be held. But it would be very positive to have a calendar of proposed events. And again, in 2022 LRM will be very liberal about allowing changes, postponements, cancellations, or even new events. Please make sure to include any event from 2021 that was postponed until 2022.

Homologation of Events and Fees
I very much appreciated the prompt submission of results to LRM for the 2021 events that have been held so far this year. For 2022, please continue to send results to me (mark@muthomas.net) in spreadsheet format with information on the event and the information on each in-time finisher - Surname, First Name, Finishing Time, Nationality, and Gender (if provided), and Medal Request. A sample results submission file is attached for your use. Tal Katzir will continue to supply requested medals, which now feature our new design. Please be sure to include the shipping address for the medals in your results submission.

There will be no changes to LRM fees for 2022. As announced for 2020, the homologation fees are 2€ per finisher. Medals will be 6€ each. As in the past, these fees will be billed along with your BRM fees. We will continue to monitor the finances of LRM to understand if further changes might be made in the future.

Challenge Lepertel
The first round of *Challenge Lepertel* needs to be modified further in light of pandemic restrictions in many countries. The requirements for the award will be adjusted for riders whose first event came in 2019. Those riders need to complete four 1200km or longer events in at least two of the years 2019-2022. We will continue to monitor the situation to determine if further adjustments must be made in 2021. I'm working on a design for the medal, but would welcome assistance from any of you.

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May 2022 bring health, good cycling, and more normalcy to all of you.

Best regards,

Mark

Mark U. Thomas
Les Randonneurs Mondiaux

ACP

Jean-Gualbert Faburel was less loquacious but had plenty of content in his annual message:

"Dear all,

We are about to celebrate the centenary of the first « brevet de randonneur" on September 11 despite the sad conditions due to the pandemic. Even if we can see less restrictions to ride over the world, we are not living an easy time... let's go further and prepare next year which should be better! Thank you to all of you for all your hard work during that difficult period.

Next year, we will celebrate on 2022 June 11 the centenary of the first 300km. We will create again a special medal for that, the same as we did for the 200km. You can find attached a picture of that medal.

As we did last year, we will also create a specific brevet card. I will need you to tell me before September 30 how many special brevet cards and centenary 300 medals you will need for 2022. Don't hesitate to answer to me now

J

As usual, I will need also to get your calendar for the next BRM season on October 15 latest. You can find attached the form to submit your calendar. You will see more columns in that file. The first ones (A to I) are mandatory and the new ones (J to O) are just for information. These new columns will help your riders to locate BRMs. You have to know that you are now allowed to modify the dates of your events in the BRM application. Don't forget that BRM ridden during the next season (November 2021 to October 2022) could be used to pre register to PBP 2023.

You can find also a new version of the BRM rules. We added electronic means as proof of passage to validate BRM.

I wish you a great summer time for northern hemisphere or a pleasant winter time for south.

Thank for all your efforts. Stay safe and enjoy riding J

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Best regards,

Jean-Gualbert FABUREL

Audax Club Parisien"

ACP Randonneur 5000

This award, on which our Brevet 5000 is modelled, requires applicants to complete within a four-year period a Paris-Brest-Paris *Randonneur*, events of 200, 300, 400, 600, and 1000 km, a Fleche Velocio or Fleche Nationale, and other approved events to make a total of at least 5000 km. The award is open to all those eligible and is free

It would appear that earlier this year
> *"Le comité Directeur de l'Audax Club Parisien a décidé, le 7 juin 2021, de tenir compte des différents protocoles sanitaires qui ont été appliqués depuis plus d'un an. Ainsi, le délai pour l'obtention de cette récompense sera rallongé de 2 ans, mais uniquement pour ceux ayant homologué le PBP 2019."*

or in best Google translated English
> *" The Audax Club Parisien executive committee decided on June 7, 2021 to take into account the various health protocols that have been applied for over a year. So, the deadline for obtaining this award will be extended by 2 years, but only for those who have approved the 2019 PBP."*

In the last twelve months or so I have been asked by several members whether an extension like this might come to pass, and I suggested it probably would not. A couple of other members have asked whether AUK might lengthen the eligibility period for the similar AUK Brevet 5000 and I have responded that it probably would not.

Given ACP's initiative, would the Board want to extend the eligibility period for our Brevet 5000?

ACP Randonneur 10000

A similar situation exists for the six-year Randonneur 10000, which bears similarities with our Brevet 25000, and has also had 2 years added to its eligibility period.

Given ACP's initiative, would the Board want to extend the eligibility period for our Brevet 25000?

Mileater

I am pleased to say that Ged Lennox has provided me with a new design for the Mileater medal,

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closely related to ideas he produced for former Mileater Secretary Paul Worthington a couple of years ago, and that, with the assistance of Allan Taylor of the Badge and Medal Shop, an order has been placed for 200 medals at a total cost of £628.80. After dispatching backlogged medals, that should cover us for another 3 years or thereabouts. I have been in touch with Moray Trophies, who hold the remaining stock of the old medals, and intend to place the backlogged order for engraving and dispatch with them, as former Mileater Secretaries have done. However, I will not ask them to hold the remaining stock.

Chris Crossland
October 2021