

The Legend

Number 215



Newsletter of
North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club
April 2025

www.ngoc.org.uk



NGOC Committee

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Club Coach Post vacant	Club Captain Vanessa Lawson captain@ngoc.org.uk
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Volunteer Coordinator Ian Prowse volunteer@ngoc.org.uk	Additional Member Paul Taunton paul@ngoc.org.uk
Other Useful Non-Committee Contacts	
Club POC Manager Caroline Craig pocs@ngoc.org.uk	Web Administrator Steve Lee webadmin@ngocweb.com

The above shows the committee structure following the 2024 AGM

Front cover: you can now turn your orienteering photos into Tintin- or Wallace & Gromit-style pictures; it is a new feature built into ChatGPT, even the free tier. More inside!

Chair's Chat

Welcome to another edition of Legend. This issue is a big one with plenty for everyone. There has been exciting news with the club's success winning our local round of the CompassSport Cup and top performances from club members and relay teams.

I have just returned from an excellent JK festival. With 2,500 competitors, and large classes to compete with, it has a very different feel to our local events and well worth going along to every now and then just for the experience. I made a mistake, for which I can only apologise to the club members who went along, by assuming someone else was bringing along a club banner or tent and not volunteering to do it myself. I think most club members managed to catch up with each other at some point over the weekend, so it was not a total disaster and on the flip side it meant we all spent quite some time socialising with orienteers from other clubs as we searched for each other in the crowds.

Talking of socialising with other clubs, Maggie and I booked ourselves on a little orienteering holiday to Italy last month. It was sprint orienteering in the alleyways of the small medieval towns that sit on top of the southern Italian hills. The orienteering was great fun – a map extract is below – but just as much fun was the chance to meet orienteers from all over world who had joined the holiday tour. We got to know people from as far away as Canada and Kazakhstan and of course there were plenty of Scandinavians. All were there for fun rather than winning (although we had to have winners, who were awarded prizes of cheese and olive oil) and it really highlighted the international community aspect of our sport. It reminded us of how lucky we are to have found something that combines exercise and brain power in a kaleidoscope of great settings, enjoyed across the world by a community of adventurous people of all ages.

Despite it not being the main orienteering season, there are lots of events during the warmer months, whether it is a local evening map run, a Saturday summer series or a multi-day event like the Scottish 6 days. I hope you enjoy some great orienteering and socialising!

Ian Jones

San Giovanni in Fiore CS

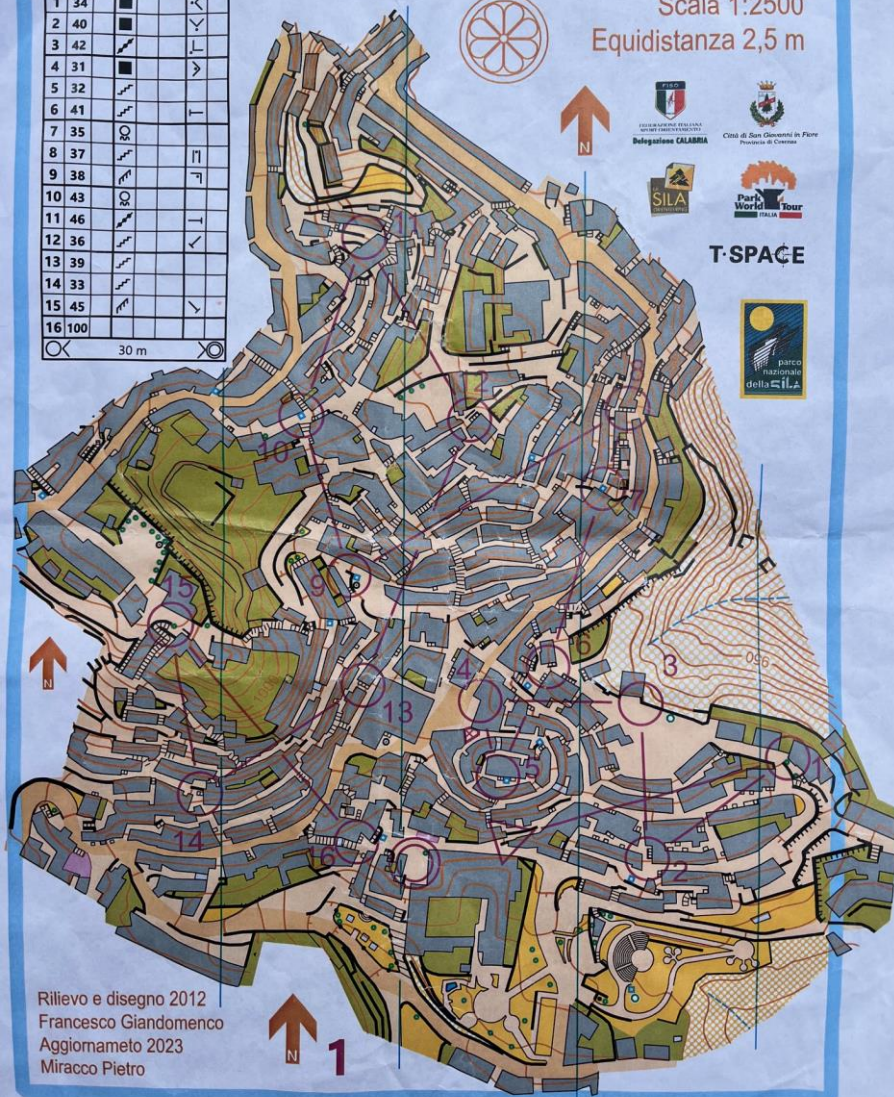
Scala 1:2500
Equidistanza 2,5 m

Moc Tour				
1		1,8 km		
1	34	■	<	
2	40	■	<	
3	42	■	<	
4	31	■	>	
5	32	■	>	
6	41	■	>	
7	35	○		
8	37	■		
9	38	■		
10	43	○		
11	46	■		
12	36	■		
13	39	■		
14	33	■		
15	45	■		
16	100	○		

30 m



T-SPACE



Rilievo e disegno 2012
Francesco Giandomenco
Aggiornameto 2023
Miracco Pietro

THANK YOU AND FAREWELL *FROM DAVID LEE*

In 1977 all four members of the Lee family joined NGOC. Over the subsequent years my involvement in orienteering has included the full range of activities at everything from local urban events to World Championship events. The locations have ranged from Forest of Dean to Scotland, and even New Zealand. Through orienteering I have had the pleasure of sharing friendship with many others. The period when my sons were at secondary school was valued particularly highly because the sport gave us shared family time.

My first event was a night event at Ashton Court and what will be my last event was a revisit to Lightning Tree Hill in December 2024. Having been the planner for the British Orienteering Championships held there in 1987 this feels like a fitting conclusion.

Orienteering has played a significant role in my life. I thank all of those I have met through the activity for their kindness and friendship.

David Lee

Czechia mini break in early March 2025

by Vanessa Lawson



Reuben has been working in Czechia since early January so I found a gap in the calendar and booked to visit him. He was working at Potkávárna u Havrana, a 'pension' (ski chalet type establishment with accommodation and meals) in Josefův Důl, in the Jizera Mountains close to the Polish border. He had been to the location before, on the Czech JROS camp in 2023 and at the time the athletes were asked that, if they wanted to, they could come back to work once they were 18+ so he took up the opportunity to go in winter.

Getting there is not so straightforward involving several buses and metro journeys, but the Czech public transport system is extremely reliable and also cheap. From Václav Havel airport in

Prague to Kaplička (the nearest bus stop 600m away) it is 125km but the public transport cost around £5 each way. The effort is worth it, the location is nothing short of idyllic. The house is surrounded by forests, birdsong and peace.

<https://www.potkavarnauhavrana.cz>

Potkávárna u Havrana is family run, and multi-generational. Dan and Lenka are the owners, their daughter Andy is married to Pavel who manages the activities and staff, but they are all involved in welcoming guests and making them feel at home. Tomáš is a childhood friend of Dan and creates homely food for the guests. Andy and Pavel's three young children are often seen at breakfast and dinner mingling with the guests' children. Dan and Lenka's other daughter is married to Ben Winsor, the coach who manages the Czech JROS tour (but I didn't get to meet them because they were orienteering in Portugal that week).

The family has a strong connection with the outdoors, hence choosing to live in such a location. Pavel and Andy are also orienteers and there are orienteering maps in the reception area for guests to borrow. Their 4-year-old saw me looking at one of the maps, exclaimed 'mapa!' and started following the course with his finger.

Activities

Orienteering

There are several maps for orienteering courses which start from the car park, the areas are technical with boulder features and steep slopes. I did try follow one of the courses but there was too much snow on the steeper northern slopes so I went off bearing 4-5 and the snow among the boulders was surprisingly knee deep (much less deep on the flatter tops and hardly any on the southern slopes).



Dan did say that they are hosting a major rogaining championship in June 2025 (Reuben tells me Dan is a past rogaining world champion).

The Jizerky O fest took place in the summer of 2024 and according to the website there should be another one this summer which, however, clashes with the Scottish 6 Days.

<https://www.o-fest.cz/>

I am going to look out to see if anything is put on in 2026.

Running

The forests are stunning, there is a network of colour coded marked paths and an excellent app which shows them all. Reuben took me on a few runs between 10 and 16km, all involving a significant amount of climb. You can go on shorter or much longer outings, there is endless choice.

The forests are all like this:



More lovely forests...



Cross-country skiing

The area is a mecca for cross-country skiing. The accommodation lies at 720m and you can start to cross-country ski 400m from the front door. Bedřichov is the nearest centre (4km away) and tracks are cut regularly during the season from there. The map app mentioned above has a winter setting where you can see the tracks and how recently they have been cut.

The week I went it hadn't snowed for a while and the temperature was rising so the snow was melting during the day and freezing overnight, making it all very icy. Reuben took me on one ski outing but I hadn't skied in 25 years and I was a bit spooked. It was hard work but really fun.





There is also a downhill area, these hills are not high but would be good for relative novices like me! The nearest downhill area is about 1km from Potkávárna u Havrana. Ski hire and instruction are available locally, I took details for next time.

Walking

Obviously, walking is also an option (and I did quite a bit of it). 1km from the accommodation is the summit of Slovanka (820m) and this has an iron lookout tower with the most amazing 360° view. I took a video of the climb up, but I needed both hands to come down!

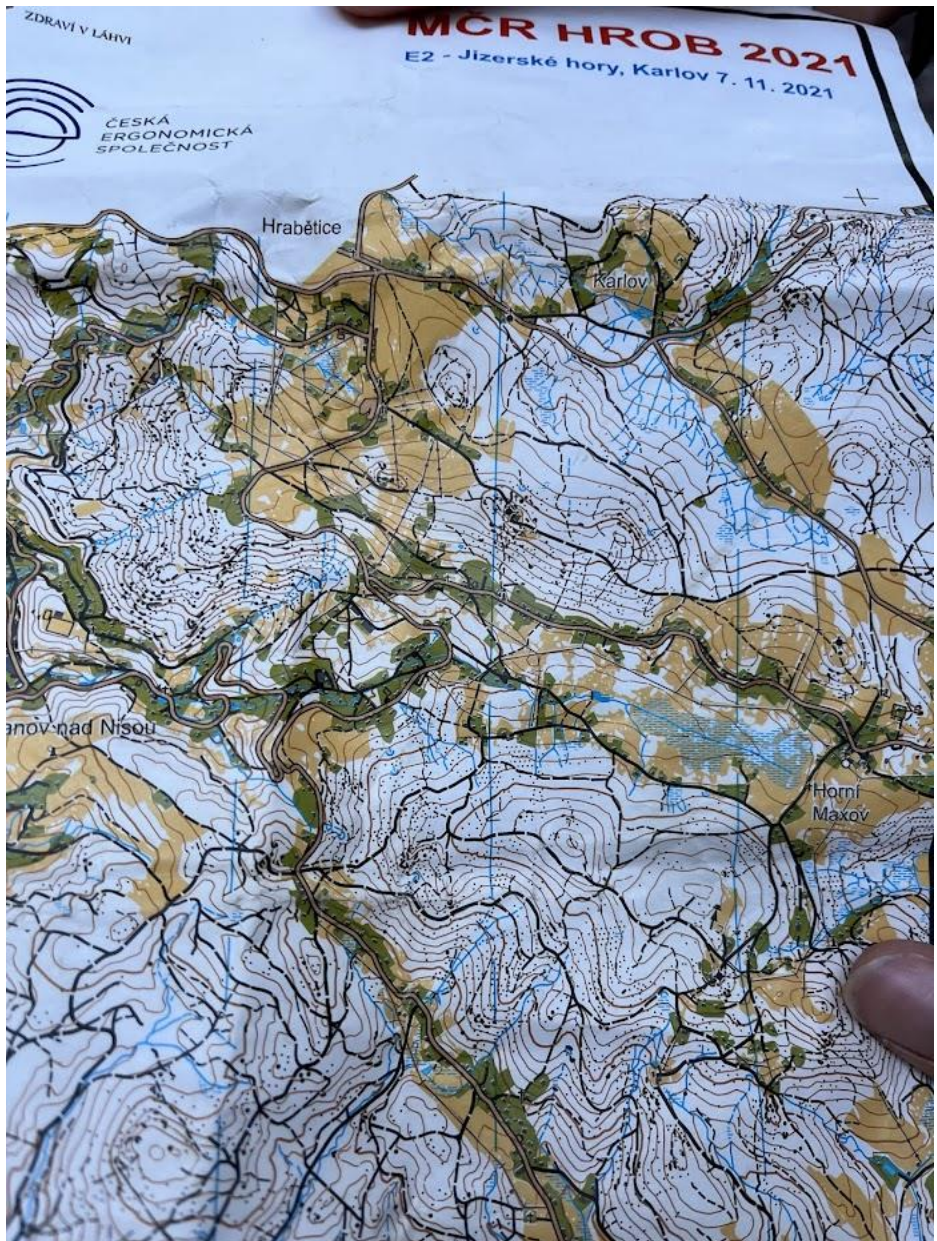


This was the view on a run, it's about 4km away from the accommodation.



There is also mountain biking in the area (all the fire trails currently cut for ski tracks would be great for MTB).

Reuben used the orienteering map from a previous rogaining event to find his way around on his runs and ski outings. I think it is 1:25,000 scale.



Summary

This was a great mini-break, helped enormously by the abundance of blue skies and sunshine.

My main aim was obviously to see Reuben with a secondary aim being to recce a family ski holiday next year, but it also occurred to me that it would make a great club training trip (in 2026?) if there was enough interest from members. The local areas are mapped and it could be timed to fit in some local events as well. For anyone who didn't want to orienteer there are plenty of other outdoor activities available.

If you are interested please get in touch and I would be happy to liaise with Pavel and organise something. I do know the family would be very happy to host us. I found Czechia very affordable, and Potkávárna u Havrana is comfortable, homely and not expensive.

Vanessa

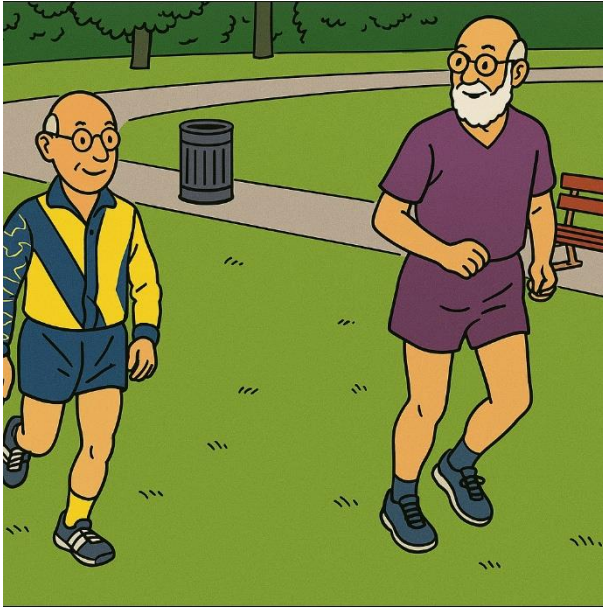


A new perspective on orienteering pictures

You can now turn your orienteering photos into Tintin- or Wallace & Gromit-style pictures; it is a new feature built into ChatGPT, even the free tier! With some tweaking you can get a range of different effects.

The photo below was in the October 2024 Legend with the caption: *Ian Parfitt (DVO) and Alan Brown (NGOC) warming up for the East Midlands Urban League at Chesterfield on 14 July 2024*





These other pictures are from recent editions of Legend:





















Wild boar in the Forest of Dean from July 2023 Legend

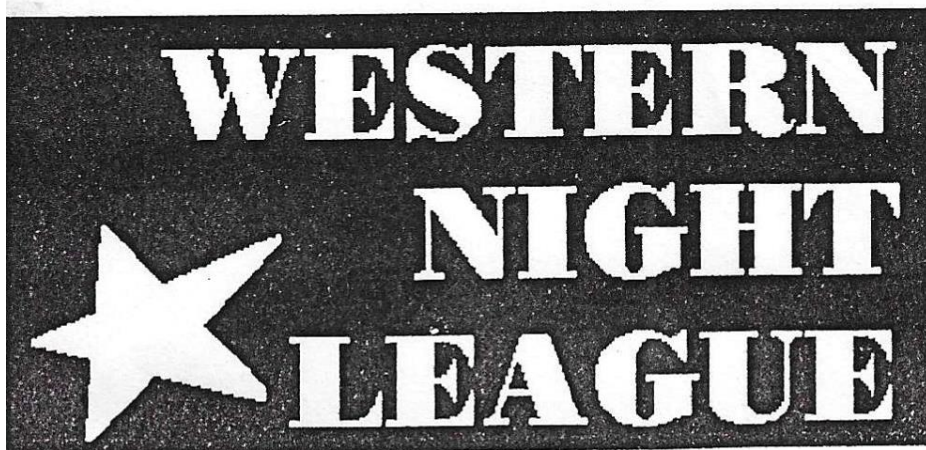






BOK Army trophy





The rise, demise and rebirth of the Western Night League – part two

(Continued from the January edition of Legend)

In the last instalment we read of the rise of the WNL. In this instalment Mark gives a summary of the demise of the league. As you will see there was no one specific reason, just an erosion of fixtures and no consistent format. In 1990 at an NGOC AGM a couple of founding members, Lin Callard and either Terry Foxton or Peter Pool, highlighted the need for some resurrection and over 1990/91/92 the league as we now know it was created.

Early years - by Mark Blackstone BOK

The previous contributors have painted a confused picture demonstrating motivation in having events to stimulate competitors either for the Harvester or the various regional championships. This was in a context of no other Night events and was pioneering in the extreme.

Numbers involved varied as they do now. 50 turned up at the very first events to enjoy the novelty and to participate in the mate-baiting still so prevalent. The small number of events concentrated the devotees to the events being provided. The curiosity element died down and a core of 20 plus kept the WNL functioning.

These early events were timed to be either weekly or fortnightly in the late autumn prior to the major champs, British, Southern and Midlands. They were training both for technique and for the early lighting systems and battery configurations. No WNL events after Christmas.

Cross-country events were provided as the practice for the "real thing". This demonstrated some dedication from the planners/organisers. As we know today the quantity of organisation for a score event is only a fraction of that required for traditional courses even with master maps. The time taken at an event was also much longer with traditional courses and this seriously eroded the available time for socialising.

From 1987, when Lin Callard vacated the NGOC chair, the emphasis changed as some summer events were held in both 87 and 88 prior to the Harvester, these were score events starting after dark in June either as a handicap system (M21s to get them all, M50s to get 15 controls) or straight score events. Organisers had stumbled on a simplistic way of getting their kicks!

The league aspect diminished and each event began to stand on its own. Both BOK and NGOC appeared to do their own thing and the central administration had disappeared. A more simplistic style arose slowly, with the score format truing both 45 and 60 minutes. By 1990/91 the league was struggling and as Gary Morton (who had been drafted in by BOK to prevent the concept of the league from drowning) demonstrated, the overall winner was only known well after the last race, with hardly a clue all

season. Gary felt he was flogging a dead horse. In fact, BOK's contribution in 1990/91 was a solitary event as the other one had fallen foul of refused land permission. Without Gary the WNL as a joint venture may well have died.

From the outset, WNL events had been tough and some of the spring 1990/91 events (and others) had been too difficult for novices and was deterring them. Unrest was no longer silent. The mould was broken by two volunteers from NGOC becoming involved.

The 1991 meeting – by Tom Mills NGOC

During the 1990 NGOC AGM an item was raised on the agenda requesting a volunteer to take responsibility for organising NGOC's quota of WNL events. Nothing was stated at the time which gave any other indication than that this was a straightforward task.

I recall the long silence that followed the request. Not a hand in sight. This presented an opportunity for two novice orienteers to offer their "apologetic" assistance, half expecting the offer to be declined. Well, not a bit of it, and with that Ivor Maughan and myself were "sworn in".

A few weeks later Lin Callard contacted me explaining that any formal structure that previously existed had now fallen by the wayside. What was needed was someone to contact and work with Bristol OK to reconstitute the league around a schedule of plans produced by the two clubs. The chaotic period that followed seemed completely out of proportion to the simple request made.

League events, or at least "events", appeared to be taking place but with little central administration and certainly without NGOC. Having overcome the initial hurdles, events scheduled and published were cancelled at short notice or no notice. This was

an incredibly frustrating (and irritating) period. Needless to say, what was needed was a formal meeting set well in advance of the season. Hence the Annual Meeting.

I called the initial meeting in my local, the Apple Tree at Minsterworth, and it produced a positive response. The forum was a catalyst to a well-scheduled, well -publicised, even well-marketed league where when a commitment to deliver an event was made the event happened. From here on an annual meeting has been held in Stonehouse just off the M5 to thrash out the future season, enticements for new recruits and accolades for winners and workers.

The get a feel for the progress made, sample the following:

- Expanded from 2 organising clubs to 6 clubs created by invitation after the meeting
- Provided a junior/novice course or courses at every event
- Have our own logo and “sportswear” (T-shirt)
- Are without question the most widely-publicised night league
- Have an annual prize-giving for all types of winners and losers
- Have a pub-of-the-night – always well attended and a good social forum
- Created a band of committed volunteers and helpers who give a pretty slick service for events often organised by a solitary band of one

The kind of efficiency any organisation would be proud of.

The modern history 1991 to 1996 – Mark Blackstone BOK

The 1991/92 season

After the initial meeting the real work of getting the Specification (Appendix C) into practice had to start. Land permissions sought,

organisers confirmed, fixtures secretaries informed/advised and publicity prepared.

The Kingswood School's John Lewis hosted the "Social" event having made available the school pavilion, plus hot drinks. The event on 5 October attracted a fair number of orienteers, many of whom seemed only interested in being able to run competitively but having run they did hang around for some socialising. A week later the first event under the new format took place at Painswick. Charles Bromley-Gardner BAOC became our first winner, visiting 19 out of 24 controls that Malcolm Green had placed. 34 starts were recorded.

On 26 October Bristol Downs saw event 2, where Clive Hallett BOK led in nine people to get all the controls. Jenny Henning SWOC was top woman. The Forest of Dean was visited on 9 November at The Pludds. Mark Saunders BOK triumphed, but the event was spoilt by the misplacing of a control. Only the high scorers were affected and they took it in good stead. 41 starters.

On 23 November we visited Lightning Tree Hill courtesy of Tom Mills. Again Charles B-G won. Eric Heritage somehow managed to mispunch and Andy Creber had a huge penalty (no light). Tom Mills junior was refused entry to the pub. A very poor reward for an eight-year-old for helping dad all day. He later teamed up with Craig Mason to become top WNL juniors.

Colin Palmer organised an informal event at Eastnor Deer Park on 7 December, the first of many distinctive events in that northwestern outpost of WNL territory.

Mendip, Stock Hill on 21 December took us up to Christmas and Mike Forrest underestimating the popularity of the venue. He spent half the night preparing pre-marked maps and a myriad of corrections for the later arrivals who eventually swelled the total to 57. The first five finishers were all BOK. The event took place in reasonable weather although all afternoon gales had

dominated the thoughts of Mike and assistant Gary Morton. The Castle of Comfort brought about welcome relief.

After four events Charles B-G led with 374 out of 400, with Clive Hallett on 358. Dan Coombs BOK was top junior with 229. This event saw the first display of the “controls visited” chart in the results allowing comparisons to be made.

Ashton Court hosted event six on 11 January with 72 starters, most people coped with having a different start to the finish. It was unique in that feature. The usual top finishers but the ladies had quite a tussle with Jackie Davis (Hallett) edging out clubmates Alice Bedwell and Heather Munro.

On 18 January Lydiard Park in northwest Swindon was MOK's contribution. John Orton ran the fastest whilst the M and W15s used it for the Duke of Edinburgh Award experience. For some reason the event did not count towards the league scores.

Two weeks later at Sallowvallets Peter Poole provided mist where 51 souls watched BOK people take the top five places. Planner Bill Budden managed to praise the cooking from Nicola Poole and Mike Forrest explained why he allowed negative penalties. Did anyone dare to respond? With one event to go the dropping of poor events was having its effect at the top of the table. Clive's three wins against two each from Mark S and Charles B-G was shaping up well. All to play for at Cleeve Hill on 29 February, over a whole moth to go with no night O!

People had got out of the habit and the top three missed the event. (There may have been a National the next day). A relatively small turnout but, overall, Clive and Jackie had won the league. no prizes and only the kudos of winning. 167 had tried the reformed WNL.

It wasn't a kangaroo!

Thirty-five years ago I ran the Chiltern Challenge and won the M40 class, so I decided I was up for the challenge (!) to race there again. In those days all the courses were defined by age classes. Permanent trophies were presented to the winners and mementos given to the top 3 in each class. Nowadays the courses are colour coded, and sadly there are no trophies or mementoes.



The event was held in Hambleden, between Henley on Thames and Marlow. I did not fancy a two-hour drive and breakfast on the move so with my wife we decided to stay the previous night at the Bisham Abbey sports centre. An excellent place to stay if you're that way or entering a TVOC or BKO event.

Why does the Sat Nav system insist that you want to travel to the nearest motorway, drive an extra 10 miles to save 30 seconds on your journey? What about saving fuel? Anyway, I ignored the Satnav and had an enjoyable ride through the country, ignoring the offer of 90 miles nose to tail on the M4.

The following day, it was a perfect day for the event. Sunny, mild, little wind and no rain.

The day's first challenge was driving through what can only be described as the Marlow bridge 'tank traps'. These are substantial metal bollards which prevent anything other than a standard size car driving into Marlow or else risk catastrophic scrapes on your bodywork. No Chelsea Tractors here!



Arriving in the event car park, a very large grassy field, we were greeted by red kites wheeling over us seemingly oblivious to the change of scenery!

Hambleden forest is one of the best places to orienteer. The courses were challenging but the forest is generally runnable. Not too many steep slopes to navigate. I was halfway through my course when a large animal bounded in front of me. No, it wasn't a kangaroo but just one of the wild wallabies! We didn't have any of them in 1989! It was closely followed by a large number of roe deer.

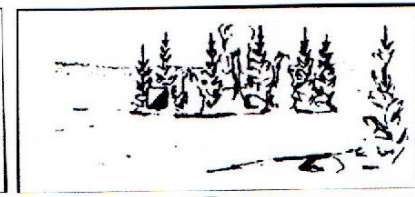
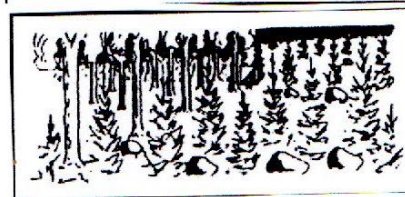
Did the wild animals cause my disappointing 4th place I wonder?!

Don Cload

How good are you at control descriptions?

Map	Terrain	Control Descriptions	Text Description
		1 <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	Terrace

Above is an example of a control description, showing a section of map, a line drawing of the feature, the symbol description and a text description. Below are four of these that have been deconstructed (and five more on the next page) – all you have to do is reconstruct them! Answers are in “Brashings”.



74									
----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Vegetation
boundary,
east corner
outside)

75									
----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Root stock,
east side

76									
----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

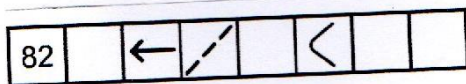
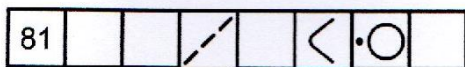
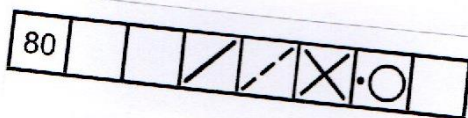
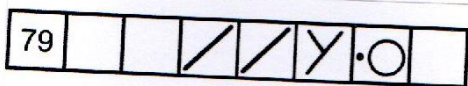
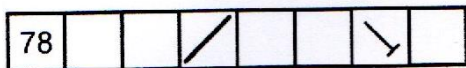


Prominent tree,
broad leaved,
east side

77									
----	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



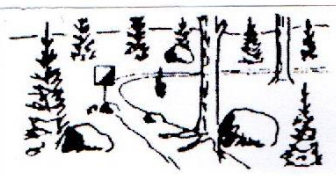
Copse, west tip



Road junction,
west side

Road/path
crossing,
west side

Western
path bend



Path bend,
west side

Road,
south-east end

PPEN Pointers – **No. 2 “Control and Leg Load”**

The second in a series of tips, intended to assist planners using Purple Pen to plan NGOC events

Part 2 - Paul Taunton

If you didn't read the first article in this series [*in the January 2025 Legend*], may I suggest you do so, for an introduction to the reasons behind the club's use of Purple Pen software.

Once you have prepared your initial set of draft courses it's useful to check whether some controls or legs might be too busy. Go to the main menu, select "Course", then, from the dropdown menu that appears, select "Competitor Load". A dialogue box similar to that shown below will pop up, allowing you to enter the expected runner numbers for each course:

ports Help

Finish Add Descriptions Add Map Flip/Exchange Add

Yellow Blank Map

Course Load

?

×

Set the number of competitors on each course by clicking in the second column and typing a number.

Course Name	Competitor Load
Brown	30
Blue	40
Green	45
Short Green	25
Orange	15
Yellow	15
Blank Map	0

OK

Cancel

Enter your best guess of the number of runners, perhaps using other events at the same location or recent League events as a guide, then press “OK”.

Once you have returned to the main menu, select “Reports” then, from the dropdown menu that appears, select “Control and Leg Load”. A report headed “Competitor Load Summary” will pop up,

divided into two sections “Control load” and “Leg load”. *Note that a warning appears, as below, if you have forgotten to set competitor loads for any particular course.*

Control load

Control and Leg Load

?

×

Competitor Load Summary for Mallards North Jan 25

WARNING: Some or all courses do not have competitor loads set for them. The loads listed below may be incorrect or missing for this reason. To set competitor loads, select "Competitor Load" from the "Course" menu.

Control load

Control	# Courses	Load
99	6	170
41	3	115
49	3	115
55	3	115
44	3	110

Section 7.4.5 of Appendix A to the Rules states that a control loading of over 500 competitors per hour per control unit is easily supported for normal events. The numbers above show that the last control before the finish, which is visited by all courses, control 99, has a load of 170 runners. One control unit is adequate (although a second backup should probably be available).

It's good (*but not a rule!*) to try to ensure that controls are not too busy, so this example event has been planned so that only three of the six courses visit any particular control. This leads to a maximum control load of 115 runners, i.e. about one runner per minute over the League start window of just over 90 minutes, which seems acceptable.

Leg load

Leg load

(only legs used by more than one course appear in the following table)

Leg	# Courses	Load
Timed Start–Start	7	170
99–Finish	6	170
67–99	3	85
41–45	2	85
48–49	2	85

Even if courses share **controls**, they should share as few **legs** as possible. Thus if two competitors arrive at a control at the same time, but are on different courses, it's likely that they will need to leave the control in slightly different directions, so they need to navigate rather than just follow. The table shows “# Courses”, the number of courses that share identical legs. For this example League event it has been possible to plan the courses so that, in general, **no more than two of the six courses run any particular leg**. Only on the approach to the finish do three courses share the leg 67 to 99, and then all courses share the run-in from 99 to finish. *(There are no Rules regarding the numbers of courses sharing legs but it's common sense to try to spread runners out as much as possible).*

The table also shows the load on each of the shared legs. In this example the maximum load (excluding the run-in) is 85 runners, half the total, so no legs should seem particularly busy.

Looking at both the control loads and the leg loads as tabulated by Purple Pen will allow you to adjust your courses to remove any particularly busy locations and ensure runners are spread more widely over the available area, hopefully leading to a more pleasant runner experience.

Paul Taunton

Brashings

British Orienteering incentive scheme Awards

Congratulations to the following members who have been awarded incentive scheme certificates for their performances at orienteering events.

James Askew	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ***
Rhiannon Fadeyibi	Racing Challenge: Silver Award *** Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ***
Sebastian Lyne	Racing Challenge: Gold Award *****
Thomas Dilley	Navigation Challenge: *** Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ***
Martin May	Navigation Challenge: *****
Alec Linton	Racing Challenge: Gold Award *****
Hannah Agombar	Racing Challenge: Gold Award *****

A warm welcome to new members: -

- * Cam Breeze
- * Bonnie Hitchins

How good are you at control descriptions? Answers:

Map	Terrain	Control Descriptions	Text Description
		74 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Vegetation boundary, east corner (outside)
		75 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Copse, west tip
		76 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Prominent tree, broad leaved, east side
		77 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Root stock, east side
		78 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Road, south-east end
		79 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Road junction, west side
		80 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Road/path crossing, west side
		81 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Path bend, west side
		82 [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []	Western path bend

For the full list of examples see: [OneDrive \(live.com\)](https://onedrive.live.com)

New Legend Editor wanted!

I have been Editor since October 2018 (that's 31 issues including this one) and I think it's time for some fresh blood! (Also I was Editor from August 2005 to November 2013, 47 issues). If anyone would like to take over from this year's AGM in the autumn please contact Chairman Ian Jones. If you want to find out more about the post please contact me. The good thing is that you are very much your own boss and have pretty much a free hand on content and presentation; there should be four issues a year but I have also done a few "specials".

Alan

Have your say!

Are there any matters that you would like the Committee to consider? Contact the Club Secretary or any member of the Committee.

Articles for Legend

We are always looking for articles and photographs on anything to do with orienteering. Send your article/pictures to legend@ngoc.org.uk. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of Legend.

Disclaimer

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club.

