

The Legend

Number 155



**Newsletter of
North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club
January 2012**

www.ngoc.org.uk

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Disclaimer:

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

Cover: To the start. Just a short walk to Neil & Pat Cameron's score event at Bixslade on 1 January 2012.

Chairman's Chat

First of all may I wish all of you, and your families, a happy and peaceful 2012. I am very much looking forward to renewing my personal battle with map and compass after the Christmas break, and eliminating a few more of those all too frequent but generally inexcusable 'senior moments' when legs and brain disengage, and location turns into re-location. I hope you will also find time to get out into the woods and support our fixture programme. To that I would add a couple of other events to look out for, and to support if you can. On Wednesday 8 February we, together with the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Support Battalion, are hosting the South and Central Military Leagues on Cleeve Common. This will be a normal colour coded event with Brown, Blue, Green and Red courses, and civilians are most welcome to compete. Any revenue the club makes from the event will be donated to Help for Heroes, so please do try and join us that day if you can. Secondly, in mid-May, we will be putting on a variety of courses in support of the Winchcombe Walking Festival, again on Cleeve Common, and again you will be welcome to come along. Look out for more details of these events on the website.

Which brings me on to the new NGOC website. We owe huge thanks to Eddie McLarnon for masterminding the refresh of the website, and I think most people agree that the new site is a significant improvement over the old. You can read more about the website elsewhere in this edition, but if you have any comments, or ideas on ways we can improve it further, please let us know. There is still more to be added, but we will fill up the gaps over the next few weeks.

The AGM was well attended; thank you to everyone who took the trouble to attend. We heard a fascinating talk from Simon Holloway, who is the Forestry Commission wildlife ranger responsible for the western part of 'our' forest, and the buffet did arrive this time. I was very pleased to be able to welcome Simon Denman onto the Committee as Membership Secretary, and Gary Wakerley as a committee member, whilst thanking Pat Cameron and Ellen Starling, both of whom chose to stand down, for all the work and support that they have given the club whilst on the committee.

In the bigger picture, the Government's Independent Panel on Forestry has printed its interim report, which you can read on the Defra website. I think there are two messages from the interim report which are important to us. The Panel believes that there is a clear need for a national public forest estate; second, the report highlights the passion which very large numbers of people clearly expressed for our forests and woodland. The first of these messages is vital to us in helping to ensure that we retain consistent and managed access to much of our orienteering land. The second is a reminder that there is a huge, and in orienteering terms largely untapped, population out there which treasures our forests, and which if it knew about orienteering, would surely come and join us in the woods. With a new website to support us, I would like in 2012 to try and focus on spreading the word that we offer so much more to people than a simple walk in the woods.

Closer to home, just before Christmas, Caroline Gay, our Regional Participation Manager, and I interviewed a number of candidates for a Lead Coach post in Gloucester. There were some strong candidates, though none with orienteering experience. Caroline has offered roles to two candidates, and they have both accepted. They will work for Caroline and British Orienteering, not directly for the Club, but clearly we will need to integrate our plans and programmes with Caroline's, and I hope you will all extend a warm welcome to the coaches, and will help them out whenever you can. I understand that Caroline plans to bring both to the Brierley mini-league, so please make an effort if you are there to make yourselves known to them. Sadly I will be on holiday that day, but I will look forward to meeting them soon. I suspect that our development plans for 2012 will need to focus on helping the coaches to get started, whilst also providing follow-on events which will enable newcomers to evolve from starter activities towards the full orienteering experience.

The full orienteering experience, of course, means different things to different people. Without being too stereotypical, for most of us in NGOC the full orienteering experience seems to be all about getting out regularly to local, well organised, and moderately competitive events, rather than travelling miles in pursuit of major competition and ranking points. Our current programme reflects this. We focus on our highly successful mini-league, and the Western Night League, with a few informal training events filling some of the gaps. This fixture list has served us well for as long as I can remember, and it

is worth pointing out that our current comfortable financial position is due very largely to the success of the mini-league programme. I do sometimes wonder, however, whether our 'ain't broke, so don't fix it' approach is sufficient to maintain the vigour and health of the club. In a recent survey BOK solicited interest from members in more than a dozen different types of events and activities, and when I compiled my 2012 orienteering calendar I was impressed by the range and frequency of events amongst our neighbouring clubs. I don't for one minute propose that we stop doing what we do so well; what I think we should be doing is looking at what else we can do to move towards a time when everyone in our 'patch' knows about orienteering, wants to have a go at it, and can make a regular (at least weekly) booking in their diaries to run locally. I am well aware, of course, that putting events on takes significant effort. What we need, then, is ideas not only about what to do, but how to do it in such a way that we minimise the time and effort required by volunteers to run the show. In the next Legend I shall suggest a few of my own ideas, but I urge you to send me whatever thoughts you have on things we can do to get out more ourselves, and get more people out. I have upped my weekly run/walk/ride/orienteer target to 20 miles this year (from 17 last year), and I would like to see a much greater proportion of it orienteering than was the case last year. I look to all club members to come up with ways of helping me to do that.

Pat MacLeod

Competition time!

Seeing the unusual pub name "Crab and Dragon" on the way to an event made me wonder about pub names with an orienteering flavour: "Map and Compass"; "The Orienteer's Dibber"; "The BOF Arms"? Please send any suggestions to the editor for inclusion in the next Legend. If you have a few sentences or a paragraph or two to explain the origin of the name so much the better. And if there are any artists out there we will be happy to print a picture of your pub sign. Entries to: legend@ngoc.org.uk

Compass Sport Cup Team - please sign up!!

That time of year has already come round again when I must begin my recruitment drive for the NGOC Compass Sport Cup team. Our Round 1 match will take place on Sunday 19 February 2012 on Cannock Chase at Brereton near Rugeley, so please put this in your diaries. Clearly, this is not long away, so I need your names right now! We need as many members as possible to take part, and the club will again hire a coach to transport us there. This promises to be a fun day out, with the chance to meet and socialise with fellow club members, so please make the effort to come along.

What is this all about?

The Compass Sport Cup is the national inter-club championship where all of the UK's clubs compete against each other. There are qualifying matches held in different parts of the country, and I have chosen the closest one to our area.

Last year, we did extremely well, winning through to the final of the Trophy competition, which is the competition for the smaller clubs. However, this year NGOC are back in the "Cup" competition, which means we will be up against the larger clubs, so we'll have to try even harder!

Courses available are:

- Brown (for Men of any age)
- Blue Women (Women any age)
- Blue Men (M45 or older, M20 or younger)
- Green Women (W45+, W20-)
- Green Men (M60+)
- Short Green Veterans (M75+, W60+)
- Light Green Boys and Girls (M18-, W18-)
- Orange Boys and Girls (M14-, W14-)
- White and Yellow (non-competitive)

Points are scored by individuals depending on their performance on the day. The 25 highest scoring individuals count towards the team score, although there are additional rules to ensure that these come from a wide spread of classes.

Travel plan and costs?

The coach will depart Oxstalls campus in Gloucester around 8 in the morning, and will arrive back after we have all completed our runs, probably by 4pm.

The club will pay for the competition entry fees and will subsidise the coach travel. This means that the only cost will be between £7 and £8 per head to contribute to the coach travel. Juniors will travel for free. The more people that travel, the cheaper it will become, and the merrier the fun!

How to enrol?

To be able to book the coach, I need a good idea of numbers quite soon, so if you would like to take part, please let me know as soon as possible. Everybody is welcome. I need your name, age class for 2012, BOF number, SI dibber number and the course you would prefer to run. Unfortunately, only BOF members (either national or local) are eligible, which means any NGOC-only members would need to upgrade their memberships to take part.

I look forward to receiving your names soon . . .

Greg Best

captain@ngoc.org.uk

01242 516053

Know your committee!

(Gary Wakerley, pictured opposite, joined the committee as an Additional Member at the AGM last November)

A Race in the life

Well, wandering to the start of the Compass Sport Cup final, enjoying a pleasant chat with Roger and trying not to fall over, got me to thinking, how did I get here?

My orienteering career started in Germany, whilst serving in the Army. As an alternative to Egyptian PT, a few, an intrepid few would run round the German forest in search of controls. And so it began, frozen fingers clamped with clickers, oh for SI. Navigation not my strong suit then, nothing changes, was outweighed by the fact I was a reasonable runner, where did that go?

So two decades on, a fitness hiatus and parties a plenty, I decided to get back on the horse. Wow what a ride, unfit, lame but well motivated. Wearing my rest decades around my middle, onwards and upwards.

Gary Wakerley



Gary trying to smuggle a few pints of Guinness under his shirt.
(Gary's caption – not the Editor's!)
(Photograph: Wendy Carlyle)

CompassSport Trophy – the unofficial version

I wasn't familiar with five o'clock on Sunday mornings until I made its acquaintance in connection with the CompassSport Trophy. I didn't feel it was going to be a great relationship: it took half an hour and three cups of coffee before I recalled that the idea was to catch the club coach from Oxstalls at a quarter to seven.

Anyways I managed to get to the coach OK and used the journey to catch up on some sleep. Arriving at Longshaw Estate in the Peak District we walked to Assembly and you didn't need to be Sherlock Holmes to see that cattle had been in the field until very recently. The evidence was impossible to avoid so we just put the tents up where we would have a good view of orienteers dibbing the last control and starting the run-in.

The team was well-prepared as Roger had got the low-down on the map: some sap had left a copy on the web. And I had made all my mistakes the previous day at the informal: the usual stuff, reaching 2 and then setting out for 4 as if I was at 3; not getting a feel for the map scale; poor route choices.

There were loads of orienteers from loads of different gangs and all in loads of different colours; it looked an impressive sight on that windy hilltop. With no sign of the cops I expected some hoodlums to see it as an ideal opportunity to settle old scores; nearly every orienteer had either a sawn-off dibber or a compass with sharpened baseplate. Some of the guys were real tough cookies and looked like they spent their spare time helping the police with their enquiries. Out in the woods people were going to be watching their backs as much as looking for controls and the winning time was not going to set any records.

Personally I was keeping an eye out for a certain M12 with a grudge. It was his own fault, the kid got careless: a few months ago he had crashed into my shoulder on the run-in and careered down a bank into a patch of brambles. It was a real shame; he must have lost at least ten minutes. Well, an M12 should wait until he's bigger before he tries to push past people like that. "It happened, kid, get over it!" But the kid made a complaint and the team was gonna be disqualified until

Chairman Pat had a quiet word with officials. “Neat shoulder charge, Al, but not a good idea in front of all those witnesses. I had to call in a lot of favours.”

My start time was 1156 and the start was at least 30 minutes away. I set out about eleven and got there with time to spare. The queue for the restrooms was longer than the start queue, maybe because there were seven start lanes and only two portaloos. There were strict instructions not to use the bushes but guys were running up and down like they were warming up and then dashing behind a bush when they guessed no one was looking. I had plenty of time so I played by the rules.

The dame at the start must have said her lines 100 times already with only another 599 to go. She varied her words slightly each time but it was difficult to make the start flag sound interesting, especially when it was only ten yards away in the middle of a big open field with no other features. I reached the front line of the start queue; she looked straight at me and said “Hello, handsome.” I took an immediate liking to her.

My day got even better when I stepped over the line and picked up the right map. Control 1 was to the fence corner, along a track and the depression was just a few yards past where the track ended. Easy, I thought, until I got to the end of the track and could see great piles of boulders but no depression. I didn’t dib until a couple of guys who had started after me had found it. It was all OK after that until 5 to 6 when I lost my head. I thought I must have gone too far or off course so I wandered round for a bit – I should have just carried straight on and I would have got it easy. Between 7 and 8 rather than go round I chose up and over, only to hit ankle-breaking heather and grass tussocks. Big mistake; five minutes wasted.

Halfway round and I still hadn’t seen any evidence of old scores being settled between different clubs. No control kites covered in blood, no feet sticking out of the bracken betraying a hastily concealed corpse. I did see one punk sitting down trying to extricate a dibber from his nose – but it may have been an accident, it happens all the time. He looked a bum so I didn’t stop to help. It was Dullsville, Arizona: all the remaining controls were straightforward and I didn’t even screw up at the last control with the crowd watching.

After download we were waiting around in the tents for the results and Carol came in to ask if people were ready for cakes. “Uh, can we leave it a few minutes?” I pleaded, looking towards the corner where the Club Captain was changing his socks.

On the coach home I ruminated. It had been a good day: NGOC had made a respectable showing in its first CompassSport Trophy final; we’d had a large turnout thanks to Mister Greg’s persuasive methods; we hadn’t lost anybody, either lost or bumped off by the opposition lost. And I’d had a personal triumph by beating that guy who had reckoned I was just a two-bit orienteer who was past it, all washed-up, a has-been, a never-was. And he would be facing a defamation rap once I’d seen my lawyer in the morning.

HOC – NGOC Street Challenge

Wednesday 15 February

Ledbury

HOC Night Street League

For full details see enclosed/attached flyer

Planner & organiser: Colin Palmer

(Thanks to Anthony Clerici and HOC for permission to reproduce this article from the December 2011 AdHoc)

Just imagine.....

It's December 2018 and the mapper has completed their job of remapping Brampton Bryan using the latest GPS portable recorder (OGPS7). This is accurate to within 10mm. The mapper's job has been greatly reduced by Google Maps that are now accurate enough through satellites to provide a great base map, the mapper is there to check vegetation and confirm features. The file has been available to the other event officials for a couple of weeks. The planner has a list of control sites tagged to the map by the mapper as they've wandered around the forest; the tag includes a photo or two of each location and the control description. The planner can start planning courses which can be easily reviewed in real time by the controller and major events team back at BOF.

Get an App. In January 2019 I've entered the event through an App on my iPhone 14 which is fast (actually took me 45 seconds) and accepted payment (25 New Euros!). It also added the event into my diary and made (useless) training suggestions. (Hill reps for Brampton Bryan – I ask you!)

And then, March 2019, the phone reminds me about the event with my start time, directions from wherever I happen to be and, most exciting, including options for public transport or electric car sharing (petrol is now 45 new euros a litre)

“ecO” This is all part of BOF's “ecO” policy to conform with SportEuro carbon targets. Less visits to the site by the controller and planner, less helpers needed, car share or public transport; by 2025 we'll even have a personal carbon allowance – nicknamed the Coal Hole by the Daily Amazon – which is traded against the healthy living tokens – again this was nicknamed by the same newspaper as the Tubby Token. So orienteers do well

from this scheme as orienteering gets 5 TT's an hour and that's equivalent to enough carbon to travel up to 100Km to an event!

The day dawns and we're off; car sharing with 2 other Harlequins and collecting a SWOC guy from Ludlow Station on the way.

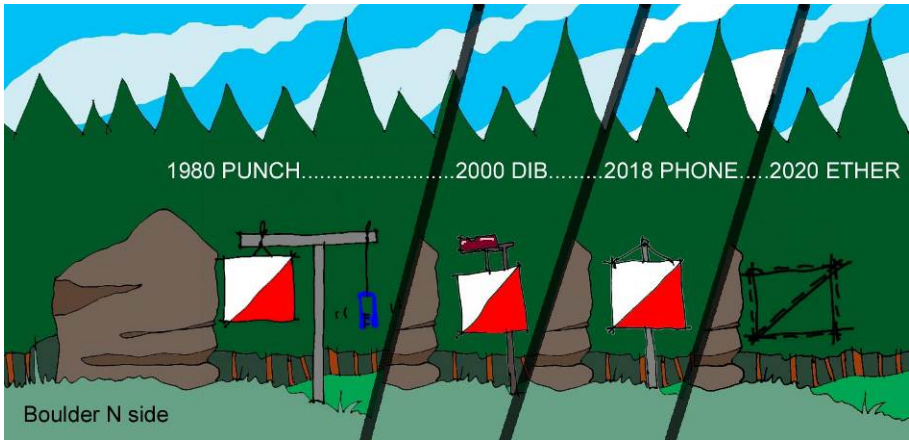
Easy parking. The satnav takes us to our pre-determined parking spot so there's only a single helper to sort out any immediate problems. This is the latest O event upgrade in that the car park is operated by a dynamic car placement system. (DCPS) which advises drivers where to park as you enter the field. I can't afford the latest Lexus or Toyota that has "drive and park U" software that takes over the car for the last 200m and drives you to the exact parking place.

Ready to go? The dibber has been replaced – you can take your phone or use a hired GPS tracker. Every control is on the "O system". On my course there is nothing to "punch" as the phone recognises where you are and by pressing a button you make a "dib" as you reach each control. I've bought the little wireless hand held switch so I can keep my phone safe and dry in a pocket; these can be placed on your wrist or in your hand. The deluxe versions also give a read out of your next control number and description.

For us mortals on the M65L or M65S the controls remain the same – the familiar kites but with only their competition number.

No control kites

For the elites and the new E class (E stands for ether) there are no control kites: nothing! You navigate to the control site and press you GPS button. Your device flashes a small LED: **green** if you are within 3m radius of the control site and **red** if not. You are only allowed a limited number of reds before every click adds 1 minute to your time: 10 as a novice, 5 for a local event and 3 for the JK or BOC. (For elites 5 reds and you're disqualified.



And finally. As you finish, your phone has your splits, where you ran and a host of other stats, like min/Km. Later you can compare your routes with everyone else on your course: your track, their tracks all in a virtual rerun. The software will have analysed the event to produce optimum routes for early, middle and late starters.

The phone will have logged your TT's and deducted the carbon used (including by the washing machine) and as a parting shot offers you a focussed training regime for improving your performance....hill reps of course!

Ant Clerici

14/11/2011

(Club Secretary Caroline Craig recently attended a SWOA meeting to discuss the future of orienteering and what it might look like in 2050. The meeting began with a discussion about how the sport was changing now, and how it might change over the next few decades. Some people thought there would be less reliance on cars and people would be more reliant on public transport and less keen to travel long distances to run (all due to increasing fuel costs). One potential participant who was unable to attend had sent round his thoughts on how orienteering might work in 2050 - this involved maps being replaced by a flexible electronic display and (as in the HOC article)

more use being made of GPS for tracking routes and verifying whether the control had been reached.)

Mapping with LIDAR Data

Towards the end of 2010 I discovered that LIDAR data had been gathered for the whole of the Forest of Dean by the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Department. LIDAR is an acronym for **L**ight **D**etection **A**nd **R**anging, and it is a technique for measuring topography (as well as many other things) by bouncing a light source (normally a Laser) from an aircraft to the ground and back again. Clearly LIDAR surveys require expensive equipment and technology, and so tend to be fairly rare in rural areas; most commercially available LIDAR data covers urban areas only. However, given recent interest in the use of LIDAR data for orienteering mapping, I thought it worth exploring whether we could get our hands on the data. I should add that I am not an orienteering mapper; however, in my last 10 years or so as a working man I spent much of my time working with spatial data on geographic information systems, and I was keen to have a play with some LIDAR data if I could find some.

Sadly, the Council advised me that copyright for their data lay with the Forestry Commission, and they also told me that some of the technology used to process the data to 'remove' the evergreen tree canopy was proprietary to a specialist business, so would probably not be available to us. They did however tell me that the Cotswold edge has been flown by Cranham Local History Society, and through the good offices of Dave Hartley, our Fixtures Secretary, I managed to speak to Will Handley, of the Society. Will was happy to let us have the data for non-commercial use, and I am most grateful to the Cranham Local History Society for permission to use their data for orienteering mapping.

LIDAR data which has been processed for use by end users such as o-mappers is essentially very simple. It typically consists of very large numbers of x,y,z triplets, where x and y are real world

map coordinates, and z is a height value. The height value may be ground (terrain) height or surface height (i.e. including buildings, trees, sheep, cars – anything else under the camera when the survey was flown). Though simple, it is very accurate; the data we were given has 1 metre horizontal precision and 1 mm vertical! The Cranham data was based on the Ordnance Survey Grid Reference system, rather than a Lat/Long system such as is used for example by Google Earth, and by GPS systems, and that made it relatively straightforward to work with against our existing o-maps, which are all based on simple Cartesian (x,y) grids rather than geodetic (lat/long) ones.



Figure 1: *5m contour plot of part of Crickley Hill*

Along with simplicity comes flexibility, and one of the great strengths of LIDAR data is that you can do all sorts of things with it. Whereas in the past, to start an O-map, you found some contours

from an existing map, or you obtained a photogrammetric contour plot, and then you traced the contours in OCAD to form your base map, now, with LIDAR data (and OCAD v10 or various open source freeware products) you can generate contours from the data at whatever contour interval you want, and at whatever level of detail you want. **Figure 1** shows a base 5m contour plot of the area around the car parks and picnic area on Crickley Hill. If the detail for 5m contours is too intricate using a 1m grid interval, you can generalise the data to say a 5m grid and try again, or you can use a smoothing algorithm to get rid of some of the detail. OCAD 10 does this smoothing pretty well. If you need 5m contours for your base map, but would like some help mapping the intricate detail of broken ground, you can generate 5m, 2.5m and 1m contours and use them all to help characterise the ground in the way that an orienteer needs to 'see' it.

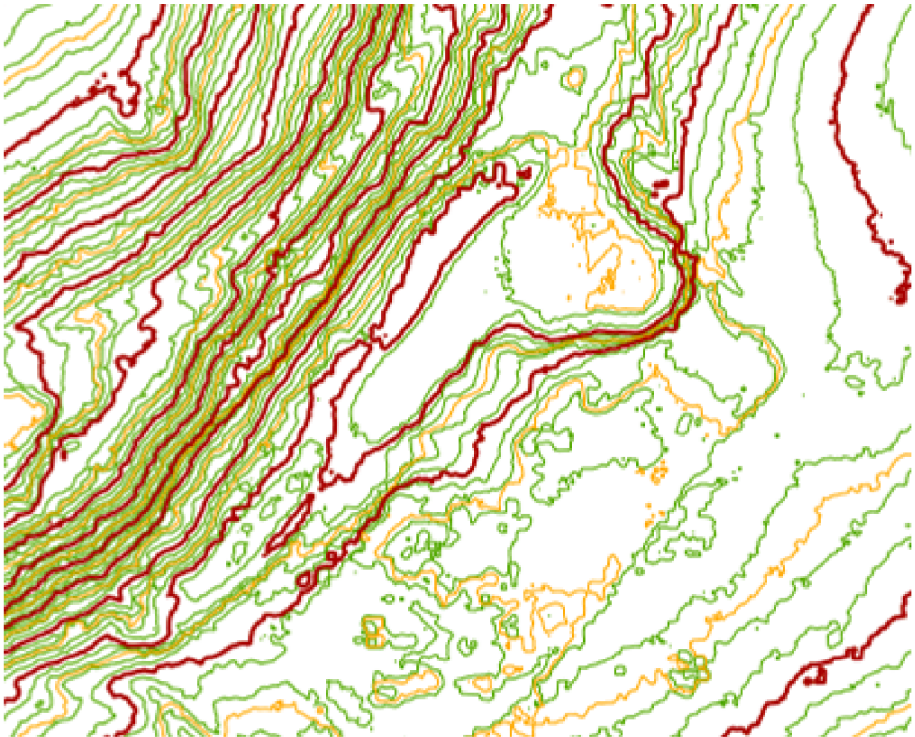


Figure 2: 5m, 2.5m and 1m contours of Crickley Hill

In **Figure 2**, 5m, 2.5m and 1m contours are all included. It is often said of LIDAR data, I am told, that it generates just too much detail, and this picture tends to reinforce that view.

However, as well as contours, you can generate 'hill-shades' from LIDAR data. Hill-shades provide a simple 3D-like view of the terrain, and most tools will allow you to vary the direction and angle of the 'sun', and also to exaggerate the relief, so that you can develop a picture of the ground which, when combined with the contour map, provides the mapper with vastly more information than a simple 5m contour plot can do. In **Figure 3** I have generated a hill-shade of this area with the sun in the West, and have then in **Figure 4** moved the sun around to the North, lowered it closer to the horizon, and exaggerated the relief by a factor of 2 to make the detail more distinct.



Figure 3: *Shaded relief map of part of Crickley Hill, sun in the west*



Figure 4: shaded relief map of part of Crickley Hill, sun in the north and relief exaggerated

Add the contours (**Figure 5**) and you have a very detailed relief view of the ground you need to map. Of course there is far too much detail for the o-mapper, but these views provide a useful bird's eye view of the ground. If, here, the mapper decided to include some point features in the bumpy area in the centre bottom part of the map, the detail should at least facilitate their accurate placement.

As I mentioned earlier in this article, LIDAR data is often available as terrain data and as surface data. So far I have used the terrain model to show ground relief. The next step is to exploit the surface model. In **Figure 6** I have generated a surface model with the same lighting and exaggeration as in the terrain model.

As well as ground features we now have a good view of the vegetation cover, and can use this to develop more of the map.

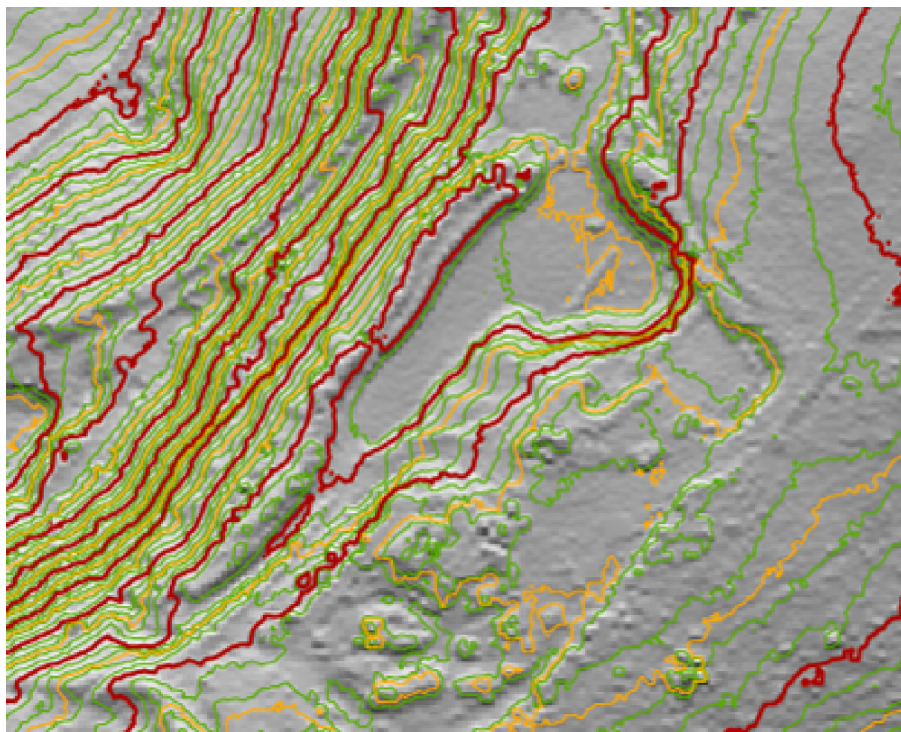


Figure 5: *contours and relief model*

None of this, of course, is a substitute for getting out on the ground, deciding what to include and what to leave out, and creating a map which presents the terrain the way the orienteer needs to see it. However, it should make the mapper's job a bit easier. With care the detail can be generalised or smoothed out to some extent, and the placement of point features which can be identified in the various views of the data should be made easier and more accurate, as should the mapping of identifiable tracks, vegetation boundaries and so on. Greg Best has been using the Cranham LIDAR data to complete the mapping of Crickley Hill, and he found it quicker to start again with the LIDAR based contour plot plus the terrain models and associated aerial photography (also provided by Cranham Local History Society) than to try and adjust what he done before getting the LIDAR data. OCAD 10 includes a good tool for creating contour detail from LIDAR data, and then

smoothing it to get rid of excess detail. I don't have an OCAD licence, but I downloaded a trial version and played with that whilst the trial lasted, and I found it much easier to use for basic contour generation than the open source tools I generally use. The latter – Quantum GIS and the GRASS tool set – offer a vast array of tools and processing algorithms but take a bit of getting used to, and none of them generated a contour base map as good (for orienteering) as the OCAD one. They just have too many options and settings, and it would take a lifetime to find the best ones for our purposes.

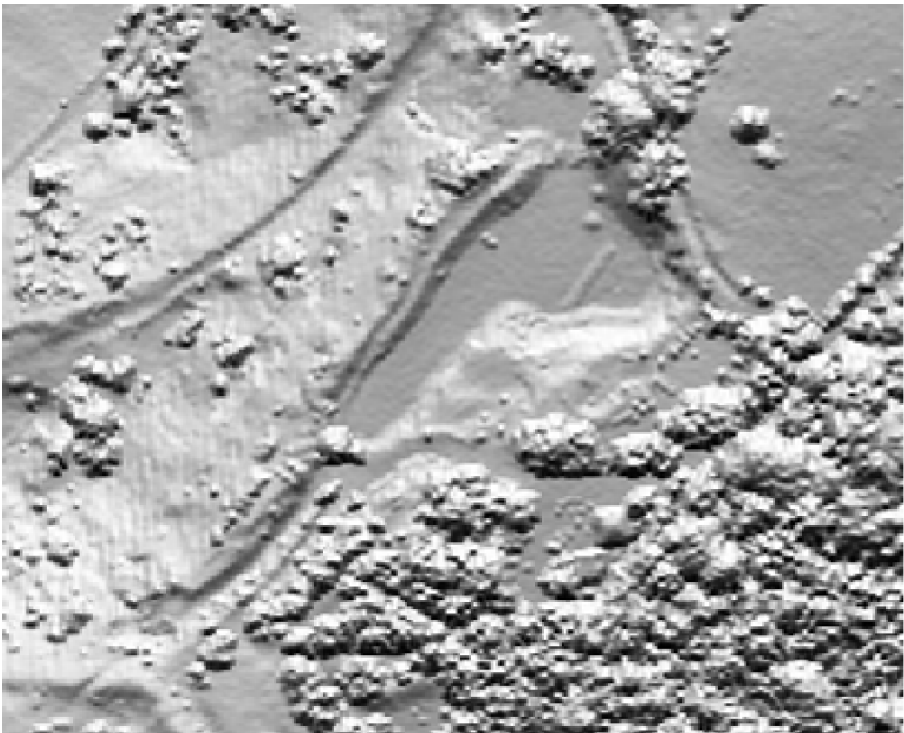


Figure 6: *digital surface model of Crickley Hill*

As well as messing about with the Crickley Hill data, I tried overlaying some of our existing Cotswold maps – Painswick, Cranham, Standish – on the LIDAR plot, but I couldn't get any of them to align truly with the LIDAR data. I suspect this was due to the fact that none of them are geo-referenced – they all use an arbitrary non real world coordinate space, they quote an imprecise

OS grid reference, and none of them states the magnetic variation that has been applied to the map to rotate it from grid to magnetic North.

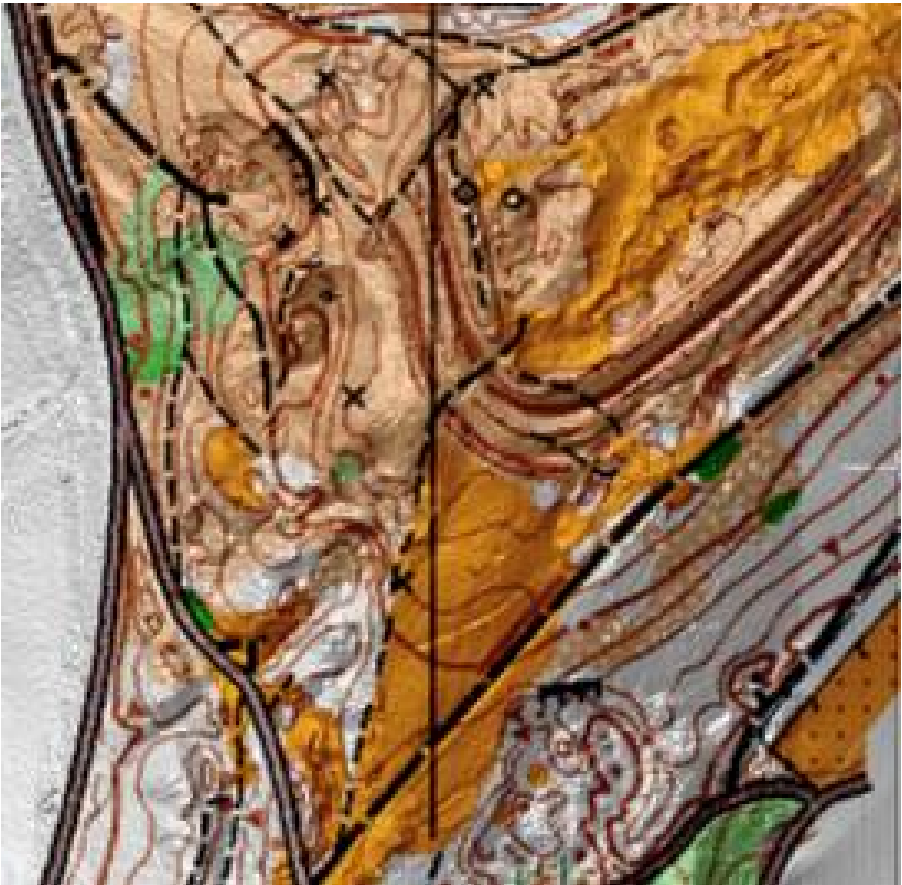


Figure 7: part of Painswick Beacon, overlaid on a digital terrain hill-shade

The closest I got was Painswick, and **Figure 7** shows what might be possible. If you look carefully just below the centre of the figure you can see a depression mapped, and the real life depression depicted by the relief map just above and to the right. This is not to suggest that the O-map is wrong – it is simply because the map and the relief model are not aligned wholly, but there is certainly scope for further investigation. In the meantime, I think all

of our future maps should be accurately located in real world space, and should carry notification of the magnetic variation applied to the map, together with the date.

When time permits I will try again to get hold of the Forest LIDAR data, as I am sure we will be able to make good use of it in maintaining our map database.

Pat MacLeod

Cranham Lidar Survey

The Cranham Lidar Survey 2008 project was organised by the Cranham Local History Society.

The project team consisted of Will Handley, Martin Whitaker, Harold Wingham and Jim Green.

The project website is at www.cranhamsurvey.org.uk

A grant from the Cotswold Conservation Board Sustainable Development Fund provided the majority of the funding for this project. The balance of the funding came from donations from the following groups:

Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club
Colesbourne Estate Company
Cranham Local History Society
Crickley Hill Archaeological Trust
Gloucestershire County Council Crickley Hill Sites Warden
Leckhampton Local History Society
The National Trust
Randwick Historical Association
Stroudend Tithing Educational Trust
Mike Rigby

The Lidar Survey was carried out by Richard Chiles of Precision Terrain Surveys Ltd.

Bixslade 1 January 2012



Registration (*above*) and the Start (*below*)



Flaxley

(The plentiful supply of brambles, brashings and mud at NGOC's new area of Flaxley on 3 December inspired Gill Stott to adapt one of Robert Browning's poems to suit the occasion)

Oh, to be in Flaxley
Now that Winter's here,
And whoever runs in Flaxley
Sees, some undergrowth, beware!
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood piles
Round the spruce-tree bole are strewn for miles,
While the brambles snag on the forest floor
In Flaxley - now!

And after hours, when spirits flag,
And the contours build, and all the mud
Hark! where my next control appears in the gloom
Another platform only the wrong one spells doom
Curses and exhaustion - at the warped planner's edge
That's the wise orienteer; who runs each leg straight over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!

And though the terrain look rough with new strewn mess,
All will be gay when the black course finishers arrive
Only time passes and few return, -
Far wiser of this hell like blood sapping mire!

With great apologies to Robert Browning (1812-1889)

(And for anyone not familiar with the original:)

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England - now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops - at the bent spray's edge
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower, -
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

The NGOC Website

You will all be aware that we have substantially refreshed the NGOC website over the last couple of months. There were two reasons why we felt we needed to do this. The old site had served us well but the design was somewhat limited, so that we had a home/welcome page of ever increasing length, showing news items which were often well past their sell-by date, and little scope for showing other information, or adding better facilities to support social networking tools, and extensions like a photo gallery, and survey tools etc. More importantly, the old site consisted of a simple series of HTML pages which only one or two people could realistically maintain. It had no facilities to allow multiple web-connected editors to create and maintain material on the site.

We decided, therefore, to look for a simple content management facility which would make it easier to add and maintain material, would support multiple editors all working via a web browser, rather than a direct attachment to the website servers, and which would provide consistent styling and look and feel without the editors having to worry about this. We chose Wordpress as the content management system, and Eddie McLarnon carried out all the technical work to set up the new environment and migrate our existing material, where possible, onto the new system. Eddie has also created a separate development system where we can try out new tools and facilities, and backup/recovery facilities to minimise the risk of our losing too much content should anything go badly wrong. We are now very well placed to exploit the web more effectively in support of the club, both socially and in orienteering activities.

The design of the site is airy and simple.....some club websites offer massive amounts of small print information on the front page. Ours, on the other hand, is very open and 'spacious' – some may feel a bit too much so. However, we have tried not to change the

WordPress theme any more than really necessary, so that we minimise our maintenance overheads. 'Less is good' is often true when presenting people with masses of information.

In this release we have consciously limited our scope to basic content with a few extras such as the gallery, and links to social networking facilities. We do not allow comments on posts at the moment, so the site does not provide a forum or a blog. We might add that kind of capability in future, if there is demand for it. We do have a survey/poll facility available, and I would like to start using that to engage club members more closely in our thinking and planning, but that will come in due course. We are looking at developing an online 'area/event' archive which will form a comprehensive repository of all our events, maps, local knowledge and experience, and we will shortly be starting to add reference material covering event organisation and planning, SI work, and website maintenance. We also need to work on our search engine optimisation.....at present BOK appear above us on Google in response to a search on orienteering and Forest of Dean, and that needs to be addressed!

One of the key benefits of having a content managed system is that it will support multiple editors; we will soon be recruiting volunteers to help maintain the website, and add material to it. Much of the 'How To' material has been written, and will be field tested by your Legend Editor shortly. If you are interested in helping to maintain the site, and publish material, please let us know – just email ngocwebadmin@ngoc.org.uk. Likewise, if you have any comments on the style and content of the website, or ideas for things we should be doing with it, please also let us know. We will welcome ideas for making the site more interesting and engaging, particularly for new visitors.

Pat MacLeod

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Location	Signposted	Organiser
1 Jan Sun	New Year's Day Score	Bixslade	SO608116	Neil Cameron 01684 294791
7 Jan Sat	WNL 2	Symonds Yat	SO571128	Dave Hartley 01452 863805
21 Jan Sat	League 4	Brierley (<i><u>note change of venue</u></i>)	SO624151	Peter Ward 01600 860597
4 Feb Sat	Informal	Crickley Hill	SO936163	Caroline Craig 01242 696443
15 Feb Wed	HOC/NGOC Street Challenge	Ledbury	SO707374	Colin Palmer 01531 633500
18 Feb Sat	League 5	Cranham	SO913122	John Shea 01242 254909
19 Feb Sun	Compass- Sport Cup	<i>(See Captain's article)</i>		
3 Mar Sat	WNL 3	Mallards Pike South	SO651086	Gary Wakerley 01594 862690
18 Mar Sun	Galoppen / League 6	Parkend	SO608078	Steve Robinson 01594 841743
31 Mar Sat	Informal	Symonds Yat	SO571128	John Coleman 01594 582151
6-9 Apr	JK Weekend			

Enquiries to Organiser or Fixtures Secretary – Dave Hartley 01452 863805

For latest details check the NGOC website at www.ngoc.org.uk

NGOC Registration and start times

Informal Events: Start times 1230-1400.

Senior £2 Junior £1 Non-members £3
Yellow / light green / blue courses

League Events: Registration 1130-1230 Starts from 1200-1300

Senior £4 Junior £1
Competitors who are not members of any club £5
Yellow / orange / green / blue courses

Night Events

Registration from 1800 – or when it's dark!
See www.westernnightleague.org.uk

Malvern Mini-League

Date	Event	Location	Signposted	Organiser
21 Jan Saturday	Event 4 (same event as NGOC League 4)	Brierley (<u><i>note change of venue</i></u>)	SO624151	Peter Ward, NGOC
25 Feb Saturday	Event 5 <i>(Pre-entry via Fabian 4)</i>	Bringsty Common	SO699547	Brian Hughes 01905 21001
10 Mar Saturday	Event 6 <i>(Pre-entry via Fabian 4)</i>	Great Malvern Urban Race		Lester Hartmann

Saturday events:

Yellow, Orange, Green and Blue courses. Best four results to count towards a competitor's cumulative score.

Registration 1130-1230 Starts from 1200-1300

Sunday events:

Yellow, Orange, Light Green, Green, Blue and Brown courses.

Entry fee will be slightly higher. May need to pre-enter.

Registration 1000-1200 Starts from 1030-1230

For more details see Harlequins Orienteering Club website.

Selected Army events

Important: for latest details and full list of events visit: <http://www.baoc.org.uk/events/>

Date	Event	Location
4 January Wednesday	Training event RMA Sandhurst	Mytchett
11 January Wednesday	Mil League South RMA Sandhurst	Windmill & Frith Hill
18 January Wednesday	Mil League South & Inf Day Champs	Long Valley South
25 January Wednesday	Mil League South & London District Champs RMA Sandhurst	Bordon
8 February Wednesday	Mil League South & Mil League Central ARRC Sp Bn	Cleeve Hill
15 February Wednesday	Mil League South & 4 Div Individual Champs 11 Sigs/SWJS	(to be confirmed)
22 February Wednesday	Mil League South & REME Champs 4 CS Bn REME	(to be confirmed)
29 February Wednesday	Mil League South & Royal Sigs Individual Champs 11 Sigs	Godshill

BOK Army

(Carol and Alan went to an Army orienteering event at the Artillery Centre, Sidbury on 9 November)

On the way Carol explained to Alan that being in the Army was a bit like being at school – you had to do what you were told and you had sports on Wednesday afternoons. As soon as they had parked Carol and Alan went to Registration to pay their entry fees. Alan, who looks after his pocket money very carefully, was delighted at how cheap it was. They then went back to Carol's car to get ready to start. Carol's car was very good for orienteering: "Not to drive round the course in" she said, noticing Alan's look of surprise, "It's good because the big door at the back lifts up so we can sit on the luggage bit to change our shoes and socks. And if it's raining the door acts like a roof to keep us dry."

On the way to the start Alan saw quite a few soldiers standing about in camouflage uniforms looking very tough. He wondered if they would let him join one day; then he could wear a nice uniform and go orienteering every Wednesday. He remembered that advertisement he had seen in the paper only the other day: *"Join the Army! Travel to strange exotic countries, meet strange exotic people – and kill them."* He had made up his mind!

Alan wondered if he could run the longest course, the brown. Carol said it would be all right as long as he didn't tell Captain Greg because Captain Greg didn't think Alan was good enough to do brown courses and might get cross if he found out.

Alan really enjoyed his course because it was on a training area with old, burnt out lorries in some places. There were also guns being fired in the distance and big explosions as well. There were some armoured personnel carriers ("APCs" thought Alan) bombing around and a very large lorry that seemed to be following Alan about. Alan didn't mind this as it was very exciting

and made him run faster, even if it was in the wrong direction. Alan was just thinking how busy it was when it got even busier: about a dozen people on horseback and a pack of hounds went past and then a helicopter flew overhead. "This is better than the boring old Forest of Dean. All those times I've run there and I've never seen a wild boar."

At long last Alan found the last control and ran like mad to the finish. He then walked slowly to Download because this was the bit he didn't like. The event used EMIT punching and Alan didn't like EMIT because the printout you got was always dispiriting. It always said something like "Your current position is 97 out of 100" no matter how hard he tried. This time the printout that told him that he was currently 52 out of 51, almost his worst position ever.

Brashings

2012 - 2013 fixtures list

Next season's fixture list is enclosed with this copy of Legend. Many thanks to all those who have already volunteered to organise some of these events. The club needs just five more organisers to come forward to cover the remaining events - one informal, three night score events and one end of season score event. Please contact either Dave Hartley or Roger Coe if you are able to volunteer - assistance will be provided. Thank you.

NGOC club cap

Does your head need a bit of protection from low branches, the cold (for those of us thinning on top) and in some of our areas, even brambles? If so, you might be interested in a club cap, bearing an embroidered club badge, and available in various colours. If you would like one, please email Paul Taunton mapping@ngoc.org.uk who will advise you on colours and likely cost.



Want to be a Controller?

Anyone that has been involved in planning or organising an event during the last two years or so is invited to contact committee member John Fallows john@greyeye.co.uk if they are interested in attending a controllers' course. For the uninitiated, controlling an event is about making sure that everything that needs to be done is done. From signing off on the risk assessment to checking the courses are of the correct standard and that controls are in the

right place. The amount of work involved varies depending on the level of the event and might only need one forest visit in advance of the event itself.

Why do we need controllers? Well, level B events (old Badge) and some level C events (Galoppen) need to be controlled by someone who's not in the organising club - an independent pair of eyes. So NGOC needs other clubs to 'lend' us controllers from time to time, and in turn, we should have controllers that other clubs can use. Also, although it's something that NGOC has not put in place, it can be worthwhile having a controller for our league events as this will help new planners and organisers to stage an event. Controlling isn't very onerous, maybe one event every three years. At present NGOC has only three controllers.

PayPal

NGOC has opened a PayPal account and members will be able to use it to pay for such things as new club kit, Forest Challenge etc. You do not need a PayPal account yourself, just a credit or debit card, to pay this way.

Have your say!

Are there any matters that you would like the Committee to consider? Contact the Club Secretary, Caroline Craig, or any member of the Committee. The next Committee meeting is on Monday 13 February at 1930.

Articles for Legend

We are always looking for articles on anything to do with orienteering; digital photos are especially welcome. Send your article/pictures to legend@ngoc.org.uk or Alan and Ann Brown, 10 Brizen Lane, Cheltenham, GL53 ONG. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of Legend.

The Red Hart at Blaisdon



To mark the use of the new area of Flaxley for NGOC's League 3 event The Red Hart at Blaisdon kindly sponsored the event to the tune of a £20 meal 'voucher'. Joe Gidley of NGOC won the meal voucher in a raffle drawn by Torin Stephens (aged almost 1) of SPLOT. The Red Hart is about the most popular pub in the Forest with a couple of renowned but inexpensive dishes in its home reared belly pork and steak & ale pie. All this plus good real ale.