

The QuOnicle



The Newsletter of Quantock Orienteers

No. 132 July 2010

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EDITORIAL

It's all pretty quiet on the orienteering front this time of year, although at the time of writing we have the Club Champs just around the corner. I'm grateful for that, as I know that if I go too long without an event I'm liable to forget some of the things I've learnt so far in my quest to get half-decent at a sport I love.

With little in the orienteering calendar I've been able to find a few other activities to fill the gap and have a little 'me' time. One of these was a trail half-marathon in the spectacular scenery around Heddon Valley in Exmoor which I've written about elsewhere in this issue.

Although lacking any form of navigation element I thought the gruelling terrain would be a good start to preparing for this year's OMM down on Dartmoor which I'm planning to have a crack at (with an experienced partner I hasten to add!).

I'm sure many of you must be participating in some interesting activities away from orienteering over the summer months. Why not do a write up for The QuOnicle and share your experiences with fellow QO members?

—*Adrian Edwards*

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

The Summer means a break in the orienteering calendar. There is less orienteering activity and fewer events. Partly this is because the forests are even more overgrown than usual. Partly it is because there are more other things to do - rather than sweating profusely while running around in the forest gaining ticks, we could be sweating profusely lying on the beach gaining a tan. But there is a parallel activity which peaks in the summer, orienteering's hardy northern cousin - the mountain marathon.

To explain for those who do not know: A mountain marathon is not like a road marathon. It is a 2 day event involving an overnight camp. Usually you take part in pairs, and you carry your tent and food with you. You jog/walk for perhaps between 4 and 8 hours each day up and down mountainous terrain. It is effectively orienteering on a large scale.

Usually these events take part in the Lake District, or in Scotland. But this year it so happens that there are two on Dartmoor. I've entered both of these and a third one up North. I'm fairly new to this type of event - I took part in my first mountain marathon only two years ago when I did the Saunders with a complete stranger. Despite the inevitable rain, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I enjoyed the camaraderie and there was a tremendous sense of achievement on completion.

I am very glad to have got into the mountain marathon scene and I building up a collection of the specialist kit needed, although I can't quite bring myself to invest in a balloon bed (must be seen to be believed!). I'm conscious that these events keep a low profile and its hard to find out about things except by word of mouth, so anyone

interested in mountain marathons but doesn't know where to start, feel free to contact me and I shall tell you more.

—Richard Sansbury

CLUB NEWS

News of Members

Mike visited John Pilkington recently taking SINS and Quonicle for him. He reads these with interest and values the fact that we take the trouble to deliver them.

Committee News

The last committee meeting was held on 17th May, with the following points arising:

- The existing QO membership fees were deemed to be fair and in-line with other clubs.
- The committee agreed to the purchase of a second club laptop, as Andy Rimes is currently lending a laptop to the club on a regular basis.
- A change to the club's constitution has been proposed as it currently stipulates that membership fees have to be set at the AGM (held in September). This causes problems as the club has to notify BOF of membership fees in summer 2011 for 2012. The result is that membership fees effectively have to be decided 15 months in advance at present.
- Lydeard Hill will require some map revisions as gorse has been cut to the west of the car-park gate. Bill Vigar suggested this could be a good project for a 'new' surveyor to be involved in, so anyone interested in learning more about mapping please step forward.

SWOA Meeting—23/03/10

- **SWOA succession planning.** So far, no candidates have come forward to fill the vacant committee slots or to replace the chairman, Roger Hargreaves.
- **Controllers.** BOF rules about controlling to be made more specific. The existing guideline, that controllers be concerned with 'all matters between start and finish flag' is to be fleshed out.

- **Low Bean** (DEVON, controlled the Croydon Canter) has retired from controlling.
- **JK surplus.** £7k anticipated as available for distribution by SWOA.
- **Sudden Oak Death.** Little impact on SW events but an apparent link to areas with Rhododendrons has been established.
- **NAC.** New club for the Cheltenham area 'NAC' created by John Dyson, formerly of North Gloucs OC. So far a one-man-band, NAC's future appears to be threatened by a new BOF requirement for each club to have three officers.
- **Gone with the wind...** Scott Collier is to become to become SWOA Senior Competitions Secretary, taking over from fellow KERNO member Arthur Boyt. Arthur is spending more time on an anti-wind farm protest at his Davidstowe residence.

—Jeff Pakes

Lost Property

Still unclaimed - 1 pale green fleece jacket size XL, left at the Neroche QOFL on May 16th. Contact Richard Sansbury soon if you want it back.

QOADS

It's time to start eating more carrots as Will Kromhout is currently organising a series of night events. The Quantock Orienteers After Dark Series (QOADS) will be held in winter 2010/11. Look out for Will's rather excellent banner in this edition, and 'watch this space' for more details.

JOG Notebook

We have held 7 JOG events this term starting with a re-run of Jim Nickolls' Kings Cliff event, cancelled from the previous term due to atrocious weather. Jim had put on a senior map memory course as well and 3 members enjoyed that. We only had 9 children but quite a few adults accompanied them so it seemed busy registering and setting everyone off.

Jim Mallinson planned the next event at Fyne Court, it was a hot, sunny

day and we attracted 17 children. We are not allowed to venture far off the paths in National Trust areas during the summer and so Jim only planned courses for juniors. Jim routed some courses in large loops around the grounds giving older children a good challenge.

29th May was the first Saturday of half term when we usually try to use local school sites. Even though his exams were looming Joel Llewellyn agreed to plan courses at King's College, thank you Joel! 14 children and 2 adults attended, many of the children did several courses and some quite young children took the opportunity of a very safe area to have a go by themselves or as a pair.

The following weekend Rosie Wych planned at King's Hall, 14 children and 2 adults enjoyed a sunny event with interesting routes around the buildings and the delightful grounds. Again several children ventured off on their own, even some very young children as Rosie had planned one course in the front of the school where runners could be watched all the way round!

Our event at Blackbrook was held at the same time as the Club 2 X 2 relay. This was good as the children could participate in this if they wished, some did so by themselves, the younger were accompanied by an adult. Jeff Pakes had planned courses around the buildings and grounds for the rest of the children and their parents. 10 children attended this event.

Mike Crockett planned a mixture of courses for juniors and seniors at Neroche Forest on 19th June. The seniors had an excellent precision course..in Mike's words..." 6 sites on the course have 3 flags and punches within the circle, only 1 matches the correct information i.e. the centre of the circle and the correct control description You must punch the correct site!" There were only 3 takers BUT they really enjoyed the challenge, well done Mike for being so innovative. 22 children and their families ran the junior courses, enjoying orienteering on a beautiful day in wonderful surroundings.

Broomfield was the last venue this term and again we were lucky to have good weather. Richard Sansbury, busy commuting as he is, kindly agreed to plan this event. The path network is complicated in the forest but Richard planned well, avoiding confusing areas and taking in a mixture of different vegetation types and giving the children real route choices. There was a lot of discussion afterwards, always a good sign at an event! 22 children, their families and 1 adult competed.

To end, we should like to thank Dave Bullock and his team at Tone School Sports Partnership for the encouragement they have given local

school children to attend our JOG events. As a result we have had 7 families coming to at least 1 of our events, several have come to 2-3.

—*Judy and Roger Craddock*

EVENTS

Adams Avery Trophy: A Relay Good Performance

A QO relay team triumphed over several South West clubs including the holders and favourites Wessex by winning Bristol's historic Adams Avery Trophy at Leigh Woods on Sunday.

Led by Jim Mallinson, the "Quality Orienteers" team lived up to its billing with a narrow win over the holders of both BOK's trophy and the SW Summer Series, who rely on the UK no.1 M55 and World Masters silver medallist Gavin Clegg and Dale Paget (the 6th-ranked M45).

Running Green on the first leg, Brian Pearson maintained perfect concentration and speed through the samey, contour-less woodland to keep within striking distance of Dale, only to come unstuck on control 13. Losing six minutes searching for a partially overgrown depression, Brian handed over to me with 41 minutes gone with Gavin some nine minutes ahead on leg two.

Like Brian, I was lacking recent experience of orienteering in forest and took the wrong path on Light Green at a fork near the start. I realised I would have to concentrate hard to compensate for a lack of 'match fitness'. Then I overshot number three and lost three minutes. Taking advantage of easy running afforded by the numerous, snake-like and sometimes unmapped cycle paths, I inadvertently found myself 10m from the control having unsuccessfully tried to 'aim off' to its W. I haplessly carried on E for 150m before a fence loomed ahead, revealing my mistake and forcing a retreat along a chain of pits and depressions which I had earlier inspected one-by-one.

Some path running followed but interest picked up again halfway through. Close contact with the map became essential as did identification of catching features. This restricted my speed but also my capacity for making mistakes and I felt vindicated when I encountered an exasperated pair circling, but not finding, a straightforward control at 11.

According to Brian, QO had overtaken three rival clubs as I handed over



to M60 Jim on 75 minutes, but Jim would have to 'run a blinder' on Light Green to catch up with Wessex, who had raced 14 minutes ahead despite Gavin making "seven minutes' worth" of errors!

Even so, we reckoned Jim's recent experience of Leigh Woods during a low-key BOK event in May might prove useful, for example his knowledge of the run-ability of various areas and useful crossing points in walls and bridges.

Meanwhile, Brian and I engaged in friendly banter with Gavin (brother of QO's Neil) with Gavin telling us his third runner, a veteran (team selection required a mixture of ages), was now overdue. We weren't expecting Jim in for at least 10 minutes. But when a runner appeared on 105 minutes, it was a tired-looking Jim. His Wessex rival followed a minute or two behind. We suppressed our delight for some tantalising moments. Jim looked neither happy nor elated- had he mis-punched? Brian delicately enquired. No, the victory was ours!

Gavin congratulated us and joked that should QO still be in contention to win the series by the time of the Hardy Relay at Poole on the 25th which he is to organise, he will make sure we get the wrong maps.

Jim is now proud keeper of the 43-year-old trophy, back in our hands after many years away and one of the first competed for in the early days of orienteering in the region.

If you would like to participate in this summer relay series, please contact acting club captain Mike Crockett. We have provisional line-ups for most fixtures but cover is often required and despite our happy start to the series, the emphasis tends to be on fun and camaraderie rather than winning.

—*Jeff Pakes*

BOK Trot – Crooks Peak

In a weak moment I agreed to Mike's request for an article on this event – and then of course forgot all about it. Hating articles of the "then I took a direct route to number 12 but got lost on the" style, one is then faced with the challenge of producing something with some individuality! Not my strong point. The only articles that stick out in my mind are Keith Bolling's literary description of the flora encountered on his protracted amble to the first control on a

Blackdowns event (he completed the rest of the course in the same time), and Christine Vince waxing lyrical on the subject of the ice-cream flavours encountered at a multi-day event. I don't think I can compete with those!

Crooks Peak is always easily identified from the M5 as the welcome return to home after the tedium of an M5/6 journey north – not as a potential orienteering venue. The chance to compete on a new area so close to home is good after repeat visits to many familiar venues. The terrain consisted mainly of lovely open runnable ground with complex areas of gorse. As usual it all made perfect sense until the control wasn't where it should be and then it involved running round in the headless chicken mode. Courses made good use of the area and made for surprisingly physical effort as one had to run for much more of the event – even up hill - rather than struggling over brashings or boggy ground. The views were a stunning distraction and motorway noise surprisingly absent. Looking for those patches of gorse will now be a feature of travelling along the M5 – you never know – the observations may help at a future event.

—*Rosie Wych*

British Sprint Championships

The Sprints were held at the Naval Base HMS Sultan at Gosport. We had two races, the morning one was used to determine the order for running in the afternoon at one minute intervals (the fastest going last). As there were only three in the M75 class it seemed a bit pointless being so close but there were other age groups on the same course. I took a 2min 16 sec lead into the afternoon session and although John Thompson in second place pulled away from me in the early stages, a bad route choice error allowed me to catch him and leave him towards the end.

The course took us around the many hangars and accommodation blocks and through some of the passages in the "Palmerston forts" which are a feature of the base.

The photo shows John and myself on the podium with the charming Emily Benham, the British MTBO champion from Sarum, who presented the prizes.

— *Mike Crockett*

QOFL 7: Castle Neroche

The season climaxed in style at Castle Neroche with the additional QOFL scheduled in to replace the cancelled Ham Hill event. Despite a worrying weather forecast it actually turned out to be a rather pleasant day as well (at least when I ran!).

I gather that Richard was rather short on volunteers for this event (unfortunately an all-too-common occurrence), but it is testimony to those that were helping out that as a participant this certainly wasn't obvious.

There was some good route choice on the Light Green course, although unfortunately I think I was guilty of a few dodgy decisions. It also took in a nice variety of terrain for a short course (unless that was just the way I ran it!), with a mix of short and long legs. I had a funny moment on one of the paths around the buildings south of the start/finish when I failed to see the fence-line which was actually pretty clear on the map (in hindsight) and thus thought I'd 'gone off on one' again. I was looking around to check my position when I noticed two other runners on the same path looking equally bewildered! I think we all needed one of those 'don't follow me—I'm lost too' signs that were in every seaside gift shop in the 1980s.

All in all I thought it was a good end the 2009/10 QOFL series, and I know from chatting to some people at the finish that this viewed was shared by many. Roll on next season...

— *Adrian Edwards*

ARTICLES

Proposal for New QOFL Scoring System

For quite a few years now we have had a forest league, and it has provided a good competition for local orienteers from ours and neighbouring clubs. An excellent article by David Rosen in CompassSport magazine comparing multi-day scoring systems provided the inspiration to look at our league in more detail. The club

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sense,

especially when a spreadsheet can do a lot of the work.

To my mind the aim of the league should be to provide a valid result for consistent performances over a whole season. There have been times however when our scoring system based on 1000 points for the winner has caused a negative effect on the outcome for the rest of the field, and also not adequately rewarded outstanding performances.

Various examples of this can be seen in the final tables when an occasional appearance made by an elite runner on the blue course has resulted in lower scores for regular runners even though they have orienteered to their usual abilities. This has often resulted in scores being dropped by chance.

Elite runners should score more points for winning by 10 minutes than for winning by 10 seconds as this is obviously a better achievement. Furthermore if a 1 minute time difference on the day is worth a consistent number of points then this is fairer than the current system that compresses the scores further down the table.

The system that came out top is called the Stats method. This system is basically used to calculate the BOF national rankings, and has been successfully employed in multi-day leagues such as the Scottish 6 Days. The proposal is to start using this system in the autumn, and QO members are invited to express their opinions.

The league is open to any member of a BOF affiliated orienteering club. Non-members are not scored, but their times will be used in the calculations. Only individual competitors are eligible, i.e. pairs, teams, and 2nd runs are not scored. In line with the latest BOF rules, shadowed juniors are also not scored. Eligible competitors are automatically entered into the league - no separate registration is required.

For the Handicap League the M/W age ratios are applied before making the calculations.

On each course the average time for the top 90% of the qualifying competitors is worth 1000 points. Each score is based on 100pts for each standard deviation quicker or slower than the average time. 90% is used to reduce the effect of outliers on the calculations, but all will receive a score.

On the courses with 10 or less qualifying runners the standard

deviation is 20% of the mean (Small Course formula), and courses with 11 to 19 runners have a weighted mean of both formulae.

Points are calculated as follows:

- Runner's points, $RP = MP + \frac{SP \times (MT - RT)}{ST}$
- $(MT - RT)/ST$ gives number of standard deviations of runner's time RT above or below race mean time MT (ST is the standard deviation of the runners' times)
- Multiplying by SP , the standard deviation of the runners' points, converts this to points
- This difference is added to MP , the average points for the runners in the race and this gives the runner's points RP
- a modified formula is used for small courses:-
Substitute $(0.2 \times MT)$ for ST
- If there are between 11 and 19 runners, a weighted mean of the scores given by the above two formulae is used, e.g. with 17 runners, the points are
- $0.7 \times$ Main formula + $0.3 \times$ Small course formula

Example:

- Suppose X comes 4th on a course in a time of 88 minutes (RT); the average time for the runners in the race is 100 minutes (MT) and the standard deviation of their times is 10 minutes (ST)
- Thus $(MT - RT)/ST = 12/10$, or 1.2 standard deviations above the average time for the runners in the race
- Mean points (MP) = 1000 and standard deviation points (SP) = 100
- So X gets more points than the average runner, this given by $1.2 \times 100 = 120$

- Thus final points = 1000 + 120 = 1120

If you have any comments or questions mail bjeuph@googlemail.com or call me on 01823 252407.

—*Brian Pearson*

Two Pints of Exmoor and a Long Run Please...

Endurance Life is a small company that puts on a series of endurance-orientated events, including a large number of trail-running events in flavours ranging from 10k to ultra-marathon. As part of their line-up they host a Coastal Trail Series (CTS) each year, and in 2009/10 this consisted of seven events (Dorset, Gower Peninsula, Portland, South Devon, Pembrokeshire, Cornwall and Exmoor). I'd love to say I completed all seven (some mad people did), but unfortunately I was a latecomer to the series and joined them for the last (and apparently toughest) race: Exmoor.

Each CTS event consists of three courses: 10k, Half Marathon and Marathon. I opted for the Half, on the basis that 10k seemed a bit short (not in hindsight!) and Marathon may well have ended in A&E.

Fellow QO member Richie Hill was also taking part (things like this are always his idea), and we decided to take advantage of a Friday evening registration option so we could just turn up at the start on Saturday morning. We pitched our tent at a campsite in Combe Martin and set off for registration, where we each had an SI card strapped to our wrists – I spent the rest of the evening feeling like a prisoner on day release! At this point we should have gone back to our tent and had a nice early night to prepare for the torments of Saturday, but instead we made the classic mistake of going to the pub for a couple of pints of Exmoor, in the hope that the local brew may in some way help us get to grips with the terrain. It didn't.

Despite the real ale (and Richie's snoring) I was up bright and early the next morning and I remember thinking it was surprisingly warm for the time of day. Little did I know that the 22nd May was going to turn out to be a real scorcher – by the time of the race the mercury was up to 25 Celsius, which was about 10 degrees hotter than the rest of the week!

The event base and start/finish was at Hunter's Inn in Heddon Valley,

which was great for spectators. Organisation was excellent throughout, and if you weren't an 'elite' competitor who expected to win (definitely not us) you were put into a staggered start. With that and the SI card it was difficult to remember that this wasn't an O event, and I kept thinking I'd left my compass in the car...

Then the fun began. As the mercury climbed so did the trail – by about 1,000 ft in the first few miles, with a total climb over 2,500ft. Two things kept me going: the spectacular scenery, and the sweets. The latter were offered at various water stations around the course. I was merrily running past one of these (I was carrying plenty of water) when I heard a very kind lady offer me a 'cola bottle'. I'm not normally a sweetie kind of person, but boy did they taste good! In fact, I think a new club rule should state that all control markers on our QOFLs also have a tub of sweets attached.

As this was my first CTS event and first stab at a trail half-marathon I wasn't unduly bothered about my time – I figured whatever I did was going to be a new 'PB', so it was just a case of laying down a marker. In the end I finished in 2hrs 52. That's a long way off my 'street' half marathon time, but most of those don't climb 250ft let alone 2,500. Given the terrain and the temperature this time wasn't so bad, and put me somewhere in the middle of the pack. It also put me somewhere in the middle of the stack of competitors throwing themselves into the stream that was handily situated just the other side of the finish line. I'm sure you could see the steam rising from Taunton!

The event was well-run throughout and both the Endurance Life staff and my fellow competitors proved very friendly, adding to a great atmosphere on the day. The next season of CTS events kicks off in September, taking in even more locations — including a return to Exmoor. I'd thoroughly recommend it if you feel like stretching your legs. And if you're feeling really brave I hear there's a new 'ultra-distance' category next season...

—*Adrian Edwards*

News Just In...

Fresh from their victory in the Adams Avery, the 'Quality Orienteers' were in action again at the Furrow Hoppers Relay in Dorchester on 11th July. No doubt spurred by success the team would have finished in third place, but unfortunately a mispunch meant they got nil points.

Still, they look nice and relaxed in the photo below...

Selected Other Events



25.07.10	Wessex Hardy Re-lays	Upton Country Park	SY 993930
11.09.10- 12.09.10	SW Sprints Week-end	Woodbury Common/ Exeter University	SY 031864/ SX 920940
19.09.10	Devon Champs	Princetown	SX 589736
19.09.10	BOK Long O	Highmeadow Wood	SO 550126
25.09.10- 26.09.10	Caddihoe Chase Regional Event	Wareham Forest	SY 895910

