



Essex Stragglers Orienteering Society (SOS)



Newsletter Volume 20 Number 12 January 2009

Editors: Geraldine Russell and Andrew Cordle - editors@stragglers.info
Club website - <http://stragglers.info>

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Essex Stragglers support the [Woodland Trust](#) and its objectives



Essex Stragglers' development activities are supported by [Awards For all](#)

Remembering Dave Birkett - Wendy Welham



I can't recall when I first met Dave, but we became friends when we were both helping with the Essex Police Cadet scheme back in the 80's whilst working as trainers for Essex Police.

Dave has always been involved in sports, be it table tennis (he was still playing in a local league), football, cycling, climbing, hill walking and mountaineering. Some of this stemmed from his days in Scouts and completing his Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. In fact he was keen on anything that would take him outdoors including his allotment.

Whilst helping with the cadets we were lucky enough to be out all year camping and hill walking in various parts of the country. It was because of this that David decided that **we** needed to learn to orienteer. This led to another sporting passion for David and to quite a few adventures, involving myself on some occasions, and his family on many others such as his epic journey to compete in Sweden last year.

This enthusiasm led to a small group of Essex Police Officers and retired colleagues competing in Police events, none of us very good, but enthusiastic. On one memorable occasion Dave shot off as usual, however on completion his course he discovered that he had in fact run the women's vets course and was promptly disqualified! This involvement also led to Dave deciding that we would host an event, which in turn meant SOS members kindly 'volunteering' to help us plan and run it over in Hatfield Forest, all for a meal and a mug!

In more recent times Dave had turned his hand to coaching. His involvement with local schools has encouraged many children to have a go at orienteering.

We shared many experiences, as he did with many of his other friends, who could all tell you similar stories of the things that would happen if Dave was around and got an idea into his head. Such stories as him directing me to take a short cut down a nice little track in North Wales only to find that it got so narrow he had to climb out of the mini bus window (as we couldn't open the doors) to see me back 1/4 mile! To our confusion at trying to direct an air sea rescue helicopter on top of a mountain in north Wales as we hadn't read that bit in the manual and were wondering why they were firing flares at us (apparently to see the wind direction!) or David being with other friends in the French Alps waiting all day for the Tour de France to pass by, only to find out it had been diverted because of the snow.

He was always up for a cup of coffee and a chat to tell me about what ever his latest harebrained scheme was, although I understand from Kath it was not a good idea to disturb his first one after the school run! I will really miss that.

He will be missed by his family and his many friends.

Dave Birkett's funeral will be on Tuesday 3rd Feb, 11.00am at Chelmsford Crematorium, Writtle Rd, Chelmsford. Everyone who knew Dave is welcome to attend, to share their memories of Dave, to celebrate his life and to support Kath, Tom and Alex. No flowers, please, but you could send a donation to the British Schools Orienteering Association c/o funeral directors Pennack and Sons, 1-3 Maldon Road, Chelmsford, CM2 7DW.

Editorial - Andrew Cordle

Let me apologise for the late publication of this Newsletter. After the cancellation of our event on 25th January, we had no location for distribution of the printed edition, and we felt it was important to wait for Dave Birkett's obituary and funeral notice to be available.

Dave's untimely death has left a large hole in the coaching programme, but I'm sure our coaches will manage to fill it. The club always needs more volunteers, as you will be aware from Martin and Julie's contributions to this newsletter. Enthusiasm is more important than experience. Many find their volunteer contribution more rewarding than their orienteering results! It should be fun, too, of course, and hopefully the length of service of some of our officials shows that this is the case. If you don't have the time or the inclination to volunteer, just enjoy your orienteering.

Chairman's Chat - Martin Sellens

Dave Birkett

The death of a friend puts everything else into perspective. Club stalwart Dave Birkett died suddenly, without warning, at his Chelmsford home on Monday 12th January 2009. He had spent the weekend on a first aid course with fellow Stragglers, to up-date his qualifications so that he could be the designated first aider at events and coaching sessions. Over the past few years, since taking early retirement on health grounds from the police force, Orienteering had become a major part of David's life, and he had persuaded his family, Kath, Tom and Alex, of the arcane pleasure to be had from the sport. The Birkett family have been a mainstay of the organisation of many a Straggler's event, providing legendary string courses to ensure that other young families were entertained and instructed while mum and dad got their fix in the forest. Dave's contribution to the development of the club has been awesome. As well as taking a leading role in coaching he seemed to be on a one-man mission to convert the Chelmsford area into a hot bed of Orienteering activity. To Dave, Maldon was just a suburb of Chelmsford, and one of his recent triumphs was the mapping of the promenade area and the initiation of a series of events in collaboration with the council. He was single handedly responsible for the development of the permanent course at Hanningfield. He had also mapped a number of Chelmsford Schools and had recently negotiated, with Helen Errington, the BOF regional Development Officer, and Sport Essex, for Orienteering to be included in the next Essex Games. Among the other projects Dave had on the go, was the mapping of Writtle Forest, an area that he had helped to negotiate access to and for which he had an almost breathless enthusiasm. I think he had in mind the first National Event for Essex, and who's to say that this wouldn't have happened with Dave's boundless energy pushing it forward? He was leading the Stragglers organising team for the 2009 British School's Score Championships to be held at Hylands Park in the Autumn. He was the Stragglers' representative on the East Anglian Orienteering Association committee. The scope of his involvement in the Sport leaves me breathless!

Dave had a lifelong love of the outdoors. He was also a competitive sportsman, having (and I hope I have my 'facts' right here) played cricket and table tennis to a high level in earlier years. His heart rhythm problems, which had resulted in the fitting of a pacemaker, were a source of great frustration to him as they limited his competitiveness as an orienteer. Nevertheless, he was a fit man who could hold his own in the M45s and he continued to be competitive vicariously through Tom and Alex. Their successes were a source of great pride and he managed that most difficult of balances between allowing his boys have fun and encouraging them to do well. It was wonderful to see Kath, Tom and Alex at Sutton Common, less that a week after losing Dave, and fitting that Tom won the Orange course (despite the six minute error that he explained to me afterwards, and that he would have mulled over with his dad before rushing off to find a tree to climb). Dave, and his family, has been an inspiration to us all. He was an irreplaceable force, and we will miss him.

Other News

Congratulations and thanks to Julie Laver, who toils tirelessly for the club in her role as Chair of the Development Committee, and recently obtained BOF funding, linked to our Clubmark status, to promote Orienteering in Maldon. Julie also conjured up funding to support a number of Stragglers to attend the recent BOF first aid course, bolstering first aid support for all club activities. If you intend to get injured, I encourage you to do it at a Stragglers event so you can enjoy the attentions of the Stragglers team and use up some of the resources from our mobile emergency room (assembled, of course, by Dave Birkett).

Julie also met with Clubmark officials recently for a review of our Clubmark status. Apparently the reviewer was suitably impressed by Andrew Cordle's file of documentation on the club Website and left satisfied that BOF is appropriately rigorous in its allocation of Clubmark status; so thanks to Andrew and Julie for protecting the good name of Orienteering both locally and nationally

John Collyer continues to push forward the 'Awards for All' (A4A) permanent course project. The grand(ish) opening of the Fordham Hall Estate permanent course took place on an atmospherically cold and misty Saturday 10th January with a 45 minute score event. Top performances were recorded by Nick Pugh and Steve Robertson (who jetted back from Germany specially to take part in the inaugural event on the map of his extended back garden). The event was followed by a reviving dose of Geraldine's Sooper Soup in the warmth of the Robertson's Moatfield residence, and recorded for posterity by our new publicity officer, Rachel Archer, who is working hard to raise our profile in the local press. Welcome to the committee, Rachel! The High Woods Permanent course will be officially opened by local MP Bob Russell on May 17th. Thanks to John for his hard work on this project.

Going back a bit further, Andrew Cordle's New Years day event at Wivenhoe provided the usual bracing start to the year with yet another imaginative Cordle variation of the Score Event theme; this time involving a soupcon of trail O and several passes through the eerily deserted campus buildings. Geraldine's soup, once again, staved off the hunger pangs and cold to encourage members to linger a while.

For completeness, I should confess to the Committee's disappointment at having to cancel a training event at Blakes Wood and the EAGAL event at Roman Valley that was scheduled for 25th January. The training event was another Dave Birkett production and would have taken place less than a week after his death. Roman Valley was cancelled because of last minute problems with land permissions entirely outside the control of Dave Skinner, the Club's meticulous Fixtures secretary. On behalf of the committee I am very sorry about these cancellations, not least for Steve Cartwright, who had planned the courses, and John Collyer, who had booked the loos and assembled a team of helpers. This event is now being rescheduled for the autumn.

Finally, see elsewhere in this issue for news on the 2009 Compass Sport Trophy campaign and on imminent big event relays from Jenny Collyer. And welcome to the committee to our new Junior Captain, Hannah Newton. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the East Anglian and British Championships events in February, and at the JK in April. I apologise for the important things I have missed out, and for any inadvertent errors of 'fact'. My hard drive is full and I am in dire need of a memory upgrade.

May you all enjoy flowing runs and precise navigation within the control circle in 2009. Dream on, fellow Stragglers. Get out there and enjoy yourselves.

Captain's Corner - Jenny Collyer

We have a busy few months ahead of us with club teams to be entered in both the British Relay Championships and the JK Relays and also a Compass Sport Trophy round.

On Sunday, March 1st is the **British Relay Championships** in the New Forest. I have entered seven teams as follows:-

M40	David Sanderson, Kevin Machin
M50	Mark Lyne, Colin West and Steve Robertson
M/W60	(2 teams) Dave Skinner, Jack Isbester, John and Jenny Collyer, John and Geraldine Russell
M/W12	Tom Birkett, Alex Birkett and Tom Burgess
Mixed Ad Hoc	James Lyne, Julie Laver and Sue Carton
Junior Ad Hoc	Alex Ware, Ellen Sanderson and Rhiannon Ware

I am taking entries at the moment for the **JK Relays** taking place in Northumberland on Monday, April 13th. To enter teams at the cheapest rate of £11 and £7 I need to hear from you by the 28th Jan. (Please send cheques, payable to SOS, to me at 48 Meadow View Road, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 7NY.)

The first round of the **Compass Sport Trophy** is on Sunday 29th March hopefully at the event near Sevenoaks. I don't know any more details yet but if you are able to run on that day please let me know. At this event we need everyone to take part as points are awarded to all and the best 13 used for the final score. The more competitors we have the more chance of a higher score.

Keep up the orienteering over the next few months. There are a lot of good events coming up and the forests are at their best now with the undergrowth at its lowest.

Schools League Report - Julie Laver

The results after four events are as follows -

Up to Y6 Boys

Thomas Birkett
Kit Phillips
Jack Gilby

Up to Y6 Girls

Bronwen Mansel
Lucy Holder
Elsbeth Harrison

Y7/8 Boys

Nicolas Harrison
Roderick Mansel
Bryn Wilkinson

Y7/8 Girls

Rachael Harrison
Rhiannon Ware
Matilda Selby

Y9/10 Boys

Alex Ware
Michael Park
Will Hooton

Y9/10 Girls

Isobel Chandler
Bethany Heybrock

Y11/12/13 Boys

James Park
Jonathan Cronk
Connor Weed

Y11/12/13 Girls

Hannah Newton
Ellen Sanderson
Jacqueline Heybrock

Top three schools

Barnardiston Preparatory
Beyton Middle
Copleston High

Well done to all who have taken part so far. Please make sure you are entered for the League by recording your school and year group on your registration form. You do not have to be entered via your school.

For the full list of competitors please visit the ESSOL pages of our website. If I have missed your details please contact me and I will amend them.

The remaining ESSOL events are as follows

22 Feb Knettishall Heath SUFFOC
22 March Hockley Woods SOS
17 May Highwoods SOS
14 June Wivenhoe SOS

Unfortunately the Roman Valley fixture was cancelled.

Stragglers' League - Andrew Cordle

We are in exciting times at the top of the rankings, with Richard Bonnett first equalling then beating Jenny Collyer's score to take the no. 1 spot. Chris Sellens leaped from 19th up to 5th position on completing his sixth event in a year, but then dropped back to 21st when one of his six events became over a year old.

Next qualifying events are -

7 Feb 2009 CUOC Cambridge City
8 Feb 2009 WAOC Croxton
14 Feb 2009 HAVOC Harts Wood
15 Feb 2009 SMOC Silverstone
22 Feb 2009 SUFFOC Knettishall
8 Mar 2009 WAOC Rowney Warren
14 Mar 2009 CHIG Lea Valley Park
22 Mar 2009 SOS Hockley
19 Apr 2009 HAVOC Belhus Woods

- subject to change. Check the website <http://www.stragglers.info/league> for latest information and scores.

SOS Notice board

Wanted - Julie Laver

If you are aged 14-19 and would like to help at junior coaching sessions the Development Committee will be running a **Young Leaders** Course.

If you are interested please contact Julie Laver 01206 826152 or email julie.laver@virgin.net

We will set the date to include the most number of participants.

Also for adults who would like to help at coaching events but are not sure if they want to take a formal qualification we are now recruiting **Coaching Crew**.

You will take part in a taster day and you will have to have a CRB check through the club.

There are all sorts of ways experienced club members can help develop our new/young recruits so please also contact Julie as above.

Explorer Challenge - Julie Laver

What is it?

A four-stage incentive scheme to encourage young people to take part and maintain an interest in orienteering.

Who can take part?

Any junior can participate but the scheme will particularly benefit those who are just starting out.

What do you do?

The participants are issued with a logbook which they take to events with them. A point is earned for every control they find even if the course is not completed so if the course has 12 controls to find and only 10 are punched then 10 points are awarded. The participant must present the logbook to be signed by an official-there are usually plenty lurking about!- at the end of their run after download.

What then?

For every 25 points earned a certificate and a cloth badge are awarded to the participant. There are 4 awards available.

Do I have to run solo?

No, not at first. The idea of the scheme is to build confidence and provide an incentive to improve performance. The first points may be earned by a junior being shadowed and it is to be hoped that as their ability and experience increase they will be able to run as pairs then solo by the end. This will however depend on the age and ability of the individual.

How much will it cost?

Nothing-free-nil-zero-nought-no pence etc! extra. Just pay the normal entry fee for the event.

How do I get involved?

Collect a logbook from the enquiries point at any SOS event and start collecting those control points. The event does not have to be run by SOS to count towards your total.

My children have participated in the scheme and I found the promise of earning a badge counted a lot towards them turning out with enthusiasm on a rotten winter morning when the appeal of Sunday morning kids TV seemed a better alternative to them. After completing all the stages my two oldest are competing regularly and are keen to progress through the normal colour codes of the sport. My youngest has just started to collect the points and I hope she will soon be as proud of her badges and certificates as the others were.

Our new Permanent Orienteering Courses - John Collyer

Fordham Hall Estate

Following the informal introductory event, the course is now open for use.

Maps will be available from the local shop during opening hours, or from me.

The area is now "greening" up a bit as the newly planted trees grow, although there are several "meadow" areas which will be left unplanted.

I have suggested three courses on the back of the map, all of which start from the Ponder's Road car park. Several people successfully got round all 20 controls within the 45 minute allowance.

The work for this was paid for by the Woodland Trust, we provided the map files.

Hylands Park

As part of our Awards for All grant from the Lottery Fund, the first Permanent Course of three, has opened at Hylands Park. The bonus for users is that due to the funding agreement, maps are free of charge from the shop. This is in the Stables Visitor Centre next to the House; the House car park is reached by the main entrance on the northbound carriageway of the A414, north of junction 12 of the A12.

Again there are three suggested courses using a total of 16 controls. If you use the course, then the café in the Stables area is well worth visit (after a run of course).

We have two other projects underway as part of the Permanent Course initiative; those at Notley Park Braintree and High Woods Colchester are due for completion by Easter.



At the opening of the Fordham permanent course - photo by Rachel Archer

Kit for Sale - Julie Laver

New for 2009

Bring your good quality unwanted 'O' kit to the enquiries point at our events and we will display it for sale.

All items to be marked with the price and sellers name and contact number.

Please collect unsold kit before you leave as we cannot store items.

Also for sale are some club T-shirts and sweatshirts.

For New Club 'O' kit see Lyn West.

Fixtures in East Anglia and Nearby Regions

The information provided below normally consists of **Event Date**, **Region** (eg EA = East Anglia), **Event Grade and Type** (Grade 1 is highest grade, Grade 5 is lowest. Type C is a conventional Cross Country event in which controls must be visited in the sequence listed on the description sheet). **Event & Location Names** and **map reference**. **Organiser's contact details**. Contact details, costs, closing date etc. for **Pre-entry** when provided. Whether **Entry on the Day** (EOD) is possible and the surcharge payable. The range of **courses** offered. The address of a **website** from which additional information can be obtained. Additional information in plain language. At Essex Stragglers' events registration normally opens at 1000hrs, starts are from 1030hrs until 1230hrs and courses close at 1430hrs.

February 2009

- 1st EA NOR Local Event. West Bilney, Kings Lynn. TF700139 .
C5 Alan Bedder, 01603 424589. alan.bedder@virgin.net
£5.50/£1.50 Family/Groups £6.50. EPS-SI. Dogs only on a
lead. www.norfolkoc.co.uk
- 1st EA SMOC Local Event. Keyne O Series. Linford Wood, Milton
Keynes. SP845401 .
C5 Steve Hardy, 01933 311488. steve-hardy@hotmail.com
£3.00/Senior Adult groups £5.00. Families £3.00. Additional
maps £1.00. Entry fees as stated ~ BOF member discounts
N/A. Dogs on leads. Medium and Short starts from 10.00 to
12.00. Long to 11.30. Three courses. Long, Medium and Short.
Typically 8km, 5km and 3km. www.smoc.info
- 7th-8th EA **Town & Country Weekend**
O3S **7th - CUOC Cambridge City Race 2009 & Icenian Trophy**
Jesus Green, Cambridge. TL453592 .
Organiser: Clare Sutherland, 07789871376.
cityrace@cuoc.org.uk . EPS-SI. www.cuoc.org.uk
- C3 **8th - WAOC Regional Event & EA League.** Croxton Heath,
Thetford. TL877894 .
Tim Mulcahy, 01223 513761. tim.mulcahy@aveva.com Fees
TBA. EPS-SI.
Postal Entries: Caroline Louth, 20 Long Road, Cambridge, CB2
2PS, 01223 246145. entries@waoc.org.uk *CD Postal:*
25/01/09. CD online 25/01/09 (late online up to 31/01/09
+£2.00/£1.00). Day 1 Fees: £10.00/£5.00. No EOD. Day 2
Fees: £10.00/£4.00. Seniors & juniors entering both days
£1.00 discount. Lim EOD on Day 2 +£2.00/£1.00. Chq: WAOC.
EPS-SI. Day 2 will have the new colour coded courses for
regional events, inc Black. Online entries preferred:
www.fabian4.co.uk/default.aspx?EventID=172 .
www.waoc.org.uk
- 14th EA HAVOC Valentine O at Harts Wood. Harts Wood, Brentwood.
TQ607912 .
C5 Chris Shaw, 01375 677377. fixtures@orienteeing-havoc.co.uk
£4.00/£2.00. EPS-SI. W, Y, O, LG & Blue, String course.
Parking £2.00. Starts 10.30-12.30AM. www.orienteeing-havoc.co.uk

- 15th EA **SMOC Regional Event & East Anglian Championships.**
Silverstone, Towcester. [SP660446](#) .
- C3 Organiser: Keith Downing, 01234 270018. keith@keith-o.demon.co.uk
Postal Entries: Helen Nisbet, 2 Hopkins Close, Milton Keynes Village, Milton Keynes, MK10 9AS. entries@smoc.info CD: *unknown*. £11.00/£4.00 +£1.00 SI hire. Lim EOD & late entries + £2.00/£2.00. Chq: South Midlands Orienteering Club. EPS-SI. String course. White, yellow, Orange, Light Green & Green - £7.00/£4.00. No dogs. Online entries at www.fabian4.co.uk .
www.smoc.info
- 22nd EA SUFFOC Local Event & ESSOL. Knettishall Heath, Woodbridge. [TL956806](#) .
- C5 Simon Hooton, 01379 871494. s.hooton@ukonline.co.uk
£7.00/£2.00. -SI. Dogs on lead. www.pdl.demon.co.uk/suffoc
- Feb SC **BRITISH ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS**
28th-
Mar 1st
- C2 **28th - British Orienteering Championships.** Hampton Ridge, New Forest. [SU200140](#) .
Organiser: Jerry Newcombe, 01256 780990.
Postal Entries: Lynne Moore, 12 Beaufort Place, Old Mill Lane, Bray, Berkshire, SL6 2BS. CD: 07/02/09. Post marked on or before 11/01/09 - £15.00/£7.00, 25/01/09 - £17.00/£8.00, 03/02/09 - £20.00/£10.00. No EOD. Chq: South Central Orienteering Association. EPS-Emit. Parking £2.00. Dogs on lead in car park only. Online entries preferred through www.fabian4.co.uk . www.boc2009.org.uk
- R2 **1st - British Relay Championships.** Beaulieu & Dibden, New Forest. [SU390040](#) .
Organiser: Jerry Newcombe, 01256 780990.
Entries: Stephen Robinson, 18 Hanson Road, Andover, Hants, SP10 3HL. CD: 07/02/09. On or before 11/01/09 - £36.00/£24.00 per team, 25/01/09 - £39.00/£27.00, 07/02/09 - £45.00/£30.00. No EOD. Chq: South Central Orienteering Association. EPS-Emit. Dogs on lead in car park only. Online entries preferred through www.fabian4.co.uk .
www.boc2009.org.uk

March 2009

- 8th EA WAOC Local Event. Rowney Warren, Shefford. [TL123403](#) .
- C5 Chris Bell, 01462 850422. chris_n_bell@msn.com £8.00/£3.00.
EPS-SI. www.waoc.org.uk
- 15th EA SMOC Local Event. Keyne O Series. Shenley Wood, Milton Keynes. [SP824366](#) .
- C5 Steve Hardy, 01933 311488. steve-hardy@hotmail.com
£3.00/Senior Adult groups £5.00. Families £3.00. Additional maps £1.00. Entry fees as stated ~ BOF member discounts N/A. Dogs on leads. Medium and Short starts from 10.00 to

- 12.00. Long to 11.30. Three courses. Long, Medium and Short. Typically 8km, 5km and 3km. www.smoc.info
- 22nd EA SOS Local Event & Essex & Suffolk Schools League (ESSOL). Hockley Woods, Hockley. TQ833923 .
- C5 David Skinner, 01245 381266. dave.skinner@btinternet.com £7.00/£2.00. EPS-SI. White to Blue courses. www.stragglers.info
- 29th EM **Compass Sport Cup 1st Round - TBA**

April 2009

- 5th EA NOR Local Event. Ken Hill, Hunstanton. TF675349 .
- C5 Alan Bedder, 01603 424589. alan.bedder@virgin.net £5.50/£1.50 Family/Groups £6.50. EPS-SI. Dogs only in Car Park area and on leads. www.norfolkoc.co.uk
- 5th EA SMOC Local Event. Keyne O Series. Woughton, Milton Keynes. SP877375 .
- C5 Steve Hardy, 01933 311488. steve-hardy@hotmail.com £3.00/Senior Adult groups £5.00. Families £3.00. Additional maps £1.00. Entry fees as stated ~ BOF member discounts N/A. Dogs on leads. Medium and Short starts from 10.00 to 12.00. Long to 11.30. Three courses. Long, Medium and Short. Typically 8km, 5km and 3km. www.smoc.info
- 10th-13th NE **JAN KJELLSTROM ORIENTEERING FESTIVAL**
- C2 **10th - JK SPRINT.** Newcastle University, Newcastle. NZ248654 .
- C2 **11th - JK DAY 1.** Kyoie woods, Berwick-upon-Tweed. NU058396 .
- C2 **12th - JK DAY 2.** Detchant, Shiellow, Greensheen Hill & Cockenheugh, Berwick-upon-Tweed. NU083350 .
- R2 **13th - JK Relay.** Dipton, Hexham. NY975605 .
JK Coordinator: Boris Spence, 01670 860897. coordinator@jk2009.org.uk
Entries: JK 2009, 6 Aln Court, Ellington, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 5LR. entries@jk2009.org.uk CD: 28/02/09 for elites, 20/03/09 for others. Fees - see website. Chq: JK 2009. EPS-SI. String course. Entry via website preferred; entries open 01/12/08. www.jk2009.org.uk/
- 19th EA HAVOC Local Event & EA League. Belhus Woods Country Park, Aveley. TQ564824 .
- C5 Chris Shaw, 01375 677377. fixtures@orienteeing-havoc.co.uk £7.00/£2.00. EPS-SI. Starts 10.30-12.30PM. www.orienteeing-havoc.co.uk
Full registration pending
- 26th EA WAOC Short Races. Ampthill Park, Ampthill. TL024382 .
- O5 Ian Lawson, 01438 359042. ianh.lawson@ntlworld.com EPS-SI. S
Full registration pending

Emails to the Editors

Origins of SOS - Barry Faiers

Dear Webmaster,

I was demonstrating the www to my elderly mother by typing in my own name, and expected only to find items that related to lectures that I had given because of my work (but now fortunately retired from). To say I was surprised to see the name of SOS turn up linked to my name is a massive understatement.. (There was a 1970 news letter re-published on your site).

Curiosity got the better of me and I went to your website and saw the 'About The Club ' page and the e-mail from Derek Keeble. As a founder member of SOS and a former member of the Robert Beard Youth Club Orienteering team I thought you might like to hear a bit more background.

RBYC got involved in orienteering because the then club warden (as the boss of the club was called) Peter Joynes, had experienced the sport whilst training to be a youth leader. We went to a few events in the club minibus and enthusiasm grew. As a group we wanted to join the British Orienteering Federation but it was a bit awkward for Peter and his wife as seniors to run as members of a youth club team, and there were other obstructions as we were not a constituted orienteering club. Not quite sure who hit upon the name (probably Peter), but we all agreed that it was OK and it stuck and we became the SOS with our own constitution and funds, albeit still based at RBYC in Hornchurch. I don't remember when the change of name took place, but RBYC appears beside my name and that of Brenda Joynes (Peter's wife) in the results published for the Southern Championships held on 21st April 1968. (The Orienteer Vol 1 No 2)

We competed at the National Event at Cannock Chase in 1967 (or was it 1968) and attended the AGM the evening before at which there was much debate on the constitution and rights of members or teams to register a vote. We crawled into our tents that night comforted by the knowledge that the morrows event was sponsored by Guinness and that there was the promise of free beer at the finish! I don't remember much of the event or course, (although somewhere in the loft is my map and the results list) what I do remember is that 3 weeks of serious training to get to enjoy bottled Guinness was in vain, as when the finish came into sight the Guinness caravan was dispensing draught Guinness!

As a club we enjoyed the sport and put on our own event in Epping Forest (?1969) at which I had the dubious honour of being at the finish when the late great Chris Brasher came in cursing the map maker because he thought that 'The Spur' was 50m out of place on the map! He was also covered from head to toe in good old London clay because the route he chose was rather wet and slippery.

As with all good stories there is buried treasure and lost fortunes, the SOS seemed to go into a bit of a downturn in the early 1970's and it was re-constituted with a new committee away from RBYC and from your website appears to have gone from strength to strength. At the downturn there was a bank account with the Trustee Savings Bank in Hornchurch which as far as I know was never formally transferred to the new committee, in real terms it was probably only £5.3s.6d (in the currency of the day) and with interest at 0.01% probably now amounts to £5.25 but it might be worth investigating. Our treasurer at the time was Ray Feake who worked for the TSB.

I have other memories and lists of names but brevity etc.etc., and copies of 'The Orienteer' from Vol 1 No 2 to Vol 8 No 6 that are looking for a new home!

Thanks for jogging my memory

Brotherhood of Centurions - Derek Keeble

I found an interest in Jill Green's article about British centurions, as written in the STRIDER of December 2008. Centurions, it is explained walk 100 miles within a time-limit of 24 hours, and do so by keeping contact with the ground. Presumably that means no running: not bad for a Score Event task!

Apparently the Brotherhood of Centurions was set up in 1911, and in almost 100 years the the list of achievers, including Jill herself, numbers just over a thousand successes. Coming in during 1980 to be heralded No 709 was Mike Powell Davies, unmistakably our late Straggler.

I knew of Mike's Long Distance Walker prowess in the Ben Nevis/Scafell Pike/Snowdon speediest team time record of that decade, but was not aware of his status as a Centurion.

Proudly displayed in my home for a few months is a Stragglers' Shield, awarded to me at the last A G M. It is named in memory of Mike and it gets extra polishing now.

Keep happy feet

RE:Brotherhood of Centurions - Nancy Powell Davies

Further to Derek's piece, you may wish to annotate that Strider is the name of the magazine of the [Long Distance Walkers Association](#) of which Mike was an early member.

It took Mike two attempts to gain his Centurion status because the events were road races, around a 6 or 10 mile circuit and Mike much preferred walking across country (preferably without a footpath). He told me that he nearly gave up before completing this race but Ann Sayer, who was supporting him, persuaded him that he didn't want to have to walk the 70 odd miles he had just completed again next year to gain the accolade.

A Year in the life of a Fixtures Secretary - Dave Skinner

My orienteering travelling companion must have been working on me for some weeks, sharing with me his experiences as our Fixtures Secretary, progressively developing my interest and painting the picture of a rewarding and challenging role. If my arm was twisted then I hardly felt it, but there I was appointed (unchallenged!) as your new Fixtures Secretary, with the promise of several years of 'fun' ahead of me. That was some 15 months ago, already, and I thought it timely to share with you some of my exciting adventures.

Shortly after my appointment there were four significant major tasks to pursue in the space of a few weeks.....gulp!

- Registration of our proposed 2008 events with British Orienteering - basically a form filling exercise, thankfully mostly achieved via email, which ensures that our fixtures are publicised and that we have insurance cover. This is not a one-off annual exercise - there is usually a need to update registrations as specific details of events are firmed up.
- Permissions from landowners for all our scheduled 2008 events needed to be secured - not a trivial exercise! We use land owned by the Forestry Commission, National Trust, Essex Wildlife Trust, Ministry of Defence, Council Authorities and other organisations as well as private owners. Processes for achieving this are therefore varied and sometimes involve a lot of paperwork! Thankfully the vast majority of landowners are very supportive and meet our needs.
- Identification of Officials for our 2008 events, Organisers, Planners and Controllers - with an imminent club coach trip to the Compass Trophy Final luck was on my side here - no hiding place for potential candidates, though once the scent of impending doom had been picked up the Guinness Record for the number of people simultaneously falling into a deep sleep was surely beaten! Nevertheless a good start was made. While we try to assign Controllers from other clubs whenever possible, Organisers and Planners come from within - the number of active Organisers and Planners we have roughly matches the number of events we aim to provide each year. Our members who carry out these essential roles are clearly stretched, and they are getting older! I am currently struggling to find enough Officials for our 2009 events. For flexibility and to ensure our future success we need more people involved in organising and planning events.
- Develop our 2009 Programme and submit for consideration at Regional (EA) level. This is my most complicated task. We aim to provide about 9 events each year, 5 or 6 of which will be ESSOL and one an EA League event. On average we deliver a Regional event every 18 months though are aiming to increase this frequency from 2010 onwards. The planning constraints are too numerous and complicated to detail here but include for example seasonal availability of land, the need to rotate our use of venues, avoidance of clashes with other major orienteering events and

events in our Region, etc, etc (I feel a headache coming on just writing about it!).

I am indebted to Jack Isbester for the excellent handover records, documented guidance and day to day advice he gave me to see me through this initial somewhat intensive period. I came out of it unscathed, I think! Thank you Jack, and thank you to all club colleagues who have readily supported and advised me.

Has it been fun? Well at peak times it has certainly been a challenge - for example for our Baddow Ridge event alone permission had to be obtained from around 12 landowners. The need at very short notice to move our July event away from Hylands Park as a result of an unexpected mass waterfight advertised on Facebook for the same day probably provided the most exciting moment. I have certainly found it a rewarding experience (so far!), not only from the viewpoint of contributing to the provision of events that people enjoy. As a relative newcomer to orienteering I have learned a lot about what makes the sport tick, what goes on behind the scenes. Above all it has brought me into contact with a wider range of people involved in or supporting orienteering and I have been very impressed with the commitment shown by those who make orienteering events happen, all volunteers of course.

And now, conscious of the fact that I've only really covered the first 3 months but have surely bored you enough, I must return to looking at options to reschedule our cancelled Roman Valley event



The Fixtures Secretary hurrying between tasks

Orienteering in Venice - Jenny Collyer

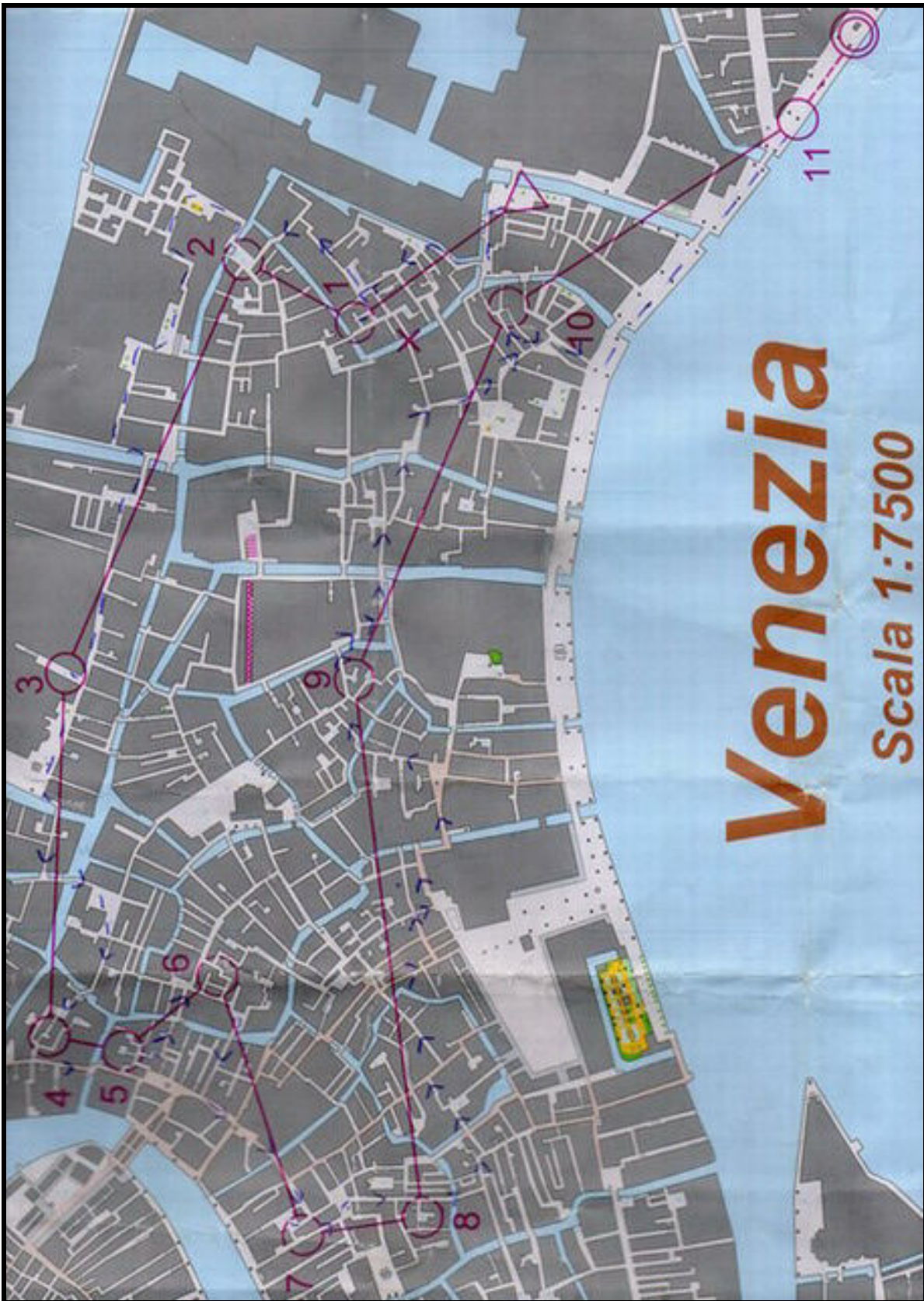
We were keen to go to this event after hearing about it from our daughter, Ann. She took part some years ago and it attracts about 4,000 orienteers from all over the world. In preparation we did the London City race, the Leeds University sprints and the Skipton Town Race all requiring close contact with the map the whole time.

I was glad that I didn't have to encounter another "two level" dilemma that the Barbican in London posed also the Leeds Liverpool Canal and a few small alleys in Skipton did not prepare us for the maze of canals and alleys that were Venice.

When Ann had talked about "all those little alleys" I had built up a picture of main streets as in any other town with alleys linking them but I was soon to learn otherwise. On our first evening we went for a walk using Ann's old map but didn't think to take a compass. The maze of little alleys and canals was absolutely fascinating and we were soon to learn that there were no direct routes and we fumbled our way over numerous bridges until we reached a larger canal that we were able to relocate ourselves on. The problems of orienteering in Venice had become evident! We actually found it easier to navigate our way using Ann's old "O" map rather than the tourist map which was too detailed.

There was a Park Race on the Saturday using an area not being used in the main race. The street sections on this gave us practice for the next day and the parkland, though not much of it, gave some respite.

We had late starts in the main race and the weather was glorious, though chilly out of the sun. We sat at a cafe having a coffee watching the earlier competitors start. Soon our turn came and it was like nothing I had done before. The worst thing would be to lose contact with the map as there was no easy way of relocating. Each leg needed to be studied carefully first to see where there were bridges to use and alleys which were not dead ends. The straight route was not an option! I kept my thumb stuck rigidly to where I was on the map for fear of losing contact. The mapper had shaded in the streets likely to be busy with the public but it was not always easy to avoid these. No one seemed to mind runners pushing their way through. I made a positive decision to avoid St Marks Square as the previous day at that time it had been flooded with the high water and we had been walking on duck boards. I didn't want to pack a wet pair of trainers the next day! I have included my map with route roughly marked on. Fortunately I didn't get lost and was pleased to finish 8th out of 42. John also had a good run his course crossing the Grand Canal via the Academia and Rialto Bridges. He finished 30th out of 59.



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