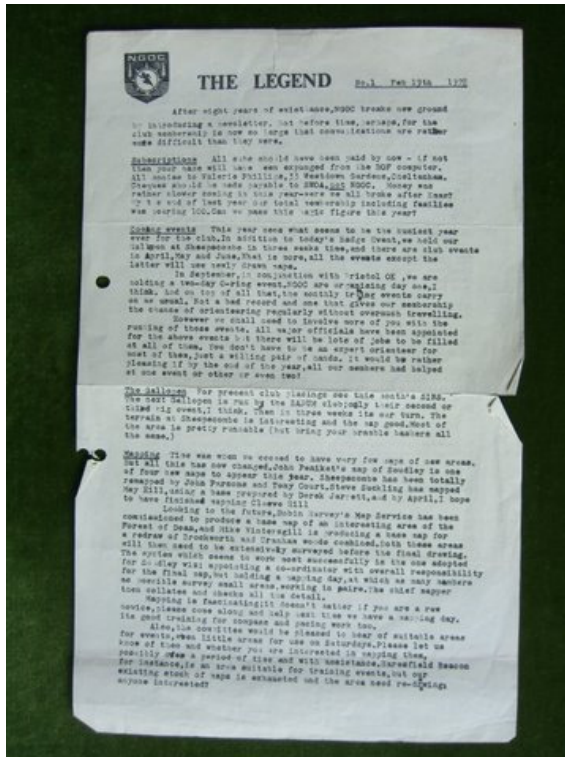


The Legend

Number 135



Legend is 30 years old

Newsletter of
North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club
September 2008
www.ngoc.org.uk

NGOC Committee

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Cover: The very first Legend, dated 19 February 1978. Note that, as well as the title of the newsletter, the club badge remains unaltered. *(Poor print quality and a non-standard paper size precluded distributing a facsimile copy with this latest Legend!!!)*

Chairman's Chat

Reflections of a Chairman

I usually take my previous Chat, copy it and then re-write it. On this occasion I made no exception but was left wondering whether anybody ever read it! Certainly no one has responded either in writing or by telephone to any of the issues that I raised in July. I can only assume that I am in my own little world.

Well done to Roger Coe and Paul Taunton who masterminded a very successful Day 4 of Croeso at Wentwood. Thanks to them and their team who contributed to the success. The next Croeso is likely to be at about the same time as the London Olympics – perhaps we can outshine them! One rather pleasing outcome of talking to a Swiss lady whose sons were running the string course for the umpteenth time, she is going to arrange to get club buffs for their club. NGOC leads again.

Club Development

At our latest committee meeting we discussed how best to take NGOC forward into the future with so many new regulations imposed on sports activities by the Government through the various Sports Bodies, such as Sport England. Our Development Officers, Alan and Ellen Starling have laid the foundations of a plan to work towards Clubmark.

We have a number of club members who are extremely skilled at putting on a wide variety of events from informals through to Nationals. It is hoped that many more members will take an interest in learning the skills needed to man an event, from organising, planning, registration, computer skills, putting out and taking in controls and car parking. Our club covers a wide area, and falls into 4 natural geographic groups and using our current membership list we will use these to form skill teams and thus share the workload and keep the club as successful as it currently is:

East (Gloucester & Cheltenham)
South (Stroud & South Cotswolds)
West (Forest of Dean)
North (Herefordshire & Worcestershire)

I sincerely believe that unless we develop and take on new ideas and adopt new approaches then your club could be on a slow decline to oblivion. In this world there are phases of existence starting with growth, then life, probable decay and finally death. I sincerely hope that our sport has not entered too far into the decay period. In 1965 I joined a new young vibrant activity, saw it grow and develop with a doubling of national membership in the mid 1970s. Social patterns have changed and with them we all seem to have gone manic trying to achieve much. This leaves fewer folk doing any one thing and makes it potentially more difficult to maintain activities. Sadly orienteering is no exception. We owe a great deal to those who are sticking at it and keeping it going.

Chairman's Challenge

We held more Street events this summer than ever before, they were all good fun and worth attending. What a pity for Dave Hartley that his evening proved rather wet. At least he can use it again next time. They all worked towards the Chairman's Challenge that will take place on Saturday 13th September. There will be a 2pm mass start and afterwards there will be Carol Stewart's barbecue at Gorsley Village Hall. A good chance to meet other club members and chat about the ways forward. If you are unable to attend then there will be another opportunity to meet at the AGM on Wednesday 15th October (details elsewhere in Legend).

Good orienteering

Chris James - *Chairman NGOC*

Chairman's Challenge

First event of the new season

Saturday 13 September. Mass start at 1400.
1-hour path-track-lane score event. Entry £3.
Chris and Gill James (01989 720122).

Bring a pen or pencil!

Start, finish and parking at Gorsley Village Hall, GR SO
676259
BBQ after the event - £2

Directions

From the M50 Junction 3 take B4221 towards Newent.

Pass School on your left.

Pass the first RH turn.

Pass "The Roadmaker" pub on your right.

Take next right into Quarry Lane. Fingerboard indicates "Gorsley Village Hall" and there is a bus stop on the opposite side of Quarry Lane.

The Hall is now on your left just past a telephone box about 100 metres down.

From Newent on B4221.

Pass County boundary into Herefordshire.

Pass Post Office on your right.

Look for the bus stop on your left at the junction with Quarry Lane.

Turn left and then as above.

(NB A40 between Highnam and Over is still very slow with roadworks.)

A TRIP TO THE WORLD'S BIGGEST ORIENTEERING FESTIVAL

Being married to a Swedish lady, I am fortunate that I can sometimes combine our summer holidays to her homeland with a trip to the O-Ringen, the famous 5-day orienteering festival. This year, my 4th time, I attended each day with my Swedish brother-in-law.

The first thing that hits you is the huge scale of it all, because the 21 000 competitors for each of the 5 days require a huge amount of resources. For example, there are 1500 event officials, 150 000 maps printed (would Bob fancy that?), 160 outdoor showers to set up, 500 000 plastic drinking cups, 200 toilet cubicles and 6km of coloured streamers. To cope with such a mass of people, there need to be 9 separate start locations, 9 different finish lanes from a single last control and about 80 courses and 250 controls per day. The run-in to the Finish is a fantastic spectacle: a heaving mass of orienteering humanity in all its forms. There are young and old, slim and fat, fast and slow, determined and deflated – all striving to reach the finish line. To add to the final excitement and trauma, everybody has to negotiate a high and treacherous wooden bridge, a steep up and then steep descent. The bridge, specially constructed for each stage, signifies the entrance to the main arena and the thousands of spectators. I calculated that there is about 1 finisher per second for 6 hours – quite a sight!

Orienteering in Swedish forests is very different and much more difficult than any places I have competed in the UK. There are very few man-made linear features like paths, fences and ditches, so navigation has to be by natural features like brown squiggly lines, extensive marshes and rocks. Attack points can be quite tricky to identify. In my optimism, I entered M45 Long, which I now realise may have been a mistake!

I began Day 1 full of enthusiasm and hope, but the 6km and a mere 9 controls took nearly two hours! Although I found it a fantastic challenge in a great area, the long and regular periods of not being quite where I thought became a little demoralising. Once lost, it is usually very difficult to relocate. Huge numbers of people here use a simpler

relocation technique, which is to stumble across a random control site (of which there are many), and ask somebody punching there to show them where they are. Of course in the UK this would be unthinkable, but most people here seem happy to help, so on subsequent days I did resort a couple of times to this rather dirty tactic to get me out of particularly bad trouble. At least I can feel slightly smug that I helped far more people than the two or three I begged help from.

On the second day the courses were short, mine being just 3.8km with 14 controls. The periods of being lost were fewer and shorter, so I spent 30 minutes less in the forest, so success! However, I was already two hours behind the leader – how do they do it?

The cabin we were staying in for the week was adjacent to Day 3's competition area, so we awoke at 8am amused and amazed to see the continuous stream of orienteers filing past our balcony like a line of colourful ants. This day was very tricky, as the map was a maze of highly complex brown lines on a perfect white background, broken up by the occasional rock and almost nothing else. I had a very late start, so quickly found myself all alone in the jungle of brown squiggles. This is a very unusual feeling at O-Ringen, and meant there was nobody to help me when I made my habitual big time-losing mistake. I eventually arrived at the finish arena, rather soggy after making a knee-high river crossing, with just a handful of other competitors and hardly any spectators left to cheer me in!

Day 4 was particularly eventful. Firstly, I finally got my O-phobic wife to take part in the equivalent of an orange course – a miracle! My 2 daughters, aged 6 and 8 ran together by themselves for the first time on the beginner's course. This course is like a white course, except that there are smiley or sad faces to re-assure them whether they are on the right or wrong path. I think this is a great way to bridge the security gap from string course to white course and could be used in the UK. To see the girls climbing over the bridge and sprinting down their finish lane made them and me very proud. To get to the starts on this day involved a thrilling ride on an 8 seater chair-lift to the top of the ski-resort mountain. However, the 50 minutes of

queuing scrum to get on the chair-lift was a nightmare. This day's course was on open moor and mountain, rather more to my liking, and much easier than the other days. The 66 minutes I took was almost respectable, at last. The course saw some unusual features and sounds not to be found in the Forest of Dean! The numerous ski lifts, snow cannons and advertising hoardings were marked on the map using special symbols, so were available for navigation. I used the bend of the bobsleigh run as an effective attack point for control 13. The passage through "*Troll Wood*" with its hundreds of carved wooden sculptures of trolls and animals and the sound of singing voices, owl hoots and troll orchestras coming mysteriously from the trees took me by surprise. I am now 4 hours behind the course leader, so not much chance of catching him in tomorrow's chasing start! I must keep reminding myself that it's the taking part that's important.

Day 5. Phew, all finished! I didn't catch the leader, of course, but I was fairly satisfied with 96 minutes for a very tricky course. It included one terrifying 2km leg, but I held my concentration for once and hit the control spot on with no mistakes – a rare treat. Later, while watching the never-ending stream of finishers, I witnessed a rare sight at orienteering events – a streaker! Wearing only skimpy underpants, he raced past, providing good entertainment for both the crowds and the TV cameras present. I also noticed a lot of "tandem" runners with a towline tied between them. Can anybody enlighten me on any possible reason for this strange practice?

I completed the 5 days, worn out but very content. I loved the huge challenge of the M45L courses in such marvellous orienteering terrain, but my orienteering technique clearly needs a lot of fine-tuning before it's really up to it. I perhaps should have entered M45M instead, the class for "leisure orienteers". It was great to see how orienteering is a proper mainstream sport for all in Sweden. Every orienteer should experience a pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime to the O-Ringen, the world's largest O-Festival.

Greg Best

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 15 October 1930 for 2000

Buffet £2 (Juniors free)

A talk on the Woodland Trust will be given by Lin Callard
prior to the AGM

Gala Club, Fairmile Gardens, Gloucester

All members welcome. Intoxicating beverages available.

Bristol Orienteering Klub

The Bristol Long-O 2008

Sunday 26 October

Using 3 local areas: Leigh Woods, Ashton Court and Ashton
Plantation/Providence

For latest information visit: www.bristolorienteering.org.uk

Overleaf: Croeso 2008 (or Creoso as the souvenir coasters say)

First photo: John Burrows finishing

Second photo: Steve Williams finishing

Photographs: Paul Taunton





MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to the following new member:

Dominic Gorton
Union Cottage, Lower High Street, Newnham, GL14 1BW
Home: 01594 510190
Mobile: 07842 345462
dominic@dominicgorton.co.uk

Change of address:

Ian, Margaret, Lawrence, Georgia and Sophie Jones
278 Rainbow Street, Coogee, NSW 2034, Australia
ml.jones@tpg.com.au

Changed your email address, phone number or postal address? Don't forget to tell the Membership Secretary! Any member who would like a full membership list please contact the Membership Secretary.

Ivor Maughan

Ivor died in St Michael's Hospice in Hereford on 17 July. Ivor was a very good friend and once an active member of NGOC. Some of you may remember Ivor for helping kick start the Western Night League after it lapsed many years ago; others because of his warm, welcoming and happy disposition whenever he attended events. He leaves his wife Steph' and two daughters Jessica and Hannah to whom we offer our condolences.

Tom Mills

30 Years of Legend

Excerpts from the first edition (some of the themes seem very familiar!):

"After eight years of existence, NGOC breaks new ground by introducing a newsletter. Not before time, perhaps, for the club membership is now so large that communications are rather more difficult than they were.

"Subscriptions All subs should have been paid by now - if not then your name will have been expunged from the BOF computer. All monies to Cheques should be made payable to SWOA, not NGOC. Money was rather slower coming in this year - were we all broke after Xmas? By the end of last year our total membership including families was nearing 100. Can we pass this magic figure this year?

"Mapping Time was when we seemed to have very few maps of new areas. But all of this has now changed. John Peniket's map of Soudley is one of four new maps to appear this year. Sheepscombe has been totally remapped by John Parsons and Tony Court. Steve Suckling has mapped May Hill, using a base map prepared by Derek Jarrett, and by April, I hope to have finished mapping Cleeve Hill.

"Equipment Ten days ago the committee, fortified by John Peniket's home brew, set to and constructed a further 40 plastic controls made, believe it or not, from a roll of the plastic generally used for the manufacture of margarine tubs, which Bert Taylor had printed orange and white for us.

"The letters of the new controls bear more than a passing resemblance to the initials of the first forty names on the membership list.

"Odds and ends All members have been allocated a member of the committee to act as a sort of area rep. The intention is that in this way communications problems over things like helping at events, venues of social evenings etc. will be eased."

Croeso 2008 – Pwll Du – Tuesday August 5th

6 a.m. and Chris and I wake to the sound of rain. No chance of burying our heads under the bedclothes, we have to be out of the house by 7 a.m. in order to erect the finish banner and control boxes for Day 3. At least we had been able to put up some of the 'run in' tape on Monday afternoon as we were in the same Assembly area for both days.

After a discussion and search for the site of the last control (250) we finally, with help, located it on top of a small hill at the foot of a re-entrant and very visible for all competitors leaving the Assembly area heading for the start. This was across the road from the Blorenghe on Pwll Du. I was extremely lucky that Robert, known as white van man during the week, spotted my mobile phone which had dropped out of my pocket. Thank you, Robert. We had erected the NGOC sail banners in a prime location so that the club tent could be nicely located for people to view the run in and finish.

I could start my race at any time, if there was no-one else on course 16, so I thought I would take my run, euphemism for walk in my case, earlier as the weather forecast was not good for later in the day. It was a 10 minute walk to the start and I was able to go straight into a start box. I knew I had a number of re-entrants on my control descriptions and I remembered from a previous encounter with Pwll Du that these were numerous and huge! No problem with No 1 a shallow re-entrant, but No 2 was a much larger one and on a lower level, then a ditch for No. 3 and so on. Pwll Du is a very interesting area, being mostly spoil heaps from the local coal mines and this leads people to having to think carefully about route choices from straight over the top to going round 'the long way'. There certainly appeared to be a number of people stopping and scrutinizing their maps and the surrounding humps and bumps. The route from control 6 to 7 involved crossing the route from 2 to 3, so I was able to recognize the gully and be absolutely sure of where I was. The rain made it difficult to decide whether one was on a path or in a ditch, especially for the later competitors. We had a timed road crossing towards the end of the course and finished with some controls on the edge of the Blorenghe. Of course I was familiar with the location of the last control and the finish, but which pits contained the next two controls? The ground looked absolutely flat covered by heather and blaeberrries (bilberries or whortleberries to

the Sassenachs)! And just which re-entrant contained our penultimate control on a ditch? I was pretty tired by then and glad to have the encouragement of a fellow competitor.

By the time I passed the club tent, our fellow members had arrived for their late starts and so had the rain in sheets. The later start blocks certainly had the worst weather of the day. I went straight from download to change in our car which was nearby and then we waited until the course closing time of 3.30 p.m. before dismantling one side of the run in as there were still a number of competitors out on their course. At last there was only one missing, but at 4 p.m. we took in the final controls, the tape and finish banner. Finally I saw him come over the hill and went to meet him, a Greek gentleman, who was quite adamant that he never got lost in the Greek hills and was unlikely to get lost in Wales. I gently pointed out that the courses closed at 3.30 and it was now 4.15 and that he had held up all the volunteers who were waiting to collect controls etc. Judith Powell, our Croeso Director made sure that he was given early starts for the rest of the week! I heard later that he spoke excellent Welsh as well as English!

And so to home and a hot bath and muddy clothes into the washing machine ready for Thursday!

Gill James

NGOC Minileague winners 07-08

Presentation to NGOC winners at the AGM on 15 October

Blue: Winner David Nevell HOC; top junior Declan Gray QO (3rd); top NGOC Andy Stott (5th)

Green: Winner Dave Hartley NGOC; top junior James Wilkinson HOC (2nd); top non-NGOC Mike Farrington HOC (6th)

Orange: Winner Sandra Bumblauskaite NGOC; top junior Sam Wilkinson NGOC (2nd); top non-NGOC Carol Farrington HOC (3rd)

Reflections

(Reprinted from the December 1983 Legend)

Confucius he say “It is better to travel than to arrive.” Orienteer he say “Cobblers.”

As an orienteer of 18 months standing, the time has come to decide whether we are compatible. From the outset the relationship has been a love-hate affair, with brief moments of pleasure being interspersed with longer moments of despair and anguish when even the parentage of the brambles has been called in to question.

The crisis came today and was cruel – first the contented smile and then the kick in the teeth! Having just finished an event at a completely new venue, I was feeling quite pleased with my time, when someone mentioned the map being 1:20,000. Nothing extraordinary in that – except that I had never noticed and assumed that I was running on a 1:15,000 as I had always done previously! How ephemeral the satisfaction; how deep and long-lasting the all-enveloping gloom. I had started orienteering expecting to make all the usual mistakes – I did and now here I was starting to make up new ones all on my own.

I should have taken heed of our inauspicious start. My enquiries had revealed that a motley collection of people, known enigmatically as the NGOC, frequently met in the Forest of Dean to indulge in the strange rituals of orienteering. At the appointed time I was at the appointed place, but no one else was. At this stage I knew that the “controls” were meant to be well hidden, but I felt this was going too far. The awful realisation that I could not find an event did lasting and irreparable damage to my self-esteem. Later I was to find out that the event had been cancelled due to a car rally, but the shame of being the would-be orienteer who could not find the event has faded only slowly. Later still I was to reflect on the irony of this – rally cars would rate well below ankle-breaking brashings, shoe-sucking swamps and boa-constrictor brambles as items to be avoided, and yet the Forest of Dean is full of the latter and no one has yet seen fit to cancel an event because of them.

Spurred on by my shame, I at last met up with my first event. Being a bit sneaky, I had read a book from the library on how it ought to be done and, thus prepared, I went out to put theory into practice.

After two events I went back to the library to check the book. Well, yes, I had rushed my first controls. Ah, “fight” was a vegetation description, not an exhortation. The theory of “aiming off” was, I remained convinced, a means of going straight to the control by using Sod’s Law in reverse but it didn’t seem to work for me. In my third event I had a nasty turn until I realised that it was my biro which had leaked in my pocket.

In my fourth event – well, I had decided that map corrections were being a wee bit melodramatic and as I had never seemed to have needed them before . . . well, it seemed a shame to spoil that nice map.

By way of a change for my fifth event I rushed the start – and still missed my start time by 3 minutes, but I had just bought my first “O” shoes. A snap decision or was I getting serious?

A strange phenomenon occurred at about my tenth event. I suddenly started making the same mistakes all over again, but now I was not despondent because I had suddenly become an expert! The sort of expert, that is, who is no better than anyone else, but who is wrong for sophisticated technical reasons. I now understand the theory of aiming-off, although I still always got lost. However, being able to pontificate about one’s mistakes was, I now realise, the point of no return.

But failing to notice the map scale? Well, in retrospect, I was quite relieved because I had been stopping short and had put that down to lack of fitness. On the other hand, to have kept on stopping short and not to have twigged, verges on stupidity. Not a nice choice it couldn’t simply be both?

Never mind; next week I’ll take my son along on an informal event. At the age of eight I can still just keep ahead of him and he still can’t distinguish between a look of concentration and a look of bewilderment on my face. The dog certainly enjoys rushing round in circles.

P.S. We met a beginner in the wood who asked us where she was. I only smirked a little as I showed her and explained, in very simple terms, how to “thumb” her map.

Robin Nicol

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Location	Map reference	Organiser
13 Sep Saturday	Chairman's Challenge street-lane-path	Gorsley Mass start at 1400	SO 673262	Chris James 01989 720122
11 Oct Saturday	League 1	Painswick	SO 870118	Bill Smith 01452 610924
25 Oct Saturday	League 2	Minchinhampton	SO 858013	Eddie McLarnon 01242 673079
26 Oct Sunday	BOK Long "O"	Leigh Woods Ashton Court Ashton Plantation/ Providence	-	See BOK website for more details
9 Nov Sunday	NGOC Regional	Sallowvallets	SO 607116	Planner = Pat MacLeod
22 Nov Saturday	Informal	Bixslade	SO 607116	Rodney Archard 01432 356079
29 Nov Saturday	League 3	Moseley Green	SO 666061	Tom Mills 01452 760451
6 Dec Saturday	Western Night League (WNL) 1	Standish	SO 838087	Greg Best 01242 516053
2009				
1 Jan Thursday	New Year's Day Score	Parkend Mass start at 1100	SO 608079	Alan Brown 01242 580096
11 Jan Sunday	Galoppen	Cranham	SO 882130	John Fallows 01684 290256
17 Jan Saturday	WNL 2	Symonds Yat	SO 573118	Tom Mills 01452 760451

Enquiries to Organiser or Fixtures Secretary – Bill Smith 01452 610924

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

League Events: Registration 1130-1230 Starts from 1230-1330
 Senior £4 Junior £1
 Competitors who are not members of any club £5

Night Events Registration from 1800 – or when it's dark!
 Senior £4 Junior £1

Brashings

2008-2009 fixtures

The new season's fixtures list is included with this edition of Legend. You will see that a volunteer is still needed for League 8 at Cranham next May - contact Bill Smith on 01452 610924 or fixtures@ngoc.org.uk - we don't want to have to cancel the last Minileague event! The entry fee for Minileague events has been increased to £4 (£5 for competitors who are not members of any club).

AGM The 2008 AGM will be on Wednesday 15 October at the Gala Club, Fairmile Gardens, Gloucester. 1930 for 2000. Buffet £2 (juniors free). Lin Callard will give a talk on the Woodland Trust prior to the AGM.

Have your say!

Are there any matters that you would like the Committee to consider? Contact the Club Secretary, Pat Cameron, or any member of the Committee. The next Committee meeting is on Monday 3 November 2008.

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.

Caption Competition!

John Fallows singing in the rain at Croeso: can you think of a good caption for this photograph? The best will be printed in the next Legend.

Photograph: Paul Taunton

