

The QuOnicle



The Newsletter of Quantock Orienteers No. 141 January 2012

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EDITORIAL

This evening I took part in my first ever 'QOAD', QO's night orienteering series. Previously I'd been dissuaded by the lack of a decent head-torch, but as this one was an urban event around the streets of Taunton I thought I'd be pretty safe—as long as I kept around the streetlights. I did have one or two 'interesting' moments when I ventured further from the paths with my little Petzl struggling to penetrate the darkness, but what fun it was! Rather inevitably I now want to go and try it in some more typical QO terrain, and after seeing and trying some of the dazzling light-sources adorning the heads of some of my fellow competitors I have a bad case of headlight envy. Time to scour the January sales I think...

One thing is for sure, with the QOADs now a popular addition to the QO 'staples' of QOFL and JOG events the future looks just as bright as those lamps. But remember that all these events require an input from club members or they wouldn't happen at all, so please make sure you do something to help out in 2012. I hope you all have a happy and successful year.

—*Adrian Edwards*

POST FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another year! Another Quantock Christmas event has passed: but it very nearly didn't. At one time the event was cancelled. With no organiser available the prospects looked bleak. However in stepped the ever reliable Will Kromhout, and after many emails, changes of date and much discussion about the Apres 'O' venue and menu, the event was on and enjoyed by many both, from QO and neighbouring clubs. Orienteering is known as a thinking sport and I am told this was no exception. However did you realise that there was an ulterior motive in the 'reindeer-drawing' control? 'They' wished to find out if there were any budding cartographers among you.

It was unfortunate that Will, Sandra and the boys were not at the Wyndham Arms to announce the results and to receive the richly deserved applause for their efforts. However Robert Green and family (who arranged the venue for the buffet) were, and were warmly applauded. There were many others who contributed to the success and on your behalf I thank them all. With club members like these we are in safe hands.

During 2012 we can expect to be up to our eyes in sport and maybe getting a bit fed up with the Razzmatazz. What better way to get away from it all at a low key orienteering event; on your own in the forest, pitting your wits against the planner, nature, and (if you are so inclined) Joe Bloggs who beat you last week by 2 seconds.

Whatever takes your fancy, may I wish every one of you, all the very best for a happy and successful 2012.

—Mike Crockett

CLUB NEWS

Membership News

A slightly belated welcome to Colin Sands from Burnham-on-Sea, who joined the club just after the November QuOnicle went to print. Also joining QO recently is Pete Akers from Sherborne.

To all existing members, a polite reminder from our membership secretary...

Membership renewals are due NOW57 people have yet to do so! QO needs **YOU**.

JOG Report

There is no JOG report this month as it was between terms, but please see page 23 for the Spring 2012 fixture list.

Proposed SCC Woodland Sell-off

Jeff Pakes circulated the QO membership and received more than 20 responses all against the proposed SCC woodland sell-off. Jeff collated these into one letter and sent it to Deputy Council Solicitor Honor Clark in the name of the club:

SCC NOTICE REF CNV0038/1/JAH: PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF LAND AT GREAT WOOD, CUSTOM COMMON AND THORNCOMBE HILL, OVER STOWEY, BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET

The club would like to register its objection to Somerset County Council's proposal to sell several areas of land in the Quantock Hills that are currently in its ownership, as announced in the recent notice.

While the club appreciates that the council is making every effort to avoid having to reduce and stop important services in the present difficult economic climate, it holds the view that selling off public land is not the correct way forward. Members consider that this would be a desperate "one off" cash-raising operation and once done, is not likely to be reversible.

The club believes that access to suitable areas for sport, walking, etc, is essential for the well-being of the population in general, particularly at a time when obesity is becoming such a worrying trend. Amongst other initiatives, Quantock Orienteers actively encourages youngsters and families to explore the Somerset countryside through its junior orienteering group (JOG). We feel that targeting the resources that promote healthy outdoor activities is wrong.

We note that your intention is to sell one of our most used areas, Great Wood / Ramscombe to its current leaseholder. If the Forestry Commission is unlikely to accept this offer as some believe, the council may then sell to the highest bidder. The resultant commercial interest is unlikely to be persuaded to support voluntary bodies' use of these areas.

It seems to have been said that safeguards concerning public access, etc, will still be in place after the sale and the club realises that most, if not all, of these areas are open access land under the CroW act. However, this act does not apply to access by organisations for sporting purposes such as orienteering. The landowner's consent must still be obtained and a private landowner could refuse to give it in cases where it would have been given if the AONB wardens (on behalf of the council) and/or the Forestry Commission were in charge. For many participants, the potential accompanying increase in usage charges would also make orienteering a prohibitively expensive sport.

The club's present favourable position on access is a result of many years of getting to know landowners and of responding sensibly and sympathetically to their legitimate concerns. Great Wood, for example, has played host to orienteering for more than 40 years. A change of landlord would set us back considerably, involving at the very least a lot of time establishing new contacts for access. However hard we work at this, the outcome is uncertain.

The way this sale and the consultation about it have been advertised has been poor, almost appearing secretive. Even obtaining the email address to which this letter is being directed has not been easy. The "somerset.gov.uk" website appears to make no mention of the sell-off, yet the same website mentions the council's intention to be more open about its operation. Members believe that a sale of such a huge area of publicly owned land in such an important area should have been publicised much more widely and prominently.

Members would further like to remind the council how unpopular the recent suggestion to sell off the national forests was, and the consequent political fall-out suffered by the government. Once again, we are strongly opposed to the sale of publicly owned land, land that is owned by the public and for which the public has not given any agreement for the council to sell.

Yours sincerely,
Jeff Pakes

Club secretary on behalf of the members of Quantock Orienteers

Purple Pen Course

Dave Holmes held a Purple Pen Workshop for eight members of QO on the evening of 4th January. Adrian Edwards, Mark Maynard, Jenny Tennant, Mike Crockett, John Trayler, Mandy Godsell, Brian Fletcher and Roger Craddock attended. I started to write a summary but then decided I couldn't do better than to publish the email he sent to everyone before the Workshop:

"This email is to give you some idea of what you are in for! The session will be very much 'hands-on'. I have put together a short course that takes you through many aspects of the Purple Pen software, so that you can familiarise yourself with the details. There will be maps and other files on CD/memory stick that you will need to use. The CD will also have the latest PP version 112 which you will be able to install, or you can download before you come to save a little time :- <http://purplepen.golde.org/>

For convenience there will be a paper copy of the course for everybody to work through, and essentially it will be DIY with me hovering in the background to help where necessary. If we do it this way it means that each can progress at a pace suitable to their experience, as I expect some people will be much more familiar with this type of 'drawing' software than others.

At the end of the session you will take away the CD so you can refer back to the sections of the course, which form a small reference book for the next time you use PP.

Obviously you will need a laptop. I would strongly recommend a (wheel) mouse to use with this as so many of the operations require drag and accurate drop of control circles etc. Progress is much slower and more fiddly with the touchpad. There's a lot to do. Please be prompt and expect a very busy 1½ hours!

Regards
Dave Holmes

We are all very grateful to Dave for the time he spent preparing so thoroughly for the Workshop. It was an excellent evening made particularly productive as everyone could work at their own speed, with Dave there to assist each person as they needed it.

—Judy Craddock

[Ed: I would just like to convey my thanks to Judy and Roger as well for their kind hospitality. Learning Purple Pen is much easier with a ready supply of coffee and biscuits!]



Above: Dave giving Mandy some Purple Pen tips. Below: Feel the concentration!



2012km Gold Challenge

I hope this isn't an 'abuse' of my position as QuOnicle Editor, but I just wanted to let you know that I am currently undertaking a "2012km Gold Challenge" to raise funds for Bliss, the premature baby charity that helped my wife and I when our daughter was born nine weeks early. I will be running, cycling, rowing and swimming my way through 2012km in time for the start of the London 2012 Olympics in July. More details and my 'progress tracker' can be found at <http://www.goldchallenge.org/gc/user/adrian>

I would be very grateful for any sponsorship.

— *Adrian Edwards*

QuOte UnQuOte: Richard Hill

The series of 'pen portraits' of QO members continues with a rare beast this month—the Lesser-Spotted-Richie. His work in the Royal Signals prevents him from attending many club events, so let's find out some more about this elusive creature...

Name: Richard (Richie) Hill (or the guy in the crazy tights)

Occupation: Communications Systems Engineer in the Royal Corps of Signals

Age Class: M35

How long have you been orienteering: 11 years

How did you get into the sport?: My first posting was to Northern Ireland in 1999 as a "singley", and one of the Sergeants came banging round the accommodation block at a silly hour one Sunday morning looking for 'volunteers'. With hindsight, I was probably still drunk from

the previous night, when I found myself in minibus going to a NI military event, in some forest in the middle of NI.

It was a map memory event, and half the area had been felled in the previous week, so we were doing knees-to-chest through all the discarded branches. With a hangover, dehydration and no compass, I found the start again after about 2 hours, having only found 3 or 4 controls. Surprisingly, I went again a fortnight later and actually completed a course!

Best orienteering moment...: Purposely getting myself disqualified (and the person following me!) by mis-punching at a Military League Event at Hermitage, Nr Newbury. Felt so good at the time, especially as he was supposed to be better than me, and I knew he was faster than me!

...and worst orienteering moment: Godshill, New Forest. I went to jump a small ditch and caught the lip of it with my toes, but the rest of my weight just crunched my ankle. It was 3 months before I could even go out for a jog.

What's the one piece of advice you wish you'd been given when you first started orienteering?: KISS- Keep it simple, stupid!

Favourite O shoes: Inov-8 Mudclaws. I've tried the lighter variants but they don't last, especially with some of my dubious route choices!

Thumb or baseplate?: Thumb, although I do tend to forget to take one sometimes.

Favourite O areas: Exmoor – only place I know where you can be knee high in water on the top of a hill! And the Lake District.

What are your other interests?: Gardening, Cooking, Foraging, Reading, Wine making and numerous other random things.

What's your favourite... Music: an Eclectic taste (Wagner to Green Day) **TV:** pretty much anything on the Discovery Channel or Sfy Channel. **Film:** Hudson Hawk!

Who do you most admire?: James Cracknell – have a look at the TV program "The Toughest Race on Earth", for true inspiration on what the mind can make the body do.

Give us one fascinating fact about yourself that other club members might not know: This is difficult as the Editor has known me since school! I once sung in the Royal Albert Hall (this was before my voice broke, as since it is only the children who have to suffer my singing in the car!) [*Ed: I had no idea, and certainly wouldn't have guessed from his 'singing' on this year's OMMJ*]

And finally, describe yourself in three words: The Wife can do it in one – Muppet!



Richie in a pair of his 'trademark' tights.

EVENTS

QOFL 1— St Audries, 20/11/2011

There is a saying that everything happens in 3's. This event was the middle one of 3 events that all had certain similarities.

The 3 events were:-

13 th November	Devon Galoppen	Holne Moor, Ashburton
20 th November	QOFL 1	St Audries, Williton
27 th November	BOK Galoppen	Wavering Down, Axbridge

The common factors for these 3 events were:-

1. 3 successive Sundays.
2. 3 areas on very high ground, confirmed by the 3 Trig Points on or near the courses.
3. 3 hilly courses – Dartmoor, Quantock Hills, Mendip Hills, each with steep climbs.
4. 3 areas with exceptional views from the highest points. The courses inevitably took you over the highest points, but the view from Holne Moor was only a memory from last time due to the rain, the mist, and the cloud, and it was cold. However there was the reassuring sight of the Slim Controller, Bill Vigar, coming down the path and appearing out of the mist as I was going up into it, who spoke the comforting words "It's even worse up there". An area that needed accurate compass work or you were lost.
5. 3 warnings with one at each event—
 - Due to the recent adverse weather the pits near Control 38 are now ponds.
 - The Courses are very exposed. For your safety and comfort please consider wearing or carrying a windproof or waterproof jacket if the weather is poor.

- Safety – Some of the routes cross crags. You should make your own assessment of whether you have the capability to ascend or descend them and if in doubt go around.
6. 3 areas with ever present gorse. Only two choices – go around it or through it and the latter was usually the shortest route.

I am not complaining as Adrian asked me to write this article as "I appeared to have enjoyed the course".

And so to the Light Green Course for this event. The weather was good with the sun shining to make it well worthwhile being on the Quantocks. The start was in sight of Registration unlike other recent events when it was 600m and 1.1 km away. First sight of the map was good news as there was not the usual adventure down to the woods towards the coast, but the position of the first control confirmed it was a Quantock Hills course as it was uphill. There was at least a decent path to follow albeit at a steady walk and the control was found on a path bend.

The location of the second control was obviously a climb again as shown by the contours on the map and confirmed by a quick compass check on the direction. The only route choice was up in a straight line, and due to the convex shape of the hill another compass check was sensible to go in the right direction. The map description was "Rough Open" which initially was not too bad and a steady climb was maintained. And then there was this massive patch of heather and some gorse, so I aimed off to reach a path to make the continual climbing easier. Perhaps these large areas should be described as "Rough Fight" as opposed to "Forest Fight". Soon the Trig Point came into view and this gave the impetus to reach the control.

Once at the top there was a respite from climbing with a large plain in front and the way forward was more or less level. A flattish muddy path led to another flattish muddy path and control three was off in the heather. The route to control four was a muddy track but at least

a steady jog could be maintained. There was a junction of several paths and it is always best practice to check the correct route at these junctions as it is a long way back if you take the wrong path. With the correct path confirmed and a steady jog I was soon close to the location and it was a matter of finding the depression to find the control. When checking my times, the time taken between controls three and four was half of that taken for the first three controls.

And then began the long leg to control five. There was only one route and it was a matter of getting to the good track by the quickest route. It was possible to do this as the scrub was low and gave the opportunity to cut off some corners. The track more or less followed the contours and although a steady jog was achieved it seemed to take ages to get to the next track junction as the track went across the start of the long finger of a spur and the head of a couple of stream valleys. It was then down and up to cross the head of another valley and look for a small earthbank forming a long forgotten enclosure. It was found and it seemed as though you were moving along the remains of a First World War trench to get to the control.

After that it was up and over the top to control six. Reaching the path above was a good sign and a compass check was made as again there was a convex hill. The bad sign was again the heather and gorse that slowed progress. So again I aimed off to reach the path that passed the control. This meant better progress but it was necessary to quickly develop the technique of left eye looking at the path and right eye looking for the depression that hid the control. It worked as the well down in the depression control was found.

The route to control seven was a matter of getting back onto the path, with a slight pause at the T junction with a track to take in the sea view. The next view towards the control confirmed what was indicated on the map. It appeared to be on the other side of a large "Rough Fight" patch of gorse. On getting closer it was. As there was a cut off corner approach I crashed through it and the control was close by.

To get to control eight was an up and down route with a common approach and then Plan A or Plan B. If I did Plan A there was a very good track that took me slightly away from the straight line, and lead to a path that went below the control. Plan B took me slightly away again from the straight line in the opposite direction, with a path that would leave me directly opposite the control. Trouble was, I completely missed the track for Plan A as the approach track was a steady head down walk upwards and I walked past the junction. Plan B did work as I got to the point directly opposite the long forgotten stone wall near the control, and it was down and up the other side to find the control with the approach through thick undergrowth.

It was a short climb to get above this control and a relatively flat approach to control nine. This at least allowed a contour jog and walk through the heather to the control located on a path. The run down the track to the finish was a welcome relief.

The straight line distance was 4.0 km, and my route was 4.5 km. Time was 52 mins 8 secs and I was happy with both distance and time, as I do not regard myself as a runner and I did not make any of my avoidable mistakes.

These personal factors make up part of my enjoyment of Orienteering. I do Light Green or Short Green because I can cope with the distances and usually on a good day take about an hour which gives me excellent entertainment value. It also presents a challenge with reading the map and compass, and route selection, and it is you against yourself. If you make a wrong decision or mistake you have given yourself a penalty – not the referee. Above all, the events must have Entertainment Value or an Enjoyment Factor at club level as people will come back again and again. The courses do not need to be an Endurance Test with the comment that I have heard of "I am not coming back here again". Many thanks to all involved with this event as it was a thoroughly enjoyable event. As Adrian said "I appeared to have enjoyed the course". I did!

—Norman Harvey

QOFL 2– Lydeard Hill, 18/12/2011

Once again the weather gods smiled on QO as QOFL 2 was held on a glorious and bright winter's day, although it felt a bit nipper up on the high ground with a cold wind blowing and I was quite glad I found a pair of running gloves knocking around in my kit bag. The weather probably helped boost the attendance levels, and I gather from the organiser (the ever-dependable Jeff Pakes) that it was a bumper turn-out. It was also a good chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping and head out for some time in the hills—the last-minute Christmas shopping would just have to wait!

The start was on the southern corner of Lydeard Hill near the car park. My first control on Light Green was a thicket just off the path running north east parallel to Muchcare Wood. The route to number two was a choice between picking up the same path again and following it round the corner across some open ground to head for the northern side of the hill, or finding a more direct way using the earth-banks and smaller paths to cut through the undergrowth. I chose the former as the distance wasn't that much greater (a popular choice judging by Route Gadget), only to find an obstacle that wasn't marked on the map. I can't blame the mapper though – after all, dogs tend to be pretty mobile! This particular canine started chasing after me as I crossed some rough open. This happens quite often when I'm out running, and I didn't pay too much attention until it jumped up and caught me in the back of the legs, sending me sprawling in the dirt. As I got back on my feet I'm sure it looked at me and smirked before running off... I will be suggesting to the Committee that this sign should be displayed at all future events in the area, and all competitors should be equipped with a DCM (Dog Counter-Measures) device in the form of a packet of dog biscuits.



With wayward pets behind me I headed down into a gully on the north side of the hill to pick up control 2, before contouring along the slope to find control 3 on a vegetation boundary. It was then a steep and muddy descent to control 4 at a fence junction, with a nifty crossing point marked up along the end of an earth-bank.

This took me into the valley between Lydeard Hill and Middle Hill, and the only serious bit of climb on the course. On Light Green we only had to make the climb once, picking up a control on a vegetation boundary part way up. I gather the Green course diverged at this point and they had to traverse this area twice, giving some interesting route choice between greater climb or greater distance.

From a control at the top of the hill just off the Macmillan Way it was back to Lydeard Hill, with an easy control at the gate at the north east end of the hill. Control 8 was on an earth-bank and a little hard to spot amongst the vegetation. I initially overshot, but soon found it by following the line of the earth-bank. There was then an interesting route choice as the leg to control 9 necessitated crossing most of Lydeard Hill in an easterly direction to the gate at the northern corner of Muchcare Wood. The brambles made the direct route unappealing, so I used the network of paths that criss-cross the hill to pick my way across until I hit the open ground on the east side of the hill. The last section was then in Muchcare Wood, with a control on the stream that bisects the woods. Some clearing work had left the ground pretty sticky along the path into the woods, but I soon found the control and returned to the path for the run to the finish, remembering to pick up the final control on a path bend on the way in.

This will probably be my last ever Light Green course as it's about time I stepped it up a gear, but it was a perfect way to finish my time at this level. As I walked back through the woods to download, I'd even stopped cursing that dog.

—*Adrian Edwards*



Graham, Shelia & Nick ready for the off

Christmas Novelty—Blackborough South, 01/01/2012

New Years Day saw a gathering of forty or so people at the Forest Glade campsite on the Blackdowns to kick start 2012 with the Christmas Novelty Event. It was good turnout of all ages, family groups, friends from neighbouring clubs, old hands and newcomers to this, which nearly didn't happen until Will Kromhout and family stepped in with only two weeks to go, to plan and organise the day.

There was a large huddle around the rules which had been posted on the wall and lots of perusing and plotting as we digested the format- one hour score ok happy with that, 20 controls 10 points each, yep been there done that, Christmas presents or puddings- hmmm going to have read all of this... Depending on the course there was either Santa's circuit to follow, alternating between present and pudding controls or for us on 'Blue', presents had to be picked off first then swapping over to the puddings and no going back to the presents. My head was beginning to feel sore and I didn't have a hangover.

There were bonuses in them thar woods too. There was a present being handed from person to person that had to be signed for and the more signatures meant more points for those people and if you were lucky a wandering Santa had a 20 minute slot to hand out presents of varying sizes worth more points.

Anyway on with the action, we had a mass punching start which could have resembled a World Cup rugby scrum but was actually quite orderly and I spent a couple of minutes deciding which presents to pick first. I trailed in to the first control behind Sheila which was surrounded by a young family- a quick dib then we were off to leave the family not planning the next route but answering the quiz. Yes, on each control was a laminated card with puzzles, anagrams, questions and codes to decipher for more points. Luckily I overheard the answer unless someone was calling me a turkey so I scribbled that on the back of my map as I set off after Sheila to remind her about the quiz bit.



At the start

It was about this point when the rain set in, well we can't have it too easy- but progress was still good, I even got my name on the wandering present, thanks to a patient Jenny Tennant waiting for me to scramble up a mud covered escarpment. Then it had to happen- it all went pear shaped. I think I have made all the mistakes that can be made but this was a new one which was quite apt for the day.



Sandra and Elliott



Will, saviour of the Christmas Novelty

I just swapped to my first Christmas pud 109 on the edge of the map, decrypted a code with the help of Christopher who handily is a programmer and folded the now very second-hand, soggy map so the wrong half was face up. I saw pudding 119 on the map and set off towards pudding 117 and found my previous present 110 which I interpreted as present 118 on the map. The rest we shall say is history but I basically had to bail out to be back within the hour.

I could see the finish and I had 62 minutes on the clock but there was one last pudding that was

too tempting close by. It had a table beside it and the final challenge was to copy a reindeer on soaked paper with a biro- it cost me 20 penalty points as I always get carried away with drawing but hey I was having a good time.

The splits printout was accompanied by a Christmas card, mulled wine and a mince pie, it was a good atmosphere as people compared routes in the sheltered assembly area, then some were off to the pub for a hot buffet to round off a good mornings entertainment and hangover cure.



What a pair

—*Brian Pearson*



The Johnsons



Father Christmas and one of his Elves. Santa's definitely been on a diet!

JOG FIXTURES—SPRING 2012

Saturday events are from **2.00-3.00pm**
Sunday QOFLs are from **11.00am-1.00pm**

Sat 14th Jan	Holway/Blackbrook	ST249 239
Sat 21st Jan	Vivary Park	ST229 239
Sun 29th Jan	Crowcombe Park Gate (QOFL)	ST122 158
Sat 4th Feb	Longrun/Castle/SCAT	ST220 250
Sun 12th Feb	Cothelstone Hill (QOFL)	ST190 326
Sat 18th Feb	Triscombe Stone	ST164 359
Sat 25th Feb	Netherclay Woods	ST206 252
Sat 3rd March	Castle Neroche	ST276 161
Sat 10th March	Broomfield Hill	ST212 325
Sat 17th March	Great Woods	ST164 378
Sat 24th March	Hankridge Water Park	TA1 2LP or ST253 255

Please confirm fixtures at
<http://www.quantockorienteers.co.uk>

Ring Judy Craddock on **01823 323850** for more information

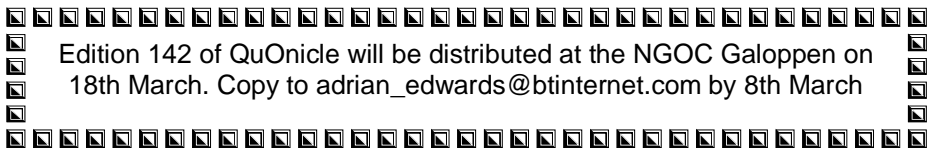


Fixtures Senior Club Events

29.01.12	QOFL3	Crowcombe Park Gate/Dead Woman's Ditch	ST162383
12.02.12	QOFL4	Cothelstone Hill and Twenty Acre Plantation	ST190326
18.02.12	QOAD4	Triscombe Stone	ST164359
03.03.12	QOAD5	Castle Neroche	ST271161
01.04.12	QOFL5	Priors Park Wood	ST228167
15.04.12	Galoppen	Croydon Hill	SS974420
13.05.12	QOFL6	Staple Hill	ST247172

The Forest League (QOFL) is our series of regular events with colour coded courses, White to Blue to suit all abilities. Start times 11am to 1pm. Costs: Senior £7 (£5 BOF members), Junior £2, Families £12, Dibber Hire £1.

PLEASE CHECK DETAILS BEFORE TRAVELLING:
www.quantockorienteers.co.uk


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