

the

March 2018

LEGEND

the magazine of North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club



Orienteering Down Under

**TRAINING - SPECIAL
DOUBLE FEATURE!**

Planning - Top Tips

*Edinburgh Indoor Night
Race*

... and much more!



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SNOW fun when all the orienteering gets cancelled ...

It's been a trying few months for local orienteering. Firstly, the extreme (well, extreme for mild, damp Gloucestershire) weather conditions have resulted in events being cancelled and training runs being hastily converted to cross-country skiing jaunts. Secondly, the club has faced the challenge of new constraints on event parking as the Forestry Commission reviews the viability of public vehicles using forest roads. However, club members have valiantly battled on with their sport - Andy Creber used the cancellation of Blakeney to get out for an excellent run on the Blue course at BOK's Headless Hill event, Richard Purkis stormed around a snowy Parkrun (see photo on page 18) and Paul Murrin has been trouncing the South Wales fell-running scene.

Sometimes it's hard to keep your training motivation up when the weather is dire and the summer multi-day events seem an awfully long way off. In his training article on page 12, Pat Macleod highlights why training is so critical for orienteers, and details some ways in which you can get quality technical training done without the hassle of finding a pre-set course to work with. There are many keen younger fell and XC runners coming into the club who are trying to find a way of translating their running talent into orienteering - if you're one of them, Pat's words are essential reading! There's a lot of guff talked about people being "naturals" at orienteering (or indeed any other activity involving technical skill). I'm a firm believer in the "10,000 hours" rule: it takes 10,000 hours of dedicated and purposeful practice to achieve excellence in any activity. For some of us, that excellence is limited by physical constraints, particularly as we get older. But we should never stop striving for it if we want to succeed.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Gill Stott has been doing fantastic work around the Gloucestershire schools and colleges, enabling young potential athletes to start logging their 10,000 hours as early on as possible. Her article on page 14 describes how orienteering is gaining ground in the county's schools, and how training structures and practices are being disseminated through teachers and assistants to produce the orienteers of the future.

Anyway. Back in the here and now, many of you will be heading up the JK as I write this - I wish all of you the best of luck! Do the club - and your hard winter training efforts - proud!

cover photo:

Steve Williams (M60) makes a determined start on the Blue course at the Bixslade League event (17th February).

We need YOUR news, articles and photos!

Been to any good events lately? Or perhaps you've completed a walking trip, a fell race, or you have a great idea for a training session. Why not write it up for Legend?? It doesn't have to be Pulitzer-winning stuff; just a few paragraphs to share your experiences with your fellow club members. Likewise, if you've got any photos from NGOC events, or from fixtures further afield, send them in! Just email legend@ngoc.org.uk. The next issue will be coming out in June 2018, so please send your articles in by the middle of that month.

HUGE thanks to this issue's contributors: Greg Best, Tom Cochrane, Richard Cronin, Pat Macleod, Allan McCall, Sheila Miklausic, Tom Mills, Andy Monro, Richard Purkis, Gill Stott and all the event photographers who do such a great job sat out in the freezing cold wishing they were running instead.

BREAKING FORESTRY LATEST! NEWS COMMISSION

Chairman Tom Mills has just given the following announcement regarding the latest position in the ongoing negotiations with the Forestry Commission: "A meeting has taken place between the Forestry Commission, British Orienteering, NGOC and BOK. The result of the meeting is that there may be some scope for a compromise that might allow selective events to use forest parking. BOF and the two clubs are quietly optimistic however there is further work to be done over the next few weeks". Collective fingers crossed, folks ...

New secretary needed

After seven and a half years as Club Secretary, Caroline Craig is stepping down from the position for personal reasons. She has done a fantastic job of it and this is a sad announcement to make here in Club News. However, it's high time that someone else took a turn. You don't have to have been in the club for donkey's years to take on a committee role - in fact, it would be much better if some of the newer members came in

with fresh enthusiasm and ideas! If you can give up some of your time to support the club in this essential role, please email secretary@ngoc.org.uk or chat to any committee member.

R2T2 back for 2018!

The hugely successful R2T2 (Run, Ride, Tracks, Trails) events are returning for 2018 after their debut last year. Ideal for anyone who enjoys off-road running, walking or cycling with an added element of navigation, at each event competitors can choose between Tracks or Trails, or take on the new Man v Bike course. Event dates for this year are:

- 4th May, Speech House
- 21st June, Forest High School, Cinderford
- 12th July, Berry Hill
- 16th August, Yorkley

Street Series Successes

The NGOC Winter Evening Street Races have been going from strength to strength during the season. Huge credit to Richard Purkis, Steve Lee and Tom Cochrane for organising the three most recent events in Tewkesbury, Stroud and Cheltenham respectively. The events are all mass starts and involve answering questions at each control feature (don't

forget to bring your pen!). Congratulations to everyone who has been involved in putting this series on.

BOF Incentive Scheme Award

Margaret Jones (W50) has been awarded the British Orienteering Racing Challenge Gold award for her recent event performances. Well done, Margaret!

UKUL comes to Ross!

NGOC will be hosting an event in the UK Urban League, at Ross-on-Wye on 5th May. This uses the excellent Ross urban map, which covers intricate old areas of the town, modern buildings and open areas. Organisers Chris and Gill James will no doubt set out to challenge the best urban orienteers with their range of courses, with a full range of classes from Mens Young Junior to Womens Hypervet. The event is also part of the OMM Running Festival which includes the Speech House R2T2 event and an OMM Lite running race.

Legend won one of the 2017 CompassSport Newsletter Awards. This is down to the great content and photos that you've all submitted during the year. Many thanks!

collective nouns

Chairman Tom Mills has raised the question, **"What would you call a collective of orienteers?"** This arose during a trip to a Military League orienteering event, when the (obviously very bored) car-load were having a little contest to see who could name the most collective nouns. Suggestions so far are ...

- An Oblivion
- A Navigation
- A Moan
- A Misplacement
- A Baffle

... I'm sure the possibilities are nigh-on endless! If you've got any suggestions to add, please do email them to legend@ngoc.org.uk.



A proposition of orienteers?

Since my last chat things started to hot up, some good, some not so good. On the good side the club had a very successful Triple Gloucester.

Both the Saturday middle distance and the Chepstow Night urban were very well received. The planners, controllers and organisers put in an enormous amount of work to launch and run these events and we in NGOC are very lucky to have such a committed group of people at our disposal. As for the Sunday Galoppen, I cannot comment on the reception of this event since I was the planner. What I can say is that the organising team and all the helpers put in another great performance.

I should also mention the help we received from BOK and Saxons for which the club is very grateful.

It is this kind of interclub relationship that ensures we can provide the standard of event now required. My personal thanks, apart from that stated above, goes to Mike Farrington for all of his help and wisdom throughout the planning and map update stages. Mike lost his Mum in the final 2 weeks leading up to the event and despite dealing with the emotional impact he still managed to provide quality controlling.

A huge amount of effort went into updating the map to ensure as accurate a picture as possible for the course legs plus the introduction of 2 new plantations to add a new dimension to the area. The entry numbers made the effort all worthwhile and the entry of 17 competitors on the Black was particularly pleasing given we were only expecting around 12, tops. The finish times demonstrated that although we were at the top end of distance and climb the level of elite standard was equal to the challenge.

Another and more recent plus has been the very good performance put in by



club members at the Compass Sport Cup despite a diminished squad due to absences abroad, injuries and other commitments. Well done to all for participating and in particular for upholding the club team spirit which has been so effectively evolving over the past few years.

On the down side the club is facing one of the biggest challenges in its history.

As many of you know the Forestry Commission for the South West has banned parking on forest tracks and roads. This severely limits our ability to put on quality events of a required standard and that ensures the safety of competitors in transit to the start.

The club has been using F.C. tracks and roads for parking for the past 48 years without any recorded injury or problem with other users. Notice for this ban was extremely short and forced the cancellation of one event. The ban was due to continue but B.O.F. negotiated a short term extension. Of all the clubs using F.C. South West terrain we are the one most affected and if this policy were to be adopted by other land owners it could have such a negative effect that the club might cease to exist

as a serious member of British Orienteering.

Over the past 8 weeks your committee has been assessing the impact, liaising with B.O.F. and Bristol Orienteering and has held an emergency meeting to decide on the best way to alleviate the problem. The result of all of these extensive discussions is that NGOC and BOK have joined together to present a uniform approach and common argument. In addition our problem has headlined the B.O.F. Executive meeting and we have now moved forward to one of two positions. The first is a meeting to be held with

the Forestry Commission at a local level which will include representatives from NGOC, BOK and B.O.F. with the hope that a sensible solution can be found that satisfies the Forestry and allows both clubs to continue to put on events without parking restriction or stoppage. If this meeting cannot find a solution the second position is for the Chief Executive of British Orienteering to take the case forward. If any member of the club feels that they might have some influence with the F.C. or has any constructive idea's that might help the committee to address the issue please let me know.

We have a problem, not the pc term 'Challenge', however please rest assured that we in NGOC together with BOK and B.O.F are doing all we can to resolve this problem and to ensure the future of the sport in the Forest of Dean and the county as a whole.

Tom

In the last few years, a number of indoor orienteering events have started popping up over Europe (especially in places with harsher winters!).

needs to be an easily-understandable way to tell how different floors connect together. Different maps have different ways to show this. In the Edinburgh event, each staircase was denoted by a letter: staircase A on floor 1 would lead to staircase A on floor 2, floor 3, etc.

I'd seen some interesting-looking maps but had never given it a go, so I was excited to see there was an indoor event scheduled as part of the Big Weekend in Edinburgh. It would take place inside the University's James Clerk Maxwell building, in conjunction with a night sprint in the surrounding campus. According to a colleague who was an Edinburgh graduate and knew the building well, it was an easy place to get lost!

Compared to some maps online, the building layout was relatively simple: corridors only, rather than the detailed designs with desk slaloms used by the Stockholm Indoor Cup. But it also differed in having a larger number of floors (8), each with a different layout, which was used to great effect in the course. Often some foresight was needed to avoid taking a staircase that didn't exist on your desired floor.



by Tom Cochrane

Photo: Tom Cochrane

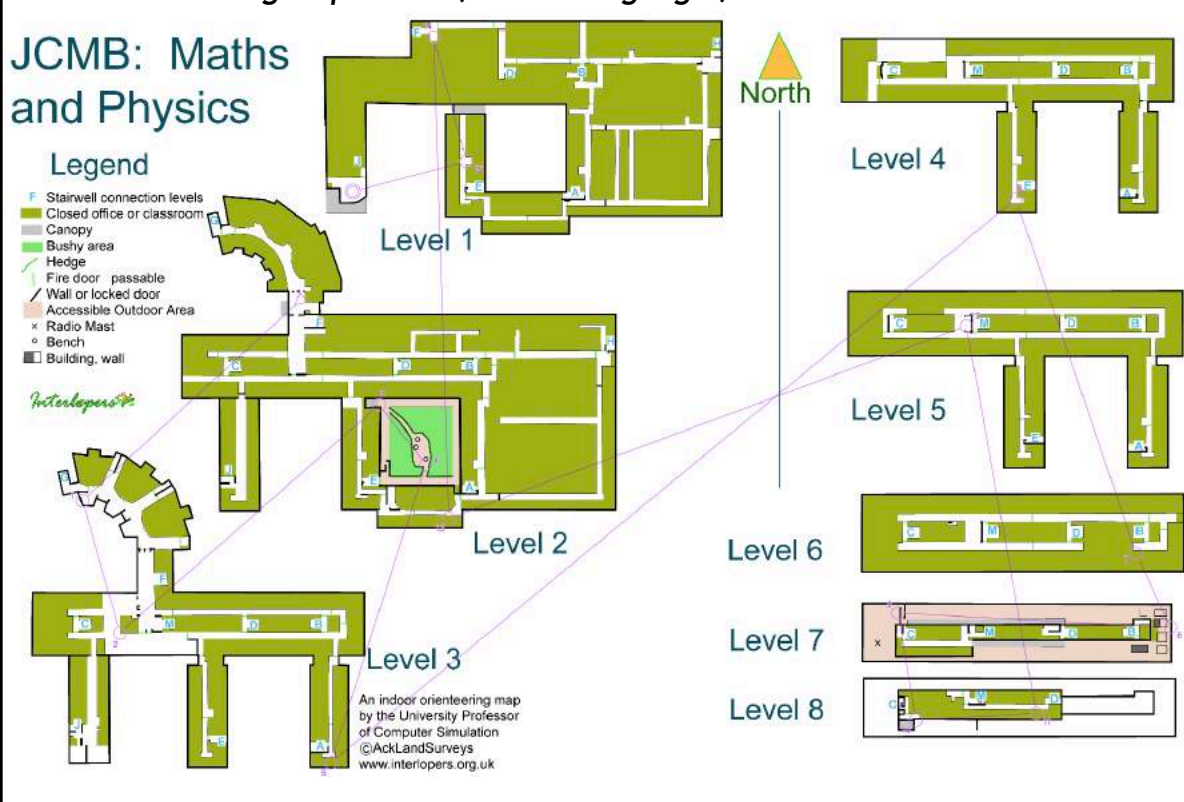
Unlike forest and urban environments, there isn't yet a standard map format for indoor events. Usually the same principles apply as sprint events: e.g. thick black lines represent uncrossable barriers. But the defining feature of indoor orienteering is the existence of multiple levels: it's essentially a 3D maze, where even if two controls are on the same level, it might be necessary to change a floor or two to get between them. So in order to plan routes, there

A new format meant some different things to think about: to wear a headtorch or not? Some sections would be unlit, so the advice of the organisers was to wear one. And so it was that a few hundred orienteers ended up running around some perfectly well-lit corridors with headtorches. It must have looked very odd to the occupants of the offices who were still there working late: hopefully they'd been warned!

The course was great fun. It took a little while to get used to the indoor aspect, as everything is much closer together and things happen so quickly, even compared with an urban sprint. But after a few controls I felt I had the hang of it a bit. Then partway through the course, a change: we were out on the roof. Running out, things seemed a little strange: oh, it was a sheet of ice! I just about kept my balance (others didn't quite manage). There ensued a bit of a shuffle/slide around the perimeter,

hanging on to the railings, to collect the outdoor controls and get inside asap. Things were more 'normal' from then on, with some tricky legs all the way to the finish.

The most confusing map ever?? (from Routegadget)



Overall then, it was an excellent course and a fun experience, even if the ice-skating section was more than I'd bargained for. Apparently I mispunched - I didn't think I had, but everything was a bit of a blur. Check the GPS tra... oh wait!

orienteering down under

Aus "O"

by Tom "Digger" Mills



All photos: Tom Mills

The aftermath of the bush fires

When talking to an Australian non-orienteer and telling him about running in the bush he exclaimed, "What, through all that spikey stuff?". Well, on Day 1 with the temperature at 32 degrees there was certainly a lot of spikey stuff and very sharp protruding broken branches.

Casuarina Pine is short, sharp and these hard windfall brushings were littered across the majority of the ground throughout the terrain. To underline this one injury being dealt with was an impaled hand. Running, what there was, was quite tricky.

It is unlikely that any of us will have a start in an open Zoo. On this day we had a very close approximation. A group of Kangaroos charged through the start followed by their respective offspring. The adults are extremely large animals who do not take a lot of notice of what is in the way in their anxiety to move on, so standing still was not always the right option. I have always thought of them as quite agile but their legs hit the fallen logs and branches with a real thud.

Day 2. The temperature started at 35

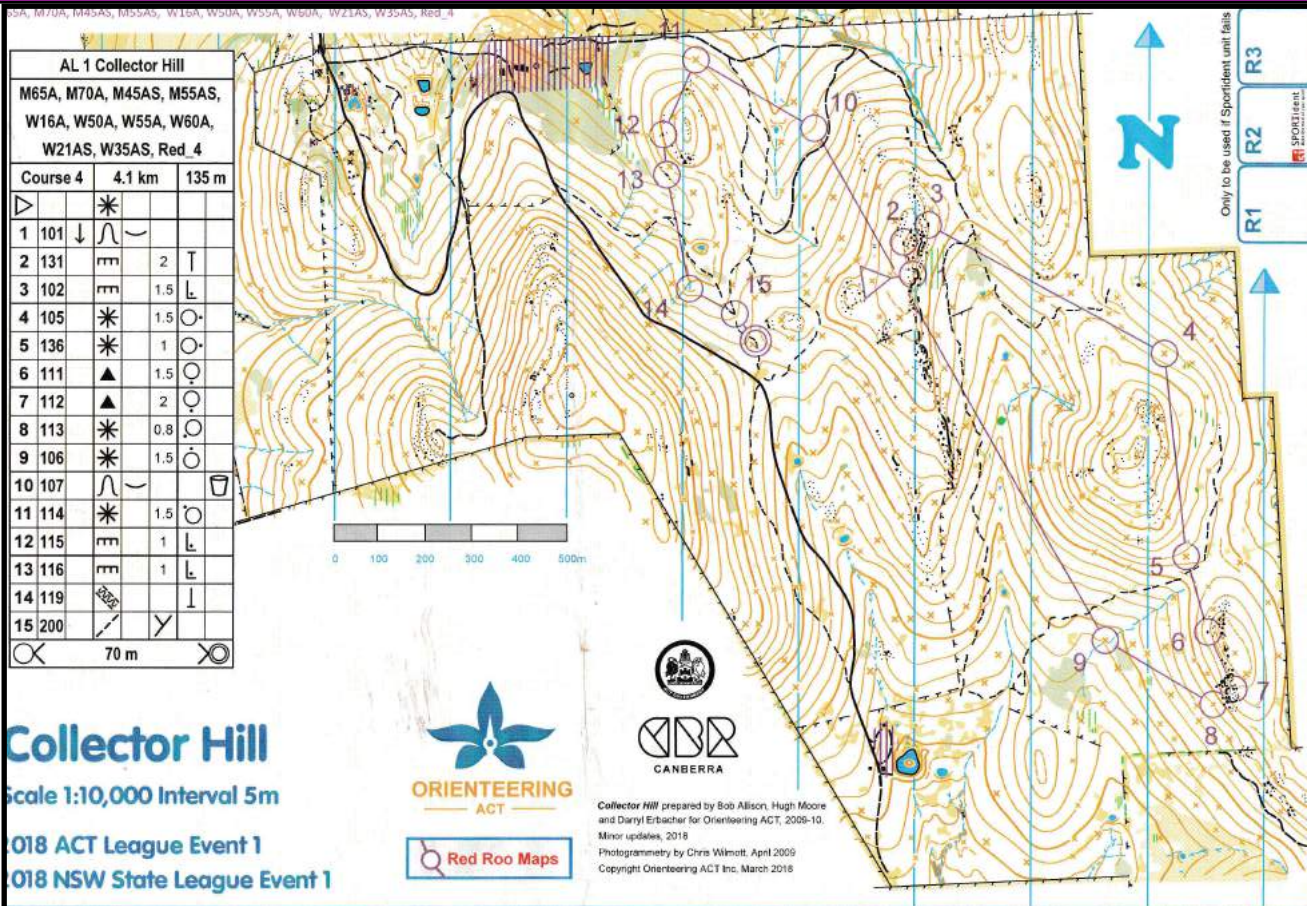
degrees. From the main B-road junction the access lane involved a 22k dirt - or in this case dust - road transit to the event. Driving an old Toyota 4x4 feeling like a modern Lawrence of Arabia, taking it steady at about 60 km per hour, I felt we were going pretty quick leaving a huge cloud of dust in our wake. After about 10k I could just see a veiled yellow 'blob' behind me. This turned out to be a tiny yellow (known as a spotty for some reason by my grandchildren) Hyundai

i10 catching up fast, bouncing over the ruts and ripples. A tip for any off roader looking for a cheap car.

We arrived late with the wind picking up and dust flying everywhere, temperature rising. Fitting into a gap in the starts the only option was to walk because after 5 minutes the heat was overpowering, at least for those of us not acclimatised. Although the event was in some danger of being cancelled the



The chairman takes a post-run rest



weight quite a long way at an accelerated speed. Take it from me it bl***y well hurts.

Commenting on the amount of traffic heading in the opposite direction we said, "Must be the heat and wind, they are going home to Canberra and giving up their weekend". Ignorance is bliss! Temperature is now hitting 40 degrees in some areas, wind is blowing

local authorities let it go ahead presumably because the fire danger had reduced overnight. This turned out to be a misjudgement. **The temperature reached 39 degrees and combined with an extremely strong wind sweeping in from the central region. The sky was red with sand.**

Leaving the event with no air con' in the car, windows open, aggregating a very nice dust covering over ourselves and the car, we scooted back to the haven of tarmac. REST, REVIVE, SURVIVE say the notices on the road. Well we stopped, attempted to revive and in my case got hit by a flying branch. In my limited judgement I have worked out that the heated wind can carry quite a hefty



Sheila demonstrates the size of a termite mound

in gusts that nearly knock you over and fires are breaking out. Grass fires and bush fires but we remained blissfully unaware until catching glimpses of fire engines heading South. By the time we reached Batemans Bay there was only one thing to do, fall into the sea. The car windows had been open all the time, more dust had accumulated and we needed a wash not to mention a cooling submersion. What was a small adventure for us was turning out to be a disaster for the people who lost their homes. **It is a salutary lesson for those of us unfamiliar with this type of weather that these fires break out spontaneously, and move with incredible speed. Just as well the event area was not affected because there was very little scope for escape.**

A few tips:

- If the registration opens at say 0900 get there at 0800. It is highly likely that they will have started early in the cool.

- There is rarely any road signage so diligently boff up on how to get there. Minor roads are tracks, they go on 'forever' with inevitable junctions and you only know you are at the event when you see the tents.

- Course colours do not match ours. In fact, at least by this experience, different states use slightly different guidelines. E.G. Day 1 the junior courses were way out of IOF guidelines and in my opinion unsuitable for children under 12 and those at an early stage of 'O' development. Day 2 on the other hand did meet guidelines.

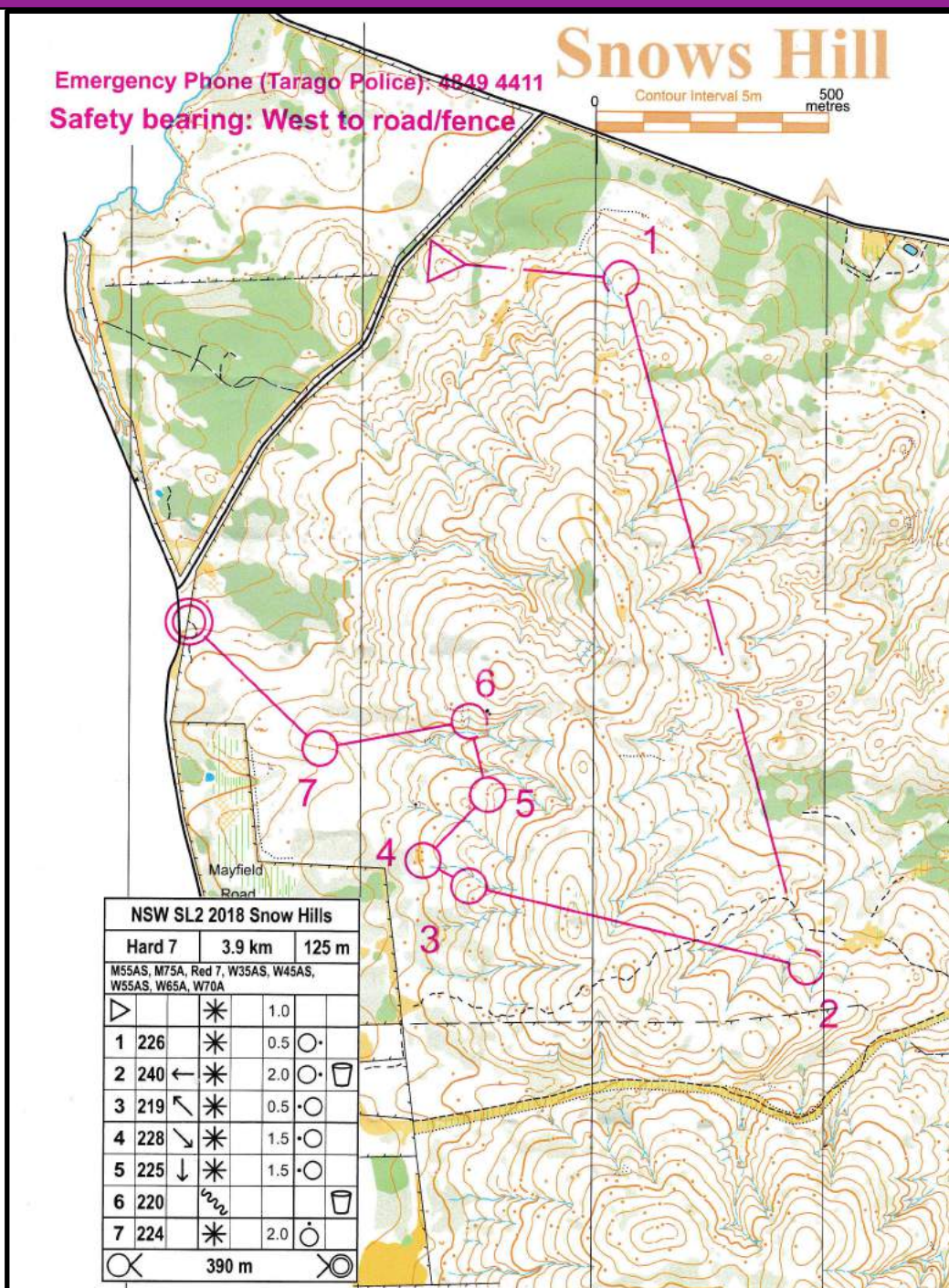
- All TD5 courses were colour coded RED with different course numbers respective to age.

- Termite mounds abound. Not all are mapped, even some well over 1.5 metres, whilst the control might be on one of half a metre. The best guide is to check the size on the descriptions.

- When out in 30 degrees plus you might as well walk, I discovered it is quicker than getting fried brain by running.

- If the roadside fire risk indicators show a very high risk or above give careful consideration to your safety and whether attendance at the event is wise.

- Do not get in the way of kangaroos!



Tom's grandson flies the NGOC colours!

by Andy Monro

Interland is an annual orienteering match between England, Belgium, France and the Netherlands. This year the competition took place in Holland near Oss.

The Saturday event was a middle distance race as part of the weekend 4 race public competition. This was supposed to be a training event for the Interland teams and we were firmly instructed not to race it! Clearly some of the juniors didn't take note of this which may have been a factor in England losing the overall Sunday Interland match. However I firmly followed the script and jogged around familiarising myself with the terrain and style of mapping.

Due to my chronic injury problems this was only the second O event I had done this year (following Richard Purkis' excellent Mallards Pike middle race in February). My "MP" was just intentionally not punching the last control on the run in.

The Sunday Interland competition was a long distance race on very flat typical Dutch terrain, with sand dunes and a crossable lake (although this wasn't such a necessary route choice on my course compared with others). The forest was hard going with many felled and fallen trees, so



using the paths as much as possible seemed the best route choice most of the time.

The sole M45 selected for the team has to run up on M40, so I knew I didn't stand much of a chance against the likes of the M40 world vets champion and current OMM Elite champion. However, I had an excellent run, coming 7th. I made very few mistakes and was running sub 5mins/k for most of the course although dropped a little off pace at the end and finished with 5.2min/k for an actual distance of 11.2k (9k course).

The England team finished a close 2nd

to the French. This was actually only the 2nd time that England have not won the competition.

Interland is a proper team event with 40 team members in total, ranging from M/W14 up to M/W60. This is the 5th time I have run for England as a Vet (and now more than 20 times in total for England/GB as a junior/senior/vet).



Photo: Orienteering England

Chalford Rural Urban, 29th April

by Greg Best



All photos: Google Images

We will be holding our first event at Chalford on Sunday 29th April, and this will be part of the NGOC League. It will be an urban event, but not as you know it.... Chalford's intriguing and eclectic mix of scenes and terrain, offers great charm and historical interest. It will be an urban race in beautiful rural surroundings!

When I have mentioned to people that I've been making a map of Chalford in readiness for an event there, most people look blank and reply "huh, where's that?" Well, if you've ever taken the train from Gloucester, Cheltenham or Stroud towards Swindon and London, you will probably have glanced out of the window some 3 miles outside of Stroud and been struck by the beauty of a lush, green, steep-sided valley, strewn with lovely Cotswold stone houses and cottages. Well this is the Golden Valley and Chalford.

Chalford's valley is the largest of the Stroud Valleys and is where the River Frome runs down the bottom of a deep

narrow gorge from Sapperton to Stroud. Chalford village is highly attractive and owes its existence to the early years of the Industrial Revolution. It is built on ascending terraces on the south facing slopes of the 'Golden Valley' and approached by a bemusing series of narrow and often steep lanes and alleyways. This large village (apparently, the second largest in England) grew up in the late 18th and early 19th century in a totally unplanned and higgledy-piggledy manner. Delightful stone cottages once inhabited by humble weavers rub

shoulders with grander houses, formerly owned by prosperous mill owners.

Chalford village is as steep as it is beautiful, so donkeys were used until the 1930s to deliver bread, coal and other household items to people's doorsteps. In fact, many front doors can still only be accessed by the winding network of 'donkey paths'. In those times, Chalford was known as 'Neddyshire' which derives its name from the use of donkeys. In recent



years, the donkey delivery service was resumed and two donkeys ran the Chalford Community Store's weekly delivery service for 5 years. Unfortunately, this service has now ceased.

The maze of narrow alleys and quiet lanes is interspersed with parks, fields and small woods to add variety and spice for orienteering. At the valley bottom, attractive old mill buildings, the river, the Thames & Severn Canal, the railway and the A419 are all crowded into the narrow space. Undeniably, there will be some challenging contours, but the top of the hill is much flatter and here, in stark contrast, a modern housing estate has been built,

offering plenty of cut-throughs and green space.

The mapped area is large, and would need a piece of A1 paper to fit on all of it at urban scale! It actually covers 6 separate villages: Chalford, Chalford Hill, France Lynch, Bussage, Brownshill and Eastcombe. This will leave lots of scope for other events to use different parts of the map.

Put the date in your diary and come and try out this charming new "urban-rural" area.



Potentially a rich recruiting ground for NGOC ...



He who trains, wins ...

by Pat Macleod



Photo: Pat Macleod

Most athletes train. They may not have to train their brains too much, but they work hard on their bodies.

Running clubs generally have at least one and typically two training nights each week, and these are generally quite well attended. Most orienteers, on the other hand, train by running in events.....not much happens in between, and neither body nor brain is prepared for the next event.....we just turn up and run, hoping, usually in vain, for that perfect run and class winning time. We all seem to think that if we've been doing it for ages, we must be good at it, and if we haven't, it'll somehow come good by sticking at it. Our very own Legend editor will tell you, however, that you don't go from complete beginner to British W40 Champion in 15 months using a suck it and see approach to learning the game. She will also tell you very persuasively that it isn't talent that gets you there, it's b*** hard work. She will tell you, though if you are like me you may not believe her, that anyone can do it, given the necessary commitment.

Of course it's easier for running clubs – same time, same place, every week, catchment area of a few miles. If it's further than that, you join a nearer club. O clubs have much bigger catchment areas, so it's harder to assemble a quorum of people wanting to get out. That doesn't mean to say that orienteers shouldn't try to train, however. The

problem is how to train. If you are anything like me, you don't go 'running' because it's boring....nothing to think about other than longing for the next distance marker to arrive, and wondering if you did it quicker this time than last time, or indeed quickest ever. Good for the body, perhaps, though a typical road/path run doesn't really set you up for brambles and brashings, high stepping and hop, step and jump forest plantations. So what do you do?

Simplify, and localise. Simplify the 'planning' so that you can create navigation and physical training without the overhead of putting out controls and publishing course maps, and localise the venues so that there is a regular 'local' schedule that everyone within a reasonable radius can get to easily and quickly. This is the basis of our developing training programme. We won't achieve it straight away, but we do have plans in place to try and make training events/activities regular for, and locally accessible to, both existing club members and those who fancy giving orienteering a go.

There are three parts to the programme.

The first is the Performance Group, also known more recently and with due modesty as the Fairly Average Group, on the grounds that 'performance' can put people off! It meets on Wednesday evenings, around the Cheltenham-Gloucester-Stroud Cotswold edge, and mixes technical with physical training in a low key and informal manner. Everyone is welcome, and activities are designed to cater for



Gratutious photo of the editor

Photo: Wendy Carlyle

mixed levels of fitness and experience. It's run by Paul Horsfall and Richard Purkis and is all administered via a Whatsapp group - <https://chat.whatsapp.com/3epXvDsKergKkHF1Qhc7op> which you contact from your phone to apply to join. If you are based in the Cheltenham/Gloucester/Stroud area you should sign up.

The maprun app



The second part of the programme is maprun. If you haven't already found out about maprun, go the maprun website and read about it - ngocweb.com/maprun. It meets the simplify object very well - virtual courses, wherever we want them, available 24/7, and needing only a smartphone to use. Localisation isn't quite there yet, but is well on the way, with a string and growing cluster of courses in the Cheltenham-Gloucester area. Maprun is currently limited to urban areas, and so it will test your navigation at a simple level, your judgement of speed and route choice, and your legs, but it doesn't yet tick all

the boxes for full O training. On the other hand, we can generate lots of virtual courses, and so can provide plenty of variety within a locality. All you need to run a maprun course is a smart phone. It helps to have a printed map, but as we create courses we also create maps that you can download and print. Starting in April we will be staging an informal and sociable maprun 'training runs' on those Thursday evenings throughout the Summer when there is no Summer street challenge or R2T2 event scheduled. To start with these will be somewhat scattered around the courses we already have, but there will be a growing focus on courses around the Cheltenham/Gloucester area, with the aim of developing a regular Thursday evening training activity based on simple street navigation with fitness training, route choice and distance planning elements. I hope shortly to become a local administrator for the maprun system, and that will give us more scope to experiment with new forms of maprun - park sprints, experimentation with forest based courses, and so on.

Finally, we need to cater for the traditional 'how do I get started in the forest' requirement. Ultimately we want people to join the club and get out into the forest. The snag has been that our forest training days have required masses of resources and planning, and so have been few and far between. The solution, we think is to separate the beginner (TD1-3) training from the more technical TD4-5 stuff, leave the latter to the Wednesday group, at least for the time being, and tie the beginner training in with the developing school programme which Gill Stott is coordinating with Active Gloucestershire(AG), and the School Gmes Organisers - seen here with teachers learning the basics of map orientation on a Naughty Numbers matrix at Robinswood Country Park! This, too has a Cheltenham/Gloucester focus, but with a current offshoot towards South



Photo: Pat Macleod

Gloucestershire, and a potential one in the Forest. We are starting to look at ways in which we can offer an after school TD1-2 training session prior to the Thursday evening mapruns, using suitable no-road areas within or close to our existing ISSOM or pseudo-ISSOM map areas. These will serve two purposes - a follow on programme for the AG programme, and a chance for other beginners to dip a toe in the more traditional compass and pace business of navigation.

It sounds like a lot of work. If we stick to the simplify principle, however, it need not be. What we do need, is for a few more people in the club to come forward and help out, either occasionally at training sessions, or to help deliver a specific project, such as checking the state of Open Street Map (the base map for maprun courses) in your locality. Everybody who gets involved in helping will tell you that it is rewarding, good fun, and good training. Don't wait to be asked - put yourself forwards. When it comes to training, effort is king.

Gloucestershire Schools Orienteering

by Gill Stott



All photos: Gill Stott

Active Gloucestershire took a big O leap forward at the end of last year - they replaced that old school stalwart, rounders, with Orienteering for primary school games.

It's great local news for us and if we can support and encourage this new initiative, then fingers crossed our junior section will be over-running with podium seekers in a few years' time. Can we reverse the current trend of an age skew toward the, erm, more mature orienteers in Gloucestershire and elsewhere? Signs are already looking more hopeful for young adults with the Richards and Paul, but we haven't really made much of an inroad into new juniors yet.

Has this decline occurred because there hasn't been any focus on school sport? It seems there are multiple school initiatives happening all over the country. Maybe these initiatives are within certain schools only, thus giving a more scattered pattern of success.

So why orienteering for school games? Well, Active

Gloucestershire have noticed that you can participate running, walking, toddling ... It's a great way to encourage reluctant and sometimes unfit youngsters into physical activity.

There are approximately 236 primary schools in Gloucestershire, grouped into five districts: <https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2626/county-with-prim-and-sec-8899.pdf>

Each district has a school games organiser (SGO), part funded by Sport England. In Gloucestershire, SGOs are based in secondary schools, reaching out to all primary schools in their area.

Active Gloucestershire are supporting every primary school in the country to take part in League events for a range of sports, and for the first time this now includes orienteering.

Working with Active Gloucestershire, a small group of us planned a pilot event with five orienteering activities which children could take part in at a league event.

10 schools would take part, entering 10 children each - so 100 children would be participating in the orienteering activities. Students from Hartpury College would assist as team leaders for each activity, which the school groups rotate around. This is planned for June 2018.

Following this news, SGOs across the county felt that they wanted to do something earlier and began organising their own events, contacting myself and so I have been very engaged planning Level 2 events with them. SGOs are great to work with - so enthusiastic and passionate about encouraging children to engage in sport.

This month (March) I have been training 23 students from Cirencester College who will lead children from schools around Cirencester at an L2 event, venue Rendcomb College. The



area we were given to use lacked a few map features i.e. a cricket field. Come in Greg Best, who gallantly remapped the area, meticulously mapping every single tree and feature he could find. Top man.

So we became more inventive as we went along. Working with the SGO, we came up with:

- **Naughty Numbers**, a matrix of 9 controls
- **Maze O**, using the island maze first described by SARUM with a Sport England grant
- **Tree Trot**, a zig-zag course up and across the cricket pitch area using Greg's newly-mapped trees
- **An Off-String course**, thanks to the Scottish 6 Days team for ideas on this. Each Mr Man now has a buddy who declines to reside on the string, lurking a few metres away instead
- **Wild Wood**, well it was a bit of scrappy wood to be honest but with Greg's help it became a feature-rich track course with tapes along the way to reassure children.

The Cirencester students were a great help to me, providing ideas on how to improve the activities. For example, the Tree Trot could have letters rather than

numbers at controls, with the children making words as they visited selected controls, so this exercise is now renamed Cricket Creatures. The students attempted the island maze on piggy back which I don't think we'll be repeating with the schools ...! So, we are all set for the league event next month. We're still discussing how to score each activity. SI might be a bit of a nightmare with 100 to cope with at the same time, 5 times over; so we'll use the old-style punches and the children will check the pattern since they'll be out in the field at different spots.

Whilst Cotswold District organised their League 2 event Gloucester District took a different approach, arranging for me to train 12 primary teachers to orienteer at Robinswood Country Park on a new



map on Friday 24th March. This has been a group effort, to remap the northern area around the Park centre. Pat's 2013 map for guides, Andy and myself resurveying, new LIDAR data from our son Ed, and Caroline and Tom Cochrane helping with Strava heat maps too. Anybody up for remapping the rest? Andy reckons it'll be a good area for local events - a bewildering network of paths and slopes! The Gloucester SGO and myself organised a pack of resources for teachers to take back to school after the training, including BOF's excellent Tri-O material. Their response was enthusiastic and positive - all teachers seeing the link between orienteering, Outdoor Activity (now on the curriculum), Geography, Maths ... A League 2 event is planned for April at St Peter's School.

South Gloucestershire is also planning a league event soon using their wonderful new map of Katherine Lady Berkeley School, mapped by Lin Callard in often Arctic conditions.



What next? Well, all the schools taking part so far are asking for their school grounds to be mapped. NGOC are going to be busy ... HELP!!

Some schools have been mapped by Bob Teed over the years, others are obtaining a plan of their school which can be mapped at a basic level using extra information from Google Earth. Some teachers are keen to try and add extra features themselves, with the involvement of their pupils. I'll see how this goes - I'm trying to encourage schools to be independent of help and to share ideas and resources.

School maps currently in the pipeline are Grange Primary (John Miklausic), Elmbridge Primary (Amber Clague, a teacher there, is enthusiastic and will encourage her Year 5s to help her map trees and play equipotential once I've started the map off for her). Purton Manor School are keen to do the same ... leading Caroline and Pat to begin wondering about Churchdown Hill - is the map for this a goer?

What can NGOC do to sustain this momentum? Well, we need to plan a series of follow-on events for juniors and parents/guardians in local parks to encourage family participation hopefully leading to increased club membership and a more healthy and

sustainable age range. Pat has come up with a list of potential parks in Gloucester, we can use some of the school areas now that we have a growing set of activities for children.

I need members to help us rise up to this new and exciting challenge so if you feel you could help in any way - by map surveying (many of Bob's maps were made some years ago and need updating), or occasional help at junior evenings (around 5pm-6pm we think), or with ideas for fun O activities you may have seen.

Interested and want to know more? Or feel you could help out in some way, however small? - then please contact me gillgeog@gmail.com. Thanks!



Richard Purkis was brave enough to take on the Triple Gloucester Middle race at Mallard's Pike as his first ever Level C Planner role. If you've ever thought about planning an event (or have planned one and think it's unlikely you'll ever try again!) then this article is a fantastic insight into avoiding the pitfalls and making sure that you plan great courses.

The Triple Gloucester Middle Race was the first Level C race I have planned. Although thankfully it ran smoothly on the day, the lead up to it was far more stressful so, looking back on it now, here are 10 tips I would give to anyone planning a Level C or above. These are especially relevant if, like me, you have only planned level Ds or are new to planning altogether. I've tried to arrange these in a chronological order so if you stick to these in plenty of time, you should be set for a trouble free event.

1. If it is your first time planning a level C, have an experienced controller.

This is arguably the most important tip if you are an inexperienced planner. A controller shouldn't just confirm control locations are correct and safe for competitors but should also have an input towards the shape of the courses, be local and know your area and patches to be wary of, and have constructive ideas. Some planners are very fussy and won't agree to planning until they know who the controller is. I was fortunate to have the very experienced Mark Saunders (SWOC) who, as I will reveal later, was very helpful in making sure my planning was up to scratch.

2. If it's a multi-day event and you are sharing an area, sort this out early.



Mallards Pike terrain (photo: Hils Nicholls)

If you are sharing an area, it is likely that you and your fellow multi-day planner will have already thought in your head about where your courses are going to go, but it is probable that you are both using the same 'nice bits' of the area. To avoid this, make sure you agree a way to split an area to avoid running through the same patches as the second day controller will not be happy about this.

Did I do this? Yes although not straight away which would have saved some time

3. If you have not run on your area, visit it and explore as much as possible.

You can look at the map as much as you want but it doesn't compare to seeing it for real. It is useful to do this first to find out if the map needs updating. Also, if you have to edit the courses late on, you will know what a block of forest is like without having to go out and check.

Did I do this? Yes and I found the map

needing updating in many places.

4. If map updates need to happen, get these done early

Pretty obvious this one. Having an updated map will let you plan with confidence and additionally, may provide you features that weren't there previously or prevent you from using features that no longer exist.

Did I do this? My map updating was not done in one go but rather a continuous project which was not ideal. This was firstly due to the Forestry Commission felling trees but also because I kept exploring new areas.

5. Be aware of all hazards specific to your area.

Most hazards won't directly affect your planning and instead are just things to be wary of. Others though could cause you planning headaches. A busy cycle path on a summer's day could be one to avoid for your junior courses. Make sure you ask previous

organisers/planners or look at previous risk assessments to learn about your area.

Did I do this? I had to deal with the Forest of Dean Family Cycle path and concluded I could not avoid this but, given it was early February, it was agreed that it would not be a high risk hazard but also mitigated by putting up "Beware Runners" signs.

6. Look at the BOF guidelines

How often have you finished designing some draft courses without even reading up how long your courses are supposed to be? What you should do is consult the BOF guidelines available from the BOF website which provide you a range for each course. Depending on whether your area is flat and runnable or hilly and tough-going, you can decide on your ideal length.

Did I do this? No and my controller pointed me in the direction of these guidelines. For my first draft I had planned my Brown and then roughly scaled down but the majority of my courses were way too long.

So, that is six tips and you could have got this far without even opening Purple Pen / Condes. Like many would do, opening purple pen and designing interesting legs was one of the first things I did but in hindsight was not the most useful thing to be doing.

7. Try to have start and finish as close as possible to assembly.

A simple one again but this is one to

Richard when he's not in Planner mode - cruising a snowy Wycombe Rye Parkrun (photo: Richard O'Hagan)



check you have been communicating with your organiser (who should have been in place when the planner/controller was chosen) and know where your assembly is.

Did I do this? Yes at first, but the first time I changed my start I actually decided to move it further away. Again my controller was very helpful and stepped in and picked out a better location not only for my start but also my finish, both closer to assembly.

8. Keep communicating with your organiser

Your organiser will want to be kept in the loop with most things you do. I was good at first but when I briefly moved my start further away without telling my organiser he was, to say the least, a bit alarmed when he found out as this meant he would have to check the new start location and think about how to

safely direct people up to 2km away. Luckily this wasn't required.

9. Use the planning software to assist you

As much as you think your courses look good individually, there may be things you haven't thought about such as controls too close together, and legs run in both directions. Your planning software can tell you instances where these occur (Event Audit in Purple Pen) and if possible you should try to mitigate them.

My controller also pointed out the first draft of courses included a lot of occasions where competitors were arriving at controls in different directions on different courses. This is something

that planning software can't pick out but should also be mitigated if possible.

10. Try to get stuff done the day before as you likely will be busy on the day

As this is a level C, your controller will need to have confirmed all your controls are out correctly before anyone can set off. Therefore, to save you time on the day, if you can, put the majority of controls out the day before. This will save you time on the day for other jobs that will need to get done.

I was luckily staying at a hotel on the map the night before. Also I could drive round the hard standing forest tracks which enabled me to put out almost all the controls prior to event day.



All photos: the editor



Kevin Brooker at Bixslade

The joint efforts of the snow and the ongoing Forestry Commission debate have conspired to restrict the number of League events so far this year to just two - at Bixslade on 17th February and High Meadow exactly one month later.

Despite the unusual parking arrangements at Bixslade, a healthy number of runners turned out to enjoy the rare sunshine and the excellent courses set by Paul Taunton. Only five runners took on the inaugural League Brown course, with Nick Gracie of BOK winning in 81:49. Phil Murray (M50, BOK) took first place on Blue in 51:56, despite claiming that he was just "going for an easy jog round"! Paul Horsfall (M35) was the top placed NGOC'er on the course (in 2nd place, 59:44) closely followed by Tom Cochrane (M21, also NGOC) in third in a time of 61:34. On the Green course, Katharine Atkins (W35) of HOC won in a time of

43:41. John Miklausic was the best placed NGOC runner in third (50:44). The new Short Green course was apparently well-received by the 18 competitors who chose to run this new option at League events. Jack Giltrap (M21, UBOC) led the field in 39:39, with Roger Coe (M70) having a good run to finish second in 49:35. Alex Agombar

(W40) was the first lady in 51:49.

Youth trumped age (for once!) on the Orange: Sam Roderick (M15) won, a little over three minutes clear of John Wickson (M70) in second. James Agombar (M10) won the Yellow course in 27:14.



The youngest Miklausics on String

Photo: Sheila Miklausic

Slightly fewer runners braved the Arctic conditions (and tough hills!) at Highmeadow to make the most of Alan Richards' challenging courses.

The event only got the go-ahead at the last minute due to the threat of heavy snow and conditions were described as being "absolutely chuffing freezing".

Ben Mitchell (M21, SBOC) made short work of the Brown course, and his time of 46:22 was over 7 minutes clear of Megan Carter-Davies (W21,

UBOC), who finished second in with 53:46. Of the mere mortals, Richard Purkis (M21) was third with a time of 62:19 (which is eye-wateringly fast by normal human standards and puts the Elite-level runners into context!).

On the Blue course, Andy Creber (M60 and widely believed to be part Robo-Orienteer) led the field home in 43:51, over seven minutes clear of David May (M70, SLOW; also suspected of using some sort of super-power). Top placed lady was Katharine Atkins in third place with 54:41, closely followed by NGOC's Vanessa Lawson in 56:01. Matthew



Erin Murrin on the Bixslade Yellow course

Pickering (M21, UBOC) won on Green in 40:24, with NGOC's Steve Harris (M40) in second place. Peter Maloney (M70) of NGOC had a good run to win Short Green. John Wickson (M65) led the Orange field home, with Claire Garai (W35) in second. Katie Agombar and Seth Lawson (M10) battled it out on Yellow, with just 17 seconds between them!

The next league event is the revolutionary Chalford Rural-Urban on 29th April. Don't miss it!

league standings after 2 events

Brown:

1	Nick Gracie	BOK	M45	1779
2	Keith Agmen	BOK	M35	1663
3	Ben Mitchell	SBOC	M21	1079
4	Owain Jones	BOK	M35	998
5	M. Carter-Davies	UBOC	W21	931

Short Green:

1	Peter Maloney	NGOC	M70	1796
2	Jack Giltrap	UBOC	M21	1222
3	Roger Coe	NGOC	M70	977
4	Alex Agombar	NGOC	W40	935
5	Brian Laycock	HOC	M70	929

Blue:

1	Paul Horsfall	NGOC	M35	2047
2	Nick Dennis	BOK	M55	1731
3	Mike Goldthorpe	SOC	M60	1719
4	Ian Kennett	SWOC	M55	1702
5	Russell Finch	SWOC	M50	1698

Orange:

1	John Wickson	NGOC	M70	2019
2	Claire Garai	NGOC	W35	1932
3	Sam Roderick	NGOC	M15	1106
4	Rose Taylor	HOC	W12	956
5	Cindy Pauze	IND	W30	811

Green:

1	John Fallows	NGOC	M60	1832
2	Steve Harris	NGOC	M40	1802
3	Pete Colbert	SWOC	M65	1620
4	Jane Holcombe	BOK	W45	1490
5	Alex Evans	NGOC	M55	1481

Yellow:

1	George Gracie	BOK	M11	1890
2	James Agombar	NGOC	M10	1879
3	Katie Agombar	NGOC	W10	1795
4	Rowan Murrin	NGOC	W9	1148
5	Sam Horsfall	NGOC	M4	1005

recent results

JANUARY

As usual, the year kicked off with our own fabulous **New Year's Day Score event at Kidnalls**. Planner Kim Liggett Made sure that even the most serious hangover had a fighting chance, and as a result a clear-thinking Michael Hallett (M21, BOK) found all 24 controls in just over 49 minutes to win with a score of 760 points. Dad Clive (M55, BOK) was a close second with 750, whilst Paul Murrin (M45) led the NGOC contingent home with 660 and 4th place.

At the BOK Regional/ASO at Headless Hill on 14th January, thwarted Blakeney League planner Andy Creber made the most of his free day to have an excellent run on the Blue course, finishing 2nd in a time of 54:55. On the Brown course, Pete Ward (M45) finished 6th and Richard Purkis (M21) was 8th. Pat Macleod (M70) demonstrated his continuing improvement in form to finish 4th on Green, with Rebecca Ward (W16) not far behind in 8th. Sister Jessica (W12) also had a good day and won the Orange course.

A few hardy club members braved the brambles of West Woods at the North Wilts Galoppen on 21st January. Top finishers were: Richard Purkis (2nd,



Paul Murrin at the NYD Score

Photo: Richard Cronin

Brown), Christophe Pige (15th, Blue) and Peter Watson (M18) was 6th on Green.

FEBRUARY

The **NGOC Triple Gloucester** event on the 3rd and 4th February attracted an excellent field from across the region and beyond. The first event was a **Middle distance race at Mallards Pike**, offering superb courses planned by Richard Purkis. Pete Ward led home the NGOC contingent on Brown, finishing 5th behind four International-

standard Elites. Andy Monro won the Blue course by almost two minutes, with Andy Creber (M60) finishing in a superb 3rd place. Sam Harris (W35) took 3rd on Green, and Sheila Miklausic (W70) finished in the same position on Light Green. Sam Cowen (M9) won the Yellow course, with sister Eleri (W11) not far behind in 2nd.

The second race in the event took an unusual format - a **Night Urban around the varied landscape of Chepstow** planned by Pat Macleod. Richard Purkis stormed round the Long course to finish 4th in a time of 21:34, with local resident Paul Murrin close behind in 5th. Veteran Night campaigner Paul Taunton (M65) was our top runner on the Short course, finishing in 11th spot.

The weekend returned to **Mallads Pike for its conclusion - this time a Long race** planned by Tom Mills. Richard Purkis finished 11th on a competitive Black course (possibly slightly tired after his efforts on the Saturday!). Pete Ward was a close 3rd on Brown, with Paul Murrin not far behind in 6th. Andrew Hartley (M21) was our top finisher on Blue in 8th. Peter Watson was 2nd on Green and Kay Billingham (W50) also 2nd on Light Green. Seth Lawson (M10) ran well to take 2nd place on White. Overall, an excellent weekend for the club - well done to all who planned, supported, ran and especially to organisers Roger Coe and Hils Nicholls.

Nine NGOC members were not put off by the dire combination of Sand Dunes and Dark, and valiantly competed in the **British Night Championships at Merthyr Mawr** on 24th February, organised by SWOC. Our top finishers were: Richard Purkis (10th in a very high standard M21 field) and Vanessa Lawson (4th W45) - an excellent result for her first Night-O event!

SBOC followed up on the BNC with a **UKOL event at Pembrey** the next day.



Dave Andrews at Pembrey (photo: Steve Rush (BOK))

Richard Purkis (who must be inexhaustible) finished 12th on the challenging Black course, with Richard Cronin (M21) showing his fell-running-gained fitness to finish 17th. The Ward family had a good day out all round: Pete was 7th on Short Brown, Rebecca 6th on Green and Jessica finished 2nd on Orange.

MARCH

The club fielded a rather reduced team

at the **CompassSport Cup qualifiers (Nesscliffe, WRE)** on 11th March. WRE did an excellent job of planning and organising the event, despite the area's limitations. In the end, the result was a close-run thing and NGOC finished in 4th place, hot on the heels of HOC. Our top runners were: Richard Purkis (3rd, Brown), Pete Ward (1st, Short Brown), Andy Creber (4th, Blue M) Vanessa Lawson (2nd, Green W), Peter Watson (7th, Green M) and Rebecca Ward (2nd, Short Green).

Our neighbours SWOC hosted an excellent **Welsh League event at Margam North** on 25th March. Andy Creber won the Blue course by an almost embarrassing 16 minutes, and Pat Macleod won Green by almost 6 minutes. Rebecca Ward also had a good run on Green to finish 4th, and Jessica was 2nd on Orange.

csc heats photos

All photos: Allan McCall



rankings

NGOC's national ranking Top 10 on 29th March 2018 were ...

1	Richard Purkis	1993	M	8044
2	Peter Ward	1970	M	7919
3	Tom Cochrane	1986	M	7749
4	Andy Monro	1969	M	7670
5	Richard Cronin	1989	M	7565
6	Lawrence Jones	1996	M	7502
7	Andy Creber	1958	M	7445
8	Ian Jones	1966	M	7348
9	Andy Stott	1959	M	7331
10	Andrew Hartley	1988	M	7296

The top 3 ranked orienteers in the club have remained unchanged for a while now, although Tom C is gradually increasing his ranking points! Andy Creber has dropped from 5th to 7th (despite increasing his ranking score), due to Richard C and Lawrence Jones both improving on their scores. Andrew Hartley is new in at number 10, and his recent performances suggest that Ian Jones and Andy S had better watch out! Our top female orienteer, Caroline Craig, is recovering from a serious injury problem which has put her outside the club's Top 10. Hope to see her back soon! Richard Purkis and Pete Ward both rank in the Top 100 orienteers in Britain - Richard is 62nd and Pete just hangs on in 100th. Well done both!

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