

The Legend

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North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club
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www.ngoc.org.uk

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Cover: Eddie McLarnon starts his run-in after dibbing at the final control on the National Trust's Longshaw Estate on Sunday 16 October. Eddie was NGOC's top scorer at the CompassSport Trophy with 96 points.
(Photograph: Pat MacLeod)

Chairman's Chat

When I sat in the 'Chair' for the first time a year ago, the big issues facing us were not so much to do with orienteering itself, but to do with our ability first to be able to afford to do it, and second to have somewhere to go where we could participate in our sport. The Forestry Commission, I suppose understandably in view of what was coming, wanted to hike access fees by hundreds of percent, to the point where many might have felt it getting beyond their means, particularly given the concurrent increases in fuel costs. This issue has not gone away – it is on hold, pending, I suspect, the outcome of the other big issue – the future of the Forestry Commission itself, and the Public Forest Estate (PFE). Early in the year the Government proposed a plan to sell off the PFE. This, of course, caused uproar, and had the somewhat irritating side effect of seeing the Forest of Dean bedecked in pink ribbon by followers of the 'Hands Off Our Forest' campaign (HOOFF). As an aside I was gratified to see it almost all removed following the Government's climb-down; I had envisaged that being too much effort for the HOOFF zealots, and I am pleased to have been proved wrong.

In place of the plan the Government created an 'Independent Panel', with responsibility to report back in April 2012 on the future of Forestry in England, and the Forestry Commission. As I reported at the time I attended the first panel workshop and found it a worthwhile experience. We await the outcome of the panel's work, and given that whatever it is, it will take time to implement, we can carry on as we have done for years, at least for the time being.

So much for the world at large. At the next level, the world of orienteering itself, I am thankful to have in the club such members as Chris James and Neil Cameron who understand the workings of British Orienteering (I shall call them BOF!) , and the overall governance and funding of the sport; I consider myself a 'small is best' kind of person, and struggle to get to grips with the grand strategies and issues of governing bodies. I am grateful to Neil and Chris for their invaluable support in representing us – albeit informally - at the Governing Body level – and making sure that we on the committee have a feel for what goes on 'up there'. It seems to me that BOF faces a couple of perennial issues – funding, and its relationship with the club/association hierarchy – which so far have mainly passed us by as we go about planning and running our fixtures programmes. The former, however, will soon affect all of us, as BOF seeks to build plans to protect itself against anticipated losses in government funding. The current debate revolves around membership fees and levies, and how these should be used to generate income for BOF. From my point of view two things stood out in all the BOF papers on this issue. First,

only 28% of actual 'runs' in the forest contributed to BOF levies; 72% of all runs were 'free' as far as BOF was concerned. Second, the membership scheme is complex – I hadn't even realised there was such a thing as a local BOF member – but the benefits of membership, as listed by BOF, are nothing to shout about, particularly if you do not aspire to 'represent your country'. The solution, then, reduce membership fees and increase participation fees..... Chris James tells me this is the conclusion arrived at by the recent Club and Association conference, and we will have to see what it means to us in practice next year.

At the local level, aside from all of the above, I set out at the beginning of the year to work hard on increasing participation in our local events, and increasing the number of club members taking an active part in organising, planning, and generally helping at events. The lesson I have learnt – probably knew already - is that these things take time! We have run two significant programmes of newcomer events, from one of which has emerged Kyla da Cunha's Family Sport initiative in Hereford. With massive support from Caroline Gay, the newly appointed BOF participation officer for the South West, Kyla has started a programme of Monday evening club nights which we hope will generate interest eventually in NGOC, MADO and HOC events, and ultimately membership of one of these clubs. Greg Best's Spring Series has resulted in a trickle of new participants in our mainstream programmes, and some of these are now turning into memberships, so whilst we don't yet have a regular club night in Cheltenham/Gloucester, we are slowly starting to see results. Lastly, we do have some new organisers and planners, and I am grateful to all of those who have decided to put more back into the club.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, we came a very respectable 6th out of 11 teams in our first CompassSport Trophy Final, so well done to the whole team, and particularly to Greg Best for pulling together the biggest club team in the competition. Hopefully by next year our development programmes will have helped us to fill the gaps in our junior ranks which make it hard for us truly to compete in this competition.

As you will also see in this issue the AGM is on Monday 7 November, at Oxstalls campus. We will have a speaker from the Forestry Commission, decisions to be made on the new club top, and a preview of the updated club website. And, of course, an opportunity to discuss how we run the club, what we do, and what we should do. Please try and be there.

Pat MacLeod

Alan Brown Changes Colour

For many years, our illustrious Legend editor had believed that if you're born a Brown then you must run the Brown. Although this belief has meant value for money running, with long distances and even longer times, it has meant lack of success in the ratings and frequent appearances on the lower reaches of the results.

However, I am pleased to report that Mr Brown has finally seen the light and realised that he is also allowed to compete in courses other than his namesake colour. The Spring Series held in Cheltenham and Gloucester was intended for newcomers to try our sport, but this did not put off Alan, and it was at these events that he finally found his niche and long-awaited success by running Yellow and Orange. At Crickley Hill Alan came 1st on Yellow, while his wife, Ann won the Orange. Encouraged by this result and determined to go one better (and beat his wife?), he ran twice at The Park Campus, winning both Yellow and Orange. This feat was repeated at the next event at Oxstalls campus, again winning Yellow and Orange.

You may think that Alan will have learnt from all this success and will in future keep to non-Brown courses, but I am disappointed to report that this has proved not to be the case. For only the weekend after I travelled with Alan to HOC's regional event at Breakneck Bank, and Alan could not resist the allure of his namesake. The result? 19th out of 19 on Brown. Normal service resumed!

Greg Best

(A photograph of Alan at the CompassSport Trophy on 16 October is on the following page. Alan thought this a good photo but his wife said his beard needed trimming and someone else said he should keep his head up more when running – to disguise the thinness of hair up top.)

CompassSport Trophy



Alan Brown (Photograph: Wendy Carlyle)

CompassSport Trophy



Pat Cameron (*above*) and Ros Taunton (*below*) (*Photographs: Pat MacLeod*)



You reckon orienteering is just for nice, peaceful, law-abiding folk? Think again, pal.

Chandleresque Chairman's Challenge

It was a fine Saturday morning, just the kind of day to visit your maiden aunt. Only I didn't have a maiden aunt, and besides, today was the big one – the Chairman's Challenge. If I didn't show up it would upset Chairman Pat and I didn't want that; if you have ever seen Pat get mad you'll know just fine what I mean.

The girl tagged along; she wasn't much of an orienteer but she was some kind of company. The directions on the web must have been good as we arrived early without taking a wrong turn. The first thing I saw at the parking lot was a whole bunch of guys from the Borstal Orienteering Gang, aka BOG. They was laughing and joking and generally acting as if they owned the joint. There were all toting the latest SI dibbers and, for good measure, one guy even had the latest EMIT hardware. They didn't scare me none so I went over and started talking. One guy asked if the entry fee was three dollars or four. "Three bucks for NGOC, four bucks for BOG," I rapped. They all laughed but I could tell from the look in their eyes that if I made any more wisecracks I wouldn't even make the start.

I backed off and went to Registration. There was Chairman Pat all on his lonesome and looking real mean. I sauntered over. "Hi, Pat, how're you doing?" "Cut the crap, Al, just tell me how many." I said two, pretty please, and passed over the money – the exact money. Pat didn't do change and it wasn't healthy to ask for any. "Take the control descriptions and get outta here," he snapped.

Back at the car the girl hadn't moved, she was still draped over the bonnet. I gave her the control descriptions. She did a double take and whined "What's with the hieroglyphics?" It was my turn to do a double take as I didn't think she knew any words longer than five letters. "How should I know? My name's not Tutankhamen." I could see a serious case of earache on the horizon so I played guess the pictorial control description for half an hour while she wrote them down

longhand. By the time she'd finished it was nearly time for the start; we had to run like the cops were on our tail.

The ones who had survived the busy road crossing to the start were in a large group and making a whole lot of noise. Suddenly it all went quiet and even the BOG guys quit fooling around: Chairman Pat was coming. "OK. One hour score event. Anybody over the hour is in big trouble. New rule: at some controls there are three kites. You have to dib at the one which exactly matches the control description. Dib the wrong one and it's big, BIG trouble time. Now SCRAM!" Pat sure didn't waste words.

Easy first control? You gotta be kidding – a long haul up a steep track. About halfway my lungs were fit to bust and guys were dropping left and right; one poor sap fell right in the middle of the path and got trampled real bad. I guessed he wasn't going to make next Saturday – League 1 at Minchinhampton.

I reached the second control OK and, oh-oh, at the third control there were three kites. I was standing there trying to figure it out when this old guy came rushing up. "Come on, punk, dib the wrong one. Make my day!" I mutter. He dibbed real quick and he looked like he knew his stuff. Out of sheer cussedness I dibbed a different one and moved on. I suddenly realised that I was alone. It was quiet, too quiet, I didn't like it. I checked my watch. Jeepers! I'd have to go like a bat out of hell if I didn't want big trouble. That hill at the start that near busted my lungs sure looked good running down. I dibbed at the finish with seconds to spare.

After download it was BBQ time. The usual suspects, Carol and Jan, were fixing the food. I guess I have a sweet tooth as I chose Jan's carrot cake. You know the type – you think you've finished but you spend five minutes licking the cream off your fingers and then you take another slice. The girl was there too; she had got back late and was making up for lost time by using both hands to push the cake into her face. Just as I finished my third slice the results were announced: BOG had taken three of the first five places and Pat looked like he was gonna blow a fuse. It was time to scoot.

Alan and Ann go to the Chairman's Challenge

It was the weekend after the end of the summer hols and Alan and Ann were wondering what to do. "Let's go orienteering," said Alan. "You always want to go orienteering," said Ann, "Let's do something different." "But it's the Chairman's Challenge and there's a barbeque afterwards and all our chums will be there." At the mention of food Ann changed her mind and off they set in Ann's car. Ann loved her dear little car, which was a nice shiny dark blue, apart from some white splodges because she had foolishly parked next to some seagulls the day before.

Alan, who thinks he is wizard at computers, had looked up where to go on the NGOC website. A very helpful person had put the grid reference on the site so Alan knew exactly where to go. After a nice drive and not taking the wrong turning once they arrived at the parking area. They were very early but some of their friends were already there and some people from BOK. Alan had been warned about people from BOK but he thought these people were awfully nice and had a chat with them. Someone asked whether the entry fee was £3 or £4 and Alan said it was £3 for NGOC and £4 for BOK and was very pleased when one person laughed.

Seeing the sign pointing to Registration Alan rushed off down a steep slope to find Chairman Pat sitting in a tent behind a table with an awfully smart laptop waiting to take peoples' money and type in their names. Clutching two sets of control descriptions and his change Alan rushed back to the car where Ann was waiting. Ann got worried when she saw that they were pictorial control descriptions because she usually did just an easy orange course where she had written descriptions. "Just like a girl! They're easy." said Alan, which made Ann very cross. "What's this first one, then?" asked Ann, pointing to a black triangle. "Um, er, I think it's either a knoll or a boulder," replied Alan, "but it will be obvious

when you get there!" Then Ann made Alan work out every one of the other descriptions and he had to wait while she wrote them down.

By this time it was time to go to the start where quite a large crowd of orienteers was collecting. Chairman Pat appeared a few minutes before the start to make his welcome speech and explain some special rules to the gaily-dressed crowd. They listened patiently although they were keen to start and waving their dibbers about. Alan was very impressed with the way that Pat addressed the crowd. "I wonder if they will let me become Chairman one day," he thought. "I can't wait to stand on an old upside-down milk crate and tell people what to do!"

Pat explained that it was a one-hour score event and that at some controls there were three kites. He said that only one was the right kite and told people to look very carefully to see which one exactly matched the control description. If someone dibbed the wrong one they lost points. Alan began to wish that he had learnt the pictorial control descriptions a bit better.

Very soon they were off! First, everyone had to dib the start box and then they were given the map. Usually Alan ran off towards the easiest control first without thinking out a good route for getting lots of points. But this time he stood and studied the map carefully, frowning very hard at the same time. At last he worked out a route and set off up the hill following a long line of orienteers. It was so steep that only one or two were actually running.

After a few easy controls Alan found a difficult one where there were three kites and he had to stop for a minute to see if he could work out which was the right one. Rodney had arrived at about the same time and dibbed very quickly before making off. Alan dibbed a different one but then thought "Surely Rodney could have not have made a mistake?" Alan worried about it all the way round the course.

After a few more controls Alan saw that time was getting on. He decided that he would have to go straight to the Finish if he was not to lose points for being late. Putting on a spurt he made his final dib with just over a minute to spare. At download Chairman Pat told Alan that he had dibbed the right box and that he needn't have worried. Alan was so pleased that he went off straight away to tell Ann.

Carol and Jan were in charge of the barbeque which was next door to Chairman Pat's registration and download tent. Alan wasn't allowed a hot dog because Ann said it would spoil his appetite for dinner so he had a piece of Jan's delicious carrot cake instead. Jan gave him such a large slice that he thought perhaps he should have put more than 5p in the honesty box. There were drinks as well but Alan was disappointed to discover that there was no ginger beer. He thought he might mention it to Chairman Pat at the next committee meeting, which was on Monday. But lots of the orienteers stayed to eat the burgers and cakes and talk about the race and all the colourful outfits they wore made a very gay scene.

Alan and Ann tore themselves away in the end and got into their little blue car to go home. On the way they stopped at a shop to buy some food for their evening meal and noticed that they sold cups of coffee as well. Alan thought a nice cup of coffee with lots of frothy milk on top would make up for missing his ginger beer but the plump lady in charge said that the coffee shop closed early on Saturdays and he couldn't have any. So Alan had to wait until he got home and then make his own, which wasn't the same thing at all. And he thought that perhaps not all plump people are jolly after all.

As they both sat in their cosy armchairs in front of a roaring fire that evening Alan and Ann talked about the day and what a jolly good adventure it was orienteering in the Forest of Dean. They agreed that Chairman Pat and all his helpers had done a super job. They decided they would go again next year but would take their own ginger beer.

CompassSport Trophy



Club Captain Greg Best. *(Photograph: Wendy Carlyle)*

CAPTAIN'S LOG

Compass Sport Trophy Final

On 16th October, our club took part in the final of the Compass Sport Trophy for the first time in our club's history. This followed our victory in the regional round in January. I was very pleased with our excellent turn-out of 38 club members, which made us the second largest team in the competition. Most of us travelled by coach from Gloucester, and the 3 hour drive to Longshaw Estate in the Peak District meant an early start. Once arrived, we erected 2 club tents in order to accommodate such a large group, and flew the club banner so that those who had travelled independently could easily find us.

In spite of a few absentees due to last-minute illnesses and pre-run excuses made by several members of the coach party claiming to be injury-stricken (including me), we did very well on the day, finishing 6th out of 11 teams. I thought that was a great result for us in our first ever final appearance. The trophy was won by Forth Valley (FVO) for an impressive fifth successive year. Fine weather, a splendid orienteering area and good company all made for a very enjoyable day-out.

Well done to everybody who took part, but particularly to those who scored our points. Only 13 people can score points for the team, but it's important to remember that everybody's performance does have an overall bearing on the final result. Our point scorers were:

Eddie McLarnon	96 points
Ruth Parkinson	92
Carol Stewart	92
Joe Taunton	87
Pete Ward	85
Caroline Craig	82
Tilly Dacunha	80

Ros Taunton	80
Andy Stott	78
Patrick Wooddisse	77
Pat Macleod	76
Heather Findlay	74
Shirley Robinson	72

The regional qualifiers for next year's competition is scheduled for 19th February, so I will be recruiting for the team nearer the time.

Harvester Relay

The annual Harvester Relay took place in the night of 16th July near Sheffield, and for the first time in quite a few years, we managed to send 2 teams. In the A class, which is for teams of 7, our team consisted of Joe Parkinson, Joe Taunton, Heather Findlay, Pete Ward, Ros Taunton, Patrick Wooddisse and myself. Unfortunately this team was disqualified as Joe Taunton (of all people) mis-punched without realising it. The other team came 17th of 27 in the Handicap category of the B class, and consisted of Paul Taunton, John Fallows, Gary Wakerley, Alan Brown and Stephen Robinson.

SHUOC put on a great event using the latest technology to track runners, and with an ultra-sprint in the assembly field before the main event and an urban race the following day, there was plenty to keep us busy and wear us out. What's more, after a really horrific weather forecast, it was a very pleasant surprise to crawl out of my tent at half past midnight to discover a night perfect for running, warm and clear.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable experience, in spite of limited success on the scoreboard. I would recommend it to all.

Greg Best
captain@ngoc.org.uk

The Diary of an Orienteering Nobody

Welcome to the following new members:

Charles & Caroline Pooter,
The Laurels, Brickfield Terrace, Holloway

Why should I not publish my diary? I have often seen reminiscences of people I have never heard of, and I fail to see – because I do not happen to be an orienteering “Somebody” – why my diary should not be interesting. My only regret is that I did not commence it when I was a youth.

CHARLES POOTER

*We settle down at our new orienteering club and I resolve
to keep a diary. Problems with Legend and its editor.
Our first event is spoilt by a silly new rule and a petty official.
Mr James (of Gorsley) introduces himself.*

September 1. My dear wife Carrie and I have been just a week in our new club, the North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club, or NGOC for short. The membership secretary was very helpful and sent us a copy of the club’s newsletter “Legend”. This looked very well produced with colour pictures and the first article that caught my eye was an account of “The Harvester” event near Sheffield and, as I had been unable to attend myself, I was keen to read about it. But I was very disappointed as the article was completely frivolous. The main race hardly had a mention and most of the space was taken up by how the writer had made a fool of himself in the Ultrasprint by having three goes and being disqualified each time for mis-punching. He seemed to consider this amusing and expected his readers to think the same way! I threw the thing down in disgust. Unfortunately it landed half in the fire and most of it burnt before I could rescue it.

September 2. Phoned the Legend Editor to ask for another copy and received a lecture on “saving paper”, “conserving the environment” and the like but eventually he promised to send me another copy. Felt very aggrieved as it was

an accident that could happen to anybody but got no sympathy from Carrie who complained that the burning Legend had singed the carpet.

September 10. The day we had been looking forward to - our first event as members of NGOC. I do not usually approve of score events but it was the first event of the season and I wanted to make the right impression by putting in an appearance. We arrived at the car parking in good time and I joined a group of people chatting near Registration, leaving Carrie, who did not wish to appear “forward”, in the car. The group were from BOK which, they explained, stood for Bristol Orienteering Klub. I expressed surprised at the spelling of Klub and was told that it was Scandinavian. How ridiculous! It seems just an affectation to me; anybody would think that the Scandinavians had invented orienteering.

One of the BOK party asked if entry was £3 or £4. As quick as anything I said it was £3 for NGOC and £4 for BOK. How we all laughed! This must be the best joke I have ever made so I went off immediately to tell Carrie. We both laughed so much that we forgot the time and had to rush to the start.

I thought I did tolerably well in the actual event in spite of a silly new rule where some controls had three kites and one had to choose carefully the kite which matched exactly the control description. However, at download, they told me that at two controls of this type I had chosen incorrectly and lost points. I argued that this was an unfair rule and might discourage youngsters. “I hardly think you qualify as a youngster, sir” said the official and the queue that was building up behind me stopped muttering and started sniggering. I thought the best thing to do was to give this petty bureaucrat a disapproving look and leave the tent with silent dignity. Unfortunately I tripped over a tent peg on the way out.

I normally disapprove of barbecues because I think that people should eat properly – sitting at table – but Carrie and I made a point of staying so that we could meet some NGOC members. We were nibbling some of Mrs Jones’ carrot cake, which was surprisingly delicious, when a most distinguished-looking gentleman came over to introduce himself and welcome us to the club. Mr James, of Gorsley, is apparently quite a swell in NGOC, having been the previous chairman. He asked me what I thought of the event. I said that I preferred good old line orienteering and was just about to add my views about the three kites rule when Mr James said “That new idea of having three kites at a control is good, don’t you think? Just the sort of innovation that we need.”



“... a most distinguished-looking gentleman came over to introduce himself and welcome us to the club. Mr James, of Gorsley, is apparently quite a swell in NGOC...” (Photograph: Wendy Carlyle)

Rather than disagree I changed the subject and said that I very much wanted to play my part as a member of the club. Mr James appeared very impressed but then said that they were always looking for people to help out with car parking and the like. I said rather coldly that I was thinking about the committee and asked about the newsletter editorship, pointing out that I thought a more serious tone was needed. "Oh, I don't know," he said casually, "We don't want anything stuffy, nobody would read it!" I was so shocked that Mr James smiled and moved off before I could reply.

September 11. Forgot to mention yesterday that while talking to Mr James, of Gorsley, I told him that I considered Mr MacLeod's speech at the Chairman's Challenge to be very good but that it was not very dignified to stand on an old milk crate. Mr James actually laughed and said that, last year, he had stood on an old wooden cable drum to give his Chairman's speech. Someone had taken a photograph that was printed in Legend with an invitation to send in amusing captions. "Lots of members sent in very funny ones and they were all printed in the next edition!" Sensing my disapproval Mr James tried to make a joke of standing on the cable drum by adding "We don't stand on ceremony in NGOC." I affected not to notice his attempt at humour.

(From the back cover of the Penguin Modern Classics version of "The Diary of a Nobody" by George and Weedon Grossmith):

"The original The Diary of a Nobody was published in 1892 and is a straight-faced imaginary journal of suburban life in Holloway, when that region of London was a highly respectable neighbourhood. The rueful "hero" who records daily endeavours and misfortunes is an aptly-named Mr Pooter, a City clerk whose over-developed sense of dignity does not in the least prevent him from relapses into the ridiculous. He is destined to be everyone's butt, and to involve himself in unseemly disputes with tradesmen, domestics and practical jokers and makes him more than ever a figure of fun to those who, unlike himself, see the joke."



Uringa Orienteers

Compass Work

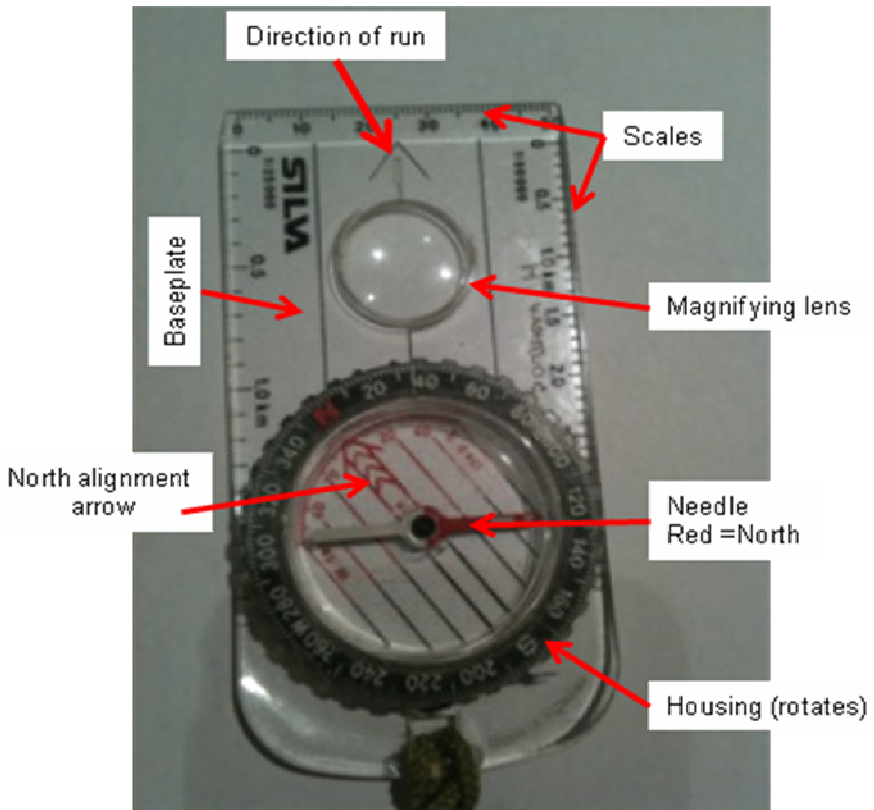
You can run without a compass on street and sprint events. On the simpler courses of Blue and Green it is positively beneficial to run without a compass – as well as being one less thing to carry, not having a compass helps beginners get used to thumbing the map and knowing to point the map in the direction they are running. On the more difficult courses however, and particularly out in the bush, good compass skills become important – if only to know which way to run on a safety bearing when you finally admit you have no idea where you are!

There are two main types of compass; the baseplate and the thumb compass. For many the choice is made for them, at the point the compass is introduced. Whatever compass the coach prefers is what the orienteer new to compass work gets. There are some significant differences and it is worth having a go with both types to see which suits you best.

The baseplate compass

This compass is much used by beginners and can be used to build an understanding of compass work, and set the foundations of accurate bearing work. Bearings are particularly important in featureless terrain, and on classic (long) courses which can require long directional stretches of running between features.

The main parts of the baseplate compass are:



Basic instructions for using a baseplate compass

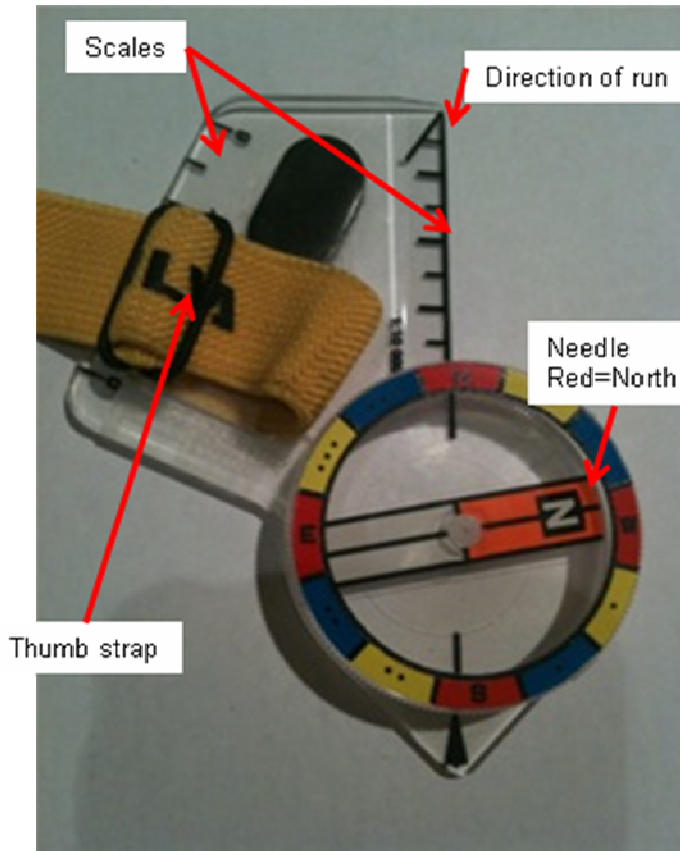
1. Turn the housing of the compass until the N is aligned with the north lines and arrow on the map
2. Lay the side of the compass along the connecting line between your starting position and the point you wish to run to, on the map

3. Take the compass off the map and turn your body until you see that the red compass needle is aligned with the N on the baseplate
4. The arrow on the baseplate of the compass is now indicating the direction you need to run in

It is important that whichever compass is used, that good map handling skills are emphasised. I have always carried my baseplate in one hand and map in the other which allows for accurate bearing work, but means that my map memory has to be good. If I have lost touch with the map, and am not concentrating on feature picking, a weak bearing is that much harder to relocate from. Many orienteers hold the baseplate in their map hand, using it a little like an advanced thumb compass which gets past this problem.

Thumb compass

The thumb compass is much used by experienced orienteers who need general guidance as to direction but who are used to picking off features as they run. Feature picking is a better way to stay in touch with a map, and makes it easier to relocate if errors are made, than when running on a pure bearing. This means that a thumb compass can encourage less experienced orienteers to stay in touch with the map more closely.



Basic instructions for using a thumb compass

1. Hold the map in front of you in the direction you want to run
2. Lay the compass along the connecting line between the two connecting points on the map
3. Fold the map at the outer edge of the compass; hold the map and compass in one hand

4. Turn until the red part of the compass needle is showing in the direction of the north lines and arrow on the map
5. Look up and run in the direction you are facing, which means you are running along the connection line to the next control

It is important to offset the compass from the direction of run so that both sides of the line can be seen. Alternatively you can put the compass on your last known position and move it forward when you are sure where you are. This tends to encourage what Thierry Gueorgiou calls 'orienteering in the past' where you only know where you have been, rather than visualising where you will be in 200m time.

Tip: Whichever hand you like to hold the map in, is the hand you need for a thumb compass -right handed or left handed. The majority of people use left handed as their right hand and right side is stronger and used for balance, holding the SI stick for punching, pushing vegetation out of the way.

Main differences between the baseplate and thumb compass

Baseplate		Thumb	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Good where a thumb compass can't be used because both hands are needed for other activity – MTBO, Adventure racing with kayaks	Can encourage map in one hand and compass in the other – this is inefficient and can lead to multiple reviews of the map if map memory is not skilful enough	Holding the compass and map in one hand leaves the other hand free to punch the control, break falls, push vegetation out of the way	Not as accurate for bearings as a base plate compass as you do not 'set' the compass. Aligning the needle with the north and maintaining it there whilst you are running needs practice and is never as accurate as a baseplate where

			the needle and compass bearing sit on top of each other
Good where there is featureless terrain and accurate bearings are important	Needs a higher level of skill to take accurate bearings	Good where map reading is intense rather than where bearing work is required	Reliance on feature picking for location can be difficult in featureless terrain even if using the 'spot a tree' sighting technique.
Good for beginners as the setting of the compass can give them that extra settling time to focus before they dive into an area of featureless terrain		Good for quick exit direction planning and encourages 'flow' between controls	Holding the thumb compass on the map can obscure the detail.
		When the map and compass are in the same hand it is easier to see the scale guides and estimate distances	

If you have always used a thumb compass, try a baseplate; if you only ever use a baseplate but wondered how it would feel to use a thumb compass then borrow one and have a go. The differences sound subtle but are significant. I now choose my compass based on the terrain; long distance with few features = baseplate. Fast and furious control punch frenzy = thumb compass.

Happy orienteering!

Margaret Jones
Uringa training officer

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Location	Signposted	Organiser
5 Nov Sat	League 2	Mallards Pike South	SO652086	Roger Coe 01594 510444
26 Nov Sat	Informal	Sallowvallets	SO608116	Alan & Ellen Starling 01793 320054
3 Dec Sat	League 3	Flaxley Woods	SO707144	Tom Mills 01452 760451
17 Dec Sat	WNL (Western Night League) 1	Sheepscombe	SO902100	Greg Best 01242 516053
2012				
1 Jan Sun	New Year's Day Score	Bixslade	SO608116	Neil Cameron 01684 294791
7 Jan Sat	WNL 2	Symonds Yat	SO572128	Dave Hartley 01452 863805
21 Jan Sat	League 4	Danby Lodge	SO666066	Peter Ward 07790 669460
4 Feb Sat	Informal	Crickley Hill	SO935162	Caroline Craig 01242 696443
18 Feb Sat	League 5	Cranham	SO914123	John Shea 01242 254909
3 Mar Sat	WNL 3	Mallards Pike South	SO652086	Gary Wakerley 01594 862690

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
12 Nov Saturday	Event 2	Lickey Hills	SO997754	Barry McGowan, HOC
11 Dec Sunday	Event 3 (pre- entry via Fabian4)	Hawkbatch, Wyre Forest	SO755784	John Embrey, HOC
21 Jan Saturday	Event 4 (same event as NGOC League 4)	Danby Lodge, Forest of Dean	SO666066	Peter Ward, NGOC
26 Feb Sunday	Event 5	Bringsty Common	tbc	tbc

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
2 November Wednesday	RLC Individual Championships, AGC Championships & MLS event	Bagshot Heath
9 November Wednesday	Mil League South (Arty Centre)	Sidbury
16 November Wednesday	Mil League South (Defence Academy)	West Woods
23 November Wednesday	Inter-Corps Championship (Day) & MLS Event (RLC)	South East area
30 November Wednesday	Mil League South (Worthy Down)	Greenham Common (tbc)
7 December Wednesday	Mil League South (HQ 4 Div)	Hankley
14 December Wednesday	Mil League South (HQLF)	Perham Down

The Scottish Six Days

The Scottish 6 Days presents an orienteering challenge quite unlike anything we face in the Forest of Dean. I have been to a few, and regret not having the effort to get to more of them, particularly as although born in Kenya of South African parents, I am, as my name suggests, spiritually a Scot.

At Tay 2009 I was pretty much bottom of the class in the overall results, and this time I was determined to do better. I set myself a target of being in the top half of the class,

so a major expedition was planned. First of all, a few days staying with my brother in Ullapool, with a few hill walks to loosen up. Then the training week in Oban, followed by the big event, and a lastly a week to wind down over the water from Oban on Morvern, where we have spent holidays on and off for over 20 years.

The 100th Day event was day 4 at Tay 2009 - Tentsmuir. There were at least 10 people there who had been to every one of the hundred days.

Source: A Few Surplus Maps; John Colls

The training week was wonderfully sunny, and I had a training run at Sutherland's Grove before meeting Bob Teed for a run on Kerrera, a short ferry ride from Oban. Kerrera provided a good introduction to the sort of open moorland we would face at Creag Mhich, Torinturk and Ardchattan, and I found it quite a challenge staying in touch with the map, and in particular relocating when I lost touch with it. I discovered something that would come back to haunt me during the 6 Days – that patterns of knolls, re-entrants, spurs and marsh repeat themselves on this open moorland, so the ground looks right until you discover that the control isn't where you thought it would be, even though everything seems to fit. Sitting around at the finish of the training courses I had a chat with a Swiss girl who had cycled from Switzerland via France and Spain to the Orkneys – 4000km when we met and still going! She had heard about the 6 Days on her way north through Oban, and came back to compete, before hitching a lift back to Switzerland to go back to work.



The Start/Finish on Kerrera

I enjoyed Kerrera so much that a couple of days later I went back and had another go. This time I just about mastered the map, and my companions at the Finish on this occasion were a Dutch couple who, it turned out, had run on Cleeve Common at an NGOC event, when visiting their daughter who was stationed at the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps HQ in Gloucester.

The 6 Days is big business; income in 2009 was close to £300K, and the biggest expenses were maps and the BOF levy

Source: A Few Surplus Maps; John Colls

Finally **Day 1** arrived, and as I was staying in Oban I walked to the event, being overtaken en route by Bob Teed on his motorised bike. Dave and Jan Jones arrived with the club tents as I approached the car

park, and before long we met the Australians to whom we had agreed to lend a tent. We started on the beach at Dunollie, with shoes full of sand before we even got to the start flag. Thereafter it was a long uphill slog to the first control, and an early introduction to one of the other distinguishing characteristics of Scottish 6 Day events – rough, tussocky going underfoot, which some people seem to glide over, but which I find saps my energy in no time. No problem with the first three controls, then misread the vegetation and overprints and wasted time stopping short of my control number 4. Not too bad after that until my penultimate control, when I again struggled to make the vegetation on the map fit what I saw on the ground, and lost lots of time when a quick relocate on the residential area adjacent to the Finish would have solved the problem. With the benefit of time to study the map I made some poor route choices, and did much more climbing than I need have done – I find I tend to stick too

closely to the line when lateral vision would have offered some more economic options.

Day 2 I prefer not to talk about! I found the map very difficult to read, again confused by the vegetation screens, and managed to spend 37 minutes on one leg on which I had got to within a 100m or so of the control in a perfect line before deciding inexplicably that I was going the wrong way. I turned



The slate coaster presented to all finishers on Day 6 is a tradition started at Tay85. I have lost one of mine, and anyway have far too few. When I stand my glass of wine on one I am reminded of a great challenge and orienteering occasion that everybody should experience from time to time.

sharp right and carried on in the wrong direction until I was pretty much back at first control. After that it went from bad to worse, and even

easy legs became a major challenge. My GPS trace is such a mess that it's hard to work out where I actually did go, and when.

I had much better runs on **Days 3 and 4**, though still managed to make a couple of errors each day which cost me time. These days brought it home to me that even with relatively clean runs, by my standards, I am still well down the table in terms of general speed over the ground. I am not ultra competitive – orienteering to me is mainly fun – but

I admire those of my age who can consistently run across mountain, moor, heath and bog significantly faster than I can, and I aspire to be a bit more like them. Between these two days, on the rest day, we visited the Lorn market – an extra market day put on especially for the orienteers. Lorn is both an area of Argyll and the Local Origins Rural Network, and the market is a showcase and outlet for many local craftspeople and farmers. We came away with hot smoked salmon, local pork and honey, and a delicious salad dressing known as The Commander's Dressing, and dined particularly well for the rest of the



week. In the evening we listened to Oban High School Pipe band on the Oban Promenade.

The parking arrangements for **Day 5** had caused quite a discussion on Nopesport, but somehow the organisers managed to overcome huge challenges and get us all on-site well in time to watch the efforts to extract the toilet truck from the assembly field, wherein it had settled up to its axles, having been driven, according to a very frustrated toilet man, by the guy who did the accessibility recce in the first place! **Day 5** was wet underfoot! The area consisted of patches of higher ground separated by wide expanses of marsh, through which we thrashed between clusters of controls on the drier bits. As usual I managed to screw up one control big time, this time through diverting off my carefully chosen and probably safe route on a whim and thinking it might save a little time. Otherwise I didn't do too badly, but slipped into the second half of the results table.

On **Day 6** I had a very late start time, and having had to leave our flat early, we had a lot of hanging around to do before I could get going. I promised to be back by 1500 so that we could move on to our next destination in good time. With a 1340 start time I needed to get it right, but sadly failed to do so. Of all the six areas Ardchattan was closest in general nature to my practice patch on Kerrera, but somehow I managed to deliver a master class in how not to navigate. On three legs I fell off my bearing through not maintaining climb. On the same three controls I was beguiled by those repeating patterns of features on the map which seemed to match what I was looking for, but didn't reveal the much sought after control. On leg 1, I found what turned out to be the right control, but misread the control number. I did a couple of perplexed loops before coming back somewhat hesitantly to the same spot and realising that it was the right one after all. It wasn't until I looked at my GPS trace that evening that I confirmed that I had already been to the control beforehand. Eventually after failing to find control 6 I decided that to keep my promise of a 1500 return I had better retire and head for home. After downloading I met Paul Taunton who told me he had been following me between controls 5 and 6; he still finished before I had found my way back to the Finish!

It's just as well only four days of the six count towards the final results. I did not meet my objective to be in the top half of the results table, but I wasn't far off, and I did much better than I had at Tay 2009. Next time around I shall

"Instead of becoming a means to spread orienteering to good terrain in all parts of Scotland, the 6 Days has become a victim of its own success, restricted to locations with sufficient infrastructure to cope with the numbers attending"

Source: A Few Surplus Maps; John Colls

The Purple Thistle has emerged to redress the balance, with an emphasis on

"enjoying oneself, with the minimum of fuss to you the competitors, and us the organisers, on some of the best and most technical terrain in the country"

Purple Thistle Mission Statement

expect a similar improvement. The Scottish 6 Days is a wonderful experience, however serious you are about orienteering. It is a massive undertaking, and I have nothing but admiration for the host of Scottish clubs who turn out every two years, and who invariably deliver a first class event. Having been equipment officer for three JKs, I know just how much work goes into these major events. Long may they continue, and let's hope that the Purple Thistle goes on meeting its own objectives. I need to start working on my sister, who lives in Cawdor, to make sure there will be a bed for me in 2013.

Pat MacLeod

CompassSport Trophy



Gill Stott (*Photograph: Wendy Carlyle*)

Brashings

AGM - Monday 7 November at 1930. Room TC218A at Oxstalls Campus, University of Gloucester

All NGOC members are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting. The AGM proper will start at 20.00, following a free buffet at 19.00, and a talk by Simon Holloway, Forestry Commission Wildlife Ranger for the Forest of Dean, at 19.30. During the buffet (and subject to network access being available) you will be invited to preview and comment on the updated NGOC website, and to contribute to a final decision on a design for the new club o-top.

The Committee, with the exception of Pat Cameron, a non-portfolio member, and Ellen Starling, Membership Secretary, are prepared to stand again. If you wish to stand for either of these posts, or indeed any other post on the committee, or if you have any items for the Agenda, please contact the Secretary, Caroline Craig.

The agenda and committee member reports will be circulated to all members before the AGM. Please make every effort to attend, and to make your views known on how the club is and should be run.

NGOC down under

NGOC ambassadors in Australia, Ian, Margaret, Lawrence, Georgie and Sophie Jones, recently attended the week long Oceania Carnival which included the Australian Championships, the Australian Schools Championships and a challenge match against New Zealand. Lawrence (M14) and Georgia (W12) were on the NSW state team and got combined silver in the individuals, and bronze in each of their relays - Georgia also came 2nd in both Long Championships. They are both shaping up to be much better than their mother at this great sport. Sophie (W8) was on the podium all week and topped it off with a win in the M/W12A relays - 2nd fastest individual leg runner on the course!

Down under over here

NGOC get a mention in the September issue of "Orienteering NSW" - a thank you for lending a tent to the Australian contingent at the Scottish 6 Days. A photograph of the NGOC tent and banner with Australian flag appears in the newsletter together with an article on New South Wales' orienteers' travels in Europe this year. Another article in the newsletter, again by NGOC's own Maggie Jones, is entitled "Tending the little green shoots", which will be of interest to anyone involved in encouraging youngsters to start and continue to orienteer. Link:

www.nsw.orienteering.asn.au/eNewsletter/eNewsletterSeptember2011.pdf

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 5 December at 1900.

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 0NG. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of Legend.

Disclaimer

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

Forest Challenge – orienteering board game

Available now. Ideal for:

Christmas and birthday presents;

Playing at club evenings;

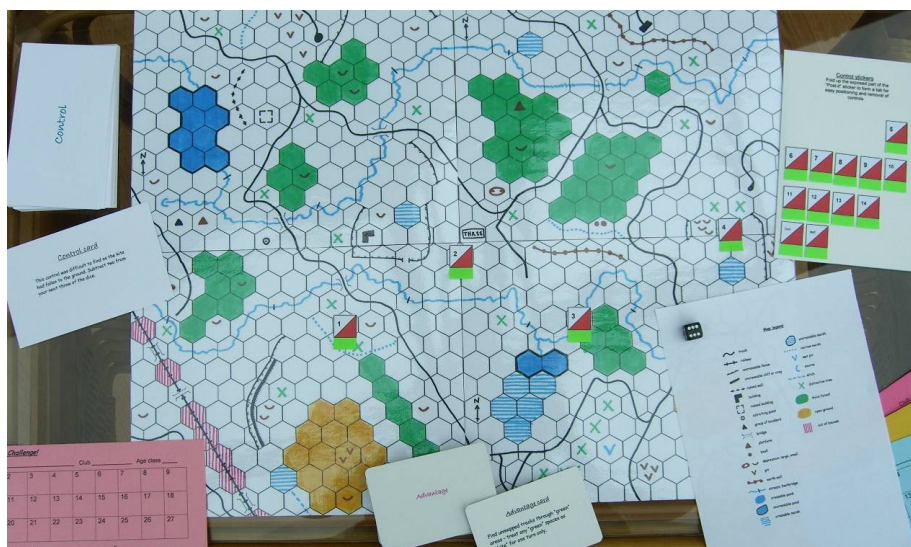
Prizes for winners of club competitions;

Teaching youngsters about orienteering and letting them have fun at the same time.

What they are saying about the game:

"Three ailing members tried out your game while others did the "proper" outdoor stuff before the AGM. We had such fun that we immediately had another game of it with the wet and muddy people . . . We've already got plans to put one of our favourite areas onto the hexagons . . . Feedback was generally - no, entirely - positive."

"I think it's a brilliant game - the kids love it."



You can buy your copy for £7-50 at most NGOC events or through the post (please add £1-50 for postage, cheques payable to NGOC) from:- Alan Brown, 10 Brizen Lane, Cheltenham, GL53 0NG. All profits to the Woodland Trust. Email legend@ngoc.org.uk for further information.