

Dave Holmes. Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2012

I have been asked by Jan to say a few words on behalf of Quantock Orienteers about Dave as an Orienteer.

Dave started orienteering while he was at York University in 1967. At the time he was completing his Mountain Leadership Course and was already a committed cross country and fell runner. After graduating he stayed in York and became a member of EBOR and in 1978, when he and Jan moved to Bolton, he joined the Manchester and District Orienteering Club.

We have received fond memories of Dave's coaching and mapping skills from Vicky Thornton of MDOC, who was then Vicky Mason. She says:

“One of Dave's many strengths was to offer encouragement to MDOC juniors. I vividly remember him painstakingly teaching my father, Phil, and me how to operate the huge printing machine. His love of maps was obvious and his fascination with them rubbed off on all of us. It would take an hour or more just to set the machine up with all the inks, trays and paper and then a handle was manually turned for each and every map but not just once – the map was fed through again and again for every colour on the map individually until the full colour map had been built up. I remember Dave was a perfectionist when it came to getting the ‘register’ for each colour spot on and I was left in no doubt about the endless hours of work Dave must have done quietly in the background, for without a good map we would all have been lost for sure!”

We, at QO, inherited Dave's skills. When he transferred to Taunton to teach, he built on the work of our mapping expert, Bill Vigar. Dave developed the OCAD route and has left a great legacy by encouraging and supporting several Club members to become mappers and showing Junior Orienteering Group planners how to use the Purple Pen programme to prepare their own courses.

Both Ruth and Rachael are elite orienteers and this is a direct result of Dave's enthusiasm, encouragement and support. Jan remembers one of their first events with QO a few months after Ruth was born. Dave took Rachael on a string course, leaving Jan with Ruth slung in front of her. Needless to say by the time he returned, Jan had taken control of registration and was giving the orders! Some things never change! Dave saw orienteering as an important family activity, and although he was totally committed to his Outdoor pursuits at King's - Duke of Edinburgh Award, Cross country running, Ten Tors training - he always tried to leave himself free for his family on Sundays so they could travel further a-field for Regional and National events.

Dave's contribution to SW orienteering included scoring the regional league for many years, and replacing their rather tired trophies with carefully designed and beautifully crafted perpetual ones in secure boxes. He has mapped two Taunton areas for use as Permanent Orienteering Courses, the latest (at Fyne Court) was completed last week. The Friends of Longrun Meadow are to site a seat or tree in his memory in recognition of his work in designing, mapping and updating the courses in the Country Park.

Dave was a very competitive orienteer and was usually in the top section of results. The pinnacle of his achievements was being selected in 1996 to represent England in the veterans Home International in Northern Ireland. His contribution to QO's relay's successes must be recorded, - especially the time when, as a new arrival from the North, he was invited to be first leg runner in a team that seriously misjudged his speed, causing Ted Heath to be caught in the changeover pen with his tracksuit on - and a very red face!

A few years ago a new initiative was started in QO to introduce orienteering to local families. This required small events to be held on different areas on at least 12 consecutive Saturdays each term. Without Dave and Bill this would not have happened. Dave in his quiet but utterly reliable manner helped planners update maps, draw courses and print them. He sought out new areas around Taunton, mapped them and kept an overall eye on how future events were progressing - giving a prod when Judy and the planners weren't producing their courses in time. It remains to be seen how we will manage without him.

A number of QO members have felt that they would like to establish an event in Dave's memory. He helped survey and did the cartography for the Awards for All series of maps of Taunton, and he was hoping to extend them to include the whole of the town for an Urban event. Ruth and Rachael have offered their knowledge of this type of event, and we have willing mappers, organisers, 'guardians' of controls sites, and officials to put on an inaugural TAUNT 'O' next year, with an Award in his honour.

Dave. Many of these observations have been a factual record of your contributions to Orienteering, but to many of us the memory of your company, humour, and integrity is what will survive. Nevertheless, when you get to where you are going, could you find time to use your surveying and mapping skills to provide an Orienteering map of that area for all of us ageing QO members!!

Roger Craddock  
(QO Committee)