

The QuOnicle



The Newsletter of Quantock Orienteers

No. 130 March 2010

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EDITORIAL

I had my first experience of a JOG event the other day when I put on an event at Queen's College in Taunton. I must confess I did cheat a little and 'recycle' some courses that Jeff Pakes put together some time ago (thanks Jeff!), but then recycling is a very good thing these days...

Despite a threat of snow it turned out to be a nice sunny winter's day, and we had a good turn out of kids and attending parents trying out the five courses on offer—including a few 'newbies' I believe. Most importantly, they all looked like they had a jolly good time. And what polite children! I think nearly all of them thanked the organising team (Judy was on hand as always, and Nick Fernandes offered his coaching skills), and I also had some very nice comments from satisfied parents.

It makes it worth the effort when that effort is so visibly appreciated, and it was also a good chance for me to think about what goes in to planning orienteering courses. Once I got over the initial trepidations (mainly 'what if I put a control in the wrong place!') I enjoyed the whole experience. So if any of you have a bit of free time and a desire to help, why not get in touch with Judy and give it a go? I can almost guarantee you'll develop your own skills as well as helping a new generation of orienteers develop theirs.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

As I write the sun is streaming through the kitchen window. We've had some beautiful crisp frosty mornings, but spring is on the way. I am reminded how seasonal orienteering is. Generally we concentrate our events in the cooler 8 months of the year, avoiding the summer, when obviously the vegetation is at its highest, off-track running is at its most difficult, and it is more difficult to get land permissions.

This seasonal aspect suits me quite well. In the winter the prospect of an hour or so of fresh air and vigorous activity makes an appealing day out. A short orienteering event does not quite fill a long summer's day in the same way, and also there are many more things to do during the summer, not all of which are quite so energetic!

However the last few years have introduced a few innovations which are closing the summer gap in the orienteering calendar. Sprint and urban orienteering we are now familiar with following our successful series in Taunton last September. Another new event type is Mountain

Bike Orienteering - a bit of a mouthful so usually abbreviated to MTBO. Although there are highly competitive international championships, local events are rare and participation is quite small. But a specific website has now been launched to promote events, difficulties such as insurance are being resolved, and I expect this sport to grow.

I recently took part in a event organised by Wimbourne. February was not the ideal time of year for an off-road bike event and I had to stop twice to grab handfuls of mud out of my bike mechanics. But it was great fun, and I'd love to do more. Perhaps QO might hold one in the summer - we are investigating

Richard

CLUB NEWS

News of Members

Many of you may have noticed some 'new faces' around at recent events, and we would like to welcome some new members to the club (apologies if I'm a little late with some of these).

Luke Dunthorn from Street joins us as a junior—a product of the JOG initiative. Luke lives just a few doors down from the not-so-junior Mike Crockett I believe.

Andrew Hopkins from Taunton joins us as an 'M35', and put in a very respectable time on the Orange course at the Blackborough QOFL. Andrew is a former Devon member.

We also welcome three new families to the fold — Sheila Braine and family, the Purchase family (former SLOW members), and the Willmott family. The Purchase's and Willmott's are both from Bower Hinton, so QO must now have a very strong presence in that neck of the woods!

Also, some new of an 'old' member. John Pilkington, a founder member of Quantock Orienteers and now a life member, has recently moved from Kent, where he was living near his daughter, to a new retirement complex at Sandford on the A38. John will be 90 in September, and Mike Crockett reports that he was looking well when he visited him recently.

Committee News

Ted Heath has stood down from the Secretary post and from the QO committee. Ted has done the Secretary job very efficiently for some time now and has served on the committee for many years. We are all grateful for the work he has done for the club over the years and we will miss his input to the committee.

Jeff Pakes has volunteered to fill the Secretary post and this has been endorsed by the committee.

QOFL 7—Castle Neroche, 16th May

I'm pleased to announce that we have scheduled an extra QOFL event to make up for the Ham Hill event that was cancelled in February. QOFL 7 will take place at Castle Neroche on the 16th May.

Devon Air Ambulance

As part of our agreement with the owners of the Forest Glade Country Holiday Park (the base for QOFL 3), QO made a donation to the Devon Air Ambulance. We received the following letter of thanks:

"We are writing to thank the Quantock Orienteers for the kind donation of £100 following the event held at Forest Glade Country Holiday Park. We are very grateful to everyone involved for their generous gift."

Devon's two air ambulances are able to reach even the remotest incident within 15 minutes. They have now flown more than 15,000 missions -touching the lives of many Devon residents and visitors to the county. We rely entirely on the generosity of our amazing supporters to raise the €4 million needed each year to keep both aircraft flying and your contribution will make a difference, not only to the future stability of the service but also to the wider Devon community."

To all existing and aspiring planners and controllers- purple pen course planning.

The club has been using our new 'Sportident' electronic hardware and 'Autodownload' event management software for some time now, and we are becoming pretty competent in its use. There are several proprietary software packages that interface nicely with the software that we are adopting to make things easier for its use.

One of these packages, Purple-pen, is a course planning software, windows based, which allows planners to design their courses, set up all the controls and allocate descriptions etc. The finished file is then simply imported directly into our Autodownload software for that event, and the courses all imported automatically avoiding the need for a whole load of manual entry either by me or a deputy when setting up the kit before the event. This means the whole process is quicker and less prone to human error.

Purple-pen is simple to install and use and is very intuitive. The major bonus of it is that it is FREE to download (but only available for windows, not Macs I'm afraid). Other course creation software is available, but these are all subscription based.

The process for creation of courses essentially involves importing the current map file into the software, setting up all the controls required, allocating control descriptions for them, and then 'joining the dots' to produce the individual courses. The software works out course lengths etc for you.

I would like to call for all planners to use this software if possible please so that we are all adopting a standard format (and making my job a whole lot easier!) We have held training sessions previously for the Autodownload software. If enough interest is shown, I am quite happy to hold a hands-on training session for this software and its use. If you would like to know more, please contact me by mail at : andy.r.g@hotmail.co.uk

Many thanks
Andy Rimes (SI manager)

JOG Notebook—March 2010

This term our programme has included 6 JOG events and 2 QOFLs. We decided to offer senior training on a more limited basis and so selected 3 venues, Lydeard Hill, Wind Down and SCAT/Castle where courses for seniors would be offered.

We started the season with a session at Broomfield Hill...just managing to avoid the snow which had thickly covered the area a week or so earlier. We had only 7 children but with Mike Crockett and Ron Ford coaching it proved to be a worthwhile afternoon for those that came.

Lydeard Hill was a great success (17 children and 11 adults) with Jeff producing corridor and disc'O's for seniors and lots of wonderfully muddy courses through the woods for the juniors. (We gained several families for this reason alone!) Nick Fernandes was coach for the day and was fully extended helping new orienteers and giving coaching to others.

Wellington School was the venue the following week and Rachel Bussell had courses for all abilities, using both the school buildings and grounds. We attracted 21 children and 4 adults. It was a good safe area and many of the children, (encouraged by Joel) had a go by themselves or in pairs and some of the older children did some map memory.

Adrian Edwards agreed to put on his first event for JOG at Queen's. This was the last weekend of half term and was very well supported, 30 children and 2 adults. Remember that the 30 children are accompanied by parents and you will begin to realise the numbers involved and the excitement generated. Adrian has written a short report on this event. Nick Fernandes was our coach and was kept on his toes setting some off and coaching others.

Jeff Pakes put on a re-run of his Wind Down event of last term (badly affected by torrential rain and gale force winds...I hadn't cancelled as we had already put off the previous week due to the same sort of weather). I woke in the night of the 27th to hear it pouring with rain again and I couldn't believe our bad luck at Wind Down.

Jeff and Tamsin had been drenched as they hung controls in the morning and at 1.00pm we waited wondering which stalwarts would venture forth. AND THEN they came; 21 children accompanied by parents and grandparents and 10 adults. Brian Pearson gave 'tailor made' coaching to several of the juniors, one of them even trying the disc'O'. The atmosphere was vibrant as adults returning from their disc'O's or corridor events chatted and discussed their routes and children arrived back pursued by parents all of them out of breath and rosie-cheeked. Then off again, having a go on a harder course or venturing off in a pair with a new friend. Well done Jeff and Tamsin, it paid off this time.

There's one more event this term but not before 'copy date' so we'll leave an account of that for the next time. Thanks go AGAIN to Bill and Dave for their excellent maps and for updating and printing them at relatively short notice.

Judy Craddock

EVENTS

Croydon Hill Regional - 17th January 2010

So I'm standing in the barn having a chat, when my good 'friend' Adrian says "I know someone who could write this up and he hasn't done much for the club recently". Apparently, not even moving out of the area and deploying to Afghanistan is an excuse not to help out with QO!!

With my muddy boots still in their carrier bag in the kitchen (much to the disgust of my wife!), I've worked out that the last time I was out in the woods with map-in-hand was the QOFL event in Crowcombe on the 29th Mar 2009, I haven't even had a chance to get to the mid-week Military League events! I knew it had been a fairly long time, which was the main factor in my decision to 'run-down' to Blue from my usual Brown.

Even driving up to Broadwood Farm was eventful in my little Fiesta, trying (mostly unsuccessfully!) to dodge the pot holes, and although it was nice to know that the tree was the tallest in England, reading the sign did make me miss seeing one particularly evil pothole. The last time I was orienteering on Croydon Hill was back on the Long-O in 2002, which for the most part has been banished from my memory, apart from the acute tendonitis and hypothermia; I can still remember them!

I was actually quite surprised by the lack of mud around the course, in light of the recent weather and thaw I had expected it to be a mud bath day! From the Start I had planned to take it easy, concentrating on my navigational skills, this all went out the window as soon as I picked up the map! In fact, I had not even got to the first control before I found myself having a little rest, looking up into the canopy of the forest; wet wood on the ground quite often has this effect on me.

I was quite happy with the first seven controls, apart from my route choice through the fight between 4 & 5; it would have been a lot nicer

to my skin to have gone around it. I did have a little glitch in my time between 7 and 8, as I thought going straight down the recently felled and rather steep valley in the south of the area, was the best idea, only to find myself on a path trying to identify two 'indistinct' streams above me on the other side of the valley. There did seem to be a few of us running (and walking) up and down the path trying to work out where they were on the path. Eventually I managed to re-locate off a platform by the stream, and started the slog up the hill to the control.

Trying to straight line to 11, I suddenly realised that I didn't have my compass; I did find it back in the Fiesta on my return! A bad route choice to 12 led to some bad language floating around in my area of wood, although I'm pretty sure no-one else would have heard it, as they wouldn't be foolish enough to be on the same route as me! My scrambled descent from 13 to the track resulted in a rather wet bottom and rock becoming dislodged, bouncing down the slope directly towards a lady at the bottom. Despite my shouting, she didn't make it completely out of its path, luckily taking it on the arm and not her head! As I passed her I made my apologies, before the final ascent towards the finish, by which time my legs felt distinctly lead-like.

At the end of all this, I was reasonably pleased with my overall performance, although my body was craving for one of the cakes I had seen whilst registering. A gap of 10 months does take its toll on your orienteering skills and, according to my wife's bathroom scales, your waistline! Now I just have to upload my route onto Routegadget. Many thanks to all those involved in making the Croydon Hill Regional a thoroughly enjoyable event, especially those cakes!!

P.S. In his article (Quonicle 129, Pg. 16) Adrian insinuates that he is not a competitive person. If this were true, why would being beaten by a 14 year old caused him such personal annoyance?

Richard Hill

National Event 1 at Curbar in the Peak District 30th January.

It was advertised as the Northern Championship Weekend with a middle distance race on the Saturday, a Night Score in the evening and the National event on an area new to orienteering on the Sunday. Having won the Northern championships as a first year M50 a few years ago I was keen to do this one and entered before realising that the prestigious Concorde Chase was at Star Posts and our own QOFL at Blackborough.

I chose to do just the National on Sunday which gave us the option of using the Camper van for Saturday night or driving up on Sunday morning. When the forecast was for a very cold night the early morning start seemed more attractive. Margaret did ask what happened to the hard man she had married who used to spend a night in a small tent on a wild hillside in late October (The Kimm as it was then called). I think she was secretly pleased with the decision.

We arrived in good time and were able to enjoy the views of the cliffs or edges as they are known. Before changing and setting off for the start.

I was running the equivalent of Short Green. When I picked up the map I couldn't really believe that there was a path going nearly all the way to the first control. In fact I was quite slow getting going as I wanted to make sure I wasn't missing something. The map was difficult to read but I was right, along the path and drop down to the ruined wall. Then it was back up to the path and on towards number 2. And so it continued. Only two controls were more than 50 metres from a path. Certainly the heather and boulders did impede progress when venturing off the paths but not unpleasantly so. Maybe the northern planners and controllers are kinder to us older men or (at a risk of being sexist) to the ladies that were paired with us on the same course.

As you can imagine I had no problems until I "switched off" at the last control to follow the tapes 90 meters to the finish only to find no tapes. However that was only a few seconds lost.

Back at assembly the general consensus of opinion was not good. The

comments I heard in addition to the missing tapes were:

- A rhododendron bush used as a control had larger unmapped bushes close by.
- A single almost imperceptible dot on the map was described as a boulder field in the control descriptions.

But the most critical thing was that the symbols on the 1:10000 map were the wrong size and almost unreadable. The symbols used were those for a 15000 map and not 50% larger as defined in the mapping handbook. Hence the remark overheard by Margaret: "I didn't come all this way to be given an illegible map". I'm not sure where things went wrong, but I am sure there will be comments on Nope Sport or somewhere .

I don't think the area justified a National event. Perhaps one should ask - Why has it not been used before? And why were there so few entries on some courses? Perhaps the missing numbers knew something we didn't or was it just the credit crunch?

Having said all this I thoroughly enjoyed my run, no doubt enhanced by the repeat of 25 years earlier and the unexpected prize of a fleece top.

Footnote: Overheard at the start – Growing old is not nice but it is certainly much better than the alternative.

Mike Crockett

The Compass Sport Trophy held at Ashley Walk near Fordingbridge 24th January

On behalf of QO a big thank you to all those who represented the club at this event. We had a mixture of old stagers and newcomers and all acquitted themselves well in what was, to some, unfamiliar type of terrain. We also had members running out of class to give us a balanced team. Three M45s ran the Open class Brown course and were a little dismayed when they saw the final details 11.9 Km and 125 metres of climb.

The area was mainly open with fairly gentle contour features but made difficult by heather, gorse and excessive water underfoot. The eastern part of the area visited by the longer courses has a plethora of ponds, wet depressions, pits and knolls . These are evidence of the areas use as a practice bombing range during World War 2.

The trophy competition for small clubs had eight designated courses. The club could enter as many runners as they wished but only the top 13 scores would be counted with the proviso that the Brown and Blue Mens courses allowed a maximum of three runners to score and the other courses two to score.

Overall result was. (This is slightly different to that announced on the day but did not affect the actual positions.)

1	Wimborne	1255
2	Sarum	1253
3	BADO	1182
4	Wessex	1132
5	QO	1132
6	NWO	816
7	Kerno	506

Tied positions are determined by the 14th placed runner.

QO scorers were:

1	Bill Vigar	M75	35.19	Short Green	100
2	Chris Philip	M55	55.00	Blue Men	99
3	Mike Crockett	M75	36.00	Short Green	96
4	Richard Sansbury	M40	95.23	Brown	93
5	Sheila Braine	W45	74.47	Blue Women	90
6	Rosie Wych	W55	75.46	Blue Women	88
7	Ted Heath	M65	43.59	Green Men	88
8	Ian Bartlett	M45	115.15	Brown	87
9	Nick Fernandes	M45	117.21	Brown	85
10	Tony Hext	M60	47.09	Green Men	82
11	John Chesters	M55	72.14	Blue Men	76
12	Calum Scott Hartley	M16	78.49	Light Green	76
13	Matthew Williams	M16	118.07	Light Green	72

Sue Gard (84) and Ruth Chesters (90) scored well but they were our 3rd highest scores on courses where only two counted..

Once again many thanks. *Mike Crockett*

QOFL 3—Blackborough, 31st January

My first thoughts upon arriving at this event were 'how civilised'! QO HQ for the day was the Forest Glade Country Holiday Park, and the parking on the hard-standings in amongst the caravans was most welcome (I'd just given my car its annual wash). Speaking of cars, I hear Jeff Pakes got a bit stuck on the ice on his way up here in the morning, so thanks to the guys who put some grit on the roads so the rest of us had a smoother journey.

The Forest Glade Country Holiday Park kindly let us use the premises in return for a donation to the Devon Air Ambulance (see page 5), and the registration team set up shop in a garage offering welcome respite from the elements. It was a tad chilly outside, but luckily the winter showers held off and the sun came out for the duration. There was also a string course in a small wooded area next to registration run by JOG and the Green family. Another 'plus' was the location of the start and finish areas just a short walk from registration thanks to Bill Vigar and Chris Denton—the latter making his planning debut at this event.

This was my first time running at Blackborough, and I was relieved to see a relatively flat course. The freezing conditions also meant that it was nice and crisp underfoot for the most part with just enough muddy bits to let me know that I'd been in a QOFL.

It was a fairly uneventful run for me on the Light Green course as I'd decided to slacken off the pace a bit in a bid to cut out some of 'silly' mistakes I'm prone to making when I go haring off, but I've now got a theory that I should just go like the clappers and make the silly mistake happen a bit quicker. I always seem to make at least one, so I may as well get it out of the way! There was a bit of confusion at the finish as I suddenly realised I had 11 controls on my control sheet—and 10 controls on the map. Still, it was easily remedied with a bit of common sense, and didn't detract from my enjoyment of the event.

Adrian Edwards

Southern Championships - Lydney Park, Forest of Dean, 21st February

I was browsing through the fixtures list and noticed a national event only an hour away from Taunton, at Lydney Park in the Forest of Dean. As I have just moved into the M50 class I thought it is time to raise my game again after a few years of local events and south west galoppens. I upped our membership to national level and am

intending to get some of the larger events under my belt. The motive behind this is being at the sharper end of an age class so I thought I would put this to the test at Lydney.

I entered online and was kept well briefed by email of the events that were unfolding to put the race in jeopardy. Snow had covered the parking field in the forest and the organiser had to put plan B into operation to bus the 700 or so competitors to the start/finish area. My brother and I now parked in an industrial area on the outskirts of the town and impressively all the facilities including trade stands selling kit, food stalls, toilets and event tents were clustered together to provide a lively atmosphere.

The bussing was efficient and after a 600m walk we found ourselves in an arena of snow covered fields hosting the finish area and clothing dump. I bumped into Mike Crockett and casually asked him about the Southern championships that were part of this day. I always thought this was for runners from towards London as we have our own South West championships at the Caddihoe Chase but Mike told me I was in it, as it is for all southern associations stretching from Kent to Cornwall. 'Ok, no pressure there then' I mused, watching people doing warm up sprints across the snow in England and Wales team shirts.

The sun was out and it felt warm as we jogged across to the start. We had to wait a while in a pre-start before scrambling down a steep snowy and muddy path churned up by most of the runners. As I slid my way down I was thinking that metal spikes or even crampons would have been a better footwear choice and it felt like an achievement just to reach the start area. It was a timed start in accordance with the rules and your results count from this time. I am still haunted by a few dark memories of running flat out to reach the start with a few seconds to spare.

For the first control it was straight into the woods and up a sharp climb hopping over snow covered brashings, this was ok then it was a contouring leg across rocky broken ground. There were several lines of footprints in the snow so it was a case of keeping to the one that

sat best with the bearing and the contours. It was a novelty to have these snow tracks but like sheep trods, they did seem a bit random at times. A lot of the forest had no snow at all and for me the first nine of twenty three controls were despatched with no problem. 10 was a tricky diagonal leg on a hillside to find a rock that I didn't adjust for after a fast path section. Then it was a climb before a huge 2km leg across a valley then a ridge holding the dreaded Scowles to reach 14.

This is marked on the map with purple hatching and a legend 'There Be Dragons'. To be avoided at all costs because if you weren't devoured there were 10 metre crags to fall off, into pits or caves created by ancient mine workings. I chose a safe, long path route and switched off to make my most costly mistake of the day. This time the snow worked against me and I headed up what I presumed to be a path to end up trapped in an enclosure, embarrassingly within view of the finish area. Once resolved this added an extra 2 and a half minutes, to record a leg time of 20:38 and my shin was bitten, by a rock, in the process.

It was a great course, physical, technical, totally absorbing and took me a full 90 minutes to get around the 8.9km with 400m climb, I later calculated a total time loss of around 7 minutes confined to 5 controls. Back at base it was time to join the crowd looking at the results board. There were 45 finishers on M50L and I was pleased to finish 17th, although my theory about the sharp end was disproved a bit when I saw that M45 shared the same course and with them I would have been 16th/37. National events include a championship standard which I missed by a couple of minutes and my inaugural Southern champs position was 11th M50 so not a bad days play.

Twelve QO runners took part and podium results are:

M35L Brian Fletcher 3rd/5

M60S Tony Hext 2nd/11

M75L Bill Vigar 1st/14

M75L Mike Crockett 3rd/14

Brian Pearson

NWO Galoppen at Silk Wood, 28th February

A very wet morning and the promise of high winds made this event quite unattractive, and so before setting off for Gloucestershire I checked the website in case of cancellation. I set off early as I had an appointment later in the day and was quite pleased that I did so. A good drive up and reasonably dry weather when I arrived meant that I had a very relaxed preparation time before setting off as one of the first starters.

Silk wood is part of the Westonbirt Estate near Tetbury, and as such is well managed. We didn't run in the arboretum, but in the nearby woodland. There were areas of bramble but plenty of paths and so the technical difficulty was fairly low but still pleasant.

Later as I left it began to rain and I did have sympathy for some of the QO members I saw heading for the start..

As usual with Emit the results were on the website by early evening. There was a good turn out of QOs, and good results (top 10) from:

Robert Green—2nd Short Green
Brian Pearson—6th on Blue
Graham Pearson—10th Light Green
Mike Crockett 10th—Green

Mike Crockett

ARTI CLES

There Is Always Next Time...

It seemed like a nice idea, a little walk through pretty woodland finding our way with a map and compass. It was only when we reached Culme Davy that the doubts kicked in. These people looked speedy. They wore lycra and were pin thin. 'You mean I have to *run*?' I said. The most exercise I get is moving from the cooker to the fridge (*and* back) with maybe a spurt of speed if I'm late on the school run

or need to get the washing in in a hurry. And the forest looked pretty dark and uninviting. I might get lost only to emerge into the sunlight years later with the wild look of an old soldier wondering if the war is over.

But that was eighteen months ago and, as a family, we Greens are pretty much hooked on orienteering. We are at most Quantock events and some of the Bristol ones too. The people are great and very helpful and friendly, we often have a laugh ('oh, you aren't *doing* the green, you *are* a Green!), my husband has tutored me carefully, shown me how to pace distances (I'm 110 paces to 100m on a map). I know that forest light is dark green and that it's wise to follow the long contour route rather than going up and down hill. That the blue bit might actually just be soggy ground and that falling off an earthbank can hurt.

So why, after umpteen events am I still getting it wrong? 90% of each course is okay but there always seems to be a blip in the middle. Age? A senior moment? I'm only a W45, there are people nearly twice my age hurtling around the woods! My husband has ceased to say 'how did you get on?' as my face usually tells the story (and apologies to the smiley people at the finish who often get a half-squint or a 'DON'T ASK!') But I still live in hope that on one course I will get it all right. That there will be a day when I don't spend an hour frowning at the map afterwards saying 'it's *so* obvious where I was, what *was* I thinking of?' or spend twenty minutes on the top of Lydeard Hill wondering why the one path in front of me bears no relation to the three close together on my map. Or, embarrassment of embarrassments, stopping 50 metres from the start and realising I have FORGOTTEN MY COMPASS. Where is North? Am I facing the way I think I am facing? If so, it looks like, oh no, I will have to walk almost back to the start and all those people I left ten minutes ago will think 'what *is* the one in the red coat doing?'. It also seems bad form to grab somebody and say 'just-tell-me-where-North-is-I'm-only-on-an- orange-I-can-get-by-without-my-compass' as this will lose them valuable nano-seconds in the results. So I hang around, shuffling about, picking fluff off my coat until a chap I vaguely

recognise says 'Are you alright?' (did I look *that* bad?). I did a double take 'who me?', 'yes'. I explained my predicament and the kind man went on his way and, yes, I was where I thought I was, and yes, with a face as red as my coat I have to tramp back to the start to the little path I should have gone down all that time ago.....

But hey, that was a few weeks ago, its QOFL 5 coming up and this time it'll be good. I'll jog all the way, be well up the results list, kiss the chap at the finish and sing all the way home... But then again, if you see a red face above a red coat emerging from the forest, give it a wide berth, it's that Green woman and she's HAVING A BAD DAY....

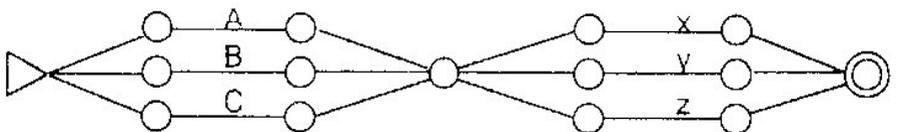
Elaine Green

GAFFLING

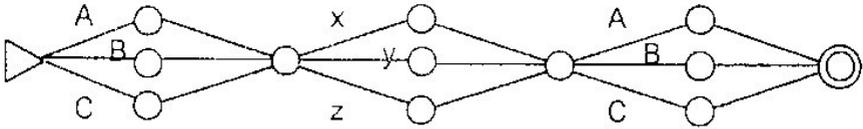
Now that the Relay season is approaching this word crops up from time to time. The aim of "gaffling" is to prevent competitors following others instead of navigating for themselves.

For relays with 3 courses (A, B and C) of equal length and say 6 teams competing then each team could run the courses in a different order, i.e. Team 1 ABC, 2 ACB, 3 BAC, 4 BCA, 5 CAB, and 6 CBA. However the problem with this is that if competitors met at a control they would know that they were on the same course, and so Gaffling has been introduced.

Briefly, instead of having three separate courses, common controls are introduced and the courses switched at the common controls thus:



Or thus:



In each case Team 1 and 2 would be running course A, but at the first common control they would change to x and y respectively and so on. In this way a large number of variations can be created.

The important thing is that, although runners do not run the same courses, each team as a whole does exactly the same legs. A bit of a nightmare for the planner and controller but I have yet to hear of protest or complaint.

British Orienteering had until recently a very comprehensive Guideline for relay events, and Gaffling (or Course Variants as they are sometimes referred to) was a major part of that Guideline. It is due to be reissued later in 2010 and can be found on the British Orienteering website. In the words of the chancellor I commend it to you.

Mike Crockett

Why British Orienteering Needs a 4 Level Event Structure

At the 2010 British Orienteering AGM, to be held on Saturday 3rd April 2010 at the JK, we are tabling the following Proposal:

That the current BOF Event Structure be amended, with effect from 1st January 2011, from a 3 tier structure to a 4 tier structure, the Levels to become:

- Level 1 Events - British Orienteering's major events, including the British Championships (Sprint, Middle, Long, Relays) and the JK.

- Level 2 Events - comprising a limited number of high quality events, including the best of the traditional age-class based cross country events, high profile city races and the Harvester Relays.
- Level 3 Events - comprising a wide range of typical Sunday morning events for competitors largely from within their Region, including colour-coded cross country events (former District events), urban races, etc.
- Level 4 Events - small scale events aimed at providing local competition (e.g. within a club) and increasing participation. e.g. introductory events, club summer evening events.

This Proposal, if carried, will have the effect of creating a 4 tier Event Structure, by the insertion of an additional Level to enable a clear distinction between those events aimed at attracting competitors primarily from within the Region, and those aimed at a wider audience.

Following the introduction of the new Event Structure, clubs are now being encouraged to register their former District Events in the new Level 2, as Regional Events, instead of in the New Level 3, as Local Events, as was initially intended. Merging the former Regional and District Events into a single tier of Events of widely differing qualities, has created a number of problems, all of which may effect the quality or cost of our orienteering, including:

- **Identification of Quality Events:** How is a competitor to decide which of these Events are worth travelling to if they are all now described as Regional Events?
- **Entry Fees:** If Clubs choose to register their former District Events as Regional Events, they may well be tempted to increase their entry fees for these Events.
- **Embargoes:** The requirement for a 12 month embargo on areas to be used for Regional Events has been dropped, to permit former District Events to be registered as Regional Events.

- **Controllers:** Level 2 Regional Events should be being controlled by Grade 2 controllers, but there aren't enough of them for all the former District Events, so now experienced Grade 3 Controllers are being allowed to control Level 2 Events. Newly qualified Grade 3 Controllers can only control Level 3 Local Events, many of which don't need a controller at all.

The creation of a separate Level for the best of the old Regional Events, along with other events aimed at a national audience, will enable all of these, and other, problems, which didn't exist under the old Event Structure, to be easily resolved.

To get our Resolution adopted at the AGM, we need your support, either to attend and vote at the AGM, or to use your Proxy Vote, details of which will be sent out to you by British Orienteering. Few members of British Orienteering have yet had an opportunity to express their opinions on the current Event Structure. Use your chance to do so now.

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Dick Towler

And Finally...

An orienteer was running along one day when he came to a wide river. Seeing a fellow orienteer on the other side he shouted across to him "*Excuse me! Can you tell me how to get to the other side?*" The other orienteer looked at his map, then checked his compass, then looked down the bank to his left and to his right. He thought about it for a moment, then shouted back "*you ARE on the other side*".

