

Number 196



Newsletter of North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club April 2021

<u>www.ngoc.org.uk</u>



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The above shows the committee structure set out in the NGOC constitution.

Front & back covers: the pandemic has given "Modern" Mapping Man Greg Best lots of extra time for mapping.

<u>Chairman's Chat</u>

We had an excellent restart event on Saturday 3 April, in bright weather, at Birdlip, using a new area of open runnable woodland and fast open grassland. We had an exceptional on-line entry of 203, much higher than usual for an NGOC League event, showing that people are keen to get back to orienteering. The courses, planned by Greg Best, used a new map that he had surveyed and drawn. Despite the steepness of the Cotswold escarpment the courses allowed some contouring to reduce the climb to an acceptable amount. For those of you not familiar with the area, we now have a continuous map of the Cotswold edge from Birdlip to Cooper's Hill, extending southwards to cover Cranham and Sheepscombe, a very large area indeed. If somebody's keen to plan a Long-O it looks as if a straight line 7km leg might be possible within the mapped area?

Now events have restarted let's hope that the remainder of this season's fixtures, currently shown on the NGOC website, can go ahead as planned. Those of you living in the Forest may note that the summer fixtures are almost all east of the Severn. This is because at present we are not allowed access to the Forest of Dean for adequate numbers of participants to hold a League event. Forestry England (FE) states "From the 17 May 2021 through to 1 September 2021 we will extend the participant numbers to a maximum of 30. This maximum number must include any activity/group leader(s)". We have programmed events in the Forest from September onwards, but these remain uncertain as FE states they will then consider events "on a caseby-case basis". Let's hope we are allowed to hold the four events programmed in the Forest during the autumn! The committee has been active in trying to identify additional privately-owned areas to reduce our reliance on FE. We have had some success, as Greg has obtained permission for (and mapped) a new area at

Huntley to be used on 10 April and, after a 10-year break, we now have an agreement in principle to use Lydney Park again.

If you haven't already done so, don't forget to think about Lochaber 2021 soon. This year's Scottish 6-day event is planned for 1 to 7 August and the organisers are confident it will go ahead, though they say that a GO/NO GO decision will need to be made at the end of May. With foreign holidays still in doubt, and staycations being more popular, it's likely that booking accommodation near Fort William during the event week will be even more difficult than usual! The Taunton family has entered and booked a cottage in Glencoe. I'm pleased to see there are already over 1400 people on the entry list, including 19 NGOC members. If you do intend to come it's best to enter before the end of April as the daily fee increases by £2 on 1 May. Hope to see you there! If the event should be cancelled we intend to go to the cottage anyway, as it's a great area for a holiday!

Looking ahead to Easter 2022, NGOC hope to be assisting the Welsh Orienteering Association by taking on the planning and organisation of the JK22 Middle race on Saturday 16 April 2022, in the sand dunes at Merthyr Mawr, near Porthcawl, South Wales. The committee is discussing how best to progress the event as, so far, we have been unable to obtain an organiser to take it on. NGOC will be looking for a large squad of on-the-day helpers, so plan now to spend Easter 2022 in South Wales!

Best wishes to all of you for 2021. Stay safe!

Taul





NGOC League 2021 Huntley (Bright's and Castle Hill Woods) Level: D (Local) Saturday 10 April 2021

NGOC are pleased to invite you to the second in event of 2021, like the first, in a newly mapped area. This area comprises two smallish woods, Brights Hill and Castle Hill Wood, linked by farmland. They are adjacent to May Hill with views over to Gloucester City. This is the first part to be completed of an extensive new map that will also cover Newent Woods and May Hill. The landowner is keen for us to use their woods and, happily, they will allow us to run events there at times of the year when Forestry England will not.

Pre entry only via Fabian 4

"Modern" Mapping Man

The pandemic with all its lockdowns has given me lots of extra time for mapping, so I have busied myself trying to make full use of this opportunity.

Happily, new LiDAR data for most of Gloucestershire had recently been released by the Environment Agency, meaning I was able to re-survey and re-draw the contours of Cleeve Hill. These are now totally LiDAR-based so ready for the British Nights when it can finally take place. I made a map of "Piccadilly Pits", which is close to Cleeve Hill, for use as a series of MapRun micr-O courses. I also made a map of another new area at Edge, near Standish, which I had initially intended to be used also as a micr-O area. However, with the addition of some nearby National Trust woods, it outgrew this purpose and became big enough to support a middle-distance event. I completed the map of Cheltenham's town centre and spent time on the map of Wyman's Brook for a MapRun event. My current project is by far the biggest. This is to map our new area at Huntley Estate, which includes Newent Woods and May Hill.

Before getting too far into this latest project, I decided to investigate updating my working methods, so thought you might be interested to hear about this. Almost all the mapping I have ever done since the first one I made at Crickley Hill some six years ago has benefitted from freely available LiDAR data. This makes for a fairly accurate result and a lot of time savings in the field. The Huntley Estate has large areas with few big features to navigate by, meaning it would be quite difficult for me to keep track of precise location. Imagine finding a small depression in the middle of thick vegetation far from other features or paths – this would be really quite tricky to place accurately on the map. The easy solution is to use GPS.



Photos showing our Modern Mapping Man with all his gear....

- 1. The mobile computer (aka mobile phone)
- 2. Compass securely tied to trousers, as have finally learnt from already losing two of them
- 3. Map clipboard with at least 2 variants with different LiDAR backgrounds
- 4. Front bumbag containing coloured pens
- 5. Pocket with a selection of supermarket carrier bags for flagging distant features when checking bearings
- 6. Grippy, bogtrotter wellies to keep the feet dry
- 7. Fingerless gloves



- 8. Cap and Garmin receiver with blue and yellow flashing lights
- 9. Scruffy old cycling jacket with convenient back pockets
- 10. Portable phone charger and cable

11. Scruffy mapping trousers with lots of pockets – covered in old mud stains from frequent trips and falls when looking at the map and not where I'm going

12. Packed lunch when mapping far away from the car

I have experimented before with using GPS to record mountain bike tracks and the like but was not confident of the accuracy under the forest canopy, so gave up. After doing some research, I purchased a Garmin GLO2, which is a dedicated GPS receiver that is able to receive signals from the Russian Glonass satellites as well as the American GPS ones. This is attached to the top of my cap by elastic straps sewn on by Sophie, my good wife. It communicates via Bluetooth to my mobile phone. The theory is that being on top of my head, there are no parts of my body that can get in the way to obstruct it, although I find it quite difficult to be sure about how much extra accuracy this actually gives. I have heard about some orienteering mappers who attach a large antenna to their head for even better signal. Okay, I admit that I look quite silly enough with a small flashing Garmin on my head, but an antenna would really be taking it a step too far! Walking around with a clipboard already encourages plenty of public curiosity, but just think of the extra questions I would face from amused/bemused dog walkers!

On my phone, I will have already loaded up a geo-referenced image of the latest version of the map, together with a background of my favourite LiDAR views - one or half metre contours and the vegetation base. This means that I can constantly see where I am on the map. The GPS accuracy is never 100% but usually it is within 5-10 metres or so. I use a really nice free app on my phone called Avenza Maps to view the map, which also allows me to record tracks in the field, like small paths and vegetation boundaries, and to record point features. Each of these can be given a description and different colours/symbols can be used depending on what kind of feature it is. These are all easily uploaded to OCAD when I get home. However, when in the field, I still prefer to record most features with my coloured pens on the paper map that is attached to my clipboard. Hence, no raincoat in the kit, as mapping in the rain is a disaster. The old mappers' tools of compass and pace-counting still have an important place as it remains essential to check the location of new features against other known features - never

blindly trust the GPS location! I have heard that some mappers these days use a computer tablet in the field to record their changes, but I don't think I'm ready for this yet. Amongst other reasons, I trip and fall at least a couple of times on every outing, so would be very nervous of damaging the tablet. Hence, mine is very much a hybrid approach to surveying, combining the old methods with the new.



This vegetation basemap generated from LiDAR by OCAD shows a small part of Newent Woods. As you would expect, white is runnable woodland, progressively darker greens are less runnable and yellow is open. The purple is low but thick undergrowth. The thin grey contours are at 1 metre intervals.

Another great advance I have recently come across is OCAD's "Vegetation Base Map". This only became possible with the latest kind of LiDAR data recently available. LiDAR has always been great for generating contours and being able to identify land features like distinct tracks, gullies, earth walls and large point features. However, until now, LiDAR has offered fairly limited assistance with vegetation. Mapping and classifying vegetation is one of the trickier aspects of mapping and annoyingly it tends to change guickly over time compared to land features. Now, I am able to load up the vegetation basemap onto my phone as a background and it clearly shows the areas of thicker vegetation and even heavy undergrowth like thick brambles or bracken - see the example below to get an idea of how this looks. The whole area still needs to be carefully field checked and vegetation classified before inclusion in the final map, but it does give a very helpful starting point and saves guite a bit of time. One downside to using the phone so much in the field is that I find that my phone battery drains quickly, lasting at most half a day. This means I need to also bring along a portable phone charger for recharging on the hoof.

LiDAR and GPS certainly help me to speed up the process of mapping and to produce a more accurate result. I have great admiration for old-school mappers, who had no computerised assistance and I feel sure I would not have had enough skill or patience to have managed in those days! However, mapping remains a very time-consuming task, needing much dedication! Very many full days are spent in the forest to make a map and after each day, several further hours of work are needed on the computer at home deciphering the day's scribbled lines and notes and drawing these changes in OCAD. Please do spare a thought for all the work and time that has gone into making every single orienteering map and don't focus only on small inaccuracies you may come across that perhaps has lost you a few seconds! Mappers always appreciate constructive comments, though.





by Chris Johnson

In my earlier article (*Legend January 2021*) I looked at the development of orienteering maps in the UK fifty years ago. The first ten years of orienteering saw huge strides in the development of specialist foot navigation maps. Over the following 20 years maps gradually improved, with photogrammetric base maps becoming more widely available, but progress was incremental rather than startling.

The next major development was the development of computer software that standardised the drawing of maps and made it far easier to update an area. The Swiss program OCAD was created in 1989 with an English-language Windows version (OCAD5) released in 1995. Since then, the program has become ever more sophisticated and it is now in its 15th (OCAD2020) version. Other programs such as the shareware OpenOrienteeringMapper and plug-ins for Illustrator can also be used, although their capabilities vary. Recent versions of OCAD contain modules that enable externally sourced digital mapping data to be analysed relatively quickly and easily, requiring fewer programming skills than other professional mapping programs. Even so, OCAD is not intuitive and it takes time and effort to use it proficiently.

Used at its basic level, OCAD simply provides the drawing tools necessary to create or update a digital map. The next step in complexity is to ensure that the map is 'georeferenced', such that each point of the map is associated with a grid reference. GPS is nowadays a very cheap and accessible technology, available in most phones and many tablets, that enables you to know where you are within about 4m. Used in conjunction with a georeferenced map the GPS module can 'spot' where you are on the map. If a map is georeferenced accurately it can be used for 'Virtual Events' with Apps such as MapRunR and UsynligO. Over the past year it has become very apparent which of our legacy maps are accurately georeferenced and which are not.

Another technology of immense importance to modern mapping is lidar. Aircraft or drones fly over an area and shine laser beams of various frequencies at the land. Reflections from these beams are analysed, producing very accurate height and position data. Different types of sampling enable either the ground level (DTM = digital terrain measurements) or the visible surface of the tops of buildings, trees or vegetation (DSM = digital surface measurements) to be gathered. Samples can be taken at different densities, but a typical file used to produce an O-map will include samples of 1m distribution - meaning that there are 1 million sample points per square km. In the UK, lidar was originally used by the Environment Agency to gather very accurate information about watercourses and assess the risk of flooding, so there is more publicly available lidar data for lowland areas than for the tops of hills. Analytical outputs from this data include contour maps and pseudo-images of the landform. It is also possible to subtract the DTM data from the DSM data, which produces a plot of the height of vegetation or buildings. Some lidar outputs also provide information about vegetation density, which can save enormous amounts of field work. Archaeologists get very excited about lidar because of its ability to reveal features below dense tree cover.

Satellite images are also a type of digital map. Google, Microsoft Bing and Apple all provide high-definition aerial images which can be particularly helpful if mapping open areas or new housing developments. It is worth searching to discover which of the platforms has the most up-to-date image. OCAD now includes the capability to load a georeferenced Google image directly into your map file. To give an idea of how these different technologies can combine, I am using as an example a small part of Braunton Burrows, a complex area of open sand dunes that now has numerous lidar files of various types associated with it. Having found and downloaded the available lidar data in a suitable format, the analytic module in OCAD will produce for you a contour map of the area. In this example I have used 1m definition and asked the program to output 1m contours in purple, 5m contours in green and 25m contours in brown. It is immediately obvious that this is a very complex area. Lidar plots are inherently georeferenced, which makes them excellent base maps.



The analytical package also produces pseudo-images of the land from the available data. These provide views of gradients and hill-shading, which can facilitate interpretation of the contours. Combining the DSM hill shading output with the contours produces a much clearer image of the land.



This combined image shows up new details including tracks, clumps of vegetation and the complexities of the various gully systems. Clearly this combination is going to make the drawing of the O-map much easier. The next step is to add in a satellite photo of the same area and fiddle with the intensities of the various images to produce a satisfactory balance.

By including the aerial photo data, we can now see which areas are sandy or grassy, and we create an accurate impression of the various tracks even in the flat open areas. Indeed, it would be interesting to compare for ease of use a virtual image map of this type compared to the standard orienteering map of the same area. There is however a caveat, this image above is at a scale of about 1:2,500 and, with highly complex terrain, a major part of the skill of the mapmaker is to reduce the amount of data shown on the O-map such that it is both legible and comprehendible at 1:10,000 or 1:15,000 scales.



Having now created this virtual map, one can settle down to the task of creating the O-map. Much of this can be done without leaving the comfort of your desk but there comes a point when it is essential to get out and check that there have not been major changes to the area you are mapping. A really neat way of doing this is to download your georeferenced map onto a tablet and use this to check all the key features. I export a georeferenced TIFF file and use an app called Avenza Maps on my iPad for this task, but other similar apps exist. In the field, you are always on the lookout for new paths and changes in the size and shape of thickets, but this methodology can be really helpful if, for example, a large number of new trees have been planted during landscaping of an open area.

The technique demonstrated above is just one method of beginning to create a new orienteering map from scratch. However, often a lot of the mapper's work will have already been done by someone else and it is possible to pull in information from mapping wikis that save a lot of time. The relatively simple street maps used for a lot of the NGOC Mapruns are examples of automated downloads that are relatively quick and easy to obtain. For urban areas, it is also possible to transform OS digital data directly into O-maps using suitable algorithms, although to do this you need to have access to the OS digital database in the first place (purchases are prohibitively expensive), and then have the programming skills necessary to make the transformations. Mappers also need to be imaginative when dealing with new building developments. Several of the competition areas that I have mapped have included new buildings or housing estates too recent to feature on OS maps or satellite images. However, a search through the archives of Council planning departments will often allow you to find the architects plans for buildings and landscaping, thus enabling you to plot the feature accurately.

With all this information around, it is possible to produce very detailed and highly accurate maps. An A3 urban map or an area of intricate sand dunes may include vast numbers of individual objects on the map. From a time in the early 1970s when map interpretation was something of a dark art, we have reached a point where orienteers expect perfection and whinge mightily if they don't get it. At the Bath University Sprint Champs in 2018, an A4 map comprised of 5340 objects, the main complaint to me as mapper boiled down to a 1mm long line that I had plotted with a width of 0.14mm, rather than 0.4mm. Talk about being pernickety! Despite the occasional gripe, producing maps is, at least to me, very satisfying. It's a chance to get to know an area really well and a nicely finished map should be a piece of functional art. It has certainly kept me fully occupied since I retired.

Flags from bags

While tidying up during lockdown, I was distracted by the distinctive pattern on an old Lakeland carrier bag. Squares diagonally split into orange and white triangles - why did that look familiar?



For some reason it seemed natural to cut the bag into strips of three. It was a large bag with the same pattern on both sides, yielding an impressive twenty strips.



The final transformation was achieved with a combination of bamboo skewer, Sellotape and string. At 7.5 x 7.5 cm, they're about a quarter the size of a regular control flag.



I've no doubt that others with more skills could produce something more robust, but they stand up well enough to their current stay-at-home weather!

Tom Cochrane

Forest training between Lockdowns

'Do you want some cake too?' my mum asks as we are going through the Costa drive thru to get lunch. I think we've deserved it – we've just spent nearly three hours in a forest in torrential rain. We didn't meet a single person but that's probably because everyone else had bothered to read the weather forecast. And as we walked back to the car through a fast-flowing stream that had started the day as a path, we wished we had too.



But there is something special about having a forest all to yourself, something my family and I have enjoyed many times in the last few months, and something all orienteers would appreciate. Just in the last fortnight we've been to the Forest of Dean three times, each time vastly different and each time a great training session, a great mood booster, and a welcome escape from lapping the fields behind my house.



Last Saturday we went to a beautiful open patch of woodland to do some high-speed orienteering where the forest floor had nothing but a cushion of fallen leaves. I did some control pick style courses, trying to practice running at race pace – it's the closest I can get to a race in the current climate. We met basically no one until I came up a slope and accidently surprised a family of wild boar. I was within 10 metres before we noticed each other and they stormed off up the hill, startled. But this happens surprisingly often when you run off the paths in the Forest of Dean, particularly if it's not in a race and no one has come before you. Several times I've met cute litters of 10 or so babies with one or two adults, the little ones running around in all directions not knowing what to do when they see you until an adult takes the lead and they all scurry along behind to go hide in some thicker vegetation. Sometimes you meet the same family more than once on the same run, almost expecting which patch of woods you will see them in next.

By the following day the temperature had dropped and because we were out early the forest was covered in a thin layer of frost, making crunching sounds with each of our footsteps. The focus today was just to get some time in terrain. I've come to value these sessions very highly as I think they were the key to my success in the recent UKEOL races in the Lake District, particularly the long distance. The terrain might be a bit different in the Lakes but there are some sections in the Forest of Dean that can be as tricky as anything there. Also, just being used to running in the forest and holding a map gives me a lot of confidence since it means that all the race processes become somewhat normalised. That's the point of any training - to make everything you might experience in a race feel normal - that includes: running through a bog, orienteering and concentrating for over an hour, getting into oxygen debt running up a hill but still managing to find a control, picking a tricky route choice for a long leg, or navigating just as well when the weather is horrific.

So whilst I hated it quite a bit this week when running in torrential rain, I do it because it gives me confidence that if it rains like that on one of the big races, it will feel 'normal'. And to be honest it's not too bad. You reach a point where you can't get any more wet and I got to wear dad's raincoat (which reaches my knees), which helped keep me warm. And that brings us back to the car where, wrapped up nice and warm with the heating on full and the car filled with toasties and brownies, we are now laughing at the day's events. Of how the rain just got heavier and heavier and about all the hills we slipped down on our bums.

I bet you all have similar stories of horrible days in the forest that made you hate the sport at the time but now we'd give anything to be back out there on that horrible day. Let's hope we can all get out and enjoy the forests safely together again soon. I look forward to seeing you all out there, at some random control in some random forest at some random race but most importantly with massive grins on our faces.

Cecilie Andersen

(BOK and GB senior squad)

I'd like to thank NGOC for the maps they have kindly shared to allow me to run these and many more training sessions in high quality terrain on excellent maps. My performances at the races that did take place this season would not have been possible without this kindness from my neighbouring club.

Please note this article was written before the National lockdown was imposed in January and all rules were followed when travelling to train.

CAPTION COMPETITION



"I was told that a mud bath would do wonders for my complexion, but I can't see any difference." *(Trevor himself!)*

"I'm not going to shadow Geraldine Granger around the White course again!" (Paul Taunton)

Still feeling clean after your Tough Mudder? Why not try Orienteering for tough competition to oil your mind and spoil your clothes! (Samuel Taunton)

Ski Orienteering Course for Cleeve Hill!

Following a cross-country skiing excursion on Cleeve Hill during the snowy weather at the end of January, I came up with the bright idea of setting up a ski-O course there. Of course, in this country it's impossible to predict if or when we may get snow and when it does come it usually doesn't last for long. Hence, any such course needs to be ready to go at the drop of a hat - or at the fall of a snowflake! MapRun was the obvious way to go as it can all be set up in advance, there are no control flags to put out in a hurry and the course can be left open for several days. Hence, I have now set up and tested a score course with 30 controls. It sticks to the skier-friendly grassy areas and has relatively straightforward navigation. Control sites are fairly big and easy to spot when covered with snow and these even include a few golf greens – hopefully, snow golf isn't a thing?!

I don't know of many other cross-country skiers in the club, but there might be one or two? I know that BOK has a handful. Because of the likely very small uptake by skiers with their own equipment, an event will also be opened up to snow-runners to boost the numbers! I reckon that runners will be faster over a thin cover of snow plus skiers will have the additional problem of how to carry a map and compass, so to level up the competition, runners will be awarded fewer points per control than skiers. Cleeve Hill is embargoed until the British Nights in November (don't worry, I'm exempt as mapper!). This means we are looking at next winter at the earliest, but keep a keen eye out for a sudden invite to the NGOC ski-O championship when we next get a flurry of snow! Fortunately, only a small covering of snow is enough to be able to ski on grass.

Selfies from my January ski expedition on Cleeve . . .







Stones in the Forest

Some of the boulders marked on NGOC orienteering maps are more interesting than you might expect. If you visit a control described as "boulder" during an event, you would no doubt dib quickly and dash onwards, without pausing to examine the feature itself. But some boulders deserve a little investigation! During December 2020, before the current lockdown, with no orienteering to go to and less than ideal weather for venturing out in running kit, Ros and I went on several walks taking a closer look at some of the stones marking mining and forest boundaries. Our walks included areas on the NGOC Mallard's Pike map and also BOK territory south of Moseley Green.

Mining Boundaries

One "boulder" marked on the O-map of Mallard's Pike is engraved with the number 101 and is in fact a boundary marker. In the 1830's a mining engineer, Thomas Sopwith, was commissioned to survey the coal and iron mines in the Forest of Dean, on behalf of the Crown, with the objective of resolving disputes in the mining industry. Sopwith's survey defined the mine boundaries in relation to about 150 surface markers. Part of his small-scale index plan reproduced below shows the location of stone 101 close to the eastern boundary of Russell's Enclosure and stone 104 on the edge of the arboretum. Nearby colliery boundaries are defined in the subsequent Act of Parliament relative to these two stones:

Resolution and Safeguard Colliery.

All those several tracts of coal in the Churchway High Delf vein, and all other veins above the same co-extensive therewith, bounded as follows, that is to say, on the western side by the line extending between the 2 boundary stones to be set up and N^{cd} 101 and 104, and which are to form part of the eastern boundary of Royal Forester Colliery;



Sad to say when we visited stone 101 it was no longer upright but lying flat on the ground. Its location is close to the road, so I hope it had not been dug up in preparation for being stolen? Only about a third of the stones survive and a few of these are recent replacements.

Sopwith's map shows a lot of boundary stones within NGOC areas, but not all of the stones that remain have been mapped, as they are less than 1m tall.



There are at least three such stones remaining on our Bixslade area and both have been used as controls. One is mapped as a boulder and a second is obvious, in the centre of a mapped platform. Keep your eyes open next time you run there!

We have searched for more stones using Sopwith's map, but the lack of identifiable surface features, small scale and uncertain north point make exact navigation a challenge! (The grid lines on the map extract are at 2-mile spacings). We have managed to find several by cross-referencing his map with the first edition Ordnance Survey and current O-maps. Stone 112, on the NGOC Danby Lodge area, is visible from the road, but most are not so easy to find, such as Stone 108, in Oak Hill Inclosure, shown above.

Inclosure Boundaries

Periodically large areas of the Forest of Dean were replanted and enclosed with a hedge and bank to prevent grazing livestock damaging the young trees. Several such inclosures are shown on the map extract above. It was the custom to erect marker stones on the inclosure boundary detailing the date, its extent, and the name of the Commissioner.



At least two such boundary stones remain within the Mallard's Pike area and both are marked on our O-map. A boulder, mapped lying a few metres west of the parking area at the northeastern corner of the map, is an inclosure boundary marker, but its inscription is not very clear. A second boulder marked on a forest ride about 700m northeast of New Fancy is in fact a tall boundary marker. It is slightly unclear, but the photograph above appears to read "1844, Saint Low Enclosure, 216 acres 2 rods 38 perches, Lincoln C Commissioner".

Some later inclosure markers, such as those on New Beechenhurst Inclosure dated 1896, are made from cast iron, as shown above. In 2008 a new stone was erected on the boundary of Speech House Inclosure naming Deputy Surveyor Rob Guest.

Scouts Permanent Orienteering Course

If you explore Oakenhill Wood, the block of woodland to the southeast of Parkend Church, you may come across an unusual permanent orienteering course created many years ago by local scouts. The 30 markers are mostly small stones, too small to appear on the O-map of the area. Interestingly some consist of reused tramroad blocks, although at least one is an old concrete gatepost! Each is marked with a letter, and most with a blob of white paint to aid visibility. The map below shows their approximate locations, generally close to paths and tracks, creating relatively easy courses.



The style and age of the map, and changes in the path network, mean that searching for the stones is an interesting challenge! Marker 24 is pictured below. In the past we have found them all except number 9. It may still be there somewhere - can anybody find it? Please send me a photo!

There are four letters which appear on none of the stones, whilst some letters appear on two or even three stones, but they don't spell out a message – odd!



Finally . . .

If you are walking in the forest rather than running there's a lot more to see. There are engraved keystones on two culverts crossing the Blackpool Brook within the Mallard's Pike area. Keep your eyes open for local history!

Acknowledgements

Copies of Sopwith's maps are rare, so thanks are due to David Bick of Newent (1929 – 2006) a mining historian who, over 30 years ago, published a reprint of the index sheet. I can't recollect who gave me the map of the Oakenhill trail, but thanks are certainly due to Parkend scouts.

Saul Taunton



This building has appeared in an area currently mapped as a small clearing on the BOK New Beechenhurst map. It looks like a brand-new bungalow! Can you guess its purpose?



Yes, it's a bat roost and is at Birch Wood, grid ref OS 641148.

There are some other man-made roosts in the area. It seems the objective is to provide alternative locations for bats that are displaced by demolition of redundant buildings as part of the Cinderford Northern Quarter redevelopment.



The lower, righthand sign reads:

Forest of Dean District Council

This building is important for wildlife; it is a bat roosting site.

Unauthorised entry will cause disturbance which is prohibited under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

(Thanks to Paul Taunton)



<u>Cleeve Hill Golf Course</u>

In last October's Legend we reported that Cleeve Hill Golf Course was due to close and it was planned to return the area to its natural state; we speculated that this would give more room for orienteering. However, it has now been announced that a company has been chosen to take over and create a "first class golf club". Cotswold Hub Co has been selected as preferred bidder to transform the clubhouse and build a new restaurant and accommodation lodges, according to Tewkesbury Borough Council. For the full report on GloucerstershireLive see:

<u>https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/cheltenham-</u> news/cleeve-hill-golf-club-saved-4943828

(Thanks again to Eddie McLarnon)

Stop Press

The golf course will stay open under the management of the Cotswold Hub Co, as reported above. Their website is: <u>https://www.cotswoldhub.co.uk</u>

(Thanks to Ian Phillips)

Wild boar

In her article in this edition of Legend about orienteering training between lockdowns, Cecilie mentioned encounters with wild boar in the Forest of Dean. Do you know the collective word for a number of pigs or boar? According to the ADDucation.info website there are several:

"A herd of pigs, a sounder of swine, a parcel of pigs, a drift of pigs, a drove of pigs, a sounder of wild pigs, a team of passel, a singular of boars. The collective noun for piglets is a litter; also a passel of piglets or a farrow of piglets. One of the most diverse collective nouns for animals.

"Words for a *male* are: boar, barrow, stag; *female*: sow, cow, gilt."

For collective words for pigs and other animals visit: https://www.adducation.info/mankind-nature-generalknowledge/collective-nouns-for-animals/

Alan Turing and the £50 note

On 23 June the Bank of England will issuing a new polymer £50 note featuring the mathematician Alan Turing. Was he an orienteer? Three words, hidden in tiny letters within the



text on the back of the new note, could perhaps be a clue that he might have been! See the enlarged detail here, taken from the GCHQ "Turing Challenge" puzzle website.

(Thanks to Paul Taunton)

Have your say!

Are there any matters that you would like the Committee to consider? Contact the Club Secretary, Kim Liggett, 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 <u>legend@ngoc.org.uk</u>. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of Legend.

<u>Disclaimer</u>

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



