

# The QuOnicle



**The Newsletter of Quantock Orienteers**

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## **EDITORIAL**

It doesn't seem five minutes ago I was wishing you all a happy new year, and now here we are on the verge of spring and heading towards the end of the orienteering 'season'. Congratulations to Richard Sansbury on winning the inaugural QOAD league (more on that in this issue), and good luck to all in the remaining two QOFLs where there's still 'plenty to play for'. We also have our club champs in July this year—a great chance to keep your eye in during the summer.

Many thanks to those of you who have made a contribution to QuOnicle this month. It was particularly pleasing to receive a lot of material well before the editorial deadline, and in many cases without the editor having to do any coercing!

—*Adrian Edwards*

## **CHAIRMAN'S CHAT**

The latest initiative from British Orienteering is the Event Safety Workshop. I can imagine this provokes some groaning from certain quarters. Could this be another example of a runaway health and safety culture that wants to wrap us all in cotton wool? Perhaps it is! As I write, the workshop hasn't happened yet, so we don't know. I suspect not though. It has emerged in response to a valid concern that event officials are not well supported, particularly in relation to safety.

As I drive up and down the M5 I notice the differences in attitudes to safety in the way different people drive. Every day there will be someone (not me!) whizzing past at over 90mph. I understand people's motives for driving fast - they may be late, possibly over-confident of their driving skills, or simply enjoy the rebellious thrill of being the fastest on the road. I am more puzzled by the occasional driver doing less than 50mph. An ordinary looking person in an ordinary car but travelling slower than the lorries. Why? Are they trying to conserve fuel, is the car not running properly, or are they terrified by the risks of going any faster.

What's that got to do with orienteering? Well, how do you think current standards of orienteering safety provision compares to the drivers. Are we the reckless speeders, the slow plodders, or the average. I know that in comparison to other sports, our activities can appear to be high risk. Compared to schools standards our safety systems can look flimsy. If, God forbid, a major incident were to happen, would our systems be able to cope, and stand up to scrutiny?

By the time you read this the first workshop will have happened and we'll know what direction orienteering safety is moving.

—*Richard Sansbury*

## **CLUB NEWS**

### **Membership Renewals**

We have a few club members who are yet to renew their membership—you know who you are! We would be grateful if you could do so as soon as possible.

### **News of People**

It's very encouraging to welcome lots of new QO members in this edition. First of all, a belated welcome to Amanda Godsell and Suzanne Richards who joined the club in January, just too late to be welcomed in the last QuOnicle. Amanda and Suzanne work at the West Somerset Sports and Leisure Centre and as part of a 'Living Well' initiative they have developed a monthly orienteering activity programme which attracts over 45 people to each event.

The Hancock family (Chris, Sarah and their three children Beth, Kirsten and Ruth) have recently joined the club. They live in Kingston St. Mary—a perfect location for attending the majority of JOG events. Lloyd Williams and his son Jack have joined the club, and have attended some JOG and QOAD events. Lloyd is involved in the Tone Schools Sports Partnership. The Modica family (Spencer, Angela and their three children Tate, Isabella and Miles) from Taunton are also new family members and JOG regulars, and Tate and Isabella have already been awarded their 'Hare' badges.

John Nicholson from Stogursey has left the club due to problems with his knees preventing participation. John has been a member of QO since 1986 and would like to pass on his thanks to those that have helped and encouraged him over the years—in particular Tony Milroy, Chris Philip, Ted & Lennox Heath and Mike Crockett.

## **An Interview with the President**

Those of you that subscribe to Compass Sport magazine may have noticed that QO President Mike Crockett is featured in a "Know Your Class Leader" article. Back in January, Mike was number one in the M75 rankings and was thus interviewed for the magazine.

Unfortunately Mike has a knee injury and has slipped to 4th place, but Bill Vigar is currently occupying 2nd place. It's quite a fillip for QO to have two members at the top of the M75 rankings!

## **Lost Keys**

Graham Pearson would like to pass on his thanks to those people who helped him search for his car keys which he lost during the QOAD night event up on Cothelstone Hill.

## **A request for Help**

JOG is searching for people willing to attend events now and then and show newcomers what it's all about.

**It isn't coaching**, just assisting family groups to understand:

- how the courses work
- what to look for
- what to do when they get to a control
- how to orientate the map
- Maybe to go to the first control with them

If you think you might be able to help please give me a ring. 01823 323850 or email [jandr.craddock@gmail.com](mailto:jandr.craddock@gmail.com)

— *Judy Craddock*

## JOG REPORT – Feb/March 2011

This term we started at Lydeard Hill on a bleak and windy day, courses were planned by Will Kromhout with Iain and Liz Pye the coaches. Unbelievably we had 65 people attend. It's a great place for JOG as we tend to use the hill and surrounding area which is enclosed by a (very long) fence. Everyone returned steaming, ruddy cheeked and out of breath...only registration froze! As night fell the fourth QOAD followed with the Green and Kromhout-Smith families staying to join the excitement of orienteering after dark.

JOG have a series of skills badges for the children to acquire, the fourth badge Fox requires children to start planning courses by working with experienced orienteers. Robert Green offered to plan our next event at Castle Neroche and asked his son James to plan the white course. As many of you know this is probably the most difficult course to plan but James used his experience and Dad's advice to give us a well thought out course which was fun but technically correct! Well done James. The orange course offered good opportunities for coaches to introduce the use of attack points and to show how contours features on the map translate to physical features on the ground.



*New JOG planner James*

Cothelstone replaced 20 Acre Wood on our fixture list. (A lot of logging had made the latter very muddy.) This was a brilliantly sunny yet cold day and again Will Kromhout planned our courses. It was the first time we have been there and it proved a good venue as you have to read the map carefully to avoid missing rides and paths, some of which start off running parallel to each other. Groups of horses were the great attraction at Seven Sisters and during the QOAD that followed the thunder of their hooves galloping over the open ground in the dark was

a bit scary. Nick Fernandes joined us so that he could start to monitor coaching and think about the best way to develop this section.

Rachel Bussell did her usual excellent job at Wellington school on 28<sup>th</sup> February. The younger children really made the most of such a safe site and several made that first step of venturing off on their own.

Rachel designed a great line course for the orange level and you had to be very accurate to get them all, with no extras! Mike Crockett came to coach even though he had injured his leg, we are VERY grateful to Mike for the support he continues to give JOG. Actually he was 'bowled over' by one young member he tested for her Squirrel badge, she impressed him by her knowledge, well done Niamh O' Mahony.



*Chris Green collecting controls*

John Trayler has now joined the cohort of planners we are beginning to gather for JOG. He planned at Broomfield Hill and designed excellent courses just at the right level. While putting out the controls the Highland cattle that frequent the open area of the hill weren't to be seen however by the time our first competitors were running they were very evident and some were quite intimidated. Not sure what to do about this, any ideas? Adrian Edwards came to coach, Nick turned up too and both were kept very busy offering coaching to children at all levels.

Two new areas for the last two events this term, Thurlbear Woods and Netherclay Wood. Quite exciting prospects!

To those of you who help JOG in many and various ways a big THANK YOU!

*—Roger and Judy Craddock*

## EVENTS

### **Will & Family's Excellent (Nocturnal) Adventures**

When Will Kromhout first introduced the idea of an After Dark Series of events, following on from JOG events during the afternoon, I wonder whether he realised how successful it would be. Most QO members, during my time here, have not been known to be night orienteers (there are only a very few exceptions). So here was an opportunity for them to find out – without having to travel very far – what they had been missing.

The series started back in mid November at Kings Cliff, where a total of 19 of us ventured into the dark in search of 20 illusive controls – 10 marked in red, 10 marked in blue. Starting off on whichever colour you preferred, you could collect as many controls of that colour as you wished (or were able) before changing to the other colour. Once you changed colour, you could then collect as many controls of that other colour as you wished (or were able) – but you could not collect any more controls of your first choice colour. All this had to be done within the usual time limit of one hour. With controls having different values, tactics (or strategy) played an important part of the exercise.

At the end of the evening, when all had returned safely and the dust had settled (or should I say the mud had puddled), Richard Sansbury emerged as the winner having collected an impressive 405 points (out of a possible 500) – but he was 3 minutes late, giving him a score of 375 points. A simple handicap system was used to 'even things out a bit' and to encourage the juniors. This still left Richard in top spot, with Jim Mallinson 2<sup>nd</sup> and Brian Pearson 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Early December saw the next adventure, at Wind Down & Broomfield Hill, where fewer (13) ventured out (perhaps some were put off by the heavy afternoon rain?). Once again it was Richard out in front, closely followed by Jim with Brian a little further back in 3<sup>rd</sup>. New Year's Day at Blackborough was the venue for the 3<sup>rd</sup> adventure, following on from the Xmas Novelty event of the morning. Not surprisingly, not all that many stayed on for the night event (13 again). Richard claimed

his third win out of three and virtually claimed the series, but Jim kept the pressure on with a third 2<sup>nd</sup> spot, Brian dropping back a little.

A cold, windy night at the end of January saw a larger crowd (21) gather on top of Lydeard Hill for the fourth adventure. Easy running on the open hill tops (and sides) meant points were a bit easier to collect, and Richard & Brian took full advantage of that. Richard won his fourth consecutive event, with James Green (M10) in 2<sup>nd</sup> place (due to the encouraging handicap system), and Brian in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

And so to the last adventure, in mid-February at Cothelstone Hill. Could Richard make it a clean sweep? Could a 'dark horse' come from behind and beat him? The advantage of being computerised is that we would find out at the social gathering after the event (in a nearby pub).

A record 22 runners turned out on a cold, clear, moon-lit night, and rumours of points being easy to collect were soon dispelled, with some hoping to get a high score coming to grief. Richard was one of these, but had he already done enough to ensure the series win? Brian ended the series strongly, winning the last event, with Jim coming a consistent 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Chris Phillip returning in 3<sup>rd</sup> (despite not taking a watch and mis-judging the time to collect 140 penalty points!).

Calculators and computers were hard at work whilst the control collecting team were out retrieving all the controls. Then it was off to the pub for the results to be announced and the trophy to be awarded. Will had made an excellent wooden carving of an owl on a stand – a very appropriate trophy, and this was duly presented to Richard Sansbury as the overall winner. Jim Mallinson held onto 2<sup>nd</sup> place and, despite his victory on the night, Brian Pearson had to settle for 3<sup>rd</sup> place (but it was close!). So congratulations to the winner, all those who took part and completed at least one event successfully, and especially to Will for planning and organising all 5 adventures – roll on next year.

In all, 42 people took part in this After Dark Series, with 5 people attending all 5 events. After the presentation of the trophy, I saw Richard with the details for the Harvester Trophy Relay – the 7 person

relay starting at night, with the first 3 or 4 legs run at night, and finishing in daylight. QO now have enough experienced night runners to compete in this event and to turn in a creditable performance. Go for it lads!

Will's planning of the whole series was very good, as the winning scores at all events were very similar (450/450/450/522/426), although it was a bit easier to get points at Lydeard Hill. With different 'top' scores being achieved at the different event, I asked myself the question as to whether using these actual scores to determine the series winner was truly fair, and could it be improved upon for next year. It is (almost) equivalent to taking the actual times of competitors at QOFL events and using the cumulative time to determine the series winner. As a matter of interest, I also looked at whether using the QOFL handicap values would make any difference.

First, I scaled the scores to (an arbitrary) 1000 for the winner, as the QOFL used to do before this season, so that the winner of every event scores the same number of point for the series. In this way, any advantage of attending an event where points are easier to collect is eliminated. Similarly, any disadvantage of attending an event where points are harder to collect is also eliminated. This resulted in the first 12 places in the final league table being exactly the same. There were minor changes lower down the table, most due to points being easier to collect at Lydeard Hill and harder to collect at Cothelstone Hill.

I then used the QOFL handicap system, first scaling the winners' score to 1000, then taking the 'raw' scores. As would be expected, this produced a lot more changes, but the order of the top 3 stayed the same when scores were scaled to 1000. It was only with the basic QOFL handicapping that the result changed significantly, with the winning order being Jim, Brian and Richard.

With different people planning the events next year (hopefully there will be 5 different planners for the 5 events – allowing everyone, including Will, to take part), there is a strong likelihood that winning scores at the events will differ greatly. Taking the 'raw' scores to determine the series winner could then introduce a degree of

unfairness. By scaling the scores, this potential unfairness can be eliminated, so I propose this should be adopted. The handicapping system used for this series is a good one, as it encourages the juniors, so I see no reason to change this aspect – keep thing simple.

—*Jim Mallinson*

## **QOFL Event - Buckland Wood - Sunday 30 Jan 2011**

It was a cool dry Sunday morning and it was the place to go for my 364<sup>th</sup> orienteering event. I had been to Buckland Wood before, most recently almost exactly three years ago. I had completely forgotten the most interesting thing about this orienteering area up on the Blackdown Hills. Starting was delayed briefly due to one control having been removed. The first four controls on Blue involved mostly steep descents with one climb. I was not going to finish in record time because of the thick vegetation and brushings. This is typical of the Blackdown locations. Also because I had done the “Blackdown Beast” pub run the day before. What great fun that was as well.

Eleven of us from YTRRC ran round as one group. Now back to Buckland Wood. Control number 5 came easily, and from 6 to 9, I was no longer running entirely alone. Crossing the high iron fence to get to control 12 was interesting. I had to find a gap somewhere. Luckily I found a gap in the fence just where the path crossed it. Then it was out of the woods and onto some high open ground for control 13. This is where it all came back to me. Strange derelict concrete structures below and a large curved wall like thing mostly buried in the ground. Where was I, and what was it all there for? I remember three years ago it was explained to me as being the remains of an abandoned reservoir project. I don't know why the project was abandoned.

There were five more controls in the open bit (which would have been under water), then back into woods for the final leg. Control 20 was at another odd structure. On leaving number 20, I made my only significant error. Holding the map the wrong way round, I ran down the path and eastwards and not up. Realising this mistake, I had to run

back up the path adding on a few extra minutes. After 363 previous events, I should know better. Finishing was great as usual. I enjoyed the run. The course was excellent. Thanks to QO.

—*Mark Larcombe*

### **Past times? or pastime?? How was it for you?**

I've been navigating my way round the countryside since roaming the Lake District as a child. All that 'lonely as a cloud' stuff perhaps. Despite the shock of moving to the flatlands of Cambridge for my teenage years, I continued to love the freedom of 'doing my own thing' in the outdoors. The nearest I came to 'club' or team sports was a low-level racing eight on the Cam. I preferred a swim in the open air baths at 6am, or solo canoeing. I was quite hooked on Scout activities however, and learned compass and map skills ( and camping) in them. But I never enjoyed spectator 'sport', watching others.

For nearly forty years of professional life in Taunton I was lucky. I taught physics, and loved trying to enthuse the students who came my way. I was able to promote my interests in electronics and computing. And I ran Scout Troops, Duke of Edinburgh adventure training, canoeing, mountain biking.... and occasionally 'field days' or 'orienteering'.

This was an activity very unlike modern club orienteering. We Roneo'd, spirit-duplicated or photocopied black and white maps ( we pushed the school to clear it with the Ordnance Survey) and I made home-made needle punches using glass fibre resin from my canoe-building activities. Our main aim was to improve students' navigation skills in a fun way. I was always pushing for solo entrants, but partly due to 'risk assessment' and partly because DofE works with teams, as do Corps and Scouts, we often had it as a group activity. This usually meant one person doing the navigating, and the rest learning little and just following. The arrival of mobile phones meant it became easy for teams to phone each other up and ask for navigation help.

I met the Craddock family because Roger was a colleague; he used a lab next to mine; and as my son moved to the school at age eleven he soon joined Roger's orienteering activities, since he'd been coming to my camps since being in a carry-sling.

I was never 'super fit', but being on a sports field three afternoons a week, cycling to work, canoeing on the river, or running a camp all weekend, or running a ten day camp in Wales or the Lakes, or on a school skiing trip left me able to move pretty fast. If only I'd got into the club orienteering scene then.

So, what happens? You grow older. Physically your body shows signs of wear and tear. For me, first back pain (all those years canoeing and mountain biking). A dodgy knee (ski injury?). Then both big toes become very painful (arthritis? or gout??) Then because this makes walking, let alone running, painful, I get heel and fasciitis problems. Oh, and my eyes- one of which was always very short-sighted and good to read maps, and the other good for spotting detail in the distance, start getting worse.

BUT. I retire. I have time to get to orienteering run by clubs, rather than spending all my time setting my own versions up for students; running and policing the course; and collecting up later. I get to see people who aren't just M60 like me ('til April) but M75. I still feel competitive, and don't like under-performing, and manage to compete with some degree of success and a lot of satisfaction. I may have to manage foot problems by 'running' in heavyweight mountain boots to save the pain of flexing feet- but that gives me an excuse for slowness. I return to race again in areas I've run before, and that gives some advantage- the old 'cunning running'. Electronic dibbing gives me instant feedback on my total and leg performance. Maps are full colour on waterproof paper. And I find the Crads are running a fantastic scheme to try to interest young children and families in OUR sport.

So- a typical day. Off to the Northern slopes of the Blackdowns- I've been here before. Ran green. I remember it as VERY soggy underfoot

and with lots of undergrowth. And I 'shadowed' a beginner here on another occasion. Left him after he seemed to be navigating reasonably, but then didn't see him back for an hour and was a bit worried... But today it's looking good. Sunny, crisp January morning. Car park already overflowing, so clearly popular. QO flags and tent efficiently manned as usual and only a brief hiccup getting the printer working. Shadow a young family for the first two controls to make sure they are happy with how dibbers are used- and happy on use of map and compass. That's my good deed for the day.. As a result remember that all courses look like diving down the scarp, and I'll have to struggle back up it. Clock in. And off I go on Green.

Ah. Good leg along the top track. That'll get me away after an initial shambling attempt at a jog- soon no-one will see me walking! If I dive down the slope after careful navigating I'll hit the control. Whoops. Twenty metres too soon- but not much time lost. Off to the next one. Brambles much better than I remembered- but I'd forgotten how stepping onto and across slippery brushing branches can slow you. Yeah, I'm enjoying this. Markers are accurately placed, and sneakily positioned so they don't telegraph at long range. Looks like I've got company on this course. Try to dive away from markers quickly, with map and next course in mind before I dib. Glasses steaming up. Take woolly hat off- it kept getting knocked off by branches.

Yeah, these are the tangled slopes I remember- but the course planner seems to have arranged markers with do-able routes between them. And room for thought on which route to go. Long leg along the slope. Follow the edge of the open area then dive forward. Spot on.

OK. Down across the main path. Straight down with fence and boundary either side, then 20 metres diagonally left. Spot on. I'm enjoying this. Aim diagonally out to pick up the path. Mmm. Not as clear as I expected. Get a bit distracted over where to aim in from. Hey! I'm lost! Charge North to be able to see boundary corner. Aim back to obvious re-entrant. 20m in and it's exactly where it's supposed to be. Must have missed it by less than 40m on the way. Too much time lost...

Two more reasonable legs. Compass and features as expected. Feeling happier. Yeah, I remember this huge concrete conduit from last time- but this time meet it at a much better crossing point. Thought I'd got ahead of her- where did she come from? CONCENTRATE. This is a fun leg. Seems to involve passing the Blackdown work-gang sorting brambles and fences. I like this checkpoint- sneakily hidden in a little quarry-like hole on the hillside. Back past the work-gang. Where can I cross this fence- ah- stile over there. Up a leafy clearing to the obvious tower. Back through acceptable boggy ground. More runners. Wonder if they started before or after me?

TIRING. Waste time deciding where to cross lower parking area fence then realise the course aims me for a proper place. This is the uphill bit I wasn't looking forward to. But here's the little thicket, and round the back the flag. Head along the slope, then up a steep half-stream to hidden ruins. Feet aren't liking this. Oh- shall I skirt round through messy trees? Skirt up for clearer ground but longer route? Eventually follow fence round edge. Marker's there. Can't even rise to a jog to finish. Collect printout. Quick thank-you to a few of the organisers and planners- a very enjoyable day, and I now rate the area higher- and have seen the 'Batcave'!

SO. It was a pastime- it passed a significant part of the day. I got a lot of satisfaction. Not a star performance, but I didn't disgrace myself. I'm enormously grateful to the whole team who make it possible- planners, mappers, car-park organisers et al.

But is it going to be that in future I sit on my rocking chair and think of days like this as 'past times'? I hope not. It's not a spectator sport, but there are plenty of roles for the non-competitor. As a lifetime teacher I still enjoy helping and enthusing young people. And I can't wait to see the results up on RouteGadget, and be able to see, as if I don't already know, how I compared with others over route choice and speed. When's that next event?

*—John Fisher*

## **QOFL 5—Ham Hill, 20th Feb 2011**

Speaking to a few fellow competitors, I get the impression that Ham Hill is a bit of a 'Marmite' area—you either love it or hate it! Personally I'm in the former category, as I love the uniqueness of the area.

Ham Hill was the scene for my first ever QO event in 2008. I did an Orange course back then and so kept largely to the extensive path network, but I was forewarned by some more experienced members that things get decidedly more technical when you have to venture off those paths and start picking your way across the myriad of small hills!

Control 1 on Light Green was a nice and gentle introduction being situated just off a path bend, whilst controls 2 and 3 took me off into the wooded hillside to the east of the map. The weather was crisp with a smattering of sunshine, but heavy rain prior to the event left it rather slippery in places. Control 3 was situated half way down a steepish wooded slope, and it took a bit of a scramble to get back up to the path at the top again. Indeed I saw one poor person get within a few meters of the top, only to slide back down the slope again!

Control 4 was a short climb up through a wooded area to the edge of the large field on the east side of the map, giving a good opportunity to get the heart pumping for a sprint across the field and back into the hills for number 5. It was back out into the fields again for number 6, and the somewhat rare chance to run downhill on short grass. Of course, what goes down must come up and so it proved as controls 7 and 8 led us back up towards the monument. I had a bit of a brain-freeze at this point, probably induced by haring around in those fields, and lost too much time looking for number 8 too far down the hill. Lesson learned (albeit a bit too late!), I slowed it down a bit and paid proper attention to the map for the last three controls.

I really enjoyed the course, and talking to others at the finish I heard nothing but praise for the other courses planned by Tony Hext. Some

orienteers from other clubs seemed quite amused to be using the old Joe Lee system, and whilst I didn't have any particular problems it did make me realise what a neat system SI is! As it turned out we didn't have any vandalism problems on the day thankfully, but given the past problems it was good peace of mind to know that our relatively new (and expensive) SI kit wasn't in harms way.

—*Adrian Edwards*

## **QOADS**

By the time you all read this the clocks will have probably gone forward and dark, early evenings will be but a distant memory. Hopefully memories of the first QO Night Series will live longer!!

Over 40 different competitors ventured out into the darkness over the course of the series, all returned safely to tell the tale. More than 30 competitors came back to try it again, which proves we must be doing something right!! Rich Sansbury couldn't maintain his 100% record through the entire series, being pipped at the last event, but still managed to walk away with the Trophy.

With many competitors investing in new, more powerful headlamps, next seasons competition can only be tougher. I look forward to seeing you all there!!!

Please turn the page for the final league table...

—*Will Kromhout*

## QOADS 2010/11: Final league Table

Rank	Name	Class	Club	Kings Cliff	Wind Down	Black-borough	Lydeard Hill	Cothelstone	TOTAL
				13/11/10	04/12/10	01/01/11	22/01/11	12/02/11	
1	Richard Sansbury	M40	QO	456 (1)	450 (1)	450 (1)	522 (1)	390 (4)	1428
2	Jim Mallinson	M60	SLOW	413 (2)	441 (2)	371 (=2)	441 (4)	406 (2)	1295
3	Brian Pearson	M50	QO	372 (3)	342 (3)	306 (5)	468 (3)	426 (1)	1266
4	Graham Hartley	M45	QO	174 (11)	204 (4)	240 (7)	432 (6)	348 (6)	1020
5	Jeff Pakes	M35	QO		144 (9)	258 (6)	324 (8)	246 (14)	828
6	Chris Phillip	M55	QO				420 (7)	399 (3)	819
7	Mike Crockett	M75	QO	184 (10)	200 (5)		264 (10)	328 (8)	792
8	Roger Craddock	M70	QO			120 (10)	256 (11)	352 (5)	728
9	Elliot Smith	M10	QO	275 (6)	100 (11)			300 (11)	675
10	Rich Kromhout	M35	QO			348 (4)		318 (10)	666
11	Mark Lockett	M35	Kerno	336 (4)			246 (12)		582
12	Neil Clegg	M50	QO	140 (13)	192 (6)	156 (8)	168 (17)	186 (18)	546
13	Hilary Barnard	W55	IND	118 (15)	168 (7)		232 (13)		518
14	Jonathan Barnard	M55	IND	97 (17)			210 (15)	204 (15)	511
15	James Green	M10	QO				475 (2)		475
16	Bill Vigar	M75	QO	64 (18)		72 (11)		328 (7)	464
17	Chris Green	M8	QO				437.5 (5)		437.5
18	Sue Gard	W60	QO	304 (5)		128 (9)			432
19	Adrian Taylor	M55	Devon			371 (=2)			371
20	Geoff Richardson	M45	QO					324 (9)	324
21=	Brian Fletcher	M35	QO				300 (9)		300
21=	Graham Pearson	M45	QO	114 (16)			126 (20)	60 (20)	300
23	Sheila Braine	W45	QO					287 (12)	287
24=	Jonathan Richardson	M11	QO					275 (13)	275
24=	Kyle Mead	M10	IND	275 (6)					275
24=	Eden Smith	M10	QO	275 (6)		0 (13)			275
27	Lloyd Williams	M21	IND	240 (9)					240
28	Grant Floyd	M45	IND				228 (14)		228
29=	Jim Pearson	M75	QO	152 (12)			56 (21)		208
29=	Margaret Crockett	W60	QO	0 (19)			208 (16)	48 (21)	208
31=	Penny Richardson	W45	QO					203 (=16)	203
31=	Amy Hallett	W18	IND					203 (=16)	203
33	Eleanor Richardson	W13	QO					160 (19)	160
34	Sandra Smith	W45	QO				154 (18)		154
35	Andy Rimes	M45	QO		150 (8)				150
36	Jim Scott	M55	IND				147 (19)		147
37	David Parkin	M75	BOK	120 (14)					120
38	Alfie Hollingsworth	M10	QO		112.5 (10)				112.5
39	Rosie Wych	W55	QO		96 (12)				96
40	Tom Hollingsworth	M12	QO		90 (13)				90
41=	Christopher Hancock	M55	QO					0 (22)	0
41=	Matthew Atkins+1	M40	Devon			0 (12)			0

## **THE FORESTRY COMMISSION SELL-OFF, AND QO's PART IN ITS DOWNFALL!**

When I first heard the news of the sell-off I couldn't quite believe it. "Really? All of it? Why?" Some digging around found out that, yes, the government intention was to sell off all 1000 square miles of Forestry Commission (FC) land in England and that the intention appeared to be simply to raise a bit of cash for the Treasury.

Like many of you, I have been enjoying access to FC land all my life. I recall family walks as a child, hours spent fooling around on mountain bikes as an adult, and of course numerous orienteering events. I have always been impressed at the high standard of facilities provided, the freedom to go anywhere and the distinct absence of commercialism spoiling the whole experience. Now all that seemed threatened.

I also knew this was bad news for the club. Last year I carried out a strategic analysis of QO and noted that two of the major threats to our activities was landowners withholding permissions and vulnerability to changes in statutory requirements. But I must admit that the possibility of large scale revolutions in forest ownership was way beyond my imagination. The fact is that the FC is supportive of sporting activities on their land and understands what we do, so losing them could lead to a loss of access for orienteering.

One of the large areas affected was the Forest of Dean. (Can you imagine the loss of the Forest of Dean to orienteering?). A well focussed campaign seemed to develop very quickly. I saw their strong response from the local people who were clearly on the case and was encouraged by their example. But what to do? I came up with a four step plan:

1. Consult the membership and check if they agree that QO should oppose the sell-off,
2. Lobby our four local MPs on behalf of the club to oppose the proposals,

3. Make an official response as a club to the consultation,
4. Support British Orienteering in their response to the consultation.

So I sent an email out to as many club members as possible. I have email addresses for about half the club membership, so that was a quick and easy way to get good coverage. (Sorry to those who were left out of this consultation, but I needed a fast response and couldn't wait for the next QuOnicle.) Then I waited to see what happened.



There was a huge response. I had a couple of dozen responses in the first 24 hours alone. Every single one was opposed to the sell-off, some obviously felt very strongly about it! Clearly I had club support.

Meanwhile there were reports that the Forest of Dean was to be spared. The revised plans seemed to be that "heritage forests" would somehow be protected from commercial exploitation, and public access would be preserved. However there is quite a difference between allowing access by individual walkers and access for organised sporting events, so this wasn't likely to be the solution orienteers would want.

I composed a letter and sent it to Jeremy Browne, MP for Taunton. Jeff Pakes was going to write to Bridgwater MP, Ian Liddell Grainger.

Mike Crockett wrote to Tessa Munt, MP for Wells. Just needed to find someone to write to the Yeovil MP. Anyway here's what I wrote:

*Dear Jeremy Browne,*

*I write regarding the proposed sell-off of Forestry Commission lands I am chairman of Quantock Orienteers. Orienteering is an established outdoor adventure sport that normally takes place in forests and woodland. We hold regular events around the Taunton Deane area attracting up to 100 competitors ranging from age 5 to 75.*

*We rely on the cooperation of landowners, as our events needs full access to land areas, not just use of rights of way. The Forestry Commission understands our needs, encourages outdoor activities and is business-like in its approach to permissions. By contrast our experiences with private landowners are less reliable, and on occasions we have had to cancel events due to permissions difficulties. Our concern is therefore that the land sell-off will result in reduced opportunities for our sport.*

*We therefore appeal to you to oppose the sell-off. Alternatively, if a sell-off is unavoidable, we would like you to support any measures to preserve access for organised events such as ours.*

*Yours sincerely, etc*

Mike got an immediate response from his MP. (I have abridged the letter as it goes on at some length about the detailed discussions on access)

*Dear Friend,*

*Thank you for taking the time to email me.*

*I am writing to update you on the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (Defra) proposed disposal of England's Forests. I have had hundreds of emails and letters from constituents regarding this*

*matter – many times the number about any other issue since I was elected last May. Not one has been supportive of the Secretary of State's position.*

*..... I do not agree with the sale or lease of any Forestry Commission land without protection for biodiversity, protected and improved public access, a continued and increasing role for woodlands in climate change mitigation and protected nationally important landscapes .....*

*..... I would urge you to help me by keeping the pressure on .....*

*Kind regards,*

*Tessa Munt MP*

But hardly had we started on step 2 than I heard a surprising report on the radio. At Prime Minister's Questions David Cameron admitted he wasn't happy with the plans for the forestry sell-off. Fantastic news! It was obvious that a change of plan was imminent. The next day as expected a full U-turn was announced.

And that was it. Suddenly it was all over. We had probably come in too late to make much difference but the weight of the protests, which must have included many orienteers had won the day. So well done all who made their voice heard!

*—Richard Sansbury*

## **JOG FIXTURES—SUMMER TERM 2011**

This is the provisional fixture list at time of press—please check the Events page on the QO website ([www.quantockorienteers.co.uk](http://www.quantockorienteers.co.uk)) for any revisions.

Sun May 8th	Cockercombe ST187366
Sat May 14th	Longrun/Castle/SCAT ST21 248
Sat May 21st	Fyne Court ST 222 319
Sat May 28th	Queen's College ST 218 233
Sat June 4th	Broomfield Hill ST 212 3
Sat June 11th	Kingscliff Wood ST 270320
Sat June 18th	Cothelstone Hill ST 201 328
Sat June 25th	Thurlbear Woods ST 26213
Sat July 2nd	Castle Neroche ST 267 158
Sat July 9th	Lydeard Hill ST181 338

Saturday events are from 2-3pm. Sunday events are 11-1pm.

