

## Fixtures

## Club Events

7.12.08	QOFL 3 Team 2	Priors Park	ST 221161	Sue Craythorne 01884 840631
27.12.08	Christmas Event	Sheldon Blackdowns	ST113070	Bill Vigar 01823 680679
25.1.09	QOFL 4 Team 3	Lydeard Hill	ST183335	R. Sansbury 01823-288405
15.3.09	QOFL 5 Team 1	Crowcombe Heathfield	ST127343	A.Rimes 01823 451942
10.5.09	QOFL 6 Team 2	Staple Hill	ST 246159	Ted Heath 01823 251985

Start Times for QOFLs(QO Forest League) 11.00-13.00

### **Other Events in the South West**

3.12.08	BAOC Military League	Ham Hill	ST 478165	Richard Hill 01823 481064
28.2.08	Devon Christmas Novelty Event	Bullers Hill Exeter	SX 883848	Adrian Taylor 01935 274152
11.1.09	NGOC Galloppen	Cranham	SO 882130	R.Coe 01594 510444

All the South West fixtures are shown on [www.swoa.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/](http://www.swoa.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/)



You are advised to check event details before travelling.

Edition 123 of Quonicle will be distributed early in the  
New Year  
Copy to me by 1st January please.



## The Newsletter of Quantock Orienteers

No. 122 November 2008

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QO Website <http://www.quantockorienteers.co.uk/>

## Quantock Orienteers Committee

Chairman	Richard Sansbury	01823-288405	Fixtures
Secretary	Ted Heath	01823- 251985	Website
Treasurer	Roger Craddock	01823-323850	
Committee	Bob Lloyd	01823-333251	Permissions
	Brian Pearson	01823_252407	
	Jeff Pakes	01278-433687	
	Brian Fletcher	01935- 424569	Youth
	Bill Vigar	01823-680679	Mapping
	Nick Fernandes	01935-424128	
Other Club Officials	Ian Bartlett	01749-840797	Club Captain
	Tony Milroy	01278-427875	QOFL
	Mike Crockett	01458-445540	Membership Quonicle

### **Editorial**

Welcome to another new season and new club leadership. With Richard Sansbury as Chairman, Ian Bartlett as Club Captain and Jeff Pakes joining the Committee the average age of the committee has reduced considerably.

Margaret and I have just returned from a few days in Venice. We managed to find our way around by means of street maps, YES contrary to expectation they do exist. Unfortunately it was late in the holiday that I discovered that North was about 20 degrees off vertical, which probably accounted for my lack of success navigating by compass.

### **Team lists**

<u>Team 1</u>	<u>Team 2</u>	<u>Team 3</u>
<u>Roger Craddock Leader</u>	<u>Ted Heath Leader</u>	<u>R. Sansbury Leader</u>
Bussell Andy & Rachel	Bolling Keith	Appleby Adele
Clegg Neil	Chesters John	Bartlett Ian
Craddock Judy	Chesters Ruth	Bartlett Marion
Edmonds Marie	Crawford Hugh	Baybutt John
*Elliston Steve	Fairweather Caroline	Butcher Peter
Elliston Kay	Fisher John	Craythorne Susan
*Evans Joanna	Foord Ron	Crockett Margaret
Gray Donald	Gard Sue	Crockett Mike
Harvey Norman	Hartley Graham	Cudmore Chris
Hill Richard	Heath Lennox	Daniels Jan
Holmes David & Jan	Husband Ian	Denton Chris
Llewellyn-Eaton Joel	Lloyd Bob	Fernandes Nick
*Llewellyn-Eaton Rhys	Modica Izzy	Fernandes Bev
Llewellyn-Eaton R'ard	Pakes Jeff	Fletcher Brian
Longhurst Martin	Patterson John	Hands David
Maynard Family	Pye Elizabeth	Hext Tony
Mallinson Jim	Pye Iain	Hollingsworth Family
Milroy Tony	Robertson Ewan	Knipe Matthew
Nicholson John	Ryan Tim	Kromhout Richard
Pearson Brian & Nicky	Scott-Hartley Callum	Kromhout William
Pearson Graham	Spenlove-Brown Tim	Kromhout Fay
Pearson Jim	Trayler John	Larcombe Mark
Philip Chris	Trembath James	Nickolls Jim
Pottage Barrie	Vigar Bill	Richardson Geoff
Rimes Andy	Windsor Steve	Scott Mary
Round Alice	*Williams Ian	Tennant Jenny
Round John & Nicola	Williams Stephen	Wakeling Garry
Round Zoe	*Williams Joanne	Waite Xanthe
Thakur Kieran	York Family	
Wood Tim		
Wych Rosie		

\* These members are living away at present but we will be delighted to see them when they are in the local area , even more delighted if they could find time to help at an event.

## **Club matters continued from page 4**

Notes from committee Meeting 18th November

1. Jeff Pakes was co-opted onto the Ctte
2. (The Ctte voted to apply for Clubmark
3. The Awards for all Grant is progressing
4. A lot of activity on Schools and JOG front
5. Judy Craddock will take over as Membership Secretary from January 2009.
6. New Event Structure on track for 2010

Full minutes from the committee meeting will be on the club website.

### **JOG**

The JOG activities have been transferred to Saturday from 12 –2pm, but we still provide one coach on Thursdays to keep contact with Taunton AC and provide publicity.

A lot of work is falling on the shoulders of a few. It is hoped to address in the near future.

There is a meeting of coaches early in December to discuss various items among them the provision of additional help.

### **Team Lists**

The up to date team lists with new members added are on the opposite page. The club has been divided into 3 so you are not asked to help at ALL events. Could you please take note of which team you are allocated to and try and be available for the dates of the QOFL's when you will be asked to help.

If you have any queries, I will be at the next few events to try and meet up with you and get to know the new faces!!

Lennox Heath

I gather that later in November there is a Street O around the area we stayed and that the O map is far better than any of the commercial ones available. Unfortunately I was too late to get hold of one.

On our return to Street we found a very frightened toy poodle wandering in the road. (Toby didn't think much of the present we had apparently brought back for him and was pleased when she left us to rejoin her owner.) We spent nearly a day sorting this out with help from a great number of people.

Why is he telling us this? I hear you say. Well the dog was microchipped but the records had not been kept up to date. The lady had moved from Brighton to Somerset some time ago and changed her telephone number twice. To cap it all she was on holiday in Spain and totally unaware of anything untoward.

The moral of this is to remind you to keep records up to date and remind you that both QO and British Orienteering need to know of any changes to your details.

In the meantime enjoy the forests and keep the reports coming in.

### **Chairman's Chat**

As this is my first Chairman's Chat, I'd like to thank those who have supported me in becoming chairman, and say many thanks to Bill for filling in the role for last year. Bill does so much for the club with the mapping and electronics but only took on the Chairman job reluctantly. The club is in good health with a steady enthusiastic membership and sound finances, but there are a couple of particular issues facing us in the immediate future.



Richard Sansbury Club Chairman

First we have the Schools Activities and JOG. The number of helpers involved in JOG shows that there is considerable interest in this project. In local schools we have given an orienteering experience to large numbers of children. So far we have not seen many coming along to mainstream QO events, but we remain optimistic. But there is a possibility that the present opportunities to continue with schools may be closed to us if we do not go for clubmark.

Secondly we have the opportunity to apply for substantial funding which could be used to develop the club. While we could continue as we are for the immediate future, we have decided to apply for a grant for a series of community orienteering events in which we would host some urban orienteering, enabling us to buy a new electronic punching system and keeping up with other clubs in our region.

I hope you like the direction the committee is taking, and hope to see you at one of our events soon.

Richard

## Club News

### Welcome to new members

Ian Husband and John Fisher are old friends who we now welcome as members.

Alfie and Tom Hollingsworth have joined us as junior local members.

The Maynard Family (Mark, Sarah, Owen and Evelyn) have also joined us as local family members

We look forward to seeing you all at future events.

### AGM.

The minutes of the AGM will be on the club website soon. If any one wants a printed copy please contact Ted Heath.

few months younger than Mick Jagger (and think what he looks like nowadays), that did the trick!

As a result I found myself one day in early September at a roundabout near the A2 in Kent waiting for a coach which took me and forty-nine other cyclists on the coach to France. The 49 cyclists were dropped off in Rouen, Tours, and Bordeaux etc. I went as far as Bayonne.

The route to Santiago took me over the Pyrenees (in a gale) to Pamplona, across "La Meseta"- a huge plain between Burgos and Leon - and across two ridge lines over 4,000 feet. Averaging 45 miles a day, I was able to complete the journey in thirteen days giving me an extra day in Santiago, which is a fascinating city dating from the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

There were, of course, many other pilgrims on the route, the vast majority walkers, including a couple of large walking groups who had their luggage taken on ahead for them! I encountered other cyclists, mainly on mountain bikes.

Memories of the trip are those of great contrasts. The windy mountains, the hot, dusty plains, the quiet pueblos (villages) looking like something out of a cowboy film and the noisy, bustling cities. I developed a system of self motivation based upon bribery – promising myself a sweet or refreshment once I reached a certain landmark, which worked very well. My orienteering may have benefited also, as most roads had posts spaced at 25 metre intervals and it was useful to develop my distance-judging skills.

When I finally reached the cathedral square in Santiago, some 550 miles later, I was surrounded by other peregrinos (pilgrims) congratulating themselves at having made it. I offered up a little prayer of thanks for arriving safely, having avoiding collision with a lorry, car or even fellow traveller on the way, as well as not falling into the ever-present concrete storm drains by the side of the road!

ED—Tim has so far raised about £5,500 for the charity H4H.

## **QOFL (Quantock Orienteers Forest League)**

Mike Crockett

The season is now underway with two events gone. Both events have been very successful. With a good turn out from both club members and visitors from neighbouring clubs and further afield.

The first event at Culm Davy had the bonus of the car park being enlarged but as this is to facilitate forestry operations it may not be of benefit for the future.

Yesterday's event at Triscombe was very well attended and a lot of interest was expressed by other users of the area. It was a pity that the mist came down making the afternoon quite unpleasant. I think that most competitors had completed the exposed parts of the course by that time and so were not handicapped by the low visibility.

There are no front runners on the longer courses but Robert Green on Light Green and Jenny Wood on Orange have won both events.

### **By way of a change.**

I frequently ask for reports of other activities members of QO undertake. Here is one.

#### **CYCLING TO SANTIAGO**

Tim Spenlove Brown

I decided to cycle to Santiago de Compostela in N W Spain to raise money for the "Help for Heroes" charity because I had been at Headley Court, the tri-service rehabilitation centre, that was the original focus of their fund-raising. Also, I felt strongly that the wounded from Iraq and Afghanistan were not getting the support that they deserved and this was what H4H was now trying to redress.

Immediately I was faced with doubts – was I fit enough to survive this trip? Could I carry enough Mars Bars? Wasn't I too old for this sort of thing? After a while I realised, of course, that once I got fitter I wouldn't need the Mars Bars and when I remembered that I'm only a

## **Membership Renewals**

Members are reminded that renewal is required by British Orienteering office by 12th December so that Membership cards can be issued for 1st January 2009

### **Army events**

BAOC (11 Signals Regiment) are holding one of their weekly training events at Ham hill on 3rd December. Start times 12.00 –15.00. Civilians are welcome but take part at their own risk.

### **Christmas**

A flier for Quantock Christmas event is enclosed with this newsletter.

### **QO Publicity**

Are you good at design? The committee is looking for ways to improve our posters and flyers that we use to advertise our events. We are launching a competition to design a style of flyer that we could use. The closing date will be the end of January. Please see the website forum for details of how to take part and some initial ideas.

### **From SWOA**

There will be a technical conference at Millfield, Street on 5th Dec. All controllers, planners, organisers and interested members are welcome. Free lunch will be provided. Further Information is available in SINS or on the SWOA website.

Booking is essential (by 1.12.08) to  
[arthur.vince@btinternet.com](mailto:arthur.vince@btinternet.com), 01935 863429.

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## Events

For a change I have persuaded someone from outside the club to contribute this article. I am very pleased I did . Thank you John!  
But please not so much of the “old”. You’re the same age as me.

### MECHANICAL OVERLOAD

An old chap's experience at the QO Galoppen.

Avoid power lines, welding equipment, airport security scanners and no heavy lifting were amongst the instructions issued to me by the pacemaker surgeon. Fairly obvious you'd have thought. Other things included not to raise my arms above head height, no MRI scans and for goodness sake, don't be cremated. This list seemed pretty comprehensive - that is until the 28th Sep 2008.

I suppose I should have known better but it had been ages since I'd been to Quantock Forest North and the mental scars had healed over the years. However, it all came back to me almost as soon as I left the start kite, on the green course, and made the stiff 75 metre ascent to the road crossing. "Phew! thank goodness that's over," I gasped as a few gurgles and crackling sounds emanated from the old pulseometer - though still only half way to control No1 - say another 5 mins - Yeah! Right! But I'm getting ahead of myself, let's rewind.

What a great day in prospect a few patches of fog on the M5 but this would soon clear. Indeed it did and the weather was marvellous as we were welcomed by the first QO representative. A similarly warm welcome awaited in the assembly area where, in return for my six quid, I was presented with a piece of map about the size of a postage stamp and what appeared to be a small can opener. Now I know one or two Quantock types and although they're a bit odd this was weird behaviour even by their standards. I don't know about you but when I'm in these puzzling situations I hang about and see what everyone else does and so it was that I found that on the back of the miniature map were the control descriptions - only seven controls, no problem. The can opener was still a puzzle though.

## FOD

Before some of us have got around to thinking of these events as Regional, change is upon us again so this may well be the last of its kind. This did cause me think about whether it matters much what events are called, what matters is the quality of the planning and the suitability of the area. On both of these counts there were no problems. The area, used for JK 2007, is almost 100% runnable forest, apart from the hills some may add! The deep valleys with plenty of potential control features allow courses to be planned with lots of route choice.

Perhaps BOF is right in reducing the number of events that are run in age classes as so many competitors 'run up'. This is particularly the case in the M/W 21 classes. At this event the ages of the first 4 in M21 were: M45, M35, ?, M50. In W21 the first two were W40, W45.

Bill Vigar

The results of QO members attending were:

Ian Bartlett	M40L	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bill Vigar	M70L	1 <sup>st</sup>
Andy Rimes	M45L	8 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Crockett	M70L	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Matthew Knipe	M45S	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sue Gard	W45L	4 <sup>th</sup>
Martin Longhurst	M50L	8 <sup>th</sup>	Rosie Wych	W50L	7th
Hugh Crawford	M50L	19 <sup>th</sup>			



Ian Bartlett your new Club Captain who had a good result at Sallowvallets

by a later finisher having been the first to arrive back at the hall during the day following a lucky error free run. If this had not been the case, it could well have been difficult asserting that fact given my partner was the controller!

#### Controllers/Organisers Comments

I hope that you will agree that the *Martin Longhurst Years* got off to a good start! The event I think will be memorable for the singularly damp weather which probably made the excellent refreshments and comfortable hall even more welcome than usual. Well done especially to those who had completed the Devon event, it was understandable that that they suffered by comparison to those with fresh legs.

The small team of helpers really do put a huge amount of time and effort into making the whole thing work. Martin and Bill over the months before and Sue, Lennox, Judy; and Roger especially on the day for his lengthy manning of the checkpoint in thick mist.

For future reference some fine tuning of the planning is needed to help us know more accurately where runners are along the way and it would be appreciated if the stated closing time of the courses could be kept to by all competitors. Thank you to all the car drivers who reacted so very agreeably to being directed to park in various parts of the village as the parking field was so wet.

Martin was worried that it was going to be too easy, the weather worked in his favour here and some controls that would have been very easy proved nightmarishly difficult for some unfortunate souls. It was a shame that some of the glorious views we had both in the summer heat and stormy previous day putting out controls could not be seen. You also missed much of the gorse and bracken that made summer exploration painful and tiring.

It is always satisfying to have positive comments. Thanks to those who do take the trouble to express their appreciation. We hope you will return in 2009 - Martin is already scheming!

Rosie Wych

**The NGOC Badge, sorry Regional, Event at Sallowvallets in the**

Back to the top of the hill. I suppose it was the combination of the strange noises coming from the pacemaker, burning lungs, oxygen debt plus the worry of the mysterious can opener thingy that made me lose concentration at this pointl - oh! and it was a 1-15000 map. Suffice to say it took me like forever to locate control one. Nice forest though. This time wasn't completely wasted as during my wandering I suddenly recalled the old Joe Lee jobbies that I had used in the dim and distant just in time to verify my presence at control No1. So a quick fiddle and I was off towards No2 at a slow gallop. It was all downhill of course. 1min .28secs but then it was only 120metres. Now I'm in the mood - watch out No3. Leap the stream - Oh! no. Just as my life support system was settling down - only the odd squeak here and there - came the next ascent. Another 75 metres but significantly steeper. My zig-zag technique was only partially successful as it eased the climb but doubled the distance. I lay down to recover and let the wiring cool off. They said it had a ten year life but I couldn't help feeling that maybe I was venturing outside of the conditions stipulated in the manufacturer's warranty. I reflected on how clever Sue, Roger and Richard had been to convince the club to let them officiate rather than compete and how Bill was sitting comfortably in his car sipping his gin and tonic knowing he'll easily make up the points at the next galoppen. Once I felt things had settled down to within the normal operational limits I was off again and surprisingly I coasted the rest of the course through primarily nice runnable, or in my case staggerable, forest.

Oddly enough I did, on reflection enjoy it, as did the other BOK folk with whom I chatted. This included particular appreciation of an excellent blue course - many thanks Quantock.

John Parker - BOK

ps As it was Sunday and the pacemaker clinic was closed I popped into the local garage on my way home and after a couple of squirts of WD 40 everything was fine.

pps You will be pleased to learn that Quantock Forest North has been added to the official list of things for pacemaker hosts to avoid.

**OMM** As you all will know by now there has been a lot of adverse media publicity for the KIMM or OMM as it is now known. I was secretly pleased to see that it was reported as a fell running event. Several club members were there. Here are Richard's and Martin's thoughts on the events of the weekend.

#### **Richard says**

We normally complain about a lack of media attention about orienteering. But this October the Original Mountain Marathon (OMM), which is essentially a long orienteering event, became the lead story on the national news. I don't think I have been involved in a headline story before, so here comes my account.

This was my second mountain marathon and my first OMM. I took part in the Saunders Mountain Marathon back in the summer when the days were long, the weather mild, but it was raining (of course). This time I hadn't seen a recent weather forecast but as I travelled up to Cumbria with my race partner Ian Bowles and others from Devon on the Friday the talk was all about the predicted heavy rain, floods and winds gusting to 110mph. I hoped these were exaggerated, but that Friday night I didn't sleep well mostly due to the noise of roaring wind and flapping tents.

Our start was early and we arrived slightly late so it was a bit of a muddle. We were clearly told to use bad weather courses which meant about one quarter was cut off of our 28km "A class" course but again everyone was carrying on. We left the windy start with a rather impractical A2 size thickly laminated difficult to fold map and headed for high ground. On the hill tops we felt the full force of the wind, but its direction was in our favour, it was still dry and as a bonus the views were good.

About an hour in to our run the rain started. At first the rain on our backs was not a problem but the wind grew stronger and more gusty. After a brief stop near lunchtime to shelter in a derelict shed and put on more clothes we had to turn into the wind. Running on exposed ridges was out of the question, so route choice was severely limited by

the path network extensively until at the far west end of the course beyond Alderman's Barrow where the tussock grass reduced me to a walk. Shortly after a quick chat with a rather lonely looking Roger Craddock at the manned control on a misty hill top it was back to running on paths almost all the way home. It was nice to take in Dunkery Beacon on the way back. At the very end I got lost again in the same wood near the start/finish but it seems so did everyone else. On returning to the hall I was briefly cruelly misinformed that I had won, before being told I had been beaten into second place. But I had a great day out and hope we can do more events on the moor in the future.

#### **Andy Rimes says**

Having planned and organized this event for the previous 5 years, I was looking forward to actually competing for a change. The low cloud and steady drizzle throughout the day would require some accurate navigation to point controls if massive time losses were to be avoided. In fact although in more or less constant rain, there was no wind at all and the temperature was very mild, permitting running in minimum attire.

Martin made excellent use of Bill's purpose produced map, planning a course with a good mix of technical point controls, long and short legs and stunning views(?) I feel navigation would have been much simpler in good visibility, although a quick scan at the results splits shows that many people struggled in the thick mist on the Dunkery slopes, searching for the final controls in the open ground. For me personally, contouring in the right direction over rough ground, on one of the myriad of unmarked animal tracks and relying on good compass work proved successful rather than lengthy detours to the major tracks between controls. A marked lack of fern growth aided the runnability of the area.

An added bonus for all was the noticeable reduction of climb than in recent years on some of our other venues.

I was finally grateful to be beaten into second place at the last moment

Coupled with the Devon Long O this event was the second day of the Two Moors Challenge. Challenge it was with horrendous conditions at Okehampton on the Saturday and forecasts for similar on the Sunday. On the way to Wootten Courtenay we did spot a small patch of blue sky somewhere over Exmoor and wondered if we might be lucky, however this was not to be. It didn't rain all the time, but when it did, that coupled with thick mist above the tree line made conditions pretty miserable.

Martin Longhurst and Rosie Wych had set some very challenging courses which in good weather might have been too easy but with the mist, two controls on cairns were possibly a bit of a lottery. Gorse bushes took on the same shape as cairns in the mist and could, and did, cause distractions. The map produced specially for the event was, by necessity, lacking the detail that is found in normal cross country orienteering events but was adequate for the purpose. Waterproof paper for the map and control descriptions is really a godsend in those conditions. Mine was showing slight signs of wear at the end and might have benefited from the added protection of a poly bag.

The short course was a 8.9 Km with a very imaginative 290 metres of climb. I counted 38 contours at 10 metres, this, coupled with knee high heather on the lower slopes, made the off path running, perhaps walking, very tough. Bill's non competitive time of 2 hrs and 11mins was particularly good.

#### **Richard Sansbury says-**

The long course was excellent, made all the more challenging by the low visibility. I chose to start late owing to having a few too many glasses of wine at a wedding the night before. Completely went wrong on the first control trying to shortcut through the woods and getting stuck in the tough gorse and bracken. At least my thrashing around was rewarded by seeing an adder but I had to completely retreat and start again. Out in the open the going was much easier as I was able to use

the weather, so our course became a caravan of competitors travelling along together. It was now difficult to look forward in the direction of travel as the rain would sting our faces. I also did not like the difficult heather traverses that the weather forced us to do. We were no longer running and I was struggling.

Then some six hours into our run at a manned control came the message that the event was cancelled and we were to abandon our courses, get down off the hill by the most convenient route and make our way back to the start or the first day finish. We had nearly finished anyway so we went onwards wading through flooded roads to the site of what would have been the overnight camp, although the field was flooded and portaloos were now surrounded by water. We were checked in and asked to make our way back to the start, 7km by road over Honister pass.

We now had the worst of the weather. A long file of runners trudged up the road, with floods pouring quickly down the road ankle deep, spraying up over our shoes. But fighting the wind was the hardest part as it was hard just to keep upright as we approached the pass summit. Then when we nearly there we saw that ahead of us people were turning round. Soon we were told that the RAF mountain rescue were asking people to go back to the overnight camp. We later found out on the other side of the pass people were wading waist deep through flood water and there was concern that someone could be washed away.

So we returned to the overnight site where the plan was that we would now stay in the farmer's barn. This unfinished structure with no toilets and no doors became home. A few brave ones set up camp on what grass remained above water but most of us squeezed in together and laid out our sleeping bags on the concrete floor. We then spent what I can only describe as a really unpleasant night. As the wind raged and rain blew in through the gaps, I could not get comfortable on the hard floor and more importantly my down sleeping bag got damp enough to lose its warmth so I was cold all night.

When dawn came it was a relief to pack up and get out. For the second time we set off up the road over the pass. Although the storm had now

passed and it could have been possible to run the second day, I certainly was not in the mood to do anything. When we reached the start we found some cars had been flooded, the cafe tent had had a river in it, the equipment tent had partly collapsed and people had slept in the barn just as we had. But what we also found was that we were all over the news.

So, should the organisers have cancelled before the start? With the benefit of hindsight clearly it would have been better if they had, and we might have had a second day to take part in. But that is a difficult decision to make when you have turn away thousands of disappointed customers. The organisers have taken a lot of criticism, but it is also true that all of us competitors had the opportunity to retire early, and although some did stop, most of us didn't. The organisers coped with an escalating situation and avoided a catastrophe. Unfortunately they did not have time to manage the media and the incorrect message went out that hundreds were missing and in danger, causing alarm and ultimately leading to strong criticism. I hope there are no consequences for next year, as I and probably most of the others intend to be there again next year.

### **Martin's thoughts on the OMM 2008 ...**

You had to be there ... at least this is what the kit supplier intends to overprint on the unsold tee-shirts to boost sales. The only time in 42 years it has been cancelled. You have to sympathise with the organizers – the press coverage was ferocious and very wrong. No doubt, Saturday was a difficult day, and many chose not to run or returned down the hill from their 1<sup>st</sup> control straight back to their cars. But it wasn't the worst weather I have ever run in (Edale Skyline 2007 – 80mph, snow, minus 6). The half-way camp being underwater by midday meant they had no real option but to stack it, but you couldn't certainly have predicted this, and it is quite normal to be camping in soggy conditions on the OMM/KIMM if you've been tardy or had a late start!

As a pair, Jonathon and I struggled to cover the ground, particularly up and down the hills. We had a late start which meant the worst of the weather. The choice of score controls and route were strongly

influenced by potential exposure to the wind. Map reading in the driving rain is always tricky for a couple of old blokes in glasses. Actually hanging on to your map was a bit of a game – I saw several fly by to disappear over an edge. We made a bad error to come down off High Knott over steep loose scree, but we were in the lee of the hill. By the time we were informed of the cancellation at the next road crossing we had already decided to stick to low-level routes to get to camp and conserve our efforts to have a better day 2.

So after a walk back to the event centre along roads that resembled rivers, we spent a dry and moderately comfortable night in the car watching the water gradually flood the field. Luckily I had parked on a high-and-dry spot but actually no-one in the field went more than axle deep, so again not what was shown on telly! The event centre provided free tea and soup for the returners, and Wilf's provided its usual matchless scoff in a marquee 4 inches deep in water with a stream running down the centre. The novelty stimulated much animated discussion in the queue. Some slept overnight using Wilf's tables for a dry platform. I rather enjoyed sitting in the car on the Sunday morning, eating my porridge and listening to the 9am news describe us as the "hard core of experienced UK fell runners" or some such tosh. You just had to look around at the bunch of crocks wandering about wondering how they were going to extricate their cars from what was now a bog. Which we did with good cheer and the cooperation of 'pushing teams'. So, a bit of a washout as weekends go, but at least I have the tee-shirt (actually a rather pricey fleece, in my case!).

Martin Longhurst

Devon and Quantock's version of the OMM held a few weeks before and designed partly as a "warm up" were held in bad conditions but did nothing to prepare the competitors for what was to come a few weeks later.

### **The Quantock Long O**

Mike Crockett