

the

November 2016

# LEGEND

*the magazine of North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club*



*Going Underground - the dark side of Danby Lodge*

*Going Underwater: WMOC Estonia*

*Going Up: Four Fans Fell Race and the Mourne Mountain Marathon*

**PLUS!**

*AGM News*

*Chairman's Chat*

*Captain's Logs*

*Member Profile*

*League Latest*

*...and more!*



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Welcome to the November issue of Legend! This is my first issue as editor, so go easy on me ... I know that the typesetting etc. isn't perfect, but my learning curve for desktop publishing has pretty much topped out for this month, so it's as good as it's going to get for now.

It's been a busy couple of months. The orienteering season has started to pick up, and as well as two superb NGOC League events we've also had the first major fixture of the autumn (the Caddihoe Chase), the start of the various local leagues (Quantocks Forest League, Western Night League and SWOC Street Series) and our AGM. And there's plenty to look forward to for the remainder of 2016: the November Classic and Southern Night Championships are fast approaching, plus the SW Galoppen series and our final

The editor at WMOC



League fixtures at Kidnalls and Knockalls.

One of the perennial topics at AGMs and committee meetings is how to get enough volunteers to support our club-hosted events. You'll probably have noticed that it always seems to be the same faces doing everything - if you \*are\* one of those faces, you'll definitely have noticed! For a long time after joining the club I didn't volunteer at all. Firstly, I thought I wouldn't know what to do; secondly that the people who always volunteer must be really good at it and wouldn't want some ignorant newbie interrupting their flow; and thirdly, well, everything always seemed to just happen anyway, so surely the club didn't actually *need* me to help.

The truth is that we have a very full calendar and we're not a huge club. This means that if you like to have a range of events throughout the year to choose from then you also need to help out occasionally. It doesn't have to be much, and it doesn't have to be every single

event. The Parkrun series ask people to volunteer once for every five events they race in, and that would probably be a good starting point for orienteering events too.

It's often the case that an event organiser or planner will get a negligible response to any advance request for helpers, but when they ask people on the day almost everyone is willing to help. This is great, but it does make event organising feel like you're flying by the seat of your pants! I'm definitely guilty of doing this - what happens if something urgent comes up and I can no longer attend the event? I don't want to be letting people down by pulling out of helping at the last minute. But the reality is that this very rarely happens, and usually I end up going to the event and then just sloping off after my run having done nothing to support the club apart from paying my entry fee.

So, have a think about the forthcoming League events at Kidnalls (19th November) and Knockalls (3rd December). And the Standish Western Night League, if you're into orienteering after dark. Could you perhaps arrive a bit early, and spend 20 minutes helping to set up? If you prefer a late run, maybe you could stay on a while longer and collect in a few controls. It really isn't a big commitment, and it's a small price to pay for having a club calendar that we can all enjoy and be proud of. Just drop the planner or organiser a quick email, saying that you'll probably be there and think you'll be able to help out. If we all did that more often, then we'd have to do it less often. If you know what I mean!

## News from the AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> October

The 2016 AGM was action-packed! Well, not quite, but it was certainly cake-packed thanks to the excellent efforts of Caroline and Carol.

The informal discussion centred around two main topics: how best to utilise the club's current reserves, and whether it was worth **reviving "old" areas** - ones we haven't used for a long time - by having them professionally re-mapped. At present the club is using quite a restricted selection of areas to host a growing number of events, and with the added constraints of access, conservation etc. this is set to continue for the foreseeable future.

Opinion was divided. On the one hand, there's usually a good reason why an area isn't currently in use - it's overgrown, or been subject to extensive forestry works, or it wasn't very good to start with. On the other hand even dealing with some

extra undergrowth would make a nice change from going to Parkend 3 or 4 times a year! So, this is under consideration, and members of the committee have been researching firstly how much this might cost and secondly what the areas are like now.

The possibility of having a **club awards dinner** and social was also a hot topic. One of the shortcomings of our sport is that it's not particularly conducive to socialising, and it would be great to get most of the club together for a bit of a knees-up. Obviously the big questions are "When?" and "Where?" - problematic because the calendar for next year is already pretty full and the club's members are widely dispersed throughout Gloucestershire and the surrounding counties. If you've got any great ideas, collar a committee member at an event or email Gary.

Also under discussion was the **summer evening informal events**. Turnout for these is generally on the low side (20 to 30 people) which isn't a great return for the amount of effort which goes in to making them happen. On the whole, opinion was that the club should continue with the series but try to pick venues likely to attract a higher attendance.

**See Chairman's Chat on page 4 for full details on the committee changes**

The winner of the **Terry Bradstock Trophy** (see left) was announced, and this led on to talking about a proposed new format **Club Championships**. The brainchild of Richard Cronin, this championships would be based on a range of events - both NGOC and organised by other clubs - throughout the year. Club members' performances would be scored based on a course and handicap calculation and then the championships decided based on who had the highest total score over the year. The exact format and calculations are still under discussion, but watch this space for news of the first events in the 2017 Championships!

### Terry Bradstock winners announced!

... and it's a clean sweep for the Ward family!

1st - Pete Ward (M45)

2nd - Jessica Ward (W10)

3rd - Rebecca Ward (W14)

Congratulations! Pete wins the Terry Bradstock Trophy, and Jessica and Rebecca were awarded a new £5 note each as runners-up.

### NGOC soar in National club rankings!

In the CompassSport national club rankings published last month, NGOC climbed 21 places to 38th - an all-time record high! This puts us 3rd in SWOA, behind BOK and DEVON. Well done!

## We need YOUR articles, news and photos!

Been to any good events lately? Or perhaps you've done a walking trip, or a fell race, or 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](mailto:legend@ngoc.org.uk). Next issue will be out at the beginning of January, so please send articles by 24<sup>th</sup> December.

# chairman's chat

*Thank you to all who attended the AGM, they can be a pretty dry affair.*

Hopefully the pre-meeting Q and A, provided some light relief as well as constructive suggestions, on where to spend our healthy club budget.

The AGM, saw a few changes in committee members. Roger after a veritable lifetime has stepped down, his contributions and knowledge have been invaluable. Gill James, steps down from her role as "Stand in" Volunteer Co-ordinator, a role which she filled at short notice and helped structure, after Hillary stepped down. Gill has been a rock in doing the VC job, despite her many outside commitments.

Gill Stott has left us as lead coach and Legend Editor, due to ill health. Gill's structuring and leading coaching, has given the club a valuable roadmap to future coaching. The only upside to Gill leaving is getting Judith to take over as Legend editor, I look forward this month's new take on Legend.

Greg has moved across from Club Captain to take over obtaining permissions. His enthusiasm and humour as Club Captain has lightened many a cold wet day. Richard Cronin has agreed to replace Greg and knowing Richard, a worthy successor.

Richard Purkis has also joined as a committee member, I look forward to his contributions at future meetings. Ashleigh Denman, has come on board as Welfare Officer, to complete the

Denman household's contribution to the club.

Finally, this AGM was due to be my last as Chairman. After three great and enjoyable years, I was due to handover to someone, sadly that someone did not volunteer. I have agreed to stay until the Christmas committee meeting, but have plans for the New Year, so will have no spare time to give to this important role. The Club has other roles on the committee, not just the Chairman to fill. These roles are important to maintain the smooth running of the Club and maintain our high standards.



*The chairman in action at Cleeve Hill*



# captain's final log - Greg

*Well, after 8 (yes EIGHT!!) years as captain, the time has finally come to hand over the reins to fresh young blood.*

It was back in 2008 that Chris James, then chairman, backed me into a corner and promised me vast riches and power if I took on the role of club captain. Being still a naive and foolish young man at the time, only in my mid 40's, I believed him and agreed. Instead of this, my hair has turned grey and then fallen out. Such are the stresses of chasing volunteers to fill NGOC teams!

Seriously though, it has been a great pleasure to be captain for so long. In particular, it has given me a chance to get to know most of the people in our club. We may not have won much in the way of silverware at team events, but thankfully it's by no means only about that. I feel it's also very much about building a good club spirit. Orienteering can be quite a solitary activity, so taking part in team events is a very good way to feel part of a team, the club and of getting to know other club members.

So what is my legacy you may ask? Well, I like to think it is about trying to encourage as many people as I can to take part in team events. In my first year as captain, I rented and drove a minibus down to Devon for that year's Compass Sport Cup campaign, and we had a mere 17 people in the team, and not surprisingly we finished a distant last. Over the years, I have gradually managed to persuade

more and more people to take part in this annual national competition and I am very proud and happy that these days we regularly get in excess of 60 people taking part for the team.

What's more, it was exciting in 2011 and 2013 to win through to the final of the Trophy (the competition for smaller clubs). At the second of these, we finished an excellent 3rd out of the 10 clubs in the final. We have now settled back into the "Cup" competition for larger clubs, and we are getting a little stronger each year. I experimented with renting a team coach in some years, and travelling together proved to be fun and good for improving club spirit.

We usually manage to enter teams for most of the major relays, but when these competitions have been held close to home ground, it has been pleasing to be able to field a large number of NGOC teams.

We have also managed to enter one or two teams in The Harvester each year, and this culminated on Cleeve Hill this June with 5 teams, which I found very pleasing.

Mind you, The Harvester has not always been without mishap from the captain, so sorry for this! First time was on Merthyr Common one year when I mis-punched and disqualified the whole team. Then in 2012 I had to retire on leg 1 when my lamp battery finally died after two and a half hours of hopeless thrashing about, again wasting the efforts of the rest of the team.

Anyway, thank you to those of you who have allowed me to persuade you to take part in NGOC teams over the last 8 years and clearly there are very many of you. My new role will be to organise fixture access permissions and also to recruit officials for our events, and I intend to seek out new people to have a go at planning and organising. This means you won't have heard the last from me!

All that remains is to wish Richard Cronin success as captain. Please continue to offer your support to Richard when he comes calling.

Greg Best, ex-captain

*Greg (and Daisy) at the Minchinhampton in September*



# captain's log - Richard

*Greg hands over with the club performing at a much higher level than when he first became captain.*

We've done well in the "transfer window" in recent years and found some new talent too. We are now "relatively" strong in the M/W21 category and have seen some growth in this key age group.

During 2016, we have had members called up to represent their countries in both Junior and Veteran Home Internationals.

The two most recent Compass Sport qualifying rounds have seen record attendances from the club, and close by British Championships and Harvester have seen us entering more teams than ever before. Long may this continue.

Unfortunately, 2017 sees the major relay races being far away (British Champs in the Lakes, JK in the South East, Harvester in the North West) However, there are plenty of other opportunities for the club:

**Compass Sport Cup** – Bristol OK finished in the top three in the 2016 competition, so should we be drawn against them and finish second we would still make the final as losing to one of the best – i.e. we have much better odds of qualifying! We plan to attend the Welsh round at Cwm Lickey near Cwmbran – just 30 mins away from Chepstow/Monmouth. **Save the date – 12<sup>th</sup> March.** The final, should we qualify, will be in the South West on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Cotswold Way Relay** – we had good results in 2015 with two teams and have gained more fast runners since then. I'm hoping to enter at least two teams in 2017 – it's a fantastic way to advertise our club as a sport to local runners, enjoy the scenery, and maybe have a chat or two on the way. Expecting this to be Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June.

**Club Championships** – more on this elsewhere. An incentive for you to get out and run at nearby "Level C" races and improve your national ranking. The higher you get, the stronger the club looks!

**Parkrun** – OK, this isn't orienteering but just a free "fun" 5km run every Saturday morning. Keep fit and active when there's no race and wear your O-top or club vest with pride! Everyone is friendly and talks – the kit is an advert for orienteering and it has drawn in some newcomers! There are now 9 venues in Gloucestershire, with Hereford, Worcester and Evesham all not far away.

Once again, huge thanks to Greg for his many years as Captain and all the successes that have been down to his hard work and persuasion.



*We're starting off this new series of interviews with a friendly face often seen helping out at events and happily making her way around the woods - Hilary Nicholls (W45).*

**When did you start orienteering?**

In the summer of 2012. I remember my first telephone call with Pat!

**What got you into it?**

I remembered how much I enjoyed orienteering at school when I was about 13. It was introduced to me by my Scottish form and geography teacher, Mr Alistair Thompson - wherever you are, thank you!

I've always liked to know where I am and have memories of following routes on the old AA map books whilst my parents were driving. I always thought that the road maps weren't detailed enough.

**How long have you been with NGOC? Have you been a member of any other clubs?**

NGOC through and through, since 2013.

**What do you enjoy most about the sport?**

Reading a map.

**What's the funniest/weirdest thing you've seen when out orienteering?**

Nothing stands out. I can't wait to see my first sheep or rabbit eyes when I do a Western Night League, though!

**What's your favourite area or terrain?**

Different types of woodland.

**Best orienteering experience?**

The sight of Greg, Gary and other NGOC members

encouraging me to finish in this year's British Relay Championships at Brown Clee - nearly everyone else had gone home! And all the fantastic scenery and views I get whilst I amble around courses.

**Biggest/most entertaining orienteering mistake?**

Nothing I can care to remember ...

**Do you do any other sports apart from orienteering?**

No

**What do you do when you're not orienteering?**

I'm a full-time PA and Marketing Assistant at a Cheltenham book publishers. I've got a dog called Denzel and I do yoga. I also love spending time with family - my sister's two adopted boys.

**Name one fact that people would never guess about you ...**

I love jigsaws!

**If you could change one thing about your orienteering, what would it be?**

I will be - getting fit to enable me to jog around.

**You always look like you're having great fun when I see you out in the woods. I probably always look stressed and knackered! What's your Zen secret to happy orienteering?**

I'm always happy with a map in front of me.



*Hilary on registration at Cleeve Hill*

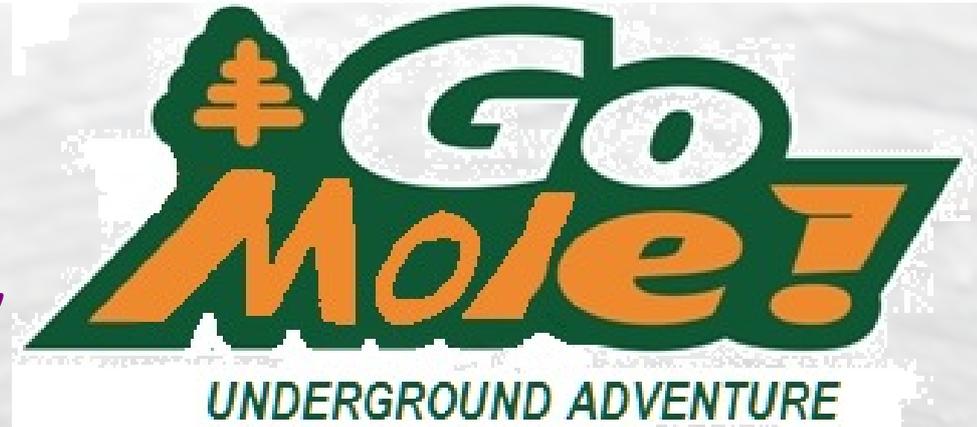
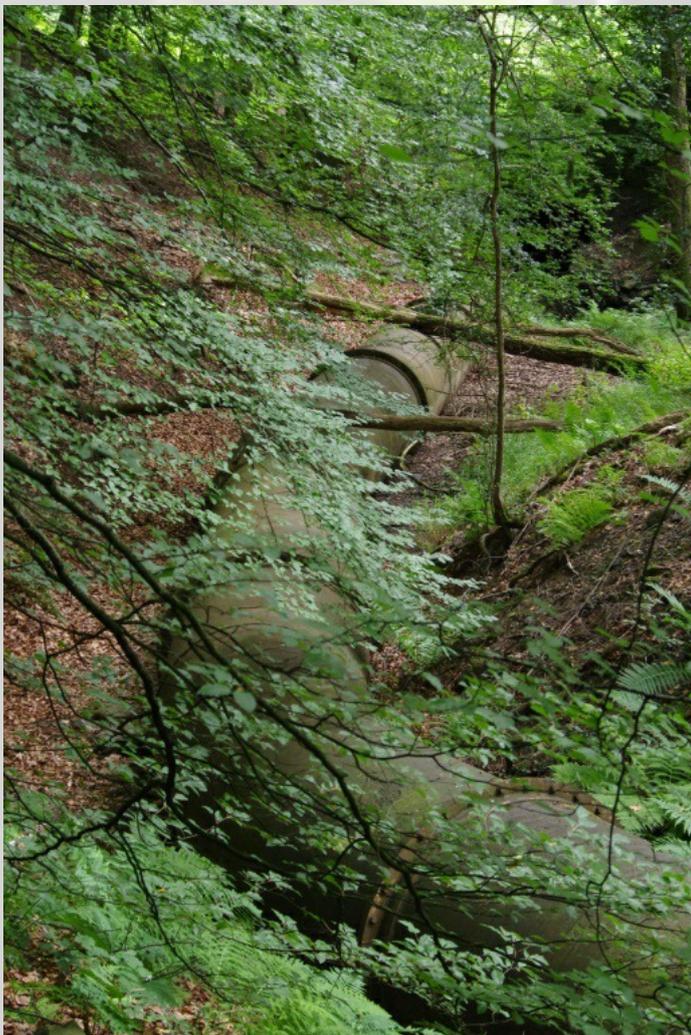
# going underground

By Paul Taunton

Want to try something different next time you are in the Forest? Do you think *Go Ape!* is too scary (or too expensive)?

Then try NGOC's new *Go Mole!* – but not if you're scared of the dark, or confined spaces.

All you need to do is find your old O-maps of Mallards Pike and the adjoining part of Danby Lodge to the south, bring a torch, and choose a day when it hasn't recently rained. On 30 July 2016 the route was dry and could be



completed in trainers, but that's not always the case. A hat is recommended as, in places, the pipes/culverts are low and you may crack your head.

I don't need to tell you where to go since, as an experienced orienteer, you will have already noticed part of the course, which runs inside an iron pipe (shown left), marked on your maps!

Why is the pipe there? Mining in the Forest of Dean has always been hampered by groundwater and this was a particular problem for iron mines in highly permeable limestone strata. In many parts of the Forest beds of streams were waterproofed to prevent surface streams that were running over the less permeable Coal Measures rocks disappearing into the ground when they reached more porous limestone areas. This pipe is thought to have been installed to

prevent the Blackpool Brook flooding the workings of the Perseverance mine, half-a-mile away, but almost 300 feet below the level of the brook.



Additionally, both the Blakeney Road and the course of the former Forest of Dean Central Railway run along the valley of the Blackpool Brook. This necessitated the construction of several long stone culverts to carry the brook beneath the road and under former railway sidings.

**So, starting about 100m east of the entrance to Mallards Pike Lake,** follow the dry bed of the Blackpool Brook eastwards. During the next kilometre you can explore several hundred metres of pipes and underground culverts, of varying sizes!



## History:

If you are interested in the history of the area then look at the large-scale (25 inch) editions of the Ordnance Survey map, available free on the National Library of Scotland website, showing mines and railways.

Bowen (1992), Swallow Holes and Mine Drainage in the Forest of Dean, Descent, vol.108, pp. 30-32.

## Acknowledgements:

Thanks to **GoApe!** for their inspiration!



## Pictures:

Opposite page, bottom left: The iron pipe marked on the Danby map. Right, top: Culvert with stone paved floor running under former railway lines. Right, bottom: West end of a pipe - a bit of a squeeze!

This page, top: Forest ride crossing stone-lined channel of brook, south of the Blakeney road. Middle: East end of a pipe - some daylight enters as it's cracked in a few places! Bottom: The first (larger) culvert under the Blakeney road, easily passable.

## Risk Assessment:

*This route is given for information only and NGOC makes no warranty that its exploration is safe. Persons exploring the area do so at their own risk. In particular it should be noted that there has been a partial collapse of ground at the west end of the iron pipe, and there is a risk of further falls.*



# Wet and wild at WMOC

By Allan McCall

Photo credits: the editor and photo.sk100.ee



*SwampWorld - W40 Final terrain*

Judith Austerberry and I decided to have our first taste of orienteering foreign-style at the World Masters Championships in Estonia in August. We enjoyed a laid-back week's holiday in Tallinn first - doing the tourist things, walking casually around the Sprint competition areas pretending not to scope out potential control sites - before steeling ourselves for seven days of orienteering.

Competition proper started on Sunday 7th August with the Sprint qualifiers at Kadriorg Park, in Tallinn. The atmosphere and crowds were unlike anything we'd ever seen at a UK event - way bigger than the JK and the Scottish 6 Days. With the event centre in an athletics stadium, every course had a grandstand finish. Our hearts sank at the thought of having to run our dead-legged finish sprints in front of an audience of thousands. The courses weren't particularly technical but were very pleasant: through formal rose gardens, past ponds and fountains, and straight through

the middle of the national modern art museum. We both made mistakes towards the end and finished about where we'd expected: I was 40th in the M45-2 heat and Judith was 16th in the W40 heat.

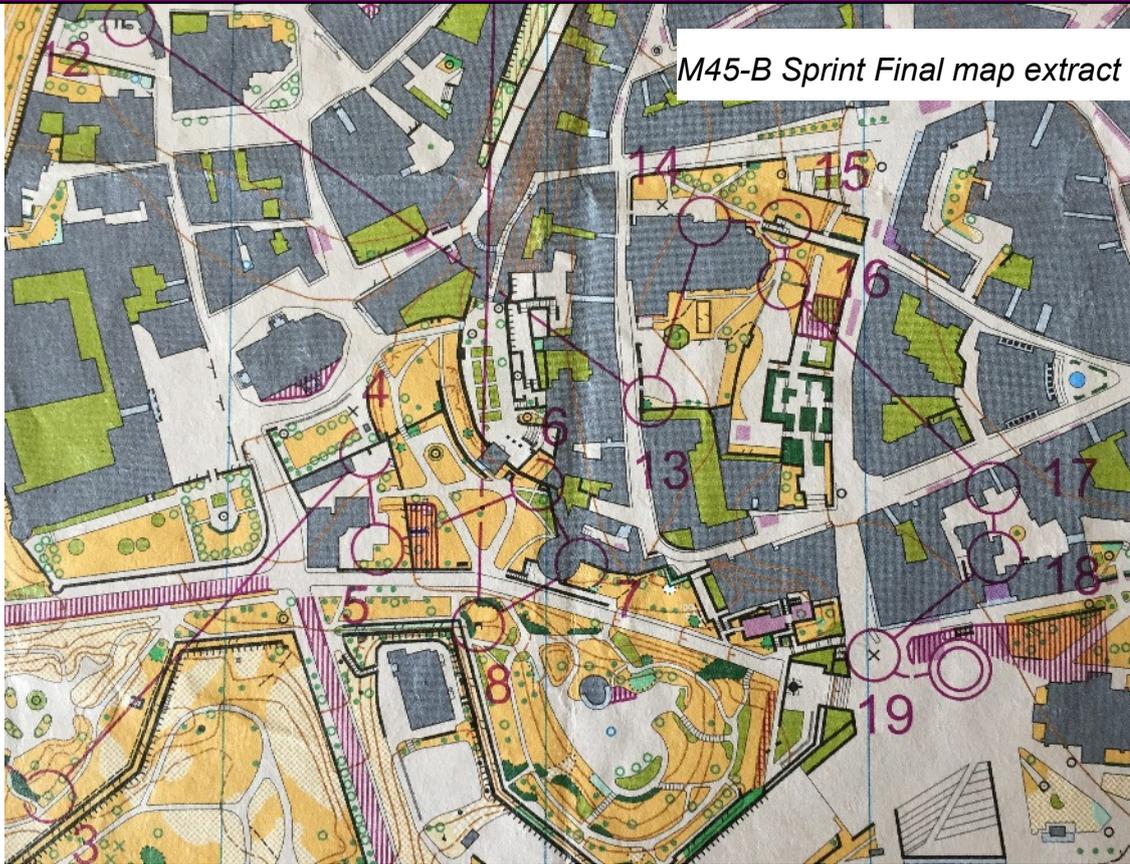
and alleyways ... and zillions of tourists. Courses were more technical than in the qualifiers and there was plenty of route choice - sometimes it came down to which route would have the fewest tourists on it. Crashes

*The Sprint Qualifiers grandstand*



The Sprint finals the next day were in Tallinn's Old Town, with its medieval fortifications and towers, winding cobbled streets

abounded, and there were several complaints of tourists "hiding" controls by wilfully loitering in front of them. It was a stunning setting for a sprint,



M45-B Sprint Final map extract

spent 10 minutes faffing around in the wrong re-entrant. In the second qualifier we both fared slightly better, though unfortunately so did almost everyone else. Overall I finished 54th in M45-2 (and would be running in the B final) and Judith was 26th in W40, which meant that she just scraped into the A final. I was disappointed not to be in the A final, and Judith was

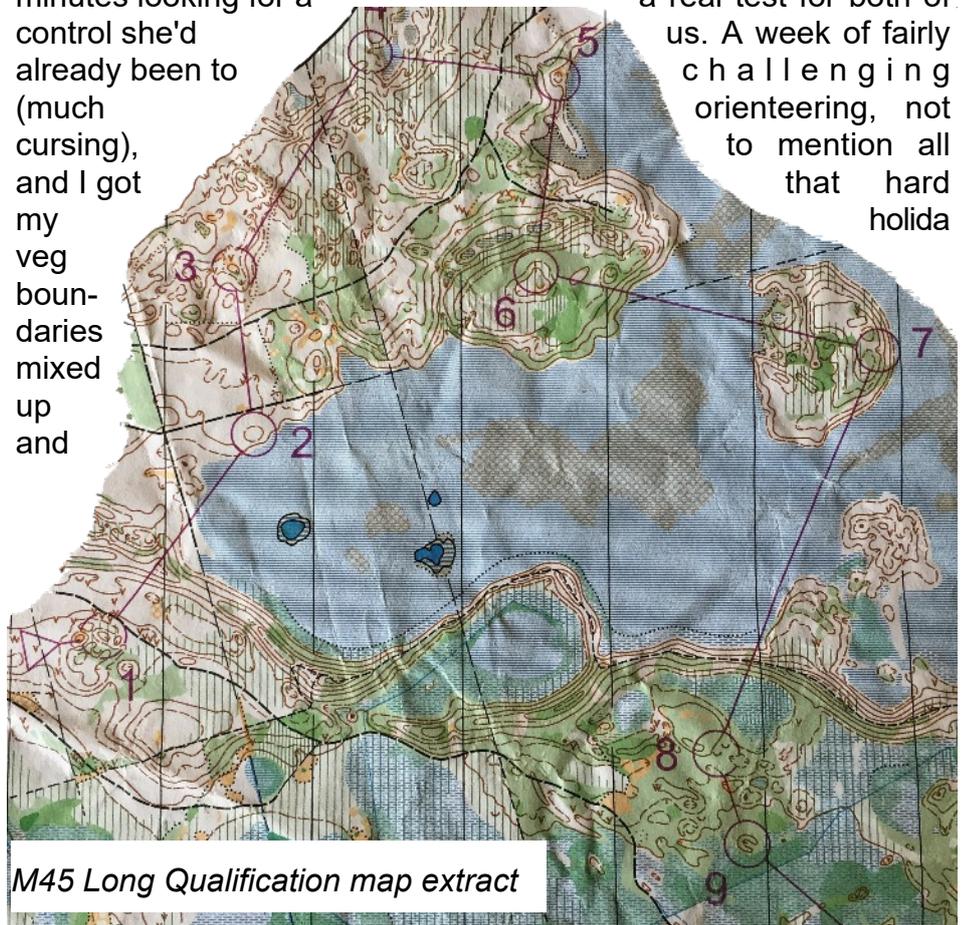
with a great finish run-in in the main Freedom Square where the event centre was set up. I had a reasonable run and finished 20th in the M45 B Final, Judith made a few mistakes towards the end and was 10th in the W40 A Final. That was that done. Now into the forests ...

The two Long Distance qualification races were both at Apuparra, in the Korvemaa Nature Reserve. It was a marshy, forested area; mostly with good runnability and visibility. Some of the marshes were really slow going, though, and when the map said green it really meant green! Both of us were surprised by the expanses of marsh-forest - where the ground is marsh but there's still a regular forest growing out of it - because that's not a terrain you see very much in the UK. We found the orienteering quite challenging, and it was all too easy to lose map contact and

have little to relocate off. We were pretty slow in the first qualifier and both made quite a few mistakes. Judith mis-read control codes and spent 7 minutes looking for a control she'd already been to (much cursing), and I got my veg boundaries mixed up and

hacked off that she had to run in the A final. There's no pleasing some people.

The Long Distance Finals were a real test for both of us. A week of fairly challenging orienteering, not to mention all that hard holid



M45 Long Qualification map extract



*SwampWorld, and a map that's been in a swamp*

she will never criticise Forest of Dean undergrowth again and at least stinging nettles grow out of solid ground.

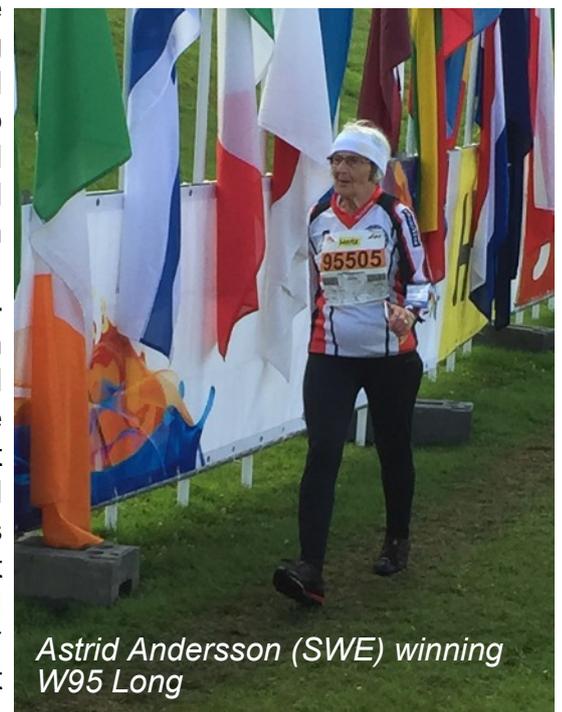
Overall it was "an experience". A look into the world of proper-good orienteering and a real eye-opener as to how fast some of the Scandinavian and Baltic orienteers are. We really enjoyed seeing the M/W 90 and 95's running their courses - truly inspirational. And it was great to see the mix of competitors, from super-fast

athletes to happy holidayers.

The event was really well organised and had a great atmosphere, and Tallinn was a fabulous host city. We enjoyed it. Probably.

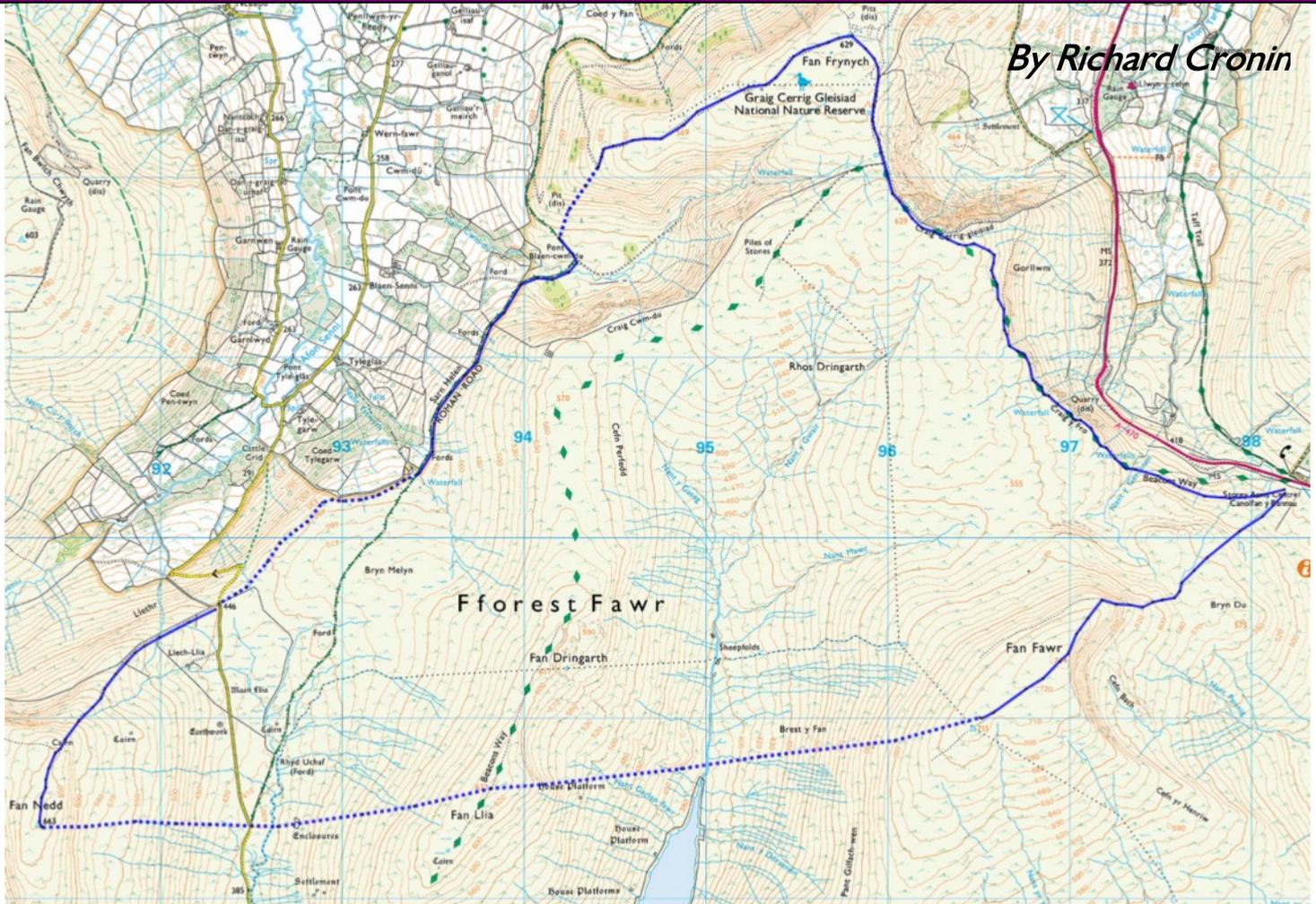
ying beforehand, and we were getting tired. The area for the Finals, Pikassaare, was another forest featuring lots of glacial contour detail and several marshes. The courses were long: my M45 B final was 8.5km and Judith's was 7.4km. It was a chilly, very rainy day; more like Blaenavon than the Baltic. I finished 39th, tired and wet after several long detours off-route and a quite spectacular 180 error. I got back to the event centre to find a mud-covered, pale and shaken Judith being looked after by assorted members of the British contingent. Out to the west of the competition terrain was an expanse of marsh, featureless except for hundreds of small pools which all looked the same. They'll never use that, we thought, but sure enough the

longer men's and women's courses had been taken into what is now referred to in our house as SwampWorld. Judith had tried to cross a marshy pool in this area and had sunk in chest-deep. After five minutes or so of wallowing like a sick hippo and eventually shouting for help some passing M40's had rescued her, but it turned out to be the final straw in what was already a bad run. Judith finished the course - not that she had much choice, as SwampWorld was miles away from the start and finish - but was not a happy camper. She ended up a fed-up 29th, which as she points out was last place in the A final, but as I point out was at least \*in\* the A final. She says that



*Astrid Andersson (SWE) winning W95 Long*

By Richard Cronin



## Four Fans Fell Race Report

Fell racing isn't always just about who can run up a hill the fastest – some, outwardly at least, look very much like orienteering. The Four Fans race, starting from the Storey Arms in the Brecon Beacons, is one of the highlights in the South Wales calendar and has attracted several North Gloucester runners (and friends) over the years.

Simply, it is a long orienteering race in open terrain – 18km, 1200m ascent “Long Black”. Just the 4 controls (manned, not flagged), you already know where they are: Fan Frynych, Fan Nedd, Fan Llia, and Fan Fawr. Take any route so long as you get to them all in the correct order. Mass start at 11!

Holding the race in the middle of August always runs the risk of truly abysmal weather, and memories of 2015 – where we were all washed away in a thigh deep river – were still fresh. Still, 2016 is another year and the weather was far ...worse! Not just torrential rain but 60mph+ winds to contend with. I came to this during a long period of being unwell and off food – with survival being an achievement my only chance of a reasonable result was by taking the best routes.

Here I had a cunning plan. Last year my tactic was to follow Andy Creber as he'd recce'd all the shortcuts, and I gained ground back faster runners early by taking his aggressive cut to Craig Cerrig-gleisiad (CCG) rather than sticking to the track. This year, no Andy – but I had downloaded my GPS plot from

before and tracked it on my watch. I took one of the most “inland” routes of anyone and back in the mix with Messrs Lawson, Ponsford (SWOC) and Arkell only just ahead despite my truly terrible starting pace. Andy Stott not far behind having followed my line.

The first real route choice decision happens after Fan Frynych (CP1/“Control 1”). Most runners consider the best route to Fan Nedd to be doubling back on yourself towards CCG and retaining the high ground. I had planned to do the same – but approaching the trig point, noted Ponsford, Burley and Arkell come back past – but not Pinker (FVO). Given that, and the guaranteed 2km against a hurricane with no shelter, I changed my plan at the last second to go down the valley instead. See Strava “flyby”

below for the different routes taken by runners on the day, my line is in black – routes from right to left, with the checkpoint where all the plots converge at top of the extract.

Immediately I regretted my decision – hit a wall of wind straight away, ducked off the

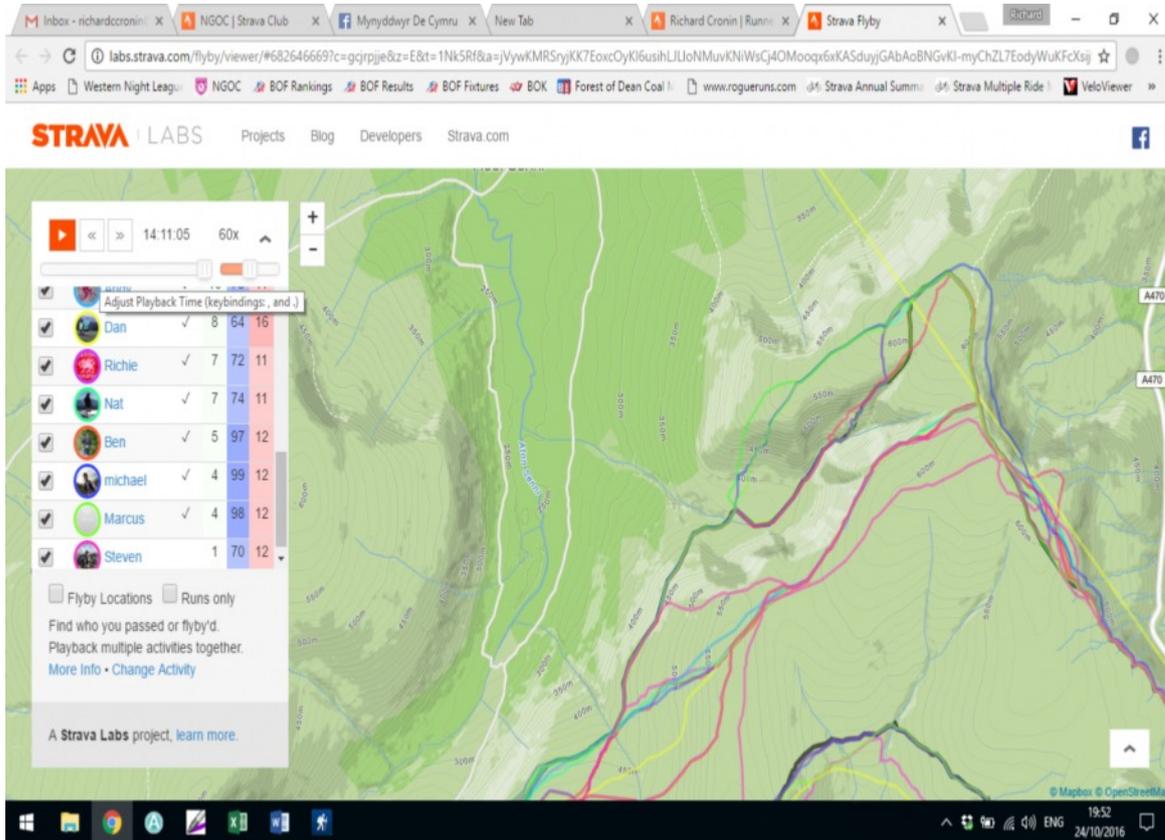
Nedd (CP2), dropped Ben half way and with Burley by the top. Pretty pleased by now!

For those who don't know Fan Nedd it's one of the most horrid hills to run on in Wales – the only thing worse than going down is trying to get up. Many people have been eaten by those

for the next leg to Fan Fawr (CP4). This could well be the best route choice leg in any race I've ever done. See right, again my line is black, heading from left to right.

How to get to Fan Fawr was main discussion point pre-race and Ben was adamant that

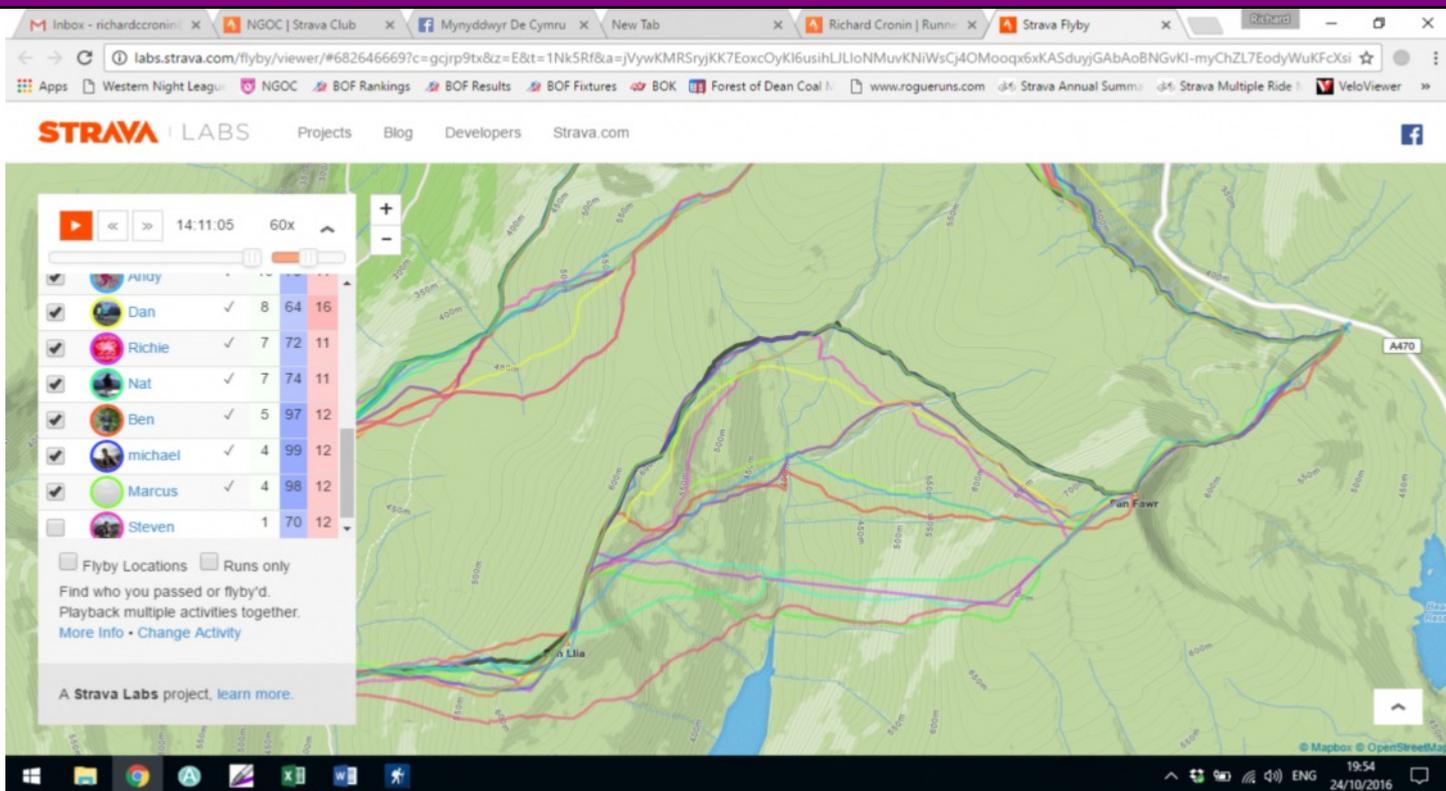
around (+2km distance, 90m less ascent) would be much quicker, and I initially poo-pooed it. Then adding in my pathetic descent pace and my unsteady river crossing/swimming/drowning and started to agree. Set a plan of leave point 3 north on edge ridge and then contour around at 460m (using altimeter on watch) and pick up a little path on the other side that goes straight up to the top. The ridge



path into thick tussocks and then shin deep bog on near vertical slope down into the valley. Stream was quite "lively" too. Still somebody followed me this way, runners wearing NGOC tops are known for their good route choices... Made it to the end of the valley and then just a case of swimming upstream along the Sarn Helen road to re-join the normal route, looking for people to use as a reference on timings. Guy in black could be Mark Burley – but surely too close?! Then Ben – about 1 min ahead – so we'd maintained the gap, but I wasn't ruined by the constant wind so had fresher legs for the steep climb to Fan

tussocks. I don't do tussocks well so Burley long gone, and Ben shot past too. At the bottom get apprehensive as the first river crossing approached – only knee deep but I seemed fairly unstable – then to attack Fan Llia (CP3). Where Fan Nedd has reputation for being horrid, Fan Llia is known for coaxing runners too far right as you automatically go straight up rather than diagonal. Last year I split the difference between Creber and Dave Austin and hit top bang on – this year was straight follow the watch. Passed Ben for the last time on the climb, and again 1 min behind Burley at the top ready

running was wonderful – smooth underfoot, shallow grade, wind behind, and I was crossing the river upstream at 10 mins when I know it takes me 10 mins to get straight down (where river might not be crossable today). Very happy now. Every intention of running to the top went away when I realised I was exhausted – but walking was still a good pace versus the very steep direct line. This route also had advantage of dumping me right at the cairn rather than leaving me lost in the fog. Got here with Burley so gained ground – and overtaken another 4 or so people on the loop. Just a case of getting to the finish in one



piece now – long way down – and nobody really of note behind for me to race away from.

I finished in a time 10 minutes faster than last year: 1 min gained from start to CP1, 1 min lost on long leg to CP2 (significantly hit by wind), 6 mins gained CP2-CP3, 4 mins gained CP3-4 by taking longer route.

This race is all about the navigation, and being able to plan it out in advance and use aids (both not allowed in “normal” orienteering) adds to the fun. Despite there being only 26 runners, there were still lots of different lines being taken through the terrain and still nobody can say with certainty which is the best. Maybe we should ask the female course record holder... Judith?

I’m looking forward to running this again. I hope the organiser has got the rain booked in already. No ducking out again from Creber or Austin please!

## Four Fans 2016 results

NGOC Members:

- 9<sup>th</sup> Matthew Lawson 2:23:19
- 13<sup>th</sup> Richard Cronin 2:28:09
- 16<sup>th</sup> Ben Arkell 2:38:04
- 18<sup>th</sup>= Andy Stott 2:47:22 (an improbable 4 way tie given the entry...)

And friends of NGOC:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Marcus Pinker (FVO) 2:00:20
- 8<sup>th</sup> Mark Ponsford (SWOC) 2:23:19
- 11<sup>th</sup>= Mark Burley (BOK) 2:26:59
- 24<sup>th</sup> Sasha Habgood (SBOC) 3:16:35

You can “replay” this race from GPS plots, click on the link <http://labs.strava.com/flyby/viewer/#682646669?c=gjrp9tx&z=E&t=1Nk5Rf&a=jVywKMRSryjKK7EoxcOyKI6usihLJLIoNMuvKNIWsCj4OMooqx6xKASduyjGAbAoBNGvKI-myChZL7EodyWuKFCXsig> (may not work in printed edition)

# the mourne mountain marathon

*By the editor*

Photo credits: mourne2day.com and Terry McQueen



*Bristol Airport, Friday 16th September. Three bored NGOC members are sat waiting for a flight to Belfast, on their way to take part in the Mourne Mountain Marathon.*

Andy Creber, with his race partner Bryan Stadden, are entered for the Elite course and are having doubts about the wisdom of two runners with a combined age of 118 signing up to run 55km (straight line distance) with 3100m of height gain over the weekend's racing. Allan McCall and I have entered the B class (a mere 45km and 2500m) but I've got a cold and am wondering why I'm even getting on the plane. Across the gate lounge, Mark Burley of BOK is looking as perky as ever, also entered in the B class with race partner Tom Watkins. And there are a fair few other folk dotted around, lean-looking and with suspiciously high-tech ultralight rucksacks as their carry-on bags, who look like they're heading off for the same weekend of pain as we are.

The stunning Mourne Mountains lie about an hour's drive south of Belfast; a compact range of hills whose rugged, crag-topped peaks and air of remoteness belie their relatively small size and proximity to civilisation. The annual Mourne Mountain Marathon is a small event in comparison with the likes of the OMM or the LAMM, but has a reputation for great scenery, good course setting and excellent organisation. It doesn't offer the same range of course options as some other events, with only Elite, B, C and D classes; but the event atmosphere and relative ease of travel from Belfast Airport make up for this.

After a dodgy pasta dinner in Newcastle and a night camped in nearby Tollymore Forest Park, we headed off on Saturday morning for Event HQ and the bus out to the starts. I had hoped that we would be able to find someone for Allan to pair up with, so that I could spend the

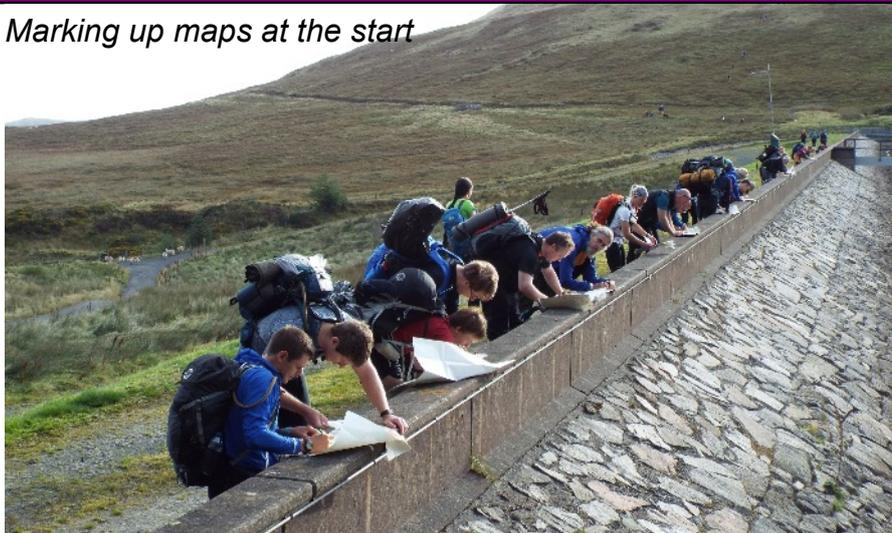
weekend sneezing (and snoozing) in the campsite, but no such luck. We explain the situation to the organisers and ask if we can change down to the D class, but they talk us into taking on C instead. Andy and Bryan are going for an ultra-late start (hoping for a few teams to chase down, and maybe even an elephant track or two) so we leave them at registration and head off to the bus.

The setting for Day 1's start is idyllic. We get off the bus to the sight of a line of competitors leaning on the dam wall of a reservoir, all marking up their maps with their route choices. The weather is glorious and the hills look inviting - not too big! - in the early autumn sunshine. Allan and I mark up our maps - the event uses the Harvey Superwalker 1:25k as a base map, rather than specially-printed fully-waterproof maps - and we head off into the hills.

The control locations in mountain marathons tend to be a lot less challenging than for orienteering, and we're relieved to find that this is the case at the Mourne. The first four controls are all

straightforward and it's not until leg 5 that we're tested. A big route choice - straight line, over rough ground with a load of height gain and loss and a potentially risky river crossing; or a long way around, on paths with not a lot of contours in the way. We go round, but of course spend the entire leg wondering if we've just cost ourselves any chance of getting in the prizes. (My cold was magically forgotten as soon as we started racing.) We see a lot of other teams during the first half of the course - we

*Marking up maps at the start*



chose a fairly late start time - but after leaving control 5 it's much quieter. Did we lose so much time on that leg that the rest of the field is now way ahead of us? We choose a tough straight line route to 6, but it turns out to be very effective and the sight of teams on a lower line moving slower than us keeps us going during a tough rising traverse through boulder-strewn bracken and heather. Controls 7 through to 10 are largely descending on easier ground through old

quarry workings on the southern slopes of Slieve Binnian, so we push on hard to the end of Day 1 and the mid camp. There's hardly anyone in sight now, which is worrying given how late we started. Where have they all got to?

Mid-camp was situated at the lovely Silent Valley reservoir, and when we get there it's almost deserted. We're the third team in, across all the courses. The organisers are great, with the event medic offering me hot drinks and paracetamol for my cold (which I haven't thought about for hours now). We settle down in the sunshine, enjoying the luxurious springy lawn that's being used as the camping area, and eat non-stop while we watch other teams coming down off the hill.



*Heading off across the dam and into the hills*

A few hours later and it's starting to get dark. Finally, Andy and Bryan arrive at download. They've had a monster 8+ hour day - 30km/1860m and 18 controls. The Elite course for Day 1 contained two "cluster" control groups: all of the controls within a cluster are compulsory, but they can be taken in any order. In the rush of marking up the maps at the start of the day, they'd



*Andy & Bryan, about 6 hours in to Day 1*

confused the marking up of linear and cluster controls, resulting in a 90 minute error. To cap it all, in the exhaustion of the final stages of the run they'd gone straight past the penultimate control, then had to regain 120m of height on rough ground to go back for it. There was cursing, and disbelief, and tired frustration at having made such a simple mistake. Allan and I definitely felt like we'd had an easy day in comparison.

After the first day's racing, we were in second place in the C class. Our 3 hours 33 time was 14 minutes behind the leaders (a male team) and 23 minutes ahead of the alarmingly youthful mixed team in third place. Andy and Bryan's epic 8 hours 22 minutes put them in 10th place overall in the Elite class, but with a comfortable 3

hour margin over the next veteran team.

What felt like a few minutes of bad sleep later, we were dragged to wakefulness at 6am by one of the organisers roaming the campsite singing an Irish ballad. Day 2's starts were mass starts by class, with the Elites off first.

much spring in their steps as they headed towards the hills. Allan and I weren't feeling that spectacular either, and were very glad that we only had another 18km to do before it was all over. Mass starts are not our favourites - all too often they end up being a crocodile stretching up the hillside, which can really favour fast non-navigators.

We decided to be at the front of the start queue and make a quick getaway, to avoid spending the day in a herd.



*At mid camp*

The second day of the C course headed straight into a control cluster: two controls which we could take in any order. Having this right at the outset is tricky - there's no time to have a good think

Andy and Bryan were both feeling the after effects of their tough Day 1, and there wasn't

about it, and the options really did seem to be six of one and half a dozen of the other. In the end, we

saw the first and third placed teams in our class both heading up the same way and decided to go with the consensus of opinion (though I'm still not convinced it was right!).

After a long but straightforward leg 3, the clouds were starting to drop and visibility deteriorated. Thus far, we'd managed to keep pace with the third and fourth placed teams on our course, but after a hilly slog along the Mourne Wall to control 4 we started to flag. We could still see the course leaders just ahead of us and struggled to keep contact. Controls 6 and 7 formed another cluster high on the boulder-strewn slopes of Slieve Bernagh and the route choice here really divided opinion among the leading teams. The slightly shorter option crossed much tougher terrain and was going to be a navigational challenge with the clouds down; the longer option enabled a 1.5km track run to get out of the cluster and into

Control 8. By now, we were pretty knackered and not really up to running very much at all - so tough terrain and navigation it would be!

Our course leaders had been just behind us leaving the control before the cluster group, and



*Tired, at the Mourne Wall*

arrived at the next control after it at the same time as we did. So we concluded that we managed to save ourselves a load of running without actually losing any time.

Into the final hour or so of racing now, and everyone's getting pretty tired. We had managed to get a bit of a gap on the leaders

at 9, a tricky little crag on the side of an undulating spur. Then it was the sprint for home along forest tracks in Tollymore Forest Park. We gained a couple more minutes by cutting through a forest block and arrived at the empty event centre as the second team in. At least we got our pick of the post-race sandwiches on offer.

The only fault we could find with the organisation was the provision of shuttle buses between the Event HQ and the campsite/car park. After a weekend of being cold, tired and hungry we ended up walking 2km along the road in the rain to get to the campsite for a shower and to change out of our race kit. The idea of walking back again for the prizegiving was just too much, so we "borrowed" Andy's hire car and drove; praying firstly that we wouldn't crash and secondly that Andy wouldn't be too angry about it.

We pulled up outside HQ to find Andy and Bryan - far more tired and wet than we had been and girding themselves for a wet walk back to the campsite - absolutely delighted to see "their" car conveniently pull up right in front of them! Showered and changed, it was time for the prizegiving : Andy and Bryan took the Vets prize in the Elite class (and were in fact the only Vets team to finish the gruelling course); Allan and I were second in the C class.

All in all it was an excellent weekend in the hills. Mostly nice weather, superb mountain scenery and interesting courses. Well worth a trip over the Irish Sea!



*Andy Creber & Bryan Stadden:  
1<sup>st</sup> Vets team, Elite class*

## League Latest!



### League 7, Minchinhampton, 24th September

The only venue with a first-class ice-cream shop on the map saw an excellent turnout for the first league event of the autumn. Caroline Craig did a great job of planning interesting courses across this fast terrain.

Tim Britton of BOK took the closely-fought honours on the Blue course in a time of 45:01, with NGOC's Pete Ward third in 45:48. Simon Denman topped the Green results in 41:34; Steve Harris came in 2nd in 44:05. Alan Brown won Orange in 25:56, followed by Ashleigh Denman in 2nd place in 27:18. Seth and Reuben Lawson were first and second on Yellow in 27:05 and 27:59 respectively.

### League 8, Parkend. 15th October 2016

Joe Parkinson and his helpers put on a great event at Parkend which saw many excellent runs from both NGOC competitors and guests.

The Blue course was won by Megan Carter-Davies (UBOC/MWOC) in a fast 43:25 for the 5.7km/160m course. Top

NGOC runners were Paul Murrin, 3rd in 50:09 and Caroline Craig close on his heels in 4th with 50:49. Scott Johnson also had a very good run to finish 9th in a time of 55:20.

Green (3.6km/110m) was won by another visitor, John Mills from SWOC, in 48:39. NGOC's Simon Denman was a very close second in 48:43 and Philip Bostock, also NGOC, was third in 51:05.

On the orange course (3km/100m), John Miklausic was first with a time of 34:54. Ashleigh Denman was second in 38:15. Reuben Lawson won the yellow course (2.2km/80m), almost seven minutes clear with a time of 17:42. Seth Lawson was equal 3rd in 25:21.

### League 9, Cleeve Hill, 29th October

Many thanks to Greg Best and team for an excellent day out at Cleeve. The rain mostly held off and everyone enjoyed blasting around the open terrain. (Or getting lost in gorse thickets, cough.)

Performance of the day surely went to Caroline Craig, who won Blue (7.5km/295m) in a very impressive 61:35. Thomas Cochrane was the next NGOC runner; 6th in 67:36.

Honours on the green course (4.8km/150m) went to Richard Purkis (on his way back from injury) with a very quick time of 40:39. Steve Harris was second in 49:44.

John Miklausic took first place again on the Orange (3.2km/55m) in 33:45, followed by Jack Hobby in 35:28.

Yellow (2.1km/50m) was won by Rose Taylor of HOC in 21:33. Seth Lawson came second in 26:56.



# League Standings after 9 events

## Blue

1 Caroline Craig	NGOC W21	6986
2 Duncan Innes	SWOC M50	5870
3 Nick Dennis	BOK M55	5683
4 Scott Johnson	NGOC M35	5678
5 Christine Farr	SWOC W40	5168
6 Greg Best	NGOC M50	5085
7 Steve Chiverton	HOC M65	4930
8 Rachel Dennis	BOK W45	4909
9 Anders Johansson	NGOC M40	4600
10 Peter Ward	NGOC M45	4486

## Green

1 Simon Denman	NGOC M50	8417
2 Steven Harris	NGOC M35	7315
3 Dave Hartley	NGOC M60	6684
4 John Fallows	NGOC M55	6488
5 Tom Birthwright	NGOC M35	6453
6 Philip Bostock	NGOC M50	6301
7 Kevin Brooker	BAOC M45	6190
8 Peter Watson	NGOC M16	5741
9 Paul Hobby	NGOC M45	5709
10 Brian Laycock	HOC M65	5119

## Orange

1 Ashleigh Denman	NGOC W45	7305
2 John Miklausic	NGOC M35	5786
3 Jess Miklausic	NGOC W21	5545
4 Carol Farrington	HOC W55	5178
5 Sam Harris	NGOC W35	5120
6 Rosie Watson	NGOC W14	4970
7 Paul Shutler	IND M55	4762
8 Jack Hobby	NGOC M15	4741
9 Adrian Dawson	SARUM M55	4272
10 John Wickson	NGOC M65	3434

## Yellow

1 Reuben Lawson	NGOC M10	6585
2 Seth Lawson	NGOC M8	5760
3 Rose Taylor	HOC W10	4245
4 Jessica Ward	NGOC W10	3031
5 Ella May Rush	BOK W10	2051
6 Thomas Harris	NGOC M4	1488
7 Rowan Murrin	IND W7	1390
8 Maya Britton	BOK W8	1166
9 Barthelemy Pige	NGOC M6	1165
10 S & D Johnson	NGOC W5/7	1029

### *Next NGOC League Events:*

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November:** League 10, Kidnalls. Organisers & Planners: Stephen & Shirley Robinson (phone (01242) 516053)

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December:** League 11, Knockalls. Organiser & Planner: Kim Liggett.

*And don't forget to schedule the unmissable New Year's Day Score event into your festive calendar! Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January at Ninewells!*



*Shirley Robinson enjoys the finish run-in at Cleeve*

# recent results

## **3rd September - BOK Blast Sprint (including SWOA Sprint Championships), Yate**

CONGRATULATIONS to the SW Sprint Champions - Rosie Watson, Adam Watson, Andy Monro and David Lee!

Peter Watson (M16), 2nd  
Adam Watson (M20), 1st  
Andy Monro (M45) 1st  
David Lee (M80) 1st  
Rosie Watson (W14) 1st  
Shirley Robinson (W60), 2nd  
Paul Taunton (M65) 15th on Men's Open, managing to finish in less than twice the time taken by the winner Ben Mitchell (SBOC)!

## **4th September - BOK Blast Day 2, Wells**

The excitement of the SWOA Sprint Championships was followed by a longer urban race in the compact and bijou city of Wells.

MOpen Sam Taunton 16th  
MV Christophe Pige 11th  
MUV Paul Taunton 11th, David Lee 26th  
WUV Ros Taunton 9th

## **10th September - SLOW London City Race, Rotherhithe**

(planned by NGOC offspring Ed Stott, SLOW)  
MV Andy Monro 33rd  
MSV Simon Denman 48th (field of 170!)  
WSV Rhiannon Fadeyibi 89th

## **18th September - WIM Galoppen, Godshill**

Brown, Pete Ward 10th  
Blue, Christophe Pige 24th  
Green, Peter Watson 10th  
Short Green David Lee 28th  
Light Green Rebecca Ward 1st  
Yellow Jessica Ward 2nd

## **25th September - NWO Urban, Royal Wootton Bassett**

Controller Paul Taunton (NGOC) had an interesting day - dealing with a locked gate which affected the shorter courses and almost an hour's delay to the starts! Some interesting route choices largely around residential areas, with fun on the last few controls around the town centre.

MYJ Barthelemy Pige, 4th  
MV Christophe Pige 9th  
MUV David Lee 20th  
WO Judith Austerberry 2nd

## **1st & 2nd October - WSX Caddihoe Chase and SWOA Long Distance Champs, Agglestone & Rempstone**

This classic of the calendar consisted of two days of heathland orienteering near the beautiful Studland Bay. Some aspects of the courses were slightly less beautiful, however, with some mapping issues and several mispunches as a result. Pete Ward was in line for the M45 South West title until the exclusion of a dodgy control put him about a minute down on Paul Gebbett of BOK. However, Pete claimed the major prize of the weekend by winning the M45 Caddihoe trophy. Congratulations to him! Other Caddihoe placings were:

Allan McCall, 8th M45  
Paul Taunton, 17th M65  
Jessica Ward, 2nd W10  
Rebecca Ward, 4th W14  
Ros Taunton, 4th W65



*Pete Ward wins Caddihoe M45*

## **9th October - SARUM Galoppen, Collingbourne Woods**

Collingbourne's reputation for ferocious undergrowth preceded it, and several NGOC members opted for the (equally vegetated, as it turned out) SBOC Kenfig Burrows event instead. The courses were planned to make the most of the area and were a lot better than they could have been, if still pretty brambly.

Yellow: Jessica Ward (W10) 7th  
Short Green: David Lee (M80) 19th  
Green: Ian Prowse (M60) 8th  
Blue: Christophe Pige (M40) 18th  
Brown: Pete Ward (M45) 7th

## 9th October - SBOC Kenfig Burrows

Richard Cronin was fastest on the Green course in a time of 56:55, which gives an indication of how tough the going was in the section of Kenfig used for this event!

## 22nd October - HOC Malvern Urban

Controller Richard Cronin (NGOC) had his work cut out with a delayed start then a controversial off-the-map route choice affecting the Mens Vets and Womens Open course. Top-placed NGOC runners were:

Men's Open: Alan Brown (M60), 16th  
 Mens Vet: Andy Monro(M45), 4th  
 Mens Super Vet: Dave Hartley (M60), 17th  
 Mens Ultra Vet: Neil Cameron (M70), 6th  
 Womens Open: Judith Austerberry (W40), 1st  
 Womens Vet: Rhiannon Fadeyibi (W50), 14<sup>th</sup>  
 Womens Ultra Vet: Ros Taunton (W65), 9th

## 23rd October - HOC Castlemorton Common

Long courses and counting gorse bushes were the orders of the day at Castlemorton Common. Top-placed NGOC runners by course:

Short Green: David Lee (M80), 24th  
 Green: Rodney Archard (M70), 6th  
 Blue: Neil Bradshaw (M55), 25th  
 Brown: Judith Austerberry (W40), 9th

## 23rd October - DEVON League Event, Holne Moor

Brown: Pete Ward, 2nd  
 Light Green: Rebecca Ward, 9th  
 Orange: Gill James 6th  
 Yellow: Jessica Ward 2nd

## 29th October - BOK Western Night League, Warmley

The Western Night League 2016/17 season kicked off with a great little event at Warmley. An "odds/evens" score format to get the most out of a relatively small area, with a mixture of parkland and semi-urban running. Top NGOC scorers were Richard Cronin, who managed not only to get a maximum 600 points but also did so bang on the time limit in 60:00! Caroline Craig was just behind Richard in the results with an impressive 595 points.

## Forthcoming Events

### November

2nd: SBOC Night League, Clyne Gardens, Swansea (D)  
 5th: SARUM Salisbury City Urban (B)  
 SWOC local, Gwaelod y Garth, Cardiff (D)  
 6th: SOC November Classic & Southern Champs, Fritham (A)  
 WRE Bury Ditches Hill Fort (C)  
 12th: **NGOC WNL, Standish (D)**  
 QO AD, Wind Down & Broomfield Hill (D)  
 13th: MWOC Welsh League, Foel Goch, Machynlleth (C)  
 DEVON Galoppen, Fernworthy (C)  
 16th: SWOC Street Event, Danescourt, Cardiff (D)  
 17th: HOC Night Street League, Worcester (D)  
 19th: OUOC Oxford City Race (C)  
**NGOC League 10, Kidnalls (D)**  
 QO After Dark, Kingscliff (D)  
 20th: TVOC Regional, Shotover Park, Oxford (C)  
 KERNO Forest League, Penhale South (C)  
 24th: HOC Winter Evening, Walton Hill, Halesowen (D)  
 26th: QO Southern Night Champs, Ramscombe, Bridgwater (B)

26th: BOK Saturday League, Stoke Park (D)  
 27th: QO Galoppen, Ramscombe, Bridgwater

### December

1st: HOC Night Street League, Wombourne (D)  
 3rd: **NGOC League 11, Knockalls (D)**  
 BOK WNL, Leigh Woods (D)  
 4th: HOC WMOA League, Dymock, Ledbury (C)  
 BOK Club & ASO, Leigh Woods (C)  
 SBOC Local, Whiteford Burrows, Gower (D)  
 8th: HOC Winter Evening, Hayhead, Walsall (D)  
 10th: **NGOC WNL, Blakeney Hill (D)**  
 SWOC Wenallt Woods, Cardiff (D)  
 11th: NWO Four Colour, Fyfield (TBC), Marlborough (D)  
 SN Trophy, Long Valley North (B)  
 QO Forest League, Croydon Hill (D)  
 27th: SWOC Score, Pontcanna, Cardiff (D)

### January

1st: **NGOC New Year's Day Score, Ninewells, Coleford (D)**  
 2nd: TVOC Urban, Didcot Ladygrove (C)

*NGOC's national ranking top 10 on 1<sup>st</sup> November were ...*

1	Richard Purkis	1993	M	7909
2	Andrew Monro	1969	M	7830
3	Peter Ward	1970	M	7822
4	Joe Gidley	1988	M	7601
5	Caroline Craig	1984	F	7430
6	Andy Creber	1958	M	7380
7	Richard Cronin	1989	M	7345
8	Judith Austerberry	1974	F	7279
9	Scott Johnson	1978	M	7174
10	Christophe Pige	1971	M	7119

Richard Purkis (M21) heads NGOC's members in the BOF ranking list - he's ranked 78th in the UK as a whole. Our top-ranked female runner is Caroline Craig (W21), who is 324th on the overall ranking list and is 39th ranked female orienteer in the UK.

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